

Liberty University

ACCESS RESTORED:

The Role of Music and Worship in Christian Reconciliation

A Capstone Paper Submitted to
the Faculty of the Division of Music
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Music and Worship: Conducting

School of Music

by

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April 2021

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Abstract

This project explores the meaning of reconciliation to the Father through the sacrifice of Christ. At its fundamental level, the gospel contains the most radical example of reconciliation, where the offended is the party to reestablish contact. Vertical reconciliation is to be the precursor to horizontal reconciliation. The problem is that the body of Christ is far too divided. This division takes on a number of forms within the church, none of which is biblical. As the capstone project of an M.A. in Music and Worship degree, the purpose of the study is twofold. The first is to examine how the call to be ministers of reconciliation is to govern the Christian's daily behavior. The second is to consider the role of music in this calling. The method of this study is a Worship Program Recital, or a Lecture Recital, with an emphasis in conducting. In order to relate biblically to God, men and women must appreciate His character, while acknowledging the standard required to know Him. The gospel is the framework for life, and *ACCESS RESTORED* is one lens through which to understand and apply it.

Keywords: reconciliation, gospel, worship, music, cross, choir

Acknowledgements

Each and every step of the way, God’s hand on this project has been evident. There have been numerous tests of faith throughout the preparation journey, and He has consistently proven His faithfulness. The three most influential people in shaping the direction of *ACCESS RESTORED* served on the faculty committee. Dr. Rumrill—you sharpened my original ideas when they were in their infancy. Mr. Bullman—we became excited together about this repertoire in the fall as you gave me weekly instruction. Dr. Byrd—this paper is stronger because of your input.

Financially, 44 individuals/couples exceeded the \$4,000 fundraising goal via a GoFundMe campaign. From 3 provinces and 6 states (in 2 countries), this team put arms and legs on this project. I know that these and other individuals faithfully prayed for my team and me throughout the rehearsal process. There are many others with key roles in the actual recital that I do not have room to mention here. I appreciate each one of you, including all who viewed and attended!

If my Mom were still alive, I would have two parents on top of the world, observing the culmination of my hard work. However, I still have one. I am *so* grateful for a Dad who is one of my closest friends. He has continued to support me these past three years, and I thank God for continuing to give him life. Dad, I love you. It is my honor to dedicate this project to you.

Father, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the fine I could never pay. I am honored that You would call me one of Your own. You have blessed me abundantly with musical abilities, and I am in awe of the things You have done over the past number of years. I joyfully return the glory to You for anything and everything of value that may come out of this project. May this creative offering be one application of my life verse, “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name” (Hebrews 13:15, NKJV). Amen.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

The Call for Every Believer

The world is not as it ought to be. A person does not need to look far to see the brokenness and division ravaging every aspect of life on this globe. Marriages implode, cultural tensions intensify, and the effects of a virus force the vulnerable into isolation. To make matters worse, those who bear the name of Christ assault one another in a cyber war, where anything goes, and human beings become nothing more than virtual punching bags. Sin certainly pervades.

It should be no surprise that the ramifications of being separated from a holy God are ugly. Yahweh is life. Yahweh is love. Yahweh is peace, joy, justice, and goodness. Apart from Him, a person is void of all these things.¹ Yet, this is not the case for the redeemed. God's people not only have access to the fullness of His character, they are called to live it out.²

Too often, at some point, believers reach a place in their journey with the Lord, where they develop the notion of having arrived. The believer's eternal destiny was redirected from hell to heaven when he or she became a Christian. Having done some good things since then, it may seem that no additional action is required. Nothing could be further from the truth! Although the believer is saved by grace through faith,³ the work of sanctification *begins* on the day of justification,⁴ when the man or woman confesses and repents of sin, professing faith in Jesus

¹ Galatians 5:19–21.

² Galatians 5:22–25.

³ Ephesians 2:8.

⁴ Philippians 1:6.

Christ.⁵ God’s people have been given a holy calling⁶ and been saved for good works.⁷ Serving the Lord is not a one-time event, but rather, a lifetime journey. Being indwelt by the Holy Spirit,⁸ saints become equipped to accomplish mighty things, in the name of Jesus, for the glory of God.

The Mission of Jesus

Worship leader Jeff Deyo writes about a sermon he heard a number of years ago at a conference where he was leading worship. The speaker, Jose Duran, was questioning if, perhaps, the church had overemphasized Jesus. Deyo was startled. Although he was sure the speaker was a lunatic, he kept listening. Duran proceeded to quote John 14:6, “Jesus said to him [Thomas], ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”⁹ As Duran continued with an analogy about a trip to Disney, Deyo was amazed. Duran illustrated that Jesus is the road to take people somewhere, and, in life, people do not get excited about the road but the destination. What is incredibly significant, according to Deyo, is that Jesus Himself is the One speaking in this verse.¹⁰ He has a critical message to share that many people miss “because of centuries of misguided teaching . . . [that] Jesus—the Way—is the chief end. But no. Coming to the Father. To be *with* Him, to have fellowship with Him (along with Jesus and the Holy Spirit). This is the true end.”¹¹ Sent *by* the Father, Jesus desires to take people *to* the Father.

⁵ Luke 5:32; Romans 10:9–10; 1 John 1:9.

⁶ 2 Timothy 1:9.

⁷ Ephesians 2:10.

⁸ John 14:12; 16:7.

⁹ John 14:6, NKJV; Jeff Deyo, *Awakening Pure Worship: Cultivating a Closer Friendship with God* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2018), 132.

¹⁰ Deyo, *Awakening Pure Worship*, 132–36.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 136.

The Role of Jesus

Sin is a barrier, a roadblock to enjoying fellowship with the Father. Adam's original sin collectively represented the rebellion of the human race, and this irreversible disease ultimately leads to death.¹² No mortal being has ever lived who had the capacity to provide a cure or the ability to stop perpetuating the sin epidemic. Furthermore, a just God cannot simply pretend that sin does not exist. There must be a sinless Savior, Jesus Christ, One Who could enter the human race via a means other than sexual reproduction and provide a payment for the costliest fine ever known to man. The provision of this unmerited gift by the Merciful, and the acceptance of this gift by the offender, conjointly comprise the act of reconciliation, made possible by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Jesus' teaching in John 14:6 is consistent with the rest of His ministry *and* with the rest of Scripture. His focus was always on the Father. The Father "granted the Son to have life in Himself."¹³ Jesus came "not to do [His] own will, but the will of [the Father] who sent [Him]."¹⁴ Jesus was sent to earth in His Father's name.¹⁵ Jesus testified that He could do nothing apart from His Father¹⁶ and that His doctrine was not His own but His Father's.¹⁷ However, Jesus was not, and is not, an unimportant Person in the Godhead. The fact remains that Jesus Himself said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."¹⁸ The Father gave "all things into

¹² Romans 5:12.

¹³ John 5:26.

¹⁴ John 6:38.

¹⁵ John 5:43.

¹⁶ John 5:19, 30.

¹⁷ John 7:16.

¹⁸ Matthew 28:18.

[Jesus'] hand,"¹⁹ "committed all judgment to the Son,"²⁰ and "highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name."²¹ Yet, in the well-known passage of Philippians 2, the Father still is mentioned: "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and *that* every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."²² Clearly, Jesus' life was marked by a higher purpose. It still is, and He serves as an example for the people of God.

The Process of Reconciliation

Reconciliation makes a new beginning possible for a given relationship.²³ Reconciliation begins when one party admits wrongdoing and receives the forgiveness offered by another party. Through the cross, Jesus was, and is, the means of reconciling repentant men and women with the Father. Typically, the offender is the one to take the first step to reconcile. However, God's economy often operates contrary to the ways of the world. Christ did not die for a righteous or a good man.²⁴ Rather, He died for men and women while they were still sinners, otherwise known as enemies of God.²⁵

A present trend in the prosperity gospel movement is to view the removal of sin as something that will make a person's life better, conveniently distorting the fact that the actual

¹⁹ John 3:35.

²⁰ John 5:22.

²¹ Philippians 2:9.

²² Philippians 2:10–11.

²³ *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. "reconcile," accessed April 14, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reconciled>.

²⁴ Romans 5:7.

²⁵ Romans 5:8, 10.

reason why sin must be removed is for man to have fellowship restored with a holy God.²⁶ Mankind is desperately in need of saving. Tim Tebow says, “What Jesus did on the cross didn’t make average people a little bit better. It made dead people alive!”²⁷ The book of Hebrews is a rich and detailed account of the priesthood of Christ. Prior to Christ’s death and resurrection, the high priest had to offer up sacrifices, daily, for his sins and the sins of the people.²⁸ Yet, once every year marked a special and serious occasion, when the high priest would enter the holy of holies. Like the other sacrifices, this visit was also for the purpose of temporarily covering sin.²⁹ However, this day was unique. The holy of holies marked the dwelling place of God’s presence, and this annual event was a foreshadowing of what Christ would eventually do when the veil was torn, giving people permanent access to the Father.³⁰ What once was an opportunity with limited terms would later become an anytime-invitation for mankind to commune with his Maker.

In all of this, though, people are not the centerpiece of the gospel. Clarifying the ultimate motive, pastor John Piper says, “God performs salvation for *His own sake*. He justifies the people called by His name in order that He may be glorified.”³¹ Christ’s life was marked by obedience and submission to the Father.³² His manner of coming through the virgin birth defined

²⁶ Justin Peters, “Why Your Church Shouldn’t Play Bethel and Hillsong Music,” interview by Todd Friel, *Wretched*, February 8, 2020, video, 8:43, <https://youtu.be/Y0uFSYHVSRk>.

²⁷ Tim Tebow, “Poetry in Motion,” interview by James Robison, *LIFE Today*, January 25, 2020, video, 12:50, <https://youtu.be/gRVYUqVx7oI>.

²⁸ Hebrews 7:27.

²⁹ Hebrews 9:7.

³⁰ Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45.

³¹ John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry*, rev. ed. (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 7.

³² John 5:30; 6:38; Matthew 26:39, 42.

His identity as the sinless God-man and climaxed in dying one death on behalf of many people.³³ In its totality, vertical reconciliation hinges on the New Covenant of Christ.

Vertical reconciliation presents a horizontal mission. In the words of the apostle Paul, God has entrusted the reconciled with the “ministry of reconciliation.”³⁴ Knowing that the Father sees them as if they had never sinned, the reconciled become ambassadors for Christ, “as though God were pleading” through His children for others to be reconciled to Him in the same way.³⁵ This key passage of 2 Corinthians 5:18–20 is located between two well-known passages within the same chapter. Preceding it is the truth that “anyone [who] *is* in Christ . . . *is* a new creation”³⁶ Following it is the truth of imputed righteousness, which reads, “He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”³⁷ All of these truths pertain to the change, the transformation, that takes place inside believers and the expected horizontal actions that will follow. Yet, whether or not the message of reconciliation is regarded as credible depends upon the conduct of the deliverer. 1 John tells of the importance of walking in love, based on the example first presented by Jesus. A love that saw through the once-permanent stain of sin is the same love that must see through the offensive behavior of the lost.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this project is to consider the wondrous concept of reconciliation in relation to worship music and the Christian’s daily behavior. Worship pastors and musicians will

³³ Ian Thomas, lecture at Moody Bible Institute, quoted in John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 31.

³⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:18.

³⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:20.

³⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:17.

³⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:21.

likely find the content especially interesting. However, since those in local-church ministry seek to edify the common-man of the congregation, people who are not involved in vocational or volunteer platform ministry will also benefit from this study. As God's children come to greater understandings of the person of God and their identity in Him, they will live more victoriously and be more effective for the kingdom. Through the veil, they are one with the God of the universe,³⁸ and His glory is displayed through their daily obedience to the gospel.

Significance of the Study

The Prevalence of False Gospels

The true gospel continues to be attacked by false gospels. Their proponents' craftiness seems to be increasing, and more people fall prey to these heresies every day.³⁹ False gospels, similar to all religious belief systems, are built on some truth, mixed with a significant amount of error.⁴⁰ Christianity is not a religion. Rather, it is the true account of God coming to man.⁴¹ Every religion, in some way, involves man trying to get to God. False gospels diminish the holiness of God and manufacture a fictitious narrative about the goodness of man.⁴² In the process, a fake god is created. Essentially, man is the focus.

Man's relationship with God has always been dependent upon God's faithfulness. Prior to the cross, the Abrahamic Covenant was an excellent example of God making promises to His

³⁸ Hebrews 6:19; 10:19–25.

³⁹ Galatians 1:6–7.

⁴⁰ 2 Peter 2:1–2.

⁴¹ John 1:14.

⁴² Galatians 3:1–3.

people and sealing them with His own unchangeable character.⁴³ Under no circumstance, prior to meeting Christ or after, do God's people earn, or contribute to, their righteous standing before Him. Yet, false gospels and religions appeal to man's supposed winning-tally on a scorecard with God. God's people must remain grounded in the truth if they are to spot the counterfeit, even if the errors are only subtle. Just because something is popular, even among Christians, does not mean that it is sound and godly. In a day when, via the internet, a wide array of resources is available at the fingertips of the church (many under the generic "Christian" label), believers must be discerning. They must remember their utter dependence on God and take up their crosses daily.⁴⁴ Like the Bereans, believers must evaluate Christian practices in light of the Scriptures.⁴⁵

Types of Reconciliation

Having been vertically reconciled, God's people can be reconciled, horizontally, with one another. Sadly, that has not happened. Instead of walls coming down, it seems that more division has formed.⁴⁶ Voicing an opinion has become more important than considering the opinions of others. Comparisons are made and judgments are formed in a number of areas, not the least of which is skin tone. Many types of division are heartbreaking, but this one, especially, has no grounds for discrimination. Creationist Ken Ham points out that, biblically, "all humans are

⁴³ Genesis 15.

⁴⁴ Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23.

⁴⁵ Acts 17:11.

⁴⁶ Rhyne R. Putman, "How Social Media Worsens Theological Divides," Crossway, May 20, 2020, <https://www.crossway.org/articles/how-social-media-worsens-the-theological-divide>.

descendants of the first man, Adam.”⁴⁷ The apostle Paul articulates, “He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth.”⁴⁸ Pastor Voddie Baucham specifies that “God made ethnicities and not races.” He shows that “the Great Commission acknowledges ethnicity,” but “antiracism is an antibiblical idea.”⁴⁹ In other words, racism is not biblical because race is not biblical. All people are one race, meaning that classifying a church as “multiracial” is incongruent with Scripture. Ham observes, “The Bible does not even use the word race in reference to people,” and he believes the term “race(s)” should be discarded.⁵⁰ Yet, pastor Dhati Lewis holds a different perspective. Although he recognizes that mankind is one race, Lewis realizes that most people use “race” to discuss differences of ethnicity. With this in mind, he chooses to use the term as a means of effectively addressing the divisions he sees today.⁵¹

Sadly, music can be a point of division. The church should celebrate ethnicity, including a variety of musical expressions. According to Baucham, if the cross was enough to reconcile the division that God created between Jews and Gentiles, so much more should it reconcile the artificial divisions that people have created.⁵² Thus, music can be a means of celebrating reconciliation with God and oneness with one another in the body of Christ.

⁴⁷ Ken Ham, “Are There Really Different Races?,” in *The New Answers Book*, vol. 1, *Over 25 Questions on Creation/Evolution and the Bible*, ed. Ken Ham and Bodie Hodge (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2006), 223; 1 Corinthians 15:45.

⁴⁸ Acts 17:26.

⁴⁹ Voddie Baucham, “LU Convocation,” interview by David Nasser, Liberty University, November 6, 2020, video, 29:52–36:38, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtNcSqowoxA>; Matthew 28:18–20.

⁵⁰ Ham, “Are There Really Different Races?,” 223.

⁵¹ Dhati Lewis, *Advocates: The Narrow Path to Racial Reconciliation* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), xv, xxi.

⁵² Baucham, “LU Convocation,” 29:52–36:38.

Research Questions

For this study, the research questions are:

RQ1: In what ways, if any, does the realization of having been reconciled to the Father influence the attitudes of believers toward other people?

RQ2: How should the role of worship music, involving the choir, aid or assist in the ministry of reconciliation?

As the capstone project for an M.A. in Music and Worship degree, much of the content will be theological in nature. However, the influential aspect of *singing* theology will also be discussed.

Method

The subject matter for this topic will heavily rely upon reflexivity, the ways in which “background, culture, and experiences hold potential for shaping . . . interpretations.”⁵³ Bias is also a large factor in this study.⁵⁴ Reflexivity and bias are characteristics of a qualitative approach to research. This approach also allows the author to write more expressively.⁵⁵ Since personal views need not be avoided, the damage caused by the prosperity gospel will be addressed. In addition, a holistic account, one that includes other perspectives, will be presented for greater credibility.⁵⁶ A variety of sources will be consulted in this study, including books, commentaries, and other works of theological scholars, to determine themes and patterns pertinent to the research questions.

⁵³ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018), 182.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 182.

Summary

What Christ accomplished on the cross represents so much more than offering men and women forgiveness from sin. His accomplishment restored people's access to the Father. All who have been reconciled to God now bear the great responsibility to extend the favor to others which they have first been shown. Singing this theology through music with fellow believers can facilitate a horizontal work of reconciliation, flowing out of the vertical aspect. As will be discovered, what God has done in one human's soul must be applied in his or her daily behavior with others, specifically, by serving as a minister of reconciliation⁵⁷ through music.

⁵⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:18–20.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

As with many things, a term or a concept can take on different meanings, depending on the priorities and worldview of the interpreter. Not surprisingly, when the starting point does not have a biblical foundation, the conclusion will almost certainly be a long distance from aligning with the truth of God's Word. Reconciliation, the topic at hand, does have other applications, but must be understood within the biblical narrative of being reconciled to the Father through Jesus Christ. This chapter will discuss the various perspectives of reconciliation, in general, as well as the practice of reconciliation through the vehicle of music.

Perspectives of Reconciliation

Humanistic Reconciliation

Apart from Christ, people in various fields approach their work and research from a humanistic perspective. Social activist María Elisa Pinto García reports, "Over the last two decades, reconciliation began to emerge as a specific area of study parallel to conflict resolution and peacebuilding."⁵⁸ Conflict resolution involves two parties working through a problem between them and often requires the help of a mediator.⁵⁹ Peacebuilding, "generically defined as external interventions that are designed to prevent the eruption or return of armed conflict,"⁶⁰

⁵⁸ María Elisa Pinto García, "Music and Reconciliation in Colombia: Opportunities and Limitations of Songs Composed by Victims," *Music and Arts in Action* 4, no. 2 (2014): 27.

⁵⁹ Sai On Cheung, "Mediation for Improved Conflict Resolution," *Journal of Legal Affairs and Dispute Resolution in Engineering and Construction* 2, no. 3 (August 2010): 135, [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)LA.1943-4170.0000035](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)LA.1943-4170.0000035).

⁶⁰ Michael Barnett et al., "Peacebuilding: What Is in a Name?," *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 13, no. 1 (January-March 2007): 36, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27800641>.

tends to occur on a national or international scale, with the goal of a more harmonious way of life. In the past, “contradictory, or even mutually exclusive, approaches” were used in the two fields, creating “tension,” independent of the problems being addressed.⁶¹ Similar to peacebuilding in some respects is the study of human rights.⁶² A group of researchers believe that the fields of human rights and conflict resolution, although separate, would do well to learn from one another.⁶³ They highlight the priorities of human rights for justice and of conflict resolution for reconciliation as the greatest difference between the two disciplines.⁶⁴

A distinction must be made between forgiveness and reconciliation. According to psychologist Everett L. Worthington Jr., “Forgiveness occurs inside an individual. Reconciliation is restoring damage in a relationship, not inside an individual.”⁶⁵ Forgiveness precedes reconciliation, but that does not necessarily mean reconciliation will follow. Worthington does not believe that forgiveness is “the only way or always the best way people should deal with interpersonal transgressions.”⁶⁶ Thus, without biblical absolutes, practicing forgiveness and attempting to reconcile is optional.

⁶¹ Ibrahim Seaga Shaw and Senthan Selvarajah, eds., introduction to *Reporting Human Rights, Conflicts, and Peacebuilding: Critical and Global Perspectives* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 3.

⁶² Michelle Parlevliet, “Human Rights and Peacebuilding: Complementary and Contradictory, Complex and Contingent,” *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 9, no. 3 (November 2017): 344, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/hux032>.

⁶³ Ellen L. Lutz, Eileen F. Babbitt, and Hurst Hannum, “Human Rights and Conflict Resolution from the Practitioners' Perspectives,” *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 27, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2003): 192, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45289227>.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁶⁵ Everett L. Worthington Jr., *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Theory and Application* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 3.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, xii.

Superficial Reconciliation

Inauthentic Christianity

One of the biggest offenses for external observers of Christianity is when they have reason to believe that what is practiced by its proponents is not genuine. Similarly, Christians themselves want to see genuine Christlikeness at work within the church. Jesus said, “Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”⁶⁷ He also said, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”⁶⁸ Believers are not perfect, but the general pattern of their lives should be that of consistent growth and increasing godliness.

Before considering reconciliation with others, there must be an understanding of reconciliation with God. Evangelist Ray Comfort is asked, on occasion, why he does not lead people in the Sinner’s Prayer after sharing the gospel with them. To answer the question, he illustrates how absurd it would be for someone to lead a husband in an apology to his wife after committing adultery. In this scenario, the wife would not receive the apology as earnest and genuine. Just as the apology should flow naturally from the remorseful heart in a broken marriage, so should a sinner’s apology flow naturally to God without coaching.⁶⁹

As previously discussed, conflict resolution is related to reconciliation.⁷⁰ Specifically, both disciplines seek to mend a broken relationship, but the desire to achieve this result could actually short-circuit the process of getting there. Articulating one of the frequent criticisms of his field, expert Bernard Mayer says, “Conflict resolution processes tend to suppress conflict and

⁶⁷ Matthew 7:20.

⁶⁸ John 13:35.

⁶⁹ Ray Comfort, “Why Doesn’t Ray Comfort Pray the ‘Sinner’s Prayer’ with People?,” October 7, 2015, Living Waters, video, 0:11–0:47, <https://youtu.be/VCabeFXneGg>.

⁷⁰ García, “Music and Reconciliation in Colombia,” 27.

arrive at superficial and fragile solutions. Because the goal is harmony and resolution, there is a natural norm . . . to achieve resolution easily and with minimal angst.”⁷¹ A critic of forgiveness took issue with the damage that occurs when women are told to forgive their abusers, because they eventually get back into the relationship and get hurt again.⁷² Such an occurrence does not make forgiveness wrong, because forgiveness is not the only influencing factor in this situation. Restoring trust in the former offender should not take place until he has evidently changed his behavior.⁷³ Even without restoring trust, genuine forgiveness goes deeper than that of the surface level and is different than merely saying the words, “I forgive you,” when, evidently, the offended is still bitter.⁷⁴

On the other hand, forgiving someone out of *obedience* to Scripture, even when it seems impossible, is different than forgiving someone out of *obligation* to a set of rules. Encountering him years later, Holocaust survivor Corrie ten Boom shares that *she* could *not* forgive “one of the most cruel guards” from the camp where her sister was killed. However, once she took the very difficult step to reach out her hand, ten Boom recounts, “The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.”⁷⁵ Holy Spirit–empowered forgiveness is possible. Rather than continuing to live as if forgiveness has taken place, when it actually has not, a wounded person should seek counsel and cry out to God for help to forgive others.

⁷¹ Bernard Mayer, *Beyond Neutrality: Confronting the Crisis in Conflict Resolution* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 46.

⁷² Worthington Jr., *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, 3.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

⁷⁵ Corrie ten Boom, *Tramp for the Lord* (Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications, 2011), 55–57.

Misplaced Leadership Actions

Dhati Lewis reminds his readers that the only hope for breaking down any division, specifically that of ethnicity, is a return to the gospel.⁷⁶ He contends that believers should heed the call to be advocates, those with the goal of “reconciliation to Christ and his body.”⁷⁷ Lewis realizes that being an advocate does not mean that reconciliation “always takes place,” but it must be the intent of the heart.⁷⁸ Similarly, pastor Cameron Thomas reflects on the Southern Baptist Convention’s designation of a Sunday in February as “Racial Reconciliation Sunday.” He questions exactly what a church is supposed to do on this particular day. Realistically, Thomas remarks that “best intentions don’t fix problems.” Instead, he continues, “A ‘Reconciliation Sunday’ service can reinstate radicalized stereotypes about music and culture if the intention to invite guests into our sanctuaries becomes a token gesture of entertaining music or preaching,”⁷⁹ when the style is contrary to that of a local church’s norm.

In government, passing legislation can be helpful if it supports biblical principles. However, changing the law does not change the human heart. Civil rights laws have been passed over the years, but ethnic segregation remains.⁸⁰ Sadly, according to law professor Sheryll Cashin, black people have become “integration weary.” She explains, “Most African Americans do not crave integration, although they support it. What seems to matter most to black people is not living in a well-integrated neighborhood but having the same access to the good things in life

⁷⁶ Lewis, *Advocates*, xiv–xv.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, xvi.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, xvi–xvii.

⁷⁹ Cameron Thomas, “Rethinking Worship for Racial Segregation Sunday,” Samford University, February 10, 2020, <https://www.samford.edu/worship-arts/blog/2020/Rethinking-Worship-for-Racial-Reconciliation-Sunday>.

⁸⁰ Sheryll Cashin, *The Failures of Integration: How Race and Class Are Undermining the American Dream* (Cambridge, MA: PublicAffairs, 2004), xiv.

as everyone else.”⁸¹ The fulfillment of this desire should not *substitute for* integration. Rather, it should be sought *in conjunction with* integration. Church leaders play a part in implementing strategic initiatives that facilitate change. Yet, the most radical shift results from a transformed perspective in the individual lives of congregants and families. If black people are weary in the battle, other believers should advocate on their behalf. The body of Christ is not comprised of sectors based on skin tone. God’s people, including pastors, must seek something more unified than the present reality.

The need for holistic reconciliation is also evident within the relationships of the family unit. Marriage and parenting are God-ordained relationships. Great joy is experienced through these interactions, but great hurt can result as well. Apart from daily infusions of the gospel, the priority of self will eventually affect any given relationship in negative ways. Consequently, many relationships degrade over time. The flesh is ugly, and believers need to hear and internalize the gospel for consistent spiritual growth as much as pre-believers need to hear and respond to the gospel for conversion.⁸² However, Voddie Baucham observes how it seems that people “grow weary of the gospel.”⁸³ Instead of reminding them of their need for Christ, parents will tell their children to “stop that!” Yet, citing Isaiah 64:6, Baucham contends that teaching children to do good deeds without a dependence upon God is not the answer.⁸⁴ Men and women do not have the capacity to selflessly love and wholeheartedly forgive one another. *Only* as they

⁸¹ Cashin, *The Failures of Integration*, xii–xiii.

⁸² J. D. Greear, *Gospel: Recovering the Power that Made Christianity Revolutionary* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 240.

⁸³ Voddie Baucham, *Joseph and the Gospel of Many Colors: Reading an Old Story in a New Way* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 18.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 18–19.

diligently seek Him can God's people fully experience His goodness and display His glory as a witness to others.

Genuine Christianity

Those who follow Jesus Christ realize that reconciliation could never be completely understood apart from God's grace. To classify reconciliation as an area of psychological or sociological study divorces the concept from its eternal significance as demonstrated by the Godhead. In the same way that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,"⁸⁵ understanding life is only possible when God is acknowledged as the Supreme Example. As is often the case, multiple variables are at play when faced with conflict. Believers who are serious about obeying the truth of God's Word, as well as upholding their personal convictions, are required to make significant choices. These choices include differentiating between primary and secondary doctrines. According to theologian Mark Dever, the desire to be faithful to Christ in doctrine could, consequently, cause further division in the body. Dever observes that the total number of denominations continues to rise, which is representative of the "increasing desire for faithfulness in purity rather than unity."⁸⁶ In some cases, the act of being separate may be the best option if a primary doctrine is in question. In many cases, though, believers are divided because of secondary doctrines. This should not be the case. The apostle Paul says, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."⁸⁷ Thus, even in the case of

⁸⁵ Proverbs 9:10.

⁸⁶ Mark E. Dever, "The Church," in *A Theology for the Church*, rev ed., ed. Daniel L. Akin, Bruce Riley Ashford, and Kenneth Keathley (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 643.

⁸⁷ Romans 12:18.

separation due to primary doctrines, vocational ministers of the gospel should still be leading the general charge for unity.

Too often, congregants define themselves by their denomination, which is likely due, at least in part, to something that has or has not been said by the leadership. For a pastor to frequently emphasize the reason that they, as a church, identify as Baptists or Pentecostals could spark further division. On the contrary, a pastor could regularly remind a given church that they are serving the same Lord as the church down the street, potentially fostering behavior that would unify believers in the area. Rather than repel their differences, pastors should befriend fellow ministers of the gospel in their particular communities and encourage one another in their labor throughout the year.⁸⁸

The Conduct of the Reconciled

Before discussing music, God's expected conduct of reconciled believers must be considered. The tongue is powerful, for with it, believers "bless [their] God and Father" and "curse men."⁸⁹ Worship song lyrics have the potential to serve as a blazing testimony, affirming the collective godly character of the people within a particular local church. However, the lyrics become meaningless when joined with contradicting behavior on the part of the proclaimers. Although not a comprehensive list, God's people have two main responsibilities: to forgive others and to pursue holiness.

⁸⁸ Chris Bruno and Matt Dirks, *Churches Partnering Together: Biblical Strategies for Fellowship, Evangelism, and Compassion* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 147.

⁸⁹ James 3:9.

Forgive Others

In Matthew 18, Jesus shares a parable about a servant who owed an enormous debt to his master, but his master forgave him the debt when he asked for an extension.⁹⁰ Yet, when a fellow servant asked the one with the forgiven debt for the same thing, this previously-desperate servant threw the debtor in jail.⁹¹ Subsequently, the master heard about what had happened and called the forgiven servant to condemn him.⁹² The master then “delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him,” originally.⁹³ More than likely, the servant’s response would have been different had he actually pondered what great favor he had been shown. The first research question seeks to investigate that further.

Grace is God’s unmerited favor shown to mankind. When someone receives salvation, it does not mean that he or she will live sinlessly from that moment on. However, at the moment of conversion, the Holy Spirit comes to reside within the individual⁹⁴ and gives him or her an overarching desire to do right. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, “He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”⁹⁵ A person who has truly experienced the grace of God will not want to take advantage of it. The apostle Paul made no allowance for the abuse of grace.⁹⁶ To a certain extent, continuing to receive God’s grace as His children is dependent upon

⁹⁰ Matthew 18:23–27.

⁹¹ Matthew 18:28–30.

⁹² Matthew 18:31–33.

⁹³ Matthew 18:34.

⁹⁴ John 14:16–17.

⁹⁵ John 16:8.

⁹⁶ Romans 6:1–2, 15.

extending forgiveness to others.⁹⁷ The love which believers show is a result of having first been loved by the Almighty.⁹⁸

Pursuing Holiness

The church needs one another in order to effectively live the Christian life. One of the most significant mandates that God has given to His people is to be holy.⁹⁹ Dever observes, “Apart from God’s holiness the church need not exist. That is, if God is not set apart, his people would not be set apart.”¹⁰⁰ Put another way, the church mirrors God’s holiness. Forsaking the things of the world is a battle and is almost impossible to do without the support of others who are seeking to do the same thing. Theologian Bernie A. Van De Walle exhorts, “The task of the church in regard to morality, then, is not to strike out on its own with the best of intentions and a firm resolve. Instead, humbly, it is to call on God for the grace to be and to do what he has created it for.”¹⁰¹ How much more effective when done in the context of corporate, not solely individual, prayer. The people of God need the input of one another so as not to get become ensnared in the trappings of sin¹⁰² or comfortable with the pleasures of this world.¹⁰³ By commanding them to take up their crosses daily,¹⁰⁴ Jesus was reminding His disciples to stay

⁹⁷ Matthew 6:15.

⁹⁸ 1 John 4:19.

⁹⁹ Leviticus 11:44–45, 19:2, 20:7, 26; Romans 12:1–2; 1 Peter 1:16.

¹⁰⁰ Dever, “The Church,” 614.

¹⁰¹ Bernie A. Van De Walle, *Rethinking Holiness: A Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 141.

¹⁰² Hebrews 3:13.

¹⁰³ 2 Peter 1:10–15.

¹⁰⁴ Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23.

focused on completing the work entrusted to them, in the same way that He was focused on being about His Father's business.¹⁰⁵

The Ministry of Reconciliation through Music

Few people would deny that music is a powerful medium of communication. Tonality, contour, texture, and rhythm all convey something to the listener. Possessing an additional dimension of communication, the human voice is a unique and sacred instrument. It has the capacity to carry the very truth of the gospel, with the potential to accentuate the message via a suitable melody and musical setting. Vocalist Jeanette Bicknell observes, "With some songs, . . . the communication of a dominant emotional mood or a specific rhythmic feel are just as important as the communication of the lyrics."¹⁰⁶ Emotion is intertwined in the human voice to the extent that the two can hardly be separated. This relationship can either enhance or detract from the message. According to music researcher Graham Welch, "As part of our basic communication, six primary emotions – fear, anger, joy, sadness, surprise, and disgust – are all commonly expressed vocally."¹⁰⁷ Although it is possible to say or sing something emotionlessly, a message is still communicated, for the better or for the worse.

Welch's study intriguingly examines the development of vocalization and interpretation from human infancy. Among his literature are studies by psychologist Sandra Trehub and philosopher António Salgado. Trehub found that infants were "entranced" by vocal performances

¹⁰⁵ Luke 2:49.

¹⁰⁶ Jeanette Bicknell, *Philosophy of Song and Singing: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 35.

¹⁰⁷ Graham F. Welch, "Singing as Communication," in *Musical Communication*, ed. Dorothy Miell, Raymond MacDonald, and David J. Hargreaves (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 245.

in which they could both see and hear the singer.¹⁰⁸ She also observed a greater degree of captivation on the part of the infants in watching recordings of their mothers sing than in watching recordings of their mothers speak.¹⁰⁹ Welch discusses the “close correspondence between the acoustic characteristics of voiced emotion in everyday life and the expressive cues used to convey emotion in musical performance.”¹¹⁰ Salgado suggests that “the communication of emotion is at the heart of sung performance through the combined use of acoustical (vocal) and visual (facial) expressive cues” and that the emotions conveyed are built on real-life experiences.¹¹¹ These findings are excellent but still need to be applied to the choir in the evangelical church.

Worshipping with Others

In the present day, “worship” has come to be synonymous with music. Although worship takes on a number of significant forms, such as prayer, reading Scripture, and anything that is done to the glory of God,¹¹² music *is* a significant avenue of worship. Hymnwriters Keith and Kristyn Getty, in *Sing!: How Worship Transforms Your Life, Family, and Church*, consider the power of singing with others in the body of Christ. They encourage believers to look around when they sing and be encouraged by what they are declaring as “a multi-generational, multi-

¹⁰⁸ Sandra E. Trehub, “The Developmental Origins of Musicality,” *Nature Neuroscience* 6, no. 7 (July 2003): 671, <https://doi.org/10.1038/nn1084>.

¹⁰⁹ Sandra E. Trehub, “Musical Predispositions in Infancy,” in *The Biological Foundations of Infancy*, ed. R. J. Zatorre and I. Peretz (New York: Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 2001), 930:9–10, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.2001.tb05721.x>.

¹¹⁰ Welch, “Singing as Communication,” 247.

¹¹¹ António G. Salgado, “A Psycho-Philosophical Investigation of the Perception of Emotional Meaning in the Performance of Solo Singing (19th Century Lied Repertoire)” (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield), quoted in Welch, “Singing as Communication,” 251.

¹¹² Romans 12:1–2; 1 Corinthians 10:31.

ethnic, multi-*everything* family.”¹¹³ The Gettys recount a conversation they had with a friend, who, at least at the time of their book’s publication, was not a believer. Having watched and listened to a congregation sing, their friend questioned if the people actually were invested in what they believed. On other occasions, she had observed and wondered the same thing in different churches. The Gettys contend that in cases such as this, “what we sing can make us hypocritical, and not only doesn’t attract non-believers—it turns them off.”¹¹⁴ So, a disconnect is obvious in many churches. This study will endeavor to explain how the choir can be part of the solution in modelling a vibrant-expressiveness to the congregation.

Lyrical Content

The lyrical content of repertoire in corporate worship must be carefully evaluated. The Gettys discuss the beauty of singing theology. Singing “rehearse[s] the truth” of the faith.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, Keith Getty contends, “What we sing becomes the grammar of what we believe.”¹¹⁶ Having been reconciled to the Father, God expects the conduct of His people to reflect this new reality. Yet, the church must always remember that the reconciling work was all because of Him. A false and dangerous doctrine prevalent today is that mankind is inherently not-so-bad after all. As a result, God’s people believe they are entitled to certain things in the relationship. Citing the example of Hezekiah’s illness, Joel Osteen contends, “When you’re in difficult times, it’s good to remind God what you’ve done.” Osteen later says, “Every time you

¹¹³ Keith Getty and Kristyn Getty, *Sing!: How Worship Transforms Your Life, Family, and Church* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2017), 73.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 92–93.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹¹⁶ Joan Huyser-Honig, “Keith Getty on Writing Hymns for the Church Universal,” Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, September 1, 2006, <https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/keith-getty-on-writing-hymns-for-the-church-universal>.

come to church, . . . you are storing up mercy for you and your family.”¹¹⁷ Although problematic, such an idea sounds good. Consequently, this erroneous theology makes its way into song lyrics, as well as sermons. However, Osteen’s claim that Hezekiah proceeded to “remind God of everything good he [Hezekiah] had done” for Him is false.¹¹⁸ According to the text in 2 Kings 20, Hezekiah was simply stating the pattern of his conduct in a conversation with the Lord.¹¹⁹ Earlier, Scripture records that Hezekiah did “*what was* right in the sight of the LORD” and “held fast to the LORD.”¹²⁰ God used Hezekiah for His glory. When he was ill, the posture of his heart appeared to be focused on God, not on himself. Hezekiah knew the ability of the God he served, and God ended up extending Hezekiah’s life¹²¹ for His glory. Although it is true that God is faithful to His children, the bigger picture is that He is faithful to Himself.¹²² Mankind’s relationship with Him has always been dependent upon His faithfulness.¹²³ Thus, in addition to considering the role of the choir, this study will seek to show how musical repertoire must focus on the gospel and not on man’s deeds.

Eternal Worship

Worship pastors regularly make decisions that shape the theme and direction of weekend services. Although these decisions are not limited to song selection, the sequence of a service’s

¹¹⁷ Joel Osteen, *Daily Readings from It’s Your Time: 90 Devotions for Activating Your Faith, Achieving Your Dreams, and Increasing in God’s Favor* (New York: Howard Books, 2010), 48.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹¹⁹ 2 Kings 20:1–3.

¹²⁰ 2 Kings 18:3, 6.

¹²¹ 2 Kings 20:4–6.

¹²² Rhonda Redmon and Laney Rene, “Jesus is Everything,” interview by James and Betty Robison, *LIFE Today*, January 21, 2020, video, 4:25, https://youtu.be/8_4hszoFR6E.

¹²³ Genesis 15.

elements has a big impact on the takeaway message for each week. The members of Vertical Church Band, now Vertical Worship, believe that telling people there is a God Who is present in the storm is important. However, they contend that a worship leader should not leave people there. Ministers of the gospel must point to the coming day when the presence of pain and tears will be eliminated for all those who are in Christ.¹²⁴

The beauty of the gospel is that while people are actively completing the work God has set before them, God's story is continuing to unfold. Heaven will look a lot different than much of the present human experience, but some things will remain the same. Kent Eilers, in *Faithful to Save: Pannenberg on God's Reconciling Action*, presents the wonder of how the fallenness of mankind is an instrument through which God's glory is shown. Although the cross is a significant element of reconciliation, Pannenberg viewed the doctrine in the four parts of "anticipation, actualization, proclamation, and consummation."¹²⁵ Analyzing the theologian's writings, Eilers articulates Pannenberg's belief that the power of salvation is ultimately in what is yet to come. Eilers declares, "In and through God's reconciling action, we *transcend* (but not leave behind) our finitude through the activity of the Son and the Spirit. Our particularity is affirmed rather than destroyed; our independence is transformed rather than set aside."¹²⁶ The reconciling work is built on the event of the cross and broadcast by the church. One day, the church will be glorified,¹²⁷ which will wed, in a new way, the finite nature of man with the

¹²⁴ Andi Rozier and Eddie Hoagland (lecture, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, January 28, 2016); Revelation 21:4.

¹²⁵ Kent Eilers, *Faithful to Save: Pannenberg on God's Reconciling Action* (T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology. London: T&T Clark, 2011), 7.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2–3.

¹²⁷ 2 Thessalonians 1:10.

sanctifying work of a holy, personal God. Even in eternity, man's dependence, although perfected, is what qualifies him to have a relationship with the Almighty.¹²⁸

Not only does the Great Commission acknowledge ethnicity,¹²⁹ nations and tribes are recorded as being present in John's vision of future worship.¹³⁰ This reality also comprises one of the songs being sung by the living creatures and the elders, written in the book of Revelation.¹³¹ Cameron Thomas contends, "We invest in our eternal formation when co-image bearers of God share space together to worship the living God."¹³² However, it must be more than merely sharing space. God's people should passionately praise the Creator together. A way forward needs to be charted, detailing how this aim can be accomplished.

Summary

Being reconciled to God must be the point of origin for grasping how reconciliation can be experienced with others. A desire to see others vertically reconciled to the Father must be present in the heart of every believer, and efforts to see horizontal reconciliation occur must not be primarily driven by church programs. Nevertheless, as an artistic tool of communicating the reconciliation message, worship song lyrics must be embodied by the singers and musicians within the local church. By living in holiness, forgiving others, and exalting the Lord, reconciled believers can display the glory of God at present, in addition to what is yet to come.

¹²⁸ Eilers, *Faithful to Save*, 2–3.

¹²⁹ Matthew 28:18–20; Baucham, "LU Convocation," 29:52–36:38.

¹³⁰ Revelation 7:9; Thomas, "Rethinking Worship for Racial Segregation Sunday."

¹³¹ Revelation 5:9.

¹³² Thomas, "Rethinking Worship for Racial Segregation Sunday."

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Although not as widely used as it once was, the choir and orchestra, combined, is a vibrant mechanism of communication. Sometimes, the personnel may not be available to form these groups, or they may not fit, contextually, in the direction of a specific worship ministry. However, few musical settings are as majestic or provide opportunities for as many people to be involved as does the partnership of these ensembles. The band, or rhythm section, remains the foundation of what holds everything together, but the expanded vocals and instrumentation enhance the texture, considerably. Such a combination draws upon each group's artistic strengths to facilitate a dynamic musical experience. The purpose of this chapter is to define the method of research for this Worship Program Recital.

Personnel

ACCESS RESTORED is the musical companion-project to this literary submission. The personnel list consisted of a 29-member choir, 26-piece orchestra, and 5-piece band, in conjunction with a number of soloists. Additionally, a 23-member children's choir joined the sizable team for the final song.

The director's preparation for the program first began in the summer of 2020. In the fall of 2020, the repertoire list was finalized with the help of Mr. Scott Bullman, a professor at the Liberty University School of Music (LUSOM). Mr. Bullman taught weekly applied conducting lessons from September through November, specifically geared toward the program repertoire. The majority of the members comprising this large musical team were recruited in November, most of whom were current undergraduate students at the LUSOM. After committing to

participate, the members received their music just before heading home for Thanksgiving. Due to the extended break and the start date of the rehearsals, this early distribution of the music was so that each member would have ample opportunity to become familiar with the songs. Rehearsals began early in February of 2021 by grouping—student choir, band, and orchestra—before coming together on the night of the recital hearing. Participating in only one song, the children’s choir did not begin rehearsing until the middle of February. The committee waived the requirement for them to participate in the hearing, so the children were added to the presentation on the day of the recital.

The Reconciliation Story

Thematically, the songs beautifully complemented one another and the events within reconciliation. The holiness of God was extolled at the outset to gain an appreciation of the necessarily high cost to reconcile with mankind. Then, attendees were taken on a journey through the gospel narrative. The fact that this self-sufficient God would create a personal being, only to desire his return after having gone astray, is hard to comprehend. What is more is that He bought back sinful man without compromising His spotless character, because “his [God’s] love provide[d] what his holiness require[d].”¹³³ In doing so, He purchased a diverse people to call His own. Containing members of at least three different ethnicities, the choir and orchestra, together, embodied this and other aspects of a reconciled church. The final song gave them and their younger brothers and sisters the chance to make a multigenerational declaration of their collective identity.

¹³³ Dever, “The Church,” 614.

Program Content

The songs were strategically selected to tell the story of reconciliation, from before God's creation of man until what is yet to unfold. Comprising the list were six songs, totaling approximately 27 minutes. The opening song, "Immortal, Invisible," focused on the eternity of God, with a thematic focus on the Father (see appendix). The second song, "The Word of God Has Spoken," followed, providing a preview of the lecture content. "At the Cross" and "Low in the Grave He Lay / Faithful," the third and fourth songs, flowed one into the other. The cross is ultimately where reconciliation took place, and the "At the Cross" choral feature considered the theology represented by Christ's sacrifice. An instrumental rendition of "Low in the Grave He Lay" celebrated the resurrection, before reflecting on the faithfulness of God in "Faithful." The penultimate song, "New Jerusalem," looked forward to an eternity free from the corruption of sin, face-to-face with the Savior. Although the story is complete at this point, the final song, "Children of God," punctuated this glorious narrative by unpacking and celebrating the reconciling work of Christ.

Summary

This Worship Program Recital was the culmination of many man-hours' worth of hard work. As a large group of people with a common goal, the choir and orchestra, as one unit, was a powerful mechanism for communicating the gospel message of reconciliation. Expounding the content in lecture-form wove the program together by focusing on specific thematic aspects. Because of the cross, believers worship the King as one church, in unity and harmony.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

ACCESS RESTORED took place on Saturday, March 6, 2021. The event itself was the ultimate culmination of everyone's collective hard work. The night of the hearing, Tuesday, February 16, 2021, was an interim goal along the way. The purpose of this chapter is to report the results of this project.

Results

Musical and Technical

Adding up everyone who made an appearance at some point during the program, 88 singers and instrumentalists were involved in *ACCESS RESTORED*. The beauty of a group presentation, comprised of competent musicians, is that each individual plays an important part in reaching the final goal. Although most of the members received their music over two months before rehearsals started, the most daunting task was rehearsing the various groups, followed by bringing everything together. The entirety of the rehearsal process occurred in just over one month.

As a worship program in the present era, the tech preparation was significant. Due to COVID-19 protocols and the number of people involved, the performance venue was the Concert Hall at Liberty University's Center for Music and Worship Arts. The production process involved preparing for an extensive live event in a large venue, but it also involved preparations to videorecord the program. This dual-purpose shaped other decisions in planning. From a "live" perspective, vocal stems and string stems were important in a large performance space with a high-volume level, created by many instruments. However, this necessity became even more

crucial when considering the needs of recording. So, during the gap period between the hearing and the recital, additional vocal and string stems were recorded to supplement what was already available. A video crew of three people captured the live event to later be paired with the mixed audio. The final audio mix contained a combination of live and prerecorded tracks.

The end result of the live event seemed to accomplish the intended objective. The presentation of the gospel was clear, both through the songs and the accompanying lecture. There had been some technical challenges on the day of the event, not long before it started. Yet, overall, the actual program flowed smoothly. The singers and instrumentalists offered their talents and hard work in a way that directed the attention to God.

Topical Content

For worship leaders, the musical aspect of a presentation is only one contributing factor to a quality offering of worship. Serious preparation involves musical practice, but it also entails internalizing the lyrics. It takes time for a song's message to permeate the heart and mind of an individual so that he or she delivers more than a collection of words set to music. Although the progress of this step cannot be measured quantitatively, soloists and ensembles that take time to intentionally ponder a song's lyrics are set apart from those who do not. The former's manner of communication is noticeably at a higher level, with a potential for ministry that goes beyond the music. Physical expressiveness in corporate worship comes more naturally to some than others, however, the choir did display an outward engagement on some level.

Music is a powerful tool for memorization. The Gettys discuss a number of reasons why singing is important, not the least of which is the act of singing with other believers.¹³⁴ A theory put forth in the correlating Worship Program Recital is that music can aid in breaking down the

¹³⁴ Getty and Getty, *Sing!*, 92–93.

divides within the church. Just as it is hard to pray for someone when harboring bitterness toward him or her, it is hard to fully engage in corporate worship when knowingly not right with others in the body. If music helps cement information in the minds of people, then, passionately singing together, not merely paying lip service, should deepen each believer's personal conviction that the church is, indeed, one body.

Summary

Although the members of the *ACCESS RESTORED* team were made up of some immediate-family relations, every member was related to one another in Christ. The participants did not only like the actual music. Deeper than that, they resonated with the truths of the songs. Lord willing, as they drew closer to Him through worship, they drew closer together as one church. The reality of oneness, with God and with one another, should serve as a positive witness to a watching world and increase the resolve of believers to share their glorious hope with those around them. This project sought to glorify God and edify believers, kingdom purposes for each member, collectively accomplished, yet, forging ahead.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The successful execution of any large event requires a great deal of work. Both the preparations and the actual event are very important. Yet, another important part of a healthy event is the debrief stage that follows it. Post-evaluation provides the organizer or researcher with the time to reflect upon the results. In the case of an evangelistic event, this stage affords the respective team members the chance to ensure that the proceeding support and follow-up measures will be sufficient. As a research project, this paper is built around the live *ACCESS RESTORED* event that recently occurred. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the results and how they relate to the existing related literature.

Discussion

The Trehub¹³⁵ and Salgado¹³⁶ studies note that, although music is a sonic art, the listener is captivated by a correlating visual dimension. While not in an evangelical context, these studies discuss the connection between the emotions used in singing and the emotions encountered in everyday life. Herein lies the beauty of a Christian choral presentation. A choir can tell of shared, yet, unique life experiences through song, with the gospel message serving as each member's common narrative. Although the specific circumstances will vary from person to person, the choir can jointly recall the faithful hand, the Father heart, and the refining Spirit of God. Certain emotions may be tender, depending on the current trials of each participant, but, the intersection of people's lives with gospel truth evokes a visual and audible declaration of thanks on the

¹³⁵ Trehub, "The Developmental Origins of Musicality," 671; Trehub, "Musical Predispositions in Infancy," 9–10.

¹³⁶ Salgado, "The Perception of Emotional Meaning in the Performance of Solo Singing," 671.

platform. This manner of leading, by the power of the Holy Spirit, will encourage a similar response on the part of each congregant before the Almighty.

Extending forgiveness in humanly-impossible situations, such as the one Corrie ten Boom found herself in,¹³⁷ is hard. Heeding the call of Dhati Lewis,¹³⁸ the apostle Paul,¹³⁹ and Christ Himself¹⁴⁰ to commit to being an advocate, one with the goal of living as a minister of reconciliation,¹⁴¹ is an all-consuming mission. Music, in and of itself, does not fix anything. However, God is able to use music as a catalyst for supernatural reform. Through music, the Holy Spirit can soften sensitive hearts to take restorative action toward their brothers and sisters in the Lord. Through music, the Holy Spirit can forge the bond of believers who passionately worship the King. Through music, believers can commit to being bolder in their witness for Jesus Christ among the lost. Music, in the hand of its Creator, is powerful indeed!

Recommendations for Future Study

When considering future avenues of study, a few things come to mind. First, most worship leaders realize the centrality of vocals and lyrics in facilitating corporate worshipful engagement through song. Dynamic instrumental accompaniment is wonderful, but, as the carrier of biblical truth, the vocals must be clearly heard in the mix. Instrumental moments have their place in the local church, but it differs from that of the mainstream world, where people respond to musical works that have no words. In the evangelical church, instrumental moments

¹³⁷ ten Boom, *Tramp for the Lord*, 55–57.

¹³⁸ Lewis, *Advocates*, xiv–xv.

¹³⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:18–20.

¹⁴⁰ Matthew 6:15.

¹⁴¹ Lewis, *Advocates*, xvi.

tend to feature a melody that people know, and the listeners recall the lyrics to mind as the musicians play. These types of instrumental selections can be very effective as service openers, offertories, or moments of reflection before communion. With this in mind, it might be interesting to determine if an instrumental program that presents the same message of reconciliation would be more or less effective than a program with vocals and lyrics.

Second, the Western world, specifically that of North America, is not very community-oriented. In other cultures, community is an inseparable part of the DNA and of the fabric of daily life. Doing life with others brings great rewards, but the hurt caused by exclusion and misunderstandings can be deep. In this cultural context, a healthy community of believers is a community that has learned to practice forgiveness and reconciliation regularly. Making contextual changes, as necessary, and presenting a program similar to *ACCESS RESTORED* in a community-oriented country could be an intriguing endeavor. The gospel message would be the same, but the specific responses to it may be quite different.

Third, although the age range for the project was broadened by including children and some faculty soloists, the primary demographic was that of college students. The total age span could have been much wider had the program been presented by an adult choir in a local church. These choirs can represent an age range of 50–60 years or more. Since the musical content of the program was blended, minimal modifications would have been necessary to present it in that setting. However, it would be interesting to see how all the practicalities unfolded, such the likely need to encourage the older generation to be physically expressive.

Fourth, as a general rule, the church is far too segregated. Consequently, seniors and teenagers do not interact with one another very often. Although not the only factor, music has had a part in this separation. One may think that such a reality is the fault of the young people,

but that would not be the full story. True, some youth consider seniors to be boring individuals. Yet, in some cases, seniors begrudgingly hold the next generation responsible for taking away their favorite music style. To counteract this tension, each of these two demographics could present a program, with excellence, of the other's preferred music. An alternative exercise could be for each demographic to present a compelling program for the other of their individually-preferred music. Contrary to a blended approach, these exercises could be a way of making amends. In the process, one generation might come to appreciate the other's music. Depending on the result, a blended approach could be the next step toward change in that local church's worship ministry. The result could be a middle ground that progresses from once being something that people tolerated to now being something that most believers appreciate and enjoy. Arguably, the easiest solution would be to keep everyone segregated, but to do so would be to ignore Jesus' desire for His disciples to be one as the Trinity is one.¹⁴² This side of eternity, corporate worship will never be perfect. Nevertheless, by His grace, the church must heed the call of God, aiming to glorify Him together as "one mind *and* one mouth"¹⁴³ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is worthy of nothing less than such a unified and passionate declaration.

Summary

Reconciliation is simply one lens through which to view the message of the gospel and of the Word of God. What was broken has been made whole, the latter not because of the offender but because of the *offended*. Recognizing and appreciating this reality should influence every action of the believer's daily life. When its Creator is sought, the uses of music are tremendous, both for thanking the Reconciler and for drawing near to others. The beginning and the ending of

¹⁴² John 17:22.

¹⁴³ Romans 15:6.

Scripture depict sinless situations of fellowship with the Almighty. Although timebound, *ACCESS RESTORED* was one man's effort with God's people to lift an eternal expression of praise to the Lord. For their unnumbered days in glory, Christ's church will worship Him as one. Until then, may believers rehearse their song together, offered to the Giver of Life.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Genesis 1:26–28; Ephesians 2:1.

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Appendix: ACCESS RESTORED Program Order

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise (©2015)

Walter Chalmers Smith
New Words and Music by Tommy Walker
arr. Tommy Walker
orch. Daniel Semsen

Adam Stinespring, *voice*
Dr. Michael Brennan, *guitar*
Savannah Shockey, *violin*
Praise Team

The Word of God Has Spoken (©2011)

Travis Cottrell, Jonathan Lee,
and David Moffitt
arr. Travis Cottrell
orch. Daniel Semsen

Dr. Stephen Müller, *voice*
Praise Team

At the Cross (©2012)

Matt Armstrong, Benji Cowart, Jenna Cowart,
and William R. Newell
arr. and *orch.* Danny Mitchell

Low in the Grave He Lay /
Faithful (©2013)

Robert Lowry
Joel Auge and Greg Sykes
arr. and *orch.* Daniel Gray

Laurel Fogle, *voice*
Dr. Michael Brennan, *guitar*

New Jerusalem (©2009)

Carol Cymbala, Onaje Jefferson,
and Jason Michael Webb
arr. and *orch.* Bradley Knight

Dr. Mindy Damon, *voice*

Children of God (©2010)

Tai Anderson, David Carr, Mark Lee,
and Mac Powell
arr. and *orch.* Bradley Knight

James Cox, *voice*
Praise Team
Children's Choir