

Singing for Contemporary Christian Worship



Australian Church Singer Survey
Results!



Abstract

The genre and context of Contemporary Christian Worship has been under-researched. There is a proliferation of culturally biased text but an eager participant may be frustrated by the lack of dedicated research-based material.

This poster presents the findings from a recent online survey. The survey examined Contemporary Christian Worship Singers in Australian churches from a variety of denominations.



Online Survey

Participants were randomly chosen to participate in a secure online survey. The following limits were placed on the data collection:

- 18yrs and Over
- Australian Residents Only
- Church Size: Churches of 60-1500 people
- Only protestant churches were approached for participants
- All participants were 'current' worship singers.

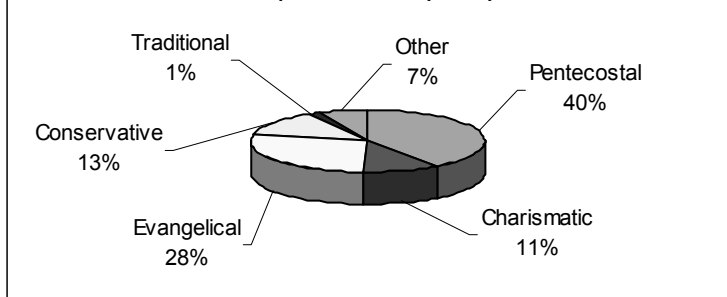


Demographics

Age of Participants against Church Size (n85)

	60-250	251-500	501-750	751-1000	1001-1500	TOTAL
18-25	19	6	3	1	1	30 (35.3%)
26-30	8	3	0	2	1	14 (16.5%)
31-40	2	8	1	2	2	15 (17.6%)
41-50	6	5	2	3	0	16 (18.8%)
51-60	4	1	0	1	0	6 (7.1%)
60+	3	1	0	0	0	4 (4.7%)

Participants Church Worship Expression (n85)



Denominations

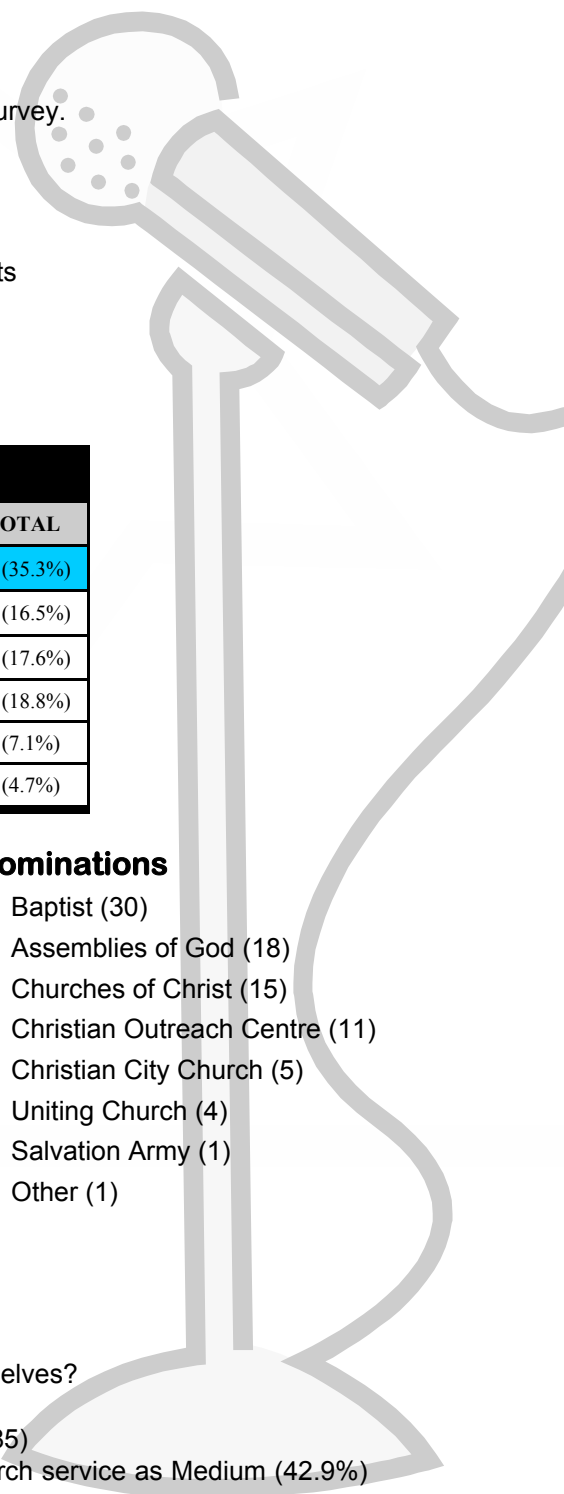
- Baptist (30)
- Assemblies of God (18)
- Churches of Christ (15)
- Christian Outreach Centre (11)
- Christian City Church (5)
- Uniting Church (4)
- Salvation Army (1)
- Other (1)



Identity

How does the Australian Contemporary Worship Singer identify themselves?

- 88.2% classify their singing as 'contemporary' (n85)
- 85.9% would **not** classify themselves as 'Pop' singers (n85)
- 85.8% rate the importance of their role in the overall church service as Medium (42.9%) to High (42.9%) (n84)
- 82.1% rate the importance of the worship service (congregational singing) in relation to the preaching of the Word (sermon) as equal (n84)





Singing Activity

Singing is an accepted expression of the Contemporary Christian Worshipper, according to existing literature. This existing material also presents a variety of often conflicting views as to how this activity might be expressed. As a result, the contemporary worship singer is confronted with a difficult environment.

1. What style of worship music does your worship team generally play?

72.3% of those surveyed sing mostly Worship Choruses with some Hymns with only 18.1% singing only Worship Choruses. (n83)

2. If your church employs both Hymns and Choruses, which of the two musical styles do you find the more vocally demanding?

Hymns ~ 57.6%

Worship Choruses ~ 42.4% (n59)

3. Have you received any vocal lessons from a qualified singing teacher(s)?

• No: 42.3%

• Yes: 57.7% (n78)

Of those who answered yes...

In your opinion, does/or did your singing teacher have intimate knowledge of your church environment and the type of songs you are singing?

• No: 46.7%

• Yes: 53.3% (n45)

4. The Contemporary Worship Singer often stands still when they sing. They might also be swaying (71.8%), dancing (34.6%), jumping (32.1%) and clapping (74.4%) (n78).



The Worship Team

Who does the Australian Contemporary Worship Singer work with?

- 69.9% believe the worship team is a 'dominant' group within their church (n83)
- 97.6% of worship teams use 'Hillsong' Material (n83)
- 62.7% believe 'A corporate call to worship' 'best' describes their worship team's presentation of the corporate worship service (n83)



Philosophy

The cultural context of the Australian Contemporary Worship Singer is as diverse as it is complex. Bob Rognlien in his book 'Experiential Worship' states, "*Worship is always expressed in a particular cultural context.*" (Rognlien, 2005, p. 168). The following statements observe the diversity of philosophical views as expressed by the survey participants on the topics of '**Worship & Theology**' & '**The Anointing**':

1. What role does the worship/music in your church play in the overall theology/philosophy of the local church?

- "I think it supports the overall theology of the church. The songs that are picked support the theology and usually endorse the sermon. The atmosphere that the singing part of the service sets up is one of love and unity which also supports the theology of the church."
- "Not much."
- "Worship is very important because it gets people fired up and ready to hear Gods message. Anything can happen in worship!"

2. Does the term 'Anointed' hold any significance for you in relation to the role of a Contemporary Worship Singer?

- "I love that word... I have been told by our Worship director that I am anointed in the role...but reality is I don't particularly feel anointed, I am just starting out to try worship leading ...as opposed to back up singer.. and feel old and perhaps ill [equipped] to do the role...still I desire to lead and do the best I can so that I can see the congregation really connect with God. I hope that that heart will mean that my ministry is effective."
- "I do not believe that being 'Anointed' has any correlation with the effectiveness of a worship singer."
- "There's no doubt in my mind that in order to use the gift God has given, you must surrender it to Him. He's the one who [anoints] you, and when you are, your singing is amazing, it reaches people's spirits, touching emotions and minds and God does the most important part."

73.1% of survey participants believe they are anointed for the role of Contemporary Worship Singer. (n78)

Rognlien, B. (2005). *Experiential worship: Encountering God with heart, soul, mind & strength*. Canada: NavPress.