

Christian music licensing group takes center stage

FRANKLIN, Tenn. (AP) — Sunday mornings at the People’s Church look more like a rock concert than traditional worship services.

A couple on stage leads about 3,700 people — many of them teenagers in blue jeans — in contemporary worship songs, accompanied by guitars and drums. Lyrics roll across a large video screen.

“Music is a big deal in our church,” said Randy Elrod, creative arts pastor for the church. “We have a band. We’re very contemporary in style. I’m influenced more by what is culturally relevant.”

Thousands of churches like this one in suburban Nashville have moved away from singing hymns to “participatory music” — and that’s meant a change in music publishing, too.

Christian Copyright Licensing International Inc., the world’s largest provider of Christian music licensing, makes it possible for churches to legally copy and distribute praise-and-worship music to their congregations. Based in Portland, Ore., CCLI works with about 200,000 churches around the world and tracks the most popular songs used in contemporary church services.

Churches can’t legally project the lyrics on a video screen or reprint them in a bulletin without permission. But instead of negotiating with music publishers individually, churches can pay a blanket license fee to CCLI, which funnels royalties to the songwriters.

In the past decade, the group has nearly doubled the number of U.S. churches it licenses to 140,000, said EMI CMG Publishing President Eddie DeGarmo, who’s on the licensing company’s advisory council.

“This growth reflects the acceptance of the songs,” DeGarmo said. “Modern worship songs are exploding on a global basis. They’re in a style that relates to a younger audience. They’re easy to sing and sound like something you’d hear on the radio.”

Many Protestant churches began to phase out hymnals and put song lyrics on overhead projection screens in the 1980s. The old-fashioned music was replaced by pop-influenced singalongs known as praise-and-worship music.

But “there was really no way for the songwriters to be paid for their works,” DeGarmo said. “So there was a need that arose to help churches work within the copyright law. (The licensing company) was formed as a way for them to operate legally.”

Praise-and-worship songs are “congregational, not necessarily performance-based, someone performing on stage,” he said. “In other words they’re participatory. Modern worship has really struck a nerve in that way. It’s still growing. The churches are the avenue for these artists to get played.”

Founded in 1984, CCLI now makes upward of \$20 million a year in revenue — the majority of which is a percentage of the licensing fees, which are determined based on the size of the church. Annual fees range from about \$100 to \$1,000. CCLI surveys which songs are being sung in churches and ranks the top tunes, creating what DeGarmo describes as a kind of Billboard for Christian music.

One of the leaders in praise-and-worship music, Chris Tomlin, garnered the most nominations for this year’s Dove Awards, the gospel music industry’s equivalent of the Grammys. Tomlin, 33, said he believes his music is popular with listeners who want to communicate with God.

“Music connects with the soul,” Tomlin said. “I think it’s the quickest art form to the soul.

“What bigger music scene is there in the world than the church? It’s vital to the world and to culture.”

James Byrd, assistant dean of the Vanderbilt University Divinity School, said the licensing group’s growth reflects the increasing importance music plays in church services.

“When we talk about denominations today, they’re not the primary identity markers for people who are Christians,” Byrd said. “More and more Christians don’t think of themselves tied to a denomination.

“I think music is one of the things contributing to this,” he said. “The music is trans-denominational, something uniting these people ... There’s less to disagree with in the music than with sermons, where you can get into theological arguments.”

Elrod said that, several years ago, the People’s Church only dedicated about a third of its hour-long services to music. Now it accounts for half the time.

“It gives most everyone a chance to participate,” Elrod said. “If you’re given a sermon or message, you’re listening and really a spectator. But if you’re singing, you’re more of a participant. Churches want to engage people more in participation.

On the Net:
<http://www.ccli.com>

An estimated 250 youth attended the opening of The Rock youth center Saturday at Southwind Plaza. The center’s opening night included concerts from Christian bands.



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THE SHEPHERD’S STAFF, REXFORD, Joan Dingwerth, Director, 687-2565

Schedule of church services

ASCENSION-ON-THE-PRAIRIE EPISCOPAL, Rev. Don Martin, College Drive & Wheatridge Rd., 462-3041, Holy Eucharist, 9:00 a.m. every Sunday, Evening Prayer, 5:15 p.m. Wednesday, September through May. Christian Education for Youth, 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, September through May

COLLEGE DRIVE ASSEMBLY OF GOD, Pastor, Jeremy Gundling, 245 W. College Dr. - 462-8234, Early Service - 8:00 a.m.; Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Morning Worship - 10:45 a.m.

BEREAN CHURCH, 1000 S. Franklin, 460-2763, www.colbyborean.com; Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m. Awana Clubs, Wednesday, 7 p.m., Middle & High School, Wednesday, 7 p.m. @ the Heartland Christian School Gym

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, Pastor Bradley L. Herndon, Grant & Webster Street, 462-2867, Morning Worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday School 9:15 a.m., Evening Worship 6:30 p.m., Wednesday Bible 7:30 p.m.

COLLEGE VIEW BAPTIST CHURCH, (SBC), Pastor Tom Huffman, 1185 Wheatridge Rd. at College Drive, 460-7144, Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship services, 10:45 a.m.

MINGO BIBLE CHURCH, 420 Main Mingo, 785-462-2992: An independent community church served by Village Missions Pastor Chris Shubert. Sunday School: 9:30AM - all ages. Sunday Services: 10:45AM. Sunday Nights: 1st Sunday of the month: potluck following morning service - no evening service; 2nd Sunday: services at 6:30 PM; 3rd Sunday: informal fellowship - bring a snack to share!; 4th and 5th Sunday: services at 6:30 p.m.

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC, 462-2179, Father Dana Clark, Pastor, Saturday Eve. Mass 5:30 p.m., Sunday Masses 8:00 & 10:00 a.m., Confessions will be heard Saturday 4:30-5:05

p.m. and from 7:30-7:45 a.m. and 9:25-9:40 a.m. on Sunday.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Rev. Carol Rahn, 515 W. 4th, 462-6342, Worship, 9:00 a.m.

WESLEYAN CHURCH, 320 W. Pine - 462-8391, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:40 a.m., Sunday Evening Cell groups at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday Youth Ministries, Kids Clubhouse 7 p.m.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, 1145 S. Franklin - 460-6605, President Dave Geldmacher, 846-7740; Calvin Haverfield, 1st counselor, 672-4165; Matt Christensen, 2nd counselor, 460-0146. Sacrament meeting 10 a.m., Sunday School and Primary 11:20 a.m., Priesthood, Relief Society, YM/YW, 12:10 p.m.; Family History Center open to public, 7-9 p.m. Thursdays or by appointment. Call 462-3571.

COLBY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, Rev. James Mardock, pastor, 950 S. Franklin, 462-6521, Sunday Worship Services at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Fellowship coffee 9:30 a.m., Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., KXXX broadcasts 11:00 worship. <http://www.gbmg-umc.org/colby-umc/>

REDEEMING LOVE MINISTRIES, INC., 345 N. Franklin, Apostle W.G. and Rev. Orvella Romine, Equipping Class, Sunday, 10 a.m., Sunday worship, 11 a.m., Wednesday, R.L.M Training Center (Bible School), 7 p.m.

CHURCH OF CHRIST, 510 E. 4th, Jay Kelley, minister, Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday Eve. Worship 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

COLBY EVANGELISM CENTER, Rev. Robert Cooper, 815 West 3rd - 462-2062, Sunday School 9:45; Sunday service 10:00 and 6:30 p.m.; Wednesday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Friday Youth Power Hour at 7:00 p.m.

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, (Disciples of Christ), Pastor Bradley L. Herndon, 385 W. 3rd - 460-2718, Sunday Morning Worship at 9:00 a.m.; Sunday School at 10:30 a.m. E-mail: fcccolby@st-tel.net

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Rev. John L. Schmidt, East 5th & Country Club, 462-3497, Services, Sat., 5:30 p.m., Sunday; Sunday School and Adult Bible Class 9:15 a.m.; Services, 10:30 a.m.

OUR SAVIORS LUTHERAN CHURCH, Brewster, Sunday worship 9:00 a.m.; 2nd Sunday of the month at 8:00 a.m.

PLEASANT HOME CHURCH, Pastor, Charlie Busch, 694-2242, 3190 Road 70, Edson, Worship, 9:00 a.m., Sunday School 10:00 a.m., Evening service, 6:00 p.m.

LEVANT COMMUNITY CHURCH, 205 1st St., Pastor Jerry Vincent, 586-2376, Sunday School (classes for 3 years & up and 3 adult classes) 9:30 a.m., Morning worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday Evening Worship 7:00 p.m.

WINONA METHODIST CHURCH, Rev. Michael Eurit, Sunday School, 10:30 a.m., Morning Worship 9:30 a.m. (CDT)

BREWSTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, PO Box 250, Brewster. Pastor Dorine Chambers, 785-462-6044, Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., Morning Worship, 10:45 a.m.

THE SHEPHERD’S STAFF, REXFORD, Joan Dingwerth, Director, 687-2565

REXFORD COMMUNITY CHURCH, Rexford, Pastor Lane Purcell, 687-3305, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

BREWSTER COMMUNITY CHURCH, Mike Pinkelman, Pastor, Brewster - 694-2720, Sunday School (all ages) 9:30 a.m., Worship Service 10:30 a.m., Bible Study 7:00 p.m., Wed. mornings 6:30 a.m. - Men’s Bible Study, Wed. 7:00 p.m. - Children’s Ministries (Royal Rangers/ Missionettes), Wed. 7:15 p.m. - Intercessory & Prayer, Thurs. 4:00 p.m. - Women’s Bible Study

Catholics, Mormon, Pentecostal churches grow fastest

NEW YORK (AP) — The Assemblies of God, the Mormon church and the Roman Catholic Church were the fastest-growing major denominations in the United States last year, according to the just-released 2006 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches.

The Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal church, grew 1.81 percent to just under 2.8 million members. The Church of Jesus Christ of Lat-

ter-day Saints increased 1.74 percent to nearly 6 million people. And the Catholic Church, by the far the largest denomination in the United States, grew .83 percent to 67.8 million parishioners.

The United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., stayed in the top 10 despite experiencing declines in membership last year.

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