NON-TRADITIONAL MEANS OF WORSHIP

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A MASTER'S THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS IN MUSIC AND WORSHIP STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of worship is to praise the God of all and give Him thanks for all He has done. Based on the Old Testament and the New Testament, one thing is certain: God has always desired to have a relationship with His people. However, it was not until the death, resurrection, and ascension of God's only Son that believers could worship God freely. Now, worship is unhindered. Jesus Christ broke every chain and has become the bridge-way for all God's people to have a free relationship with Him. This research paper will uncover the biblical principles discovered in the New Testament of worship and the connection of worship to the COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation will utilize a qualitative study to identify how worshipers can still praise God amidst an epidemic. Supporting content and exploration will respond to the following question: How can worship leaders reach worship participants through non-traditional means? Answering this question will require analysis of biblical principles as well as the integrity behind virtual-led worship services. This study is significant as it will highlight the need to worship the Lord, encourage worshipers to remember and understand the gospel story, and support how it can be utilized to share the good news of Jesus Christ by practicing theological doctrine in non-traditional means. Further, this review can provide a useful tool to guide worship leaders in leading worship participants that embraces and expresses the redemption story; a story all Christians must remember and acknowledge. This project is written to glorify God and provide knowledge to Christ-followers of God's provision during troubling times.

Keywords: Worship, New Testament, Theology, Non-Traditional Worship, Resurrection, Salvation, Gospel Story, COVID-19.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Before technological advances made worship accessible across countries, corporate worship was strictly set within the church community and/or the church building itself. Within the last twenty years, the use of technology has increased dramatically within the place of worship. The COVID-19 epidemic spread across not just the United States but also across every country globally, leaving many worshipers isolated and hindered from attending church services. For many, this lack of opportunity to worship leaves their faith wavering. The need to reach people with the gospel story has increased significantly to the point where worship has been moved to a virtual space. Livestreaming worship services, prerecorded music, and video calls for prayer and devotional groups have become the norm. The twenty-first century has become the age of digital and virtual worship. However, many worship leaders are asking, 'how can we share the good news without meeting regularly? How can worship be experienced if people are not gathering for worship?' Many worship leaders have been left with feelings of uncertainty.

In response to the COVID-19 chaos, worship leaders and others are advancing their worship through digital means. They are not giving up on the need to worship. Many need hope, which is precisely what worship leaders and pastors are providing, light in the darkness. However, worship leaders were not prepared for moving worship to strictly digital platforms such as Skype, Zoom, and or Livestream. Some, if not many, do not have the resources or know-how to reach worship participants within the new technological era. This research paper aims to seek an understanding of the question, "How can worship leaders reach worship participants through non-traditional means?" This study will explore answers to this inquiry by performing a narrative study. This study will survey non-traditional means in which worship participants can benefit during a pandemic or chaotic times.

Background

Worship, defined by David Wheeler and Vernon M. Whaley, "...is this: 'Love God.' Jesus said, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength' (Mark 12:30 NKJV; cf. Matt 22:37; Luke 10:27)."[1] God created each individual to have a unique relationship with Him. As such, He asks His people to love Him and serve Him through the act of worship. Worship, in this sense, is an intricate facet of corporate and private praise to the Lord. It is what allows worshipers to have a deep and personal relationship with the God who created all.

The means by which an individual worships can make a significant difference throughout their lives. When it came to worship in the Old Testament, there were many guidelines and restrictions. Worship in the Old Testament can best be described as distant. All throughout the Old Testament, one can see the chasm that laid between God and His people. Exodus 24:1-2 states, "Then the Lord instructed Moses: 'Come up here to me, and bring along Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of Israel's elders. All of you must worship from a distance. Only Moses is allowed to come near to the Lord. The others must come near, and none of the other people are allowed to climb up the mountain with him' (NLT)."[2] God would not allow Moses or any of the others to come too close. They had to worship from afar. Later, in the Old Testament, God provides Moses with the vision to build the Tabernacle. Upon building the Tabernacle, pertinent rules restricted God's people from coming too close or entering into what was called the "Holy of Holies" to worship. The only one who could come close or enter into the "Holy of Holies"

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[1] David Wheeler and Vernon M. Whaley, *The Great Commission to Worship: Biblical Principles for Worship-Based Evangelism* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 27.

[2] Unless otherwise noted, all citations come from New International Version.

was the high priest; "...only the high priest ever entered the Most Holy Place, and only once a year..." (Hebrews 9:7, NLT).

This was not the only principle in the Old Testament that created a sense of intentional distance. Other moralities included the need to provide sacrificial offerings and test believers' worship integrity. In the act of worship, God's people followed, hoping to become closer in relationship with Him. However, one intangible object still divided God from His people; the sin of the world. God recognized the need and desire for a deeper relationship with His people. He created humanity for a relationship though, there seemed to be a continued barrier between Him and His creation. As such, God chose to send His one and only Son to dwell amongst His people and fulfill the Old Covenant.

There are many instructions and vital examples of worship in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul describes how one must worship in the New Testament. He writes, "And so, dear brothers and sister, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him" (Romans 12:1, NLT). As worshipers, one must offer their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. Jesus further proclaims that the time has come "...when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way" (John 4:23, NLT). God desires people who will worship in Spirit and in Truth. However, it is only through the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ that imparts God's people unhindered access to the "Holy of Holies"; direct access to praise the God of all, unreservedly.

Through the act of Jesus Christ, God's people can worship Him freely and wholeheartedly. When it comes to the story of Easter and the entirety of the death, burial, and

resurrection of Jesus Christ, one must first understand their need and call to worship in Spirit and in Truth. Believers must worship and express their praises by living out their worship, offering their bodies as living sacrifices, and sharing the good news of salvation with others. Easter is arguably the most significant event throughout the world's history. It reflects the truth and entirety of the Christian faith. The resurrection of Jesus is proof that He is precisely whom He claimed to be, the Son of God and Savior of the world. It is the redemption story.

Worship has continued to change throughout the years. Worship was strictly set to certain times and places. Nevertheless, as the years have progressed and times have changed, so has the church. As the church and God's people, it is their responsibility to share the good news of the gospel with others; they must share the gospel story and the redeeming power and salvation Jesus Christ has given. In the year 2020, the world witnessed and experienced a large shift in daily life. Shops, stores, churches, restaurants, public areas, schools, parks, and so many other activities and daily life were altered. Everything was shut-down. Normal way of life and daily activities ceased to exist. Instead, everything shifted from in-person meetings and gatherings to online, virtual, and live-streamed communities. The world drastically fell into depression. However, one thing still remained: the gathered church. The church did not give up on its mission. They did not give up on sharing the gospel story. No matter what, the church has always continued to thrive. Throughout the year 2020, the church remained strong and continued to tell the gospel story and His saving grace, whether through Livestream, online, or virtual means. Even though in-person worship was taken away, worshipers still had unhindered access to God; they had complete access to worship.

Statement of Purpose

Through this study, the light will be revealed through the acts of God's people and their never-ending worship. Through the analysis of non-traditional means for worship, Christ followers will discover the need to reenact and remember the gospel story despite the ever-changing forms of worship. Worship is imperative to the church, an individual's relationship with God, and is what all of humanity was created for: to worship and praise God. Undoubtedly, Christ-followers need to remember the resurrection and salvation found in the surrendered life of Jesus Christ. In doing so, Jesus is glorified, and the people reenact a large concept and meaning of the gospel story, the salvation of the world through the death and resurrection of the Lamb. By researching and analyzing investigations and research studies from previous investigators, the impact of non-traditional worship will be presented.

Throughout this investigation, the five components that will be analyzed and discussed include definitions, biblical principles for worship, worship in the church today, ideal worship, and innovative means for worship. These sections have been chosen due to their biblical, theological, and practical application to non-traditional worship development amid COVID-19. As stated before, worship has changed and will continue to evolve based on worldly circumstances. In all, it is the hope that these sources will provide a starting point for worship leaders, pastors, and worship participants to prepare for sudden changes in worship. Hopefully, this summary and analysis will help guide and propel research that aids the overall worshiping community.

Research Questions

The research question that will direct Christ-followers and worship leaders' attention to the everchanging worship needs is: How can worship leaders reach worship participants through

non-traditional means? In addition, sub-questions will be considered in correspondence to the full-extent of non-traditional means of worship. The sub-questions consist of: (1) What aspects of worship can be explored to reach worshipers online? (2) What types of outlets or means can be utilized to reach worshipers when power, internet, or technology is unavailable? (3) Where and how can people experience worship within their homes? (4) Does someone have to lead worship, or can it be self-led? (5) What is a current ideal setting, or can become an ideal setting for alternative worship methods?

<div align="center">Hypothesis</div>

For the past year, many have suffered the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The church and worship pastors, especially, have suffered due to the quick shut-down of public gatherings. Where and how to worship has become some of the biggest questions for worship leaders, pastors, and congregants. In its entirety, this research paper hopes to shed light on how worship leaders can reach worship participants in non-traditional ways. Given the current events associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, exploring and discovering innovative methods to deliver God's message is applicable and necessary. As the church, worship leaders can extend new practices and ways to share the good news of Jesus Christ. However, specific methods may be more sustainable in the long run, whereas others may be utilized during times of struggle or hardship. There is currently a need for these types of methods to share the gospel.

This topic will provide value to the church's current circumstances and pave the way for future situations and perhaps result in discovering a new normal approach to worship delivery and participation. After considering many possibilities for approaching this study, it seems fitting that a qualitative research methodology would prove most effective. Due to this study's broad spectrum, it would be most beneficial to conduct an in-depth analysis of specific literature that

can benefit worship leaders and pastors today by interpreting musical and worship methods used throughout epidemics and typical worship gatherings.

Through this topic, there are a multitude of things to be explored. In regards to what can be discovered, this allows the local church's worship growth and the growth of churches around the country. There is much anticipation in discovering ways where people can come together to worship during hardships or epidemics. The goal is to uncover how worshipers can come together in worship. The researcher seeks to identify a means of innovative practices that may transform worship strategies for the greater good now and in the future. There is so much more to worship than is given credit. Additionally, worship to the Lord can be given in a variety of ways. There is not just one way to exude worship; there is music, prayer, His Word, and so much more. In that, many worship leaders long to encounter ways in which congregants can come together to worship the Lord no matter the circumstance.

<div align="center">Significance of the Study</div>

The thought of a pandemic and life-altering changes to worship can be hard to fathom. No one ever expected or predicted that a virus could spread so quickly or destroy the lives of so many. Looking back to the bubonic plague, no one anticipated the devastation an illness could have on humanity. Life was altered entirely, similar to the life humanity is living in today. Fear, anxiety, and feeling of depression have crept into all humanity's lives and minds. It has created a sense of distance and loneliness. However, God is not any of these things. 2 Timothy 1:7 proclaims, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of sound mind" (NKJV). God has given His people a spirit of hope, love, and power. As such, they have the capability to share the good news no matter the circumstance.

This study's significance is to uncover non-traditional means of worship and how worshipers and worship leaders can praise the Lord despite the chaos and crisis occurring in the world. If God does not give His people the spirit of fear, then there is nothing to fear. He will win the battle and He will reign over the anxieties, depression, and devastation of the world. God has not only given a spirit of love and of sound mind, but also of faith, hope, and perseverance. He has provided the tools necessary to overcome all obstacles. These tools are known as the Bible and the ability to worship Him. According to 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Through this research, the investigator will identify biblical means for which God has called His people to worship Him, glorify Him, and praise Him, no matter what. Even though the church community has moved to virtual gatherings of praise, worship is still the same. Though the place of worship has altered, God still remains; "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you" (Isaiah 43:2, ESV). By utilizing the biblical principles found in the gospel story and analyzing the non-traditional and innovative means for worship, worship leaders can create long-lasting and fulfilling worship services to reach congregants despite the hardships of COVID-19. This study aims to witness and see how worship leaders can help worshipers worship authentically through different means and outlets. As witnessed throughout the COVID-19 isolation, people are in need of prayer, worship, joy, hope, and a relationship with God. People need to be guided to worship with what they are given. Overall, God is in control, but He gives worshipers and worship leaders the tools to worship Him no matter the situation.

Research Plan

This research paper will embody why there is a need to worship the Lord, why He must be celebrated, and why there is a need to develop non-traditional means for worship during an epidemic. Five categories will be analyzed and studied using a qualitative research method. These five categories include: definitions, biblical principles for worship, worship in church today, ideal Worship, and the incorporation of innovative worship. In order to express and share the full-extent of the gospel story and how one must praise the Lord due to His surrendered sacrifice, ideas and concepts must be studied with an open-mind. The principles and theology behind the gospel must also exemplify the salvation given by analyzing God's Word. The plan put in place will investigate five categories that exemplify the totality of worship during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each category will be studied in depth and will be applied and incorporated into worship planning amidst an epidemic. In doing so, the research and methods used to grasp the basis of non-traditional means for worship can serve as an example for future worship leaders to explore the integrity of their worship services during a pandemic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Through the examination of varying literature texts, theses, books, and articles, the writer

hopes to emphasize the need to worship the Lord, inspire worshipers to remember and recognize

the need to reenact the gospel story and support how the use of this literature can be utilized to

share the good news of Christ by applying theological doctrine in non-traditional means for

worship. Additionally, this literature review can provide a valuable tool to direct worship pastors,

leaders, and church members in leading worshipers to embrace and express the story of

redemption, one that all Christian believers must recall and acknowledge. As stated previously,

five areas of literature will be studied further in order to understand and effectively grasp the

need to incorporate non-traditional means for worship amid a pandemic.

Definitions

Audrey Eccleston is a dedicated woman who has desired to share the true meaning of

praise, worship, and thanksgiving. Often times these three words can be misconstrued.

Throughout her book, *Praise, Worship, and Thanksgiving: Giving God What He Deserves*, she

analyzes how each word conveys a heart full of appreciation to the Lord. Eccleston recognizes

the need to define each word in relation to God. She utilizes Scripture to define each word as

expressed by Jesus Christ and His Apostles. She writes, "[in] the examples cited in Scripture

with Joshua, David, Jehoshaphat, Daniel and the Samaritan woman, we observed that God

always manifests his power through the means of Praise/Worship/Thanksgiving."[3] Eccleston

takes a qualitative posture on her research methodology by applying historical, yet authentic,

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[3] Audrey C.A. Eccleston, *Praise, Worship, and Thanksgiving: Giving God What He Deserves* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, Inc., 2013), 43.

evidence discovered in Scripture. She explores why people worldwide are captivated in portraying private praise, public worship, and thanksgiving to the Lord at every opportunity. Eccleston quotes Dr. David L. Robbins, proclaiming that "[praise] is the vehicle of faith that brings us into the presence and power of God' for there is no end to praising God; this is a lifestyle for the saints of God."[4] By clarifying each characteristic of gratitude to God, Eccleston tries to uncover the extraordinary power achieved through simple practice. In general, she provides excellent knowledge of what it means to praise, worship, and give thanks to the Father.

In *Worship 365*, David M. Edwards explains what worship is, how it can be incorporated into worship, and what it means to be a true authentic worshipper of God. According to Edwards, "Worship is not just a time/space event...Worship is our highest priority. Worship at its core is all about a relationship between God and His people."[5] Like Edwards, proclaims, worship is more than time and space; it is a deep relationship with God. By taking readers through an analysis of what worship is and how it can be incorporated into lives of Christ-followers, worshipers and worship leaders can realize how their worship might be hindered. With this in mind, leaders and believers can direct not only their hearts towards genuine authentic praise and adoration to Christ, but the hearts of others to experience Him in a new light. First, worshipers need to comprehend the subject of truth; "Biblical truth sets us free to understand about the pure worship of the Holy. Jesu said that God is looking for those who will worship Him 'in spirit and into truth' (John 4:24). In order for truth to set us free, we need to know it."[6] Edwards continues, for

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[4] Eccleston, *Praise, Worship, and Thanksgiving*, 43.

[5] David M. Edwards, *Worship 365: The Power of a Worshiping Life*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 18.

[6] Ibid., 9.

worshipers to genuinely praise and give thanks to God, they must worship in spirit and truth. Worshipers must know the truth expelled in the gospels. Knowing Scripture is knowing truth, but knowing Jesus Christ is also discerning truth, for Christ alone is truth incarnate.[7]

Further, Edwards divides his book into four different sections, discussing topics such as what is worship, the power and sacrifice of praise, the correlation between praise and worship, the promise of His presence, throne room encounters, and the power to worship. Throughout his book, Edwards relates each section to his personal life. It provides foresight into how Christ-followers can merge worship into their everyday life, in addition to experiencing how worship and the presence of the Holy Spirit inspires a life of faith.[8] As Edwards writes, "[the] Holy Spirit is constantly and consistently working within believers to deepen our experience and our walk with the Lord."[9] The Holy Spirit deepens a believers awareness of their need for Jesus, inciting new life. Edwards provides considerable guidance into the true meaning of worship for worshipers and worship leaders.

In his book *Lifestyle Worship*, Orlando Figueiredo offers a consideration of what it means to live a life devoted to worship of the Lord. Within his book, Figueiredo strives to attend to the inquiry: "What is a lifestyle of worship and how do I become a worshipper?"[10] God craves a connection with His children. Worship has become the doorway to a deep relationship with the Father. The relationship God wants with every one of His created children has not changed and will not change. Figueiredo takes the relationship concept further by communicating David's

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[7] Edwards, *Worship 365*, 9.

[8] Ibid., 27.

[9] Ibid., 132.

[10] Orlando Figueiredo, *Lifestyle Worship* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2014), vii.

compassion and adoration to God as a model for lifestyle worship.[11] Furthermore, he explains what it means to praise and give thanks to the Lord. There are various expressions of praise, but there are only six that Figueiredo uncovers. By using the Scriptures not just as a guide but as a means of contemplation, God can reveal the meaning of His Word. The purpose of this book is to lead an encounter with the Father, Son, and holy Spirit. In doing so, worshipers and worship leaders can experience the Holy Spirit.

<div align="center">Biblical Principles for Worship</div>

Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New By Allen P. Ross, Creation provides a historical and theological study of worship from the beginning of time into modern day creation. Ross takes readers from the beginning of creation into current liturgy and traditions, uncovering worship's historical development. Each element and focus of worship throughout the ages allows worshipers, pastors, worship leaders, and many more to encounter a more profound recollection and understanding of the meaning of glorious worship. Through this reading, readers see patterns and principles of worship emerge, recognize their heritage and traditions, and discover biblical principles and means to improve their worship.[12] Ross proclaims, "Truly, if our worship, if our spiritual life, is going to rise above this earthly existence where our minds are fixed on mundane thoughts and our attention is given to mundane concerns, then we are going to have to begin to focus our hearts and our minds on the holiness and the glory and the beauty of the one we say we know and love."[13]

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[11]Figueiredo, *Lifestyle Worship*, 5.

[12] Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2006), 38-39

[13] Ibid., 37.

With this in mind, Ross seeks to recall the hope of glory in the worship of God's people. He wants to restore the biblical principles of worship: biblical revelation and response. God always reveals Himself. In Isaiah's case, after King Uzziah's death, he saw the majesty and glory of heavenly worship. God has revealed to him the nature in which worship was to be offered. As such, Isaiah responded by dedicating his life to the Lord and enabled him to see the problems occurring in his land. Thus, inspiring him to present and embody the proper submission and adoration of worship. Like Isaiah, "...if people respond to the revelation of the Lord...they too will be transformed into devout worshippers and dedicated servants."[14] Throughout the Bible, there is the call and response action. As worshipers and worship leaders, they must respond to the revelation God has placed in front of them. This is the biblical pattern and model in which God's people must follow.

Similar to that of Ross' book, Vernon Whaley takes worshipers and worship leaders through each chapter of the Bible to uncover biblical principles for worship. Each chapter of *Called to Worship: From the Dawn of Creation to the Final Amen*, reveals how individuals throughout the Bible encountered God and reacted to His unfailing love for His children. It is a study of the story of worship from Genesis through Revelation.[15] God is the ultimate Creator and throughout the Bible, up into the last book, concludes with the hallelujah chorus singing and celebrating praises to God and His plan for eternity. Through this exploration of the Bible, Whaley discovers and shares with readers fundamentals of worship drawn from the lives of biblical individuals, conventional people, events, Old Testament and New Testament practices,

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[14] Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 42.

[15] Vernon M. Whaley, *Called to Worship: From the Dawn of Creation to the Final Amen* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009), xxi.

the life of Christ, the epistles, and the fulfillment of the prophecy.[16] Through this continual

analysis of worship in the Scriptures, those in ministry and many others can dive deeper into the

foundation of worship, experiencing a renewed understanding of private and public worship. By

and large, "[we] will learn how to follow our Conductor, Jesus, as He leads us—with His tempo,

His tune, and His dynamics—through the musical masterpiece of life that was composed for us

by God."[17] Worshipers must worship and praise Him, because it is what humanity was made for;

it is how they can glorify Him.[18]

Worship Old and New, Robert Webber's text wonderfully represented what worship

looked like before Jesus Christ and after His death and resurrection. Webber evaluates the Old

Testament worship practices and how those practices correlate to those in New Testament

worship. Webber poses the question: "What kind of worship could possibly meet the changes

that are taking place in the church?"[19] He responds with three differing answers: (1) some

traditionalists want worship to remain the same, (2) those who wish to abandon traditional

worship as inapt and instead go in search of contemporary worship, and then (3) individuals who

blend both old and new worship practices in hopes of respecting tradition and incorporate

modern, contemporary worship styles.[20] Webber examines each of these approaches with the

hope of restoring traditional worship from the Old Testament and incorporating new approaches

to worship from the New Testament and modernized contemporary worship gatherings.

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[16] Whaley, *Called to Worship*, xx.

[17] Ibid., 234.

[18] Ibid., 333.

[19] Robert Webber, *Worship Old and New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 12.

[20] Ibid., 12-13.

Webber believes, whole-heartedly, by integrating both old and new into one worship style worshipers can restore what was lost; the Sacrament.[21] Webber states, "...there is only one sacrament, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the church's sacrament because only Jesus Christ can make one holy."[22] For worship to be authentic and genuine, worshipers and worship leaders must direct themselves and others towards the one who gave it all, Jesus Christ. Only through Him, can believers be made holy in His image. Similarly, worship cannot be genuine if praise is not offered with an open mind, an open heart, and all Christ has done in the past, present, and will do in the future. Webber exclaims, that worship old and new must be united if worship is too full of deep joy, adoration, and love. He writes "...convergence of worship old and new stands as a signpost at the uncertain crossroad of future worship. It says, 'Here is a way to preserve the best of the past and to talk with confidence into the future.'"[23] Biblically, theologically, and Scripturally, worship must embody and remember the past and look to future worship practices as time progresses.

David Wheeler and Vernon M. Whaley wrote the book *The Great Commission to Worship: Biblical Principles for Worship-Based Evangelism*. Throughout their book, they provide many biblical principles as well as ways in which Christ followers and worship leaders can share the good news of Jesus Christ. Wheeler and Whaley explore the Great Commission and the Great Commandment that God has called upon all of His Children. The Great Commission declares, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that

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[21] Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 229.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 15.

I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20 NKJV). This command to go is direct. The command to disciple is conclusive. The command to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is evident. The command to observe all things is unambiguous. Lastly, the command is the promise of all ages: Jesus Christ gives disciples His presence and promise, "'...lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age'" (Matthew 28:20 NKJV).[24] Through this verse, Wheeler and Whaley guide worshipers and worship leaders to the call to evangelize, a biblical principle Jesus Christ called upon.

Not only do Wheeler and Whaley discuss the biblical principle for evangelistic worship, but also the call to be worshipers who follow the Great Commandment; "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind'" (Matthew 22:37). This is, as Jesus proclaims, the greatest commandment above all. In addition, God's children must also "'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:39). In these brief words, worshipers and worship leaders can embrace and hone into the heart of both worship and evangelism.[25] Worship is the response to the Great Commandment. There is a prominent call to praise and honor God with uncompromising loyalty.

Reading through Wheeler and Whaley's text will offer insight into how worshipers and worship leaders can passionately respond to the Lord by following the Great Commandment. Additionally, believers and leaders can reignite their delight in fulfilling the Great Commission by living a new worship model. Wheeler and Whaley affirm, "In one true sense, our blueprint for Great Commission worship may serve as a set of outcomes that help us stay focused on our calling—worship evangelism. Thus, this model serves as a guideline for what all Great

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[24] Wheeler and Whaley, *The Great Commission to Worship*, 40.

[25] Ibid., 22.

Commission worship should accomplish in the hearts of believers. That is because Great

Commission worship is formational, transformational, relational, missional, and reproducible."[26]

It is through these biblical foundations for worship that worship leaders and worshipers can grow

in their private worship as well as in their worship evangelism. Worship is formational,

transformational, relational, missional, and reproducible. God wants to teach His children how to

fulfill His purposes through humility, trust, honor, and honesty. However, God alone prepares

believers' hearts for the task of Great Commission worship.[27]

Worship in Church Today

Michael G. Bausch's book, *Silver Screen, Sacred Story: Using Multimedia in Worship*,

exhibits various disciplines associated with multimedia usage in worship. Its sole purpose is to

equip worshipers with a universal visual language that successfully expresses the gospel.[28]

Multimedia and other forms of technology can help initiate an atmosphere for worship.

However, many can concentrate too much on the "perfection" of these technological

advancements within a worship setting. By combining the arts and theological reflections,

worship teams and worship leaders can reveal work within the church: worship God, proclaim

the Gospel, join together in faith through multigenerational community, and work towards

fulfilling the Great Commission.[29]

Moreover, Bausch discusses that through Bible study, theological reflection, and ongoing

conversations about worship and its purpose, worship leaders and teams can learn how to utilize

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[26] Wheeler and Whaley, *The Great Commission to Worship*, 49.

[27] Ibid., 61.

[28] Michael G. Bausch, *Silver Screen, Sacred Story: Using Multimedia in Worship*, foreword by Doug Adams (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2002), v.

[29] Ibid., ix-x.

audiovisuals to communicate the gospel efficiently artistically. He explains how to use such visuals in worship by separating each principle, examining multimedia and worship, developing support strategies, learning to use film, art, and music, and producing multimedia worship. Bausch looks even further at studies such as the screens used in a congregational setting. He argues that "[one] of the most important equipment decisions has to do with projection screens. The screen can be a vehicle for God's revelatory power, opening imaginations in fresh new ways, attracting attention, fostering understanding, and stimulating mission response."[30] He further discusses the need and innovative use of these screens, including what screens and projection pieces to use based on worship gathering size, worship space, and churches' financial resources. These factors come into play when considering visual arts to communicate the gospel. In all, each topic Bausch reveals communicates how to use technological innovations in worship effectually.

Teresa Berger, in her text, @ *Worship: Liturgical Practices in Digital Worlds*, discovers that virtual worship has become a part of the norm. She does not seek to communicate how to use digital media in worship or for practicing prayer.[31] Instead, Berger intends to engage in the digitally mediated practices of prayer and worship, investigating whether these practices can be identified as a developing prevalent fervor of the digital age. In order to understand an outlook on liturgical practices found through digital mediation, Berger examines the why, how, and what of studying liturgical practices in digital worlds, the virtual bodies, digital presence, and online participation, the ecclesial communities @ worship, the virtual "stuff," the sacramental bits and

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[30] Bausch, *Silver Screen, Sacred Story*, 100.

[31] Teresa Berger, @ *Worship: Liturgical Practices in Digital Worlds* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), xi.

bytes, as well as the digital present and future of worship. She seeks to incorporate liturgical practices into the digital age, allowing, the gospel to be spread among the nations.

Berger records, "God moves and reveals Godself in digital space with as much ease—and as many problems—as everywhere else in this world, brick-and-mortar sanctuaries included."[32] As Berger suggests, worship and an encounter with God are not solely left to in-person sanctuaries or gatherings. Instead, encountering God in a digital space has more to do with material and human nature. Some believers, as Berger implies, have lost sight of how God reveals Himself amongst His people. It is not due to the physical presence in a church building where God resides and reveals Himself. Specifically, in prayer, Berger studies the significance and liturgical prayer practices available to worshipers. "Praying via the Divine Office app, for example, frees the worshipper from a severely text-bound practice of reading prayers, because this app offers the liturgy not only as text but as spoken and sing words."[33] Instead of worshipers reading prayers, they can enter into the ancient, communally rooted experience of praying through aural, digital means. Overall, Berger acknowledges the significance of worship and prayer in addition to how liturgical practices of worship and prayer interconnect with digital media.

Pamela and Michael Cooper-White, in their third chapter "Stewards of the Mysteries: Practices of Worship," from their book *Exploring Practices of Ministry*, demonstrates through the life of Jesus Christ what it means to worship. Jesus prayed, praised God publicly and privately, participated in communion, and publicly shared his ministry through self-identity as a

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[32] Berger, @ *Worship*, xi.

[33] Ibid., 18.

surrendered servant.[34] Christ's life on earth and how he lived is a perfect example for lifestyle worship. He taught his disciples how to pray and worship "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Pamela and Michael Cooper-White recognize the value of worship and how Christ's followers should practice their admirations based on the life of Jesus. Worshipers must follow this example set by Christ and adhere to those that lead worship. Their book offers insight into how worshipers and worship leaders can commendably interpret Scripture and lead laudable worship. For it is God's calling to serve: as "servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries" (1 Corinthians 4:1).[35]

The world in which worshipers and worship leaders live is constantly changing. Virtual church services have become one of the many new innovations from the twenty-first century. With this in mind, environments for worship are changing. Throughout his book, *SimChurch: Being the Church in the Virtual World*, Douglas Estes analyzes differing virtual churches and how they have adjusted to the new age of technology. He surveys the vision, concerns, challenges, and possibilities that can come with building the Kingdom of God virtually.[36] Estes writes, "The Christian church is engaging far less than 1 percent of the seventy million people who are active in the virtual world. This means the virtual world is the largest unreached people group on planet earth by far. Simon Jenkins, of the founders of Church of Fools, remarks 'it's like someone has created a new town and no one has thought to build a church there. It's almost

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[34] Pamela and Michael Cooper-White, "Stewards of the Mysteries: Practices of Worship," *Exploring Practices of Ministry* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, 2014, accessed February 16, 2021, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9m0tjb), 50.

[35] Ibid., 51.

[36] Douglas Estes, *SimChurch: Being the Church in the Virtual World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 29.

scandalous.' We have great work to do."[37] Estes recognizes the need to reach people virtually. However, he also understands the need for theological, missional, and ethical practices. If worship leaders are to effectively and successfully reach and lead worshipers in the virtual realm, they have to "build a church" there; worship leaders must be "the church."

Estes has a pressing concern for theology, ecclesiology, and philosophy and how it affects the church. Estes takes specific theological, ecclesiastical, and philosophical models and formulates inquiries, opening considerations that provide worship leaders and worshipers to contemplate the benefit of "attending" a virtual worship service. According to Estes, attending and participating in virtual worship is excellent: it unites God's people. Through metaphors and a study of Scripture, Estes directs the reader's attention to what God has said about gathered worship. Estes remarks, "...each image is a metaphor for what God does through the Spirit, never for a physical building (1 Peter 2:4-5)."[38] Estes explains that there are no metaphors that contradict or deny a virtual church's authenticity throughout the Bible. Instead, most biblical metaphors about the church discuss believers' gathering under the headship of Jesus Christ. Still, church participants must consider how they will "be" the church in a virtual world by encouraging unified worship and community times.[39] Even though believers choose to meet virtually, Estes shares that worshipers remain honest and trustworthy to the biblical call; stay united as localized people of God (Hebrews 10:25).

In his article, "Hallelujah!: Worship Style and Congregational Growth," Michael Lee identifies vital Christian ministry visionaries and their advancements in worship. He works

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[37] Estes, *SimChurch*, 29.

[38] Ibid., 44.

[39] Ibid.

towards tracing pathways for innovative distribution initiated in mainstream evangelical churches, more specifically during the mid-1980's early 2010's.[40] Lee explores what it means to be a "contemporary" church and how this form of worship can offer genuine praise to the Lord. He notes the modifications that have taken place within churches concerning worship and music practices. Lee clarifies, "[the] style of music you choose to use in your services will be one of the most critical (and controversial) decisions you make in the life of your church. It may also be the most influential factor in determining who your church reaches for Christ..."[41] As time, culture, and worship practices evolve, so should music; music must match the kind of people God wants worship leaders' church to reach.

Over a span of fifteen years, ten characteristics in worship transformed. Singing with the choir, bulletin/program use, as well as the utilization of an organ are considerably low in contrast to new innovative worship practices.[42] While projection equipment, testimonies, saying "Amen," jumping or shouting, raising hands in adoration, or the use of drums have become the new custom. A significant contributor to contemporary worship is innovation, creating an atmosphere for spiritual vitality.[43] By providing this insight, Lee shows how contemporary worship has grown into a new age of worship practices and has created an environment that facilitates divine encounters.[44] In doing so, these new advancements in worship and the growth of new paradigms allow churches to grow in size and reach worship participants.

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[40] Michael Hakmin Lee, "Hallelujah!: Worship Style and Congregational Growth.," (*The Choral Journal* 58, no. 4, 2017: 67-76, accessed February 17, 2021, www.jstor.org/stable/26412903), 67.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., 69.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., 71.

Vernon M. Whaley, in his book, *The Dynamics of Corporate Worship*, evaluates the fundamentals and foundations related to public worship. There is a variety of dynamics discovered in worship, including: the dynamics of honest (Psalm 51:17), genuine (Psalm 34:3), hindered (1 Samuel 16:7), Old and New Testament worship (Revelation 21:3) as well as dynamics of revival and worship (Psalm 85:6), biblical worship (Psalm 50:15), music and worship (Psalm 96:1-2), evangelism and worship (Psalm 96:3), giving and worship (Psalm 96:8), prayer and worship (Psalm 96:8-9), preaching and worship (1 Corinthians 1:18), people and worship (Acts 21:19), serving and worship (Colossians 3:23), and practical worship (Psalm 90:17). Whaley declares, "[worship] wars are raging and wounded soldiers are scattered along both sides of a highway called biblical worship. Disagreements over worship preferences, traditions, style, and choice of music, cultural identity, and much more form the platform of controversy."[45] The very thing that should be driving and bringing God's people together has become and continues to become a source of damage among worshipers. By taking readers through the dynamics of worship, Whaley hopes to restore the biblical principles of corporate worship and better equip God's children to praise Him in spirit and in truth.

While worship is a significant attribute among Christian lives, it is also essential to grow in a believer's faith. Whaley takes readers through personal life events and many revelations of God's glory, disclosing the genuine nature of worship and why God calls his people to worship Him. While this book serves well in comprehending many corporate worship dynamics, it also conveys worship principles discovered in churches today. Like Whaley affirms, "God continues to call people to worship, and he calls people to worship as a congregation...God yearns for a

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[45] Vernon M. Whaley, *The Dynamics of Corporate Worship* (Virginia Beach, VA: Academx Publishing Services, Inc., 2009), 15.

dwelling place with his people. He desires for people of the twenty-first century to know him in his fullness, to seek him with all their hearts, and to develop a deep and personal relationship with him."[46] There is a need to restore the basic fundamentals and biblical principles of worship. God desires to have a relationship and desires to dwell amongst His people. However, worshipers and worship leaders must take biblical concepts of worship from the "textbook" and to the congregation, ministering to God's people.[47] In general, Whaley provides worshipers and worship leaders to be better equipped to worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

<div align="center">Ideal Worship</div>

Worship Matters, written by Bob Kauflin, offers a construct for understanding authentic worship. Kauflin focuses on what is critical to worship and how worship leads to an encounter with the Holy Spirit. He proclaims, "[churches] can faithfully magnify the greatness of God in Christ, yet fail to demonstrate the kind of empowered living and passion that the gospel should produce."[48] Kauflin further explains that this is because believers often attempt to worship God apart from the Holy Spirit's power. If the Holy Spirit is apart from the worshiper or if the worshiper is not consciously dependent upon the Holy Spirit, their worship is not genuine, nor is it Christian.[49] Worshipers and worship leaders must recognize and comprehend the Holy Spirit and its ability to empower their worship as well as the worship they direct; they must demonstrate the empowered living and passion the gospel produces.

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[46] Whaley, *The Dynamics of Corporate Worship*, 60-61.

[47] Ibid., 170.

[48] Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encourage the Greatness of God*, foreword by Paul Baloche (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 81.

[49] Ibid.

Throughout his book, Kauflin explains how to encounter the Lord through authentic, Scriptural worship. The Revelation-Response is a theological and biblical approach to encounter the Holy Spirit and experience and listen to what God may be saying. Kauflin encourages that when "[we] exalt God's greatness at the start, encounter him in our hearts and minds, then respond in appropriate ways," worshipers are following the biblical model set out by so many gospel heroes.[50] This is just one of the many principles Kauflin illuminates. He also considers what it means to be the hands and feet of Christ, what a worship leader does and must do, what a worshiper embodies, and how worship involves people. His writings and discoveries provide biblical, practical, intriguing, wise, and thorough worship leadership practices for worship leaders to utilize during worship. While the means for worship alter and the settings for worship change due to differing circumstances, the authenticity and genuine meaning of worship are the same; exaltation and devotion to the Lord.[51] In general, true worship is attained through an encounter and relationship with the Father.

Monty Boyd McGee's thesis, "Serving the Body of Christ in Corporate Worship: An Apologetic for Embracing Multiple Styles of Music," investigates the stylistic changes and transitions that have taken place in Christian worship. In some cases, when related to worship, music can deteriorate the body of the church, more specifically the relationships and the authenticity of worship.[52] Due to these stylistic modifications, unnecessary disagreements can develop. McGee detects that inevitable disagreements can lead to a divide amongst the church's

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[50] Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 114.

[51] Ibid., 189.

[52] Monty Boyd McGee, "Serving the Body of Christ in Corporate Worship: An Apologetic for Embracing Multiple Styles of Music," (Doctor of Educational Ministry Theses, 2018, accessed February 18, 2021, https://digital.library.sbts.edu/bitstream/handle/10392/5696/McGee_sbts.pdp_0207A_10358.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y), vi.

body. The result of this divide is shattered relationships and hindered worship. By studying

biblical and theological foundations, historical issues, and contemporary worship music

concerning musical diversity, McGee attempts to reveal the recognition of musical pluralism.

McGee renders that musical pluralism, "a viewpoint that assigns an amoral nature to

music," or the musical expression of worship is obligatory when imparting gratitude to God.[53]

He claims that because modern day Christians are unfamiliar with unique musical styles, they

often view it as an uncongenial means of worship to the Lord. Current Christ-followers should

welcome these new and different musical offerings of worship. If each musical offering is

biblically and theologically sound, God will be glorified, no matter the musical style. Hence,

"God is glorified when believers consider mutual edification of brothers and sisters in Christ

more important than the preservation of certain musical style or tradition."[54] Regardless of the

differences in musical preference, believers must remain open to others' inclination and needs

when seeking to praise the Lord. In doing so, God is honored and relationships amongst Christ's

body are restored. Paul encourages, "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace

and to mutual edification" (Romans 14:19). As worshipers and worship leaders adapt a biblical

view of mutual edification, McGee hopes to enlighten what it means to worship the Lord through

differing, unique, and diversified music styles.

Kevin J. Navarro's book, *The Complete Worship Leader*, dives into the principles behind

a worship leader's role and a biblical worship service. Navarro writes about how worship leaders

can grow and develop in their understanding of worship and how to effectively lead Christ-

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[53] McGee, "Serving the Body of Christ in Corporate Worship: An Apologetic for Embracing Multiple Styles of Music," 1.

[54] Ibid., 23.

centered worship.[55] In doing so, worship leaders can teach, lead, and guide their congregations towards authentic worship. Navarro splits his concepts into four sections, discussing how to become a theologian (through revelation and redemption), a disciple (through salvation and proclamation), an artist (through appreciation and creation), and a leader (through demonstration and participation).[56] Each element is pulled together to show how worship leaders can effectively lead authentic and genuine worship. Moreover, Navarro poses the question "what are we worshiping?"[57] By asking this question, Navarro presents the struggle humanity has with the idea of worship. God created humanity and in response to His kindness and generosity, mankind responds with worship. However, like Navarro points out, humanity has not worshiped the living God; humanity has worshiped the creation.[58]

If a worship leader does not possess the attributes of a theologian, disciple, artist, or a leader, they may not be equipped to teach and direct worshipers to encounter the Holy Spirit truly. Navarro states, "[we] must be born again and become disciples of Jesus Christ if we are to see worship produced by the Spirit. True worship will ultimately come from hearts that the Spirit of Christ has regenerated."[59] God must be worshiped with accuracy, integrity, and authentically. God does not accept worship if it does not follow certain biblical foundations. Worshipers and worship leaders must approach God with an attitude of humility, reverence, gratefulness, and appreciation for all He has done (Leviticus 10:3; Psalms 29:2; 89:7:93:5; Habakkuk 2:20; John

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[55] Kevin J. Navarro, *The Complete Worship Leader*, foreword by Sally Morgenthaler (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 14.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., 18.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid., 49.

4:24).[60] Attitude, in this sense, is the starting point for dynamic worship. It is the heartbeat behind why God's people worship; to give Him thanks and be theologians, disciples, artists, and leaders of His Word. By becoming proficient not only in a proper attitude towards worship but also in each of the four characteristics, worship leaders as well as believers can become complete, Christ-centered worship leaders.

Incorporation of Innovative Worship

Andrew K. Barnett presents a case study that ponders the question, "how a cathedral might innovate, evaluate, and improve worship to participate more fully in God's mission."[61] In Barnett's theses, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow: Innovating, Evaluating, and Improving Worship to Participate in God's Mission," he uses the word "cathedral" as a form of practice rather than the seat of the Bishop.[62] Cathedral, defined by Barnett is "the congregation, visitors, staff, and donors that spend regular time in our building. Importantly, when I use the term I am referring primarily to the people—the Body of Christ."[63] When the term "cathedral" is put into practice, it suggests to the congregation and staff how to serve together as the church. It is then, through the application of theoretical structures (missional church, adaptive leadership, playful acts in Scripture, and mixed-methods social science research), Barnett finds that partaking in innovative worship will lead to transformational and engaging worship. In all, Barnett's research and findings will help innovation thrive in worshiping communities.

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[60] Navarro, *The Complete Worship Leader*, 135.

[61] Andrew K. Barnett, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow: Innovating, Evaluating, and Improving Worship to Participate in God's Mission," (Doctor of Ministry Theses, 2019, accessed February 18, 2021, https://digitalcommons.luthersem.edu/cgi/view content.cgi?article=1045&context=dmin_theses), iii.

[62] Ibid., 3.

[63] Ibid., 22.

If worship is to change, modernize, and transform with the times, it must incorporate continued investment. Worship is intricate. Nonetheless, as Barnett studies in his theses, worshipers and worship leaders must understand how to shape worship that engages worshipers of all generations, supports cultural diversity, and amplifies genuine liturgical offerings.[64] Barnett's analysis delivers pragmatic models for innovatively and spiritually transform worship. He dives into adaptive challenges the church faces: "people do not attend church with the frequency of previous generations, young people do not attend church like they used to...we have immensely conflicting sources of identity, the generation that was so dedicated to finishing the Cathedral is literally dying off."[65] Barnett sees challenges, not just his church, in fact many congregations are facing challenging factors. Younger generations are leaving the church. He believes that God is calling the church to be innovative as they navigate through these differing challenges. Barnett quotes Linda Hill: "If your goal is innovation, then your role must instead be to create an environment – a setting, a context, an organization – where people are willing and able to do the hard work of innovation themselves: to collaborate, learn through trial and error, and make integrated choices."[66] Innovation in the church must begin with worship leaders. However, innovation and creativity must also consider worship participants' needs, establishing an atmosphere where worshipers can worship freely.

Liturgical Art for a Media Culture, by Eileen D. Crowley, examines the incorporation of innovative media and media arts. There are, however, two sides to this argument: (1) church

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[64] Barnett, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow: Innovating, Evaluating, and Improving Worship to Participate in God's Mission," 1.

[65] Ibid., 35.

[66] Ibid., 38.

leaders who readily embrace media in worship and (2) church leaders who reject the use of

media technologies and arts, claiming new innovations are inappropriate for worship. Crowley

articulates,

> Projected photographs, computer graphics, feature film clips, video stories, animation,
> and combinations of these are among the "new media: that have entered Christian
> worship. These media truly do present new opportunities, as well as new "pastoral
> problems." During the last three decades, and since the 1990's in particular, churches
> Protestant and Catholic have taken up the challenge of how to use this "new language" in
> their praise and thanks...[67]

Crowley understands that new technologies and media have slowly made their way into the

church throughout worship years. In doing so, it has allowed new opportunities to worship. The

thought in applying these new media platforms is to enrich the worship experience. However, in

some cases, incorporating new experiences and media platforms can create issues.

Crowley argues that the use of creative media technologies and arts has the potential to

generate new forms of liturgical art and ministries.[68] Translated from the Greek language, liturgy

means "the work of the people."[69] It is then that "liturgical art signifies any form of art that is

integral and appropriate to the liturgical actions of a community's liturgy."[70] Liturgy, in this

sense, accentuates the communal facet of worship. If media technologies and arts are liturgical in

nature, it has the potential to serve and bring glory to God. Although, like all liturgical arts, it

must encompass thoughtful discernment, examining the validity of community, liturgy,

aesthetics, and ethics. If media arts and technologies stray from these biblical principles, then

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[67] Eileen D. Crowley, *Liturgical Art for a Media Culture: American Essays in Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 7.

[68] Ibid., 10.

[69] Ibid., 11.

[70] Ibid., 13.

this will cause complications. These complications can create a sense of being welcomed guests rather than welcomed and active participants; "they are invited to watch and to listen to the on-stage action of preachers, musicians, actors, or others who perform, and to experience media produced to help communicate the church's message."[71] Ultimately, congregants are not expected to contribute in any way to the worship service. This is why Crowley offers assistance to church leaders and members: to direct worship leaders to compare and contrast the possibilities and complications that may come with the integration of media in worship. In doing so, the church can choose to incorporate creative media and media arts into their worship services.

In his theses, *Creating Church Online: An Ethnographic Study of Five Internet-Based Christian Communities*, Timothy Hutchings investigates a multitude of dimensions regarding the relationship between digital and everyday life. This concept is what encourages online activity, including religion online. Hutchings decided to conduct an ethnographic study amongst five online Christian churches based on this idea. These churches consist of: Church of Fools; i-church; St Pixels; the Anglican Cathedral of Second Life; and Church Online, an "online campus" that is run by LifeChurch.tv. Each church studied offers virtual access to the Christian religion. Hutchings studies these five churches based not only on their online religious standing, but also on their varying size, activity, media, leadership style, theology, and institutional overseeing. Inclusively, his research suggests opportunities for a wide-range of comparative consideration.[72] Despite this article being written in 2010, its analysis from Hutchings' research

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[71] Crowley, *Liturgical Art for a Media Culture*, 13.

[72] Timothy, Robert, Benjamin Hutchings, *Creating Church Online: An Ethnographic Study of Five Internet-Based Christian Communities* (Durham theses, Durham University, 2010, accessed February 19, 2021, available at Durham E-Theses Online: http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/416/), 5.

offers awareness into today's groundbreaking online churches, involving community and worship.

Hutchings' report presents a new perspective: online churches are becoming the new norm. Online churches are beginning to flourish in new, innovative ways. Hutchings writes, "[studying] these five churches offer opportunities to see the potential of online church, what kind of online activities and practices and cultures attract committed participants..."[73] Each church studied reveals the potential for online church gatherings and how to include the use of new media with Christian practice. The online Christian activity of attending online church platforms is assimilated into daily routine patterns by applying new media and Christian practices, making online church "*a part of the everyday life of the visitor*, in five overlapping ways: *conceptual, material, social, digital, and religious*."[74]

Conceptual everyday life is the idea that "virtual" and "real" worship participation is one in the same. The growth of internet-mediated relationships and assemblies has opened the door to a new context for Christian ministry, by redefining the community that exists amongst believer's everyday life.[75] Simply put, there is no "virtual" community. Instead, as Hutchings puts it, it is an online community with every day, real-life believers. This concept then ties into Hutchings' second overlapping idea, material everyday life. Here, the term *material* refers to the physical aspects of an individual's life engaged in online activity: "connecting from a location, using computer equipment, physically typing, meeting another churchgoer face-to-face, or

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[73] Hutchings, *Creating Church Online: An Ethnographic Study of Five Internet-Based Christian Communities*, 44.

[74] Ibid., 290.

[75] Ibid.

simply talking online about physical experiences."[76] As the church, it is imperative to involve the physical aspect of worship; the physical body is central to worship. According to Hutchings, worshipers can do so by singing aloud in time with music playing from the service, testimonials from blog posts, or participating in chatroom conversations involving prayers over one another.

The discussion and concern about the body involved in worship online leads to Hutchings' next concept: everyday *social* life of the internet. Hutchings argues that each internet user is, in some way, connected with a rich network of relationships, and it is through those connections where they are drawn into online life.[77] The social world of an individual can allow them to connect, socially, on an entirely new level. However, as Hutchings explains, "[time] must be found for the online church in daily routine."[78] This can be accomplished by inviting others, similar to LifeChurch.tv, where couples served as online volunteers and hosted watch parties in their homes. By doing this, couples and many others were able to still connect on a social level with one another. These accounts demonstrate a conceptual everyday life of the internet without community boundaries amongst worshipers.

Digital everyday life considers how worshipers can experience worship and community through online, "virtual" means. Similar to that of the social aspect of everyday life, the digital aspect refers to online churches that communicate through a broad range of media, from emails to blog posts to Facebook to MSN.[79] From there, each person connects to their online church comparably to any other online activity. MyChurch.org connected and reached out to

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[76] Hutchings, *Creating Church Online: An Ethnographic Study of Five Internet-Based Christian Communities*, 291.

[77] Ibid., 292.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid., 294.

congregants through Facebook, engaging with members through various options made available online. This embodied community and the sense of being in community with other church members. Lastly, the final and most critical dimension Hutchings discusses is the *religious* characteristic introduced by online churches in everyday life. Attending an online church is one facet of a worshiper's religious life. Hutchings mentions that "[virtue] and character development at the centre of an individual's personal network of contacts and resources, only partly maintained through digital media."[80] When treating an online church as a part of a worshiper's personal religious network they can strengthen their local involvement. This network allows worshipers to be more involved in Christian issues, locally. Overall, these five overlapping components to online church and worship open the worshiper's eyes to the possibilities of innovative and communicative worship to the Lord.

Timothy Hutchings determines a diverse culture in online churches through a structured ethnographic account, ranging from virtual worlds to video streaming. Throughout the last several years, online churches have been considered the new norm. These churches involve online congregations that generate innovative means for ritual, leadership, community, and global influence networks.[81] Online churches have allowed many to experience the gospel in a multitude of ways. All through his book, *Creating Church Online: Ritual, Community and New Media*, Hutchings summarizes the history of online church participation, starting from the 1980's to present day. He indicates significant academic and Christian debate themes, including how worship and community are fabricated through online church attendance. By exercising current

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[80] Hutchings, *Creating Church Online: An Ethnographic Study of Five Internet-Based Christian Communities*, 294.

[81] Tim Hutchings, *Creating Church Online: Ritual, Community and New Media* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 24.

theories in religion, media, and culture, Hutchings evokes a modern paradigm of religious design. During the course of his study, Hutchings provides an appreciation of the impact digital media has had in the religious and social lives of online church users. He extends modern theoretical ideas for virtual religious practices.

Hutchings explains further this idea of online churches and how the Trinity as well as biblical principles for worship can be experienced through online church community's:

> ...God is essentially relational (as Father, Son and Spirit). Humans are made in the image of God, and this is why they are also relational. If relationality is part of the image of God, then all forms of community (including online community) can be seen as an outworking to a divinely given impulse to connect. Douglas Estes, for example, argues that the appeal of virtual community 'originates with the innate, God-given need and desire to relate to other people. It's Trinitarian; it's genetic (Estes 2009:59). By offering anonymity, removing anxieties of physical appearance and generating new opportunities to meet, online environments 'free us to follow our *imago Dei* need for greater depths of relationship' (Estes 2009: 60).[82]

Worship online can be relational. It is through the image of God that worshipers become relational. Because God created mankind for relationship, humanity is also created for relationship. In this sense, worship and any form of community are considered an outward and divine call to be relational; online churches' innovation is fulfilling God's call for gathering.

One church, Alpha Church, emerged from the years 1989 and has since continued to remain a robust online church community. They have provided sermons and worship services along with daily updates in the form of blogs, images, and recorded resources to either be read, streamed, or downloaded.[83] Furthermore, worshipers or "visitors" can email the pastor for prayer requests and donate their offerings. Many other churches Hutchings studies, but Alpha Church

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[82] Hutchings, *Creating Church Online: Ritual, Community and New Media*, 34.

[83] Ibid., 14.

seems to continue to thrive in the innovative and creative online environment, welcoming new participants and engaging people in God's Word. According to their website, the church formed due to a particular focus on the needs of disabled Christian believers. The church received feedback from two paraplegic worshipers about what interested them spiritually, visually, and logistically.[84] Not long after, the church discovered that the best way to draw in church attendees and those who could not attend "regular" or in person church was to use the internet.

Dan Kimball's book, *Emerging Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations*, is a magnificent representation of what it means to be the church in a changing world. In the form of a narrative, Kimball monitors and directs worship of congregants and church leaders by establishing alternative worship services, appealing to the younger generations. He applies anecdotes from personal experiences to create six creative models. Kimball uncovers vital issues, including: how to develop team prayer, assess the mission of the church, determine specific leaders and team members that have an eye for ingenuity, and identify the differing values between evolving worship and set church. In general, this book provides an excellent tool for worshipers and worship leaders to understand and adapt to a changing world and incorporate new innovations for routine worship.

Kimball acknowledges the need to teach and reach out to younger generations. In order to reach these generations, churches must incorporate alternative worship services and modern developments into their ministries, specifically advancements that meet the needs of emerging generations. He acknowledges the need to involve and teach emerging generations to be disciples as well as create worship gatherings that suit their generation. As Kimball points out, emerging generations are losing interest in the church. Due to the lack of innovation and closed

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[84] Hutchings, *Creating Church Online: Ritual, Community and New Media*, 14.

mindedness to change among older generations, younger generations are losing interest in attending or participating in the church.[85] Eventually, making newer generations leave. In order to include and disciple emerging generations, older generations and traditional churches must allow innovation in worship. Kimball declares, "I pray that we will work hard to create and express innovative worship, but not at the expense of losing our first love in Jesus (Revelation 2:4)." [86] He understands the need for innovation from younger generations. However, the innovation in worship and the adoration worshipers express should not lose sight of who is at the center of all worship; Jesus.

In addition to transforming worship suited to generational worship, Kimball analyzes the notion of reintroducing ancient and liturgical practices in worship. In fact, emerging generations desire to embrace Christianity's ancient and liturgical forms of worship. New forms of worship have transformed towards the traditional and biblical practices exemplified by Jesus Christ. Biblical practices being used includes: the practice of repetitive meditation, prayer from Scripture, the focus and participation in the Christian calendar.[87] Another characteristic among emerging generations is their interest in singing hymns. Through the lyrical content of hymns, emerging generations are experiencing a longed for, rich and deep connection to Christ. In all, churches are choosing to incorporate liturgy into their worship, "breathing new life into their 'routine' practices."[88] Just like the mission of the early church, the mission of the church is to invite others to join as disciples of Jesus Christ, experiencing the saving grace of Jesus and

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[85] Dan Kimball, *Emerging Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations*, foreword by David Crowder and Sally Morgenthaler (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), xii.

[86] Ibid., 230.

[87] Ibid., 93.

[88] Ibid.

God's love. People can experience saving grace through acts of love, kindness, service, social justice, and by blessing others.[89] In order to lead an emerging generation, innovation must take place.

Quentin J. Schultze in his book, *High-Tech Worship?: Using Presentational Technologies Wisely*, discerns the need to be knowledgeable in utilizing technology in worship. During his sabbatical, Schultze and his wife visited many different churches, varying in size, generational attendance, and technological encroachments in their worship.[90] He discovered several churches had taken steps to integrate new modernizations to worship. However, upon his encounters with particular churches, many did not understand their steps towards incorporating twenty-first century technological advances were hindering their worship. Nonetheless, Schultze and his wife witnessed some incredible and inspiring worship presentations on the other side. Through this time, Schultze discovered that "[presentational] technologies can shape worship for both good and bad. The key to using presentational technologies wisely is employing them well in a service of worthy purposes, not for their own ends. We should not use technology for the sake of technology but in support of commendable worship."[91]

Throughout Schultze's text, he stipulates liturgical wisdom (how to plan, order, and conduct worship) that directs how to exercise presentational technologies. Worship leaders who seek to steward adoration to the Father can utilize these helpful tidbits of understanding to help them adapt and incorporate technology as a meaningful form of worship. Schultze provides an

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[89] Kimball, *Emerging Worship*, 176.

[90] Quentin J. Schultze, *High-Tech Worship?: Using Presentational Technologies Wisely.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 12.

[91] Ibid., 13.

insightful meaning to technology: "Technology includes: (1) the *Physical devices* (or tools) that we use to develop God's creation, (2) the *meanings* that we attach to these devices, and (3) the *ways* that we use them."[92] Schultze continues to say that technology is a visual and verbal symbol that can alter worship for good. Technology is powerful because it carries symbolic significance. However, worshipers and worship leaders must also comprehend the implications behind technology. New technological advancements can be used for good, but in some cases they can create or produce implications, hindering authentic worship to the Lord; "If technology is a biased tool—if it includes particular meanings and practices—then we have to be careful about how, when, why, and where we use it."[93] It is important to be aware of how to utilize technology to encourage and foster love and devotion to God.

Susan J. White is enthusiastic about Christian worship and its relationship to technology. In her manuscript, *Christian Worship and Technological Change*, White delves into two worlds (Christian worship and technology) and how they can be assimilated into one. Identifying that individuals view liturgy and technology as two distinct entities, White presumes that liturgy and technology do have something in common: technology and technological rationality have motivated planning, studying, and participation in corporate Christian worship. As White records, "... [Technology] can and does alter our perceptions of how the liturgy is constructed, how it changes, how it shapes the faith of the believer, and how it functions within

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[92] Schultze, *High-Tech Worship?*, 43.

[93] Ibid.

congregational life."[94] Overall, technology can enhance and allow the liturgy to shape Christ believers' faith.

White continues to cite definitive historical examples of how technological processes and Christian worship interchange. White uncovers how churches, through the years, have had to adapt to various technological changes. White chooses to educate worshipers and church leaders that such adaptations will be a part of the church's future; it will continue to be a part of church growth and church development. White does not condone nor curse the use of technological advancements, but rather, it calls for a continued discussion or "relationship of mutual critique" or dialogue between the disciples of liturgy and technology to achieve a mutually beneficial relationship. White suggests that this dialogue should include a wide variety of participants, present a real challenge to technology, present real challenges to Christian worship, be broadly historical, and consider theology a serious aspect of the Christian faith.[95] White proclaims, "if technology and worship can enter into a relationship of mutual critique, that both may undergo genuine renewal."[96] By analyzing and considering this dialogue or relational critiques, worship can be authentic and remain intact to God's exclusive worship design.

All About...Music Technology in Worship, written by Steve Young, is a copious source for comprehending and incorporating music technology and music technology characteristics in worship. In order to embrace music technology in worship, worshipers and worship leaders must apprehend the elements and facets offered by fresh ideas. Young opens his book with a

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[94] Susan J. White, *Christian Worship and Technological Change* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 10.

[95] White, *Christian Worship and Technological Change*, 123-127.

[96] Ibid., 122.

clarification of differing musical issues as well as music technology innovations that can help benefit worship. Moreover, Young's book delivers a comfortable, comprehensible instruction for music technology, involving the use of synthesizers, MIDI and sequencing from percussion, bass, and guitar technology. In conjunction with these new innovations to worship technology, Young considers the history of music technology in worship, hard disc recording, and music technology's unification in both large and small gatherings for worship. Young's book proves to be an all-encompassing music technology source that can benefit any worship leader preparing to lead and offer their music ministry new means for worship.

Young writes, "[diversity] in the area of musical instruments utilized in worship is not a new concept. The Old Testament states that 'David and all the Israelites were celebrating with all their might before God, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, cymbals, and trumpets' (1 Chron. 13:8)."[97] Entering God's presence with multiple expressions of musical worship is nothing new. King David as well as the Israelites offered their admiration to God by utilizing many different forms of musical worship. Like Young describes through David's worship, music is changing and so are the offerings of worship to God. Indeed, the church is "poised to carry the torch of musical diversity that David modeled for us in first Chronicles. Is it any surprise that David wrote in Psalm 33:3, 'Sing to him a new song. Play skillfully and shout for joy'?"[98] Like David, the church should acknowledge and apprehend fresh ideas and innovations to worship.

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[97] Steve Young, *All About...Music Technology in Worship*, foreword by Rory Noland (Milwaukie, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2004), 1.

[98] Ibid., 4.

Conclusion

Upon discovery, there is no shortage of theological doctrine for worship. Scriptural worship is discovered throughout the Bible story. It is even discovered in the lives of early worshipers and leaders within the church today. Many things can be learned and incorporated to remain biblical in authentic worship and be creative and innovative in worship forms. Worship pastors and leaders can incorporate these definitions for expressive praise, worship, and thanksgiving to the Lord. They can also discover means by which to offer these forms of adoration to the Lord by studying the biblical principles represented and studied, recognizing how worshipers express their praises in church today, and by identifying ideal worship based on Scripture and the gospel story. In doing so, worship pastors and leaders can incorporate innovative means for non-traditional worship.

Chapter 3: Methodology of the Research

Introduction

In establishing the purpose, details, and literature regarding this project, it is then necessary to explore and examine how this study's research will be conducted. It is essential to determine a process in which readers can understand the necessary actions taking place. Instituting specific research tools, the project structure, and project application, are only a few of the methodological considerations that must be established. Hopefully, this research will indicate an effective means by which worship leaders and pastors can lead innovative, non-traditional worship amidst an ever-changing world.

Research Design

This study will use a qualitative approach using texts, documents, images, graphs, and observations discovered in correlation to non-traditional means for worship. This research project's design will be split into a few different categories, including subjects surrounding the main topic of reaching worship participants through non-traditional means of worship. The first section discussed will uncover some basic background research on the central topic, assessing existing literature on studies including (a) the definition of worship, praise, thanksgiving, and lifestyle worship, (b) ideal worship based on biblical principles, and (c) the use of various non-traditional means for worship (technological advancements and innovations) in modern day churches. The analysis of this background will provide the knowledge needed in order to incorporate innovative, technological, and creative non-traditional means to reach worship participants.

The second section analyzed some helpful, innovative and creative tools to incorporate and utilize to reach worship participants in non-traditional ways. How worship is expressed has

changed and evolved with the circumstances and stylistic changes of the world. During the

COVID-19 pandemic, many churches, if not all, had to quickly discover how to effectively

reach, lead, and walk alongside their church goers. Many churches quickly had to learn how to

utilize online means for worship, including engaging virtual or livestreamed worship services.

Many churches struggled during the shift. They were not prepared for what was to come; the

shutdown of the entire world. Worship, public gatherings, even family gatherings were

prohibited. This presented a considerable barrier for worshipers and church leaders around the

world. Some churches were not fully equipped to handle the shutdown financially,

technologically, nor evangelically or missionally. Non-traditional means of worship and how to

utilize those means have become critical to the church's thriving nature. By discovering tools and

creative means for worship, church leaders, worship leaders, and pastors can successfully lead

worship participants in genuine praise to the Father. Through this study worship leaders and

pastors will be equipped and prepared to lead believers to engage in and have a relationship with

the Lord.

Lastly, the third section considers some implications to incorporating non-traditional

means of worship. During the pandemic, there were many new innovations and creative means

for which worship was expressed, led, and exuded. However, some implications stood in the way

of many churches fulfilling the mission set out in Matthew 28:19. Many could not effectively

reach their routine church participants due to the lack of technological advancements, finances,

or knowledge of leading a virtual or running a virtual worship service. As worship leaders and

pastors, it is crucial to recognize these implications and how some of these issues can prohibit

churches from being "the church" in the midst of an epidemic. Through the investigator's hope, it

is then that these implications can be tackled, providing helpful tools and principles for churches

amid a pandemic to thrive; to share the gospel with those who are in desperate need of hope.

<p style="text-align:center">Tools and Data Collection</p>

The research of this project will entail and utilize texts from the Jerry Falwell Library as

well as contextual and theological books gathered throughout the Master of Arts in Music and

Worship Studies degree. The texts gathered will be used to investigate authentic and biblical

practices for worship in correlation to non-traditional means for worship during an epidemic

where gathering for worship is strictly limited to virtual or online settings. Given the current and

continuous events surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the church requires restoring worship

no matter where a church member may be. With this in mind, literature, graphs, and other helpful

tools will be analyzed and studied to incorporate technological advancements in worship and

help worship leaders and pastors successfully lead worship participants in biblical, ideal, and

innovative worship.

<p style="text-align:center">Questions and Hypothesis</p>

As discovered throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a need to reintroduce

biblical principles for worship as well as a need to introduce non-traditional means for worship

amidst limited worship gatherings. Amid an epidemic, worshipers struggle to praise the Lord

publicly due to the hindrance and limitation of large gatherings. In addition, worship leaders and

pastors struggle to effectively lead worshipers in congregational, participatory worship due to the

lack of in person worship gatherings. However, thanks to many technological advances,

innovations, and creative means for expressing adoration to the Father, worshipers can

participate and engage in worship through a multitude of ways. It is, in no way similar to in

person participation, yet, thanks to the innovation and creativity of up and coming virtual and

online churches, worshipers are allotted the ability to serve and worship the Lord without feeling disengaged or deterred.

In general, one question will direct Christ-followers, worship leaders, and pastors to the everchanging and evolving needs of worship. This overarching question asks, how can worship leaders reach worship participants through non-traditional means of worship. Additional questions are considered and answered throughout this study to grasp the full-extent of the investigation and help worship leaders and worshipers offer genuine praises of admiration to the Lord. These additional questions to consider consist of: (1) What aspects of worship can be explored to reach worshipers online? (2) What types of outlets or means can be utilized to reach worshipers when power, internet, or technology is unavailable? (3) Where and how can people experience worship within their homes? (4) Does someone have to lead worship, or can it be self-led? (5) What is a current ideal setting or can become an ideal setting for alternative worship methods? In all, these questions will be the basis of this research project and will influence the literature and texts analyzed for biblical worship methods expressed as well as non-traditional means for worship during an endemic.

Over the past year, many individuals have suffered the effects of COVID-19. The church and God's people have undergone many trials and tribulations due to social gatherings' immediate shutdown. How and where to worship, publicly, has become one of the few biggest questions for churches. The researcher hopes to shed light on the questions listed above and provide practical means for worship leaders and pastors to lead their congregation in biblical, safely-distanced worship effectively. The exploration of the hypothesis and research is necessary for the church to thrive as well as fulfill the Great Commission set out by Jesus Christ; "Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and

of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). Worship leaders and pastors must explore innovative methods for worship in order to be on the mission with Christ; delivering the gospel message no matter the circumstances put in place. There is a definitive need for these innovative and creative methods for worship.

It is predicted that the information gathered and collected in this investigation will help worship leaders and pastors effectively lead worshipers in non-traditional means for worship. In addition, it is foreseen that worshipers can improve their relationship with the Lord amidst hindered public worship. This project will introduce new and innovative means for worship, both publicly and privately. Worship is essential and vital to the life of followers of Christ. Without it, a relationship with the Lord is not fulfilling the call and command God set in place from the beginning of time. Non-traditional means for worship does have some implications and these possibilities will be investigated and attempted to be resolved. Even though there may be implications to employing non-traditional means for worship, the researcher hopes to tackle these inferences and present helpful and innovative tools for worship leaders, pastors, and worshipers to worship the Lord effectually. It is hypothesized that worship leaders and pastors can reach worship participants through non-traditional means of worship.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

Section 1: Reasons to Consider Non-Traditional Means of Worship

The COVID-19 pandemic left many in a state of fear, anxiety, worry, and loneliness. It was and continues to be a life-altering characteristic of life. It has changed the lives of thousands, if not millions. Unfortunately, some more so than others. Individuals lost their jobs, their homes, contracted the COVID-19 virus, and in some cases lost their fight against the disease or recovered and were left with aftermath effects. It was and still is a time of great despair. Even churches experienced loss, fear, anxiety, and a sense of loneliness. Public gatherings were prohibited, and in some areas gatherings still remain restricted. It has put much stress on not only Christ-followers, but also on those who lead corporate worship. Churches and leaders within the church were not prepared technologically, mentally, or financially. With this in mind, it is detrimental to consider reasons to utilize non-traditional means of worship. Worship leaders must be prepared in the future to lead worship no matter the circumstances of the world.

The first reason to consider the utilization of non-traditional means of worship is the lack of technological knowledge and advancements in the worship environment. Many churches have closed their doors or have lost church members due to the lack of technological advancements and/or the absence of innovative, technological knowledge. From the beginning of the early church up into modern-day worship, public church gatherings have witnessed and experienced an array of advancements and innovations to worship. However, the application of technology in worship is considered relatively new. The graph below reveals an increase of technological uses within five years of technology and online format development:
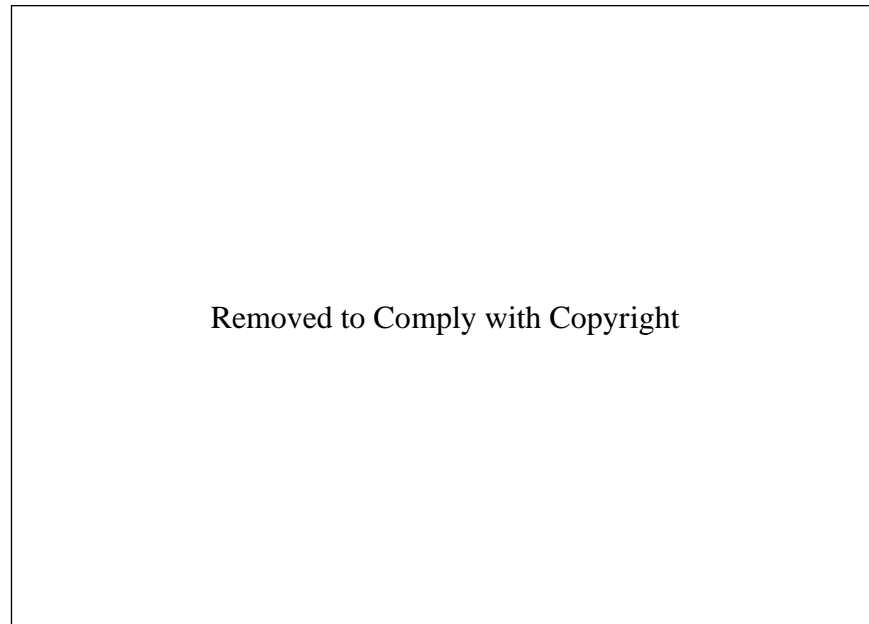
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Figure 1: Use of Technology in Worship[99]

Based on this graph, it is evident that the use of technology in congregational worship has

increased significantly in specific areas. The utilization of online formats, such as Facebook,

Podcasts, or Blogs has allowed worshipers to engage in worship in a new light. In addition, these

online formats have allowed worshipers to participate in worship from wherever they may be. In

general, the increase of technology and its use in gathered worship, has become necessary for

worship leaders to consider incorporating non-traditional means of worship into their worship

gatherings. In doing so, it can prepare their church as well as their church attendees for any

future hindrances to gathered, in-person worship services.

Second, worship leaders must consider using non-traditional means of worship due to the

mental and spiritual impacts on worship leaders and worshipers. Due to the pandemic,

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[99] Scott Thuma, "Virtual Religious: Technology and Internet Use in American Congregations" (Hartford Seminary, March, 2011, accessed March 5, 2021, http://www.hartfordinstitute.org/research/ technology-Internet-use.html).

worshipers and worship leaders have suffered a large amount of mental and spiritual stress. The

lack of human interaction and long-term isolation has left many struggling mentally and

spiritually. The graph shown below reveals a study of how individuals react when thinking about
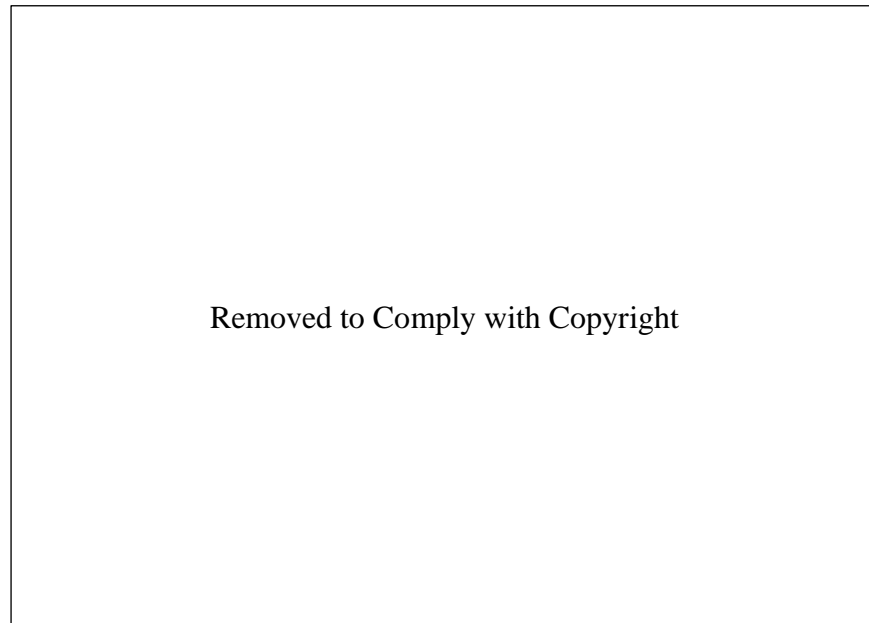
the COVID-19 outbreak:

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Figure 2: Americans Reaction to the COVID-19 Pandemic[100]

The above graph reveals that many have a physical reaction when thinking of the

COVID-19 pandemic. Some have felt lonely, depressed, anxious, and have even experienced

trouble sleeping. It is evident that the pandemic has created much worry for so many. Due to this

reaction, it is vital to consider means to support anyone's needs and everyone experiencing these

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[100] Scott Keeter, "People Financially Affected by COVID-19 Outbreak are Experiencing More Psychological distress than others" (Pew Research Center, March 3, 2020, accessed March 5, 2021, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/03/30/people-financially-affected-by-covid-19-outbreak-are-experiencing-more-psychological-distress-than-others/).

side effects of isolation. By considering non-traditional means of worship, worship leaders and worshipers can encounter a deeper connection mentally and spiritually with the Lord. The graph below also indicates how COVID-19 has influenced the mental health of individuals within only a week:

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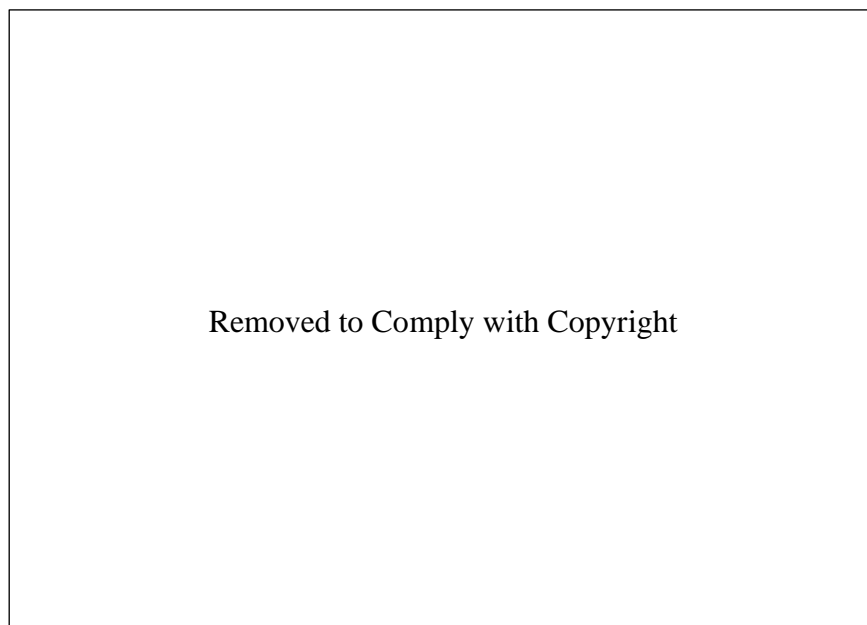
Figure 3: How COVID-19 has Influenced Mental Health[101]

Many individuals have experienced a great deal of stress or anxiety. In turn, this stress and anxiety led to a physical reaction, including trouble sleeping. When considering the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is evident that individuals have been significantly impacted. It is vital to consider non-traditional means of worship to provide support for worshipers and worship

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[101] David Frederick, "COVID-19 National Mental Health Study (Spring 2020)," (Chapman University, 2021, accessed March 7, 2021, https://www.chapman.edu/crean/research-centers/covid19-national-mental-health-study.aspx?utm_source=general&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=mentalhealthsurvey).

leaders to reestablish their mental and spiritual health. It is critical to consider methods and means in which to lead and provide worshipers and worship leaders to strengthen their mental and spiritual health. By leading worshipers and leaders to the cross through non-traditional means of worship, such as online devotional groups, believers can experience the love, support, and relationship needed in order to reestablish their mental and spiritual health amidst a pandemic. Having access to an online community while being isolated can benefit the mental and spiritual needs of those experiencing loneliness, depression, fear, or anxiety.

Worship leaders must also consider non-traditional means of worship due to the financial impact it may have on the church. Over the last several months, worship attendees' financial offerings have significantly decreased. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many lost their jobs or were unable to work due to the risk it may have had on an individual's health. Given the world's circumstances, worshipers looked into their finances and made a choice: continue to give and support their local church or place their offerings to the church towards their family's needs. *Church Production* magazine surveyed its audience on how technical ministries responded to the coronavirus. In this survey *Church Production* magazine looked at the offerings of church members and the decrease in those offerings as well as the effect the pandemic had on streaming services for churches. *Church* Production magazine states, "59% of churches surveyed were streaming before the coronavirus pandemic. However, of the 41% of churches who were NOT streaming, 84% said they are much more likely to start streaming as a result of the health crisis."[102] Due to COVID-19, many churches now see the need for streaming services. However, they have also noticed a decrease in their financial resources due to the decrease in giving. The

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[102] "How Are Churches Responding to COVID-19?," (*Church Production*, March 36, 2020, accessed March 7, 2021, https://www.churchproduction.com/daily411/how-are-churches-responding-to-covid-19/).

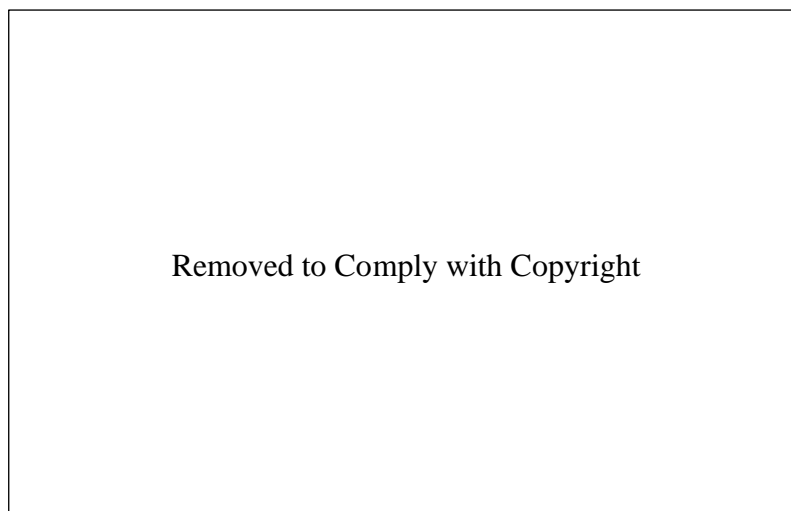graph below indicates the percentage of churches that reported giving declines from their church members:

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Figure 4: Churches that Reported Giving Declines[103]

Due to the decline in giving, churches experienced a drastic change in their financial resources, leaving them to either use their finances for technological streaming service advancements or close their doors.

In addition, many churches had to make a decision on which expenses took precedence over others. It was and continues to be a struggle for many churches during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the *Church Production* survey, "churches expect to largely maintain their spending or investment in technology for the rest of 2020. 32% - Expect little or no drop in spending or investment in technology for the rest of 2020. 47% - Expect a short-term drop, but none in the long term. 21% - Expect a significant drop."[104] This study was taken between March

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[103] Greg, Garrison, "Churches Turn to Online Giving as Collection Plates Gather Dust," (Advance Local Media LLC, April 28, 2020, accessed March 7, 2021, https://www.al.com/coronavirus/2020/04/churches-turn-to-online-giving-as-collection-plates-gather-dust.html).

[104] "How Are Churches Responding to COVID-19?"

seventeenth and the twenty-third of twenty-twenty. This data was taken early on in the pandemic, but it reveals that despite the shut-down the spending or investment in technology was expected not to change. However, as the months passed churches recognized the need for specific technological advancements, such as cameras, streaming equipment, lighting, microphones, audio mixing controls, video editing software, camera accessories, IMAG systems, intercoms, and content storage systems, in order to help them reach worshipers through non-traditional means. Overall, it is essential to consider the needs of worshipers and worship leaders when the world's circumstances drastically affect the church and how worshipers gather publicly.

<div align="center">Section 2: Background Research Findings</div>

In order to fully grasp how to incorporate and consider non-traditional means of worship amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, worship leaders must comprehend the meaning of worship, praise, thanksgiving, lifestyle worship. They must also consider what ideal worship looks like concerning biblical principles witnessed throughout the gospel. According to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, he lived His life according to the Great Commission. I followed and exuded both through the way He lived, taught, and lived those around Him. Like Him, worshipers and worship leaders must exemplify and live their lives according to His example. Intrinsically, worship leaders can lead and learn how to lead worshipers through non-traditional means of worship today.

<div align="center">Definitions: Worship, Praise, Thanksgiving, and Lifestyle Worship</div>

Worship

According to David Edwards,

> Worship happens when our hearts respond to God's heart. Worship happens when we pour out our souls to Him. Worship happens when we make it abundantly clear to Him that we know we cannot make it on our own—we need Him!...Worship is fluid, dynamic,

and unpredictable—because life is. We respond to God as we process the highs and lows of life on a daily basis. Worship becomes the catalyst whereby God manifests Himself in the midst of His people.[105]

Edwards' description of worship is one of utmost importance. Edwards reveals so many things throughout this passage. First, God is the one who calls His people to worship. Due to His love, mercy, and compassion, His people respond. It is not the people who initiate worship or begin the "conversation," it is God who initiates it. It is then through an individual's adoration towards the Lord Most High that He sees the relationship received and acknowledge; as Edwards proclaims it is the soul pouring out to Him, creating a "two-way street."[106] God designed it this way so that His creation can draw near to Him and He in turn will draw near to His people (James 4:8).[107]

Another facet of Edwards' definition of worship is that worship is fluid, dynamic, and unpredictable. He connects this definition of worship to life. There are fluid, dynamic, and unpredictable occurrences within each believer's life. At times, worshipers and worship leaders cannot control what happens around them or what affects them. With the COVID-19 pandemic in mind, life was and continues to be fluid, dynamic, and unpredictable. However, so is worship. Depending on the world's circumstances and how it may affect worshipers and worship leaders, worship and adoration to the Lord may be fluid, dynamic, and unpredictable. No matter the highs or the lows, God's people are compelled to worship fluidly, dynamically, and unpredictably.

Lastly, worship is a two-way street. God initiates worship and His people respond. God created humanity for relationships. He wanted to have a deep connection with His creation. From

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[105] Edwards, *Worship 365*, 25.

[106] Ibid., 27.

[107] Ibid.

the very beginning, God wanted to be in community. That is why He created Adam in the very

beginning. However, after creating Adam, God realized that he was alone. He did not believe it

was right to leave man alone. So, He took a rib from Adam and created a woman, Eve. God

recognized the need for relationship and created individuals who could come together to be the

Body of Christ. Edwards states, "[we] were created for a relationship with God, and the total of

our response to Him in that relationship is our worship. Our worship is lived out in how we

respond to God, His Word, and His will."[108] Overall, God is worthy to be praised and He is

worthy of relationship because He is the one who designed it. There are many more definitions

of worship, but these concepts and characteristics provide a good understanding of what worship

entails.

Praise

In addition to worship, praise is often used to offer adoration and love to the Lord.

Audrey Eccleston provides an excellent definition of praise: "'praise' is what we offer to God for

who He is/what He does despite how we feel, because our feelings change from time to time.

King David of Israel declares in Psalm 18:3 'I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be

praised, so shall I be saved from mine enemies.' Here, David recognized that when he called

upon God and uttered his praises, he felt safe and knew that his enemies could not hurt him."[109]

Here, Eccleston explains that praise is an offering to God for what He has done and what He

continues to do in the lives of many. No matter how a worshiper feels, God is always present,

ready to listen and accept the praises of His people. In the excerpt from Psalm 18:3, King David

proclaimed the Lord's name and praised Him even amid great strife. He knew that He felt safe

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[108] Edwards, *Worship 365*, 129.

[109] Eccleston, *Praise, Worship, and Thanksgiving*, 9.

and protected from His enemies' wrath with God. Like David, Christ-followers can rely on God and praise Him during the storm. Eccleston quotes Dr. David L. Robbins, "'Praise is the vehicle of faith that brings us into the presence and power of God' for there is no end to praising God; this is a lifestyle for the saints of God."[110] No matter where individuals are in life or how they feel, God is always present and is always listening. Through that praise, it is then praise that creates a "vehicle" of faith, bringing worshipers and worship leaders into the presence of God. If worshipers and worship leaders are to come into God's presence they must understand that there is no end to praising Him, for He is worthy to be praised.

Thanksgiving

Another term that must also be considered when incorporating and innovating non-traditional means of worship is thanksgiving. Eccleston writes, "[thanksgiving] is an expression of gratitude especially to God."[111] God has done and continues to do so much for His people. He has provided strength, resiliency, mercy, and salvation. Because He has provided all of these things, along with many more, worshipers should give Him thanks for all He has done. God made the decision to send His one and only Son to die for the sins of the world. He did this not only because He wanted a deeper relationship with His children but also because He loved them. Psalm 100:4-5 proclaims, "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations." His love is never ending and He remains faithful in His promises. God's love is witnessed all throughout the gospel story.

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[110] Eccleston, *Praise, Worship, and Thanksgiving*, 39.

[111] Ibid., 31.

Thanksgiving is witnessed in the life of Jesus Christ as well as many other biblical leaders. Like Jesus, worshipers and worship leaders must exemplify thanksgiving to the Lord, but they must also follow the example laid out by Him and other biblical leaders. In 2 Chronicles, the Levites offered their praise and thanks to the Lord. Soon after, the temple was filled with a cloud, signifying the presence of the Lord. It was the moment "[the] trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: 'He is good; his love endures forever.' Then the temple of the Lord was filled with the cloud... [For] the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God." (2 Chronicles 5: 13-13). The Levites recognized their need to give thanks to the Lord for all He had done for the Israelites. They chose to lead the people in thanksgiving. In response, the Lord filled the temple with His glory. It was His response to their offerings of thanksgiving. Eccleston states, "[if] we praise and thank God for the expected end, God will honor our faith in him because we align ourselves with His will and His Word."[112]

Lifestyle Worship

John 4:24 declares, "God is Spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." Observed throughout the gospel story, Jesus points worshipers and leaders to worship and offer praise and thanksgiving to Him in both Spirit and in truth. God desires to reveal His heart and His innermost feelings of love to His children so that they may experience His presence in their everyday lives. Without worship, lifestyle worship, Christ-followers will never be able to achieve this, because praise expresses a heart of faith and draws them nearer to His presence. Living out that worship within a believer's heart can allow them to enter His rest; enter into His

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[112] Eccleston, *Praise, Worship, and Thanksgiving*, 35.

peace and joy found in the Holy Spirit. God is looking for people who are willing to open their

hearts, allowing Him to speak life into His people. Figueiredo records, "[a] worshipper is one

who will honor God with his life in all he does and all he is, while expressing his love

unashamedly. He will give God the place of receiving the highest honor in his life by submitting

his all to God as his sovereign Lord."[113] Like Figueiredo proclaims, worshipers are those whom

worship in Spirit and in truth. They are the ones who live their lives dedicated to giving God

glory and placing Him above everything else.

Another aspect of lifestyle worship is being obedient and living a life of service. Living a

life dedicated to the Lord is central to worshipers and worship leaders' lives. It is what drives

them to be obedient and live a life of service to Christ. Worship, in this sense, "is not an act but a

lifestyle; it is a lifestyle of living with a continual open heart to the Father, and submitted to the

work of the Spirit in [worshipers lives]."[114] Worship is a daily lifestyle lived out. The word

Latreuo, in Greek means to serve or hired servant.[115] In Philippians 3:3, Paul writes to the church

of Philippi, "for we are the true circumcision, who worship [latreuo] in the Spirit of God and

glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh." (NASB). As Paul writes, worship is so

much more than offerings of praise and thanksgiving. It is a way of life; it is a part of the

worshiper's lifestyle. It is submission and obedience to the work of the Holy Spirit. As

worshipers and worship leaders, it is pertinent to serve God and willingly submit to the Holy

Spirit's leading all throughout their daily lives. Figueiredo exclaims, "[restraint] in our lives is as

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[113] Figueiredo, *Lifestyle Worship*, 73.

[114] Ibid., 78.

[115] Ibid.

much an act of worship as is obedience."[116] If worshipers and worship leaders are to worship not only in Spirit and in truth, but also with surrendered lives, they must understand these definitions of adoration to the Father. Only then can Christ-followers accept, acknowledge, and comprehend their roles amidst the COVID-19 pandemic; be a light in the darkness.

<div align="center">Ideal Worship and Biblical Principles</div>

When it comes to leading worship, worship leaders must consider the means by which worshipers praise the Lord, participate in worship, and encounter the Lord. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is evident that many struggled with their mental and spiritual health. People lost their way to the Lord due to not understanding the true meaning of worship, ideal forms of worship, and biblical principles of worship. The church was not prepared to guide worship participants to practice these things privately or publicly through non-traditional means of worship. With this in mind, worship leaders must prepare themselves for leading worship participants through non-traditional means of worship. If worship leaders fall short of their guidance, worshipers fall short of their calling to worship the Lord publicly.

Ideal Worship

There are many fundamentals to worship and many biblical principles that can help worship leaders effectively lead their church in non-traditional ways. When it comes to ideal worship, worship leaders must consider worshipers' needs and how they can recall the hope of glory amid an epidemic. In order to lead worshipers in non-traditional means of worship, worship leaders and pastors must identify why worship matters, why God's people have been called to worship, according to the Great Commission, and how they can serve the body of Christ by being a complete worship leader.

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[116] Figueiredo, *Lifestyle Worship*, 79.

Kauflin affirms, "The better (i.e., the more accurately) we know God through his Word, the more genuine our worship will be. In fact, the moment we veer from what is true about God, we're engaging in idolatry. Regardless of what we think or feel, there is no authentic worship of God without a right knowledge of God."[117] During the COVID-19 pandemic, many worshipers and worship leaders experienced some form of distance from God. Worship participants were either not attending online services or their churches were not providing them. Worship leaders and pastors were either struggling to incorporate and learn new means of reaching their church members or were struggling mentally and spiritually to reach participants.

This has affected their relationship with God, other church members, and hindered them from genuine offerings of worship to the Lord. This is why worship leaders must immerse in God's Word. Navarro writes, "[we] need to regain our confidence in the written Word of God. The written Word of God not only informs, it performs and transforms."[118] In the same way Kauflin stated, worshipers can veer from what is true, leading to idolatry engagement. If worship leaders are not immersed in God's Word, they may be falling short of God's proper knowledge, thus hindering them from leading worshipers in genuine, ideal worship. Worship leaders must reengage themselves in God's Word; "A worship leader who barely knows the Bible can't be a faithful worship leader."[119]

Worship leaders must not only dive into Scripture, but they must also recognize the needs of the church and worship participants. If worship leaders and pastors remain in the Word, they can engage worship participants in authentic worship. By diving into God's Word worship

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[117] Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 28.

[118] Navarro, *The Complete Worship Leader*, 142.

[119] Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 28.

leaders can rebuild their relationship with God as well as their spiritual health, allowing them to successfully lead and direct their church members in true adoration to the Father. McGee explains that "[the] responsibility to provide worshipful expressions, accessible and meaningful to the congregants, lies with worship leaders and pastors. Good pastoral leadership reflects an understanding of the needs of the flock and a willingness to provide spiritual and scriptural nourishment on an appropriate worshipful context."[120] Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, worship leaders had to reflect and understand the needs of their "flock." They needed to be willing to provide spiritual and scriptural nourishment in new, innovative and creative ways. For some worship leaders and pastors this task was more difficult than normal. It meant going outside of their comfort zones and overcoming their fears of COVID-19 to care for their worship participants.

Despite COVID-19, worship leaders and pastors must recognize the need and call to minister to their worship participants. By doing so, worship leaders can begin to comprehend how to successfully lead worship participants in authentic, non-traditional means of worship. According to the literature discussed, worshipers and worship leaders can offer ideal worship. However, in order for worship leaders and pastors to direct and lead worshipers in ideal worship through non-traditional means, they must comprehend and analyze their spiritual health. In addition, they must also recognize the needs of their "flock" or church attendees. Furthermore, worship leaders and worshipers, according to 1 Corinthians 14:1-5, must build one another up in faith; "But one who prophesies strengthens others, encourages them, and comforts them" (1 Corinthians 14:3). During the COVID-19 pandemic, worship leaders and worship need to build

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[120] McGee, "Serving the Body of Christ in Corporate Worship: An Apologetic for Embracing Multiple Styles of Music," 19.

one another and encourage one another to comfort each other. Many fear the outcome of COVID-19. But, by encouraging one another in ideal worship believers are demonstrating mutual edification; they are being "the body of Christ as they lead each other through 'real engagement with other believers in the context of mutual ministry.'"[121]

Biblical Principles

There are many biblical principles to consider when reaching worship participants through non-traditional means of worship. However, there are specific fundamentals that worship leaders and pastors and worshipers must obey. Worshipers and worship leaders must (1) understand the call to worship, (2) recall the hope of glory, and (3) recognize how to be a Great Commission worshiper amid a catastrophic event. These are simply a few of the many biblical principles Christ uncovers throughout the Bible. However, these three principles can guide worship leaders to effectively reach their congregants and help worshipers engage in worship through new innovative and non-traditional means of worship.

The first biblical principle to contemplate is understanding the call to worship. As stated by Whaley, "Worship is what we were made for. God created man because He wanted relationship. It's what He's about, and by now it must be clear that the way—the only way—to an intimate relationship with God is through worship...Worship is our expression of love to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, lived out in our daily lives."[122] As Whaley explains, God created humanity for worship. He wanted a relationship and so created humanity in His image. If worshipers are to truly encounter the Lord they must comprehend that they were called to have

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[121] McGee, "Serving the Body of Christ in Corporate Worship: An Apologetic for Embracing Multiple Styles of Music," 17.

[122] Whaley, *Called to Worship*, 333-334.

an intimate relationship with Him. However, to genuinely respond to God's revelation, worshipers and worship leaders must be broken in spirit, obedient, demonstrate personal integrity, and embrace love for others. Once these aspects of worship are exhibited, worshipers and worship leaders can have a deeper relationship with Him and amongst one another. It is how they can be connected despite the distance they have experienced during the COVID-19 outbreak. However, above all things, Christ-followers and leaders must "...love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5 NLT). This is worship that transcends all time, culture, and change; it is God's call to worship.[123]

Recalling the hope of glory is another biblical principle that worshipers and worshipers must reflect on when engaging in non-traditional means of worship. As COVID-19 struck, many churches witnessed a decrease in their attendance. Many people feared leaving their homes and lived a life in panic over what was to come. They lost sight of the Lord and lost sight of their faith in Him. Moreover, churches feared gathering in person for the fear of catching the deadly virus. Nevertheless, God is not a God of fear; He is a God of hope. 2 Timothy reads, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of sound mind" (1:7 NKJV). This is why it is detrimental to worshipers and worship leaders' lives to remember who God is and what His characteristics have revealed through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord, Jesus Christ. God did not give His children a spirit of fear, but rather of power and trust in Him. Ross encourages worshipers by stating that if believers worship and spiritual life is going to rise above this earthly existence, they will have to refocus their hearts and minds on God's holiness and glory.[124] The hope of glory must be reintroduced and recalled in order for Christ-

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[123] Whaley, *Called to Worship*, 337.

[124] Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 37.

followers to restore their hope and faith in Him. They must rely on Him to take away that fear, anxiety, stress, and fatigue. Only then can they truly recall the hope of glory and embrace the innovative, new, creative, and non-traditional means in which corporate worship occurs.

Lastly, worship leaders and worshipers need to acknowledge their roles as Great Commission worshipers. As stated before, the Great Commission is to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). Throughout the pandemic, it is apparent that many worship leaders, pastors, and worshipers felt that they could not fulfill or live out this Commission. They were scattered and unable to reach one another and worship the Lord congregationally. There were boundaries put in place: fear, anxiety, and structured in-person services. Looking back to the early church and Christians, they also experienced lack of structure in gathered meetings, fear, and in many cases persecution.[125] Today, many still experience persecution, however, in the case of COVID-19, many people suffered differently; they endured pain, fear, and even death of loved ones.

Nonetheless, in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak, worshipers, worship leaders, and pastors, have braved the COVID-19 pandemic. Yes, some struggled to influence congregants and struggled to find their way back to the Cross. However, because of their faith in Jesus Christ and the continuation of personal worship, they have persisted to fulfill the Great Commission. They became Great Commission worshipers; "a person who is so much in love with Jesus, so committed to worship of Jesus, and so devoted to being obedient to every command of Jesus that he simply cannot restrain himself from telling others about his incredible relationship with the

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[125] Wheeler and Whaley, *The Great Commission to Worship*, 30.

Son of God. A Great Commission Worshipper is equally committed to worship and evangelism."[126] It is clear through research findings that worship leaders and pastors endlessly spread the gospel's good news. The graph below indicates some research findings in regards to how worshipers interacted with and engaged in virtual, non-traditional worship:
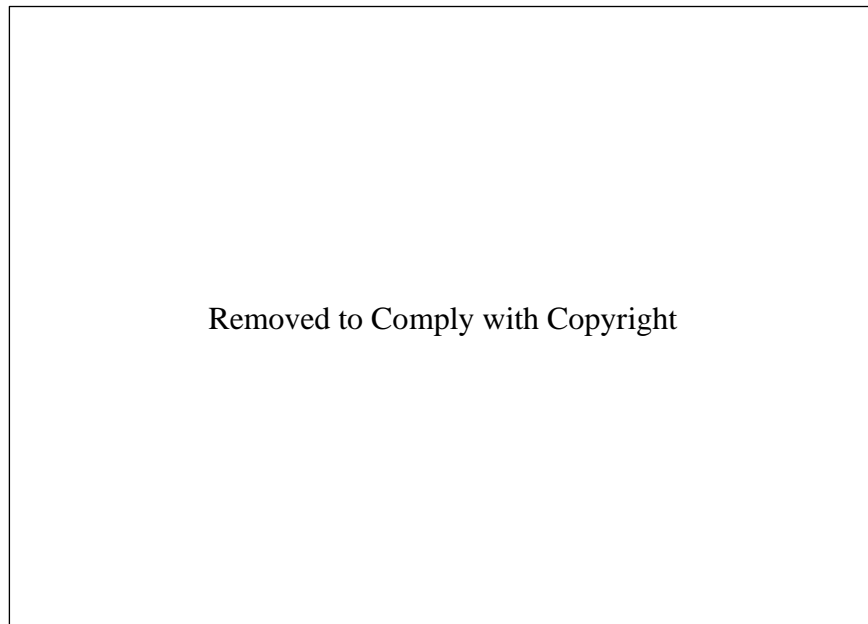
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Figure 5: Engagement in Digital Faith-Based Practices[127]

As seen above, many individuals, non-Christian and practicing Christians engaged in some form of digital faith-based practices. It is clear that worship leaders have fulfilled the Great Commission by sharing the gospel.

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[126] Wheeler and Whaley, *The Great Commission to Worship*, 30.

[127] "What Research Has Revealed About the New Sunday Morning," (Barna Group, 2020, accessed March 12, 2021, https://www.barna.com/research/new-sunday-morning/).

Each biblical principle can guide worship leaders to direct congregants to encounter the Lord with authenticity during an outbreak. Additionally, worshipers can comprehend how to respond to the call to worship, recall the hope of glory, and understand their role as a Great Commission worshiper. Jesus exclaims, "'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only'" (Luke 4:8). Worship is a calling upon believers' lives; worship the Lord above all things. If Jesus Christ decreed to praise the Father, then as His followers, they must also answer the call to worship Him. Offering praise, thanksgiving, and admiration to the Lord are biblical principles and calls to worship. By following these principles, worship leaders and worshipers can faithfully and genuinely worship the Lord through non-traditional means of worship.

<div align="center">Section 3: Non-Traditional Means of Worship</div>

Over the past several months, many worship leaders, churches, pastors, and other congregational leaders have strived to reach their worship participants through non-traditional means of worship. It would be an understatement to say church leaders have not experienced great struggle and strife through the COVID-19 months. They and their church staff have utilized evert resource they have available, but that wasn't enough in some cases. The circumstances of COVID-19 left them in financial, mental, and spiritual deficit. However, through this study, the researcher hopes to provide helpful tools to reestablish church leaders' Christian faith and church attendees' faith and hope. By studying biblical principles and similar historical occurrences, worship leaders can restore their hope in reaching worship participants through non-traditional means of worship. With this in mind, this section of literature findings and discoveries will reveal new, innovative, and creative means for worship leaders to engage worship participants in worship during impeded corporate worship.

During the COVID-19 pandemic many churches and leaders have searched for meaningful ways in which to engage their church members in worship. For several months they have attempted to find new and innovative ways to reach their worship participants. This included an abundant amount of research as well as overseeing and assessing their current financial resources. In doing so many churches either closed their doors or were unable to effectively fund specific resources to reach their worship attendees, resulting in a decline of church attendance. However, in some cases, many churches thrived. Many worship leaders and pastors had incorporated and utilized non-traditional means of worship, such as live streaming or prerecording their worship services for church members to watch at their convenience. By discovering these non-traditional means of worship, there is hope for struggling churches to overcome the hardships endured by the COVID-19 epidemic.

Many non-traditional means of worship can efficiently reach and engage worship participants in praises to the Lord. Non-traditional means of worship that will be discussed and have been found to be most helpful include: incorporating online giving, social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, online streaming services, whether it be prerecorded or livestreamed, technological advancements, comprising of audio and visual production enhancements, and lastly, virtual devotional groups. Every non-traditional means of worship can allow worship leaders and pastors feel confident in actively and successfully reaching out to and engaging their worship congregants in multifaceted, genuine worship.

One facet that can engage and reach worship participants through non-traditional means of worship is utilizing online giving. Many churches, pre-COVID, chose to allow time for worship participants to give offerings. Nevertheless, due to public gatherings' restrictions, many churches were unable to successfully and efficiently collect church offerings. As a result of the

restrictions put in place, churches had one option to protect their church members and themselves from possibly contracting the disease: allow worshipers to give offerings virtually. Many churches, especially smaller churches, were weary of or unprepared to set-up online giving. Ultimately, this resulted in a decrease in giving.

There were many other factors considered concerning the decrease in giving, such as an increase in layoffs. However, by not providing an online format for worshipers to give, it prohibited them from offering their praises and thanks to the Lord; it hindered them from offering their form of worship. This is why remote giving, especially amidst an epidemic, is essential; to provide an outlet for worshipers to fulfill any facet of worship in which God calls each individual to participate. Paul wrote, "[through] Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased" (Hebrews 13:15-16). Giving offerings to the church is a calling; it is a call to worship. Churches can no longer rely on passing the plate, bucket, or bowl to collect offerings. Providing an online, non-traditional means of offering allows worshipers a secure means of offering digital donations during COVID-19 and other catastrophic events. Fortunately, many technology companies, such as Pushpay, have developed a sophisticated tool for digital giving and a means automatic recurring giving.[128]

Similar to the use of online giving, social media has presented a wide array of outlets for worshipers to participate and engage in worship. Even though the information provided below is before the COVID-19 pandemic, it reveals an increase in the use of communication channels and non-traditional means of reaching worship participants:

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[128] "Updated Church Statistics During the Coronavirus Pandemic," (CDF Capital, March 22, 2020, accessed March 13, 2021, https://www.cdfcapital.org/covid19-church-statistics/).

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Figure 6: Most Important Communication Channels[129]

Based on the statistics above, communication channels have become and, to this day, continue to be a vital aspect in the lives of churches and/or non-profits. It is a means for worship leaders and pastors to connect worshipers to the Lord and His Word effectively. Estes declares, "...the recent rise of social-networking sites has created a whole new understanding...People disconnected by geography are closer than ever via developing social communities. The virtual world is radically transforming what it means to have friendships, to network, even to fellowship together."[130] The use of social media and social networks has permitted worshipers to engage in not only worship, but as Estes writes, to fellowship with one another. This is detrimental to worshipers and worship leaders' lives because fellowship has been very minimal. With social media and networking availability, worshipers can have that sense of communion with other worshipers.

Another means in which worship leaders and pastors can reach worship participants through non-traditional means of worship is through online streaming services. The statistics

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[129] Andrew Conrad, "10 Powerful Church Statistics on Social Media Use," (Capterra, March 13, 2018, accessed March 12, 2021, https://blog.capterra.com/church-statistics-social-media/).

[130] Estes, *SimChurch*, 206.

below, while they are dated, reveal insight as to how churches have made a large impact on

worshipers while incorporating Livestream and virtual opportunities to engage in worship:

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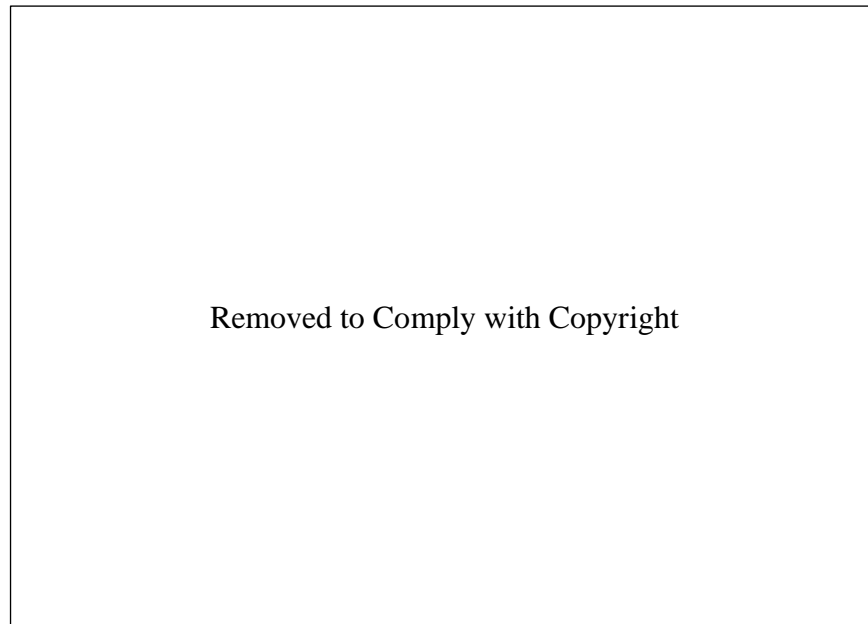
Figure 7: Impact of Livestreaming Services[131]

Looking over the statistics from the year twenty-sixteen, it is discernable that many churches

grew and impacted the lives of believers by providing online streaming services. Online

streaming services have allowed many online church visitors to experience the life that occurs

within the church and witness the Lord working through that church. During the COVID-19

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[131] Caroline Golum, "Should Churches Livestream," (Livestream, 2017, accessed March 13, 2021, https://livestream.com/blog/livestreaming-houses-worship-statistics).

pandemic, the use of Livestreamed services or prerecorded services invited new worshipers and reoccurring worshipers to experience hope and love amid dark times. By employing this form of non-traditional means of worship, worship leaders and pastors fulfill the Great Commission: to share the good news of the gospel story to any and all who seek the Lord.

In addition, worship leaders and pastors can reach worship participants by applying new technological advancements to their streaming services. Technological advancments can support the Livestreamed or prerecorded services as well as enhance the participation of worshipers online. The data below reveals the "anatomy of a live streaming system" and how worship leaders can reach worshipers:

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Figure 8: Helpful Live Streaming/Technological Advancement Systems[132]

Looking over the data and information presented above, worship leaders can effectively utilize new and innovative technology forms in their worship settings. Sweetwater and many other instrumental sites and stores deliver accessibility to worship leaders and pastors to effectively

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[132] Kent Morris, "Livestreaming Tips for Churches," (Sweetwater, March 27, 2020, accessed March 13, 2021, https://www.sweetwater.com/insync/live-streaming-tips-for-churches/).

reach congregants through Live Streaming systems. Some of these systems include: Quality light fixtures, microphones, cameras, video-switcher or streaming encoder, mixing controllers, graphic overlay systems like ProPresenter, Keynote, or PowerPoint, appropriate licensing for copyrighted works, and church website or social media platform. All of these systems can enhance the online worship experience. However, even though these enhancements enrich the online or virtual worship "experience," Jesus Christ must be honored above all else. Through these technological advancements, His Word is shared and people can continue to gather from a distance to sing His praises.

Finally, the last method in which worship leaders and pastors can incorporate non-traditional means of worship during an outbreak is through virtual devotional groups. Similar to the use of social media and networking, worshipers and worship leaders can develop a deeper connection and fellowship with one another by gathering together virtually in small devotional group gatherings. Not only does this create a sense of fellowship, but it can also allow worshipers to encounter the Lord through gathered times of prayers, singing, listening, and discussion. All of these elements make up a worship service. However, between the restrictions of gathered worship and in-person community, these elements have been hard to display adoration to the Father Whom created and calls for congregational times of worship. In all, by providing these forms of gathered worship, Christ-followers can encourage one another as well as reach out to one another when prayers are needed.[133] It lets worshipers grow in their faith and feel connected to a body of Christ that so many during the COVID-19 outbreak have confronted. As worship leaders and pastors, it is imperative to consider and incorporate this form of non-

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[133] Hutchings, *Creating Church Online: An Ethnographic Study of Five Internet-Based Christian Communities*, 250.

traditional worship so that worshipers can continue to grow in their relationship with one another and the Father.

As a result of COVID-19 and the restrictions put into effect, churches must find ways to connect with their church members and communities. By adapting to digital means of outreach and discipleship, worship leaders can prolifically engage their congregants in authentic and significant worship to the Lord. I the midst of a viral disease, digital and virtual means are the safest and most efficient way to abide by government restrictions. It is also the best means for worship leaders to support worshipers during troubling times. There is no way to know the long-term effects of the coronavirus, but worship leaders and pastors can do their very best to reach out to their congregants in hopes of restoring corporate worship at a safe distance.

Section 4: Implications to Incorporating Non-Traditional Means of Worship

There are many non-traditional means of worship that are currently available and accessible to worship leaders, pastors, and worshipers. It allows worship leaders and pastors to engage worshipers in congregational worship even though corporate gatherings are not taking place in-person. Non-traditional means of worship also allows worshipers to have a sense of fellowship with others and feel connected despite the hinderance of gathered worship; it allows Christ-followers to continue participating in meaningful congregational worship. It is apparent that many churches have chosen to incorporate new and creative means for which worshipers can express adoration to the Lord over the years. Because the modern world has become for advanced in technology it seems fitting for churches to get on board with incorporating these means in which to engage worshipers. Even though there are many ways for worship leaders and pastors to motivate and involve their worship participants, some implications come along with incorporating innovative, non-traditional means of worship. It is critical to consider these

implications for worship leaders and pastors to integrate novel expressions of worship successfully.

There are some implications to contemplate regarding including non-traditional means of worship during an epidemic. Some statistics reveal the inferences to integrating non-traditional and technological advancements in worship. However, when it comes to the COVID-19 outbreak, there is not much data that uncovers the impacts of incorporating new, non-traditional means of worship. With that being said, the research findings discovered still disclose similar implications that affect churches during an endemic. Some inferences that worship leaders and pastors must take into consideration when attempting to integrate non-traditional means of worship consist of: financial impacts and church budget in the middle of a pandemic, insufficient knowledge of technological and virtual advancements and how to utilize them to reach worship participants sufficiently, and acknowledging the fears, anxiety, and sense of loneliness that comes along with new changes. There are many more implications to ponder, but these are a few of the most influential when it comes to public gatherings' sudden shutdown.

The first implication to think about is the financial impacts of integrating new and innovative means for worship. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, worship leaders, pastors, and other church leaders experienced a major shift in financial offerings and donations. Financial shifts are due to the coronavirus's impact on Christ-followers' lives, their jobs, and their livelihood. Due to many losing their jobs, they prioritized their finances and revisited their financial budgets. The prioritization of finances drastically impacted the church's livelihood, especially smaller and more rural churches. As a result, churches also had to revisit their spending and church budget regarding spending their financial resources. Since worshipers could not gather in-person, churches had to reach worship participants in innovative ways, including

virtual and online means of worship. New innovations then led to churches needing to purchase

technological and virtual advancements in order to engage their worshipers successfully.

However, because of the decline in financial offerings, as stated before, many churches had to

close their doors; they were not prepared for the financial burden that COVID-19 would cause.

Because so many churches suffered, modern day churches and leaders need to consider these

implications if something similar happened again in the future. With this in mind, worship

leaders can begin to prepare and set aside a budget and financial resources that can assist them if

another outbreak or shutdown were to occur.

Another repercussion many churches may face while assimilating non-traditional means

of worship during an epidemic is the scarcity of knowledge when it comes to utilizing

technological and virtual advancements. Being thrown into the unexpected has had detrimental

impacts on so many, especially churches. In some cases, churches were prepared to move

corporate worship strictly to online, virtual services and create online spaces for fellowship.

Nevertheless, other churches were not prepared or had the technological resources or knowledge

to virtually run their worship services. For those churches, it created a lot of struggle and much

hardship. They could not effectively communicate and reach out to their worship participants. As

worship leaders, pastors, and those in church leadership positions, it is vital to consider

technological advancements and how they can benefit worshipers who cannot attend in-person.

There was no way to predict the coronavirus's impact on churches and those whim

attended. It is uncharted territory that no one has ever experienced in the modern-day virtual and

technology filled world. Nevertheless, worship leaders and pastors can now understand the

significance behind incorporating non-traditional means of worship. Many may veer from

incorporating the use of technology and virtual or livestreamed services. Although, to reach

worship participants worldwide, it has become a necessity within their communities. This is why it is also pertinent to hire or delegate a church leader or member to learn how to utilize new and creative means of worship. By establishing or choosing an individual to learn how to use technological and virtual program systems, worship leaders and pastors can feel more confident in engage worship participants in genuine worship to the Lord. The main point for considering to seek knowledge about technological and virtual advancements is to direct and guide churches to provide a means for worshipers to continue gathering in corporate worship.

Conclusively, one of the last implications worship leaders, pastors, and other church leaders must deliberate is the fear, anxiety, and sense of loneliness many may feel when choosing to implement innovative means of worship. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic it is evident that many, including church leaders, have experienced a sense of fear, anxiety, and loneliness. However, when it comes to incorporating new means of worship and reaching worship participants, there is a new and different feeling of fear, anxiety, and loneliness. There is the fear of not knowing how to utilize virtual, online, or livestreaming services to engage worshipers. There is the feeling of anxiety not knowing if incorporating innovative and non-traditional systems in worship will positively impact or hinder gathered virtual worship. Then, there is the feeling of loneliness; worship leaders do not feel that connection to their congregation and worshipers in return do not feel they are gathering in community with one another.

Online, virtual, or livestreamed worship services are not the same as physically gathering in person, but it can still be corporate worship. Online worship feels different: it feels as if worshipers are watching or observing someone worshiping or worshiping God alone. However, livestreamed worship is still considered corporate worship. Even though worshipers and worship

leaders and pastors may not be able to hear or see their brothers and sisters in Christ sing, pray, or worship amongst each other, they are still singing the same words, they are still praying alongside one another, and they are still coming together, lifting their voices and their praises mingle before God's throne. Worshipers are still united in their praises. The fear, anxiety, and loneliness may still linger, but those praises and offerings of thanksgiving are still coming together in corporately gathered worship. When worshipers bow their heads in prayer, the pastor's voice becomes the mouthpiece of joined hearts (Acts 4:24). Like Hebrews 12:22-23 proclaims, that the "innumerable angels join congregations in festal gathering...and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect" (ESV). There is hope and a sense of peace knowing that each person is still coming together in that fear, anxiety, and loneliness to worship the Lord. Despite the implications of fear, anxiety, and loneliness, that non-traditional means of worship places on congregants, worshipers and worship leaders and pastors can recognize that they are not alone. Rather, they are coming together as one voice.

Chapter 5: Conclusion, Relationship of the Results to the Literature Review, Limitations,

Considerations for Future Study

Conclusion

Worship is an expression that God asks of each individual. It is a means in which God's children can communicate with Him and have relationship with Him. That is all He wants; to have a relationship with His people. However, due to COVID-19 and the many restrictions in which churches had to follow, corporate worship seemed hindered. Many circumstances hindered the worship of congregants. Nevertheless, despite the shut-down and restrictions for in-person gatherings, worship leaders, pastors, and many other church leaders chose to adapt and shine a light in what seemed like the darkest of times. They discovered new and innovative means for which to reach worship participants and engage them in authentic worship. Even though God's people could not gather in-person, it did not mean they could not gather virtually through other non-traditional means of adoration to Him. Though many churches struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic, many continued to strive, uplifting other congregations as well as the lives of believers and unbelievers. Through these non-traditional means of worship, worship leaders continued to lead and direct worshipers in safely distanced, communal praises to the Father.

Through this study, worship leaders and pastors can learn to reach and effectively lead worship participants in non-traditional means of worship. No one expected or predicted the drastic impacts that the coronavirus would have on believers' lives and the lives of worship leaders and pastors. There was no way to prepare churches financially, mentally, spiritually, or technologically before the shut-down. However, now that worship leaders and worshipers have experienced the circumstances of COVID-19, they now know how to prepare corporate worship

for future events. In all, this research suggests that worship leaders can effectively lead and reach worship participants through non-traditional means of worship.

<div align="center">Relationship of the Results to the Literature Review</div>

The literature reviewed provided insight into how worship leaders can reach worship participants through non-traditional means of worship. Many things were discovered, revealing the number of technological advancements churches underwent before the COVID-19 shutdown. Furthermore, the literature reviewed also revealed non-traditional ways for worship leaders to engage worshipers, more specifically, through virtual and online means. Many churches had considered these new, innovative, and creative ways to involve and include worship participants in a different and, in some cases, deeper context. As the analyzed literature revealed, many worshipers have or are continuing to struggle to engage in and participate in worship. It may be a multitude of reasons, but one cannot access engaging resources not provided by their local churches.

This has become apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic and has raised many church leaders' questions. Gathered, in-person worship was prohibited. As a result, many were prohibited or isolated from attending a corporate worship service of any kind. As the literature divulged, this problem of reaching worship participants through non-traditional means of worship is not new. In fact, it is something that has been around since churches began to incorporate new ways in which to involve worship participation. The only difference from the literature analyzed and the results from discovered is that the circumstances are different. Before, public worship gatherings in the United States had not been excluded. Instead, they were welcomed and invited to incorporate new means for worship to the Lord. However, preceding the COVID-19 outbreak, some churches took it upon themselves to not engage in innovative

means for worship. They did not choose to implement and integrate new technological advancements into their worship services.

In regards to traditional and non-traditional churches, there was not necessarily a need to incorporate new technological or non-traditional means for worship in the church. However, as of recent events, churches began to stumble; they were not prepared to move their worship services online. They were not prepared to engage with worshipers through virtual means. They were not equipped to lead congregants musically in worship and praise to God. Accordingly, those churches stumbled and fell. However, as explained on the limitations section of these final thoughts, there are not many studies currently that reveal the tragic impact the pandemic had among churches, worship leaders, and those they led in worship.

Upon looking over the results and the literature review, it is evident that there are many succeeding relationships and associations to one another. One being the realization of incorporating new technological advancements in worship services. Throughout the literature reviewed, it is apparent that many church communities have chosen to implement new technologies in their worship services. However, it was also discovered that many churches have also chosen to forego those innovations and to incorporate new changes at their own pace. When it comes to the results or findings discovered after the studies were analyzed, it is seeming that worship leaders and pastors struggled during the pandemic to engage worshipers if these technological advancements had not been applied. There is a connection to the literature review and the results with this in mind. Churches that had not made those technological changes and innovations to their worship services and gatherings were struggling, but churches that had taken the time to budget and incorporate these changes were thriving. There are many more factors to

consider, but the relationship between the literature review and the results reveal the impact those decision had amongst churches.

Another affiliation between the results and the literature review is that worship, no matter what is a calling from God. Psalm 105:1-4 proclaims, "[give] praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Look to the Lord and his and his strength; seek his face always." Worship is a calling from God and as discovered in the literature review, it endures throughout the years. The literature review analyzed the biblical principles and brief definitions of worship and different adoration forms to the Lord. Based on the results and findings over non-traditional means of worship, it is obvious that these fundamentals still ring true. Amid the pandemic, churches, worship leaders, and pastors had to engage their worshipers through a completely non-traditional means of worship. Despite the many barriers they faced, worship leaders and pastors adapted and attempted to learn an evolve with the world's circumstances. These non-traditional means of worship were discovered and incorporated to continue to answer the call to worship the Lord.

One last correlation between the literature review and the results is that no matter how worship is expressed, it must be expressed with authenticity and the believer's heart truly wanting to dive deeper in their relationship with the Lord. Looking back to the literature review, worship is an authentic and genuine act from the heart of God's children. It is their way of giving thanks to Him. It is their way to glorify Him above anyone else. However, as also uncovered, worship is expressed in many ways. It is expressed through prayer, singing, listening, or taking the time to fellowship in community with one another. It is a means in which worshipers grow in their relationship to the Father and to the brothers and sisters God placed all around them.

However, worshipers must honor the Lord with a humble and surrendered heart. The results of non-traditional means for worship reveal that these acts of worship are evident and expressed through the lives of those gathering in distanced fellowship. Worshipers express thanksgiving, praise, adoration, and admiration in many different ways. This is why it is vital to consider how worship leaders can reach worship participants through non-traditional means. It is a way for Christ-followers to engage in community and surrendered praise to the Father.

The literature review showed that worshipers have chosen to express their worship authentically, but differently. Through the COVID-19 pandemic it is plain to see that worshipers continued to do so and worship leaders have attempted to lead their congregants. However, some churches and leaders could not direct their churches successfully. This is why it is imperative to consider and understand the relationship between the literature review and the results and recognize a need for non-traditional means of worship and how worship leaders can successfully be prepared to lead worshipers in those methods of admiration.

Limitations

After researching and discovering how worship leaders can successfully engage worship participants in non-traditional means, it is apparent that there are still some limitations to ponder. The shut-down of the entire country surprised everyone. No one had predicted or could predict the longevity that COVID-19 would have on the lives of believers and the church. Because there was no one to predict or prepare for this massive definiteness, churches were not financially prepared, nor were the lives of God's people. This is just one of the many limitations that impacted many lives. However, when it comes to the research aspect of finding means for which to reach worship participants in non-traditional ways, some drawbacks hinder further exploration.

One limitation to this research is that there is not enough investigation regarding the impacts the shut-down had among churches, worship leaders, and the lives of worshipers. Due to the shut-down, many churches were not prepared for the drastic impact it would have on their finances. In addition, many did not foresee the prolonged existence in which the world would be compromised. Because many did not foresee the impact COVID-19 and the short amount of time in which people witnessed these changes, there are not many studies or statistics to prove the severe force it had upon churches or the lives of those in the church. Some statistics show the shift from in-person worship gatherings to virtual worship gatherings. However, there is not enough data to reveal the spike in use of non-traditional means of worship amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, there is not an abundance of collected data over the amount of churches that had to close their doors. These types of statistics, graphs, and data collections would have helped further research and discoveries of how to reach worship participants through non-traditional means of worship. Nevertheless, due to the prolonged effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is not much research or many that have taken the time to research the impacts it has had on churches, the lives of worship leaders, and the live of worship congregants.

Another limitation to this research is the means in which the research was investigated. Using literature as a research method was helpful and provided insight into how worship leaders could engage worshipers through non-traditional means of praise to God. However, because there is a limited amount of resources and statistics impacting churches, worship leaders, and worshipers during an epidemic, the qualitative research method may have hindered further findings and discoveries. If the research method had included a more quantitative approach, such as the use of interviews, there may have been more data and research results discovered to help

and direct worship leaders to connect with worshipers in non-traditional ways. Utilizing this research method may have provided a deeper understanding of the impact COVID-19 had among worship leaders, churches, and those they served.

<div align="center">Considerations for Future Study</div>

Similarly mentioned in the limitations section of this study, the research explores pre-existing and current literature and data collections regarding non-traditional means in which to reach worship participants amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This study was analyzed through a qualitative lens; however, the data and findings did not go into as much depth as the researcher may have predicted or would have foreseen. Based on the observations and the limitations of the research, it is evident that more research needs to be had before the researcher can properly investigate and share means for which worship leaders and pastors can effectively reach worship participants. As discussed before, there is not much research or data to indicate the essential need for non-traditional means of worship amid an epidemic. In the past leading up to COVID-19, many churches were incorporating new and innovative technologies to enhance and engage worshipers worldwide and within their local communities that were unable to attend physically. Nonetheless, there is no evidence of how or why worship leaders need to reach worship participants through non-traditional means of worship. This is why it necessary to consider recommendations for futures studies and research.

As briefly explained in the limitations section, future research should include qualitative and quantitative studies. Doing so can provide a greater range of findings and, more importantly, help support worship leaders and pastors in leading their congregations through non-traditional, innovative, engaging, and meaningful worship to the Lord. With the investigative use of qualitative study, worship leaders and pastors can learn from past experiences and learn to

incorporate new, technological advancements in their worship services. Technological advancements can provide an engaging environment for worshipers of all generations. With the incorporation of quantitative studies, worship leaders and pastors can discover ways to grow their congregations and fully involve worshipers to offer authentic praises to the Lord.

Also, utilizing a quantitative approach can help gather data to support non-traditional means for worship. There is not much data or statistics to reveal the necessary need to incorporate non-traditional means for worship. By taking the time to conduct interviews, of course with IRB approval, more data can reveal and further answer the questions presented within this investigative study. Questions such as, (1) What aspects of worship can be explored to reach worshipers online? (2) What types of outlets or means can be utilized to reach worshipers when power, internet, or technology is unavailable? (3) Where and how can people experience worship within their homes? (4) Does someone have to lead worship, or can it be self-led? (5) What is a current ideal setting, or can become an ideal setting for alternative worship methods? Some of these questions have been answered. However, due to the lack of literature over innovative means for worship during an epidemic, it is vital to consider interviews and a more in depth understanding of what church leaders may be experiencing or had experienced with the outbreak of COVID-19.

Much more work and much more research to be done over this topic to better support worship leaders and pastors in reaching worshipers and guide worshipers to engage in and participate in corporate worship fully. The need to incorporate non-traditional means for worship should be investigated further and should be considered a dire need if there is another shutdown. No one can foresee if another outbreak of any kind will impact the lives of worship leaders, pastors, and worshipers. However, with God's hope and preparation and implementation of non-

traditional means for worship, worship leaders and pastors can feel confident and hopeful in their ability to impact and involve the worship of congregational participants positively. Non-traditional means for worship should continue to be investigated.

Final Thoughts

In order for the church to guide worshipers in authentic worship amid worldly circumstances effectively, they must be given directions and means to implement new, innovative, and effective ways to reach worship participants. Even though public gatherings have been prohibited it does not mean that corporate worship cannot continue. Similar those in the early church, worship leaders must discover news ways in which to reach worship participants. Worship is a call from God and no matter what, must endure. James 1:2-4 affirms, "[count] it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect an complete, lacking in nothing." No matter the trials or tribulations believers face, they must remain steadfast in their worship, in their faith, and in their relationship to the Lord. As COVID-19 persists to reign, worship leaders and pastors must continue to reach their congregants through non-traditional means of worship. Despite the pandemic's continuation, there is need for hope. Worship leaders can successfully reach worship participants and engage them in gathered, corporate worship. They must trust in Him and continue to share the good news of the gospel.

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