



# Family Friendly Churches

Committed to making churches places where all are welcome

The Newsletter of the Family Friendly Churches Trust

February 2005

Check out our website: [www.FamilyFriendlyChurches.org.uk](http://www.FamilyFriendlyChurches.org.uk)

## Hymns vs Choruses

There has been a vigorous debate about the use of hymns and choruses in recent weeks in the Methodist Recorder. This debate has been very charged, generally with the correspondents coming out firmly for one or the other.

There seems to be a great need to explain the differences between most hymns and most modern choruses and then to reconcile the matter by saying that the church needs both.

So here goes. There are two main differences, one musical and the other linguistic.

Generally, and there are exceptions to all the statements in this argument, the musical interest of a hymn is in the harmony and the rhythm is very straightforward. This can be seen in the music where there are very few dotted notes.

Choruses are almost the opposite, the harmonies are virtually non-existent and the interest is in the rhythmic patterns. When looking at the music there is a forest of dotted and tied notes. This is why many traditional organists find them difficult to play. This is further complicated because congregations quite often don't sing these patterns as they are written, but go by the 'feel' of the song.

Those who are musical can be encouraged to compensate for the lack of harmony by improvising their own harmony.

The use of language is quite different too. Generally the words of a traditional hymn are about God or Jesus. In effect they are a congregation telling each other how great God is. Think of the words of some of Wesley's greatest



hymns; 'And can it be that I should gain...' or 'O, for a thousand tongues to sing...'

The words of most choruses are addressed directly to God or Jesus, offering them direct worship. Take a look at 'Abba, Father ...' or 'Father, we adore you' and you can see this shift from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> party in the way they address God. This is why they are often called worship songs.

We believe that for a church to be truly Family Friendly it needs to be using both on a regular basis. A service using hymns alone does not take the best opportunity to use music to offer worship. A service using worship songs alone does not take the best opportunity to offer some depth and poetry in its hymnody. In addition to this only a combination of styles can satisfy the musical tastes of the different generations in a congregation.

However it has to be said that work has to be done on the use of worship songs. Traditionally in a 5 hymn sandwich hymns have been used as separators between the different parts of a service.

Preachers and Ministers have been trained to use them in this way, but simply to replace a hymn with a worship song in the same structure does not use them to best advantage. Worship songs are designed to be used in a block and connected with prayers between them and linked with them.

Those in the traditional churches have to look at their patterns of worship so that they can make best use of this new resource whilst also retaining the riches from their past.

## Reviews

The trust has received a couple of favourable reviews in the last few weeks.

BBC Radio Kent reviewed our website as part of its web site of the week series. Chris Stone, the reviewer writes:

*What I like is that Family Friendly Churches doesn't just tell you why such things are important, it doesn't just recommend things to buy, it has a scheme which means that you can try out the technology before you buy, and have someone alongside to help as you experiment.*

The whole review can be read at:

[www.bbc.co.uk/England/radiokent/sunday/web\\_review/list\\_2004.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/England/radiokent/sunday/web_review/list_2004.shtml)



In addition the *At the Breaking of the Bread* CD-Rom, which was created by the trust, was reviewed by e-Church Active. This is a very useful on-line magazine for those need help using technology in churches.

In conclusion the reviewer gives 5 out of 5 for the CD-Rom.

Check out the review and their website at [www.echurchactive.net](http://www.echurchactive.net) or on our own website.

## The Great Omission

A group known as the Viva Network is calling for churches to put children back at the heart of their thinking. They believe that children are the 'the Great Omission' in the churches.

Whilst the trust focuses on this regarding aspects of worship and explores how churches can create worship suitable for all ages, the Viva Network highlights the massive social issues and concerns that children face around the world. Their web site is [www.viva.org](http://www.viva.org)

## Look at the CD-Rom

Those of you who have bought Building Family Friendly Churches and have not looked at the CD-ROM in the book are really missing out.

The CD-ROM contains a host of useful facilities including the detailed profiles of the Family Friendly Churches visited by Mike during the research for his book.

Also on the CD-Rom are the Christmas and Epiphany Services in the At the Breaking of the Bread format along with a set of matching PowerPoint slides containing the words of popular carols.

In addition there are the words of around 100 of the most popular out of copyright hymns in PowerPoint format with attractive pictorial backgrounds.

All these can be quickly inserted into PowerPoint presentations in just a few seconds by using the 'Insert Slides from File' facility.

Certainly worth a look.

## Mike's Diary

Below is a list of Mike's commitments for the next couple of months. Please do pray for him.

### February

5<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00am Website Course and IT Surgery at Diss.  
14<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> - JERUSALEM TV Holiday Club at Codsall, Nr. Wolverhampton.  
26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> - Multi-media Weekend at Glossop

### March

2<sup>nd</sup> - Family Friendly Churches Workshop at St Michael's College, Cardiff.  
5<sup>th</sup> - Family Friendly Churches Workshop at the Headway AGM at Peterborough.  
12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> - Multi-media Weekend at Bognor Regis  
29<sup>th</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> - Family Friendly Churches Workshops at Easter People, Scarborough.

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