



The Musician as

WARRIOR

“.. when you make a sound on your instrument in the name of God, it rattles the nerves of the enemy!”

As a professional musician, I spend almost every day of the week pulling my instrument out of its case, warming up and then playing a gig. When I became a Christian and started utilizing my abilities in the church, there was an initial burst of excitement as I began to be able to offer my talents in service to the Lord. But, as with so many things in life, after some time, the initial excitement waned. I was still excited about God and what He was doing in my life, but after a full week of playing music, and sometimes after a late Saturday night gig, the act of pulling out my horn on a Sunday morning began to have less and less significance. Sometimes the thrill of serving God with my gifts was lost as I mindlessly repeated the familiar tasks I'd associated with making a living.

I realized at one point that this was not how God wanted me to respond to ministry. Being a musician in the church should have more relevance and be more exciting than any secular work I might do. After all, isn't performing my ministry part of fulfilling the Great

Commission? Yes, I can also take my ministry into the secular workplace, and I try to do that, but shouldn't there be something even more special about playing at church? Over the years I've noticed that many musicians in the church suffer from the same complacent attitude. This is true not only for the professionals who play every day but for the hobbyists as well.

What changed my attitude was learning that God Himself had designated a crucially important role for the believing musician!

THE LESSON...

During the 1989 Christmas season, American military troops surrounded the headquarters of Panama's General Manuel Noriega. The Americans were in a position of power at this point and could have easily taken the building by force and arrested their target, but they didn't. Instead, they camped outside the headquarters with loudspeakers attached to the roofs of their vehicles and proceeded to play rock and roll music, loudly and incessantly. They kept this

WAR

Affecting The Musician's Heart By Redefining His/Her Role

BY TONY GUERRERO

up (among other tactics) for so long that, finally, Noriega simply couldn't take it anymore and gave himself up. Where did America's military leaders come up with such a brilliant strategy?

Well, it's possible they took their lead from the book of Joshua. In chapter six, we read about Joshua at the battle of Jericho. God had already told Joshua, who was leading Israel's army, that He would give them the city (6:2). This meant that they should have been able to just fearlessly walk through the city gates and take the city, but God had other plans. Instead, He instructed Joshua to have his army march around the city walls once a day for six days, then seven times on the seventh day (6:3-4), carrying the Ark of the Covenant. He also ordered that seven priests were to march in front of the ark blowing trumpets (6:4). Finally, he instructed Joshua to make sure no one raised their voices or gave any war cry (6:10). The only sound was to be that of loud trumpets. Imagine the fear the residents of Jericho must have felt as they had to listen day after day to the incessant battle horns of the surrounding army!

How, then, does this story affect our perception of the role of the musician in the church?

There is little argument that we, the church, are deep in the throes of a spiritual battle. We are at war with the enemy, and Satan's army is large and strong. But we also know, as Joshua did, that in the end victory is ours; but

for now, the battles rage on. If we imagine the church as God's army, then the musicians in the church are like those trumpet players at Jericho. Our job is to sound the call, boldly, confidently, and loudly! We are to lead in bringing down the walls of evil, of people's prides, of people's despair, of the enemies false sense of security!

The fact is, when you put your instrument to your lips, or your bow to the string, or your hand on the keys in the name of God, it rattles the nerves of the enemy! The enemy knows his fate, but his war rages on. He fights to fake as many people with him as possible. We need to remember that we are warriors as well as musicians, and there are few greater honors than to fight in God's army!

When I approach the worship stage these days, I try to remind myself of three things: 1) this is not a performance—this is not about me; 2) I need to focus on God; and now, 3) I remind myself, I'm not just "playing my horn"—God has put me in a very specific and important role as I play my part in this spiritual battle that we are in. It is an honor to be in this position, and I fully intend to rattle the nerves of the enemy until the war is won.

Tony Guerrero has gained world recognition as a Contemporary Jazz trumpet player with several chart-topping solo CDs to his credit. He is also currently a Music Director at Saddleback Church (Lake Forest, CA) and Marina Ranch Church (Dana Point, CA).