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THE USE OF THE FINE ARTS IN
THE MENNONITE CHURCH

by

Orlando Schmidt

A.B., Bethel College

A Thesis

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem of the Thesis

1. The Problem Stated.

From the time that the earliest Anabaptists met in private houses for prayer and Bible study until the present day, the Mennonite Church has been characterized in various degrees by simplicity and a constant desire to avoid anything that is nonessential. The Anabaptist movement was an attempt to bring about a resurgence of pure, simple Christianity as it existed in the Apostolic Church.¹ This desire was chosen as the original key for religious doctrine and life, and although there have been numerous embellishments and variations, the original key has never modulated during the four centuries of Mennonite history. The first inclination toward only that which is simple and essential has survived to a large extent; and because of the original predilection of the forefathers, there is today only a small evidence of the fine arts in a Mennonite worship service.

The questions facing us today are these and others like them. Is the Mennonite Church justified in disapproving an extensive use of the fine arts? Has the evasion of the

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1. C. Henry Smith: The Story of the Mennonites, p. 29.

fine arts been a real factor in accomplishing the principal mission of the church? Or do the fine arts have anything to do with it? Is it possible to bring the various fine arts into a church service and still maintain the principles of simplicity and nonconformity? Is it right that we should adhere to standards today that were set four hundred years ago? To what extent should outward entities be employed to produce inward experiences? Should the Mennonite Church take a more liberal attitude toward the use of the fine arts?

2. The significance of the problem.

These and many more questions become even more significant when present day conditions and trends are considered in the light of former standards and practices. Today there is much greater interest in education than there ever has been in the Mennonite Church. Many are becoming more aware of conditions that exist outside of the one denomination. The experiences during the war have served to broaden the interests of a large percentage of young people. Many groups of Mennonites are no longer in solely Mennonite communities but are a small group among many other cultures and denominations. More and more they must reevaluate the customs and expressions of the past in the light of present day trends and influences. This is also true in the light of inclinations in the larger Christian church today, such as the active ecumenical movement and recent trends in forms of worship. In the light of these things it is well to

reconsider the status quo in the Mennonite Church.

3. The problem delimited.

The problem that has been presented is far too great to receive a thorough consideration in this study. There are certain limitations which have been set in order to define the procedure more clearly.

a. Limited to the worship service.

In the first place, the use of the fine arts will be considered particularly as their usage and expression affects the service of worship. The use of fine arts in homes, schools and other places will not be given thorough study but will be considered only as it has a direct bearing on the worship service.

The worship service itself is an expression of religion and life, so that it is as representative of the entire faith of a people as any one thing could be.

"No feature of a church is more characteristic than its worship. As men and women worship together, the ethos of their religious fellowship finds special expression. . . What they do or what they leave undone in worship, private and public, is invariably significant."¹

Furthermore, the worship service itself is one of the greatest of the fine arts, being closely associated with music,² poetry and architecture.

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1. James Moffatt in N. Micklem (ed.): Christian Worship, 119. Cf. A. E. Garvie in Micklem, op. cit., pp. 7-9.
2. Andrew W. Blackwood: The Fine Art of Public Worship, pp. 13, 14.

b. Limited to certain of the fine arts.

In the second place, all of the fine arts will not be included in the scope of this thesis. Of special consequence are music, architecture, the graphic arts and to some extent literature. The drama, sculpture and the dance will not be included, as they do not have a direct bearing on the problem as it is associated with the Mennonite Church.

c. Limited somewhat to certain groups of Mennonites.

In the third place, the problem will not be applied fully to every group of Mennonites. Each group has a different set of standards regarding the use of the fine arts, and in most groups there is quite a difference among the various congregations. In spite of these differences, there is a definite similarity that characterizes all of the worshiping communities. Furthermore, every attitude towards the fine arts found in the Mennonite Church, no matter how liberal, has a common background; and no doubt each group would claim to be clinging to original principles of Mennonitism. In this study only the larger groups of Mennonites will be considered, although references will be made to the smaller groups. Since the writer is a member of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church in North America, the investigation will be made with particular interest in and for that group.

d. Limited to churches in America.

In the fourth place, the Mennonite congregations in Europe will not be considered as thoroughly as the American churches, although references will be made especially to German and Dutch churches. Since the churches in Latin America are still very young and still in the process of being established, there will be very little reference to the use of the fine arts in those congregations.

B. The Method of Procedure

In proceeding with this problem, the first step will be to make a historical study of the principles and practices of the Mennonite Church regarding the fine arts. A brief survey will be made of what the attitude towards the fine arts has been and how this has expressed itself throughout the four centuries of Mennonite history. Such a study is essential in understanding the condition as it exists in the Mennonite Church today.

Then there will be a brief consideration of the basic factors involved in the use of the fine arts in Christian worship. This will include not only the basic conflicts between the fine arts and Christian worship but will regard the heritage of the total Christian church and the attitude and experience of other denominations.

In the light of these things, some practical suggestions will be made that aim toward a more intelligent and pragmatic use of the fine arts in the Mennonite Church. This will be done not merely as an attempt to bring about a wider acceptance of the fine arts but as an aid for bringing about a more adequate expression of worship and a more potent witness of the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

C. The Sources of Data

The sources for this paper have been quite varied. Some time has been spent in two Mennonite historical libraries at Goshen College and at Bethel College, where much information was received for the historical aspect of this treatise. A number of interviews were held. Of special value were those with several Mennonite ministers and students from Europe. Many statements will also be made on the basis of the writer's own experiences and observations in various Mennonite circles. Numerous books in the fields of worship, art, and related subjects have also been read.

CHAPTER I

A HISTORICAL SURVEY
OF THE FINE ARTS IN THE MENNONITE CHURCH

CHAPTER I
A HISTORICAL SURVEY
OF THE FINE ARTS IN THE MENNONITE CHURCH

A. Introduction

It is not possible to understand the attitude of the Mennonite Church toward the fine arts without going back several centuries to see what has gone before. There are certain reasons for present attitudes that reach far below the surface of present day prejudices and beliefs. To understand these reasons we must grapple with the principles and aims of the early Anabaptist "brethren."¹

In this chapter we shall see how the faith of these brethren was expressed in a worship service. We want to know how it effected their attitude toward music, architecture and painting. And we want to know whether their understanding of these things was carried out in the generations that followed. Only after these things have been observed can we make a true evaluation of the practices and attitudes in the Mennonite Church of today.

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1. The earliest Anabaptists preferred to be known as brethren. Smith, op. cit., p. 124.

B. Early Beginnings

1. Early Christian attitude toward the fine arts.

Before we consider the early Anabaptist attitude toward the fine arts we must take a brief glance at conditions as they were in the Roman Catholic Church before the Reformation.

During the earliest Christian centuries art was almost entirely associated with the service of pagan religions, so that "the early Church regarded it as something with which the faithful could hold no friendly relations."¹ Therefore art was rejected and condemned for many years. But gradually it began to take a real place, first in private houses and then in the churches. Art did not win this acceptance on the basis of aesthetic qualities, but rather as being the most effective way of bringing the supernatural world down to the level of human experience.² This acceptance became so widespread that the general council at Nicaea in 787 decided that

"images of Christ, of the Virgin, of saints, angels, and holy men, as well as the cross, whether in colors, mosaic-work, or other material, whether on sacred vessels and vestments, on walls and tablets, in houses and in highways, should be honored with the kiss and prostration, and worshipped, but without that peculiar adoration which is properly offered to the Divine nature alone. The council also included the gospel books, and the relics of martyrs, among the proper objects of veneration."³

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1. R. C. Trench: Mediaeval Church History, p. 89.

2. Ibid., pp. 89, 90.

3. Henry C. Sheldon: History of the Christian Church, Vol. II, pp. 85-86. Cf. Philip Schaff: History of the Christian Church, Vol. IV, pp. 460-462.

2. Pre-Reformation attitude toward the fine arts.

By the time of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries this resolution had been utilized to such an extent that there seemed to be very little immediate worship of God. Pictures and images were to be found in all places of worship. They were an integral part of the existing religious organization. Several of the large cathedrals had as many¹ as five thousand figures in various parts. In speaking of the churches of that time Schaff says they were

"overloaded with good and bad pictures, with real and fictitious relics. Saint-worship and image-worship, superstitious rites and ceremonies obstructed the direct worship of God in spirit and in truth."²

It is because of such things that the condition in the Roman Catholic Church as regards the fine arts was one of the factors that instigated the coming of the Reformation.³

3. The early Reformers' attitude toward the fine arts.

The early reformers did a great deal to restore wor-

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1. Sheldon, op. cit., p. 519.

2. Schaff, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 10.

3. Such conditions in the Roman Church existed in spite of many attempts at reform. The Cistercians had wanted nothing superfluous in God's house, banishing all paintings, carvings and other non-essentials from their chapels. Petrus Cantor of Notre Dame had condemned churches that exhibited pride rather than humility. Certain Franciscans covered walls of chapels with mud. Humbert de Romans criticized architectural indulgences severely, claiming that church ornaments exceeded those of worldly folk. St. Bernard had condemned elaborate vestments, and St. Jerome wrote of the "vain and monstrous pictures of churches, and the filth and carelessness of sacred things, as of altar cloths and so forth." G. G. Coulton; Art and the Reformation, pp. 330-336.

ship to its former simplicity and spirituality. They thoroughly disliked the idolatry that had crept into the church. They did away with the worship of saints, images and relics, pilgrimages and masses for the dead. Five of the seven sacraments were rejected. The elaborate ceremonialism and the complex ritualistic display were reduced greatly, so that there were fewer obstructions in the service. For Latin was substituted the vernacular, and more prominence was given to the sermon.

The first reformer to bring about certain changes in music was John Huss, who realized the "propagandist value" of songs and singing. He had sung in a cathedral choir himself and later wrote about the "careless way in which the services were chanted and to the scandal of having to take his part in the blasphemous ceremonies."¹ So during his reforms he and his friends wrote and collected several vernacular hymns, set them to tunes and introduced them to the people.

The greatest contribution to the singing of hymns was made by the German Protestant leaders.² The attitude of Luther toward the arts was not one of rejection but rather an attempt to give them a real and proper place in the church service.³

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1. Frederick John Gillman: The Songs and Singers of Christendom, p. 63.
2. Schaff, Vol. VI, op. cit., p. 495.
3. Martin Luther once said, "I wish to see all arts, principally music, in the service of Him who gave and created them. Music is a fair and glorious gift of God. I would

Calvin also recognized the great power that there was in music, but he allowed nothing but Scriptural language to be sung in his church at Geneva.¹

In Switzerland, the cradle of early Anabaptists, Zwingli was bringing about many changes. He was one who loved music and poetry. But even though he was a musician,² he wanted to do away with all music and singing in church. He used the Bible as his absolute standard, rejecting everything that was not definitely admonished or prohibited in Scripture.³ Although he favored a simplification of the forms of worship, he condemned "the movement directed against the destruction of images and pictures."⁴

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not for the world forgo my humble share of music. Singers are never sorrowful, but are merry and smile through their troubles in song. Music makes many people kinder, gentler, more straid and reasonable. I am strongly persuaded that after theology, there is no art that can be placed on a level with music; for besides theology, music is the only art capable of affording peace and joy of the heart. The devil flees before the sound of music almost as much as before the Word of God." From the editorial page of The Mennonite of Dec. 14, 1948. Luther also wanted church walls painted with the creation, Noah building his ark and other scenes. He often corresponded with Dürer and Lucas Cranach. G. G. Coulton: Art and the Reformation, p. 408.

1. "He did not approve of the French tendency to introduce light airs, such as were wedded to bacchanalian and frivolous love-songs, into the sanctuary. For the same reason he objected to organs and to four-part singing." Frederick John Gillman: The Evolution of the English Hymn, p. 135.
2. C. J. Cadoux in Micklem, op. cit., p. 142.
3. Lars P. Qualben: A History of the Christian Church, p. 255.
4. Smith, op. cit., p. 11.

4. The Anabaptists' complete rejection of the Roman Catholic system.

The earliest Anabaptist leaders, such as Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, Wilhelm Reublin and Simon Stumpf, insisted that there should be a complete break with the Church of Rome. The new church was to be based on principles so revolutionary that a complete break with even the Reformed Churches was a natural result.¹ They were determined to get back to the Bible, to develop a faith such as that of the apostles.

One of the basic issues of the early Anabaptists was that

"the essential character of the Christian life is holy obedience to Christ and His Word, not ceremonialism, church fasts, pilgrimages, adoration of relics, making the sign of the cross, using the rosary and the like."²

In order to accomplish the ideal of this new church, a great emphasis was placed on separation from the world.

"The world" meant not only secular activities but all of the Roman Catholic Church and also the Reformed groups.

One of the seven articles drawn up by the Conference of Schleithem³ in 1527, states,

"The Christian must be separated from all the evil and wickedness that Satan has planted into the world. According to II Cor. 6:17, 18: 'We shall come out from among them and be separated;' separate from all Papistic works and services, meetings and churchgoings, drinking-

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1. Ibid., p. 12.
2. John C. Wenger: Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine, p. 4.
3. The Schleithem articles of 1527 are the earliest Anabaptist confession that is on record. Smith, op. cit., p. 33.

houses and other things which the world highly esteems."¹

The Roman Catholic Church was so closely associated with "the world" that there could be nothing but a complete rejection of its entire system.

C. The Worship Service in the Mennonite Church

1. The meetings of the Anabaptists.

When the Swiss brethren left the Roman Church they did it largely as a protest against the worldliness that had come into the worship service.

"Her forms of worship and ritual were worldly, having departed from a simple and spiritual worship of God. . . . And so, among other things, the founding of our church meant this: that true believers, both in their personal religious life and in their community life as a church must follow the principles which God has given rather than those which come from the world of sinful men."²

Since the Anabaptist movement was characterized by a strong evangelistic and missionary zeal, there were many meetings held both day and night. Although not very much is known about the earliest services, we know that they were very simple and informal gatherings. Since the whole movement was an attempt to reproduce the primitive Apostolic Church in its purity and simplicity, their worship consisted of Bible reading, prayers, exhortation, testimonies and singing of hymns.³

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1. John Horsch: The Mennonites, their History, Faith, and Practice, p. 18.
2. Paul Erb: Bible Teachings on Nonconformity, pp. 11, 12.
3. Smith, op. cit., pp. 28, 29.

Most of these meetings had to be held secretly in private houses, often at night and in out of the way places. In many cases it was centuries before the Anabaptists even had buildings that were set apart for worship.¹ Persecution was not the only reason for meeting in this manner. They believed that the true Church of Christ existed not in temples and cathedrals but where two or three are gathered together in the Lord's name.² Michael Sattler, one of the early leaders, conducted his meetings in the fields or in the woods. On July 10, 1539, the court at Marbeck was told that the "radicals" were meeting "by the oak in Esslingen wood" on Sunday morning while others were in church.³

We have a complete description of an Anabaptist worship service of later years by an observer who was not of that group.⁴ After the congregation is seated the songleader (Vorsinger) announces twice the hymn that is to be sung. During the singing of the hymn the preacher and the teachers take their places.⁵ The preacher speaks while he remains seated. He moves from his chair only for prayer, during

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- ✓ 1. Ibid.,
2. Matthew 18:20.
3. Emil Egli (ed.): Actensammlung zur Geschichte der Zurcher Reformation in den Jahren 1519-1533, Vol. II, p. 581.
4. M. Simeon Friderich Rues: Aufrichtige Nachrichten von dem Gegenwärtigen Zustande der Mennoniten oder Taufgesinnten wie auch der Collegianten oder Reinsburger, Beyderseits Ansehnlicher Kirchlicher Gesellschaften in den vereinigten Niederlanden, pp. 46-48.
5. Ibid., p. 47.

which time the men kneel but the women remain seated; and everyone prays silently. When the preacher rises everyone finishes his prayer; and he sits down to announce his text, from which he preaches. After the sermon he gives some exhortation. He mentions the great needs of the world, after which everyone prays silently once again. After this another hymn is sung. Then the preacher gives the benediction. No offering is taken during the service, but everyone lays his offering into a box made for that purpose as he leaves the church.¹

This extreme simplicity has continued to characterize the worship of Mennonites throughout the centuries, even up to the present day.

2. Early American worship.

The early American Mennonites met for worship in a simple log building. They sang German one-part hymns, prayed, read from the Scriptures, listened to a long sermon and offered testimonies. Some of the special services, such as the baptismal service, the annual or semi-annual communion service, preparatory services, feet washing and harvest-home festivals, naturally included other things but were always characterized by the same simplicity.²

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1. Ibid., pp. 48, 49.

2. Wenger, op. cit., p. 188.

3. The Amish service.

Such extreme simplicity and informality, probably even more so, is still to be seen in the most conservative branches of the Mennonite Church--the Old Order and Conservative Amish congregations. These services generally last from three to four hours. They are held in the various homes of the members of the congregation.

"The order of service is the same for every worship service: three hymns, a forty-five minute address, a long period of silent prayer, a chapter reading, an hour-long sermon, a long audible prayer, the benediction and another hymn."¹

4. Services among the Old Mennonites.

In the services of the congregations of the Old Mennonite Church there is also a very informal and absolutely simple order. A typical service includes two congregational hymns, announcements, Scripture reading (sometimes read responsively), prayer, offering, sermon, another prayer² and the closing hymn.

5. Services in the General Conference.

The worship services in the churches of the General Conference of Mennonites vary a great deal in complexity. Most of them include the service of the choir; many have

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1. John Umble: "The Old Order Amish, Their Hymns and Hymn Tunes," The Journal of American Folk-Lore, Vol. LII, No. 203, p. 84. For more information concerning the services of Amish congregations Cf. H. M. J. Klein: History and Customs of the Amish People, pp. 36-42.
2. This order is based especially on the morning worship service of the Goshen Mennonite Church on Aug. 1, 1948.

introduced such things as a call to worship, musical responses, instrumental preludes and offertories; but all of them still maintain a large degree of simplicity and informality¹ in their corporate worship.

6. Services among the Mennonites of Europe and Latin America.

This adherence to simplicity is true not only of American Mennonites but also of Mennonites throughout the world. In Holland the order of service is similar to that in the United States although a bit more formal.² In Germany the church worship is simple--hymns, Scripture, prayer and a sermon. Often there is a "curious mixture of simplicity and continental formality."³ In Switzerland the form of worship is "very similar to our services here in America."⁴ Among the Mennonites in Latin America the worship services are especially simple and straightforward.⁵

So we can say that the worship service in a Mennonite Church of today, as well as the services throughout its history, is characterized by simplicity and directness. Mennonites have rarely known anything but that, and today they show very few signs of changing their ways.

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1. Based on various church bulletins and the writer's life-long experience in such churches.
2. From an interview with Johann Hilverda, a Dutch student at Bethel College.
3. Robert Kreider: "Impressions of Mennonites in South Germany," Mennonite Life, Jan., 1947, p. 13.
4. Sam J. Goering: "With the Swiss Mennonites Today," Mennonite Life, Jan., 1947, p. 9.
5. Cf. Walter Schmiedehaus: "Mennonite Life in Mexico," Mennonite Life, April, 1947, p. 34.

D. The Place of Music in the Mennonite Church

Of all the arts, none has been so enthusiastically accepted and so thoroughly utilized in Mennonite worship as music. It has been one of the chief mediums of expression at all times. Wherever there was any life in the church there was music.¹

1. The hymns of the church.

The greatest and most important aspect of this subject is the hymns of the church. This is especially true when we consider the prolific creation of hymns during the time of the Anabaptists. During the first half century, beginning with the year 1527, there were at least 700 hymns written by various Anabaptists.² "Their value lies chiefly in this, that in them, as nowhere else, the spirit of the Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century finds a voice."³

Two characteristics of these hymns stand out above all others. First, they are a defense of the particular beliefs that the Anabaptists had accepted, speaking especially of

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1. "The great interest in singing among the Mennonites is shown by the fact that in the 'Mennonitica Americana' (a critical bibliography of American Mennonite literature compiled by the editors of the 'Mennonite Quarterly Review') nearly one out of five of all the publications listed is a hymn-book or a collection of religious songs." Samuel Theodore Burkhard, "Music Among the Mennonites and Amish of North America," p. 29.
2. A. J. Ramaker: "Hymns and Hymn Writers Among the Anabaptists of the Sixteenth Century," Mennonite Quarterly Review, April, 1929, p. 108.
3. Henry S. Burrage: Baptist Hymn Writers and their Hymns, p. 24.

regeneration by God's spirit. Secondly, they relate the great tragedy that so many of the Anabaptists experienced.¹

These hymns are a record of persecution and martyrdom. Official Swiss documents show that the hymns themselves were actually persecuted. "Political authorities apprehended them as danger-carriers, prohibited their distribution, and constables were ordered to seize and destroy the song booklets."²

With the earliest beginnings of the Anabaptist movement, hymns began to spring up among the members. The earliest hymn that is known to have come from this activity dates back to 1524,³ which is even one year before the new church was actually founded.⁴ This hymn is still to be found in the Ausbund,⁵ which is the earliest hymnbook to be used by the Swiss brethren, and which is still being used⁶

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1. Ramaker, op. cit., p. 109.
2. Ernst Correll: "The Value of Hymns for Mennonite History," Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1930, p. 218.
3. Rudolf Wolkan: Die Lieder der Wiedertäufer, p. 8.
4. The beginning of the Anabaptist movement actually occurred in 1525, when Conrad Grebel was the first to administer rebaptism (adult baptism). There were, however, numerous events in the preceding years that led up to it. Smith, op. cit., p. 15.
5. The term "Ausbund" means "Selection of the best." The first edition came out in the year 1564. Wenger, op. cit., p. 135. "It was the first Mennonite book published in America for Mennonite use." It went out of use in Mennonite congregations in the early 19th century. Harold S. Bender: "The Literature and Hymnology of the Mennonites of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania," The Mennonite Quarterly Review, July, 1932, p. 165.
6. The Anabaptists in Holland used a hymnbook as early as 1529. This was one compiled by David Jores of Duer, Holland. Walter H. Hohmann: "Development of Music in the Mennonite Church," Proceedings of the third Annual Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems, p. 12.

by the Old Order Amish in their services.¹

It is interesting to note that the Anabaptists did not sing the Psalms and other hymns used in the Reformed Churches.²

Many of these hymns were written by early Anabaptist leaders, such as George Blaurock, Felix Mantz, Michael Sattler, Hans Hut and others.³ Several hymns were written by a number of people, each person writing one stanza. Most of the hymns have many stanzas, some having as many as 38 and 46.⁴

Since there was no place for congregational singing in Roman Catholic worship, the people had no tunes, to which they could sing these hymns. The result was that they used many of the folk tunes of that day.⁵

The extant hymns of the Anabaptists reveal many things

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1. The hymns in the Ausbund are probably more genuine folk poetry than any other Protestant hymns. "Of these Anabaptist hymns, the Ausbund not only contains some of the oldest hymns, but it seems to have been the first to be collected in its present form and it is the only Protestant hymnal of the 16th century which is still in use." Umble, op. cit., p. 86. Cf. Burkhard, op. cit., pp. 32-42.
2. Christoph Andreas Fischer: Vier und funfftzig Erhebliche Ursachen Warum die Widertaufer nicht sein im Land zu leyden, p. 79.
3. Ausbund, das ist: Etliche schone Christliche Lieder, Wie sie in dem Gegangnis zu Passau in dem Schloss von anderen rechtglaubigen Christen hin und her gedichtet worden.
4. Ibid. One hymn has 76 stanzas.
5. Examples of these are "Ein Blümlein auff der Heyden," "Der Wacher auff der Zinnen," "Des Frewleins von Brittannien," Wolkan, op. cit., pp. III, IV. Cf. Fischer, op. cit.

concerning their life and character. The moral aspects of the Christian life are made prominent. Steadfastness in persecution is always a mark of true discipleship. The hymns played a great part in strengthening other brethren. In many Anabaptist homes they were considered next to God's Word. Many of them are purely devotional, "giving glad if not always beautiful expression to the devout sentiments of truly pious hearts."¹

Since the earliest editions of the Ausbund there have been numerous hymnbooks published for use in various Mennonite groups, but there have been very few hymns written by Mennonites since the days of the Anabaptists.² But in spite of the lack of original writing of hymns, the Mennonites have always made great use of congregational singing.³

2. The use of musical instruments.

Mennonites have been very slow in accepting the use of musical instruments for worship services. When Menno Simons mentioned the organ in his writings he associated it with worldly things that contribute to the expression of the "eat, drink and be merry" philosophy of life.⁴ For

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1. Burrage, op. cit., p. 25.
2. For a discussion of the hymns written by Christopher Dock in the 18th century see Burkhard, op. cit., pp. 43-53.
3. For a thorough study of hymnbooks that have been used by Mennonites, see Walter H. Hohmann: *Outlines in Hymnology with Emphasis on Mennonite Hymnology*; also Hohmann: "Development of Music," op. cit.
4. Menno Simon: *The Complete Works of Menno Simon*, p. 208.

many years there were no Mennonite churches that used musical instruments in their worship services.

The first church in Holland to introduce an organ into the church was the one at Utrecht, in 1765.¹ In Germany an organ was purchased by the church at Hamburg in 1764.² The first church in Prussia to introduce an organ was the one at Neugarten in 1788.³ One of the Danzig churches installed an organ in 1805.⁴ So it was nearly two centuries after the founding of the church that organs began to be used in the worship service.

In America the first congregation to use an instrument was the West Swamp Church (General Conference) in Pennsylvania. A pipe organ was dedicated there in 1874.⁵

Today there are various standards being followed in Mennonite churches. Many congregations of the General Conference are using pipe organs and electric organs. Practically all of them have pianos in the church. The Old Mennonite churches have neither organs nor pianos in

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1. Hohmann: "Transition in Worship," Mennonite Life, Jan., 1946, p. 8.
2. Wenger, op. cit., p. 92.
3. Hohmann: "Transition in Worship," op. cit., p. 8.
4. Wenger, op. cit., p. 93.
5. J. Herbert Fretz: "A Pennsylvania Mennonite Church--West Swamp," Mennonite Life, Oct., 1947, p. 37. At an earlier date than 1874, an organ was brought to America from Holland by the Rev. Carl Justus van der Smitten in 1868, to be used for worship purposes at the Wadsworth Seminary at Wadsworth, Ohio. This organ is still on display in the Kauffman Museum on the campus of Bethel College, North Newton, Kans. Cf. Vernon Neufeld: "The Musical Instrument in Worship," Mennonite Life, April, 1948, p. 34.

their "meeting houses," although many of the church members¹ have pianos in their homes.

In the churches of Germany today there is a higher standard of music than in the churches of America. In Europe, as in America, music is the greatest expression of the fine arts, but there is a greater emphasis on instrumental music. Practically all of the churches have organs. These are all pipe organs, since electric organs² are closely associated with theaters.

3. The work of choirs.

In the last century of Mennonite history there has been a great interest in choir work. Among the Mennonites of Russia there was a great emphasis on singing. In parochial schools singing was one subject that was always included.³ This love for singing was kept up in the Russian churches even in recent years. It is interesting to note that when the German Wehrmacht took over the Ukraine, the churches, which had been closed since 1935, were reopened for worship; and immediately "choirs sang again to edify

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1. Neufeld, op. cit.
2. The standard of music in the German churches has received a special impetus in recent years by the "Back to Bach" movement. According to Dr. Dirk Cattepoel of Krefeld, Germany, the standard of music has been high for many years. Many years ago Brahms dedicated a number of his works to Mennonites. One of Brahms' favorite books was a work on Hans Denk, one of the earliest Anabaptists, *Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer* by Dr. Ludwig Keller.
3. Peter Braun: "The Educational System of the Mennonite Colonies in South Russia," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, July, 1929, pp. 169-182.

the services."¹ In most of the church schools in America, there always has been a large place given to singing and choir work.² A number of individual congregations have developed their choirs to such an extent that oratorios and many other works of fine music are being produced.³ Besides the work of individual church choirs, there has been for many years a great enthusiasm for song festivals in various Mennonite communities.⁴ The worship services of the Old Mennonite churches have no music besides congregational singing.⁵

E. The Place of Architecture in the Mennonite Church

1. During Anabaptist times.

The story of architecture in the Mennonite Church can-

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1. Gerhard Fast: "Mennonites of the Ukraine under Stalin and Hitler," Mennonite Life, April, 1947, p. 21.
2. J. E. Hartzler: Education Among the Mennonites of North America, pp. 110, 111, 120. Cf. David H. Suderman: "Our Musical Heritage in the Colleges," Mennonite Life, April, 1948, pp. 31, 32.
3. This is especially true of such communities as Berne, Ind., Moundridge, Kans., Newton, Kans. and others. Cf. Olin A. Krehbiel: "The Berne Community," Mennonite Life, July, 1947, p. 18.
4. Lester Hostettler: "The Future of Our Church Music," Mennonite Life, April, 1948, pp. 37, 38.
5. Even though choirs do not participate in the regular worship services, there is some interest in choirs among the young people of the Old Mennonite Church, particularly in the various church schools. Note also the work that was done in Virginia during the 19th century by Joseph Funk, who conducted numerous singing classes and published many singing books and other musical literature. Cf. John W. Wayland: "Joseph Funk,--Father of Song in Northern Virginia." Also the various works by Joseph Funk, listed in the bibliography.

not possibly date from the same time as other aspects of worship for the simple reason that there were no church buildings. The earliest meetings of the Anabaptists were held in homes and other out-of-the-way places. This, of course, was a natural result of the emphasis on religion as an inward matter and of strict adherence to the doctrine¹ of nonconformity.

In criticizing certain groups of Anabaptists in the early seventeenth century one writer says:

"There has never been a heathen so godless, no Turk so ruthless, no Jew so hardened, no Kaiser so wicked, who would not build his God a temple or a mosque. The Jew, for his service, builds a synagogue; and the Kaiser, for the strengthening of his error, a chapel. Only the pharisaical Anabaptists are blinder than the heathen, more ruthless than the Turks, more hardened than the Jews; for they have no churches or chapels or like places where they can conduct their services. Yes, they thoroughly disapprove of such things. And although they have in Moravia more than seventy dwelling houses, they have not one single church or chapel or altar, where they can pray and preach. Their sermons they have twice a week in their dining halls."²

2. Earliest meeting houses.

When meeting houses were finally erected for church services, they were extremely simple in every respect. In describing some of the earliest worship services of the Anabaptists, Dr. Joseph Beck says, "Music, pictures and all external displays were naturally excluded from their places

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 15.

2. Translated from Fischer, op. cit., pp. 78, 79.

of worship. The buildings had no towers, no bells."¹

The churches of the 18th century in Holland were without any ornamentation.² Most of the buildings did not appear like churches from the outside, but on the inside³ they were arranged very practically for worship services.

Practically the only symbolism ever to be found in any Mennonite churches was seen on the outside of these 18th century meeting houses. Each church had some type of figure or sign that might have been on the order of a coat of arms. One church in Amsterdam had Noah's ark for its sign. Another church is described as having the sign of the sun. Another⁴ one had a lamb as its sign.

3. Mennonite conception of the meeting house.

And so the "meeting houses,"⁵ as the places of worship for Mennonite congregations have often been called, have always retained a very simple appearance. Mennonites have usually felt that there is no particular sacredness connected with any particular building.

"According to the example of the apostles, the assembling of Christians for worship is simply called 'Meetings,' and the house wherein the meeting is held 'Meeting-house!' not 'House of God' or 'Church.'"⁶

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1. Translated from Josef Beck: Die Geschichts-Bücher der Wiedertäufer in Oesterreich-Ungarn, p. XIV.
2. Rues, op. cit., p. 46.
3. Ibid., p. 155.
4. Ibid., p. 156.
5. Horsch, op. cit., p. 31.
6. Ibid.

4. The absence of a uniform style.

There has never been a uniform type of style except for some of the old meeting houses in eastern Pennsylvania. These meeting houses are severely simple, rectangular structures, usually built in a grove of trees.¹ The pulpit "usually occupies the entire space between the two entrance doors at one end of the building, from ten to fifteen feet."²

Churches of the General Conference are of varying shapes and sizes. Some of the buildings have steeples with bells. Some have arched windows. A few have stained glass windows. None of the churches are elaborate. Nearly all have been built principally for practical purposes. There seems to be no typical expression in the architecture of Mennonite churches today.³

F. The Place of the Graphic Arts in the
Mennonite Church

1. No place for art in worship.

Since this paper is being centered around the worship service in the Mennonite Church, there is very little that needs to be said concerning the graphic arts. They have

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1. Martin G. Weaver: Mennonites of Lancaster Conference, p. 436.
2. John C. Wenger: History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference, p. 36.
3. Cf. two volumes of pictures of Mennonite churches of the General Conference, found in the Historical Library at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.

never played an important part in any church service. In the early centuries of Mennonite history there was very little sympathy with any art work because it was considered to be a violation of the second commandment.¹ During the first century of Mennonite history the ban was sometimes placed on an artist, especially if he painted portraits.²

2. The work of Mennonite artists.

Although there has been practically no use of the graphic arts in Mennonite churches, something should be said concerning the many artists that were Mennonites and whose work became quite well known.

a. Artists of The Netherlands.

1). Karel van Mander.

The first artist to appear among the Dutch Anabaptists, who became sympathetic toward the fine arts quite early, was Karel van Mander (1548-1606). He left Flanders in 1583 because of his faith. Although he left very few works of art, he wrote a book on artists, which has become the main source of information concerning artists of that time.³

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1. Deut. 5:8.
2. D. Christian Neff: Mennonitisches Lexikon, Vol. I, p. 221. Cf. A. Muttray: "Der Danziger Maler Enoch Seemann," Mitteilungen des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins, pp. 59-61.
3. The title of this book is Das Leben der Niederländischen und Deutschen Maler. R. van der Zijpp: Mennonitisches Lexikon, Vol. III, p. 11.

2). Hendrik van Uylenburgh.

Hendrik van Uylenburgh (1584-1660), the leader of a well known art school and a dealer in arts, was a cousin of Saskia, Rembrandt's wife. His brother, Rombout, was an artist too, and his son Gerrit was a known dealer in the arts.¹

3). Michiel Miervelt.

Michiel Miervelt (1567-1641), who was called to Brussels to escape persecution of the "taufgesinnten," painted portraits of princes and princesses of the House of Orange-Nassau and of the King of Bohemia.²

4). Lambert Jacobs.

Lambert Jacobs (c. 1600-?) was a minister of the Mennonite congregation at Leeuwarden. A student of Rubens, he painted a well known picture of "Boaz and Ruth." He was influential in convincing some that art was not a godless occupation. His son Abraham, was a well known portrait painter.³

5). Jan Luiken.

Jan Luiken (1649-1712), who became a Mennonite in 1672, worked mostly as a book illustrator, producing at least 3275 illustrations. In 1685 he illustrated the Martyrs'

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1. Dirk Cattepoel: Mennonitisches Lexikon, Vol. III, pp. 241-243.

2. H. F. W. Jeltjes: Mennonitisches Lexikon, Vol. III, p. 133.

3. Cattepoel, op. cit.

¹
Mirror with 104 illustrations. He also produced the Luiken Bible with numerous two-page illustrations of all important events in Scripture.² His son was also an illustrator,³ producing at least 1187 works.

6). Jacob van Ruisdael.

Jacob van Ruisdael (1625-1682), who has been called "the foremost of Holland's landscapists,"⁴ was brought up in the Mennonite faith. Since his father left the Mennonite Church, it is not known whether the son also left, but since it is known for certain that the Mennonite congregation at Haarlem provided a place for him in the poor house, it seems as though he continued a Mennonite.⁵

7). Govert Flinck.

Govert Flinck (1615-1660), whose parents originally felt that all artists are frivolous and careless, became a pupil of Rembrandt in Amsterdam. His works are in museums at München, Dresden, Berlin, Paris, Rotterdam, Leeuwarden, the Haag and Amsterdam. His most famous painting is "Isaak Blesses Jacob,"⁶ in Amsterdam.

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1. Christian Hege: Mennonitisches Lexikon, Vol. II, pp. 700, 701. Cf. T. J. van Braght: The Bloody Theatre or Martyrs' Mirror.
2. Jan Luiken (artist): A fbeeldingen der Merkwaaardigste Geschiedenissen van het Oude en Nieuwe Testament.
3. Hege, op. cit.
4. "Jacob van Ruisdael" in Masters in Art, Part 86, Vol. 8.
5. Cattepoel, op. cit.
6. K. Bos: Mennonitisches Lexikon, Vol. I, p. 654.

8). Rembrandt Van Rijn.

Rembrandt Van Rijn (1606-1669), whose parents were members of the Dutch Reformed Church, is thought to have joined the Mennonite Church. Hendrik van Loon, in his novel on the life of Rembrandt, says that he wanted to withdraw from the Dutch Reformed Church, and since that was impossible without accepting the membership of another denomination, he decided to join the Mennonite Church in which Anslo,¹ one of Rembrandt's friends, was a preacher.

There are many other artists that might be mentioned here, such as David Joris (c. 1501-1556) and Jan van der Heyden (1637-1712).²

b. Artists of Germany.

Besides these Mennonite painters in Holland there were a number of fine artists among the Mennonites of Germany, where they did not appear as early as in Holland. In contrast to the Mennonites in Holland those in Prussia were quite strongly opposed to the pictorial arts. One of

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1. In van Loon's novel Rembrandt says: "So I joined the Mennonites and I have never been sorry." Rembrandt often painted and etched Anslo. Hostede de Groot in Die Urkunden ueber Rembrandt also concludes that Rembrandt was a Mennonite. An Italian art historian, Filippo Baldinucci, living in Rembrandt's time, says that he belonged to the Mennonite faith. These and other references to Rembrandt's being a Mennonite may be found in Johan Wytze Hilverda: "Rembrandt Van Rijn, a Mennonite Artist." Cf. also W. J. Kühler; Geschiedenis van de Doopsgezinden in Nederland.
2. Cattepoel, op. cit.

the first Mennonite pamphlets published at Danzig makes reference to a quarrel between the painter Enoch Seemann the elder and George Hansen, Elder of the church, on account of his profession. This Enoch Seemann finally gave up portrait painting; but his son, Enoch Seemann the younger (1694-1744), became a well known portrait painter of Danzig. He painted portraits of the royal family. Some of his work is in the Dresden Gallery.¹

Other well known painters of Danzig were Heinrich Zimmermann (1804-1845), Richard Loewens (1856-1885), a promising artist who died prematurely, and Hans Mekelburger (1884-1915). Other painters of Germany were Johann Wientz² (1781-1849) and Franz Theodor Zimmermann.

c. Artists of America.

There have been only a few artists among the Mennonites of America.³ Several who have done outstanding work are John P. Klassen of Bluffton, Ohio, and Arthur Sprunger⁴ of Goshen, Indiana.

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1. Kurt Kauenhoven: "Mennonite Painters of Danzig and Königsberg," an article written to Dr. Cornelius Krahn, North Newton, Kans., for use in Mennonite Life. Cf. A. Muttray: Der Danziger Maler Enoch Seemann and Cuny: Die Maler Deneter und Seemann.
2. Kauenhoven, op. cit.
3. Rosella Dyck: Mennonite Artists (Contemporary).
4. An outstanding Mennonite artist in Brazil is J. J. Janzen. For more information concerning this man Cf. letter and pictures from J. J. Janzen.

G. The Present Situation in the Mennonite Church
Regarding the Use of the Fine Arts.

1. Factors effecting the present situation.

To understand the present situation in the Mennonite Church we must remember that it has always been a relatively small church. At the same time it has been a widely scattered church, originating in two different sections of Europe during Reformation days--in Switzerland and in Holland. Being a persecuted and unwanted people, they have had to move constantly and thus have contacted many different cultures, continually being forced to rethink and reevaluate the principles by which they live and worship. We must also remember the original independent spirit of the Anabaptist movement, daring to be different in everything, bound to no man-made doctrines and creeds.

2. Differences in attitudes and standards.

In light of all these things it is no small wonder that today there is a great variety of standards and attitudes to be found within the church. Even though every congregation would like to recapture the original spirit of the Anabaptists and apply it to present day situations, some are much more progressive and willing to make changes and attempt new things than others. Although each group is trying to preserve the principles of simplicity and non-conformity, some believe that it can be done only by adhering to all those forms of worship that have been followed

for generations, while others wish to alter their worship service so that young people and those outside of the church will be attracted. Although all of the Mennonites have and still maintain a great love for music, some believe that this form of expression must be legislated in order to escape many dangers; while others feel that the great heritage of sacred music, which the Christian Church possesses, should be employed in every possible way in the worship service to bring honor to God's name. Because the place of worship has never seemed important there are today only a few congregations sincerely interested in building an edifice of beauty. Concerning the art of painting and other graphic arts, there have been only some churches that have placed pictures on the walls or in the windows of their houses of worship.

3. Different standards in the home and church.

One more characteristic concerning the attitude toward the fine arts concerns their acceptance in private homes and other places outside of the church. Many who are opposed to using musical instruments in public worship make use of them in their homes. A number of church members have taken an interest in painting and certainly a large group has learned to appreciate good art. Yet there are practically no religious paintings that have found a place in the sanctuary. The same thing might be said of most of the fine arts.

H. Conclusion

Thus we have seen that the present day attitude towards the fine arts cannot be appreciated without tracing its development from the time of the Reformation. The sincere desire of the Anabaptist brethren was to reproduce elements of Apostolic Christianity. In order to accomplish this there had to be a complete rejection of the Roman Catholic system. So their worship service became extremely simple and direct. Since no group with an active zeal and evangelistic spirit can keep from some type of expression there was immediately a great production of hymns, followed by a constant use of congregational singing. At the same time there was also a ban of musical instruments, which still exists in some groups of Mennonites. Since the emphasis was placed on inward experience in worship, there was little or no regard for outward circumstance. The result was that the architecture of a meeting house was never important. The graphic arts were for many years thought to be a violation of God's commandment, but eventually there were many who became well known for their work in this field, even though pictures were never used in the church.

So today there is in the Mennonite Church a sincerely conservative and cautious attitude towards the fine arts.

CHAPTER II

BASIC FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE USE OF THE FINE ARTS IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

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BASIC FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE USE OF THE FINE ARTS IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

A. Introduction

In order to arrive at some conclusions concerning the present use of the fine arts in the Mennonite Church there must be a consideration of some basic factors that are necessarily involved and closely related to the subject. There must be an understanding of what art is and how the aesthetic consciousness affects men's lives. There must also be clarity as to what factors are involved in a worship experience. These observations naturally raise many questions as to what is and should be the relation between art and worship. Then there is the problem of the objective and subjective in worship. This brings us to the heart of the matter, namely the relationship between the spiritual and the physical in worship. Since there is such diversity of opinion as to what use should be made of liturgy and symbolism, there should be a study of the benefits and hindrances of their use. This will be followed with an investigation concerning the power of the religious and cultural heritage of the worshiping group. Since the Mennonite Church has continually sought to base its faith and practice on the teachings of the New Testament, this chapter will be concluded with a glimpse of what Scripture has to say about Christian worship as it regards the fine arts.

B. Considerations Concerning the Essence and Function of Art

1. A definition of art.

It is important that we know just what is meant by the word "art," since the term connotes many different significations to various individuals. As it is used in this study it does not refer merely to a particular skill, nor does it refer to everything that is produced by certain skills or tastes. It is rather what Heimsath calls "the endeavor to give significant form to spiritual meaning."¹ A definition such as this is essential when we speak of art in relation to Christian worship. It must first of all be an expression of something spiritual. "It is the setting forth . . . of the innermost thoughts and emotions."² Whenever someone endeavors to put this spiritual truth or insight into significant form, the result is art.

The artist is constantly in search of reality. He considers actual facts deeply, until he feels that he has come to know reality. Then he sets forth on an endeavor to fashion a form that will enable other men to see and know what he has seen and known.³

According to the definition that has been given, art is not necessarily beautiful. The effectiveness and success

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1. Charles H. Heimsath: The Genius of Public Worship, p. 106.
2. Richard H. Ritter: The Arts of the Church, p. 4.
3. Willard L. Sperry: Reality in Worship, p. 225.

of a work of art, however, will depend upon the extent to which it is beautiful and meaningful. Its success depends upon the richness of the artist's personality and upon his skill in his particular medium.¹

2. The universality of art and the aesthetic consciousness.

It is important to realize that art is not limited to a certain group of people who claim to have skills in special fields. Since everyone receives a certain amount of satisfaction out of expression, and since art is expression for its own sake, everyone is an artist. It should be remembered that there are many ways of expressing one's self. Art is not confined to music, painting, sculpture, architecture and other seemingly specialized fields; it is the product of words, pantomime and other common, every-day occupations that are the real beginning of art.² They "express to anyone who cares to notice something of what is within our souls."³

It is quite a common thought today that art is really

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1. Ibid., p. 5.
2. "The idea that art and artists are confined to art galleries is antiquated; instead, art must function in daily living. Art is expressed in everything that is done in the best way. . . . Art touches everything we do in life. Choosing the proper necktie, dress, hat, or handkerchief, making beautiful pictures with flower arrangements, weaving a rug to match the furnishings of a room, setting the table attractively, landscaping our yards, keeping our streets and back yards free from rubbish and weeds, as well as appreciation of all beautiful man-made things and things in nature--all this is art to me." Lena Waltner: "Art as I See It," Mennonite Life, Jan., 1947, p. 46.
3. Sperry, op. cit., p. 5.

not one of the important or serious things in life. It is usually considered to be something nonessential and more or less frivolous.

"We have hardly begun to realize that it is itself one of life's most serious things; that its end is not to tickle our sensations, or give us pleasure, or satisfy our vanity, or to scribble over vacant spaces; but that its end is to make beauty, and beauty, like goodness, is an end in itself, not to be sought for any other reason."¹

Besides realizing the universal expression of art itself, we must consider what is closely related to it--² the fact of aesthetic consciousness. The importance of this aspect of human nature has generally not been recognized, and yet it affects all men in a real way. It affects our bodily life, since the aesthetic motives determine the clothes we wear, personal cleanliness and physical development.³ Since it is the beauty of an object that often creates within us a desire for a more comprehensive understanding of many things, it figures largely in cognition.⁴ Our social life is so imbued with an aesthetic consciousness that "he who consciously offends in this respect, either willfully or through ignorance, is bound to suffer."⁵ By increasing the desires of the human race it has become related to man's

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1. Percy Dearmer: The Art of Public Worship, p. 13.
2. Cf. Bertram Morris: The Aesthetic Process, p. 7.
3. E. Hershey Sneath: "The Importance of the Aesthetic Consciousness and its Bearing on Religious Education," Education for Christian Service, pp. 210-211.
4. Ibid., pp. 211-214.
5. Ibid., p. 217.

economic life; and it affects man's politics, since aesthetic relations are expressed in unity, order, harmony and proportion.¹ It is greatly influential in the moral life, for the beauty of virtue appeals to the soul with great force.² The aesthetic and religious consciousness are closely related. This can be seen in Old Testament worship and also throughout the history of the church, from the time that Christ and His disciples sang a hymn until the present time, when poetry, music, art and architecture are all dependent largely on religion for inspiration, and religion owes much to the contribution of the fine arts.³

"The antiquity and practical universality of art, the powerful influence exerted by aesthetic consciousness in all fundamental forms of human functioning, and a careful influence exerted by aesthetic consciousness in all fundamental forms of human functioning, and a careful psychological analysis of man, all testify to the fact that he is constitutionally an aesthetic being."⁴

The same conclusion is reached when we study history. For no matter how ancient or isolated a tribe may be, there is always ornamentation or graphic representation. So that we can only generalize "that the instinct for art is universal."⁵

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1. Ibid., p. 223.
2. Ibid., pp. 225-227.
3. Ibid., pp. 232-233. Cf. Von Ogden Vogt: Art and Religion, Ch. III.
4. Sneath, op. cit., p. 242.
5. Sheldon Cheney: A World History of Art, p. 7.

C. Considerations Concerning the Essence and Function of Worship

1. A definition of worship.

Although there are many aspects of worship that cannot be summarized in one sentence, its central purpose and meaning can probably best be crystalized in a statement such as this: "Worship, in all its grades and kinds, is the response of the creature to the Eternal."¹

Many men have attempted to explain the impulse to worship, since it seems to be instinctive and universal. Although we can make a thorough observation of how men worship, it is much more difficult to understand why they worship. If we accept the definition given in the previous paragraph, recognizing it as the response of the creature to the Creator, it is its own reason for existing. "The impulse to worship is elemental, nonrational, instinctive, and an end in itself. It does not have to be explained or justified, either by utilitarian or ethical considerations."²

Since we are concerned only with Christian worship in this study, we must be more clear as to its purpose. Richard Ritter has said that "It is simply a means of giving natural expression, in company with our group, to our normal Christian feelings toward God."³

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1. Evelyn Underhill: *Worship*, p. 3. Cf. Heimsath, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Sperry, *op. cit.*, p. 175; H. Wheeler Robinson in Micklem, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
2. S. Arthur Devan: *Ascent to Zion*, p. 4.
3. Ritter, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

2. Factors involved in Christian worship.

Since worship is based on both the creature and the Creator, there is necessarily always a subject-object relationship. This means that any conception of God must be more than only immanent and subjective. So worship acknowledges something that is Transcendent, "a Reality independent of the worshiper, which is always more or less deeply coloured by mystery, and which is there first."¹

In speaking of worship we mean more than just communion, which can be accomplished anywhere and individually. Worship implies a formal service, where a number of people are gathered together. In that formal service must be an ordered expression of some kind.

In reality worship has two aspects from the standpoint of expression of Christian experience. In the first place there is the experience of the individual, who comes to the service from his own individual background. He comes to the service with a desire for self-expression.² In the second place there is the experience of the larger group, not only of the local congregation but "the experience of two thousand Christian years and many Christian generations as that experience is reconsidered, revised, and restated."³

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1. Underhill, op. cit., p. 10

2. Sperry, op. cit., p. 175.

3. Ibid. "While religion, in its highest stage, is thus an individual experience of personal relation to God, the individual is throughout its development dependent on and affected by his social inheritance and environment. Religion is a tribal or national concern before it becomes an individual interest." A. E. Garvie: in Micklem, op. cit., p. 2.

D. The Relationship of Art and Worship

1. Worship is art.

It is hardly correct to say that there is a relationship between art and worship, for such a statement implies that they are two separate things. Worship is in itself an art. It is "the expression of religious faith on the level of art."¹ Each one that comes to worship has certain desires, impulses and spiritual longings that have to be expressed in some way. To express these adequately is the art of worshipping.² Every man who worships is an artist. "The church may be ugly, the anthems lame, and the sermon crude, but the total performance on Sunday belongs to sentiment, creativeness, and interpretation."³

It is impossible to have a public worship service without art, since anything beyond the realm of meditation is some form of expression. In fact it is only by the use of art that religion can be taught. Percy Dearmer goes so far as to say that "If we had the inner light alone, unaided by literature, we should each of us begin life as pagans; and unless art came to our rescue, we should end life as pagans, however godly we might become."⁴

In the simplest and most informal prayer meeting many

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1. Heimsath, op. cit., p. 104.
2. D. H. Hislop: Our Heritage in Public Worship, p. 280.
3. Heimsath, op. cit., p. 105.
4. Dearmer, op. cit., p. 16.

arts are involved. Architecture is there in the form of some kind of meeting house. The Bible is usually used, so that there is literature too. Where there is singing there is music. And for every religious service there is some art of ceremonial and also a ritual, whether it be fixed or free. In all preaching, whether good or bad, there is the art of rhetoric. So we must conclude that "There is no such thing as an inartistic service."¹

The difference that does seem to exist between the artist and the worshiper is there because art is personal and worship is social. The poet, the painter and the musician all express something that is personal, while a worship service is the communication of an entire group. "It synthesizes separate art forms to mould the corporate emotion and aspiration of the worshiping community into a single, unified, significant, ceremonial form."²

The artist and the worshiper have many things in common. The artist is not so much interested in physical objects and forms as in achieving a form whereby he can communicate beauty or truth. The worshiper is interested in a form whereby he can express his feelings to God. "Worship is religion in the interpretative mood of art rather than in the critical spirit of science."³

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1. Ibid., p. 19.
2. Heimsath, op. cit., p. 108
3. Ibid., p. 107.

2. Worship and beauty.

A worship service should always be beautiful. It should have the unity, harmony and satisfying delight of a true work of art. It "needs to give men their birthright to beauty, a beauty which shall call forth that inner glory¹ involved in the salvation of a soul and the vision of God." Although it is not possible to avoid the practice of art in worship, it is possible to avoid beauty. And where there is no beauty the service is most probably ineffective and sometimes humiliating.²

But when speaking of beauty in worship it is important that the aims and objectives are set properly. Beauty itself should not be the aim of a worship service. Its aim should rather be to provide adequate means whereby man can express his faith and accept God's grace. If this is done adequately the service will be beautiful.³ There is a "'peril of beauty as extravagance, formalism, unreality, and making the beautiful an end in itself instead of one of the art paths to God."⁴

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1. Henry Hallam Tweedy: "Training in Worship," Education for Christian Service, p. 195.
2. Dearmer, op. cit., p. 19.
3. Hislop, op. cit., p. 298.
4. Orene McIlwain: Worship God, Quote from Dr. Fiske: Recovery of Worship, p. 194.

E. Objective and Subjective Worship

1. Meaning of the terms.

By objective worship is meant that which seeks to make some kind of effect upon God or which in some way communicates directly with God. Subjective worship, on the other hand, seeks to produce a certain experience or belief or attitude in the mind of the worshiper.¹

2. The situation in the Roman Catholic Church.

Objective worship can best be illustrated by the example of the Roman Catholic Church. Its belief is that a continuous worship of God is essential. He is pleased with the constant prayers and praise of the people. This objective character is also expressed in the churches, where the emphasis is not on the people's participation but on the fact that God must be properly worshiped. The church building is a place where God dwells in a peculiar way. The priest seems to be oblivious of a congregation's presence. The important thing is that God sees and accepts what is being executed. The worshipers have a particularly objective point of view of the peculiar and miraculous presence of the Divine. "It was this almost unreplaceable stimulus to the religious sentiment that was left behind when our Protestant fathers went out from the old historic Church."²

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1. James Bissett Pratt: The Religious Consciousness, p. 290.
2. Ibid., pp. 298-299.

The subjective effect of Roman Catholic worship is aimed at only indirectly. The church, to the worshiper, is a good place to pray; and the service gives a realization¹ of the closeness of God.

3. The problem of Protestant worship.

Andrew Blackwood has stated that "In the hour of worship, there should be a blending of the objective and the subjective, with the objective prevailing, especially in the early part of the service."² In the Protestant Church there is a real problem in seeking to secure this ideal blending of the objective and subjective, since most of the methods being used are of a subjective nature. Too often worship is directed not so much toward the Person of God as to the persons of the congregation. In many of our services "we may have been religiously entertained, but the 'finite human spirit has not been brought into vital contact with the Source of its being in the Infinite Spirit of God.'"³

Some of the hymns used in Protestant Churches are objective, but a great portion, probably the greater section, of our hymns are of a subjective nature. All music rouses emotions, but the state of mind incited by certain kinds of emotion may not be that of religious sentiment

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1. Ibid., p. 299.

2. Andrew W. Blackwood: The Fine Art of public worship, p. 19.

3. Devan, op. cit., p. 10.

at all. Often it actually does more harm than good. Too often it is true that "'After the choir by elaborate performance has brought the congregation into the concert-mood, the preacher is expected to remove that mood and replace it by the temper of devotion.'" ¹

The Scripture lesson and the sermon are directed to the worshipers. The sermon is the great weapon of the Protestant Church in evangelism and edification. Too often, however, the congregation is little more than an audience. The reality of the Divine is not suggested as it should ² be.

The main form of objective worship in the Protestant service is prayer. This is where we find a direct expression of the soul to God. It is worship in a simple, direct sense. ³

4. The solution of the problem.

There is a general feeling that most Protestant services need something. In trying to arrive at some solution we must first of all remember that no one solution is possible because of the many variations in human temperament and taste. "A very considerable diversity in ritual among Christian churches . . . will always be not only desirable ⁴ but necessary if the Church is to feed the needs of all."

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1. Pratt, op. cit., p. 303. Quote from President Faunce in the American Journal of Theology, Vol. XIV, p. 5, Jan., 1910.

2. Ibid., p. 304.

3. Ibid., p. 301.

4. Ibid., p. 306.

Since there is such an obvious lack of objective form in the Protestant service, it should be introduced in some way. In this respect the important thing is not to alter the plan of service, since there is no one best order. Such an attempted remedy does not get at the actual root of the problem. The more effective remedy lies in the selection of material. It is important that the church should make clear, confident affirmations as to what it believes.

"The trouble with so many of our Protestant services is precisely this muted and uncertain note which they give out when they announce the theme of objective reality . . . You do not know what the church really believes or whether it believes anything."¹

In light of this there should always be a careful selection of hymns, anthems and Scripture lessons.

Since the most purely objective element in the service is prayer, the worshiper must be made to feel that something really happens during this time. The church should train its members in the habit of prayer, "and in the belief that somehow in prayer one puts oneself in touch with a super-²sensible world."

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1. Sperry, op. cit., p. 268.
2. Pratt, op. cit., p. 307.

F. The Relationship between the Spiritual and the Physical in Worship

1. Historic survey.

We have now come to what is the heart of the problem concerning the use of the fine arts in worship. The relationship between the spiritual and physical in Christian worship has been a problem for many centuries, often resulting in church splits, religious wars and barbaric persecution.¹

The early church did not use images and outward forms in its worship. They were naturally associated with heathen cults. Furthermore, they were not conducive to spiritual religion. Clement of Alexandria once said:

"We must not adhere to the sensuous, but we must rise to the spiritual. The familiarity of daily sight lowers the dignity of the divine, and to wish to honour a spiritual being by means of earthly matter is to degrade it by sensuousness."²

Gradually, however, Christian symbols, such as the fish, the dove and the Good Shepherd, were introduced both into homes and into churches. After Christianity became the state religion under Constantine, art became recognised as the handmaid of religion, so that churches soon were elaborately ornamented with pictures and statues.³ The original simplicity of the apostolic church was lost. As artistic forms developed, there

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1. Cf. Henry Fanshawe Tozer: The Church and the Eastern Empire, Ch. VI, pp. 100-131; Henry Hart Milman: History of Latin Christianity, Vol. II, Ch. VII, pp. 339-377.
2. Tozer, op. cit., p. 102.
3. Ibid., pp. 102, 103.

was less and less emphasis on freedom and simplicity in worship. The Roman Catholic Church reverted to a ritual that was much like that of the Old Testament system. In the Protestant Reformation there was an attempt to return once again to the spirit of Apostolic worship.

2. The Roman Catholic conception.

To the Roman Catholic the invisible and the visible somehow merge into each other. They are two aspects of the same reality. Because of this there is some kind of physical element in everything that Catholicism considers to be venerable. The relation of this conception to worship is that the sensuous is a means by which the invisible spirit can be seen and understood. Outward forms are considered in the light of the Divine. This produces the danger of a drift toward the artificial and traditional. The result is that symbolism often becomes a dead body.

This does not mean however, that this danger is un-¹escapable or that ritual has no advantages at all. Evelyn Underhill says that ritual, symbol, sacrament and sacrifice can be a real expression of worship, since they belong at the same time to the world of sense and the world of spirit.

"Taking from that sensible world which surrounds us--and of which alone we have direct experience--finite realities, to which they attach religious significance, and which can therefore be used for the conveyance of

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1. Pratt, op. cit., p. 314.

infinite truths, all these perform the essential office of welding the world of things into human worship. The obvious dangers of materialism and aestheticism, and the constant invitation to a relapse into more primitive religious conceptions and practices, which wait on all external and stylized expressions of worship, must never be allowed to obscure this truth."¹

3. The Puritan conception.

The Puritan system, which includes the Anabaptists and Quakers, says that the natural and the spiritual contradict each other. The one exists independently from the other, and the two cannot merge into one. "For the Puritan, . . . the natural and the supernatural exist in an unmediated dualism, and it is a difficulty with him to clothe the naked idea--religious or ethical--in any sensuous medium or body."² Truth should not be associated with a fleshly body. Sensual symbolism has no place in worship. The senses may be appealed to through voice or written words but not through artistic mediums. Church ceremonies and ritual are merely distracting. "Puritanism maintained, as far as was possible, that the relation between the invisible spirit of man and the invisible God was immediate rather than mediate."³ Religious experience and expression were not to be associated with created forms of beauty. Artistic appreciation of form was to be expressed in a formal ordering of the Christian

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1. Underhill, op. cit., p. 24.
2. Edward Dowden: Puritan and Anglican: Studies in Literature, p. 9.
3. Ibid., p. 11.

life. Form and order were not to be experienced vicariously¹
but directly.

G. The Place of Liturgy in Christian Worship.

1. The real issue.

In speaking of liturgy from a technical standpoint it is "a fixed, prescribed, ritualistic office, which is generally determined by the canons of the church, set forth in a book of prayer, and followed each Sunday by all churches of that faith."² This would include the services of the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Episcopal and Lutheran churches. But it is also true that services in non-liturgical churches often become as fixed in pattern as liturgical churches. Every minister unconsciously develops certain forms of speech and action which become habitual. Just

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1. "In spite of all this, however, it is not really possible for human creatures to set up a watertight compartment between visible and invisible, outward and inward worship. The distinction which we commonly make is arbitrary, and merely means that which is or is not visible from the human point of view. Indeed, since we can only think, will, and feel in and with a physical body, and it is always in close connection with sense-impressions received through that body that our religious consciousness is stirred and sustained, it follows that we can hardly dispense with some ritual act, some sensible image, some material offering, as an element in the total act of worship, if that act of worship is to turn our humanity in its wholeness towards God. The mysterious feeding of spirit upon Spirit is made more not less real by the ritual meal which drives home the practical truth of our creaturely dependence." Underhill, op. cit., p. 25. Cf. Daniel Miller, "The Meaning of Simplicity."
2. Heimsath, op. cit., p. 8.

because his prayers are not printed in a book does not mean he is a non-liturgical minister. The real question is not so much whether a liturgy is to be used as how far the liturgical principle is to be carried.¹ In speaking of a liturgy, however, we shall continue to imply the use of some fixed artistic forms which are either prescribed by the church or are produced for local situations.

2. Arguments for the use of a liturgy.

Since the language of the liturgy has been chosen to meet the needs of all Christians and since it is produced by men of great ability, the service of a minister with quite limited abilities can be made more effective and acceptable. To a certain extent a service "ceases to be dependent on the ability, powers of expression, and spiritual mood--or, it may be, the personal idiosyncrasies--of the one man who happens to be the leader of worship."² Since the "free" service makes such great demands on a minister, there are relatively few that have the ability and training to bring forth the choice expressions of a liturgy. In other words, a liturgical service expresses the thoughts of the worshipers as well as anyone can express them.³

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1. Sperry, op. cit., p. 313.
2. Devan, op. cit., p. 93.
3. Sperry, op. cit., p. 312. Cf. Blackwood, op. cit., pp. 61-62; Devan, op. cit., p. 93.

As for the congregation, it usually has a larger share in the worship when a liturgy is followed. Since it is an ordered arrangement it should be clear what everyone is to do and say. The worshiper is not just a passive listener but cooperates with the leader and the rest of the congregation in active participation.¹

The use of artistic forms does much to attract people. Stately forms and dramatic action appeal especially to children. This same usage also appeals to men and women with refined sensibilities. It should be carefully considered, because wherever there is a love of the fine arts there is a desire for beauty in the worship of God.²

In the use of a liturgy there is a stronger tendency to bring out the universal elements in Christianity. The center of Christian truth is constantly emphasized. Prayers are used that were effective several centuries ago and versicles are pronounced that do not encourage the worshiper to meditate on his own troubles but lift his thoughts to the truth and wonder of God's love for all men.³ For the worshiper there is also a "sense of union with the generations past who in these very words have sent their winged prayers to God, and who even now belong to the cloud of unseen heavenly witnesses encircling him."⁴

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1. Devan, op. cit., p. 92.
2. Blackwood, op. cit., pp. 62-63.
3. Ibid., p. 64.
4. Devan, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

A liturgy is a distinct help in producing a sense of orderliness. To produce reverence there must first of all be order. To worship in an orderly manner is naturally more satisfactory to everyone concerned, and where a liturgy is used, there is usually a definite way of doing things.¹

The use of a liturgy generally makes possible the use of dramatic values in worship. When there is no liturgy the only mediums for communication are the organs of speech and sound. Color and movement can suggest things that words do not convey, and they can also appeal to some people who will not be attracted by the use of words only.²

3. Arguments for a "free" service.

The first thing that comes to the mind of those who do not favor a liturgy is that it is so easy for a liturgy to lapse into mere formalism. Worship should always be more than that.

In a free service there is always change and refreshing resilience. It is easier to avoid the monotony that can emerge so easily in the constant use of a liturgy.

"Like worn coins, the effigies and inscriptions of which have been rubbed off by much handling, the fine phrases of the great liturgies lose their meaning when they are heard in endless repetition."³

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1. Ibid., p. 94.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 95.

When a minister is forced constantly to use his own words rather than those of a prayer-book, he is able to produce more vitality and genuineness. And these elements should always appear in a worship service.

In a non-liturgical service there is more opportunity to adjust the service to the needs of the present. In a liturgical service prayers and phrases are used that were created without a knowledge of the actual wants and requirements of the congregation. Throughout a free service the minister can constantly apply universal truths to particular needs, whereas in a liturgical service universal truths are set forth, trusting that the worshiper will somehow understand the appropriate relevancy.¹

According to church history the most spiritual and powerful life was evident when there was not an excessive use of liturgy.² Furthermore, there were a number of by-products that went with the liturgical movement. In the first place there was the development of a priestly hierarchy. Along with that came a neglect of preaching. And last of all there was a substitution of art for religion.³

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1. Ibid., pp. 95-96.
2. Blackwood, op. cit., p. 67.
3. Ibid., p. 68.

H. The Power of Tradition

In considering any changes that might be made in a worship service and especially in the realm of liturgy it is essential that we recognize the power of tradition within the worshiping group. Percy Dearmer calls tradition the "handmaid of art, and the root of things."¹ Since religion deals with some unchanging qualities such as human nature and various qualitative values, an "alteration in established forms of worship makes genuinely religious people uncomfortable."² Although this conservative attitude has often impeded religious and social progress it has at the same time been a stabilizing force.

Whenever people are in a religious mood they are not inspired and stimulated by new and modern things as much as by traditional practices and familiar language. "The sense of history and the awareness of eternity, pervade the atmosphere of all genuine and moving worship."³ It is perfectly natural for it to be that way. The symbols through which a worshiper wants to express religious ideas are imbedded in his own cultural and religious heritage. These are the things that bring meaningful expression to his⁴ faith.

Most people love their own way of worship. Even though

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1. Dearmer, op. cit., p. 15.
2. Devan, op. cit., p. 13.
3. Ibid., p. 14.
4. Edward Krusen Ziegler: Rural People at Worship, p. xii.

it might not be the most ideal way, it is the way that brings them close to God. Since worship is largely a matter of Christian feeling, we should certainly give ear¹ to what Christian experience says. Tradition is then a part of the very essence in worship. Psychologically, it

"summons into the marginal region of the worshiper's consciousness the sense of a long line of past and venerated generations, of whose faith the ritual is a kind of crystallization. So great is the force of confirmation from the authority of the past that it is unlikely any ritual can ever attain its full effect until it has reached a considerable age."²

Materials for worship and practices of ritual are not useful until they have become very familiar. The same principle that holds true in the appreciation of music also works in the realm of worship. Someone has said that appreciation of music is a triumph of memory. While we should guard against thinking that old things are too sacred to alter and all new suggestions are bad,³ it is important that we do not attempt to modernize everything, and especially in matters concerning worship, to twentieth-century methods and ideas.⁴

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1. Blackwood, op. cit., p. 70.
2. Devan, op. cit., p. 14, quote from Pratt, The Religious Consciousness, Ch. XIII.
3. Worship must never be "perverted from its true function of God's glory to the questionable business of sanctifying the established customs or the private prejudices of a particular people." Heimsath, op. cit., p. 36.
4. Cf. Devan, op. cit., p. 14; Dearmer, op. cit., p. 15.

I. Biblical Teachings on Worship

Since the Mennonite Church, and particularly the Anabaptist movement, was an attempt to reproduce the original Apostolic Church as much as possible,¹ and since the Bible has always been considered the only source of spiritual authority,² it is well that this chapter should include a brief reference to the forms of worship found in Scripture.

1. Old Testament worship.

In Old Testament times

"Worship was full of colour, noise, and movement. Its music was not harmony but the clanging of cymbals and the blowing of horns and trumpets, whilst its highest point of achievement would be a simple melody on stringed instruments."³

We know that the worship of the Israelites in the tabernacle and in the temple was characterized by impressive ritual, symbolism, drama and music. The tabernacle had elaborate furnishings, its plan was based on a system of symbolism, the priests were vested magnificently and a complete ritual was prescribed by God.⁴ No prayers were prescribed, however,⁵ except one, the priestly benediction.

The use of musical instruments was a common practice,⁶

1. Harold S. Bender: "The Anabaptist Vision," The Mennonite Quarterly Review, April, 1944, p. 10.
2. Smith, op. cit., p. 29.
3. H. Wheeler Robinson in Micklem, op. cit., pp. 20-21.
4. Exodus 25-31.
5. Numbers 6:24-26. Cf. Blackwood, op. cit., p. 33.
6. I Chron. 16:4-6, 39-42; 25:5,7; II Chron. 5:11-14; 6:6; Neh. 2:27,36.

commanded by God.¹ At one time there was an orchestra of
four thousand,² consisting of lyres, harps, cymbals and
horns,³ together with many singers.⁴ There is evidence of
processions by night to flute music.⁵ Choirs were frequently
employed.⁶ "At times the chorus included women as well as
men. Much of the singing was in unison. . . . Less frequently,
it was antiphonal."⁷ The Psalms are filled with references
to music.⁸ There was much singing and playing of instruments.⁹
Instruments were often associated with the work of the pro-
phets.¹⁰ There was also dancing, possibly associated with
the ritual.¹¹ At times there must have been religious pro-
cessions.¹²

So worship in the tabernacle and in the temple made
use of many different forms of expression and used them
profusely. "Public worship in Old Testament days was an
art. That worship was chiefly liturgical. Although those
people . . . did not excel in other arts, except in poetry,

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1. II Chron. 29:25-28.
2. I Chron. 23:5.
3. I Chron. 25:1,5.
4. I Chron. 25:7. According to Josephus' History of the Jews there were 200,000 singers at one time. From notes of a lecture on the Jewish liturgy, given by Dr. Helen Dickinson on Oct. 9, 1946.
5. Isa. 30:29.
6. II Chron. 29:25-28.
7. Blackwood, op. cit., p. 36.
8. Ps. 33:2,3; 71:22; 98:5,6; 147:7.
9. Psalms 43:4; 49:4; 57:8; 81:2,3; 92:3; 108:2; 137:2; 150:3-5.
10. I Sam. 10:5; I Kings 3:15; I Chron. 25:1.
11. Psalms 149:3; 150:4; Cf. II Sam. 6:14.
12. Psalms 42:4; 68:25.

they did surpass all other ancient peoples in the finest of all fine arts, that of public worship."¹

2. New Testament Worship.

In the New Testament we have very little reference to the actual form of Christian worship, but there is a tremendous spirit of worship. The first thing the Christians did was to participate in the traditional worship of the Jews in the temple.² At the same time there were meetings for prayer, usually informal in character, held in private homes.³ As Paul went on his missionary journeys and as there was more and more a complete break with Judaism, preaching was done outside of the synagogues.⁴ There are practically no references in the New Testament concerning a special place for meeting, but there are a few passages that might give such an indication.⁵

In all worship there was very little emphasis upon externals. Worship was a matter of the heart. It could be exercised wherever the people of God were gathered together. There was a real sense of freedom to worship God without the use of fixed forms. Since Paul begins his letters with a benediction, it is suggested that these were taken from a common usage in the service,⁶ but this does not indicate that there was a prescribed arrangement. Most

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1. Blackwood, op. cit., pp. 38-39.
2. Lk. 24:52,53; Acts 3:1; 5:12.
3. Acts 1:12-14; 4:23-31; 12:12.
4. Acts 19:9,10.
5. I Cor. 11:22; Acts 20:8.
6. Hislop, op. cit., p. 63.

probably there were no set forms of worship.

"In the Apostolic Church the regular meeting for edification was much like that of the synagogue, with prayers and benedictions, singing of psalms, readings from the Law and the Prophets, and doubtless also from the Apostles, and exposition of the Scriptures. This is what we may call the Word-of-God Service. On the first day of the week there was also another sort of worship, which we may call the Thanksgiving Service. Here the Lord's Supper was the culmination. It took the place of the Hebrew Passover as the supreme expression of gratitude to God for redemption. . . Surely there is in the New Testament nothing which prescribes or suggests the use of fixed forms."¹

Although very little is said concerning music in New Testament worship, there evidently was much singing of hymns and psalms.² No references are made to the use of musical instruments for worship except in the apocalypse, where the heavenly scene portrays the use of harps to assist in singing praises to God.³

Since we have very little information in the New Testament about the actual forms of worship, we must be guided by its spirit if we are to determine present-day worship by Scripture. "The New Testament Church gives the standard for the spirit of worship, but the forms are yet indefinite and undeveloped."⁴ The services of the early

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1. Blackwood, op. cit., p. 46.
2. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16. "We can find fragments at least of the spiritual songs embedded in the New Testament. A hymn on the Advent (Rom. 13:11,12), a hymn of spiritual awakening (Eph. 5:14), a fragment on Christ the Lord and Judge (II Tim. 2:11-13), a confessional chant (I Tim. 12-13; 11:17; 15:3-4)." Hislop, op. cit., p. 63.
3. Rev. 5:8; 14:2,3; 15:2,3.
4. Hislop, op. cit., p. 63.

Christians were characterized by radiance and enthusiasm, filled with fervor. There was liberty, freedom and spontaneity. "It was a fellowship of religious fervour shot through with warm humanity and brotherly love."¹

J. Conclusion

Now that we have considered the most basic and most important factors that are involved in the use of the fine arts in Christian worship, we are ready to proceed with an analysis of the situation in the Mennonite Church as regards the fine arts. We have seen that art is basically an "endeavor to give significant form to spiritual meaning,"² and that the instinct for this expression is universal. Worship, as a response of the creature to his Creator, is itself an art and should always be beautiful.

In all worship there should be a blending of both the objective and the subjective, and since the Protestant Church has neglected the objective, this aspect should receive particular consideration. In considering the relationship between the spiritual and the physical in worship, the Mennonite Church has generally taken the viewpoint of the Puritan conception, believing that no physical mediums are necessary in true worship, which is an immediate relation-

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1. Ibid., p. 66.

2. Cf. Ante, p. 38.

ship between God and man.

Since many Protestant churches in recent years have sought to increase the effectiveness of their services by employing more liturgy, and since the use of a liturgy is one of the most important considerations in the art of worship, the advantages and disadvantages of using a liturgy have been investigated. Since the success of any changes in a worship service will be determined largely by the tradition of the worshiping group, there has been a study of just what part tradition does and should play when forms of worship are determined.

Lastly, we have attempted to know what was the character and form of the earliest Christian worship, as it is given to us in Scripture and have discovered that very little is said concerning actual forms but that there is revealed a spirit of worship that should effect and impel Christian worship today.

CHAPTER III

A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO THE USE OF THE FINE ARTS IN THE MENNONITE CHURCH

CHAPTER III

A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO THE USE OF THE FINE ARTS IN THE MENNONITE CHURCH

A. Introduction

Since we have now considered some of the basic factors that are involved in the use of the fine arts in Christian worship, the following material will be directed toward a consideration of how the fine arts should be taken up and employed in the worship of the Mennonite Church. In order to arrive at a satisfactory deduction there must first of all be a statement of the principles of the Mennonite Church, which should not be effaced but preserved in its worship. Then it is the problem of this chapter to consider these principles in the light of the basic factors that were delineated in the previous chapter. Only then can we arrive at some constructive suggestions concerning the use of the fine arts in Mennonite worship. These suggestions will be made particularly in regard to ritual, music and architecture. The chapter will then conclude with a consideration of how these aims can actually be accomplished.

B. Distinct Principles and Emphases of the Mennonite
Church that Should be Expressed and
Preserved in its Worship

In order to understand the cardinal principles of the Mennonite Church we need to know what were the roots of the Anabaptist movement. Dr. Harold S. Bender has summarized these tenets under three different points of emphasis.¹

1. Christianity as discipleship.

Being a Christian implied a transformation of a way of life in accordance with the teachings and life of Christ. Christian experience was not to stop with the acceptance or recognition of certain doctrines. The faith that was adopted was to bring about a certain kind of life.²

2. Church membership based on faith and life.

The church consisted of those who voluntarily accepted the Christian faith and were committed to a new life of Christian discipleship. The natural consequence of such a belief was that there must be separation from the worldly way of life. Nonconformity to the world was necessary if the church was to be a fellowship of believers, whose lives were impelled by the teachings of Christ. And since the world could not tolerate the working of true Christian

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1. Bender: "The Anabaptist Vision," op. cit., pp. 14-24.
2. Cf. Smith, op. cit., pp. 27-38; Wenger: Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine, pp. 4-6.
3. Bender, op. cit., pp. 14-18.
3. Ibid., pp. 18-21.

principles in society, there came persecution. Along with this there was a spirit and practice of brotherhood and love among the members of the church.¹

3. Ethic of love and nonresistance.

According to the law of love as set forth by Christ, the Christian is to cease from resorting to strife and war. This was exemplified by Christ himself and should be followed by those who belong to His Church.²

4. Individual responsibility.

Underlying all beliefs and practices of the Anabaptists was the fact of individual responsibility. Christianity must be accepted and applied on this basis. The Bible was the source of spiritual authority, but this was to be interpreted by each individual for himself. Christianity, although it must always blossom into evangelism and social activity, is essentially a personal thing. "Anabaptism was the essence of individualism."³

C. A Consideration of Mennonite Practices with the Principles of Art and Worship

1. Art and the Anabaptist movement.

When the earliest Anabaptists left the Roman Church there was a complete rejection of the forms of worship em-

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1. Ibid., pp. 18-21.

2. Ibid., pp. 21-23.

3. Smith, op. cit., p. 29.

ployed by the mother church.¹ This meant that practically all the fine arts were repudiated, because the Roman Church had exploited such forms quite thoroughly. Music was preserved in the form of congregational singing, since it was one form that had not been used by the Roman Catholics,² and it was so completely in character with the new movement.

But to say that the Anabaptist movement evaded the essence of art is a misconception. Any ideas that were so animated, radical and virile as those of the Anabaptists could not help but find expression. It was the natural thing for the brethren to gather for Bible reading, prayers, testimonies and singing. And above all, doctrines were expressed in the art of Christian living. Convictions were held that had to be vented. Although traditional art forms were discarded, art was present. The principle of art was not obscured. The affirmation or expression was there. Any idea must resort to art to receive attention. So it was with the Anabaptist movement, and so it is with the Mennonite Church.

Basically, art does not conflict with any of the reformation doctrines held by the Anabaptists. It was the ornate, insincere character, the doctrinal misconceptions and the baneful use of the fine arts in the Roman Catholic Church that were in conflict with the Anabaptist principles

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 13.

2. Gillman; The Evolution of the English Hymn, p. 128.

and experience of worship. God alone was to be worshiped through Jesus Christ. No images were to be venerated; no ceremonies, outward signs and rosaries were essential to the Christian life. The important thing was personal faith and holy obedience, not church ritual or indulgences. Religious impulses were not to be expressed in created forms of beauty but in life and character. God was to be worshiped "in spirit and in truth."¹ The idea was that since the relation between the invisible spirit of man and the invisible spirit of God was immediate and direct, church ceremonies and ritual were merely distracting. The ecclesiastical system of the Roman Church inhibited pure communion with God.

The Anabaptist solution to the problem was to give up all the forms of art that existed in the Church. This was certainly taking an extreme step. What the brethren in later times failed to see was that there was a proper place for the fine arts and that they could be employed to propagate the very principles for which they lived and died. The repudiation of many of the fine arts was accomplished without giving them their proper place.² The brethren did not realize that art, as well as everyday life, was meant to be sacred.

But the Anabaptist position in regard to the fine arts must also be considered and understood from a practical point of view. How could there be any church architecture

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1. John 4:24.

2. Cf. Morris, op. cit., p. 6.

when meetings had to be held in private homes? There could hardly be any church fixtures, since there was no permanent meeting house; and an organ would have been entirely out of the question. It was perfectly normal to have a "free" service when they met, since every meeting must have presented new situations and problems and was held under the constant threat of being dispersed.

2. The Mennonite conception of worship.

The services of the early Anabaptists somehow fulfilled the essentials for effective worship. The brethren who came together for Bible reading and exhortations experienced God in a real way, so that they were willing to risk their lives in order that others might have the same experience.¹ Convictions were given a natural expression, hindered by few or no outward mediums. Somehow they must have received an objective vision of God and realized a subjective experience, which impelled them to Christian living. In some way they had a personal religious experience and yet had a feeling of group worship, in the tradition of the true, spiritual, apostolic church.

The problem that we face today is the question as to whether the worship services of the Mennonite Church are still an adequate expression of Christian faith and revelation in the light of Mennonite tradition and history. It

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1. Smith, op. cit., p. 28.

is of course difficult to conceive of any one type of service as being distinctly Mennonite, since there is so much difference in the services of the various groups and since the effectiveness of any service is so largely determined by the individuals who are directing it and by the spiritual life of the congregation.

Practically every Mennonite group would claim to have a "free" service, one that is not bound by ritual and outward forms. Many churches have accepted forms that others would associate with worldly practices, while some still have nothing but congregational singing, preaching, Scripture reading, and prayer, with an occasional offering.

a. The more conservative Mennonite Churches.

Churches who have the most simple forms usually also have the most rigid order of service, one that is not to be changed, thus becoming as "formal" as the ritual of a¹ liturgical church. Another element that keeps such a serv-

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1. A typical service in the conservative churches of the Old Mennonite Conference follows this order:
 1. An opening hymn, led by the chorister.
 2. The Scripture lesson read by one of the deacons.
 3. A period of silent prayer (from 1 to 5 minutes), closed with an audible "amen" by the minister.
 4. Another congregational hymn (not followed by all churches in every service).
 5. The sermon by one of the ministers.
 6. In many churches the sermon is followed by the testimonies of deacons and ministers, who emphasize the truth that has been presented in the sermon.
 7. A prayer by the minister, usually quite long (from 5 to 10 minutes).
 8. Congregational hymn.

ice from being as effective as it might be is the fact that the ministers of such churches are usually untrained men, chosen as lay members of the congregation. The vision of such leaders is limited by the experiences and customs of the local congregation. Sermons are more or less extemporaneous and unprepared. The only active participation by the people is in congregational singing, which is unaccompanied and directed by a chorister.

It is difficult to analyze the objectives of such a service. Why do people participate in this kind of worship? No doubt it is largely a matter of discipline and of habit. It is quite obvious that Mennonite services such as these do not appeal to those outside of the church. In fact it is the aim of such churches to preserve the heritage of the church by adhering to certain forms and customs.

Such conditions are not conducive to the spirit that existed in the time of the early Anabaptists. There was in that time a strong missionary zeal, not bound by certain customs and forms. Its earliest leaders were highly trained¹ men, who understood the basic religious problems of the day and knew how to present true Christianity to the life and culture of their time. In spite of a strong belief in sim-

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9. The offering (not included in every service).

10. Announcements.

11. Benediction.

Note: The congregation kneels for all prayers except the benediction.

1. Smith, op. cit., p. 30.

plicity and nonconformity they were somehow able to make their Christianity appeal to other people. Nonconformity or separation was more basic than adhering to certain forms and legislating the use of musical instruments and the style of clothes.

Albert W. Palmer has said that one of the dangers to avoid in worship is that of developing into a new legalism.¹ When a thing is done in a certain way, it is analyzed in order to discover its principle. Rules are deduced from the principle, and then the rules are worshiped. The result is that creative spontaneity is gone. There are some real values behind conventions, but "traditions must always yield to human need and must not be allowed to imprison the creative spirit."²

b. The more liberal Mennonite Churches.

To say that a more liberal attitude towards the fine arts and a more extensive use of them would solve the problem is not right. The problem is more complex than that.

There are many Mennonite congregations (particularly those of the General Conference) who are using the fine arts quite extensively in their worship services. In fact, the use of the fine arts in many of these churches does not present much more of a problem than in other Protestant denominations. The chief differences between their worship

1. Albert W. Palmer; Come, Let Us Worship, p. 112.

2. Smith, op. cit., p. 30.

services and those of the more conservative Mennonite churches are: the use of musical instruments; choir anthems and other special expressions of music besides the congregational hymns, some of which are included largely to produce an atmosphere of worship; a more orderly, planned sermon, given by a trained minister; and sometimes the presence of¹ a more satisfying style of architecture.

These innovations have done several things for the church. They have presented a greater variety of forms for worship, so that the desires of many members with various inclinations can be fulfilled more satisfactorily. An attempt has been made to produce an atmosphere that is conducive to worship. It makes possible a more complete blending of subjective and

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1. A typical service of one of the liberal General Conference churches is something like this:
 1. Prelude (organ or piano).
 2. Call to Worship.
 3. Invocation.
 4. Opening hymn.
 5. Scripture lesson.
 6. Pastoral prayer.
 7. Choral response.
 8. Children's sermon.
 9. Congregational hymn.
 10. Announcements.
 11. Anthem.
 12. Offering (including an offertory prayer and an instrumental offertory).
 13. The sermon.
 14. Prayer.
 15. Congregational hymn.
 16. Benediction.
 17. Doxology.
- One of these services might also include such things as responsive readings, the Gloria, the Lord's Prayer in unison, and other choral responses.

objective worship in one service. It has helped to make the church more attractive to those outside of the church.

"Religion needs art to be impressive, to get a hearing."¹

It has been a stimulus to new, progressive thought and activity. "Some form of artistry is always valuable as a preparation for new insight. The direct physical effect of beauty is to kindle the senses and to increase the imagination. This tends to open-mindedness."² It has helped to stir the religious life by the emotions, which is so important in carrying Christianity into every day life.

But there has been only a beginning in this endeavor among Mennonite churches. Many mistakes have been made where the fine arts have been employed by resorting to imitation rather than producing a genuinely sincere form. This can be created only with a thorough understanding of the need and situation and the possibilities of the particular art form. Because the Mennonites have been so long with so little of the fine arts, in spite of the fact that the aesthetic consciousness in their nature is just as true as in anyone else,³ it is important that when art forms are introduced, they be introduced intelligently.

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1. Vogt, op. cit., p. 51.

2. Ibid., p. 53.

3. This is proved by the fact that among the most conservative Mennonites of Pennsylvania is found some of the most genuine art in America. Cf. John Joseph Stoudt: Consider the Lilies How They Grow, pp. 167, 168, 216-219, 284, 288, 318, 319.

"When the art-activity is denied to man or when it is aborted, he suffers under a culture destined to decadence. Man then exists in a world which is alien to his deep-seated interests, and sickly ornamentation may come to be substituted for virile art."¹

D. Suggestions for the Various Aspects of Worship
in the Mennonite Church

1. The worship service as a whole.

Worship in the Mennonite Church has always been characterized by simplicity. This is entirely in keeping with the Anabaptist spirit. Not only is simplicity a part of Mennonite heritage, it is one of the basic principles of good art.² In making any suggestions for worship, then, this principle must be kept in mind. Since it is a part of the tradition of the church, it will always make for stability and good order.

Just to adorn the service in order to make it "pretty" is meaningless. "Simplicity, correct proportions, harmonious adjustment to function, are better than the most expensive and elaborate ornamentation both in architecture and in ritual."³ Since worship must speak to the soul, it is wrong to make it fussy.

In Mennonite worship, however, it is important that other things are not mistaken for simplicity. Extemporaneousness

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1. Morris, op. cit., p. 6.
2. Albert W. Palmer; Come, Let Us Worship, p. 111.
3. Ibid.

is not identical with simplicity. Probably the most basic weakness of most Mennonite services is the lack of order, unity and purpose that are a part of every beautiful work of art. Every service should be planned. Hymns should not be chosen by a chorister after he comes to the service on Sunday morning. The entire service should be planned with a definite set of objectives in mind.¹

Changes that are suggested should not be made merely because other churches have done things a certain way. Nothing is to be altered just because of a fad. A modification should be made only when it meets a genuine need.

A liturgical type of service should not be introduced into a Mennonite service. The church is, after all, a part of the "Puritan" tradition. "To be genuine and helpful, worship must seem natural and appropriate to the people who engage in it. They must feel that it is really theirs if they are to enter into it in spirit and in truth."² Prescribed forms are not in keeping with the tradition of the Mennonite Church and should be avoided. A liturgy would not solve the problems that exist. A better way to approach them would be to develop the services that exist now through a process of education.

Since a typical Mennonite congregation consists of not

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1. Cf. Edward Dickinson: Music in the History of the Western Church, p. 401.
2. Ibid., p. 112.

only adults but also young people and children, and since a service should be so arranged that it appeals and ministers to every group, there should be more forms of expression.

"The use of artistic forms does much to attract boys and girls, as well as to hold them throughout their most impressionable years."¹

There should be enough variety in the ways of presenting the truth of God, that each one will understand it. And each one should be able to give expression to his own feelings toward God, directly or vicariously. This could be done by giving young people a more active part in the service, such as in the service of a choir. Children's sermons can be used quite effectively. The offering should be made a part of every service, conducted as an act of worship and not conceived merely as a "collection." In some instances it might be well to have the congregation read a Scripture passage responsively or in unison. To maintain simplicity in a service does not mean that there must be only congregational singing, preaching and prayer. Because of the tremendous missionary responsibility that a church has toward its community, the worship service should be one way of bringing divine grace and human need to a meeting point. To accomplish this by the use of the suggested forms of expression in a Mennonite Church involves the problem of music, which is a very sensitive sub-

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1. Blackwood, op. cit., p. 62.

ject in all conservative groups. This topic will next be considered.

2. Music.

a. The function of music.

Before making any suggestions concerning the part music should play in Mennonite worship, we should know just what the function of music should and can be.

Of all the arts music is the most emotional, direct and penetrating. "Music acts with such immediateness and intensity that it seems as though it were impossible for her to be anything but supreme when she puts forth all her energies."¹ Zwingli once wrote that "No teaching and no restrictions sink so deeply into the heart of a human being as music."²

The problem of the church is that in trying to use these qualities of music, it must guard against the replacement of devotion with nervous excitement.

"Let any one study his sensations when a trained choir pours over him a flood of rapturous harmony, and he will perhaps find it difficult to decide whether it is a devotional uplift or an aesthetic afflatus that has seized him."³

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1. Dickinson, op. cit., p. 395.
2. Helen Dickinson: A Treasury of Worship, p. 39. When Augustine heard the hymns of persecuted Christians who were shut up in the church all night, the effect was so moving that he wrote: "How greatly did I weep in Thy hymns and canticles, deeply moved by the voice of Thy sweet-speaking Church! The voices flowed into mine ears and the truth was poured forth into my heart." Helen Dickinson, op. cit., p. 13.
3. Edward Dickinson, op. cit., p. 395.

This constitutes the problem that music in the church has produced for church leaders in all centuries. Aesthetic delight is not worship. All good music is not religious music.

Music alone does not make people religious. It must always be associated with other aspects of worship, such as the recognition of God, a sense of humility, a penitence for sin, a desire for pardon, or an exercise of faith and love. Because of this music in any church service should be subordinate to the purpose of worship. "Music is a powerful auxiliary, but a bad master."¹ Although music cannot produce such convictions, it can help to deepen them and give them tangible expression. In doing this it offers a real service that is most valuable.

"It is the peculiar gift of music that it affords a speedier and more immediate means of fusion between ideas of sensuous beauty and those of devotional experience than any other of the art sisterhood."²

Music makes the mood of prayer more active. It also furnishes a means of communication among worshipers as nothing else can do and can be a real element in unifying a service.

"A few well-played notes on an organ, a well-handled song service, or the hearty congregational singing of a hymn, can weld jarring personalities and prepare the way for spiritual impression and action."³

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1. Devan, op. cit., p. 152.
2. Edward Dickinson, op. cit., p. 399.
3. Devan, op. cit., p. 156.

b. Musical instruments.

Music has always been employed in Mennonite worship but almost always with express limitations. No study of Mennonite music can be made without encountering at once the prohibition of musical instruments in many conferences. Although organs were introduced into some congregations as early as 1764,¹ the controversy is as ardent today as it was many decades ago.² An imposing array of arguments is presented, which would associate musical instruments with sin and make their introduction into the worship service seem blasphemous.

First and foremost among the reasons for this, of course is given the argument from Scripture. In spite of the great use of instruments in the temple worship, many believe that their use in Old Testament times did not have divine sanction.³ The origin of instruments is credited to a relative of the wicked Cain.⁴ They were associated with dancing, wickedness and worldly prosperity. The apostolic church did not approve of their use, since the practices of synagogue worship were accepted by early Christians. Probably

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 23.
2. Cf. J. L. Stauffer: "The Musical Instrument Question," Gospel Herald, April, 1946, pp. 85-88, 90, 91; Walter E. Yoder: "Musical Instruments in Worship," Gospel Herald, March 1, 1949, pp. 203, 213, 214. Also the editorial: "The Musical Instrument Question," Gospel Herald, April, 1946, p. 83.
3. Daniel Kauffman: Mennonite Cyclopedic Dictionary, p. 257. Cf. J. Mark Stauffer: Mennonite Church Music, p. 43.
4. Gen. 4:21.

the next most serious charge is that instruments are a hindrance to congregational singing. Unaccompanied congregational singing has preserved the Reformation and apostolic ideal of simple, spiritual worship. Instruments destroy four-part singing. Since they are so costly, the money spent for them might be spent more profitably and wisely for evangelistic and missionary enterprises. They introduce entertainment into worship. Oratorios can be presented without instruments. They take the mind's focus off of God, thus hindering the true sense of worship. They encourage the introduction of cheap music into the service. Some men even condemn the use of instruments in the home. Young people have been lost to the church through the avenue of instruments. The time used in learning to play them should be spent more wisely. Instruments thus become a snare to spiritual growth and development. They are a luxury, and their use in worship, together with trained choirs, is a trend towards worldliness, destroying the simplicity that is the distinctive standard of the Mennonite Church.¹

These are indeed serious charges, and if they are all true, then most Protestant worship is in a deplorable condi-

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1. For these and other arguments Cf. J. L. Stauffer, op. cit.; Yoder, op. cit. Cf. also A. P. Shenk: "Musical Instruments," Gospel Herald, Nov. 8, 1917; a recent statement "Reaffirming a Historic Position and Practice in the Church," which was adopted by the Willow Springs Church at Tiskilwa, Ill., published in the Gospel Herald, Dec. 7, 1948.

tion.¹ As for the argument from Scripture, we have already seen how instruments were constantly used in the worship of the Old Testament.² In the New Testament the use of musical instruments was neither condemned nor approved. Many Greek scholars say, however, that the Greek words that are used to express singing in the New Testament imply the use of musical instruments.³ Since they are mentioned in Revelation as being used to honor and bless the Lord in heaven, they were evidently not associated with only wickedness and worldliness. Early Christians might not have used instruments because there probably were none that were suitable for corporate worship. It was not until the development of the organ that instruments were used extensively. According to references made in the writings of Ambrose and Clement, there must have been some use of instruments in the second and fourth centuries;⁴ but organs were not officially introduced until the seventh century.⁵

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1. This same question has been and still is a point of controversy in several other denominations. For literature on this question that has come from non-Mennonite writers Cf. H. Christopher: "An Address on the Use of Instrumental Music in the Worship of the Church of Christ;" R. J. George: "Instrumental Music a Corruption of New Testament Worship;" John L. Girardeau: Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church.
2. Cf. Ante, pp. 61, 62.
3. For a thorough study of this subject and for the conclusions of various scholars Cf. J. B. Briney: Instrumental Music in Christian Worship, pp. 14-63.
4. Ibid., p. 105.
5. "The advantage of using the organ in the services of the church was so obvious that it would soon be perceived; and accordingly in the seventh century Pope Vitalian,

The arguments that are given from the standpoint of congregational singing should be considered seriously because it is true that this form of music is the outstanding feature of the congregations' active part in the services of all Protestant churches. If the instrument is a hindrance to this expression it should certainly not be employed. To the contrary, it is the instrument that can encourage congregational singing to a large extent. In order for congregational singing to reach its ideal of spiritual worship, it is essential that the participants recognize and appropriate the message of the hymn as it is being sung. To do this in addition to reading the notes and the words and watching the chorister is quite a task. Anything that can help to reduce the technical difficulties of congregational singing will add to the spiritual effectiveness of the worship. This is precisely what an organ aims to do. It assists rather than detracts. It takes the singer's focus off of the chorister, thus giving more opportunity for actual spiritual experience. At the same time it encourages rather than discourages four-part singing by giving a secure foundation or background to each part. As for the lowering of musical standards, the use of an instrument should raise the standards, rather than lower them,

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at Rome (about the year 666), introduced it to improve the singing of the congregations." H. C. Colles (ed.): Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. III, p. 738.

since¹this makes it easier to sing hymns in right tempi
and to sing more difficult hymns.

It is true that instruments are very expensive. But it is also true that anything which helps to build and undergird a congregation in its worship, makes a real contribution to the spiritual life of that church, which, after all, is the true basis for any evangelistic and missionary program.

To say that instruments are an entertainment is to say that their true function is not understood. The part that an instrument plays in a worship service is not determined so much by the instrument itself as by the one who plays it.

The rendition of an oratorio without instruments might be possible in some cases but is not nearly as effective as if the accompaniment were employed. An accompaniment is

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1. According to a comparison of the most recent hymnbooks published by the various Mennonite boards, there is very little difference in the quality of the hymns. The hymns in the Mennonite Hymnary, which is used by the General Conference churches, where instruments are used, are no cheaper in quality than those of the Church Hymnal, which is used by Old Mennonite congregations, where no instruments are used. In fact The Mennonite Hymnary has a large section of chorales, which are considered to be the most excellent form of church music. "In these comparatively simple little pieces in harmonic style, with their masterly part writing, there is a wealth of poetic utterance and a strength of emotional expression that has never been surpassed. . . . 'These simple four-part compositions . . . have, in fact and in the supremest degree, a religious and mystic effect upon the hearer that cannot be analyzed or explained.'" Howard D. McKinney and W. R. Anderson: Music in History, p. 304.

generally part and parcel of the music and was intended to be used. Some of the greatest music that was ever written was that written for the organ by J. S. Bach. It was he who once said: "All music should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the recreation of the soul; where this is not kept in mind there is no true music but only an infernal clamor and ranting."¹ It is motives such as these that make it possible for us to use instruments in Christian worship today. They do not need to be associated with either the ritualistic, idolatrous worship of the Roman Church or with the godless life of worldly folk, as in the time of the Anabaptists.² Because Christian men have devoted themselves to the task of expressing Christian truth through instrumental media it is now possible for a congregation to be assisted in simple, spiritual worship by an organ or a piano.³

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1. Originally in Bach's introduction to the Art of Fugue. Taken from Edith Lovell Thomas: Musical Moments in Worship, p. 4.
2. That is why the Puritanic Milton could say:
"There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced choir below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness through mine ear
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes."
Thomas Smyth: "Scriptural and Divine Right for Using Mechanical as Well as Vocal Instruments in the Worship of God," p. 537
3. For other arguments in favor of using musical instruments in Christian worship Cf. Briney, op. cit.; Smyth, op. cit.; James Lyon: "The Lawfulness, Excellency and Advantage of Instrumental Musick in the Publick Worship of God Urged and Enforced, from Scripture, and the Example of the far Greater Part of Christians in all Ages."

c. Congregational singing.

In all Mennonite circles it is agreed that congregational singing is tremendously important. Theoretically, every person that is present takes an active part in this form of worship. It has been said that "All too commonly congregational music is highly extolled and greatly neglected. Often it receives adequate attention from no one."¹ This should not be so in Mennonite churches, where congregational singing is very good,² and where everything should be done to keep it that way and to improve it.

Many aspects of congregational singing have already been mentioned. Selection of hymns should always be done with great care and forethought. Each hymn should have an essential religious significance of its own. It should be a vital part of the service and not considered merely as an intermission or interlude. Nor should they be only a means of affording physical relief for the congregation.³

The selection of hymns should be made in light of the plan and purpose of the service and should be done by the minister. Since "the vitality of all Protestant worship depends on the whole-hearted singing of . . . religious lyrics which are its peculiar treasure,"⁴ hymns should be chosen that can be sung easily. The most effective praise

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1. Ashton, op. cit., p. 93.
2. Burkhard, op. cit., p. 28.
3. Ashton, op. cit., p. 100.
4. Devan, op. cit., p. 192.

is rendered when the tune is known and yet not too frequently¹ used. The worship service should never be used as a time to learn new hymns. This should be done in other services. Since Mennonites are fond of singing and always have been² a singing people, they should have an unusually large "repertoire" of hymns.

d. Choir music.

The choir has not been introduced into many Mennonite churches. Generally speaking, when there is no musical instrument in the church, a choir is not tolerated. The two things are usually repudiated on the same grounds.

The music of the choir is quite a different form of expression than congregational singing. Besides being the vocal nucleus for the congregation, its work is representative. The choir sings in behalf of and in place of the congregation, thus extending the range of religious expression through music.

"Choir music is something more than a thing of musical beauty and interest; its function is religious--to bring the religious spirit to stronger and clearer consciousness. Through its proper use the congregation should³ come to realize exalted worship in which they are silent."

This kind of worship is quite active, for it can be more concentrated than that in which the worshiper is an agent. Physical participation arouses and stimulates attention,

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1. Hislop, op. cit., p. 297.

2. "'Whatever else we may have left,' is commonly said among them, 'we can always sing.'" Burkhard, op. cit., p. 24.

3. Ashton, op. cit., p. 122.

but the efforts involved might be a real hindrance to full concentration. In congregational singing we can become so concerned with the mechanics of it all that it becomes¹ merely "an engaging exercise."

Just because choir music needs more careful preparation is no sign that it is artificial in its method. Nor does the work of the choir necessarily make a service more "formal."

Most Mennonite Churches would do well to include this form of worship in their services. It does not conflict with any basic principles of the church if used correctly and adds greatly to the total effectiveness of worship. Anthems should not be used unless they can be sung well, for "a musical performance that is irritating to the nerves can never be a help to devotion."² A choir should never sing merely because it is expected to do so. A group of singers must be ready and able to sing an anthem before it can perform an adequate service. But even if there is no anthem, a choir can be of real service as the leader and nucleus of congregational singing.

3. Architecture

The most important aspect of Mennonite church architecture that needs to be reevaluated is the basic conception of

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1. Ibid.

2. Edward Dickinson, op. cit., p. 402.

the meeting house. Because worship has always been principally an inner matter, the outward form of things has not been considered important.¹ Church buildings have been considered chiefly as meeting houses. This is essentially a weak conception of what a church building should be. It should be a "meeting house," but it must be more than that. If the idea of a church building is nothing more than that, it would be just as well to gather in school buildings, public auditoriums or private houses. But a church building is a place where men worship God, which is vastly more than a mere meeting of man with man. It is "a house erected to the glory of the living God, and not primarily for man's convenience."² This alone is enough reason to make it different, more sacred and above all, more beautiful than other structures. It is a permanent testimony to the truth of God; and if this is true, anything that is ugly and disreputable should have no place in it.

"Stone columns and an altar richly adorned with lights . . . are not sacred in themselves, nor can an organ or a rood-screen bring a sinner to repentance. Nevertheless, wherever men worship the Ever-Present Trinity, wherever they sing their magnificats, their Psalms and their hymns of praise, wherever the Word is proclaimed . . . there do we have a house separated from profane uses. Its bricks and stones are not holy, but its purpose certainly is."³

Architecture is sometimes called "the noblest of the

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1. George Stoneback: "Mennonite Architecture and the Simple Life," p. 14.
2. F. R. Webber: The Small Church, p. 1.
3. Ibid., p. 2.

arts."¹ "It is enduring beyond any other of the fine arts. It is inescapable, for no one can avoid seeing it. It determines many activities. It stimulates moods and states of mind."² There is no greater tangible symbol of the Gospel than a beautiful church. "Its distinctiveness from other buildings speaks of facts that are different from those in the newspapers and of a life that is different from the buying and selling and pleasure-seeking of this world."³ It is a symbol of God's presence among men. Perhaps that is one of the reasons that God wanted Israel to have a temple,⁴ in spite of the fact that worship in the Old Testament was to be basically spiritual.⁵

If the Mennonite Church is to be limited only to those who have been born and fostered in its fold, then the most ordinary, cheap, commonplace building might be sufficient for its program. But if it is to be a truly evangelical church, appealing to other people, church buildings should be planned with that evangelical motive in mind. The exterior of the building should be so that it will attract people to the church. The interior design and arrangement should assist the preacher and other leaders of the service in securing a response to the message and appeals for personal

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1. Devan, op. cit., p. 118.
2. Ibid., p. 119.
3. Ibid.
4. II Sam. 7.
5. Amos 4:1-5; 5:21-27.

decision by those who are in the congregation. The church building should appeal to all classes of people. When it is a beautiful edifice, no one will be turned away. "The poorest of the poor will respond to beauty, but both poor and rich are repelled by ugliness."¹

Architecture is a kind of language that people read, whether consciously or unconsciously. This language should always express the truth of the church that it represents. "It may be a forceful agency for spiritual expression."² The buildings of the Mennonite Church should be simple but not ugly. They should not be worldly but also not naive. They must be functional but not bare. They serve as the center for Christian fellowship, but they should also symbolize the truth of God's love for man. They exist in spite of worship in "spirit and in truth," but they can also be a distinct help in producing this spiritual relationship between God and man. Church buildings should not expend all the financial resources of its congregation, but they must be built to be worthy of housing those things that are eternal. A church brings men together, but it must also direct them to God.

Many practical suggestions might be made here concerning the details of Mennonite church buildings, but in the

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1. Elbert M. Conover: The Church Builder, p. 20.
2. Ibid., p. 15.

end, this is something that must be done by an architect.

E. Education for a Greater Acknowledgement of the
Place and Value of the Fine Arts

1. In church schools.

The best place to begin a program of education in regard to the fine arts in worship is in church schools, where there are groups of young people representing the local churches. In all of the curriculums of Mennonite colleges today there is a definite place given to the fine arts.¹ The work that has been done has been very valuable in creating interest in the fine arts. But much of it has not been done in the light of possibilities for Christian worship.

The music departments of the colleges usually have only one course devoted to hymnology, and that is all that is given over to sacred music, other than applied music. There might well be courses in the history of sacred music to reveal the heritage of sacred music that the church possesses today. There could be work in the place of music in religious education. A practical course would be one that dealt with the work of the church choir, to show its possibilities, reveal the repertoire and give directions as to how to organize, direct and use a choir in a church service.

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1. Cf. college catalogues of Eastern Mennonite College, Goshen College, Bethel College and Tabor College.

None of the colleges now have courses in religious art. Not much has been said in this thesis concerning the graphic arts because they are not so closely related to the worship service. But there should be a course in religious art, open not only to those who are actually interested in painting and drawing but to everyone. This work should be designed to learn how to judge and appreciate religious pictures and how to use them in the work of the church, particularly in teaching the Bible. It is through such a course that much can be done to gain an appreciation of all of the fine arts and to develop an aesthetic consciousness. Along with this there might be a course in religious architecture, presenting a historical analysis and critical discussion of all types of architecture, giving helpful suggestions in planning church buildings for today, together with a study of Christian symbolism. Such a course should be given to all ministerial students, who will possibly have the greatest influence on church architecture in the future.

2. In local churches.

It is the local churches that present the greatest problem in developing an appreciation for the fine arts. This must necessarily be a slow process and should never be considered as an end in itself. It should always be a by-product of the total church program. Probably the most can be done in the young people's groups and in the choir. This is where there should be education for vital worship.

It is one place where religious art can be used in practical situations, for worship and Bible study..

F. Conclusion

Recognizing that the Anabaptists took an extreme step when they condemned almost entirely the use of the fine arts, we can see that the Mennonite conception of worship, which is really very difficult to analyze, is a perfectly normal thing. The different attitudes toward the fine arts is one of the main differences between the various groups of Mennonites. Where they have been accepted, it has often been done by way of imitation, while in the conservative churches one form has been substituted for another form.

The subject of music in worship has been considered particularly from the instrumental angle, giving arguments for and against their use in public worship. In the light of the function of both worship and music, instruments can be a definite help in producing the desired results. Congregational singing is the strong aspect of Mennonite music, but it should be strengthened and expanded by a more extensive use of choirs. The basic principles that have determined architecture in the Mennonite Church should be reevaluated, and then an effort should be made to have church buildings more adequately express the faith of the people that worship therein.

These few suggestions can never be realized except

through a slow process of education, which must begin with the training of all ministers of the future and should also be a part of the education of all young people in Mennonite colleges.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Summary

It has been the purpose of this thesis to understand the Mennonite attitude toward the fine arts, particularly as it is expressed in the worship service, and then to decide whether they should be used more extensively.

Chapter I was a historical study of how present day standards and practices have originated and developed from principles that were established during the Reformation when the earliest Anabaptist brethren broke away from the Roman Catholic Church. Because of the corruption that existed in the mother church, the fine arts were almost entirely rejected. Thus the worship services of the Mennonite Church were in the most simple form, making use of only the barest essentials. Music always played a large part in Mennonite circles. In the earliest times many hymns were written, some of which are still being used by certain groups. Congregational singing was always emphasized, but musical instruments did not appear in churches until the second half of the eighteenth century. Today many churches still do not make use of choirs and instruments in their services. In earliest days the Anabaptists had no churches at all; and throughout Mennonite history very little emphasis has been placed on a church building, which is often known as the "meeting-house."

The graphic arts never have had a part in public worship of Mennonite congregations, but there have been many artists in Mennonite communities, particularly in Holland and Germany.

In Chapter II there has been a brief consideration of some of the basic factors which must be considered in working with the fine arts in worship. Art is recognized as "the endeavor to give significant form to spiritual meaning,"¹ so that it is not something confined to a group of specialists; but art, together with an aesthetic consciousness, is universal. Worship is basically the response of man to his God, taking various forms of expression. Since worship itself is one form of art or expression, there is basically no conflict between art and worship. The most ideal worship is that which is a careful blending of both objective and subjective worship. Since the whole subject of the fine arts in worship involves a consideration of the relationship of the physical and the spiritual this chapter has considered several of the conceptions in regard to this problem. In considering the question of liturgy, the arguments for and against prescribed forms have been set forth. In planning any form of worship, the power of tradition must be recognized if the worship is to be most effective. After investigating what Scripture has to say about outward forms of worship, it is discovered that in Old Testament times there was a

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1. Cf. Ante, p. 38.

profuse use of the fine arts in public worship. While the New Testament says almost nothing of outward forms, it gives us the spirit for worship.

Chapter III has been an endeavor to arrive at some conclusions concerning just what approach should be taken for the use of the fine arts in the Mennonite Church today. In this attempt there has first of all been a brief review of the principles of the Mennonite Church as expressed in the Anabaptist vision which should be continually considered in determining the forms of worship. In observing these principles in the light of the principles of art and worship, it was seen that although Reformation doctrines do not conflict with the principles of art and worship, they do conflict with the forms that were being used in the Roman Catholic Church. In the Mennonite Church of today there are the more liberal churches, who have accepted the fine arts to quite an extent; but there are just as many who still are strongly dubious about taking on any new forms in the worship service. In making suggestions regarding the worship service as a whole, prescribed forms of liturgy should not be considered; but there should be an attempt to put order, unity and purpose into each service. Simplicity should be preserved, and whatever changes are accepted should be made only to meet genuine needs. It has been suggested that the use of choirs and organs does not conflict with basic principles of simplicity and nonconformity, but they can be used to accomplish the fundamental purposes of worship. Architec-

ture should receive greater attention in Mennonite circles, since the basic conception of a church building in the Mennonite Church is really incomplete. All of these suggestions can be accomplished only by a slow process of education, both in the local church and in the church schools.

B. Conclusions

After having studied the basic issues that are involved in the problem of this thesis, the first conclusion is that the subject of forms does not constitute the central problem of worship. Although forms are important, having the power either to make or break a service under certain circumstances, they are not the most important factor in determining the success of a worship service. Since worship deals principally with personalities, the form becomes secondary. It is the person who must put content into forms that determines to a greater extent the effectiveness of a service. A simple service that is not effective can be improved more by a leader that will stimulate thought and action than by employing a more elaborate form or ritual. A more elaborate service that lacks life and sincerity can be improved more readily by adding sincerity and truth to each part of the service than by simplifying the form of expression.

A second conclusion concerning Mennonite worship is that no matter what the form might be in any particular group or church, the practices that exist today have their roots

in history; and these roots go very deep. There are definite reasons for the status quo. In making suggestions and in trying to bring about certain changes this must be thoroughly understood. And when any changes are to be made, they should be made slowly and intelligently.

The third conclusion of this thesis is that most Mennonite groups, and especially the more conservative groups, would do well to consider how they could expand the forms of worship by making a greater use of the fine arts. There is a danger of becoming bound to certain forms and orders. Such an enslavement was the reason for the Anabaptists' defiance of the Roman Church. The emphasis should always be on the "free" service. The church must remember that its roots are planted in the principle of individualism, and even today each man must be given the right to his conscience in matters of worship, as well as in doctrine. "Oh, when will we finally realize that people that have been called to render a great service must also have the freedom and the opportunity to render this service? God be merciful to us!"¹

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1. J. H. Janzen: "The Literature of the Russo-Canadian Mennonites," Mennonite Life, Jan., 1946, p. 24.

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