

CHURCH NOTES

Davis Memorial Church of God In Christ will host a one-night revival service at 8 p.m. on Jan. 17. The speaker will be Ella Coaster from Dallas. For information, call 936-371-1094.

First Baptist Church in Center will be hosting the Joy Seekers Conference for Women at 8:30 a.m. on Feb. 15. The conference will feature a message by Sheri Rose Shepherd, award-winning author, speaker and Bible Life Coach. Lunch will be provided. Registration is \$30. T-shirts are available for an extra \$10. For more information, or to register, call 936-598-5605.

First Baptist Church Garrison will be hosting several upcoming events:

- The church's quarterly business meeting will take place at 7 p.m. on Wednesday.
- Mark LaRue of Proclaiming Him Ministries in Savannah, Tenn., will be a guest speaker during services at 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Jan. 26
- A birthday and anniversary lunch will be held after morning services on Feb. 2.

Iron Wheel Baptist Church will host two upcoming events:

- A 25th family anniversary service for the Rev. James A. Ervin at 3 p.m. on Jan. 26. The Greater Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church of Lufkin will be guests at the service.
- A community musical benefit at 7 p.m. Jan. 18, for Roger and Shirley Linson, a family in need of support after a house fire and the unexpected loss of their daughter. All choirs, groups, soloists, praise and dance teams, and mime teams are invited to the service. Donations will be accepted at the service in the form of checks payable to Roger and Shirley Linson.

Lilly Grove Baptist Church will host a Second Sunday Night Sing on Sunday. The service will feature gospel music led by Jesse, Kay, Murray and Jeanine Bowers. Numerous people will participate in music specials and readings mixed in with favorites sung by the audience. Everyone is invited. Pastor Russell's message Sunday morning will be the second part of a series of sermons titled "Jesus, Jesus" from Matthew 16:16.

Vineyard Church Nacogdoches will feature a message on Sunday by Jim Miller that will investigate what it means to be an authentic Christian. A complimentary continental breakfast begins at 10 a.m. followed by worship at 10:30 a.m. and Kid's Hour at 11 a.m.

Deadline for church announcements is noon Wednesday for Saturday publication. Mail information to The Daily Sentinel, P.O. Box 630068, Nacogdoches, Texas 75963; bring it by our office, at 4920 Colonial Drive; fax: 936-560-4267; or email: news@daily sentinel.com.

FAITH TRADITIONS

Music will tear us apart?

Seemingly unlikely source a cause for many church schisms

Church splits happen all of the time. In a country that helped construct the concept of democratic religion, schisms occur often and are sometimes necessary when congregants can't resolve their differences. Although there are lots of reasons why church members decide to leave (arguments over theology or politics, for instance), one common motive may be somewhat surprising: music. Music is a centerpiece of the worship experience in most evangelical Christian communities. It serves as a binder, all voices lifted in unison, bringing individual congregants together in common chorus. But music can also tear apart and over the course of the past several decades, a change in style with the introduction of contemporary music has both grown churches and ripped them apart.

Music is what helped evangelicalism to grow. During the Second Great Awakening, preachers held camp meetings where they drew hundreds from the countryside to week-long services. Many attended just to see what would happen, hoping for some free entertainment. One of the most sustaining strategies of these camp meetings, which fed later revivals, turned out to be the spirituals and songs that diverged from congregational hymns. These spirituals were criticized as being "vulgar" and inappropriate because they seemed too emotional and intimate. Many songs, including "Rock of Ages," went through heavy editing because of disagreements over the lyrics describe. But these songs worked well for their ministers who wanted message to stick with gants, who could not read the Scripture for themselves. In rural areas of New York, Kentucky and Georgia, illiterate, but they could remember the choruses of simple songs. These spirituals and hymns eventually became commonplace in evangelical churches. "Rock of Ages" and "O Thousand Tongues Sing" evolved into standards that held true to an "older" religion in changing times. In the 1960s and 1970s another form of music challenged the status quo in churches. Some called it "the Devil's Diversion," others believed it was Satanic. The people who played and listened to it called it Contemporary Christian Music (CCM). Like the arguments over spirituals and revival songs that roiled earlier American evangelicals, CCM seemed dangerous and too secular. And like those earlier musical forms, CCM attempted to use catchy melodies and simple lyrics to grab the audience



Charity Carney

and spread religion through popular stylings. Keith Green, John Michael Talbot and Larry Norman, to name a few, pioneered CCM and gave voice to a rising generation of Christians (many of whom were part of the Jesus People Movement). With long hair, and power chords, these musicians brought a Christian message to Americans in an unconventional way, as had the revivalists before them.

Today, CCM brings in billions of dollars and has influenced the growth of contemporary services that rely on upbeat and popular "Praise and Worship" music. Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, Calif., helped popularize "Praise and Worship" in the 1970s, when it brought in scores of hippie congregants who embodied the Jesus People Movement. Calvary started the Maranatha! Music business in 1973 to showcase their new songs and share them with other churches. Some churches disapproved of this new style of singing and members revolted against the shift from traditional hymns and spirituals. Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., experienced the music controversy in a very public way after a new pastor changed their services. The church was known for the Coral Ridge Hour, a popular television ministry that showcased traditional hymns and gospel music. The church broadcast these services since the 1970s in response to the rise of "Praise and Worship." When Billy

Graham's grandson, Tullian Tchividjian, took over in 2009, he pushed for something different — something more modern. Confronting changes like contemporary services, a group of long-term members tried to oust the pastor and reassert their traditions. This tactic did not work, and the megachurch boasts thousands of members today.

Other groups have taken contemporary to the next level. The youth group called the Basement in Birmingham, Ala., draws thousands of members with rock shows and rap performances.

Surrounded by smoke and flashing lights, worshippers come to the proclaimed club in experience of the traditional sounds of a modern evangelical Basement church as it pushes the boundaries of what is sacred and secular. As more congregations adopt contemporary or services, it leaves one to wonder: "Praise and Worship" or even the Basement's fist-music one day become standards? If traditional hymns were once controversial, will "Our God" and "Lord I Lift Your Name on High" have the staying power of "Amazing Grace?" Or will evangelicals choose an alternative option as many churches already have, and separate the two styles of worship for good?

(References: Mark Noll, Edith Blumhofer, and Mary Waldvogel VanDyke, eds., *Sing Them Over Again to Me: Hymns and Hymnbooks in America*. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006); Randall J. Stephens and Karl Giberson, eds., *The Anointed: Evangelical Truth in a Secular Age*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011); David W. Stowe, *No Sympathy for the Devil: Christian Pop Music and the Transformation of American Evangelicalism*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).)

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Wise words from Tiger: Take care of what's inside

They say that the longer you own your pet, the more you become alike. I am finding that to be true in the case of my cat. We have been together for 17 years, and apparently we are more alike than I realized; we were both recently diagnosed with thyroid problems. Of course the difference is my cat has a thyroid issue that makes him lose weight while mine makes me gain weight. So while I have to watch every calorie, I am feeding Tiger five times a day to help him fatten up. Thankfully I am not tempted by 9 Lives Tuna Pâté or it would be torture.



Kim Wier

Still, it is good to be able to share what I am going through and let's face it — cats are good listeners. As long as you scratch their ears they will listen to you all day long — and they never overreact. Nothing I can say will get my cat worked up.

"Just remain calm and rub a little to the left," I almost hear him purr. His calming presence is good since health issues can be stressful. Not only have I been told my thyroid is trying to go into retirement, but that I also have the bones of an 80-year-old. The doctor calls it severe osteoporosis — I call it "falling apart."

Regardless of its name, it is no laughing matter. If I don't do something, the next fashion accessory I add might be a walker. It seems this silent but sinister condition leaches the calcium from the bones until they don't have the strength to stand up to the normal wear and tear of life. What is so troubling is that there are no outward signs or symptoms that one has developed osteoporosis until running for the bus and one day your leg snaps in half.

I am thankful that in my case a routine X-ray for a minor issue sounded the alarm. It seems if you look closely enough in the right

place you actually can detect it. It's a good thing or I might have become the incredible shrinking woman before I even earn my AARP card. What a relief to find out it doesn't have to come to that; my condition is reversible — if I cooperate.

I have spent a lifetime avoiding vegetables, refusing to take vitamins and shunning all forms of exercise, unless you count the week I tried the Hip Hop Abs video. My day-to-day choices have left my bones weak and vulnerable far before their time. Depleted of vitamin C, vitamin D and with virtually no muscle tone, I am one nasty fall from a hip replacement, and I can't even get a senior discount at IHOP!

The doctor promises that all of that can change if I will modify my daily habits. Eat broccoli and other forms of rabbit food. Drink milk. Exercise. Take vitamins; and in my case a strong prescription. Cut down on the caffeine and lay off sodas. "Do it and do it now — or else,"

cautioned my physician. I may not see the progress, but over time I was assured the efforts will spare me the pain and heartache of being incapacitated.

I told all this to my cat and after a time of quiet contemplation (that resembled disinterested sleep) he uttered this wise advice: "Now." I admit it sounded a little like "meow," but I got the message. I can take action "now" to supplement my inner strength or I can live with the consequences of my inaction. My cat is pretty smart. Taking care of what is on the inside now can change everything later. I've heard that advice before, but not from my feline.

God has a great deal to say about focusing on inner-strength, not the kind that affects our bones; He desires health first for the eternal qualities of our hearts and minds.

"For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control,

and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:5-8; "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong." 1 Corinthians 16:13; "... those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength." Isaiah 40:31; "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might." Ephesians 6:10-18; "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Psalm 73:26

No matter what the current spiritual condition, if we cooperate with the wisdom of God the damage is reversible; but it is best for all of us to heed his words right "meow."

Kim Wier is an author and speaker, and hosts a weekly radio talk program on KSBJ in Houston.