

Why Christians Should Not Boycott the Worship Industry

A dear friend of mine shared a blog post on her Facebook timeline encouraging Christians to boycott the worship industry. I was very disturbed by this piece since I have some close friends who earn their income from leading worship. Here's why Christians should not boycott the worship industry, but support it:

1. God likes worship. The Old Testament such as Nehemiah is full of Scriptures where people were assigned to sing to the Lord. The singers in Nehemiah made their living from worshipping God. My friends who make a living from leading worship have invested thousands of dollars out of their own pocket and hundreds of volunteer hours in training to lead worship. I don't understand why we will pay top dollar for a doctor or an accountant but we don't want to recognize or reward a gifted singer or musician who loves God. This is pure idiocy.

2. The fact that worship is now considered a legitimate industry should be celebrated and not demonized. Worship was not considered a commercially viable musical genre until groups such as Hillsong and Jesus Culture outsold secular pop artists such as Lady Gaga. We should celebrate and support this trend instead of demonizing gifted Christian singers and musicians who have amassed a following with the message of the gospel. The fact that my 17-year-old son wants to be like Chris Quilala instead of Chris Brown is something I celebrate, not discourage. Maybe God is elevating these young men and women who have a fire burning in their bones for God so our children can have heroes.

3. There are weightier issues to arouse our crusading anger than religious preferences that criticize excellent staging

and performance. Get upset about the lack of God's presence in your church or the fact that the widows and orphans aren't being taken care of in your back yard. Get upset about the person with a disability who is being ignored or overlooked. Instead of wondering if light shows are from God, channel your anger by praying for an outpouring of the Spirit in the church. If you're really upset that your worship leader's message to follow Christ is attracting people, donate money to the poor in the church.

4. Worship is a beautiful emotional expression of your love, passion and faith in God. Since when is it wrong to be emotional in our worship? Kansas City Chief fans paint their faces, spend hundreds of dollars, get off work to sit in a parking lot for hours, jump up and down and scream in their own form of worship and adoration. We cry at secular concerts. We raise our hands when our favorite team wins the game. Why would we divorce the very gift of emotions given by God to express ourselves to Him in an act of worship?

Would David's act of dancing before the Lord be called "emotionalism?" Would the woman who poured expensive oil and washed Jesus feet in worship be called "emotionalism?" These acts were driven by their emotional expression of love and worship to the King of kings.

For me, worship is an emotional experience, which doesn't make me weak. I remember the first time I received a bill I couldn't pay at 18 years old. My first response was to go to the *lanai*, an outdoor patio in Hawaii, sit on the ground and sing to the Lord. I'll never forget those moments when I sang and worshipped God and peace came upon me like a robe.

We are made in His image, which includes all of His emotions. Here are Scriptures that refer to God's emotions:

- Anger – Psalm 7:11; Deuteronomy 9:22; Romans 1:18
- Laughter – Psalm 37:13; Psalm 2:4; Proverbs 1:26

- Compassion – Psalm 135:14; Judges 2:18; Deuteronomy 32:36
- Grief – Genesis 6:6; Psalm 78:40
- Love – 1 John 4:8; John 3:16; Jeremiah 31:3
- Hate – Proverbs 6:16; Psalm 5:5; Psalm 11:5
- Jealousy – Exodus 20:5; Exodus 34:14; Joshua 24:19
- Joy – Zephaniah 3:17; Isaiah 62:5; Jeremiah 32:41

The bottom line is that the fact worship has emerged as a commercially viable genre is a sign that people want God. My teenage and college-age sons love to worship in a stadium with thousands of other kids their age. We should celebrate and support the worship industry.