

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

**DOXOLOGY AND DISCIPLESHIP:
PRINCIPLES FOR HOW THE WORSHIP LEADER FUNCTIONS PASTORALLY**

A THESIS PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF WORSHIP STUDIES

BY
ROBERT ZEB BALENTINE

LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

MAY 2017

Copyright © 2017 by Robert Zeb Balentine
All Rights Reserved

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

THESIS PROJECT APPROVAL SHEET

PAUL RUMRILL, D.M.A.

KATHERINE MOREHOUSE, Ph.D.

THE DOCTOR OF WORSHIP STUDIES THESIS PROJECT

Robert Zeb Balentine

Liberty University School of Music, 2017

Mentor: Dr. Paul Rumrill

Many Christian worshipers and clergy misunderstand or undervalue the role that the worship leader has as a pastor and one that helps shepherd and shape the doctrinal beliefs of the church. Likewise, this could lead the worship leader to fail to take an intentional approach to worship planning. This lack of understanding and intentionality helps to contribute to the shallow or flawed theology and biblical illiteracy that plagues the church in America. This topic was chosen to demonstrate how music and song are highly effective tools for pastoring and teaching. This project will highlight three principles for how the worship leader functions pastorally, including an exploration of emphasis on Biblical perspectives on the role of song in this process. The endeavor will evaluate literature on the subject from current scholarly and academic sources; it will present the results and implications of a survey taken from over one hundred participants. Through these findings, modern-day worship leaders can be more aware of their responsibility as pastors so that they can intentionally plan worship to best serve their congregations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I.....	6
Statement of Purpose.....	6
Statement of Limitations.....	8
Theoretical Basis.....	11
Statement of Methodology.....	16
Chapter II.....	22
Taxonomy.....	22
The Worship Leader as a Pastor.....	22
Teaching and Admonishing the People of God.....	30
Comforting Those About to Meet God.....	47
Evangelizing Those Who Do Not Know God.....	49
Chapter III.....	60
Introduction.....	60
Step-by-Step Measures of What the Research Is.....	60
Philosophical Intentions.....	61
Conclusion.....	64
Chapter IV.....	65
Description.....	65
Basic Statistics.....	66
Questions for Future Research.....	84
Conclusion.....	88
Chapter V.....	89
Introduction.....	89
The Worship Leader as Pastor.....	89
Teaching and Admonishing the People of God.....	94

Comforting Those About to Meet God.....	99
Evangelizing Those Who Do Not Know God.....	102
Conclusion.....	105
Bibliography.....	106
Appendix A: Survey Questions.....	110
Appendix B: IRB Approval.....	113

Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of Purpose

The way that many Christians, pastors, and even worship leaders today view the ministry of worship leading falls short of the true purpose for the role. The focus of today seems to be on the cutting edge of musical style and technology, pandering to the musical preferences of the congregation, or performing a worship concert week in and week out. The true purpose of the worship pastor is much more humble, intentional, and ultimately fulfilling.

The worship leader has the important task of pastoring Christ's church by teaching and instructing them in sound doctrine through the services that he plans, and the choices of songs, scriptures, prayers, etc. that he makes. The goal of this Thesis Project is to highlight three principles for how worship leaders function pastorally through the songs they choose to sing in their worship gatherings.

What led me to this particular topic is my own personal journey as a minister and as a Christ-follower. I have been a musician since the age of eleven, when I received my first guitar. I became a believer in Christ at the age of fifteen, in the Spring semester of my freshmen year in high school. I soon began to sense the call to ministry and a year and a half after my conversion I surrendered my life to the ministry, one month before my junior year of high school.

When word began to spread of this decision that I had made, everyone that knew me assumed that I was surrendering to music ministry as I was a musician and had a passion for all

things music. But, strangely, music ministry didn't appeal to me at the time. I found that kind of ministry boring as my church would have been considered just a small step (stylistically) beyond a traditional church in its approach to worship music; in terms of sound and color, this approach was musically unappealing to me. I also didn't see any long-term, eternal value in music ministry, as my theology of such things was far from fully developed. I did, however, have a strong desire for Bible-teaching ministry.

When I went to college to work towards a Bachelor's degree, I chose to attend Central Baptist College in Conway, Arkansas where I decided to pursue not a church music degree but a degree in Biblical Studies with an emphasis on pastoral leadership. It wasn't until a few years later that I realized that music ministry is in fact, a pastoral ministry. I think that God used my musical background, my gifting to teach and preach the Bible, and my educational choices to lead me towards a strong conviction and passion for this perspective of music ministry and how the worship leader has a significant role in helping to pastor and shepherd God's church.

It is my goal that through my academic and applied research that I will be able to further advance this perspective on the matter. As part of my research, I will review the literature of books and articles that have been written by others before me to gain a broader perspective on the issue. Additionally, I plan on surveying pastors, worship leaders, church staff members, and Christian laymen on this subject and to gather the perspectives of these people in how they view the role of the worship leader as a pastor of the church.

In an attempt to make this Thesis Project as clear as possible, to avoid any potential confusion, and to ensure that I have communicated as effectively as possible, there are some terms that must be clearly defined before my writing continues. First, I will define worship as "ascribing worth" to someone or something, or more specifically: "our correct response to Who

God is and what He has done.” Unless otherwise noted, worship will always be referring to the worship of God. Secondly, the term “Theology” will be defined as the “beliefs/thoughts about God.” Third, “Doctrine” will refer to teaching—whether it be teaching Scripture or theology. And finally, the term “Liturgy” will be in reference to the order and structure of a Christian worship gathering.

Statement of Limitations

Though I feel strongly about this view of worship ministry and the role that music has in discipling and teaching the congregation, the points made in this Thesis Project come with a certain degree of limitations. These limitations exist both by default and by design. Before discussing these limitations, it must be noted what this Thesis Project is not designed to accomplish.

The purpose of this particular Thesis Project is not for music ministry to take the place of, or even to diminish the importance of preaching, Bible study, small groups, and one-on-one discipleship relationships. Nor is it designed to diminish the importance of the role of the senior pastor, or any other person within the church that exercises gifts of leadership, teaching, and the like. The importance of those aspects of Christian leadership, ministry, and teaching cannot be overstated and are necessary for the sanctification and spiritual development of every single follower of Christ. It is my aim to simply elevate the awareness of music ministry’s capacities in discipling Christians—a role which can operate this way on a level comparable to other ministry leadership contexts.

The first kinds of limitations in this project are the limitations on research. In reviewing many works of literature for this topic, I have discovered that there is a general lack of scholarly information and work being done on the subject. Many books address the issue in a single chapter, but I have found that there is a significant void of entire books being written on this topic.

Also, when researching through means of a survey, there is a legitimate possibility that those being surveyed could define terms differently than I do. For example, if they define terms like “theology”, “gospel”, or “worship” differently than I, then it will certainly affect the findings of the survey. There is also not really any way to absolutely ensure that those being surveyed are from a traditionally evangelical position theologically—even though the survey is intended to measure the mindset and practice of evangelical congregations. The survey will be designed to obtain data that is as clear as possible, but there is a legitimate potential for some minor confusion on said matters.

Other kinds of limitations are so by design. There were intentional decisions that were made to limit my research scope in certain ways in order to produce a project that is focused and concise. My research will be limited by a lack of results from my theories. Most of the theories in this Thesis Project have not been implemented to their fullest. This is due to the fact that I would still be considered young in the ministry and I have not had long enough tenures at churches to see long-term effects of this approach to ministry.

It is also worth noting that success in this aspect of ministry is difficult to measure as there will be little in the way of concrete evidence or results to observe. It may take many years for a researcher to see any kind of significant fruit. Since most worship leaders have short

tenures, it will be difficult to find research done on this subject with tangible and measurable results to prove the theories presented in the thesis.

Furthermore, I will not be collecting any data from my survey participants that relate to information about their ministry tenures. Though, it would be interesting to research how ministry tenure affects the theories presented in this particular thesis project, I will not be collecting such data as I believe it would be unnecessary when presenting my theories and conclusions.

I will purposely limit the amount of clergy that I will collect data and information from. My survey participants will be primarily laypeople within the church, with only a minority of them being pastors, worship leaders, and other clergy. The purpose of this limitation is to collect some amount of data from clergy to gain their perspective on the topic, but to primarily gain the perspective of Christian laypeople.

My research will be purposely limited in the fact that denominational distinctive and perspectives will not be explored. Though, there are assumptions that can be made about which denominations are more prone to view the worship leader as having a pastoral role and which do not, they won't be discussed and data will not be gathered.

I also purposefully limited my research by having certain criteria that people must meet in order to be able to participate in my survey. The criteria that the subjects must meet include: being eighteen years old or older, self-identifying as a Christian, and attending church at least forty times a year. Additionally, the subjects cannot be related to me or be members of the church in which I serve on staff.

Finally, theological views on the gender roles and distinctions between senior pastors and/or worship leaders won't be discussed. For example: Does the Bible permit a female to be a pastor? Or, can a female be a worship leader at a church that doesn't allow a female to be a senior pastor? This kind of research could be beneficial for another project and for women who are serving as worship leaders in churches and/or denominations that do not permit female pastors. It could provide some insight into how they can still provide pastoral services without being viewed as a pastor. But in order to keep the project focused and concise, this will be a limitation that I place upon my project.

Theoretical Basis

The biblical establishment of pastors began with precursors such as leaders, prophets, and apostles. God raised up many men to function in roles like this. Men such as Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, and King David. Psalm 23 describes God as our shepherd and Jesus gives more clarity on that by describing Himself as the "Good Shepherd." (John 10:11)

Furthermore, the New Testament uses several different terms to describe different aspects of the role of pastor. These terms include: Elder (I Timothy 5:19), Overseer (1st Timothy 3:1), Shepherd (1st Peter 5:2), and the most popular term today is frequently translated from the New Testament: Pastor (Ephesians 4:11). The titles of "elder" and "overseer" emphasize the leader's authority in the church, while the titles of "shepherd" and "pastor" emphasize his servitude and role to minister and build up the body of Christ.¹

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 913-914.

If worship leaders are to be considered pastors, there are many responsibilities that the pastor has that are outlined in the New Testament. They are to care for the sick and needy (James 5:14), to shepherd and be an example to the flock (1st Peter 5:2-3), be devoted to prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4), teach what accords with sound doctrine (Titus 2:1), reprove, rebuke, and exhort the congregation (2nd Timothy 4:2), guard against false teaching and false teachers (Romans 16:17-18/Titus 1:10-13), equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12), and to do the work of an evangelist (2nd Timothy 4:5). In 1st Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 Paul outlines the qualifications of a pastor. Living out the qualifications and responsibilities of the pastor will empower worship leaders to fulfill the three specific roles that will be discussed in this project most effectively.

In Ephesians 4:11-16, the Apostle Paul discusses the role of the pastor when he says:

“And [God] gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Also in Acts 20:27-28 Paul admonishes the elders/pastors at Ephesus by saying, “I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with His own blood.”

One of the primary functions of a pastor is feeding the church with the Word of God. If the worship leader functions as a pastor, it is worth noting what means and methods he uses in doing so. When observing the theoretical basis of this topic, it is also worth noting the relationship between this topic and the current best practices in accepted various ministry fields. Worship leaders can come alongside the senior pastor of their church and together they can fulfill this call and duty of the office of pastor. The two can have the same goal, but two different means to reach said goal. One uses a sermon, the other uses songs.

Colossians 3:16 states: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” If this verse is true in that the way we allow the Word to dwell within us and the way we teach and admonish one another is through the singing of songs in our corporate worship gatherings, there are some modern worship leaders that apply this verse in their methods of worship planning.

Bob Kauflin implements what he calls “The Twenty Year Rule.” He describes this rule by posing the question: If someone was born in our church and grew up singing our songs over the course of twenty years, how well would they know God?”² This approach requires the worship planner to look far beyond a week-to-week or even a month-to-month approach to worship leadership and planning. Kauflin wisely has a vision for his worship ministry and how he applies this verse that spans decades. This is a vision for ministry that will leave an impact on the congregation long after the worship leader’s ministry is over.

Dr. Lavon Gray, a professor at Liberty University and the Worship Pastor at First Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi, has a four step process that he goes through when deciding

² Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 119.

which songs should be sung in the church to shape its doctrinal beliefs. He has recruited a team of people that he trusts are biblically and theologically competent that help him in this process of song vetting.

The first step is to give the song or songs to the team where they will critique them musically and lyrically. The team observes whether or not they think the songs are biblically accurate and theologically strong, also, they will see if it they are singable congregationally. Next, the team will discuss how each one evaluated the song. Thirdly, the team will sing through it to get a feel for whether or not they think it will connect with the congregation. And the fourth step is having a follow up meeting the next week to review any problems with content that may have arisen. If the song meets all of the requirements and makes it through the entire four-step process, then Dr. Gray will introduce it to the congregation.³

Mike Cospers, worship pastor at Sojourn Community Church in Louisville, Kentucky notes the use of liturgy as his method of fulfilling this approach to ministry. He advocates a Christ-Centered liturgy that retells the story of the Gospel through the order of service. For example, the elements of liturgy will include: The Holiness of God (adoration), the fact that we are sinners (confession and lament), the reality that Jesus saves us from our sins (assurance, thanksgiving, petition, and instruction), and the fact that Jesus sends us on a mission (charge and blessing)⁴

Stephen Miller, one of the worship pastors of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas has a similar approach to liturgy, which he adopts from Isaiah 6:1-8. Miller describes this passage as highlighting five “movements” applicable to liturgy: Movement 1 is a Call to

³ Lavon Gray, *A Theological Melting Pot-Part 4*.

⁴ Mike Cospers, *Rhythms of Grace*, 122.

Worship; Movement 2 is Adoration, Praise, and Thanksgiving; Movement 3 is Confession and Repentance; Movement 4 is Assurance; and Movement 5 is Sending and Commitment.⁵

The conviction that worship planners have a role in shaping the theology of the church is one that is shared among many modern worship ministers as well as by Christian leaders all throughout church history. The first and second century Christians sang Psalms, Scripture texts, hymns of doctrine, and spiritual songs.⁶ Before long, false teachers began to adopt a musical approach to theology shaping and used it to deceive and mislead people into heresies. For example, the Gnostics and Marcionites used music to promote their heretical teachings. They wrote many songs that denied the Deity of Christ.⁷ To counter this approach, Ambrose of Milan wrote doctrinally sound hymns in order to combat false doctrine and to provide strong, theological training for believers.⁸

Eventually, Gregorian Chant became the predominate form of song in European Christian worship gatherings until the ministry of Martin Luther. Towns and Whaley note the music ministry of Luther: “Luther was a musician—equally gifted as a vocalist and a lutenist [guitarist]. He believed music to be of utmost importance in worship, and at times he used it to teach doctrine. In fact, Luther believed that he often won more converts through his singing than he did through his preaching.”⁹

This method of teaching through music continued throughout the Great Awakenings through hymn writers such as Charles Wesley, Thomas Hastings, Fanny Crosby, Isaac Watts, and William Gatsby. Towns and Whaley describe this approach during this time in American church history: “By mid-century, hymns were consistently being used in worship—especially in

⁵ Stephen Miller, *Worship Leaders, We Are Not Rock Stars*, 84-87.

⁶ Donald Hustad, *Jubilate II: Church Music in Worship and Renewal*, 164-165.

⁷ Elmer Towns and Vernon Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 77-78.

⁸ *Ibid.* 107.

⁹ *Ibid.* 108.

rural and less aristocratic communities. Hymn writers strategically used hymns as a means for communicating theology and doctrine. Hymn writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were concerned with composing songs that expressed both doctrine and personal experience.”¹⁰ Thus the use of music in worship as an effective means of shaping theology even throughout the eras of the Church Age, whether it be incidental or deeply intentional.

Statement of Methodology

In order to understand the various ways that the worship leader pastors and shapes the theology of the church, I will be reviewing current literature on the subject in chapter two of my Thesis. In the third chapter of the project, I will be conducting a survey in order to learn how Christian laymen and clergy view this role of the worship leader and how congregational singing has influenced their conversion and sanctification. Reviewing literature is a necessary step in the research and writing process because it allows the researcher to be more informed about the subject that will be integrated. The literature review will present varied and sometimes even conflicting points of view, and will emphasize the material that is already available on certain facets of the subject matter.

By being well-informed of current literature, my own perspective will be challenged, expanded, and reinforced. The church is facing a resurgence of theologically and biblically-driven worship leaders. Thanks to men like Bob Kauflin, Matt Boswell, Michael Bleecker, Stephen Miller, and many more, there is a renewed emphasis on sound doctrine, rich theology,

¹⁰ Ibid. 126.

and Christ-centered worship. I will be reviewing the writings of these men along with many of their colleagues.

In Chapter three, I will be conducting the survey of pastors, worship leaders, church staff members, and Christian laymen to gain an understanding of their perspective of the worship leader's role as a teacher in the church and the power that music has as a tool for such teaching. I will discuss what my research is and detail this with step by step measures. I will also discuss the philosophical intentions behind the questions that are in my survey and what I hope to discover through them.

Once the survey is completed, I will supply an overview of the findings through the use of graphs, charts, and tables. This will be reported on in chapter four of my Thesis Project. This data will ultimately serve as a measuring tool to gauge the basic understanding of the subject matter as well as the need for such a project to be written. I will also discuss some of the potential weaknesses and flaws of my survey. This will be accomplished by pointing out how some of the questions could be misunderstood by the subjects and/or how the subjects' responses could be potentially inaccurate. I will also discuss how research on the matter could be continued and expounded upon.

In the fifth chapter, I will discuss my conclusions and applications of my findings. These conclusions and applications will be discussed through the grid of my three principles. The first principle is that the worship leader functions as a pastor by "teaching and admonishing God's people."

By recognizing and understanding the fact that the worship leader is essentially a pastor, the worship leader should be expected to meet the biblical qualifications of a pastor/elder that is

described in 1st Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. As it relates to this Thesis topic, the worship leader most definitely should fulfill the qualification of being “able to teach” which is found in 1st Timothy 3:2. Titus 1:9 provides more detail in this expectation as Paul states that “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also rebuke those who contradict it. In order for the worship leader to teach sound doctrine through song and fulfill these two verses, the worship leader must have a sufficient understanding of the gospel and of general Bible knowledge.

The primary verse that convinces me of this principle is Colossians 3:16, which says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...[by] singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.” The Apostle Paul writes something similar in Ephesians 5:18-19 when he instructs the church to be “filled with the Spirit” by singing. The application to these verses that I will expound upon is how through the singing of Scripture, the worshiper will be able to memorize and retain those Scriptures for many years. By singing, an outward expression, a Christian can internalize and fill his or her mind with the Word of God.

To fulfill Paul’s instructions for congregational signing to “let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly”, I will demonstrate how and why it is necessary and beneficial for God’s people to sing His words back to Him in our worship gatherings. By worshiping in this way, not only is God honored, but our souls are fed with the power of His word, by singing it, it helps us to commit God’s Word to memory that will last a lifetime. One of the ways that the pastor and/or worship pastor teaches is by helping the congregation commit God’s word to memory. The worship pastor has an advantage in fulfilling this function due to the fact that he uses music as a tool to do so.

In Scripture, we see that songs were often written, especially in the Old Testament, in order to pass down information about God's character, nature, and works. This practice is still beneficial today as we can sing of the attributes of God, and how He has demonstrated those attributes throughout history.

The first Scripture that demonstrates this principle is found in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus. This chapter records a song that was written by Moses immediately after leading the Children of Israel to cross the Red Sea. In this song, Moses writes the story of how God had proven Himself faithful and how He led His people to freedom and deliverance. Moses' intention for writing the song was so that it would be passed down from generation to generation. As fathers would sing this song to their children, they would be learning about this crucial event in the history of their people.

Moses did a similar thing again in Deuteronomy chapter 32, when he wrote another song just before he died and the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land. Moses knew that his time was coming to an end and he wanted to communicate some great attributes and acts of God to his people. Just like before, Moses' intention of writing the song was so that it would be passed down from generation to generation so that these truths about who God is and what He has done would be remembered.

The Psalms state this truth very plainly. Psalm 96:2-3 says, "Sing to the LORD, bless His name; *tell* of His salvation from day to day. *Declare* His glory among the nations, his marvelous works among the peoples!" Psalm 105:1-2 says, "Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon His name; *make known his deeds* among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; tell of all his wondrous words!" And Psalm 107:22, "*Tell* of His deeds in songs of joy!" These statements from the Psalms are not coincidental. God was very intentional when He inspired

those words to be written. He wants the truth about His character, nature, and works to be told through song so that they would be remembered for many years.

Colossians 3:16 demonstrates the fact that one of the ways congregational singing teaches is through admonishing the singer. This word “Admonish” means to “warn.” What are we supposed to warn each other about through our songs? We are to warn about God’s commandments and the consequences resulting from disobeying those commandments. We can see in Scripture how songs have been used as prophetic warnings to God’s people. In order to fulfill this role, the worship leader should provide the congregation with a balanced theological and lyrical diet of songs that not only comfort, but challenge them as well—our songs should call us to action and repentance.

In 1st Chronicles 25:1, we see this being done when “David and the chiefs of the service also set apart for the service the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who prophesied with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals.” Many of the Old Testament prophecies were warnings for the Israelites to return to God and obey his commandments. These three men warned the people of God by putting their prophecies to music in order for them to be remembered.

The second way that the worship leader functions as a pastor is by “evangelizing those who do not know God.” In order to pastor the church, the first step is to build the church. I find this principle in Acts 16:16-40. This is when Paul and Silas were in prison and they spent the entire night singing hymns of worship. As a result, the people in the jail, in particular, the jailer, heard the Gospel being proclaimed through song. That night God saved that jailer, largely because the seeds of the Gospel were planted in his heart through song. The great thing is, he went home and shared the same Gospel that Paul and Silas sung about and his entire household

was converted. (Acts 16:33) Every week, the worship leader has the pastoral role of singing the gospel, not only to the saved, but also to those who are not yet saved.

And finally, I will discuss how the worship leader pastors the church by “Comforting Those About to Meet God.” In the final moments of a Christian’s life, the songs they grew up singing in church gatherings can comfort them in their final moments, and the songs that the worship leader chooses to sing on Sunday mornings will one day shepherd the saint into eternity.

This principle comes from the words of Jesus on the Cross. In Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34 he says, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.” And in Luke 23:46 he says, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” What is so interesting about these things spoken by Jesus is that he was quoting from Psalm 22:1 and 31:5.

These were songs that Jesus had sang His entire earthly life as he went to the Temple to worship and sing Psalms. And it was in Jesus’ final moments that he quoted lyrics to songs of worship. Those truths that he was accustomed to singing brought him comfort during His death. I will use these Scriptures to make the point that our shepherding and teaching goes far beyond Sunday morning worship, but we are teaching people the truths of God and His Gospel that will one day shepherd them from this life into the next.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

TAXONOMY

Christian authors that have written on the subject of Christian worship practices largely agree that congregational singing is not only an effective tool, but was intended by God to be used to shape the singer's theological beliefs. It is so universally accepted that this author has yet to come across a Christian writing that disagrees with this perspective. There are little to no authors writing entire books on the subject, but there are many that have written chapters or brief articles about it.

Furthermore, many works of literature confirm the belief that the worship leader is not simply a teacher, but acts as a pastor as well. Many of these works will be discussed in order to strengthen the argument that music ministers should have a pastoral perspective and approach to their ministries. The literature that will be discussed in this chapter will be reviewed in order to provide various perspectives on the three principles that this Thesis Project seeks to expound upon. The literature review will also serve to affirm the opinions and perspectives that will be discussed further.

THE WORSHIP LEADER AS A PASTOR

By nature of the worship leader being the second most visible leader in most churches, the role of the worship leader is essentially a pastoral role. In order to be most fruitful, worship

leaders must think of themselves as “pastors of worship.” Mike Cospers urges worship pastors to consider a “better vision” for what they are called to do.¹¹

Worship leaders should view their role in the church as that of a shepherding and pastoral role. He states that, “Planning and leading worship is a pastoral task. As we step onto the platform on Sundays, we do so as undershepherds of God’s church. The songs and prayers we place on the congregation’s lips will, to varying degrees, be taken with them into the rest of their week.”¹²

John Witvliet notes the pastoral responsibility of the worship leader:

As worship leaders, we have the important and terrifying task of placing words of prayer on people’s lips. It happens every time we choose a song and write a prayer. We also have the holy task of being stewards of God’s Word. Our choices of Scripture and themes for worship represent a degree of control over people’s spiritual diets, over how they feed on the bread of life.¹³

Not only should worship leaders have this particular perspective on this position, but the congregation would do well to view them as pastors as well. In *The Worship Leader’s Handbook*, Tom Kraeuter says:

We must understand, affirm, and accept the role of those who lead in music and worship. There is much scriptural precedent for receiving individuals in their given offices. We should not quench their ministry by dismissing them as those who provide only background music and emotionalism. A music leader who truly understands his role before God and the people will add much power and life to the overall ministry of the church.¹⁴

¹¹ Mike Cospers, *Rhythms of Grace*, 169.

¹² Ibid. 170.

¹³ John Witvliet, *Seeking Understanding*, 282.

¹⁴ Tom Kraeuter, *The Worship Leader’s Handbook*, 22.

Out of all of the other staff or volunteer positions, the worship leader spends the most time on the platform, thus making this a position of incredible influence. They lead more people at one time than any other staff member, so in order to be the most fruitful in their role, the worship leader must realize that they are doing more than just making music on Sunday mornings. They are shepherding God’s people with the Gospel of Christ.

Constance Cherry refers to the worship leader as a “pastoral musician” with the emphasis of music simply being a tool to serve a “greater purpose” of caring for the souls of those under the worship leader’s care.¹⁵ She states, “A pastoral musician is a spiritual leader with developed skill and God-given responsibility for selecting, employing, and/or leading music in worship in ways that serve the actions of the liturgy, engage worshipers as full participants, and reflect upon biblical, theological, and contextual implications, all for the ultimate purpose of glorifying God.”¹⁶

John Witvliet states: “What the church needs most is not another hymnal, larger choirs, more technology, a revised prayer book, or another set of published scripts. What the church needs most is discerning, prayerful, joyous people who treat their work as worship planners and leaders as a holy, pastoral calling.”¹⁷

In *The Worship Pastor*, Zac Hicks discusses the significant role of the worship leader and how essentially this leadership position is a pastoral role. He makes the argument that worship pastors are ministers of God’s Word who just happen to use the medium of music to communicate it. Essentially, God has given the worship pastor to the responsibility of shaping the theology of the church. He says, “Each and every week, you shape the beliefs of the people

¹⁵ Constance Cherry, *The Music Architect*, 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 3.

¹⁷ John Witvliet, *Worship Seeking Understanding*, 248.

who gather. Your songs and words don't just inspire. They teach. They help people answer their basic questions: Who is God? What is He like? Who am I? How do I look at this world? Your words and songs shape people's theology, and that kind of teaching is pastoral work. Ready or not, you're a pastor."¹⁸

Without this perspective, the worship leader would have a very short-sighted view of their role in the church and not bear the fruit of ministry that God intends for them to. Without understanding the concept of being a "pastoral musician"—or the reality that music is not an end in itself, but a means to an end—the role of the worship leader would be very shallow and the results would be fleeting.

In *Worship Matters*, Bob Kauflin notes the nature of the worship leader functioning as a pastor and how it can be dangerous if the worship leader fails to have this perspective of leadership. He says, "Leading worship is a pastoral role before it's a musical one. Music certainly plays a part, but without a pastor's involvement, the songs we sing may do more harm than good."¹⁹

Kauflin makes his point even further when he adds, "God has called pastors to feed, lead, care for, and protect the members of the church. We tend to think preaching and personal pastoral care are the only ways we can fulfill those ministry responsibilities. But let's not overlook how corporate worship—thoughtfully, passionately, and skillfully led—can be a means of fulfilling these goals."²⁰

¹⁸ Zac Hicks, *The Worship Pastor*, 14.

¹⁹ Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 250.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 251.

Likewise, in *Worship Leaders, We Are Not Rock Stars*, Stephen Miller agrees that the role of the worship leader goes far beyond being simply a church musician, but the one in this role must function as a pastor of the church:

When a worship leader leads the church in corporate worship through singing, he or she is taking on the role of Christ's undershepherd, helping to create an atmosphere and environment where people can meet with God and find spiritual refreshing and nourishment. By deciding which songs the local church sings, a worship leader is exercising his pastoral responsibility. He must discern the doctrines he is teaching to whomever he is leading and shepherd them into a greater understanding of gospel truth.²¹

Furthermore Miller states:

A worship leader is not just a singer or musician or artist. He is not a marketing guru or someone who knows what music people like. He is a pastor or deacon; a servant, a steward, and watchman over God's church. He is a teacher of doctrine, accountable to God for his teaching and his life. He must hold this tension, being neither puffed up by his position or thinking of his role as less important than it is.²²

Able to Teach

If the role of the worship leader is that of a pastoral one, it must be understood that they must be "able to teach" as the Apostle Paul noted as one of the qualifications of a pastor in I Timothy 3:2. He also noted in Titus 1:9 that a pastor must "hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine." Additionally, in Titus 2:1 Paul instructs Timothy specifically, and in effect, all pastors to "teach what accords with sound doctrine."

²¹ Stephen Miller, *Worship Leaders, We Are Not Rock Stars*, 59

²² *Ibid.* 63.

In *Doxology & Theology*, worship pastor Matt Boswell states: “Because the worship leader is a pastoral role, he must be able to teach. While we most often think of teaching happening through preaching in worship, we should remember that the songs, readings, prayers, spoken elements, and even the structure of worship educate, build up, and form the people of God.”²³

Though the worship pastor may or may not have the skills and/or gifting to stand in the pulpit and preach, or teach a Bible study in a small group or classroom setting, they must be able to clearly and verbally communicate the Gospel of Christ and the Truth of Scripture. As Boswell noted, this “teaching” can be done in various ways for the worship leader.

If the worship pastor is going to be an effective teacher, he must have sufficient biblical knowledge and discernment. Stephen Miller states, “By deciding which songs the local church sings, a worship leader is exercising his pastoral responsibility. He must discern the doctrines he is teaching to whomever he is leading and shepherd them into a greater understanding of gospel truth.”²⁴

In *Keys to Becoming an Effective Worship Leader*, Tom Kraeuter discusses the importance of the worship leader being biblically and theologically competent. He emphasizes the importance of biblical training over musical training:

Some years ago someone asked me this question: “Is it more important for a full-time worship leader to have a musical degree or a degree in biblical studies?” Although I had never thought about this before, without hesitating I answered, “Biblical studies.” Now, nearly twenty years after writing the original edition of this book, I am even more convinced of this. A solid understanding of theology is far more important than a thorough knowledge of music. I have seen and heard

²³ Matt Boswell, *Doxology & Theology*, 34.

²⁴ Miller, 59.

about too many worship leaders who have wreaked havoc on their congregations because of a lack of knowledge of God.²⁵

Pastor and Worship Leader at Home

A crucial part of the worship leader realizing and fulfilling his role as a pastor over the flock of God is that he must be faithful to pastor the flock that is in his own household. Paul says in Titus 1:6 that the pastor must love his wife and his children must be believers. In I Timothy 3:4-5, he says that “[the pastor] must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?”

Psalm 78 is written by Asaph, an Old Testament worship leader, who notes the important role of pastoring his home, proclaiming that he must “not hide [truth] from [his] children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.” (v 4)

Matt Boswell states: “The home is often the most overlooked sphere of worship. Homes matter to us because they matter to God. If the worship leader cannot lead his own wife and children well, he should not attempt to lead the bride of Christ.”²⁶ He also adds, “Our primary flock is our family, and we are their primary pastor.”²⁷

Boswell’s *Doxology & Theology* places such a strong emphasis on worship leaders being pastoral in their perspective and being committed and capable bible-teachers, it was a necessary and logical step for him to take in discussing the aspect of pastoring and teaching his family. In

²⁵ Tom Kraeuter, *Keys to Becoming an Effective Worship Leader*, 40.

²⁶ Matt Boswell, *Doxology & Theology*, 38-39.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 39.

order to be truly faithful pastors and teachers, the worship leader must not neglect the worship and teaching that happens in his home.

Secondary Pastors

Though worship leaders function as pastors, they are not the primary leader of the church. They must learn to not only lead, but to follow as well. In *Leading from the Second Chair*, Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson discuss this concept as being a “second chair leader.” They say that, “being in the second chair is the ultimate leadership paradox. It is the paradox of being a leader and a subordinate, having a deep role and a wide one, and being content with the present while continuing to dream about the future. To those who thrive in this role, whether for a season or for the long run, learn to live with the tension that this creates.”²⁸ Furthermore, they say that “a second chair leader is a person in a subordinate role whose influence with others adds value throughout the organization.”²⁹

Martin E. Hawkins writes a book entitled, *The Associate Pastor*. This book discusses how the secondary leaders have an important role in following the lead of the senior pastor while helping him lead and pastor as well. He discusses the aspect of this calling being one of a supportive leadership position: “Associate pastors are specialized in the areas they lead. But whether a church has associate pastors or assistant pastors, or a little of both, the assistant pastor or associate pastor’s position is a supportive leadership position.”³⁰

²⁸ Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair*, 1.

²⁹ Ibid. 1.

³⁰ Martin Hawkins, *The Associate Pastor*, 17.

Pastoring the Worship Team

If the worship leader functions as a pastor to the entire church, and more specifically to his own family, the worship leader must also remember to function as a pastor to his own worship team. This will be the people in the church that will be his most direct circle of influence. As he busies himself trying to serve and pastor the congregation, through worship planning and rehearsals, he must not neglect the spiritual health of those with who he works the closest with. In his book, *Worship Foundry*, Jamie Harvill points out this responsibility of the worship pastor:

The ultimate goal of a worship leader is to assist the pastor and staff in leading the congregation toward maturity in Christ. It is also our duty to create a nurturing environment within the teams we lead and in smaller group settings within the church. Many of our worship team members consider the worship ministry their primary point of personal and spiritual contact within the church. Therefore, it's important to implement "member care" as a vital part of the worship ministry. Member care involves ministering to each other, just as any small group or Sunday school class would.³¹

TEACHING AND ADMONISHING THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The Word, Song, and Spiritual Disciplines

The intake of Scripture is essential for the spiritually healthy Christian. Singing Scriptural songs is a highly effective tool for growing and equipping the believer with the Word of God. Being filled with the Word of God through the singing of Scripture, requires that the Christian be consistently singing songs that are rich in sound doctrine, making good use of God's Word.

³¹ Jamie Harvill, *Worship Foundry*, 24.

In his book *The Contemporary Christian* John Stott notes the importance of God's Word in Christian worship practices: "God must speak to us before we have any liberty to speak to him. He must disclose to us who he is before we can offer him what we are in acceptable worship. The worship of God is always a response to the Word of God. Scripture wonderfully directs and enriches our worship."³²

In his book, *Worship Matters*, Bob Kauflin makes this point by saying, "Singing God's Word can include more than reciting specific verses in song. If the Word of Christ is going to 'dwell in [us] richly', we need songs that explain, clarify, and expound on what God's Word says. We need songs that have substantive, theologically rich, biblically faithful lyrics. A consistent diet of shallow, subjective worship songs tends to produce shallow, subjective Christians."³³ He also notes that "Songs are de facto theology. They teach us who God is, what he's like, and how to relate to him. One way of doing this is to use Scripture songs that quote specific passages of the Bible."³⁴

Kauflin's perspective on the use of our worship songs accurately represents the role of the worship leader as a teacher. Songs should not be selected based primarily on popularity or how pleasing they are musically. Instead, the songs a congregation sings must be chosen with great care and intentionality. Just as a preaching pastor carefully thinks through which Scripture texts or books of the Bible he needs to preach in order to nurture a congregation of well-rounded believers, so the worship leader should demonstrate that same amount of care in selecting the songs for congregational singing.

³² John Stott, *The Contemporary Christian*, 174.

³³ Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 92.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 92.

In *Worship Leaders, We Are Not Rock Stars*, Stephen Miller goes on to further this perspective when he says:

The songs we sing teach us theology. For better or worse, as worship leaders, the songs we choose to sing with our churches will inevitably shape the way they view God and interact with Him. Songs that are rich with gospel truth and weighty in God-centered, Christ-honoring content will shape worshipers who understand and adore God, while deficient, flimsy, man-centered songs will produce a lack of understanding of who God actually is, which leads to deficient, flimsy, man-centered worship. If we are to worship God, we must know who He really is.³⁵

Stephen Miller also notes:

When we are leading our people in worship through singing, we are actually putting words into their mouths to sing to God. Therefore, it is imperative that we guard with all diligence the songs that we choose for our people to sing and be careful to maintain the doctrinal integrity of the content we are teaching. It must be truth in song every time. No exceptions.³⁶

Though it is clear that the content of our worship songs will serve to shape our understanding of God and His Word, the theological distinctives of each denomination are gradually being blurred as it relates to the worship songs that are being selected. In *Hungry for Worship*, Dr. Lavon Gray states: “Today the supply of theologically unvetted worship songs is vast. Continued use of these songs in worship through the next decade will lead to the continuing breakdown of the distinct theological characteristics that defined churches for decades in favor of a convergent theology integrated beliefs from across the theological spectrum.”³⁷

³⁵ Stephen Miller, *Worship Leaders, We Are Not Rock Stars*, 71-72.

³⁶ Ibid. 73.

³⁷ Lavon Gray, *Hungry for Worship*, 124.

Gray notes many factors that are contributing to this problem. One of the factors being that fewer and fewer churches are singing out of hymnals. Each denomination used to have their own hymnal that compiled a collection of hymns based specifically on the denomination's theological convictions. Now, instead of singing out of a denominational hymnal, churches are gathering their collection of songs from songwriters with all kinds of backgrounds and doctrinal beliefs.

In *Doxology & Theology*, Matt Boswell opens the book by saying:

One of the greatest needs of the modern church is theologically driven worship leaders. The church is starving for worship leaders who will teach them to sing about the great gospel of Christ in all its richness. This need for theologically driven worship leaders exists in large part because many believe that worship leadership and theological aptitude are mutually exclusive. Theology, they believe, is the occupation of pastors and professors, while worship is the business of church musicians and songwriters.³⁸

Theological competence is a necessary, but often overlooked quality in today's worship leader. Boswell and Gray's perspectives on the theological worship leader are in accord. While Boswell notes the importance of worship leaders to be "theologically driven," Gray goes as far as to say that worship leaders are the "theological filters" for the church.³⁹ Both men agree that the role of the worship leader is that of a theologian and a teacher. Similar to being filled with sound doctrine through music and song, much has been said about its ability to aid a person in memorizing and retaining information.

³⁸ Matt Boswell, *Doxology & Theology*, 1.

³⁹ Gray, 133.

Singing and Scripture Memory

The Reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin had a significant influence on congregational singing as we know it today. Though Luther took a creative approach to worship by writing many original hymns, Calvin was much more strict and believed that Christians should only sing the Psalms or songs from Scripture.⁴⁰ Bryan Chapell notes: “Calvin’s Regulative Principle...led him to the conclusion that songs in formal worship should be the Word of God, and thus he published psalters and largely limited the congregation to psalm singing.”⁴¹

Herbert Lockyer noted this tension in Christian worship:

Early Christians were singing Christians, of that there is no doubt. But the nature of *what* Christians were to sing became one of the most significant controversies of the early Church and continued to cause discord for centuries. And what was the issue at the center of this controversy? Whether or not songs worthy of Christian worship could be composed by individuals—or must the songs, choruses and hymns sung in worship come directly from quoted Scripture?⁴²

Though many might think of Calvin’s approach to only singing Scripture to be a bit restrictive, it is admirable to think that he was leading his congregation to sing God’s words back to Him. And no doubt, this contributed to the congregation being able to commit large portions of Scripture to memory simply by singing it.

Noting the significance that singing and the use of melody has on our memory and our ability to retain information, Debora and Ron Rienstra say, “When we sing words to a suitable

⁴⁰ Elmer Towns and Vernon Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 109.

⁴¹ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship*, 48.

⁴² Herbert Lockyer Jr. *All the Music of the Bible*, 133.

melody, for example, we enhance them by making them more beautiful and memorable.”⁴³ In *Keys to Becoming an Effective Worship Leader*, Tom Krueter affirms this belief when he says, “Many people in the body of Christ today know more Scripture because of the choruses they sing than from rote memorization. There is something about putting the words to music that makes them much easier for us to remember.”⁴⁴

Bob Kauflin reinforces this belief by saying, “Our brains are hardwired to recognize, categorize, and remember patterns in music better than we remember those patterns when we are just talking.”⁴⁵ Kauflin also states that “Music helps us remember words—and God intends for music to help us remember the word of Christ.”⁴⁶

H. B. Charles writes a book entitled, *On Pastoring*; In this book, he discusses many of the different roles and functions of the pastor in the local church. He spends some time discussing how the pastor’s role in the ministry of the Word should include the singing of the Word. He does so because he acknowledges the effectiveness that singing has to helping us retain information. He says,

Music in worship should be an extension of the ministry of the Word. Corporate singing and special music should serve to let the Word of Christ dwell in the saints richly. Let’s be honest: as hard as we work on our preaching, people will remember the songs longer than they will remember our well-crafted sermon outlines. This should not embitter us. It should motivate us to make sure the music affirms and reinforces what we are teaching.⁴⁷

⁴³ Debora and Ron Rienstra, *Worship Words*, 234.

⁴⁴ Tom Krueter, *Keys to Becoming and Effective Worship Leader*, 100.

⁴⁵ Bob Kauflin, *Why Do We Sing?*

⁴⁶ Bob Kauflin, *True Worshipers*, 104.

⁴⁷ H. B. Charles Jr. *On Pastoring*, 138.

In *Seven Words of Worship*, Mike Harland notes how songs reinforce the Word of God in our hearts. In fact, he discusses how the Word of God is central to true, authentic worship. He says,

In worship we both receive the Word of God and strengthen the Word within us. Worship apart from the revelation of the Word (the Living Word and written Word) is incomplete. But worship in response to God's revelation brings that Word to life in a powerful way. Worship and the Word go hand-in-hand, and this powerful combination is a crucial element in living the abundant life that Jesus promised.⁴⁸

This belief and practice of singing as a way to teach and reinforce knowledge of the Word of God is nothing new. It is not something that worship leaders have just recently started knowing to be true and have only recently begun to implement into their ministries. Christian leaders are given some examples in Scripture where people used the tool of song to communicate the nature and works of God. Krueter notes that "Music is also used in Scripture to tell God's great works and, consequently, to stir up our faith. Musically etching the works of God into our memories causes these works to become more real to us."⁴⁹

One of the most famous people to implement this approach to doctrinal teaching is that of Moses. Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32 records two songs that Moses had written with the intention of recording the acts of God in Israel's history, and for the songs (and information contained in the songs) to be taught and passed down from generation to generation. In the first song Moses records God's works when He led the people of Israel to cross the Red Sea. After he sings this song, his sister Miriam gathered the women and an instrument, verse 21 records her

⁴⁸ Mike Harland, *Seven Words of Worship*, 138.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 100.

singing, “Sing the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.” She is singing the first few lines of the song that Moses had just written and sang.

In Deuteronomy, Moses writes another song just before he dies and the people enter into the Promised Land. He states his intention in chapter 31, verse 19 when he says, “Now therefore write this song and *teach* it to the people of Israel. Put it in their mouths that this song may be a *witness* for me against the people of Israel.” After he presents the song to the people, he again states his intention with it in chapter 32, verse 46 when he says, “Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law.”

In *The Sound of Harvest*, Nathan Corbitt comments on Moses’ songs when he said this about them:

God’s instruction to Moses was not merely an opportunity for the people of Israel to practice singing. Israelite society was an oral society. Like most of the world’s people, the Israelites remembered the past through narrative story and historical song. While it was written down, the majority of the people remembered it orally. Even in today’s educational environment, where literacy is a valued critical skill, media technology has hurled modern-day people back in time to an aural dimension, where seeing and hearing provide the majority of information about life.⁵⁰

Moses and modern-day Christian authors that recognize the connection that music has to our memories and our ability to retain information through it. The secular world, however, also recognizes the strong connection that music has to our memories.

⁵⁰ Nathan Corbitt, *The Sound of Harvest*, 197.

In his article *The Power of Music* Oliver Sacks notes how music evokes emotions and memories in people—more specifically, in Alzheimer’s patients:

The evocative power of music can be of immense value in people with Alzheimer’s disease or other dementias, who may have become unable to understand or respond to language, but can still be profoundly moved—and often regain their cognitive focus, at least for a while—when exposed to music, especially familiar music that may evoke for them memories of earlier events, encounters or states of mind that cannot be called up in any other way. Music may bring them back briefly to a time when the world was much richer for them.⁵¹

He also notes that music affects the brain in many other ways. In particular, he notes people with Tourette’s syndrome, stating that musicians with Tourette’s “may become composed, tic-free, when they listen to or perform music; but they may also be driven by certain kinds of music into an uncontrollable ticking that is entrained with the beat.”⁵²

In *Musicophilia*, Dr. Sacks notes the connection between music and our ability to retain information. He points out that this is not the case simply in our modern time and culture; every culture from every time has used song to aid them in memory retention: “Every culture has songs and rhymes to help children learn the alphabet, numbers, and other lists. Even as adults, we’re limited in our ability to memorize series or to hold them in mind unless we use mnemonic devices or patterns—and the most powerful of these devices are rhyme, meter, and song.”⁵³

Likewise, Lutz Jancke notes in his article, *Music, Memory and Emotion* the effect that music has on our emotions and our ability to retain information. In this article, he speaks more specifically about the memory of events from the perspective of cognitive science. He states:

⁵¹ Oliver Sacks, *The Power of Music*.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Oliver Sacks, *Musicophilia*, 237.

“Because emotions enhance memory processes and music evokes strong emotions, music could be involved in forming memories, either about pieces of music or about episodes and information associated with particular music.”⁵⁴ He goes on to note the conclusions of many of his fellow researchers saying that “music is encoded in the brain by the perceptual memory system, which organizes auditory information into melodies and rhythms, rather than by the semantic memory system, which encodes meaning.”⁵⁵ And furthermore, he states: “If music has such a strong influence on emotions and our cognitive system, this raises the question of whether the memory-enhancing effect of emotional music can be used to enhance cognitive performance in general and in clinical settings.”⁵⁶

Further commenting on the evocative nature of music, and how it has been used as a therapeutic method among dementia patients, Alfredo Raglio states:

There are also the experiences of listening to music: music is potentially evocative, stimulates memories or states of mind through moments of verbalization after listening to music; further, music is used in order to facilitate the recognition of environments or structured moments of the day; finally, listening to music is used in the belief that it can effectively reduce behavioral disorders and enhance mood or socialization.⁵⁷

Raglio further clarifies the concept of music therapy among people suffering from dementia:

Music therapy is described as the use of music and/or of its components (sound, rhythm, melody and harmony) by a qualified music therapist, in individual or group relationships, in the context of a formally defined process, with the aim of facilitating and promoting communication, relationships, learning, mobilization, expression, organization and other relevant therapeutic goals intended to meet physical, emotional, mental, social and cognitive needs. The main finality of

⁵⁴ Lutz Jancke, *Music, Memory and Emotion*.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Alfredo Raglio, *Music Therapy in Dementia*

music therapy is that of developing potentialities and/or rehabilitating an individual's functions so that he/she might achieve an improved integration on the intra- and interpersonal levels and therefore an ameliorated quality of life through prevention, rehabilitation or therapy.⁵⁸

Teaching the Truths of God

Filling the congregants' hearts and minds with Scripture is certainly the result of singing Scripturally-based songs, but an even more specific result of congregational singing is the teaching of the truths of God. These truths of God being the character, nature, and works of God. When the Word of Christ dwells in us richly, we not only can memorize Scripture more effectively, but theological concepts are being formed and reinforced in our hearts and minds. These concepts will stay with us throughout our lives.

Constance Cherry comments on this purpose of congregational singing: "What is it that Christians sing? We sing the story of God. Worship is primarily a proclamation of the whole story of who God is and what God has done through his mighty acts of salvation."⁵⁹ She further adds, "Christians sing the story of God's mighty acts. God's story of deliverance was what Miriam, Moses, and the Israelites sang immediately following their escape from Egypt, and so we too sing, 'horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.'"⁶⁰

In *Music in Missions*, T.W. Hunt describes how missionaries enter into cultures with the hope of making converts, and how they will use music as a tool to do so. He says: "

Music is a useful medium for the transmission and teaching of theological concepts. The primary factor making music a useful vehicle for teaching is its mnemonic faculty—we remember better what we sing. Ambrose of Milan, Isaac

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Constance Cherry, *The Worship Architect*, 153.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 153.

Watts, and John Newton, to mention a few, infused a didactic function into their hymn writing. Hymns (for better or for worse) can be used to popularize theological concepts. Music also lends a persuasive leverage to the theology it is channeling. This capacity is potentially dangerous of course and demands integrity and perceptiveness on the part of musicians who serve the Lord.⁶¹

Hunt discusses this perspective of ministry as being “missionary musicians”:

Missionary musicians and anyone committed to evangelism should bring to musical outreach a method as articulate and even as adroit as homiletical specialists have applied to preaching. Effective evangelists have long utilized music, often very well, but the efforts are also at times diffuse and lack message. That God has blessed musical witness so abundantly is evidence of a potential perhaps not yet amply realized.⁶²

This approach to missionary work has proven to be highly effective. For years, missionaries have used music to communicate Who God is and what He has done, and have effectively shaped the doctrinal beliefs of unreached people groups. In the book, Hunt makes the case that this approach not only works for foreign missionaries and for reaching people of different languages and cultures, but it also works for a people who are trying to reach their own native language and culture.

Hunt notes:

History is replete with stories of men and women who found Christ through a musical presentation of some kind. Musicians have been gifted with one of the most powerful tools in creation for bringing others to Christ. In eternity, many will confess that they owe their spiritual life to the expense or trouble that dedicated music evangelists went to in order to provide the opportunity which God used for purposes grander than we can imagine.⁶³

⁶¹ T.W. Hunt, *Music in Missions*, 23.

⁶² *Ibid.* 46.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 58-59.

In *Return to Worship*, Ron Owens notes the responsibility that the church leaders have through the choices of congregational song by noting the fact that young children will be under their care and how they play a crucial role in teaching them about Christ through song. He says, “Director of Music, Children’s Choir Director, have you realized that even as you are teaching children about God through the songs they are learning, you are contributing to their ability to learn and reason? Isn’t that one of the reasons God has given us music?”⁶⁴ The singing of songs as children is how most people first learn the truths of the Gospel.

Similarly, Bob Kauflin in his book, *Worship Matters*, presents what he calls the “Twenty-Year Rule.” He states:

If someone was born in our church and grew up singing our songs over the course of twenty years, how well would they know God? Would these songs give them a biblical and comprehensive view of God, or would they be exposed only to certain aspects of his nature and works? Would they learn that God is holy, wise, omnipotent, and sovereign? Would they know God as Creator and Sustainer? Would they understand the glory and centrality of the gospel? Or would they think worship is about music, and not much more? May God give us grace to lead worship and choose our songs in a way that reflects his care, wisdom, and faithfulness.⁶⁵

This rule should be in the minds of all worship leaders and worship planners. It will, more than likely not be the sermons, lessons, or illustrations that people remember from childhood into adulthood, but instead it will be the songs that stay in their minds all of their lives. This rule encourages the worship leader to think and plan intentionally and strategically—not being swayed by what is popular, but having a long-term vision for making disciples through the truths in the songs that they lead.

⁶⁴ Ron Owens, *Return to Worship*, 141.

⁶⁵ Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 119.

In *The Art of Worship*, Greg Scheer notes the effectiveness of music as a tool for shaping theology, and he discusses the aspect of building a repertoire of songs for the congregation that will communicate specific doctrines of the Christian faith. He notes that there are messages being communicated to people all day and every day, and how it is important for the worship leader to communicate messages of truth that will surpass all of the false messages of the world. Scheer writes, “The wise pastor and worship planner consider not only the immediate impact of a worship service but the long-term messages that are being reinforced week after week through sermons, music, and Scripture readings.”⁶⁶ He goes on to say “For the music minister, the goal of providing long-range sustenance means focusing on not only finding a song to match the sermon theme each week but building repertoire over time that paints a broad and deep picture of God and the Christian life.”⁶⁷

Music is not only a great tool for teaching the truths of God, but it is also a great tool for affirming the truths of God. Singing about the doctrines that we already believe in, reinforces and reminds us of those beliefs. That is one of the principle functions for congregational singing.

Constance Cherry notes this perspective in *The Worship Architect*:

We sing because it is a vehicle for expressing our faith. The songs we sing testify to what we believe as Christians; they assert the doctrines of orthodox Christian belief and practice. Songs proclaim what we believe objectively, and in their singing we come to own that belief. Singing the faith helps to make it *our* faith. The repetition of melody and text embeds the meaning of the songs deep within us. We often find that those texts we repeatedly sing are there to sustain us in the truth; their melodies and lyrics rise from a deep well within us and mysteriously re-present themselves when we need them most, sometimes even years later. The faith we sing is the faith that remains with us by virtue of song.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Greg Scheer, *The Art of Worship*, 56.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 56.

⁶⁸ Constance Cherry, *The Worship Architect*, 156.

Theological Accuracy and the Word of God

Warren Wiersbe says, “A singer has no more right to sing a lie than a preacher has to preach a lie. Our singing must be theologically orthodox as well as technically adequate. No amount of beautiful harmony can atone for theological heresy.”⁶⁹ Knowing that music is an effective tool for shaping one’s theology, it is important to understand that a person can be trained in theology that is either sound or flawed. Therefore, worship leaders must be diligent in checking the theological content of their songs and make sure that the lyrics are biblically accurate. In *The Deliberate Church*, Mark Dever states: “Jesus uses His Word to build or edify the church. So it makes sense that we only sing songs that use His Word both accurately and generously. The more accurately applied scriptural theology, phrases, and allusions, the better—because the Word builds the church, and music helps us remember that Word, which we seem so quickly to forget.”⁷⁰

Ingalls, Landau, and Wagner discuss theological accuracy in music in their book, *Christian Congregational Music*, referring to the notion of “performed theology.” They state: “We have seen that musicking is both performed theology and unifying ritual; Christian clergy and music leaders must take care to perform the theology that accurately reflects the beliefs of the church and in order to promote unity rather than division.”⁷¹

In *Worship Seeking Understanding*, John Witvliet discusses this issue less from the perspective of doctrinal shaping, and more from the issue of worship nurturing souls. He notes the role of a worship leader having the responsibility of putting words of prayer and praise in the mouths of the worshipers. This is done through songs that are sung and prayers that are prayed.

⁶⁹ Warren Wiersbe, *Real Worship*, 115.

⁷⁰ Mark Dever, *The Deliberate Church*, 84.

⁷¹ Monique Ingalls, Carolyn Landau, and Tom Wagner, *Christian Congregational Music*, 53.

This responsibility is also one of being a steward of God's Word through choices of Scripture texts and themes that worship leaders implement into a worship gathering.⁷²

Furthering the point of Biblical accuracy being a crucial element in worship, Constance Cherry discusses in *The Worship Architect*, how Scripture should be used in every element of our worship services. If the use of Scripture is neglected, then the worship leaders and worship planners run the risk of drifting into theology that is weak at best, but could eventually become erroneous.

Cherry states:

[One] application for leading in the service of the Word is that of using Scripture throughout the worship service as the content for acts of worship. Specific readings of Scripture and the sermon are not the sum total of the role of Scripture in worship. Scripture should constitute the very content for much of what we say, sing, and pray in worship. When this is the case, and properly so, Scripture permeates the service from beginning to end. Scripture forms the basis for all worship.⁷³

Not every song is theologically accurate, deep, or denominationally specific. In *Worship Words*, Debora and Ron Rienstra provide a list of questions to ask when giving a theological assessment on potential songs for congregational singing. Some of those questions include:

- Is there an identifiable theological theme?
- Is there identifiable Christian content?
- Does the song agree with Scripture?
- If it is a paraphrase or interpretation of Scripture, is the paraphrase acceptable?
- Does the song agree with confessions or other denominational congregational criteria?
How is God depicted in the song?

⁷² John Witvliet, *Worship Seeking Understanding*, 282.

⁷³ Constance Cherry, *The Worship Architect*, 80.

- Is the song pastorally sensitive? Is it comforting or challenging? Which does your congregation need more of?⁷⁴

Admonishment as a Form of Teaching

Not only does congregational singing teach singers theology and helps them memorize Scripture, but it admonishes them as well. Just as the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun “prophesied” with musical instruments (I Chronicles 25:1), if the songs of the modern church are to be used to admonish the saints, they should have elements that are prophetic in nature. The content of worship songs should quote and reference Scripture, communicate the nature of God and the works of Christ, and stir the church “to love and good works.” (Hebrews 10:24)

In his book, *The Sound of the Harvest*, Nathan Corbitt states:

Musical prophets stand on the edge between the sanctuary and the street and provide a vision of God’s future reign. Music is prophecy when it leads people to truth and justice. Music is not a fortune-telling device, but a sonic tool that foretells future consequences based on present realities. At times, this musical truth lies outside the boundaries of a just and righteous kingdom. Yet at other times, it is the voice of the kingdom to an unjust world.⁷⁵

Corbitt muses on the nature of music and how it conditions the heart and mind to receive and respond to admonition:

Music softens our messages in a way we could not or would not dare attempt with words. Because it is indirect, the hearer has a way out—a way to save face and maintain the relationship—rather than having to respond directly and risk open conflict. Many Westerners who value problem solving over the maintenance of relationships often miss the subtleties of music mediation. Reared in a ‘what you see is what you get’ culture, they prefer to fight for the truth of the moment with harsh words, thus risking a loss of redemptive resolution. While it takes patience and perceptual alertness to decode the messages of mediating music, it is a

⁷⁴ Debra and Ron Rienstra, *Worship Words*, 265.

⁷⁵ Nathan Corbitt, *The Sound of Harvest*, 82.

valuable skill for understanding. When conflict is unattained, however, music's greater power inspires people to action.⁷⁶

Furthermore, Corbitt discusses music's power to motivate:

Music has real power to motivate. It calls for and creates an emotional response in humans. When combined with words, it can have a powerful effect on the hearer. At first your emotions are jolted by the sounds you hear. Then you make a choice. If you like the music, you then explore the meaning of the text. If the words make sense and have meaning to you, you then begin to internalize the music.⁷⁷

By singing truths that convict and challenge the worshiper, the heart and mind are conditioned to receive truths before having opportunity to comprehend, process, or even disagree with it. Music is a very persuasive tool and can be far more convincing than simply conversing. Songs shape what we believe about God, and they also shape how we respond to and live out the knowledge we have about God.

COMFORTING THOSE ABOUT TO MEET GOD

Scripture is clear that there will come a day when every earthly life will pass away. Hebrews 9:27 states: "It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment." Christians know the answer to the question of what awaits us after death. For believers in Christ, it is the Good News of eternal life. But the process of death can still be a painful and scary process. Part of the worship leader fulfilling a pastoral role is when he will inevitably

⁷⁶ Ibid. 89.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 118.

pastor those saints who pass from this life into the next. In *Worship Seeking Understanding*, John Witvliet says, “Christianity is nothing if not a way of thinking about death.”⁷⁸

Because of this perspective of worship ministry as a pastoral service, Zac Hicks in *The Worship Pastor* notes that worship pastors must essentially function as morticians. He says:

As worship planners and leaders, we need to think about how we can present this vision of the future in a way that speaks to the very real and present fears we all bring into worship. The metaphor of a mortician, as odd as it sounds, is helpful here. Good morticians are skilled in the caring art of preparing bodies for burial. I believe that a worship pastor is a mortician for the body of Christ, on who faithfully prepares the church for her encounter with death—not as a final experience of defeat—but as a transition into life everlasting.⁷⁹

Death is something that all clergy must face at some point in their ministries. It is an element of pastoral ministry that cannot be avoided. Some very significant ministry happens around hospital beds when the pastor is counseling and praying over a dying saint. But the worship pastor has a unique opportunity to shepherd those into the next life and that is through the songs that he teaches and leads. Hicks states: “When we talk about heaven in our worship, we need to confront the truth about death. This might seem like a depressing question to think about, but it is necessary to ask: Is there room for death in our worship songs, prayers, readings, and transitional words? The answer we find in the Psalms, the worship and song book of the church, is unequivocally yes.”⁸⁰

The songs that believers sing their entire lives will bring them comfort in their final moments. There have been many stories of families gathering around a death bed singing hymns

⁷⁸ John Witvliet, *Worship Seeking Understanding*, 291.

⁷⁹ Zac Hicks, *The Worship Pastor*, 135.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 136.

of praise, or of Alzheimer’s patients (unable to recognize their own children) remembering the worship songs that they grew up singing.

This process is no new thing. Jesus did it on the cross. While He hung there dying, He quoted from two of the Psalms (Psalm 22:1 and Psalm 31:5). These words he had sung all of his earthly life. In *Rhythms of Grace*, Mike Cospers notes: “Jesus was bearing both the physical agony of crucifixion and the spiritual agony of God’s wrath. He’d been betrayed by his own follower, abandoned by his friends, and subjected to the worst kind of public humiliation. As his blood poured out and he drew nearer to death, he opened his mouth and cried out words he’d likely sung many times—the opening lines of Psalm 22.”⁸¹

EVANGELIZING THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW GOD

In his work, *Music Through the Eyes of Faith*, Harold Best discusses music and the “witnessing church.”⁸² This means that music is a means of proclaiming the message of the gospel. With that end in mind, he addresses how music can be an aid or a hindrance to communicating the message of the Gospel.⁸³ In the book, he states that “the gospel must be sung, not just preached.”⁸⁴

For many generations, worship music has been used by God to draw the lost to salvation through the gospel. From Moses to Paul, the Scriptures are filled with examples of how songs were used to communicate Who God is and what He has done. Best goes on to say: “Witness music is effective. It works. People are moved to repentance and drawn to Christ. And why

⁸¹ Mike Cospers, *Rhythms of Grace*, 65.

⁸² Harold Best, *Music Through the Eyes of Faith*, 203.

⁸³ Ibid. 203

⁸⁴ Ibid. 204.

not? If the gospel is the power of God unto salvation and if the gospel is sung, it follows that the power of God will be made manifest in the midst of its singing.”⁸⁵ Dr. Vernon Whaley discusses in his book, *The Dynamics of Corporate Worship*, the similarities of worship and evangelism and how they serve each other: “Worship is about evangelism. Evangelism involves proclaiming the wonders of God to the unsaved community around us. Evangelism takes place through worship when out of our love for the Almighty we are motivated to tell others about Christ.”⁸⁶

In Acts 16, when Paul and Silas were worshiping all night in jail, the jailer heard the Gospel through the songs they sang and was converted because of it. Dr. Whaley notes in his book: “The prisoners listened as Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to the Lord. Paul and Silas used this as an opportunity to proclaim the wonders of God. It was soul-winning in action. The unbelievers witnessed the praise of God’s people. And God’s Spirit of conviction moved in their hearts.”⁸⁷

The use of song has always been used to help shape the beliefs about God among people who follow Him. The same logic can be used for those who do not yet know God. While they are singing, or hearing sung, the truths about God and His Gospel, their hearts and minds too will be shaped and molded.

In *The Sound of the Harvest*, J. Nathan Corbitt discusses how music is used as a medium for communicating the Gospel to people. He says, “Music functions as proclamation when it declares and communicates a simple message of salvation. This proclamation function is

⁸⁵ Ibid. 205.

⁸⁶ Vernon Whaley, *The Dynamics of Corporate Worship*, 115.

⁸⁷ Ibid. 117.

determined by the text of the music and its desired message. Music is a medium of communication.”⁸⁸

He goes on to further clarify this point by saying:

When most people think of the terms “evangelism” and “mission,” they think of a preacher in a revival service or crusade, someone handing out tracts on a street corner, or a television evangelist in a flashy suit backed by a choir and a small band. Music can be used in these events, but that does not mean that music is proclamation. Music as proclamation communicates the essence of Christianity. It is a natural extension of one’s experience within his or her culture.⁸⁹

Matt Boswell notes the importance of worship leaders having a missional mindset as they plan worship services and lead in worship: “Our goal is that God would be glorified in the worship of every nation, tribe, and tongue. While worship is God-centered, it is also declarative. While it is vertical, it is also horizontal. Christ-centered worship is proclamation.”⁹⁰

In his book, *Music in Missions*, T.W. Hunt describes the missionary and evangelistic mindset in worship leaders and church musicians when he says:

Missionary musicians and anyone committed to evangelism should bring to musical outreach a method as articulate and even as adroit as homiletical specialists have applied to preaching. Effective evangelists have long utilized music, often very well. That God has blessed musical witness so abundantly is evidence of a potential perhaps not yet amply realized.⁹¹

⁸⁸ J. Nathan Corbitt, *The Sound of the Harvest*, 111.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 115.

⁹⁰ Matt Boswell, *Doxology & Theology*, 17-18.

⁹¹ T.W. Hunt, *Music in Missions*, 46.

In *The Great Commission to Worship*, David Wheeler and Vernon Whaley present their case of worship being transformational by nature:

Worship is transformational. God is in the business of changing people. We teach, train, encourage, edify, and share the gospel with the lost for the sole purpose of seeing God do His work in the lives of men and women, boys and girls. The Holy Spirit is in the business of transforming lives from old to new, dead to living, hurting and broken to healed and recreated. This is the call of evangelism, and in the process God takes a broken person and transforms him or her into a worshipper of God.⁹²

When God's people engage in authentic, transforming worship, it fuels the worshiper to impact the world around them and produce fellow worshipers. Daniel Henderson notes this pattern in his book, *Transforming Prayer*:

The world is not transformed by relevant Christians, strategic Christians, visionary Christians, leadership-savvy Christians, wealthy Christians, attractive Christians, educated Christians, active Christians, or articulate Christians. These are all interesting qualities, and might be helpful on occasion—especially in building religious organizations and selling books. Ultimately, the world is transformed by sanctified Christians through whom the life of Jesus becomes a mystifying manifestation. People changed by Jesus cannot help but change the world.

In *Worship and Witness*, David Wheeler and Vernon Whaley note the tension among theologians as to what is most important in the Christian life: worship or evangelism. They discuss the marriage of the two:

If you're having trouble deciding whether worship or evangelism represents our primary purpose as believers, you're actually on the right track. That's because worship and evangelism aren't separate elements—or at least they shouldn't be. In reality, they're unified expressions of obedience to God, both of which deserve our full attention as we seek to follow Jesus and help others follow Him as well.

⁹² David Wheeler and Vernon Whaley, *The Great Commission to Worship*, 81.

Nonetheless, worship is not a means to an end. As Franklin Segler said, “Worship is an end in itself; it is not a means to something else. When we try to worship for the sake of certain benefits that may be received, the act ceases to be worship; for then it attempts to use God as a means to something else.”⁹³

Because worship is not a means to an end, worshipers don’t worship (or use worship) so that they can become better evangelists or missionaries. The final and ultimate goal in everything we do as Christians is to make more worshipers of God. In *Let the Nations Be Glad*, John Piper said, “Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.”⁹⁴

With that in mind, worshipers and worship leaders should be missional in their approach to worship leading. David Wheeler and Vernon Whaley define missional as being “on mission with God, demonstrating and sharing the good news of Jesus in our everyday lives, wherever we go and whatever we do.”⁹⁵ In *Planting Missional Churches*, Ed Stetzer says, “Don’t confuse the terms *mission-minded* and *missional*. The first refers more to an attitude of caring about missions, particularly overseas. *Missional* means adopting the posture of a missionary, learning and adapting to the culture around you while remaining biblically sound. Think of it this way: *Missional* means being a missionary without ever leaving your zip code.”⁹⁶

⁹³ Franklin Segler, *Christian Worship*,

⁹⁴ John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad*, 11.

⁹⁵ David Wheeler and Vernon Whaley, *Worship and Witness*, 102.

⁹⁶ Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 19.

In *The Great Commission to Worship*, Wheeler and Whaley state:

Our mission to carry the gospel to a lost and dying world is the intent of the Great Commission, but at the heart of the Great Commission is worship of Jesus. The Holy Spirit equips, fills, energizes, and empowers worshippers to declare the wonders of God to the heathen. Therefore, worship is missional! When God's people truly fall in love with Christ, they cannot be silent about His grace and mercy. Once the woman at the well understood the true identity of Jesus, she was compelled to worship Him in total obedience by proclaiming His message to her whole town.⁹⁷

Evangelistic and missional living is the overflow of a life that is in continual, authentic worship of the Lord God. For a Christian to not have this proper perspective and for it not to be a defining characteristic of their spiritual life, then they are not living as authentic worshippers of God. It could even mean that they are more worshippers of themselves than they are of God since they are not living in obedience to the Great Commission.

Church history has many examples of faithful saints who shared the Gospel, won the lost and reproduced more worshippers of God through the truth that was being presented in their worship leading. Martin Luther is an example of one of these people. Luther was responsible for the resurgence of congregational singing during the Reformation. According to Towns and Whaley, Luther was convinced that he won more converts through his singing and songwriting than he did through his sermons.⁹⁸

Charles Wesley was also one of the most influential evangelists who used his songwriting and musical abilities to communicate the gospel to the lost. Rob Morgan says, "Upon his conversion, Charles Wesley immediately began writing hymns, each one packed with doctrine, all of them exhibiting strength and sensitivity, both beauty and theological brawn. He wrote

⁹⁷ David Wheeler and Vernon Whaley, *The Great Commission to Worship*, 131.

⁹⁸ Elmer Towns and Vernon Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 108.

constantly, and even on horseback his mind was flooded with new songs.”⁹⁹ Towns and Whaley note the ministry of John and Charles Wesley as missional worship leaders/songwriters:

By mid-century, hymns were consistently being used in worship—especially in rural and less aristocratic communities. Hymn writers strategically used hymns as a means for communicating theology and doctrine. For the first time, music was used as a tool for evangelism, as people began singing in public songs of personal experience—an important innovation to worship. Hymn writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were concerned with composing songs that expressed both doctrine and personal experience.¹⁰⁰

This model of musical evangelism continued under the leadership of D.L. Moody. Rob Morgan notes the rise of the “gospel song” and how approaches to evangelism changed in the U.S. and the U.K.: “Evangelism moved from the country camps to urban auditoriums where the singing was simple, enthusiastic, emotional, personal, and heart-lifting, in the popular style of the era.”¹⁰¹

Worship leaders and songwriters like Fanny Crosby, William Bradbury, and Philip Bliss contributed to this movement of evangelism through the “gospel song.” Ira Sankey was a leader among the Gospel song era. Rob Morgan notes: “Ira Sankey wanted rousing, light, earnest music for the campaigns, songs that described the Christian’s experience in emotional terms—and so was born the era of the Gospel song.”¹⁰²

Many hymns and/or gospel songs came out of this era. To read the lyrics of these songs, one can truly see the evangelistic focus that came not only from ministry in general, but through music ministry more specifically. Possibly the most famous hymn writer of this era was Fanny

⁹⁹ Rob Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul*, 49.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 126.

¹⁰¹ Rob Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul: Book 3*, 49.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 50.

Crosby. Many of her songs had this evangelistic appeal. Note the lyrics to her song, *Jesus is Tenderly Calling*:

*Jesus is tenderly calling thee home, calling today, calling today
Why from the sunshine of love wilt thou roam farther and farther away?
Jesus is calling the weary to rest...
Bring Him thy burden and thou shalt be blest; He will not turn thee away
Jesus is waiting; O come to Him now
Come with thy sins; at His feet lowly bow, come and no longer delay
Jesus is pleading; O list to His voice
They who believe on His name shall rejoice; Quickly arise and away¹⁰³*

Her song, *Rescue the Perishing*, reminds the believer of our purpose of evangelism:

*Rescue the perishing, care for the dying
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save
Rescue the perishing, care for the dying
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save¹⁰⁴*

Another popular song from this era is *Are You Washed in the Blood?* by Elisha Hoffman. He was a frequent collaborator with Fanny Crosby.¹⁰⁵ Note his calling of sinners to trust in Christ:

*Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?
Are you fully trusting in his grace this hour?
When the Bride-groom cometh will your robes be white?*

¹⁰³ Fanny Crosby, *The Baptist Hymnal*, 136.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 559.

¹⁰⁵ Towns and Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages*, 191.

Will your soul be ready for the mansions bright?

Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

Lay aside the garments that are stained with sin, and be washed in the blood of the Lamb

*There's a fountain flowing for the soul unclean, O be washed in the blood of the Lamb!*¹⁰⁶

Worship leaders have a heritage of being stewards of truth through the content of their songs. As a preacher must be faithful to preach the gospel accurately and thoroughly in his sermons, the worship leader must be faithful to preach the gospel accurately and thoroughly in his songs. In *Unceasing Worship*, Harold Best emphasizes this point when he said:

If the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, then God in his power will make sure that the readied hearer is not left in the dark and the inherent hearer will be urged into further maturity. The secret is not in talking baby talk to the unredeemed and adult talk to the converted, nor in seeking a happy medium between the two so as to conform to eased-up protocols of certain kinds of seeker sensitivity. The secret lies in the authority, the conviction, the unswerving bluntness of all truth preached, sung and written.¹⁰⁷

A failure to fulfill this calling that worship leaders have as stewards of the Good News of Christ produces terrible results. Worship that is based on emotionalism is not sustainable, nor does it reap life-changing, soul-saving results. The reason for this is because it is not based on truth. In his book *Can't Wait for Sunday*, Michael Walters says, "Worship is meant to strengthen and enhance the witness of God's people in the world. The weakness, ineffectiveness, or absence of the church's witness indicates a disconnect between worship and life that must be mended. If it is not, the result will be worship that is perfunctory and, ultimately, powerless."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Elisha Hoffman, *The Baptist Trumpet*, 136.

¹⁰⁷ Harold Best, *Unceasing Worship*, 80.

¹⁰⁸ Michael Walters, *Can't Wait for Sunday*, 198.

In her book, *Worship Evangelism*, Sally Morgenthaler notes the power that authentic worship has on those who do not know Christ. She acknowledges that if our expression of worship is inconsistent with the content of worship, it is counter-productive on an evangelistic level:

Our worship of God either affirms or contradicts our message about God. Unbelievers (including those who are church-ed and unchurch-ed) will draw lasting conclusions about the veracity and uniqueness of our God based on what they see or do not see happening in our weekly church services. Do they detect something supernatural and life-changing going on? Can they sense God's presence and work among us? Are they experiencing something in our midst they have never seen before?¹⁰⁹

If the worship leader is faithfully fulfilling the role of the pastor by doing the work of an evangelist, then this pattern will begin to be imitated in the lives of those in the congregation that are worshiping under his or her leadership. T.W. Hunt discusses this pattern when he says, "When our lives bear witness to God's existence in ways that catch the attention of unbelievers, then the church accomplishes its mission to be light and salt to the world. Our worship services must reinforce Scripture's teaching on the mission of the church and every believer's part in it."¹¹⁰

Hunt goes on to discuss the transformative, missional, and evangelistic power of worship and how some Christians fail to grasp this perspective of worship: "Often, Christians say things such as 'Sunday worship helps me get through the week' or 'Sundays are where I get my batteries recharged.' While worship does benefit the believer, those who make such statements

¹⁰⁹ Sally Morgenthaler, *Worship Evangelism*, 9.

¹¹⁰ T.W. Hunt, *Music and Missions*, 197.

have missed half the point of worship. It is intended to transform both the Christian *and* the world.”¹¹¹

However, Thomas G. Long, in his book, *Testimony*, gives a brief description of what it would look like for congregations to grasp the vision of missional worship when they are following the examples of their pastors:

The connections between Sunday worship and the workaday week are far more subtle and complex than quoting Scripture at dinner parties, whistling hymns at Little League games, or reading Paul’s epistles at business conferences. What we need to discover how the dinner party, the Little League game, the business meeting, and all other aspects of our Monday-to-Saturday world are already present in worship, woven into the very fabric of prayer, hymn, and sermon.¹¹²

Jamie Harvill notes that the church should use this evangelistic tool to reach people that not only come to us in our Sunday worship gatherings, but to look for opportunities to go to them. He charges worship leaders to seek ways to preach the Gospel through music to those in the community and around the world:

As the local church, we have an opportunity to enlist our worship teams to reach beyond our community for Christ. Music is a powerful tool in evangelism, and planning for evangelistic opportunities will help fulfill the Great Commission that Jesus imparted to each of us, maybe through a mission trip to another state or a foreign country. Whichever the case, reaching beyond our walls, borders and continent to the world will always bless those who receive the Gospel, and will surely bless those who carry the message.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Ibid. 199.

¹¹² Thomas G. Long, *Testimony*, 40.

¹¹³ Harvill, 25-26.

Chapter 3

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will discuss the approach to my quantitative research through the twenty question survey. The goal for this survey is for it to be distributed to 100 to 120 anonymous subjects. The criteria for being a participant is that they must identify as a born-again Christian, be eighteen years or older, attend a church worship service at least forty times a year, be unrelated to me, and do not attend the church in which I am currently serving on staff.

In this chapter, I will discuss the step-by-step measure of what the research is. The philosophical intentions behind the categories and questions will also be described and discussed.

STEP-BY-STEP MEASURE OF WHAT THE RESEARCH IS

The first step of the research is to establish some kind of demographic patterns. The first five questions of the survey will ask subjects about their age group, how many years they have identified as a born-again Christian, how many times per year they attend a church worship service, and their role within a local church (as a pastor, worship leader, staff member, or layperson).

The second step of the research is twofold: First, this author wants to discover what value Christians place on the role that music has in shaping their theological beliefs. Secondly, the

author seeks to determine how aware Christians are in this specific role that worship music has in the life of the Christian.

The final step of the research is to determine how Christians view the role that the worship leader has in the church. This step is made distinct from the last one because, I will seek to eliminate any possible confusion between the two. The reasoning behind this is that the Christian can be greatly impacted by a local church's music ministry, but may not necessarily hold the role of a worship leader in high esteem. They may love music, but not understand it as a tool for shaping theology. They may love their worship leader, but may not view them as one of their pastors. They may view the worship leader's musical talent as a necessity for the job, but may not necessarily value the theological training and biblical competency within said worship leader.

PHILOSOPHICAL INTENTIONS

In this section, I will discuss the philosophical intentions behind the questions and the categories of the research and survey. As stated before, the first five questions are meant to establish some sort of demographic. I wanted to see if there were any patterns in the data as it relates to age group, duration they've been a Christian, and how their role within a local church influences their answers.

Some examples of these anticipated patterns may include: those from an older demographic will likely not view the role of the worship leader as a pastoral role; those subjects who are pastors might be the least engaged in a worship service during the congregational singing and most engaged during the sermon; or those who have only been a Christian for a short

time to not have songs and/or singing directly connected with a dying or deceased loved one. These anticipations are only assumptions, as there is no hard data that would lead me to anticipate these results.

The hopes for this section of questions is to have enough of the subjects that are participating be pastors, worship leaders, and staff members in order to obtain a measure of data, while having the bulk of my subjects be laypeople. Though I value the opinions and insights of clergy on the research topic, it is my desire to have most of the subjects be laypeople. Because the clergy are valued as subjects, the researcher didn't make one of the stipulations for taking the survey be that they should be a layperson. Because of the nature of the questions and the research topic, however, it was important that most of the subjects would be non-clergy. This will give me a clearer understanding of the data that I am trying to collect.

The next category of the research was designed to measure the subjects' awareness of how songs shape their theological beliefs and how much they value it. I seek to accomplish this with a series of various kinds of questions. The subjects are asked how often they notice the use of Scripture in the songs that they sing in their local church.

I anticipate mixed responses from this question due to a number of factors: First, the amount of years the subject has identified as a Christian; Second, the subject's level of biblical competency; and finally, the subject's level of engagement during congregational singing. All of these factors can influence the data received from this question. The question, however, cannot measure how many churches and worship leaders are actually using singing songs that have Scripture in the lyrics.

I am also seeking to gather insight into the level of admonishment that is occurring in congregational singing. I have crafted questions that attempts to measure how often this is happening among the participants as well as to gauge how much the participants value this aspect of congregational singing.

I have a series of questions in this category that will serve to measure other aspects of worship and pastoral ministry—such as comforting people after the death of a loved one, and the conversion of unbelievers, and how songs have been used during these times in people’s lives. I anticipate a high response from the participants affirming the use of music surrounding the event of death and mourning simply because music is often used during such times. For example, I anticipate that the frequent use of music in funerals and memorial services will affect the results of these questions.

I go on to ask a series of questions that measure the participants’ level of engagement and disengagement in a worship service. The questions ask in which element of the worship service are they most engaged, least engaged, and more specifically, if they are more engaged during the sermon or the songs. I anticipate that more people will be most engaged in during the singing and least engaged during the sermon. The reasons for my anticipation is based on the fact that singing is participatory by nature and sermons are by nature a spectating element of worship. Also, generally speaking, sermons last longer than the singing portion of the worship service and with the short attention spans of people, I assume it is easier for them to disengage during a sermon.

In the final category, I have a series of five questions that are designed to measure how much value Christians place on the role that the worship leader has as a pastor and as a teacher. I also wanted to see how much value they place on the biblical training and competency of the

worship leader. I have not allowed any of my current church members to participate in this survey due to the fact that I could influence the answers they provide. I believe that they could be swayed in their answers in this survey, especially this category of questions because my congregation knows my educational training is more biblical and theological than it is musical and they know that I have the skills to preach and teach the Bible. Knowing this about me, it could have influenced them when being asked about such things.

I do however anticipate a variety of responses to the questions of this particular category. I expect that more people from an older generation will not so much view the worship leader as a pastor and/or Bible teacher. I also anticipate older subjects to value musical training over theological training for the worship leader.

CONCLUSION

I have met my goal of at least one hundred participants in the survey, by accumulating one hundred and nine responses. The survey responses have provided for me a sufficient amount of data to complete my research. This data from the survey will be analyzed in more detail in chapter four.

Chapter 4

The Survey

DESCRIPTION

When researching and writing about how the worship leader functions as a pastor and as a teacher of theology through songs, and how congregational singing has an incredible ability to help one in memorization of Scripture and in Christian doctrine, it is helpful to obtain some kind of measure among professing Christians of how this has proven true in their own lives. This survey vehicle, “Thesis Survey,” from surveymonkey.com, allowed me to gather data to obtain some of these measures.¹¹⁴ It is my hope that the one hundred and nine subjects provided sufficient data in order to discover how aware they are of the effectiveness of using song to shape theology and how much value they place on the worship leader being a pastoral teacher within the church.

I have contacted these participants through social media, email, and personal phone calls. Upon contact, the subjects were informed that there would be no risk on their part and that all answers would remain completely anonymous. By keeping the survey anonymous, it was the hope of the author that this would encourage the subjects to be completely honest in their answers without the fear of it endangering their jobs, ministries, or relationships. All of the surveys were online.

The author contacted one hundred and fifty potential subjects; one hundred and nine people participated in the survey. The author tried to obtain a good mix of all age groups and a

¹¹⁴ Zeb Balentine, “Thesis Survey,” Survey Monkey, Inc. <http://surveymonkey.com>.

sufficient amount of pastors, worship leaders, and staff members to participate with the majority of the subjects being laypeople.

There was certain criteria that one must meet in order to participate in the survey. The subject must be above the age of seventeen, must identify as a born again Christian, and attend church at least forty weeks out of the year; also, they cannot be related to the author, or involved in the author's current place of ministry. In the survey itself, there were twenty questions which fell under three categories.

BASIC STATISTICS

CATEGORY 1: Establishing demographics

With the 109 individuals who responded to the survey, it was important for me to be able to categorize them and attempt to establish some kind of demographic delineation and observe any patterns in the responses to the survey based on this element. The first question asked the subject to respond with "yes" (the only available answer for this question) if they have received and read the consent form and understood the terms and conditions of this survey. I wanted to have this question as a final attempt to make sure the participants read through the documents that were presented to them. Out of the 109 people who participated, only 107 affirmatively answered this question. Though all received the consent forms, it can only be assumed that the two subjects who did not answer did so because they did not read the form.

Out of the participants, nine of them were pastors, ten were worship leaders, ten were staff members, and 80 were laypeople. The greatest percentage of participants came from

laypeople with 80 people or 73.39%, while the lowest amount were nine pastors who made up 8.26% of the participants. (Fig. 4.1)

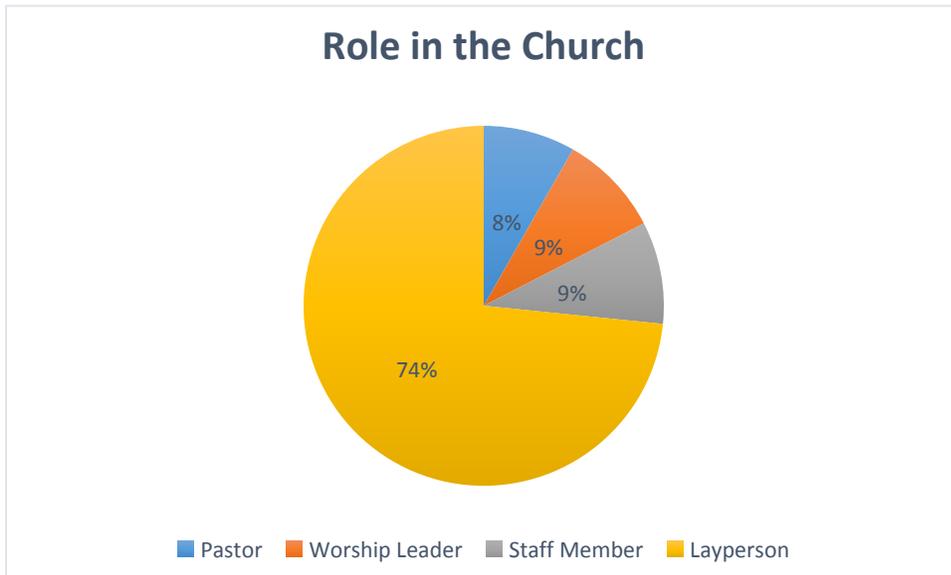


Figure 4.1. Representation of participants' role within the church

The author hoped for results similar to what was received so that the perspectives of clergy could be gathered, but with the majority perspective coming from average congregants. Though this seems like an imbalance in types of subjects, it is what the author had anticipated and hoped for in order to gather more accurate results as it relates to the topic of the Thesis Project. It would have been potentially helpful to be able to identify the number of years in ministry among the clergy who participated. This would have helped to further gauge some patterns in demographics.

One of the required criteria for being a participant in the survey was for the participant to attend church at least forty times a year. This question was important due to the content of the questions in the rest of the survey. Though it was clearly communicated before the subjects participated in the survey, the author found it necessary to include this question in the survey in order to ensure the subjects fit this criteria. As anticipated, there were some subjects that participated that didn't necessarily fit this point in the criteria, but they took the survey anyway. 104 of them or 95.41% fit the criteria of attending church at least 40 times a year. Four of them, or 3.67% attend church 26-39 times a year, and 1 participant attending church 11-25 times a year.

Most of the participants have identified as a Christian for many years. Though this does not necessarily mean that they are mature, Biblically-literate, and discerning people, the data shows that none of them were new and/or recent converts. There were no subjects who have been Christians for 0-5 years. There were 12 who have been a Christian for 6-15 years, 39 who have been for 16-25 years, 29 who have been for 26-35 years, and 29 who have been for 36 years or more. The most significant group is made up of those who have identified as a Christian for 16-25 years making up 35.78% of participants with the least amount being 6-15 years made up of 11.01%. This data is important as it helps to understand the potential spiritual maturity and experience in church life and congregational singing. (Fig. 4.2)

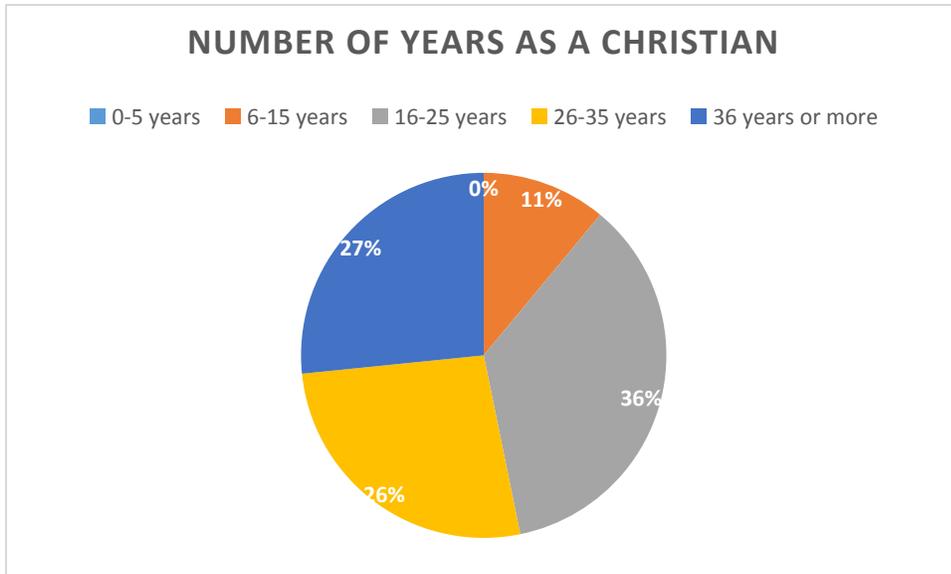


Figure 4.2. Representation of how long participants have identified as Christians

One criteria for participating in this survey was that the participant must be eighteen years old or older. Out of the 109 who participated in the survey, 21 of them were ages 18-29, 44 of them were 20-29 years old, 15 were 40-49 years old, 18 participants were between the ages 50-59, and 11 of them were 60 years old or older. The largest age group of participants were those in their thirties with 44 participants, making up 40.37% of those who responded. The smallest age group were 11 people who were sixty years old or more, making up 10.09%. (Figure 4.3)

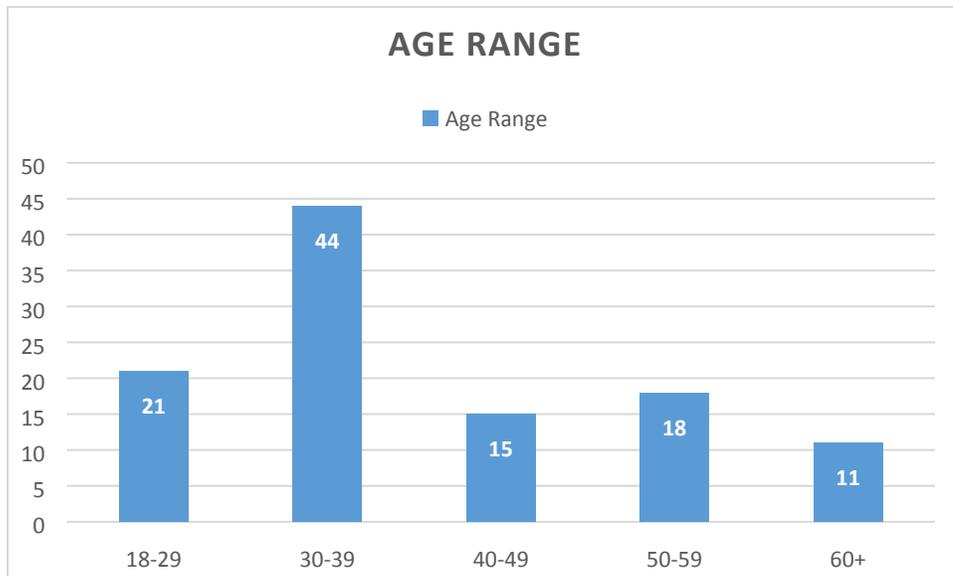


Figure 4.3. Representation of the participants' age range

Because this survey was only offered online, technology literacy and proficiency needs could have skewed the willing participants towards younger ages. This fact may put the people over sixty years old at a disadvantage for collecting data.

CATEGORY 2: The Influence of Song

This is the category that has the most questions in it. The purpose behind it is to gauge how much the subjects value and how aware they are of the significance that music has had in their theological training.

Question number six asks how often the subject notices that their local church uses Scripture in their song lyrics. Of those who answered the questions, 32.11% of them (35) said that they notice Scripture in the song lyrics every single week, 41.28% of them (45) said that it is quite often, 21.10% (23) said that they notice it sometimes, while only 5.50% (6) said that they do not notice it very often. (Fig. 4.4)

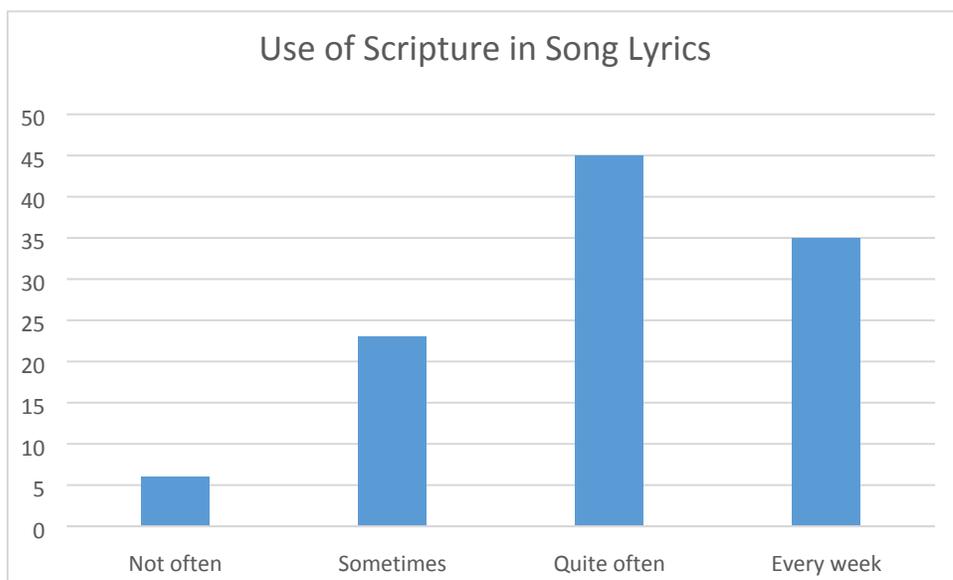


Figure 4.4 Represents the use of Scripture in song lyrics

Of course, this data result could be affected by the subject's level of participation during congregational singing, their level of discernment and awareness, and their Biblical competency to recognize Scripture in song lyrics. One potential weakness of this question is the fact that just because the subject fails to notice Scripture being used in songs, does not mean it is truly lacking. They could also be prone to being unengaged during the singing, or weak in their knowledge of Scripture.

Notably, the final statistics are similar and consistent, between lay people and among pastors, worship leaders, and staff members. Out of the clergy who responded: four pastors, four worship leaders, and one staff member state that they notice Scripture in song every week; two pastors, five worship leaders, and five staff members notice it quite often; One pastor, one worship leader, and three staff people notice it sometimes, and two pastors and one staff person state that they do not notice it that often.

This data reveals that most participants are being led by Scripture-based songs and have the biblical competency to recognize it. This is encouraging to know that the worship leaders that these subjects are being led by are choosing and/or writing songs that have a strong biblical foundation. It would have been interesting to know what Christian denominations were represented with each of the participants in order to see which ones were stronger and which were weaker in this area of ministry.

In the survey, the subjects were asked if they prefer worship songs to be primarily comforting, somewhat more comforting than challenging, somewhat more challenging than comforting, or primarily challenging. The least amount of people said that they prefer worship songs to be primarily challenging, making up only five people (4.59%). Most of these responses came from pastors, of which were three of them, and the other two were not clergy, but laypeople. Just above that, seven people (6.42%) said that they prefer worship songs to be primarily comforting. Of these people, one pastor and one staff member were included.

Next, there was a significant jump in participants who preferred worship songs to be somewhat more challenging than comforting. There were 44 people who responded to this answer making up 40.37% of the people. Of these 44, seven of them were church staff (the highest category for them), four of them were worship leaders, and two were pastors. The largest

group involved were 53 people (48.62%) who prefer their worship songs to be somewhat more comforting than challenging. This was the most consistent answer among worship leaders, including six of them, as well as two pastors and two staff people. (Fig 4.5)

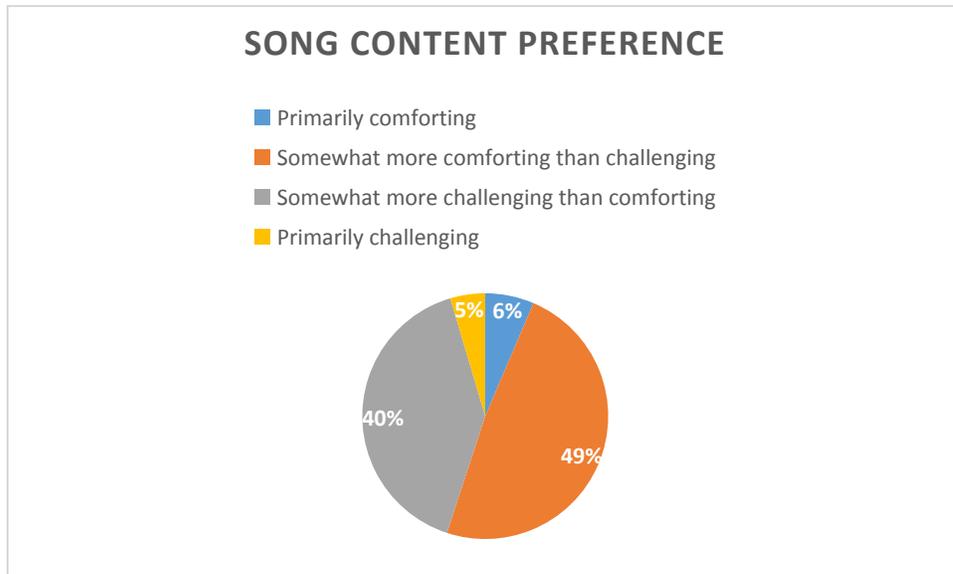


Figure 4.5. Represents the subjects’ preferences in song content

This data shows that most worshipers are closer to the middle in their preferences of this category with fewer of them preferring worship songs that are primarily comforting or primarily challenging. Most of these subjects prefer a balance of songs being comforting and challenging. According to this data, the subjects value worship songs that are more comforting in nature, but do significantly value worship songs to have a level of admonishment. One thing that I feared was a misunderstanding of the question being asked due to my word choices. I was afraid that the word “challenging” could be misinterpreted as “musically complex.” But, according to the

data collected, it seems as though the subjects accurately understood the question that was being asked.

Since one of the primary purposes of congregational singing is to admonish the people of God, I believed that it was important to try to obtain some amount of data on how often this is happening in churches. The subjects were asked if there have been any songs from the past few months that have personally challenged, warned, or called them to repentance. There was a significant number of participants responding affirmatively. Out of the 109 participants, 91 of them (84.26%) responded with “yes”; ten of them (9.26%) responded with “no”; and seven of them (6.48%) responded with “I don’t know.” According to this data, most congregants are consistently being admonished, challenged, and called to repentance through the songs that are being chosen.

In order to explore how worship songs minister to believers in times of mourning and death, there were a series of questions that were asked in an attempt to gain perspective on the matter. The subjects were asked if they have ever sung hymns or worship songs around a dying loved one. There was almost an even split among the participants. 56 of them (51.38%) said that they have, while 53 of them (48.62%) said that they have not. In the survey, they were also asked if there was a hymn or worship song that is connected to the memory of a deceased loved one. 66.97% of them (73) said that there was, while 33.03% of them (36) said that there wasn’t. The anticipation behind this question was that the songs that did have a connection to a deceased loved one would have either come from the reality of either a song that was sung at their funeral, a song that the subject heard during that particular season of mourning, or the song being a favorite of the deceased.

To be more specific, those that responded with “yes” to the previous question were asked to name the song or songs. Of those songs, 60 of them were hymns and 23 of them were modern worship songs. The most popular of the songs named were “Amazing Grace” (14), “It is Well” (9), “How Great Thou Art” (6), and “I Can Only Imagine” (6).

In order to measure the evangelistic quality of congregational singing, the participants were asked how worship music has been used in their conversion to Christ. There were five possible answers, and they were asked to select all that applied. Those possible answers included: Concerts (30 responses), Corporate worship (64), Invitations after a message (65), Not at all (15), Other (10).

The survey data showed that worship songs and congregational singing has had a significant impact on a person’s conversion to Christ. Even with those fifteen people whose answer said that music hasn’t been used in their conversion at all is disputable. The answers that the participants gave to this question is completely dependent on how aware they are of the influence music has on people. There is a likelihood that among those fifteen, there have been some Gospel seeds planted in their hearts and minds through song even if they are unaware of it. The problem is, there is no possible way to measure that fact in order to dispute the answer they gave. In order for their claims to be true, they would have never heard the Gospel in song prior to their conversion. The results can only measure the participants’ recollection of congregational song in connection with their salvation experience.

The final three questions in this category were designed to measure the subject’s level of engagement during a worship service. The motivation behind this was to compare and contrast different elements of a worship service and how effective they are at communicating truth to worshipers.

The first question in this series asks them when they feel most engaged during the worship service. Overwhelmingly, there were 82 responses for singing, with four of those responses being from a staff member and nine of them being from worship leaders. A distant second place, put 42 responses of people saying that they were most engaged during the sermon. six of those responses came from pastors and four of them came from staff members. There were 16 responses that felt most engaged during prayer, and seven responses for Communion. Some of the participants gave more than one answer to this question. (Fig. 4.6)

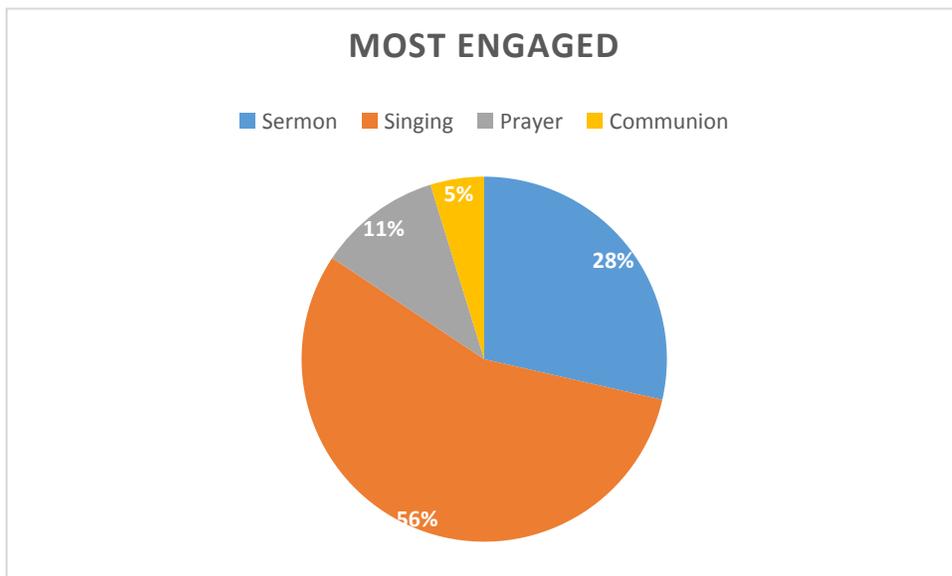


Figure 4.6. Represents when subjects are most engagement in a worship service

Similar to the previous question, the participants were asked when they feel the least engaged during a worship service. The part of the service where most people were least engaged was during the sermon with 26.21% stating it to be so (27 people). A close second was with 23.30% (24 people) stating that they are the least engaged during prayer. There were 15.53% of

people (16) that answered with Communion and only 5.83% (6) answering with singing. There were 36 responses for other parts of the service that the subject was asked to specify. The most consistent response in this category were announcements, with ten people responding in this way. (Figure 4.7)

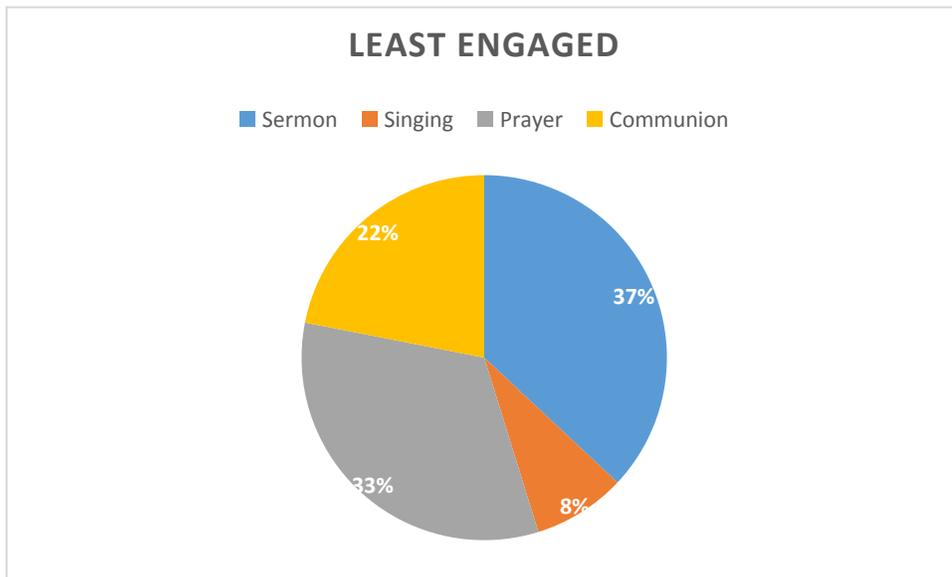


Figure 4.7. Represents when subjects are least engagement in a worship service

When analyzing clergy responses to this question, the most consistent answer for worship leaders (four responses) was that they were the least engaged during the sermon. The most consistent responses for staff members (three) was during the singing. And the most consistent responses for pastors was a tie between communion and announcements, both having two responses each.

In order to be more specific in which element of the worship service the participants were the most and the least engaged, they were asked if they felt more engaged during the sermon or the singing, with a third option being “both equally.” More than twice as many people are more engaged during the singing (51 people/46.79%) than the sermon (24 people/22.02%). There were 34 people (31.19%) who answered that they were equally engaged during both parts of the worship service. (Fig. 4.8)

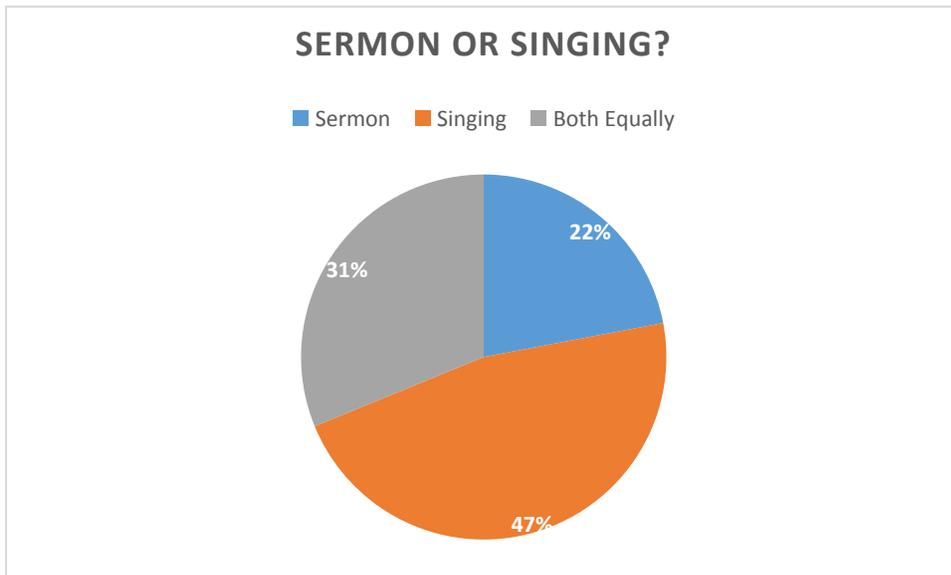


Figure. 4.8. Represents which element the subjects are most engaged

Of pastors, six were more engaged during the sermon, one during the singing, and two were equally engaged in both. Of worship leaders, seven were more engaged during singing, while three stated that they were equally engaged in both. And of staff members, four were more engaged during the sermon, two were more engaged during the singing, while five were equally engaged in both.

Preaching may be structured as the primary teaching method of a worship service, but it may not be the most effective. According to the data, people are not nearly as engaged during a sermon as they are during singing. Considering the level of engagement that people have between the sermon and singing, and the evidence that music is an effective teaching tool, it poses the question of whether or not pastors and worship planners are structuring their services in the most effective way.

CATEGORY 3: The Influence of the Worship Leader

This category is made up of five questions. This series of questions were designed to gauge how much value congregants place on the worship leader as a pastor and theological teacher.

The subjects were asked to give their opinion about who is the most significant (human) teacher that is in the church? The question specifically asked about the most significant “human” teacher in order to eliminate the potential answer being the Holy Spirit. Though some people answered more than once, there was an overwhelming response of participants believing that the (senior) Pastor was the most significant human teacher with 90 people (82.57%) responses. The response with the second most responses of 19 people (17.43%) being a Sunday School/small group teacher, while the worship leader received the least amount of responses with 6 people (5.50%) believing that they were the most significant human teacher in the church. (Fig. 4.9)

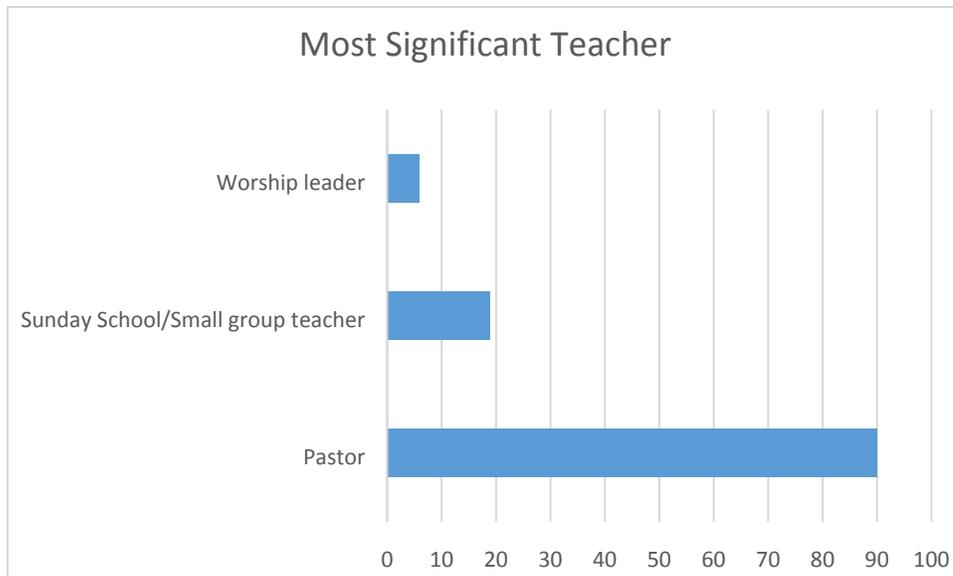
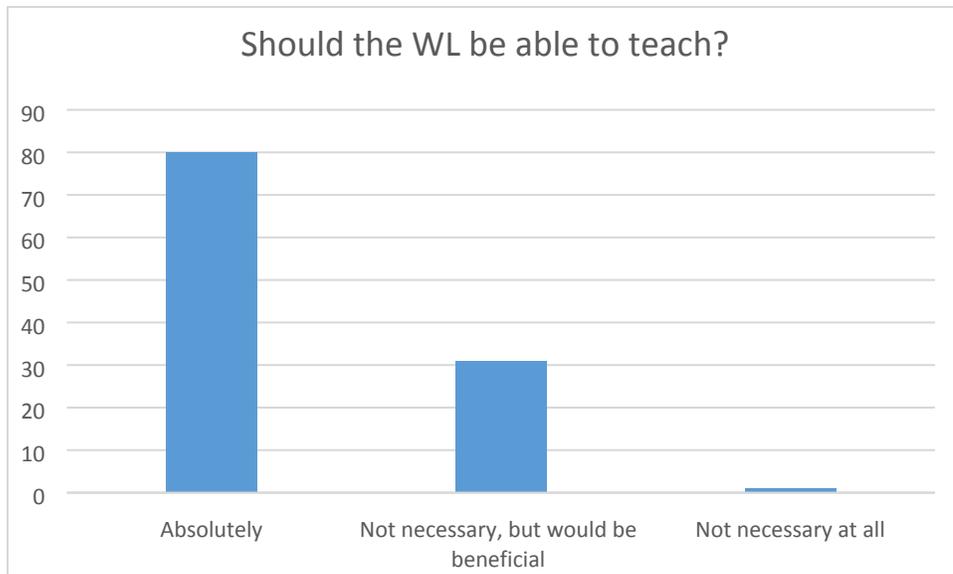


Figure 4.9. Represents the subjects' view of the most significant teacher in church

Though the worship leader received an underwhelming response in this question, the data shows that most participants actually place a high value on the worship leader as a pastor and theological teacher.

The following question asked: "Should the worship pastor be able to teach/preach the Bible?" Many people gave more than one answer to this question. Those that answered "Absolutely" made up 73.39% (80 people) of the subjects. There were 31 people who answered with: "Not necessary, but would be beneficial." Only one person answered with: "Not necessary at all." (Fig. 4.10)



Among clergy, seven pastors, seven worship leaders, and 8 staff members answered with “Absolutely.” And one pastor, three worship leaders, and two staff members answered: “Not necessary, but beneficial.”

I wanted to gauge what kind of education/training that people valued and expected in worship leaders. So, the next question asks: “What kind of education would be most valuable for the worship leader to have?” I also asked this question to see what emphasis worship/music ministry students should have in their training for ministry. 56.88% of the responses (62) were for musical training while 70.64% (77) of the responses favored biblical/theological training.

More specifically among pastors, three of them believed that musical education was more valuable, four believed biblical/theological, while two of them believed in a mix. Among staff members: one responded with musical, four responded with biblical/theological, and four responded with a mix of musical and biblical/theological. However, among worship leaders, none of them responded exclusively for musical education. Five of them believed

biblical/theological training was most important and two of them responded with a belief in a mix of musical and biblical/theological education. As far as the data collected from the worship leaders, it could be assumed that they responded in this way because they highly value theological training and/or they feel very unequipped in this area.

When asked if the participant views the role of the worship leader as a pastoral role, a large majority of people did. 79 people (73.15%) affirmed that they did, only 13 people (12.04%) said that they did not, and 16 people (14.81%) responded to the question with “sort of.” Among nine pastors, four of them said “yes,” three of them said “no,” and two of them said “sort of.” Among ten staff members, nine of them said “yes” and only one said “no.” And among ten worship leaders, all of them said that they viewed the role of the worship leader as that of the role of a pastor. (Fig. 4.11)

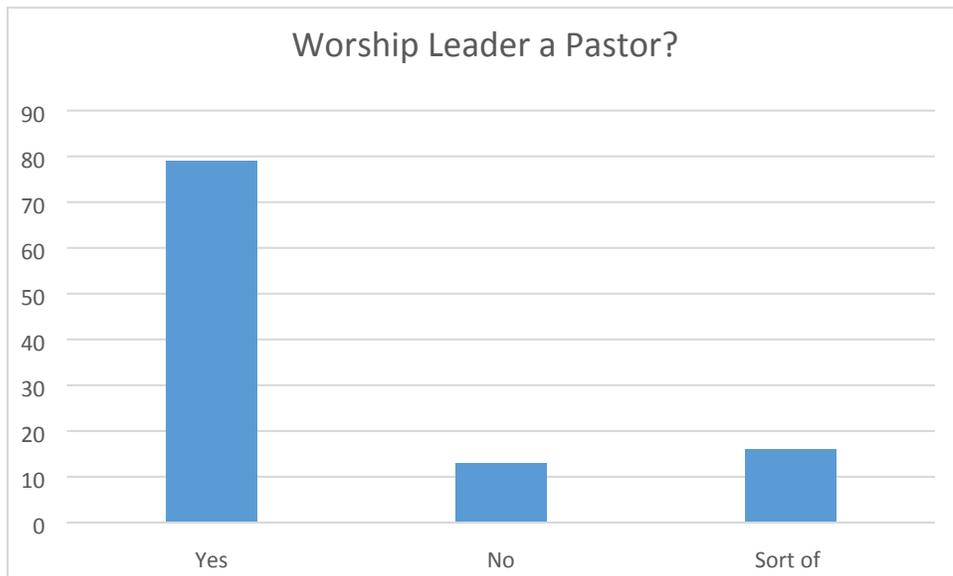


Figure 4.11. Represents whether or not the Worship Leader is viewed as a Pastor

The final question of the survey asks: Besides the pastor, who should be the most biblically competent leader in the church? The possible responses were: youth pastor, children’s minister, worship leader, Sunday school teacher, or deacon. The subjects were allowed to give more than one answer. The highest response was of the youth pastor with 59 responses. A close second was the worship leader with 51 responses. The children’s minister and the Sunday school teacher tied for third place with 27 responses, and the answer with the least amount of responses was that of a deacon with 21 responses. (Fig. 4.12)



Figure 4.12. Represents the most significant biblically competent leader

Among the responses from pastors, four answered with worship leader, two responded with deacon, and one responded with youth pastor. Among staff members, two responded with worship leader, one with Sunday school teacher, and one with youth pastor. And finally, among worship leaders, eight of them believed the worship leader should be the most biblically

competent leader (besides the pastor) within the church, while only one worship leader answered with: Sunday school teacher.

The data shows that most committed believers truly do view the worship leader as a pastor and they value the worship leader as one who teaches and shapes the theology of the church. This majority perspective is encouraging and reveals that the worship leader is in a strong position to teach and pastor his people—since most congregants have an expectation of this from someone in that position.

QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As I stated earlier, the research of this Thesis Project has certain limitations that are both by default and by design. Because of these limitations, there are certain areas of this topic that are left unexplored and/or undeveloped. Also, the survey that was conducted was not designed to ask and/or answer certain questions or come to certain conclusions. Here is a list of questions that would be worth exploring in order to further research the chosen topic.

How does the length of a worship leader's tenure affect how the church views them as a pastor?

It would be interesting to learn how worship leader tenures affect how congregants view them as a pastor. The assumption would be that shorter tenured worship leaders would not have as much respect and admiration in the eyes of congregations as longer tenured worship leaders.

Having some hard data on the subject could assist worship leaders in understanding their pastoral expectations in relation to their ministerial longevity and tenure of service.

Are certain denominations more prone to view their worship leader as one of their pastors than others?

Some denominations have more rigid views on who they consider pastors than others. On one side, some denominations accept female pastors and even consider a husband and wife to be co-pastors. On the other side, more conservative denominations do not view any church staff, except the one preaching behind a pulpit, to be their pastor. Finding hard data on which denominations are more prone to view the worship leader as a pastor would be beneficial to learn and understand.

How many Christians do not believe that the Bible permits women to be pastors?

Similar to the last question, this would help give some understanding on how modern Christians are shaping expectations concerning who fits into the role of a pastor. Though there are more women pastors today than there have been in times past, this would be a good point of research to explore to see where people are on this theological issue.

How many churches that do not believe in female pastors would accept a female worship leader?

This question would apply to more theologically conservative denominations that believe that the Bible teaches that the role of a pastor is exclusively a male position. Though these churches would not give a female worship leader the title of “worship pastor,” it would be interesting to know how many churches from this theological perspective would not accept a female worship leader at all. This would certainly create some challenges for women in these denominations that agree with their denomination in that the pastoral role is exclusive to men, but they feel called to worship ministry. Having this kind of data would help to equip these women in how to prepare to fulfill their calling within their denomination and local church.

Which is more effective in theological teaching and discipling the congregation: singing or preaching?

The participants of this survey shows that people are more inclined to be more engaged during the singing portion of the worship service and less engaged during the preaching. I would not seek to reduce the importance of preaching and I certainly would not propose doing away with the weekly preaching of sermons, but I believe it would be beneficial for pastors and church leaders to evaluate how effective they are in their current model and in the time allotted in their worship services for sermons and time allotted for singing.

What are some ways that we can change our methods of singing/preaching to be more intentional and effective in the teaching ministries of the church?

If church leaders accepted research data which indicates that singing is potentially more effective in teaching than sermons, they would seek to re-evaluate their methods in order to be more effective in theologically training their congregations. The intention behind this question is not to diminish or downplay the importance that preaching has in the theological training of the church, but to elevate it. To re-evaluate the effectiveness and methods of a pastor's preaching is to attempt to help make it better and more effective.

How have singing/preaching methods evolved throughout church history?

Along these lines, it would be an interesting point of research to evaluate how our methods of singing and preaching compare and contrast to those throughout church history. Through this kind of research, one can learn some strengths and weaknesses in one's own methods of ministry.

What Christian doctrines are being neglected or under-emphasized in popular worship songs of today?

If singing is as important to the theological training of the church as this project's research suggests, one should evaluate what Christian doctrines (especially those that are specific to one's own denomination) are being neglected in the songs that are being written and chosen

for today's typical congregation. One could gather data on what the most popular worship songs are of the day and evaluate the lyrical and doctrinal content of the songs.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the data that was collected from these survey participants was very encouraging. Though there were some surprises from the responses, many of them affirmed convictions that I had previously held. Due to the fact that the data shows that most dedicated believers value the worship leader as a pastor and biblical/theological teacher, and they recognize the influence that music has on their theological training and development, it should be easier to convince the majority of people of the theories and conclusions that are presented in the final chapter of this Thesis.

Chapter 5

Three Pastoral Roles

INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter, I will detail how, where, and when to implement my conclusions from the data that was discussed in chapter four. I will also suggest implementations that further promote a pastoral mindset in worship leadership and how to produce more mature and devoted disciples in worship practice. There are broad functions of the pastor that are fulfilled in the ministry of the worship pastor as well as some specific functions. Both will be discussed to one degree or another. More specifically, the pastoral function of the worship leader and the three pastoral functions that the worship leader fulfills will be discussed in length.

THE WORSHIP LEADER AS PASTOR

Worship Leader or Worship Pastor?

As my research showed, most believers (73.15%) view the worship leader as one of the pastors of the church, with only 12.04% of them that do not view them as such. The data shows that the majority of Christians do not view their worship leader as simply a “song leader” or “music director.” They respect him as a minister, as a leader, and as one of their pastors.

Dr. Lavon Gray notes the historical significance of this view of the worship leader when he said, “Beginning in the mid-1940s, a calling as worship pastor was recognized by churches as an important part of ministry to local congregations. For the next 60 years, hundreds of church musicians responded to this call, many serving churches their entire ministries.”¹¹⁵

When discussing some past trends in church history and staffing methods, Dr. Thom Rainer notes the program-driven perspective on church staff and their titles:

The responsibilities and names of church staff positions are incredibly diverse. When churches are largely program driven, they would often call or hire staff according to the program. Thus a music minister was hired for the music program. An educational minister was brought on staff to oversee the educational program. And a youth minister was added for youth programs. Though those positions still exist, program oversight is no longer the primary motivator for adding many staff members.¹¹⁶

I believe that churches should reinforce this view of the worship leader by addressing the one in this position as the “worship pastor.” The reasons for this is that it would give more significance to the minister and his ministry. Though a title can mean little in certain contexts (and the one that holds a title can live up to it or diminish its significance) I believe it does elevate the expectations of what the position involves. Some may view the role of the worship leader as a warm up to the sermon. Or many church members, senior pastors, or even worship leaders may view worship ministry as a stepping stone into “real” pastoral ministry. Being proactive in addressing them as the “worship pastor” could help to minimize this flawed thinking.

¹¹⁵ Lavon Gray, *Hungry for Worship*, 155.

¹¹⁶ Thom Rainer, *Church Staff: Some Observations*, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/church-staff-some-observations-55273/>

Worship Leaders and the Pastoral Qualifications

If the congregation is expected to view the worship leader with the title of a pastor, the worship leader should be expected to live up to the qualifications of a pastor. They should not be seen as merely musicians for hire, but as godly examples for the saints. One of the commands for men who shepherd the church is to be “an example to the flock.” (I Peter 5:3) The Apostle Paul notes his role as an example of holiness when he tells the Corinthians: “I urge you then, be imitators of me.” (I Corinthians 4:16). And furthermore to “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” (I Corinthians 11:1)

In I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 the Apostle Paul provides two lists of qualifications for those who claim to be called to pastor and oversee Christ’s church. There are many similarities in the two lists and also several unique points in each of them. But the main point of the lists is Paul is describing what a life that is transformed by Christ and disciplined by the Spirit really looks like. He explains what kind of life it takes for a man to pastor and “be an example” to the church.

Bob Kauflin notes this calling of holiness in worship pastors when he says, “Leading worship starts with the way I live my life, not with what I do in public. It’s inconceivable for us to see ourselves as worship leaders if we’re not giving attention to what we do every day.”¹¹⁷ Furthermore, he states: “It doesn’t matter whether we’re leading a congregation, driving our car, or sitting alone in our bedroom. Everything we do should be governed by one goal—to see Jesus Christ praised, exalted, magnified, lifted up, and obeyed.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 43.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* 44.

Church leadership concerns should advance the notion is that the role of a worship leader must have elevated expectations. They are the second most visible minister in the church, second only to the senior pastor. This is a position of significant influence. James 3:1 instructs those with influence not to take it lightly when he says, “not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.” Therefore, the worship leader ca not simply be some talented musician that leads the church’s music while living a life of sin. If they are truly going to be pastoral in their ministries, they must begin by honoring God in the choices they make in regards to holiness and godly discipline.

Worship Leaders and Pastoral Training

I would argue that the most important training that the worship pastor can receive is not musical training, but pastoral training. By pastoral training, I mean theological, biblical, counseling, teaching/preaching, administrative, etc. Most of the people surveyed (70.64%) believed that biblical and theological training was more valuable to the worship leader than musical training. It was interesting to see that none of the worship leaders that were surveyed viewed musical education as what was most valuable to their ministries.

I do not want to diminish the importance of musical training and excellence. When David recruited musicians and singers for the purpose of leading worship, he made sure they were trained and skilled (I Chronicles 25:7). But there is much more to this leadership role than musical proficiency. If worship leaders are going to truly be pastoral in their approach to ministry, they need to be trained as pastors.

Dr. Lavon Gray notes that seminaries must ask a new set of questions when thinking about their philosophy of educating and training future leaders. One question in particular: “Is our primary goal to equip our students for ministry or music?”¹¹⁹

He notes the increase in the required skills of today’s worship pastor:

The worship pastor is no longer just the resident staff musician. Today, the worship pastor, an equal partner in ministry, must be a theologian, pastor, counselor, mentor, producer, videographer, audio engineer, leader, and servant. The worship pastor must develop strong communication and relational skills, learn to negotiate and compromise, and understand how to analyze costs versus benefits. To meet these expectations, students called to the worship ministry must have more skills than ever before.¹²⁰

The worship pastor must have training that far exceeds music. If they are to truly be worship pastors, they need to be trained in how to be most effective in fulfilling the biblical responsibilities of pastors. Those responsibilities include: caring for the sick (James 5:14), being an example to the flock (I Peter 5:2-3), teaching sound doctrine (Titus 2:1), reproofing, rebuking, and exhorting (II Timothy 4:2), guarding against false teaching/teachers (Titus 1:10-13), be devoted to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4), doing the work of an evangelist (II Timothy 4:5), and equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12). Not one of these biblical responsibilities has anything that is directly related to musical skill and proficiency; nonetheless, the worship pastor must be able to do them all.

¹¹⁹ Lavon Gray, *Hungry for Worship*, 79.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* 80.

TEACHING AND ADMONISHING THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Worship Pastor as a Minister of the Word

In the book of Acts, the Apostles demonstrated the priorities of pastoral ministry when they established the office of deacon. Acts 6:4 records their reason for recruiting and ordaining deacons to assist them in ministry so that they could devote themselves to “prayer and to the ministry of the Word.” Studying Scripture, literature, and the data collected from the survey has reinforced this conviction of mine: Worship Pastors are primarily ministers of the Word. I believe that we who are in worship ministry should have this belief about our role in the church and in God’s Kingdom. We are not simply musicians for hire. We are pastors who teach God’s Word, and we happen to use music as a significant vehicle to do so.

Colossians 3:16 provides for us a grid in how worship pastors can function as ministers of the Word: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” This verse provides three ways that through the congregational singing of “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” the worshiper is growing in God’s Word

The first way is by letting “the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” This has to do with God’s Word penetrating and residing in our hearts and minds. The way that it can do that is because setting God’s words to music makes it memorable. I believe the faithful worship pastor would lead his congregation to sing songs that have Scripture texts put to singable music. If he has the ability, he should write relevant melodies to the Psalms so that his congregation can sing God’s Words back to Him and be able to memorize them. He should make good use of songs

like “*Everlasting God*” by songwriters Brenton Brown and Ken Riley which puts the words of Isaiah 40:28-31 to modern music.

Notice the wording of this Isaiah passage:

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Notice how Brown and Riley crafted this passage of Scripture into singable and rhyming lyrics:

*Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord...
Our God, you reign forever
Our hope, our strong deliverer
You are the Everlasting God; the Everlasting God
You do not faint, you won't grow weary
You're the defender of the weak, You comfort those in need
You lift us up on wings like eagles¹²¹*

The second way that this verse demonstrates that the singing congregation grows in God's Word is through teaching. The first point has to do with the memorization of God's Word, while this one has to do with progressing in an increasing understanding of God's character and works.

Practically every function of a pastor is ultimately a function of teaching. This is why Paul noted that one of the qualifications of a pastor is to be “able to teach” (I Timothy 3:2) or be

¹²¹ Brenton Brown and Ken Riley, *Everlasting God*.

“able to give instruction in sound doctrine.” (Titus 1:9) When asked if they believe that the worship leader should be able to teach and/or preach the Bible, 73.39% of the people surveyed said, “absolutely.” On the opposite end of the spectrum, only one of the people surveyed believed it was “not necessary at all.”

Because of this responsibility to teach through the medium of song, the worship pastor should select songs for the church that are theologically accurate and theologically robust. Just because a worship song is popular or on the radio and just because a hymn has made its way into a hymnal doesn’t mean it is theologically accurate or robust. The worship pastor must think as a teacher when selecting and/or writing songs for congregational use. Songs are not fulfilling the purpose of congregational singing if they are doctrinally inaccurate and/or shallow.

The third way that Colossians 3:16 demonstrates that the singing congregation grows in God’s Word is through admonishing the people of God. To admonish means to warn, reprimand, urge, or advise. There must be, to some extent, a prophetic dimension to our congregational singing, much like the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun who “prophesied with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals” (I Chronicles 25:1). Singing Scripture and theology should ultimately call the church to repentance or action.

Paul warned Timothy that “the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths” (II Timothy 4:3-4). Though this warning is certainly coming true in our culture in a lot of ways, there is a level of receptivity from God’s people for songs to be a tool for admonishment. Out of 109 people surveyed, 44 people noted that they prefer worship songs to be slightly more challenging than comforting.

With this in mind, worship pastors should make intentional steps in their worship planning and songwriting to provide their congregations with a balanced diet of songs. One of those necessary elements are songs that call us to action and/or repentance.

Most/Least Effective Teaching Methods

Historically, singing and music-making have been seen as incredibly effective teaching methods in discipleship concerns. Generally speaking, they take up far less time in a worship service than sermons primarily because sermons are viewed as the most significant, or even the only teaching time in a worship service. I would question this approach as the most effective in training our congregations in sound doctrine.

The survey revealed some very interesting data in regards to how engaged/disengaged congregants are during a sermon. Out of the 109 participants, 82 of them state that they are most engaged during congregational singing. When asked when they feel the least engaged, the largest group of responses were made up of 26.21% of the people stating it was the sermon. To be more specific, they were asked if they are more engaged during the singing or during the sermon. More than twice as many people are more engaged during the singing than during the sermon, with 51 people noting the singing and 24 people noting the sermon.

My conclusion to this data is not to diminish the importance of preaching or to call for the eliminating of sermons in our worship gatherings. My conclusion is to call pastors and worship planners to reevaluate the methods they are using and the philosophies behind how they are teaching and training their congregations. I am not calling for singing time to be longer than the sermon time, but I am calling for more of a balance. I believe that increasing the amount of time the congregation sings will allow for more effective Scripture memory, theology teaching,

and admonishing. A shorter sermon may cause congregants to be more engaged during the sermon time, thus making it more effective and fruitful.

Plan Services Like a Sermon Series

Just like a pastor plans a sermon series based on specific needs in the congregation during specific seasons, or what he may want his congregation to know about God, I believe the worship pastor should do the same kind of planning. Much like Bob Kauflin's "Twenty-Year Rule" which asks the question: Based solely on the songs they sing, what do I want my congregation to know about God after twenty years under my worship leadership?¹²² This kind of forethought and intentional planning should be a significant part of the teaching ministry of the worship pastor. Dr. Lavon Gray notes the loss of theological distinctiveness in modern day worship songs by calling them a "Theological Melting Pot."¹²³ This should cause worship pastors to think through what doctrines they want to be teaching their congregations through the songs that they sing.

In order to plan worship services like a sermon series in order to teach and instruct worshipers in theology, I would charge the worship planner with four tasks in accomplishing this. First, I would instruct them to make use of the Christian worship calendar. Some churches are more liturgical by nature than others. For those who are not from a background that uses the Christian calendar regularly, this can still be a useful tool in planning out worship services. I would say that you do not have to use the entire annual calendar, but focusing in on times such as Advent or the Easter season.

¹²² Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 119.

¹²³ Lavon Gray, *A Theological Melting Pot-Part 4*.

Secondly, I would encourage worship planners to sing the attributes of God and the gospel of Christ. For certain times of the year, the worship pastor may want to lead the congregation to focus in on a specific attribute of God that they will sing about in one day. Or they may intentionally thread the story of the gospel (sin, the cross, the resurrection) throughout their worship songs. This takes intentionality and careful planning on the part of the worship pastor.

Thirdly, I would encourage worship pastors to use a variety of song genres. I do not necessarily mean musical genres, though that could keep programming fresh and creative. What I mean is imitating the pattern that Paul laid out in Colossians 3:16 by singing “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” Though there has been some debate as to the specific meaning behind each of those song types, I believe the point is to use many different kinds of songs. This kind of variety will help accomplish the goals of teaching, admonishing, and having the word dwell in your heart and mind.

COMFORTING THOSE ABOUT TO MEET GOD

Plan Worship with the Deathbed in Mind

One clear responsibility of the pastor is to minister to those who are dying. James 5:14 says, “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointed him with oil in the name of the Lord.”

In Hebrews 9:27 the writer, reminds us that “it is appointed for man to die once...” Though Christians have eternal hope and security in Christ, who is our Eternal Life, death can still be a scary and difficult thing to walk through. The worship pastor can have a significant

role to minister to sick and dying saints. This is a perspective of ministry that Zac Hicks notes as the worship leader being a “mortician.” In many ways, our role is to prepare people for death.¹²⁴

Though there is something to say about the worship pastor ministering to a dying saint with his physical presence, that is not always possible. I believe that worship pastors minister to people in this season of life and death through the songs that they lead their congregations to sing. We can see this example given to us through Jesus. During the last moments of His earthly life, He quoted lyrics from Psalms that He had no doubt sang since He was a boy. He quotes Psalm 22:1: “My God, my God why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46/Mark 15:34) He also quotes Psalm 31:5 when He said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” (Luke 23:46)

This shows us that in a person’s dying moments, songs of worship may come to mind. They are there to comfort and to reassure what is waiting for them on the other side of death. It is interesting to see Alzheimer’s and dementia patients in this scenario. They may not remember the names or faces of their spouse or children, but they can still sing the words of hymns they grew up within church.

So, what should this call worship pastors to do? I would say that a worship pastor should have a long-term vision for their ministry. They should keep in mind that their influence goes far beyond the Sunday morning worship service. Long after the worship gatherings are over, the songs that the worship pastor teaches and leads will stay with people all of their lives. So, they need to lead worship with the death-bed in mind.

¹²⁴ Zac Hicks, *The Worship Pastor*, 135.

With this in mind, the worship pastor must evaluate the content of his song choices. Will these songs comfort dying saints and their families when they are passing from this life to the next? What do they say about eternal assurance, God's character, or the work of Christ? What about eternity is being said in the songs? The book of Revelation gives us examples of songs with eternity in mind. Chapters four, five, and seven record the songs of future praise. Revelation 15:3-4 records a song of future deliverance: "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed." These songs of future give us hope in the face of death.

Pastoring Through Funeral Planning

There is a significant element that is involved with the worship pastor comforting a dying saint that is about to meet God and that is his role in ministering to the family that is grieving and hurting. Like the other points made, songs are incredibly effective at doing so. Just like a dying patient singing songs of praise, the family can also be comforted by this expression of worship as well.

In the survey, the subjects were asked if they have ever sung hymns or worship songs around a dying loved one. Though there were mixed responses with an almost even split of those who had, and those who had not, more than half (51.38%) said that they had. Like before, the worship pastor must be intentional in his worship planning and have moments like this in mind. Whether or not the worship minister is by the hospital bed leading in the singing or not, his influence will be made known during times like this.

Another aspect of comforting the grieving family is during the funeral process. While the family is making funeral arrangements and planning out the logistics of laying to rest their loved one, this is an incredible opportunity to pastor them. This is a time that the worship pastor can be more to them than simply a musician. The presence of the worship pastor during this process will mean a great deal to the family. This will be a time to be able to encourage them, serve them, cry with them, and pray with them.

And the songs that the worship pastor sings at the funeral will not only honor the dead, but will stay with the family forever. Of the people surveyed, 66.97% of them said that there was a hymn or worship song that is connected to the memory of a deceased loved one. This proves that the worship pastor has significant impact in the lives of people that lasts far beyond a Sunday morning experience.

Out of those subjects who responded affirmatively to the previous question, they were asked to name the specific song or songs. Sixty of the songs were hymns and twenty three of them were modern worship songs. This reveals that either old hymn writers did a much better job as “morticians” or the older generation sways these stats because they die more frequently than the newer generation. I would think that it is a little bit of both, but would certainly not discredit the first assumption. This reveals a significant need for worship planners and songwriters to make more of an intentional effort to minister to the Body of Christ with seasons like this in mind.

EVANGELIZING THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW GOD

The Apostle Paul instructs the young pastor Timothy to “Do the work of an evangelist.” (II Timothy 4:5) This is foundational to pastoral ministry. Though one is not directly

ministering to the Body of Christ, in this scenario, one is ministering to someone who can potentially become part of Christ's Body. As a singing pastor, the worship leader must seek to find ways to use his method of ministry to fulfil this pastoral role. Just as music has always been an effective tool to teach and instruct believers in the truth, it is also a proven method of communicating the gospel effectively to those who do not know Christ.

Those who were surveyed were asked how worship music has been used in their conversion to Christ. People noted the use of Christian concerts (30 responses), corporate worship (64 responses), and invitations after a message (65 responses). Only fifteen people noted that music had no influence on their conversion.

This connection between song and conversion is nothing new. Psalm 96:1-3 says, "Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth! Sing to the LORD, bless his name; *tell* of his salvation from day to day. *Declare* his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!"

In Acts 16, we see an incredible story of how singing has been used in the conversion of the lost. Verse 25 says, "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, *and the prisoners were listening to them.*" There were gospel seeds that were planted in the heart of the guard as he could hear Paul and Silas sing hymns all night. After that, there was a great earthquake which opened all of the doors. There is no doubt that this earthquake gave validation to the truths that were being sung in that jail that night. As a result, the guard came to know Christ along with his family at home.

Leading Worship with the Lost in Mind

The worship leader must function as an evangelist and there must be an evangelistic quality to the content of his ministry. But the question is: How? How does the worship pastor “do the work of an evangelist” while leading worship from the platform? I would suggest five ways.

The first way is to be intentional with the song choices. Like the teaching and admonishing aspect of the worship leader’s role, this requires the worship leader to listen carefully and critically to song lyrics and to plan strategically, as well. He must always be mindful of the people that do not know Christ that will show up to the worship gatherings on Sundays, or watch the service online or on television if the church has the technology to provide that outlet for the church’s ministry content.

Secondly, the worship pastor must be intentional with his words that are spoken, not just sung. During moments like this, the worship pastor can explain the meaning of song lyrics and worship practices during the service. This would be helpful for all members of the congregation, both long-time members and new members, but most especially for those who will be present who have not trusted in the gospel and knows very little of God’s Word.

The third way that the worship pastor can function as an evangelist through congregational singing is by using culturally relevant music. By using the music language of the lost people in that local culture, the worship pastor is speaking a musical language of the people in that community, which will make them more receptive to the lyrical language of the song. This will likely improve the receptivity of the gospel and the fruitfulness of the worship pastor’s ministry in this area.

The fourth way that the worship pastor can do the work of an evangelist is through producing excellent music. Excellence in music can include the content of the song lyrics, as well as the production and presentation of the music. The Scriptures demand that music be done with skill. Psalm 33:3 says, “Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.” Not only is it unbiblical for worship music to not be excellent and skillful, but it will be a turn off to non-Christians and outsiders. Christians who are consistent participants in a local congregation’s worship gathering have a way of being more forgiving of bad music. They will excuse it far more than non-Christians will.¹²⁵ Excellent music will help a person be attentive to the message of the song, while poor music will distract from it.

And finally, the worship pastor can host and/or produce intentional music events. They can do so by hosting a traveling Christian artist, or producing a local gospel concert. They should also make significant effort to embrace the arts, in particular, the art of live music. The church should not be the enemy of the arts, but a champion for them. As messy as it may be, the worship pastor can function as an evangelist to the artistic community by supporting and contributing to local music.

CONCLUSION

It was my aim within this project to explore the pastoral functions of the worship pastor, elevating the importance of that role in local church ministry. My intention was to do this by encouraging worship pastors and to help bring confidence and strength to how worship pastors and laypeople view this position of ministry.

¹²⁵ David Roark, *How Sufjan Stevens Subverts the Stigma of Christian Music*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/03/sufjan-stevens-and-a-better-way-to-write-music-about-faith/388802/>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Best, Harold M. *Music Through the Eyes of Faith*, New York, NY: Harper One Publishers, 1973.
- Best, Harold M. *Unceasing Worship: Biblical Perspectives on Worship and the Arts*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Bonem, Mike and Roger Patterson. *Leading from the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005.
- Boswell, Matt, Michael Bleecker, Matt Papa, Andi Rozier, and Aaron Ivey. *Doxology & Theology: How the Gospel Forms the Worship Leader*, Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2013.
- Brown, Brenton and Ken Riley. *Everlasting God*. Survivor Records, 2006.
- Chapell, Bryan. *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Charles, H. B. *On Pastoring: A Short Guide to Living, Leading, and Ministering as a Pastor*, Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2016.
- Cherry, Constance. *The Music Architect: Blueprints for Engaging Worshipers in Song*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016.
- Cherry, Constance. *The Worship Architect: A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Corbitt, J. Nathan. *The Sound of the Harvest: Music's Mission in Church and Culture*, Grand Rapids, MI; Baker Books, 1998.
- Cosper, Mike. *Rhythms of Grace: How the Church's Worship Tells the Story of the Gospel*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013.
- Dever, Mark and Paul Alexander. *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005.
- Forbis, Wesley L. *The Baptist Hymnal*, Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1991.
- Gray, Lavon. *A Theological Melting Pot-Part 4*, Online Lecture, Liberty University Online, Accessed December 7, 2016.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.
- Harland, Mike and Stan Moser. *Seven Words of Worship: The Key to a Lifetime of Experiencing God*, Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2008.
- Harvill, Jamie. *Worship Foundry: Shaping a New Generation of Worship Leaders*, Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press, 2013.

- Hawkins, Martin E. with Kelli Salman. *The Associate Pastor: Second Chair, not Second Best*, Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2005.
- Hicks, Zac. *The Worship Pastor: A Call to Ministry for Worship Leaders and Teams*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.
- Hunt, T.W. *Music in Missions: Discipling Through Music*, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1987.
- Hustad, Donald. *Jubilate II: Church Music in Worship and Renewal*, Carol Stream, IL: Hope, 1993.
- Ingalls, Monique, Carolyn Landau, and Tom Wagner. *Christian Congregational Music: Performance, Identity and Experience*, Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2013.
- Jancke, Lutz. "Music, Memory and Emotion." 7, no. 21 (Published online Aug 8, 2008): Accessed Feb 28, 2017. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2776393/>
- Kauflin, Bob. *True Worshipers: Seeking What Matters to God*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.
- Kauflin, Bob. *Why Do We Sing?—Colossians 3:16-17*, Sovereign Grace Church, November 25, 2012. Accessed March 28, 2017.
- Kauflin, Bob. *Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter with Greatness of God*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.
- Krauter, Tom. *Keys to Becoming an Effective Worship Leader*, Lynwood, WA: Emerald Books, 2011.
- Krauter, Tom. *The Worship Leader's Handbook: Practical Answers to Tough Questions*, Lynnwood, WA: Emerald Books, 2007.
- Lockyer, Herbert. *All the Music of the Bible: An Exploration of Musical Expression in Scripture and Church Hymnody*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004.
- Long, Thomas G. *Testimony: Talking Ourselves into Being Christian*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004.
- Miller, Stephen. *Worship Leaders, We Are Not Rock Stars*, Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2013.
- Morgan, Robert J. *Then Sings My Soul: 150 of the World's Greatest Hymn Stories*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003.
- Morgan, Robert J. *Then Sings My Soul, Book 3: The Story of Our Songs: Drawing Strength from the Great Hymns of our Faith*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2011.
- Morgenthaler, Sally. *Worship Evangelism: Inviting Unbelievers into the Presence of God*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.
- Owens, Ron and Jan McMurray. *Return to Worship: A God-Centered Approach*, Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 1999.

- Page, Frank S. and L. Lavon Gray. *Hungry for Worship: Challenges and Solutions for Today's Church*, Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishers, 2014.
- Piper, John. *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. 1993.
- Raglio, Alfredo. (2012). "Music Therapy in Dementia." *Dementia: Non-Pharmacological Therapies* (pp. 1-14). Nova Science Publishers, Inc. Accessed on February 28, 2017.
- Rainer, Thom. "Church Staff: Some Observations," *The Christian Post*, September 8, 2011, Accessed April 27, 2017. <http://www.christianpost.com/news/church-staff-some-observations-55273/>
- Rienstra, Debora and Ron Rienstra. *Worship Words: Discipling Language for Faithful Ministry*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Roark, David, "How Sufjan Stevens Subverts the Stigma of Christian Music," *The Atlantic*, March 29, 2015. Accessed on July 27, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/03/sufjan-stevens-and-a-better-way-to-write-music-about-faith/388802/>
- Sacks, Oliver W. *Musicophilia: Takes of Music and the Brain*, New York, NY: Knopf, 2007.
- Sacks, Oliver. "The Power of Music." *Brain* Volume 129, issue 10 (October 1, 2006): Accessed on February 28, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1093/brain/awl234>
- Scheer, Greg. *The Art of Worship: A Musician's Guide to Leading Modern Worship*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006.
- Segler, Franklin M. and Randall Bradley, *Christian Worship: Its Theology and Practice*, Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2006.
- Stetzer, Ed. *Planting Missional Churches: Planting a Church That's Biblically Sound and Reaching People in Culture*, Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2006.
- Stott, John. *The Contemporary Christian: Applying God's Word to Today's World*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.
- Towns, Elmer L. and Vernon M. Whaley. *Worship Through the Ages: How the Great Awakenings Shape Evangelical Worship*, Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2012.
- Walters, Michael. *Can't Wait for Sunday: Leading Your Congregation in Authentic Worship*, Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2006.
- Whaley, Vernon M. *The Dynamics of Corporate Worship*, Virginia Beach, VA: Academx Publishing Services, Inc., 2009.
- Wheeler, David and Vernon M. Whaley. *The Great Commission to Worship: Biblical Principles for Worship-Based Evangelism*, Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2011.
- Wheeler, David and Vernon M. Whaley. *Worship and Witness: Becoming a Great Commission Worshiper*, Nashville, TN: Lifeway Press, 2012.

Wiersbe, Warren W. *Real Worship: Playground, Battle Ground, or Holy Ground?*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000.

Witvliet, John D. *Worship Seeking Understanding: Windows into Christian Practice*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS

SECTION 1

1. I have received and read the consent form and understand the terms and conditions of this survey.
2. How would you identify your role in the church?
 - a. Pastor
 - b. Worship Leader
 - c. Staff Member
 - d. Layperson
3. How many times a year do you attend church?
 - a. 0-10
 - b. 11-25
 - c. 26-39
 - d. 40-52
4. How long have you been a believer in Christ?
 - a. 0-5 years
 - b. 6-15 years
 - c. 16-25 years
 - d. 26-35 years
 - e. 36 years or more
5. What age group would you fall under?
 - a. 18-29
 - b. 30-39
 - c. 40-49
 - d. 50-59
 - e. 60+

SECTION 2

6. How often do you notice that your local church uses Scripture in their song lyrics?
 - a. Not often
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Quite often
 - d. Every week
7. Do you prefer worship songs to be:
 - a. Primarily Comforting
 - b. Somewhat more Comforting than Challenging
 - c. Somewhat more Challenging than Comforting
 - d. Primarily Challenging
8. Have there been any songs from the past few months that have personally challenged, warned, or called you to repentance?

- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I don't know
9. Have you ever sang hymns or worship songs around a dying loved one?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
10. Is there a hymn or worship song that is connected to the memory of a deceased loved one?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
11. If yes, what is the name of the song? If no, respond with "N/A."
12. How has worship music been used in your conversion to Christ? (Select all that apply)
- a. Concerts
 - b. Corporate worship
 - c. Invitations after a message
 - d. Not at all
 - e. Other (Please specify)
13. When do you feel most engaged during the service?
- a. Sermon
 - b. Singing
 - c. Prayer
 - d. Communion
 - e. Other
14. When do you feel least engaged during the service?
- a. Sermon
 - b. Singing
 - c. Prayer
 - d. Communion
 - e. Other
15. During the worship service, do you feel more engaged during the sermon or the singing?
- a. Sermon
 - b. Singing
 - c. Both equally

SECTION 3

16. In your opinion, who is the most significant (human) teacher in the church?
- a. Pastor
 - b. Worship leader
 - c. Sunday School/Small group teacher
 - d. Other—Please explain
17. Should the worship pastor be able to teach/preach the Bible?
- a. Absolutely
 - b. Not necessary, but would be beneficial

- c. Not necessary at all
 - d. Not sure
18. What kind of education would be most valuable for the worship leader to have?
- a. Musical
 - b. Biblical/Theological
 - c. Business management
 - d. Other—please explain
19. Do you view the role of the worship leader as a pastoral role?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sort of
20. Besides the pastor, who should be the most biblically competent leader in the church?
- a. Youth pastor
 - b. Children's minister
 - c. Worship leader
 - d. Sunday School teacher
 - e. Deacon

APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL SHEET

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

March 9, 2017

Zeb Balentine

IRB Exemption 2773.030917: A Survey of Worship Practice and Influence: Principles for How the Worship Leader Shapes Theology

Dear Zeb Balentine,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
 - (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
 - (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
*Administrative Chair of Institutional
Research The Graduate School*