History

Worship music (as a musical sub-genre) became popular in the 1980s, when Christian music publishers such as Maranatha Music, Integrity Music and Vineyard Music started releasing recordings of songs meant for use in local churches, as distinct from the general Christian music category of CCM (Contemporary Christian Music). Worship music was typified by first person language, with lyrics directed toward God from the congregant, and it featured a simple, melodic, choral music format. The musical roots of the genre started long before the 1980s, but the term "worship music" was not used until then.

Worship music was more than just a change in terminology from hymns. The content of lyrics and music took on many popular musical idioms and often personalized the message of the songs to focus on a deeper *worship experience* and intimacy with God. The original moniker of praise music eventually became praise and worship music, and finally has become simply "worship music." All the phrases have become virtually synonymous today. Implicit in early definitions was that *praise* music was usually used to refer to faster, upbeat type of songs, while *worship* music would imply slower, more pensive expressions of adoration and worship to God. While these are not the biblical definitions of those words, they became de-facto definitions for many, due greatly to the labeling of products by music companies.

Early Roots and the Jesus People: 60s & 70s

The term "worship music" did not come into use as a common expression until the mid-90s. The etymology of the phrase is really a progression from the original coined phrase of "praise music," which began appearing and being labeled as such during the early 1970s. This expression was an outgrowth of the music ministries that accompanied the Jesus People movement of the 70s through the US especially as it originated from the Calvary Chapel churches throughout Southern California. The Jesus people also concurrently expanded the notion of popular Christian music with *Jesus music*, which eventually became known as CCM (Contemporary Christian Music).

Much of the original praise music was itself heavily inspired by a series of then "contemporized" church songs written from the lyrics of the Bible, called "Scripture in Song." Those songs were written by David and Dale Garratt of New Zealand and served to ignite music in Calvary Chapel churches (which became Maranatha Music) and other groups worldwide.

Maranatha Music was the main purveyor of the "praise music" label, and carries that banner even today. Songs such as the classic "I Love You, Lord" and "Seek Ye First" became the anthems to an entire generation of believers who came to Christ during this time. Corresponding with the growth of praise music within North American churches, the UK was also churning through cultural shift, and worship leader/songwriter Graham Kendrick emerged as an early influential voice in songwriting for the new "church music" liturgy.

Expanding Through the Church: The 80s

Toward the late 70s and at the start of the 80s, another southern California church-based music group began expanding in popularity – Vineyard Music. Springing up from the music ministries of the Vineyard churches, they reflected very similar style and lyrical content as the early Calvary Chapel/Maranatha Music song content, but began to label their songs as "worship songs." In the mid 80s other companies sprang up to meet the needs of the quickly modernizing church. Musical tastes and styles were rapidly changing as the church struggled to close a gap of nearly fifty years from the modern music of the culture. The 70s, 80s and 90s saw the church close that gap with increasing attentiveness to modern sounds and expressions.

In 1987, a music ministry that birthed "Hosanna Music" began to expand. Originally as direct mail club, eventually changing its name to Integrity Music, they branded the phrase "praise worship" into their products, solidifying the moniker for many church music lovers. Over the next 5-10 years, songwriters and worship leaders such as Don Moen, Ron Kenoly, Kent Henry, Bob Fitts, Lynn Deshazo, Gary Sadler, Daniel Gardner, Billy Funk, Marty Nystrom, Lenny LeBlanc and many other writers worked with producer Tom Brooks and helped fill American churches with new choruses that became the basis of the Integrity song catalog.

Integrity Music would eventually become the largest of the original three "praise & worship" publishers (Integrity, Maranatha and Vineyard). Integrity had a deep impact in denominational churches with its broad musical pallet which included choral musicals (Don Moen), gospel/R&B (Ron Kenoly) and children's worship (Miss Pattycake & the Donut Man) music.

Modernization of Style: The 90s

As the 90s came along, Vineyard Music had expanded as well, and became very popular during the 1994-1998 time frame, when a corresponding revitalization in their churches birthed a plethora of still well-used songs throughout the global church. During that time, Vineyard almost completely labeled its music "Worship Music." It was also during that time that UK influences from modern sounds of worship bands like Delirious?, and writers such as Matt Redman began to appear. Birthed out of the Soul Survivor youth movement in the UK, these writers formed centrally under the Kingsway Music brand, many of whom gave direct acknowledgement regarding their stylistic inspiration and philosophical roots to Vineyard Music writers such as Kevin Prosch and others. After its distribution success with Vineyard Music during the mid 90s, EMI Christian Music Group brought the UK worship of Redman and Delirious? (and others in the Kingsway family) into the North American strata, through the brand "WorshipTogether." The brand grew from 1998 until the present with names such as Delirious?, Matt Redman, Tim Hughes and others.

The 90s also saw a global contribution in church music from Hillsong Australia songwriters and worship leaders writing songs that would sweep the world with popularity and longevity as anthems of the modern church. Originally with worship leaders and songwriters Geoff Bullock, and later Darlene Zschech, Hillsong eventually became the most recognized church community in modern worship songwriting.

In 1994, the first online discussion group appeared related to worship and music (called the "Worship List"). It quickly expanded into a community website called "praise.net" and survives to this

day as the oldest online information center on the topic. Out of that online community, the first online worship and music resource (WorshipMusic.com) was started in 1998.

Popularity And Airplay: 2000 & beyond

The popularity of worship music has grown tremendously since the year 2000, and has seen the release of many new worship music albums by both the major record companies and independent labels. Once relegated to congregational singing only, this explosion brought worship music to the forefront of the Christian music market.

At the turn of the century, some seminal recordings impacted church music greatly. Three of the most influential of those recordings were *Hungry* (Vineyard UK), *Sonicflood* (CCM pop renditions of popular worship songs) and Michael W. Smith's first *Worship* album, all of which expanded the praise and worship genre's influence into every strata of Christian music.

One of the vanguards of church music in the first decade of the 21st century has been the college-age Passion movement (and the sixsteps Records label which was birthed from it) in the United States, which mimicked the form and success of Soul Survivor and Kingsway Music in the UK during the late 90s. Passion conference worship leaders Chris Tomlin, David Crowder, Charlie Hall and others forged ahead to bring worship music into broad popularity through songs which not only took over Sunday mornings at church, but the airwaves of radio stations formerly dedicated only to Christian pop music.