MIGSDA WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

presents

Women of Worship

Understanding the Adventist Philosophy of Music

Key Text: Psalm 95:1–6

Dr. Nathanael Adjei · Sunday, October 4, 2026

PSALMS OF NATE
Harmonizing Hearts with Sacred Songs

KEY TEXT · KJV

Psalm 95:1–6

1 O come, let us **sing** unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

5 The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

6 O come, let us **worship and bow down**: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

READING THE KEY TEXT

Three movements of worship

VERSES 1–2

Come and sing

Joyful noise, thanksgiving, psalms. Worship begins out loud and glad.

VERSES 3–5

Because He is great

King above all gods, Maker of depths, hills, sea and land. Worship has a reason.

VERSE 6

Come and bow

Worship, bow down, kneel before our Maker. Worship ends on our knees.

Worship moves from a joyful noise to a bended knee.

THE THESIS FOR TONIGHT

Joy and reverence are not rivals.

Psalm 95 holds the shout and the kneel in one breath. The Adventist philosophy of music asks our singing to do the same.

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TONIGHT'S JOURNEY

Three parts, one God to worship

I

Women who worshipped in song

Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Mary, and the singing women of Israel

II

What Adventists believe about music

The 2004 philosophy of music and the counsel of Ellen G. White

III

Women of worship today

In the home, in the church, and in the heart

PART ONE

Women Who Worshipped in Song

Scripture's singing women, and what their songs teach us.

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PART ONE

Four women, four songs

EXODUS 15:20–21

Miriam

Led the women with timbrels after the Red Sea: “Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously.”

JUDGES 5

Deborah

Judge, prophetess and songwriter: “I, even I, will sing unto the LORD” (v. 3).

1 SAMUEL 2:1–10

Hannah

A prayer that became a song: the God who lifts the poor out of the dust.

LUKE 1:46–55

Mary

“My soul doth magnify the Lord”: a song soaked in Hannah's psalm and the Scriptures.

PART ONE

Women in the house of song

1 Chronicles 25:5–6	Heman's fourteen sons and three daughters were all "under the hands of their father for song in the house of the LORD."
Psalm 68:25	In the procession of God the King, "among them were the damsels playing with timbrels."
Ezra 2:65	The exiles returning to rebuild the temple brought "two hundred singing men and singing women."

Women were not spectators of Israel's worship. They were trained, organized participants.

PART ONE

What their songs have in common

God-centred

They sang about who God is and what He did, not about the singer.

Scripture-filled

Mary's song echoes Hannah's. Their lyrics were theology.

Born of testimony

Each song grew out of a real deliverance: a sea, a battle, a child, a promise.

Leading others

Miriam's women answered her. Worship was shared, not performed.

THE SONG CONTINUES

Women who gave the church its songs

Hymn writer	A hymn we still sing	Her story
Fanny Crosby (1820–1915)	Blessed Assurance	Blind from infancy; wrote thousands of hymns
Charlotte Elliott (1789–1871)	Just As I Am	Wrote from long illness and weakness
Frances R. Havergal (1836–1879)	Take My Life and Let It Be	A consecration prayer set to song
Annie R. Smith (1828–1855)	I Saw One Weary	Early Adventist poet at the Review and Herald

Which woman in our church will write the next one?

PART TWO

What Adventists Believe About Music

The 2004 philosophy of music and the counsel of Ellen G. White.

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PART TWO

Why a philosophy of music?

> “Music is not morally and spiritually neutral.”
>
> A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music, voted by the GC Annual Council, October 13, 2004

It can lift us

At its best, music draws us toward heaven's worship (Job 38:7; Revelation 4–5).

It can pull us down

It can also stir up passion, despair, anger and hatred.

So we need principles

Tastes vary; the church offers principles to inform our choices.

PART TWO

Two foundations

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

Glorify God

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

The overriding principle for all music we listen to, perform or compose.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Choose the best

“Whatsoever things are true … pure … lovely … of good report … think on these things.”

The noblest and the best: life on earth as rehearsal for heaven's choir.

A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC · 2004

The nine guiding principles

#	Principle	What it asks of the music we hear, sing or compose
1	Glorify God	All music, sacred or secular, will glorify God (1 Cor 10:31)
2	The noblest and best	True, pure and excellent (Phil 4:8): a foretaste of heaven's choir
3	Quality	Marked by quality, balance, appropriateness and authenticity
4	Wholistic	Appeals to intellect and emotions, and affects the body positively
5	Creativity	Quality melodies, artful harmony, and rhythm that complements them
6	Lyrics	Rich, uplifting words that agree with sound biblical theology
7	Words and music	Work together to shape thinking and behaviour by biblical values
8	Balance	A judicious balance of spiritual, intellectual and emotional elements
9	Culture	Recognizes the contribution of different cultures in worshipping God

ELLEN G. WHITE · EDUCATION, P. 168

“Singing is as much an act of worship as is prayer. Indeed, many a song is prayer.”

Song is “one of the most effective means of impressing the heart with spiritual truth.”

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PART TWO

Counsel on how we sing

With understanding

Sing “with the spirit, and … with the understanding also.” Mean the words.

1 Cor 14:15 · Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 146

Not a performance

Sacred music is ministry, not theatrical display for the singer's glory.

Evangelism, pp. 500–504

Not left to a few

As often as possible, the whole congregation should join in the singing.

Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 144

PART TWO

Put your heart into the song

> “Stop! I have heard the angels sing. They sing with reverence, with meaning.”
>
> Ellen White, halting a listless hymn at the St. Helena Sanitarium church, 1880s (recalled by A. P. Guyton)

Words first

She told J. S. Washburn the words are the principal thing; the music is their vehicle.

Follow the words

Slow or quick, soft or loud: let the text decide how it is sung.

Clear, not loud

“Not loud singing … but clear intonation, correct pronunciation, and distinct utterance.” (Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 144)

PRINCIPLE 9

One standard, many sounds

Musical forms and instruments vary greatly across the worldwide church. Music from one culture may sound strange to another.

Paraphrase of principle 9, 2004 Philosophy of Music

For us as Ghanaian Adventists

- Twi, Ga, Ewe and English songs can all glorify God.
- Ask not “Is it ours?” but “Does it meet the principles?”
- Neither old nor new is holy by age alone.
- Bring our heritage to the King, and bow before Him.

PUTTING IT TO WORK

Five questions to ask of any song

1 **Who is it about?** Does it glorify God? (1 Cor 10:31)

2 **Is it true?** Do the words match sound biblical theology?

3 **Is it excellent?** Is it the noblest and best we can offer? (Phil 4:8)

4 **Is it balanced?** Does it engage mind, heart and body together?

5 **Does it fit the moment?** Is it right for worship, home or witness?

PART THREE

Women of Worship Today

In the home, in the church, and in the heart.

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FROM HER GRANDDAUGHTER'S MEMORIES

Ellen White, a woman of worship

Her favourite hymn

“Jesus, Lover of My Soul”: comfort for the storm, assurance of heaven's company.

A cure for gloom

When a meeting sank in discouragement, James would say, “Come, Ellen, let's sing for them.”

Hymns by heart

At evening worship, stanzas went around the circle until the family sang with books closed.

Singing to the end

In 1915, near death, she whispered along: “There's a land that is fairer than day.”

ELMSHAVEN · EVENING WORSHIP

“Do we not have time tonight to worship the Lord in song?”

Ellen White, when her household tried to skip the hymns to save time

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IN THE HOME

The first choir loft is the home

> Memory recalls “the long-forgotten burden of a childhood song,” and “temptations lose their power.”
>
> Ellen G. White, Education, p. 168

- Sing over your children at morning and evening worship.
- Teach the hymns before the world teaches its songs.
- Let the house hear you sing when no one is watching.
- Grandmothers: pass on the Twi and English hymns you carry.

IN THE CHURCH

From performers to worship leaders

Choirs and ensembles

Prepare spiritually, not only musically. Pray over what you sing.

Song leaders

Help the whole church sing: singable keys, known tunes, clear words.

Soloists and players

Serve the text, not the spotlight. Let skill point beyond itself.

Women's Ministries

Sing together: a women's chorus, hymn-learning nights, mentoring girls.

IN THE HEART

A song for the night

> “Song is a weapon that we can always use against discouragement.”
>
> Ellen G. White, The Ministry of Healing, p. 254

Psalm 42:8

“In the night his song shall be with me.”

Acts 16:25

At midnight, in prison, Paul and Silas sang praises unto God.

ELLEN WHITE TO HER GRANDCHILDREN

> “Children, we must learn to sing the songs of Zion here if we would join the angel choir yonder.”
>
> Recalled by Ella M. White Robinson

“Heaven's communion begins on earth. We learn here the keynote of its praise.” Education, p. 168

PSALM 95:6

O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

Sing gladly. Choose wisely. Bow humbly.

PSALMS OF NATE

LET'S TALK

For discussion

1

Which song carried you through a hard season, and why do you think it worked?

2

What one change would help our whole congregation sing more?

3

How can Women's Ministries pass our hymns to the next generation?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Sources

Church document

A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music. General Conference Annual Council, October 13, 2004. gc.adventist.org/guidelines

Scripture (KJV)

Psalm 95:1–6; Exodus 15; Judges 5; 1 Samuel 2; Luke 1:46–55; 1 Chronicles 25:5–6; Psalm 68:25; Ezra 2:65; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 14:15; Philippians 4:8

Ellen G. White

- Education, pp. 167–168
- The Ministry of Healing, p. 254
- Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 146
- Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 144
- Evangelism, pp. 500–504

Family memoir

Ella M. White Robinson, “Hymns Loved and Sung by Ellen White” (1966)

MIGSDA WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

Thank you

“O come, let us sing unto the LORD.” Psalm 95:1

Dr. Nathanael Adjei Kyeremeh · Psalms of Nate

PSALMS OF NATE

Harmonizing Hearts with Sacred Songs