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Andrews University
College of Arts and Sciences

HYMNEO: THE MUSIC IN MINISTRY

MUHL 698 Project

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Music in Music Ministry

Presented to
Karin Thompson, Committee Chair
Adriana Perera
Charles Reid

by

Jamila Patrice Sylvester

July 21, 2020

INTRODUCTION

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” — John 3:16 KJV

Arguably one of the best-known verses in the Bible is John 3:16. A quick glimpse of those seven little letters and numbers spelling out John 3:16 and, like the first four measures of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, immediately people know what you are talking about. It matters not if they are faithful church-going believers or unbelievers, people know – or do they?

In the 2009 live-streamed college championship football game between the Florida Gators and the Oklahoma Sooners, Gators quarterback Tim Tebow wrote John 3:16 in his eye-black.¹ This small gesture, during the game, prompted 94 million people to Google just what John 3:16 was. Exactly three years later, during the 2012 NFL playoffs, Tebow again wrote John 3:16 in his eye-black. During the game, the crowd went wild with amazement over Tebow.

Afterward the Broncos PR representative, Patrick said to Tebow with excitement,

“...do you realize what happened?...”

“It’s exactly three years later from the day that you wore John 3:16 under your eyes...”

“...I don’t think you realize what happened. During the game you threw for 316 yards, your yards per completion were 31.6, your yards per rush were 3.16, the ratings for the night we’re 31.6, and the time of possession was 31.06 . . . and during the game, 91 million people Googled John 3:16 and it’s the number one trending thing on every platform.”²

The thought of millions of people having to Google John 3:16 gave me cause for pause. Could it be true that many people have no clue what John 3:16 is? This once treasured and household

¹ Biblica StaffBiblica, “How John 3:16 Became the Best-Known Bible Verse in the World,” Biblica, February 19, 2019, <https://www.biblica.com/articles/john-3-16/>.

² “Tim Tebow’s Shocking Story About John 3:16 ‘Coincidence’ Goes Viral,” CBN News, January 8, 2018, <https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/entertainment/2018/january/tim-tebow-s-shocking-story-about-john-3-16-coincidence-goes-viral>.

verse, today, has to be Googled. The story of quarterback Tim Tebow and John 3:16 tells the powerful impact of visible actions by influencers within their sphere. This story also gives a glimpse into the reality of the post-Christian³ world today.

METHODOLOGY

As a music minister of God, living in this Tebow John 3:16 world, there are questions that must be asked in order to better understand how to best share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Questions which include the following: Are people in the United States of America (USA) abandoning their religious beliefs? What relationship does the USA population have with the Bible or Jesus? What can help to influence the way the Bible is understood and taught? Most importantly, how can a music minister educate a new generation of believers in Jesus Christ?

To explore these questions, this paper will first survey the USA religious landscape. Second, it will recount the influence of a few historical figures on the biblically ignorant through worship music. Third, it will demonstrate how the organization Hymneo, a music ministry, can continue to span the gap between the biblically knowledgeable Seventh-day Adventist Church and the post-Christian USA population.

To analyze the various aspects of Hymneo and its history, the Active Theory Method⁴ will be utilized. In addition, it will present Hymneo's contributions and uniqueness within the Seventh-day Adventist worship construct. Lastly, it will explore Hymneo's success, areas for improvement, and future opportunity.

³ John O'Sullivan, "Our Post-Christian Society." *National Review*. National Review. December 15, 2013, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2013/12/our-post-christian-society-john-osullivan/>.

⁴ Donna Kain and Elizabeth Wardle, "Activity Theory: An Introduction for the Writing Classroom," (Academia, n.d.), https://www.academia.edu/493321/Activity_Theory_An_Introduction_for_the_Writing_Classroom.

USA RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

Research often serves to present new ideas, assist in identifying problems, and appropriate new solutions; it therefore renders new frameworks to guide actions and thoughts. To better understand the post-Christian population, this section will explore the concept of religious abandonment within the Tebow John 3:16 United States of America.⁵ This religious abandonment can be detected in the early 1990s when the USA population began to shift towards no religious affiliation, “none,” or “nothing in particular.” In 1991, the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) study showed 6% of the USA labeling themselves as “none.” By 2009, a Pew Research Center survey revealed that number had leapt to 17%. By 2012, PRRI showed it had risen to 20%, then in 2017 the number rose another 5%. Finally, Pew’s survey returned with 2018-2019 numbers at 26%+ of USA adults claiming no religious affiliation or identity.

Secular research confirms the findings of Pew and PRRI, when in 2009 the Census Bureau found that ~77% (176 million) of adults identified as Christians. By comparison, today there are ~164 million adult Christians, which is ~65% of the population. The number of unaffiliated religious people in the USA grew by about 30 million from 2009 to 2019.⁶ The “none” now represent the single largest religious group in the USA.⁷

⁵ Michael Lipka, ed., “In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace,” Pew Research Center’s Religion & Public Life Project, December 31, 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Robert P Jones et al., “Exodus: Why Americans Are Leaving Religion-and Why They’re Unlikely to Come Back,” PRRI, September 22, 2016, <https://www.prri.org/research/prri-rns-poll-nones-atheist-leaving-religion/>.

The Mass Exodus from the Church

Answers to the question why so many are leaving the church and now claiming no religious affiliation or non-Christian faiths, can be found in the PRRI studies. With the exception of Mormonism, which has held steady at 2%, other major religions have increased incrementally. Between 2009 and 2019, non-Christian faiths rose from 5% to 7%. Those USA citizens included in the increase consist of 2% Jewish, 1% Buddhist, 1% Muslim, 1% Hindu, and 3% who express their religious standing as “spiritual.”⁸

The Pew studies continue by demonstrating 74% of USA citizens, age 50 and under, not raised in a religious environment have maintained that status. 62% of USA citizens say they left their religious beliefs before they were 18 years old, with another 29% leaving between the ages of 18 and 29. Out of the 62% that left before the age of 18, 60% say they stopped believing the religious teachings, 32% admit their family was not highly religious in their youth, and finally 29% say it was due to the negative or poor teachings and treatment of the lesbian and gay community.⁹

2019 PRRI studies showed 39% of young adults, ages 18-29, are religiously unaffiliated, which is three times the rate of seniors at 13%, ages 65 plus. Only 10% of young adults in 1986 claimed no religious affiliation compared to 39% in 2019. The young adults of 2019 are approximately four times more likely to identify as religiously unaffiliated than those who were born just one generation before them.

⁸ Michael Lipka, ed., “In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace,” Pew Research Center’s Religion & Public Life Project, December 31, 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/>.

⁹ Ibid.

USA's Interaction with the Bible

Research indicates USA citizens are leaving their religious beliefs behind; however, religious or not, many claim to engage the Bible. Barna defines engagement as interacting with the Bible outside of the church setting by various means, such as watching, listening, praying, reading, or any other format. Barna's 2018 research showed ~ 48% of USA citizens claim to be Bible users. The 48% is broken down in the following manner:¹⁰

- 14% engage their Bibles on a daily basis
- 13% engage their Bibles multiple times a week
- 8% engage their Bibles a couple of times a week
- 6% engage their Bibles once a month
- 8% engage their Bibles 3 to 4 times throughout the year

Barna explains why USA citizens engage or don't engage their Bible. For those who engage their Bible, Barna shows 66% of USA citizens are curious to know what the Bible says. Out of the remaining 34%, 19% are not curious at all and 15% are indifferent. For those who do engage their Bible, two out of five expressed results of faith engagement. Faith engaged means, more loving behavior towards others, generosity with time, generosity with energy or financial resources, a greater awareness of their need for God, and a sense of connection to God. Overall, Barna deduced 58% USA adults believe the Bible has transformed their lives.

In conclusion, research reveals USA citizens are abandoning Bible engagement practices and their religious beliefs, resulting in a mass exodus.¹¹ People are unapologetically and openly

¹⁰ "State of the Bible 2018: Seven Top Findings," Barna Group, July 10, 2018, <https://www.barna.com/research/state-of-the-bible-2018-seven-top-findings/>.

¹¹ Michael Lipka, ed., "In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace," Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project, December 31, 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/>.

leaving Christian churches, with devastating effects.¹² When USA citizens engage in the Bible, however, they express transformation.¹³

Conversely, when people only open their Bibles three or four times a year, biblical ignorance proliferates, contributing to the “none” category. The need for reaching and activating the unbeliever is at an all time high. It is the job of ministers and the church body to understand the problem of biblical ignorance and address it. One way history has proven to move the hearts of people towards God is through music. In the section to follow, this paper examines the influence of music and more specifically the role worship music plays in leading people to God.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND WORSHIP MUSIC

Music Within Life

Music operates in everyday life as a form of communication, socialization, creativity, education, and pleasure. Music is an expression of current culture and religion.¹⁴ In music's most original form it was functional, taking place in a hum or whistle during work or celebration.¹⁵ The very essence and makeup of music is intrinsic, attractive, influential, and always speaking to the various aspects of human life. For this reason, religious leaders use music for reaching and teaching their congregations. One author, Jeremy Montagu, states music is “sound that conveys

¹² Catholicism and Protestantism are experiencing a great deal of loss in their church associated affiliations. Today only 43% of the once 51% in 2009, of the US adult population identify with Protestantism. While 20% of the once 23% from 2009 identify with Catholicism. Agnostics, which only used to make up 3% of the population in 2009, now make up 5% of US adults. (Pew, 2019)

¹³ “State of the Bible 2018: Seven Top Findings,” Barna Group, July 10, 2018, <https://www.barna.com/research/state-of-the-bible-2018-seven-top-findings/>.

¹⁴ Jeremy Montagu, “How Music and Instruments Began: A Brief Overview of the Origin and Entire Development of Music, from Its Earliest Stages,” *Frontiers* (May 23, 2017), <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2017.00008/full>.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

emotion.”¹⁶ Victor Hugo defines music by stating, “music expresses everything that cannot be said with words and cannot remain silent.”¹⁷ Coupled with text and rhythmic harmony, music is a powerful influencer which operates in and outside the life of religious people groups.

Worship and Music

The role of music in worship supports the development of a personal relationship with God. A relationship with God is based on personal knowledge and an experience with Him. Worship music functions as a teacher, a method of communication, and supports the expression of personal emotions.¹⁸ Ellen G. White points out that “music is one of the most effective means of impressing the heart with spiritual truth.”¹⁹ According to the dictionary, worship is the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity.²⁰ Worship as described in the Bible is a response to the Creator, who He is, and all that He has done. Through biblical engagement a follower can see the loving character of God. As one grows in knowledge, a personal relationship with God develops and the natural response is worship. As worship takes place, “we are changed neurobiologically and characterologically to become like what we admire, worship, and spend time watching and assimilating.”²¹

Paul Waitman Hoon further explains that worship is something done rather than something watched. It is a dialog between people and God, rather than a one-way speech by a leader to the congregation. Worship involves all our faculties rather than just the auditory sense,

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Victor Hugo and Marva A Barnett, *Victor Hugo on Things That Matter: A Reader*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 12.

¹⁸ Terri L Johnson et al., “Worship Styles, Music and Social Identity: A Communication Study,” *Journal of Communication and Religion*, July 2010, 144-174.

¹⁹ Ellen Gould White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903), 168.1.

²⁰ “Worship,” Merriam-Webster Dictionary (Merriam-Webster, Incorporated), accessed March 29, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/worship>.

²¹ Tim Jennings, “The Design Laws of God,” Come And Reason Ministries, September 5, 2019, <https://comeandreason.com/index.php/en/blogs-main/664-the-design-laws-of-god?highlight=WyJ3b3JzaGlwII0>.

this is vital and what is frequently missing.²² In *The Worship Architect*, Constance M. Cherry agrees with Hoon, expounding on the idea of dialog saying,

Ultimately worship is a conversation between God and God's chosen people, there's a mutual exchange, a holy dialogue, an invested sharing back and forth and worship. The reciprocity inherent in a true worship experience is a beautiful thing in which to participate, it is a living, vital conversation, not a religious program... To worship is the experience of encountering God through the means that God usually employs, a conversation built on revelation and response... True worship is never one-sided. It is not a matter of worshipers being preached at while they sit passively, hearing about God; nor is it one of forcing God to endure our wordiness and the little performances that we designed to entertain God as if the success of worship depends on us.

When it comes to worship, it is imperative to understand it is an experience where human beings express themselves to God.²³

In his book *The Integrity of Worship*, Hoon writes, “church music is often turned into mood music. People are exhorted to sing too loudly or too softly; Christian joy is equated with fortissimo volume, and Christian peace with quivering humming; or the God who is as a consuming fire is dissolved into an organ tremolo.”²⁴ Hoon’s statement clarifies why music in the church must operate as something more than just a mood fitting the bias of its members.

While individual bias has an impact, it is impossible to ignore the many factors that influence the expression of worship music.

The Influences on Church Music

People, culture, tradition, and the Bible are the four deciding factors that govern the practices of church music. Of the four, the lead influencing factor is people. Music in the church

²² Paul Waitman Hoon, *The Integrity of Worship: Ecumenical and Pastoral Studies in Liturgical Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1978), 39.

²³ Viviane Haenni, “The Colton Celebration Congregation: A Case Study in American Adventist Worship Renewal 1986-1991” (dissertation, Andrews University Digital Library, 1996), 300-350.

²⁴ Paul Waitman Hoon, *The Integrity of Worship: Ecumenical and Pastoral Studies in Liturgical Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1978), 43.

has always been determined and affected by the ability, attitude, and knowledge of its people. These people are broken into four categories: musician, minister, educator, and congregation. Respectively, the first three categories intentionally or inadvertently vie for the attention of the fourth. To see this more clearly, the following section will briefly review the role music church has played in attracting and influencing the congregation. The section will begin with the biblical origin and influence of worship music from the Old Testament, which points to its use in communication, worship, and praise to God.

The Old and New Testament Influence on Christian Worship Music

Historians can only conjecture which came first, instrumentation in the form of beating and patting, or the vocalization of songs.²⁵ William Rice, author of *A Concise History of Church Music*, expresses his belief that vocal music came first, and instrumental music was added later as a support.²⁶ The Bible shares information about origins of music practices within the Hebrew, Israelite, and Jewish context. When simply considering the Pentateuch, which supplies context for the rest of the Bible, the first musician is mentioned in Genesis 4:21.²⁷ Jubal, the father of instruments, provides the first insights into musical influence. This text indicates the significance of music in the early stages of humanity. However, this first reference to music does not explain the purpose of music. The next time the Pentateuch mentions music is Genesis 31:27²⁸ in the encounter between Laban and Jacob. There, for the first time, a purpose and use of music can be seen within home life and festivities. Later the Pentateuch tells of the songs Moses and the

²⁵Jeremy Montagu, "How Music and Instruments Began: A Brief Overview of the Origin and Entire Development of Music, from Its Earliest Stages." *Frontiers*. Frontiers. May 23, 2017. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2017.00008/full>.

²⁶William C. Rice, *A Concise History of Church Music* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1964), 10.

²⁷"...Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe..."

²⁸"...with song, with tabret, and with harp."

Israelites sang after crossing the Red Sea, followed by Miriam and a chorus of women who sang in celebration of their Egyptian deliverance.²⁹ Both Miriam and Moses' story point to the use of music in spontaneous celebration and worship to God. Later in the book of Numbers, trumpets are used to sound an alarm and gather the Children of Israel. The final account of music in the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy 32, witnesses Moses receiving the first God-given song as a means of educating the Israelites in His statutes and laws. Music in the Pentateuch seemed to be an act of celebration through daily life, spontaneous expression, praise, worship and adoration towards God. The knowledge of the Pentateuch has acted as a guide for future purposes and ideologies within musical thought and practices that are still influential today.

The Old Testament expands the use of music through multiple accounts of daily life, celebratory events, religious services, and festivals. However, the expression of music crescendoed during the time of King David. The main author of Psalms, David, provided music and musical thought for generations to come. Tim Dowley, author of *Christian Music: A Global History*, alludes to the fact that Psalms, for Israelites, were the “main lyric”³⁰ of worship. Dowley indicates literary and liturgical Israelite, and later Jewish, music history is located in the Psalms. The Israelites were first introduced to music as a systematic and scientific art during the time of King David.³¹ 1 Chronicles 25:1,7-8 and 2 Chronicles 29:25,³² exemplify the use of music by

²⁹ Exodus 15:1, Exodus 15:20-21

³⁰ Tim Dowley, *Christian Music: A Global History* (London, United Kingdom: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2018), 22.

³¹ Carl Engel, *The Music of the Most Ancient Nations, Particularly of the Assyrians, Egyptians, and Hebrews, with Special Reference to Recent Discoveries in Western Asia and in Europe* (London: W. Reeves, 1929), 323.

³² And he stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, harps, and lyres, according to the commandment of David and of Gad the king's seer and of Nathan the prophet, for the commandment was from the Lord through his prophets.

David and the chiefs of the service also set apart for the service the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who prophesied with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals... The number of them along with their brothers, who were trained in singing to the Lord, all who were skillful, was 288. And they cast lots for their duties, small and great, teacher and pupil alike.

King David, the prophets, and services to create order. The whole of the Old Testament lays the foundation for the understanding, practices and purposes of worship music.

As the reader moves into a study of the New Testament, its writings affirm the use of music by encouraging believers in the same practice and purpose expressed in the Old Testament. The Apostle Paul encourages believers in Ephesus to sing, as a way of teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul understands music creates unity and forms relationships, which speaks directly to music as a form of communication. Paul echoes Deuteremic and Psalmic teachings, expressing that congregational singing is a way to edify and strengthen new believers, in praise, joyful song, thanksgiving, etc.³³ Examples of this can be found in passages such as 1 Corinthians 14:15-17, 26 which tells “every believer” to “sing to each other.” Colossians 3:16 also encourages believers to “sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.” Additionally, the Lukian account features four canticles, which “ hold a unique place both in the canon of Christian Scripture and in the life of the Christian Church. They are set at the heart of the Scriptures because of their literary proximity and unique poetic response to the event to which all of the Scriptures point – the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.”³⁴

The Old and New Testaments lay the foundation for history’s worship music practices and purposes. With a biblical foundation laid, the next few sections of this paper will use scholarly resources to concisely highlight important topics in worship music history. It will focus on a handful of individuals that have influenced worship music’s development. These sections will focus on how each individual advanced worship music based on the need for present truth.

³³ Ephesians 5:19-21; James 5:13; Acts 16:25; Romans 15:9

³⁴ Evangeline Kozitza, “A Hermeneutical Harmonic: The Four Canticles of Luke’s Gospel as a Symphony of OT and NT Theological Themes” Thesis, (Thesis, Baylor University, 2014): 1, https://baylor-ir.tdl.org/bitstream/handle/2104/9005/KOZITZA_THESIS_FINAL%25201.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

This short history will demonstrate why Hymneo's ministry is needed in the development of worship music as it relates to today's present truth.

Present Truth and Church Music History

Present truth is new light and current duty for a specific generation. It is literally and exactly what it means: it is the truth given by God to His people for that present time. Pillars of the Seventh-day Adventist church, James and Ellen White, explained present truth by writing, "The church has ever had a present truth. The present truth now, is that which shows present duty, and the right position for us..." "Present truth is present truth, and not future truth, and the Word as a lamp shines brightly where we stand, and not so plainly on the path in the distance."³⁵

In the history of worship music, composers and lyricists complemented the message of present truth through their songs, through musical style or text. Each of the people represented in the following section demonstrate how the songs they wrote complemented and advanced the reformational teachings of their time. These figures include Martin Luther, Isaac Watts, Frances Crosby, and Larry Norman. The methods used by these historical figures have inspired the practices and principles of the world and more specifically the organization Hymneo.

Martin Luther's Music Philosophy

As a German theologian, professor, musician, composer, and priest, Martin Luther (1483-1546), was a formative and influential figure during the 16th-century Protestant Reformation. Luther rejected several Roman Catholic Church practices and teachings. He taught

³⁵ James Springer White, "The Present Truth | July 1, 1849," *The Present Truth* 1, no. 1 (July 1, 1849): 1, <https://adventistdigitalibrary.org/adl-367774/present-truth-july-1-1849>.

sound present truth from biblical doctrine which focused on salvation, God's grace, and eternal life through faith in the redeemer Christ Jesus. Luther is known for his disputes with the Roman Catholic Church which he expressed through his Ninety-five Theses and translating the Bible into the German vernacular. The present truth message spread through his sermons and music were influential throughout the Protestant Reformation. While history shows Luther's sermonic speeches as life changing for the people of his time, one of his greatest and most memorable contributions for the church was the transformation and inclusivity of congregational music. Ever since the decrees of the Council of Laodicea,³⁶ congregational music had been excluded from the worship services and replaced by canonical singers. Due to this, worship music became largely unintelligible by the common folks who were unable to comprehend the singing because it was sung in Latin. Luther argued against the church, stating that music had to be intelligible and in the common vernacular. He understood the importance of music, its construction, and its purpose.

Luther's hymns were composed specifically for the involvement of the congregation. Luther's methodology for music was characterized by the use of contrafacta (such as popular folk tunes), strophic form, and a variety of lively rhythms. Using this method, Luther created impressionable and jubilant music which remained on the hearts of the congregants. Luther taught that music should be written in such a way that it would provide a joyful expression concerning the gift of salvation. Adding congregational singing to his messages helped ingrain the teachings of justification by faith in Christ. This methodology kept present truth at the forefront of the people's minds which in turn diminished the teachings of the Roman Catholic

³⁶ Kevin Knight, "Synod of Laodicea (4th Century)." *Church Fathers: Synod of Laodicea (4th Century), Canon 15*. New Advent, 2020. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3806.htm>.

Church. *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, is a classic hymn that acts as a perfect example of Luther's tune writing, joyful expression, and Christ-centered text. It is also a hymn which is still sung in many churches today.

Robin Leaver spells out Luther's major musical practices and beliefs. Leaver shares a statement drawn from Luther's letter to Ludwig Senfl in 1530 which states:

I plainly judge, and do not hesitate to affirm, that except for theology there is no art that could be put on the same level with music, since except for theology [music] alone produces what otherwise only theology can do, namely, a calm and joyful disposition.... This is the reason why the prophets did not make use of any art except music; when setting forth their theology they did it not as geometry, not as arithmetic, not as astronomy, but as music, so that they held theology and music most tightly connected, and proclaimed truth through Psalms and songs.³⁷

Out of this Leaver draws several points which Luther makes, namely his love for music and his distaste for fanatics who condemn music. Luther asserts that "music is a gift of God and not of man," "it creates joyful hearts," and "drives away the devil." Music also "creates innocent delight by destroying wrath, unchastity, and pride."³⁸ Luther's estimation of the importance of music can be clearly understood in his belief that music is second to none but theology.

In Leaver's discussion, Luther's contribution to the development of congregational worship influenced the move away from Gregorian chant as the primary foundation of sacred song. Collective song with voices raised to God helps to make the gospel personal and real for people as they are able to practice positive reinforcement in the reciting of Psalms and Biblical present truths. Just as Luther used common language, lively rhythms, and popular folk tunes to

³⁷ Robin Leaver, "Luther on Music," *Lutheran Quarterly* 20 (2005), <http://www.lutheranquarterly.com/uploads/7/4/0/1/7401289/timelineleaver.pdf>

³⁸ Ibid.

connect the people to the Word of God, so Hymneo similarly seeks to use the cultural commonalities of its time to share the present truth of its era.

Isaac Watts's Poetic Bravery

Like Martin Luther, Isaac Watts (1674 – 1748), was a force to be reckoned with in his devotion to the Lord.³⁹ Unmarried and with no children of his own, Watts dedicated his life and work to God. An Englishman, Watts is best known as a theologian, hymn writer, and for his studies in logic. Watts wrote for all classes of readers, instructing learners in science, literature, poetry, and divinity.⁴⁰ His writings and sermons have been widely published and studied over the centuries. Yet it is his hymns that have maintained a steady presence on many Protestant church platforms. Regarding the richness of Watts's hymn contributions, James Montgomery states,

Every Sabbath, in every region where his native tongue is spoken, thousands and tens of thousands of voices are sending the sacrifices of prayer and praise to God in the strains which he prepared a century ago. Probably no poetry in the language has been more widely read or warmly prized.⁴¹

At age of 18, Watts began to compose hymn texts after being challenged by his father, Isaac Watts Sr. After a church service when young Watts voiced his critical concerns about congregational singing, his father responded by challenging Watts to give the congregation something better to sing. The succeeding week Watts presented his first composition to an enthusiastic and responsive congregation. Every week, over the course of two years Watts provided new hymns per the congregation's request. Those hymns were later compiled into a

³⁹ Isaac Watts, *Improvement of The Mind* (New York, NY: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1885), 10.

⁴⁰ Joshua E. Wills, *Dr. Isaac Watts: The Bard of the Sanctuary: His Birthplace and Personality; His Literary and Philosophical Contributions; His Life and Times, Hymnology and Bible*. (N/A, 1914), 49.

⁴¹ Kenneth W. Osbeck, *101 More Hymn Stories*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1985), 51.

1707 song book entitled, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. Many scholars in hymnody acknowledge his song books as some of the first real English hymnals.⁴²

Committed to religious nonconformity, Watts's hymns shook the Anglican and Calvinist religious congregations of his time. Watts wrote hymns that expressed personal experiences and departed from the Psalms. Calvinistic music practices, which preferred the Psalms of David as text, were the norm in English churches. However, Watts became concerned with the grim and ponderous singing of psalms. Watts expressed his thoughts on hymn praises when he wrote:

While we sing the praises of God in His church, we are employed in that part of worship which of all others is the nearest akin to heaven, and 'tis pity that this of all others should be performed the worst upon earth. That very action which should elevate us to the most delightful and divine sensations doth not only flat our devotion but too often awakens our regret and touches all the springs of uneasiness within us.⁴³

As a solution the body of Watts's work focused on disseminating the present truth in a new and engaging manner. An example of this was found in his popular songbook, *Divine and Moral Songs for Children*, inspired by the joys of children and used to educate them. In 1715 this hymnal sold over 80,000 copies.⁴⁴ Finally, in 1789 Watts published another popular songbook entitled, *The Psalms of David: Imitated in the Language of the New Testament, and Apply'd to the Christian State and Worship*. This work thrilled congregants as it showcased a present truth from the New Testament and the Psalms of David. Through his exceptional writing skills and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Watts wrote over 600 hymns and several songbooks for the men, women, and children of England.⁴⁵ Some of Watts's more popular hymns that are still

⁴² Ibid..

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Thomas Gibbons, *Memoirs of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D.* (London: Hardpress Publishing, 2012.), 230.

⁴⁵ Mark Galli, *131 Christians Everyone Should Know*. (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2000), 155.

widely sung today are *Joy to the World*, *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, and *We're Marching to Zion*.

Pioneers like Watts often encounter opposition when presenting their progressive ideas. Frequently they are confronted by traditionalists and naysayers. The progressive creativity and artistry of Watts's music ministry excited many but scandalized others. Though successful with congregants in his creative present truth music ministry, Watts often found himself at the forefront of criticism. An instance in 1789 points to this fact, when Reverend Adam Rankin exclaimed to a congregation of Presbyterians, "I have ridden horseback all the way from my home in Kentucky to ask this body to refuse the great and pernicious error of adopting the use of Isaac Watts's hymns in public worship in preference to the Psalms of David."⁴⁶ Another case linked Watts to the splitting of a church in Bedford, England, when a man complained of Watts's hymns saying, "Christian congregations have shut out divinely inspired Psalms and taken in Watts's flights of fancy."⁴⁷ History has not kept a record of Watts's reactions to these various statements; however those who knew him painted him habitual in the practice of inoffensive, gentle, humble, and modest responses.⁴⁸

An important lesson music ministers can take away when reviewing Isaac Watts's life is his willingness to go against traditionalist and fulfill God's calling. He did this by producing music that in its present time engaged and taught the Word of God. Watts fueled the present truth message of Jesus Christ to congregants through music ministry. Isaac Watts, like Martin Luther, understood the importance of singing a new song, according to the Word of God.

⁴⁶ Robert Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul Special Edition: 150 of the World's Greatest Hymns Stories*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 35.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Music ministers ought to follow in the steps of Isaac Watts by repackaging the present truth of the Bible in current styles for today. Music ministers must speak and compose in the common language and musical style to appeal to multiple generations. Doing so will remove barriers and build generational bridges between music and the gospel of Jesus.

Frances Crosby: The Queen of American Hymnody

Frances (Fanny) Jane Crosby (1820–1915) was a Protestant composer, lyricist, poet, teacher and mission worker. Her life was one constantly surrounded by political and social unrest. Living in the post Civil War and Protestant culture, Crosby set her mind to the evangelical piety of religious experience, mission, testimony, and complete devotion to Jesus. Throughout her life, Crosby wrote about many different experiences, which emerged from her inner city mission experiences. She was known to have mingled with both the rich and poor, completely unimpressed and unmoved by money or fame. Crosby's mixed company allowed her to write present truth messages, without a bias, which resonated with many denominations and/or people groups. Though blind and very petite, Crosby worked tirelessly to spread the gospel of Jesus not just through her hymn writing but also through the outpouring of her lifestyle as daily ministry. Crosby could daily be found at camp meetings before and after the USA Civil War supporting the abolitionist and later evangelical movements. Her work as a music minister complemented the Abolitionist and Wesleyan/Holiness movements, and the ministries of Robert Lowry, Ira Sankey, and Dwight Moody. She was also known to be found at the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), Seamen Missions, or the Salvation Army in lower Manhattan, New York. "Aunt Fanny," many would call her, was never too far from a prayer or song leaving

her lips to encourage and share present salvific truth to the young boys, prostitutes, trolley car operators, or seamen on the ports.⁴⁹

The motto of her life and Christian living can be found in her first composition at the age of eight, which states:

O what a happy soul am I! Although I cannot see,
I am resolved that in this world, Contented I will be;
How many blessings I enjoy, That other people don't!
To weep and sigh because I'm blind, I cannot, and I won't.⁵⁰

In the Lord, Crosby maintained a resilience that dispelled any possible hopelessness due to her blindness. Crosby believed it was a blessing and not a curse that she should not have one of her senses, stating:

It seemed intended by the blessed Providence of God, that I should be blind all my life;... But I assure you I mean it—every word of it; and if perfect earthly sight were offered me to-morrow, I would not accept it.⁵¹

I verily believe it was His intention that I should live my days in physical darkness, so as to be better prepared to sing His praises and incite others so to do. I could not have written thousands of hymns—many of which, if you will pardon me for repeating it, are sung all over the world— if I had been hindered by the distractions of seeing all the interesting and beautiful objects that would have been presented to my notice... while I am deprived of many splendid sights I have also been spared the seeing of a great many unpleasant things. The merciful God has put His hand over my eyes, and shut out from me the sight of many instances of cruelty and bitter unkindness and misfortune, that I would not have been able to relieve, and must simply have suffered in seeing.⁵²

⁴⁹ Edith Waldvogel Blumhofer and Maria M Chow, "Fanny Crosby and Protestant Hymnody," in *Music in American Religious Experience*, ed. Philip Vilas Bohlman (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 215-231, <https://archive.org/details/musicinamericanr00bohl/page/230/mode/1up?q=earthly+sight>, 222-224.

⁵⁰ Fanny J Crosby, *Memories of Eighty Years* (Boston, MA: J. H. Earle & company, 1915), <https://archive.org/details/memoriesofeighty00cros/page/26/mode/2up?q=happy+soul>, 26.

⁵¹ Fanny Crosby, *Fanny Crosby's Life Story: Autobiography of a Christian Poet, Lyricist and Mission Worker Blind from Infancy* (Pantianos Classics, 2019), 7-8.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 8-9.

Content with who she was in life and dedicated to complete service to Jesus, Crosby was a present truth minister to all who crossed her path. Sharing the gospel in a manner that met the needs of the people to whom she was ministering: to the prostitute *Just as I am*, to the prisoner *Pass Me Not Oh Gentle Savior*, to the sick or war-stricken *Rescue the Perishing*, and so many more.⁵³

By the end of the 19th century, Crosby was a household name known for a life centered around sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. As the ‘queen of American hymnody’ and the ‘mother of modern congregational music,’ Crosby wrote nearly 9000 hymns, publishing over 200 under pseudonyms.⁵⁴ Crosby’s method was unique in that her lyrics came readily. However finishing each hymn was a more tedious process, as she was very particular in choosing a tune to fit the text. She believed the tune needed to fit in style and form to best convey the message of her written work.

Reflecting on Crosby’s life, her efforts to fulfill the gospel are clearly visible in her body work. Like a chaplain, she practiced a ministry of presence. Music ministers can take a page out of Crosby’s book by mingling with people from all walks of life, then compose music that fits their particular situation to point them to Jesus. This method of songwriting can provide inspiration for true music ministry. Crosby’s type of evangelism stepped outside denominational order and stepped into the path that Jesus trod. Jesus focused on the present need of the people rather than the outward appearance of the church. By writing lyrics and choosing tunes that she

⁵³ Delores T. Burger, *Women Who Changed the Heart of the City: The Untold Story of the City Rescue Mission Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1997), <https://archive.org/details/womenwhochangedh00000burg/page/86/mode/2up?q=earthly+sight>, 87.

⁵⁴ Fanny Crosby and Robert Lowry, “Bells at Evening and Other Verses,” Internet Archive (New York and Chicago: The Biglow & Main Company, December 31, 1897), <https://archive.org/details/bellsateveningot00crosiala/page/6/mode/2up?q=fanny%2B>, 14.

felt matched the purpose of the message being put forth, Crosby changed the lives of all who crossed her path.

Larry Norman: The Father of Contemporary Christian Music

In the 20th century Larry Norman (1947-2008) is one whom many consider the father of Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) and the Jesus Music pioneer.⁵⁵ Norman was not a leader who held the same qualities as seen in the previous three music ministers discussed above. Unlike Luther, Watts, and Crosby, Norman was not a scholar in biblical studies, nor a pillar of unwavering faith and peace in Jesus. Born and bred in the United States of America, Norman was a songwriter, singer, record producer, and label owner. He released over one hundred albums without ever having learned music notation.⁵⁶ Best known for his song *Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music?* he experienced scandal and backsliding, but he clung to the saving hand of Jesus. With long blonde hair and a motorcycle, many would call Norman a hippie and a rocker while others would argue he was straight as a razor.⁵⁷

Norman was raised in a black Pentecostal and Baptist church where he developed a love for upbeat and highly engaging music. Through his highschool years Norman was an exceptional student and found community in a small band, The BackCountry Seven. Unfortunately in college Norman did not achieve the same academic success, losing his scholarship and flunking out after one semester. Norman's academic failure was not aptitude related but reflected his preference for the joy of making music.

⁵⁵Hevesi, Dennis. 2008. "Larry Norman, Singer of Christian Rock Music, Dies at 60." The New York Times. The New York Times. March 4. <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/04/arts/music/04norman.html>

⁵⁶ Richard D. Barnet, *The Story Behind the Song: 150 Songs That Chronicle the 20th Century*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2004), 206.

⁵⁷ David W. Stowe, *No Sympathy for the Devil: Christian Pop Music and the Transformation of American Evangelicalism*. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 34-57.

By 1966 Norman was on the road to stardom. His secular music journey was detoured when Norman encountered the Holy Spirit and gave his life to God. Norman took a job writing musicals for Capitol Records and shared the gospel of Jesus in the streets of Los Angeles.⁵⁸ From 1966 to 2008 Larry Norman opened the floodgates for Christian music through his compositions and various acts of ministry. Norman wrote music for musical theater and opera such as *Love on Haight Street* and *Lion's Breath*. He also produced top selling albums such as *Upon This Rock, Street Level*, and *Home at Last*. Due to his popularity, Norman was able to start his own record label, *Solid Rock Records*. Beyond his professional music, Norman would freely share the gospel with people in his halfway house, buy clothes and food for new believers, and volunteer in coffee shop outreach ministries.⁵⁹

Though he was highly active in evangelism, most religious groups did not recognize him as a music evangelist. Interestingly enough, he did not view himself in that manner either. In an interview, Don Gillespie, challenged Norman's belief that he was not an evangelist to which Norman responded,

I haven't been given the gift of evangelism. The Bible says there are different gifts of the Spirit, but that the Spirit gives gifts to whom He will. So apparently you cannot tell the Spirit what gift you want. The Spirit gives gifts according to what God wants for your life. Before I realised that, I used to pray for God to make me an evangelist. I used to give altar calls, and very few people would stand up and come forward immediately as I spoke, but then I would find out later that a lot of people became Christians because of my concerts. So I got the message. I am content to be what God has made me instead of desiring to be Billy Graham or Arthur Blessitt.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Ben Beilharz, "Here I Am, Talking about Jesus Just the Same: Larry Norman at 60." *The Longing: Here I am, Talking About Jesus Just the same: Larry Norman at 60. The Briefing: An International Evangelical Monthly*, January 30, 2008. <https://web.archive.org/web/20080720083535/http://matthiasmedia.com.au/briefing/longing/5087/#f8>.

⁵⁹ Ben Beilharz, "Here I Am, Talking about Jesus Just the Same: Larry Norman at 60." *The Longing: Here I am, Talking About Jesus Just the same: Larry Norman at 60. The Briefing: An International Evangelical Monthly*, January 30, 2008. <https://web.archive.org/web/20080720083535/http://matthiasmedia.com.au/briefing/longing/5087/#f8>.

⁶⁰ Steve Sutherland, "Don Gillespie Interviews Larry Norman Part 1-3." *New Music Express*. New Music Express, 2005. <http://www.nme.com/larrynorman/word24.htm>.

Like the progressives Luther and Watts, Norman constantly found himself in a contentious relationship with the traditional Christian world. Norman was often maligned for attempting to make rock music Christian. Norman countered their arguments by stating,

Well, if I'm a Christian, it's Christian music. All music written by a Christian should be as integrated as everything else done by a Christian. Every moment a Christian act, a Christian statement, a Christian extension of his life or his beliefs. I'm a Christian, and every song I've written is a Christian song to me. Even if it's just about a love relationship between a man and a woman, how can it be anything but a Christian perspective of a Christian relationship. I try to write about love or anything else in accordance with my beliefs and the fullness of my life as given to me by Christ. I don't happen to do any disco songs about 'Come Back To My Pad, Baby'. I don't think that most love songs on the radio are about love as I understand love. Disco love is not part of God's love.⁶¹

For Norman, Christianity was holistic and in his music he attempted to show how every aspect of the Christian life ought to be brought into the subjection of God's will, not man's. However, Norman's style of Christian pop rock shook the traditional hymn loving church. For this reason Christian leaders shunned Norman and even attempted to block his influence from their members.

Like Watts before him, Norman was displeased with the lyrics and melodies of modern music. In one interview, Norman expressed his thoughts, stating, "My primary emphasis is not to entertain. But if your art is boring, people will reject your message as well as your art."⁶² In reference to the Christian music of the 80s, he said, "sloppy thinking, dishonest metaphors and bad poetry...[I have] never been able to get over the shock of how bad the lyrics are."⁶³ Norman also commented that for many years, several of his albums were banned from the Christian bookstores,

⁶¹ Steve Sutherland, "Don Gillespie Interviews Larry Norman Part 1-3." *New Music Express*. New Music Express, 2005. <http://www.nme.com/larrynorman/word24.htm>.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

My music was different to what people were used to when I started out. They said, ‘This music cannot be Christian music because we don't like it. We are not going to sell it in our Christian Bible Bookstores because we don't think it's the kind of music we want our children to listen to.’ So 'Upon This Rock' was banned for several years. 'Only Visiting This Planet' was banned, 'So Long Ago The Garden' was banned.⁶⁴

Though initially dismissed by Christian bookstores, Norman is credited for his impact on Christian music as a producer, businessman, and musician. John J. Thompson stated, “it is certainly no overstatement to say that Larry Norman is to Christian music what John Lennon is to rock and roll or Bob Dylan is to folk music.”⁶⁵ Several artists acknowledge Norman as the man who helped to usher in the Jesus Movement and Culture,⁶⁶ which were the incubation stations for Hillsong, Elevation Worship, and Bethel.

Norman’s life is a reminder for today's music ministers that God calls and equips those whom He desires. Oftentimes, religious leaders look for the person who holds credentials or appears to have a spiritually elevated disposition to shepherd God’s people. But it is a contrite heart and an obedient servant that He will use over the appearance of good every time. So many aspects of Larry Norman’s life remain unaccounted for, however the impact of what is recorded cannot be overlooked. Like Martin Luther, Isaac Watts, and Fanny Crosby, Norman challenged the status quo of traditional Christian music by making a new song. Though he lacked formal biblical training and music studies, His work revealed a true love for the Lord.

It is essential to acknowledge and encourage the youth of this generation to take part in the spreading of the gospel through their unique God-given gifts. In current culture, Larry Norman and Tim Tebow utilized their gifts to spread the gospel the best way they knew how.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ CCM Magazine. “Remembering Larry Norman.” CCM Magazine. (Salem Media Group, April 1, 2008). <https://www.ccmagazine.com/features/remembering-larry-norman/>.

⁶⁶ Jeff Taylor, *The Political World of Bob Dylan: Freedom and Justice, Power and Sin*. (London, UK: Palgrave MacMillan , 2017), 173-200.

Music ministry should function as a tool to encourage the youth of the church to form faith and “Go ye therefore...”⁶⁷

Importance of Present Music

Worship music has a rich history of development in the areas of lyrics, tune and performance. While it is impossible to account for all the changes, the selective history given above demonstrates worship music forms holistically and generationally. Music incorporates and speaks to the various aspects of everyday life. Therefore, music ministry should communicate the present truth to current culture and society in a relatable fashion. Paraphrasing Norman, poorly communicated music fails to express present truth and loses its listener.

In an interview, T. David Gordon comments how CCM music was not any worse, better, more difficult, or easier to sing than traditional music, but rather it was more familiar.⁶⁸ He also points out that familiarity builds excitement and joy.⁶⁹ It is also true that familiarity allows for the ability to connect and participate. On the other hand, in his book *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal*, Gordon discusses his views on how new writers struggled with writing songs that were “theologically sound, but significant, profound, appropriate, memorable, and edifying.”⁷⁰ This idea may speak again to the fact that biblical illiteracy is a plague of the nation, “confusing Bible knowledge with biblical literacy.”⁷¹

⁶⁷ Matthew 28:19 KJV

⁶⁸ T David Gordon, “The Imminent Decline of Contemporary Worship Music: Eight Reasons: T. David Gordon,” Second Nature (International Institute for the Study of Technology and Christianity (IISTC), February 7, 2016), <https://secondnaturejournal.com/the-imminent-decline-of-contemporary-worship-music-eight-reasons/>.

⁶⁹ Mark Moring, “Pop Goes the Worship,” ChristianityToday.com (Christianity Today, January 9, 2020), <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/march/pogoesworship.html>.

⁷⁰ T David Gordon, *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns : How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub., 2010).

⁷¹ Nelson Fernandez Jr, “3 Big Problems Adventism Needs to Fix in the Coronavirus,” Nelson Fernandez Jr., March 27, 2020, <http://www.nelsonfernandez.com/adventism-coronavirus/?fbclid=IwAR1IMMLYMJBzVXEHFIMGt58OKFH1GLGj9VvVXiK1yBe9UVsTbU9jutTwzUU>.

The Christian community owes it to their youth to allow them the freedom to express their relationship with God in their era, culture, and style. The hindrance of an expressive personal relationship with God also hinders the ability to develop a real relationship with God. Worship wars⁷² in traditional churches hamper the expression of worship through music.

Final Thoughts on Christian Music Influences

In the lives of the aforementioned figures, Christian tradition focused on arguments about the appropriateness of musical style for worship (high and low)⁷³ rather than the dissemination of present truth. Today, Christian faiths struggle with the same issues. Within the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) community this struggle is compounded by a lack of value placed on the blessings and evangelistic opportunity of music. They fail to cultivate and utilize worship music to spread the gospel of Jesus. Hoon makes a point of this by stating, “The bald truth is that art, in a sense, always threatens liturgy, and liturgy rightly looks on art with an incorrigible suspicion simply because the polar enemy of liturgy is idolatry.”⁷⁴

Music ministry that introduces new art forms, lyrics, and styles of music face an uphill battle within the traditional SDA community. Nevertheless, time demonstrates change is inevitable and worship is not immune. Worship music, in its culturally current form, allows for a clear message of God to be conveyed in a relevant, unique, authentic, and personal way.

⁷² Aaron Earls, “Most Churches Aren’t Engaged in a Worship War Over Music.” *LifeWay Research*, September 9, 2019. <https://lifewayresearch.com/2019/08/28/most-churches-arent-engaged-in-a-worship-war-over-music/>.

⁷³ Lilianne Doukhan, *In Tune with God* (Hagerstown, MD: Autumn House Pub, 2010), 292-294.

⁷⁴ Paul Waitman Hoon, *The Integrity of Worship: Ecumenical and Pastoral Studies in Liturgical Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1978), 69.

HYMNEO ANALYSIS

Organization Origins

The organization Hymneo is a music ministry for the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) community and born out of a need perceived by the young adult community on the Andrews University campus. The need was identified as a music ministry built upon present truth but packaged for Generation Z and Millennial participation. In response, Hymneo created a community of ministers made up of theologians, poets, instrumentalists, vocalists, writers, composers, producers, and supporters to collaborate for the development of music that was relevant in style to a new generation of believers. The music is centered around the gospel of Jesus Christ, His Second Coming and the present truth of the Third Angel's Message, native to the SDA faith. Hymneo found its first supporters in the Pioneer Memorial Church. The original Hymneo team consisted of Michael Gibson, Joshua Goines, Sinegugu Katenga, Jamila Sylvester, and Associate Pastor Jose Bourget, our liaison for Pioneer Memorial Church.

In the fall of 2016, during a Pioneer Memorial Church worship team meeting, the question was posed, "Why aren't we utilizing our Seventh-day Adventist musicians to write and play our own music for church services?" The question provoked dialogue surrounding the following points:

- Our aging hymnal, at more than twenty years old
- The over abundance of various denominations represented in our hymnal
- The lack of Seventh-day Adventist composers
- The great emphasis placed on music performance and education in the formative years
- Our denomination's failure to utilize the talents cultivated for the furtherance of present truth

Over the course of the discussion the worship team took into account the SDA denominational shortcomings in music evangelism. We concluded, ‘there is a need for the development of a forward thinking music ministry.’

In summer 2017 Michael Gibson, the Pioneer Memorial Church worship team coordinator, asked if we would be willing to start the process of writing music and presenting it in the second service at Pioneer Memorial Church. The answer from the worship leaders was a resounding, “YES!” Over the course of the summer we worked to develop our brand and generate interest.

Purpose, Mission, and Vision

With the support of the Pioneer Memorial Church, our budding team discovered a purpose, mission, and vision that would fill the void in Seventh-day Adventist music ministry. We identified our purpose to further the gospel of Jesus Christ by providing Seventh-day Adventists the opportunity to disciple the unconverted through the edification of biblically sound music. Our mission: to foster the collaboration of musicians, theologians, and writers to produce new common⁷⁵ and congregational music which celebrates the diversity of worshipers in the USA through artistic depths of melody, lyrics, and instrumentation. Our vision: to be a music ministry platform for present truth which is financially sustainable for writers, composers, musicians and producers.

With our purpose, mission, and vision outlined, we decided upon the name Hymneo. Hymneo (ὕμνεω)⁷⁶ is a Greek word meaning to sing praises or hymns. The Bible verse that best

⁷⁵ Common meaning, in a setting which is not religious, filled with believers, and/or solely evangelistic in nature.

⁷⁶ “G5214 - Hymneō - Strong's Greek Lexicon (KJV),” Blue Letter Bible, accessed March 26, 2020, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?t=kjv&strongs=g5214>.

fits our purpose, mission, and vision is Psalm 96, “Sing to the Lord a new song... Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.”⁷⁷ This verse expresses our current focus and reflects the historical precedence of present truth music created by composers such as Norman, Crosby, Watts, Luther and many more. It became our “why” for creating new songs to fit the 21st century context.

Establishing Goals and Community

By the end of summer 2017, Hymneo was a community in full form with a website, social media platforms, writing groups, small groups, and events underway. The community was made primarily of artistic Millennials and Generation Z from Andrews University and their friends. The Hymneo community was fulfilling its mission of collaborating to write, compose, produce, release, perform, and support new distinctive biblical music. In a short time, the leadership of Hymneo realized further change was required to accomplish its purpose most effectively. The team discussed the possibility of Hymneo operating as a record label for SDA artists. The label would support and promote original SDA songs. The record label would also release annual hymnals and house a database of full scores for download. To remain solvent, that record label would create professional recordings, documentary films, song stories, and seek performance opportunities. The vision for the record label also included competitions and festivals to celebrate new music and locate new talent. Leveraging support from Seventh-day Adventist universities, the record label would facilitate music conferences, youth evangelism, and writing centers to provide additional training to songwriters.

⁷⁷ Psalm 96:1 & 3, NASB

With a record label in mind, the newly christened Hymneo organized a gathering of 20 people in the Pioneer Memorial Church choir room for a new Fall project. The focus was to develop 10 new songs for congregational singing. Over the course of the meeting the group determined, “To You We Sing” and “Fairest Lord Jesus” should have the primary focus. With that resolution confirmed, Hymneo made plans to convene on Wednesdays biweekly. During that time we would review new music arrangements and further develop the lyrics of “To You We Sing.”

To produce each song, the team searched Bible texts, Google, poetry and other sources to create lyrics and music that was contextual and relevant to a 21st century audience. One strength that became immediately apparent was having university resources and students readily available. Our group, being highly stimulated academically, was inclined to create unique language and melodies. Andrews University was instrumental in providing materials for the creative process. Notepads, pens, pencils, whiteboards, computers, smart phones, social media outlets, and recording devices were facilitated during each session and aided the management of information. What resulted from our first attempt at collaborative songwriting, was two songs with biblical messages and upbeat music. With melodies composed, the Hymneo community began to practice various arrangements by playing with aspects of each song such as tempo, mode, harmony, articulation, etc.. The full community contributed to an effort that resulted in what we believed is modern present truth music and radio worthy.

Leadership Development

Over the course of the Fall semester the community recognized additional structure was needed within Hymneo to facilitate growth and streamline processes. First, we noted several

contributors were graduating and would become unavailable to collaborate beyond Spring 2018. Second, Hymneo needed roles and rules clarified to advance productivity, as the addition of collaborators created decision-making difficulties.

In addressing the first issue, the originators of the group gathered to assess individual availability and commitment to the development of Hymneo. The assessment concluded with two original leaders deciding to step aside and contribute only as supporters. The vacant roles became palpable and it was decided that two new leaders were needed to distribute the load of responsibility more evenly. The community decided what was missing was a creative leader and a leader for public relations skills to pair with the visionary leadership of Michael Gibson and Jamila Sylvester. From within the community Michelle Odinma and Chad Angasan were chosen to fill the respective roles. Michelle, an established musician and songwriter, focused on pulling together a team of writers. Chad, a networker, focused on gig finding and promoting Hymneo. The remaining leadership focused on engaging supporters, developing the website and social media platforms, print marketing, involving Andrews University, and creating and maintaining rules and regulations.

Chad, with strengths geared towards networking, operated as our Project Liaison between churches and various gigs. In this position, Chad's focus was creating clear understandings between organizations and the Hymneo community. He developed professional relationships between Hymneo and event organizers. His responsibilities also included securing lodging, transportation, and equipment. Finally, Chad was assigned to introduce innovative strategies for the growth, development, and partnership of Hymneo with other organizations or events.

Michelle's role focused on songwriting and collaborating with other songwriters. As our songwriter lead, her job was to meet with potential churches or youth groups in need of music to create clientele. Additionally, Michelle was challenged to recruit songwriters within the USA. To incentivize recruits, Michelle focused on generating a network of producers and directors for mixing and mastering each song created. Lastly, Michelle's leadership would generate original ideas using both traditional and non-traditional instruments like pianos and guitars or synthesizers and electronic beats.

The remaining leadership responsibilities included setting up a website and social media platforms for the purpose of building engaged participants and supportive followership. The community also identified support was needed from departments within the Andrews University campus. The Music Department was needed for musicians, the English Department for poets and writers, the Film and Photography Department for videos and photography, and Student Life for student engagement. Hymneo also needed other schools and churches to build support beyond the immediate location, involvement, and support of Andrews University. The aforementioned responsibilities were shared between the leadership of Michael Gibson and Jamila Sylvester.

With leadership roles established, one of the most difficult challenges Hymneo encountered was developing rules and regulations. This proved difficult considering the infancy of Hymneo. Establishing rules at first seemed counterproductive to the creative process taking place. Ultimately the community determined boundaries and expectations could only help facilitate the stated purpose.

Firstly, to protect the ownership and authenticity of each piece, Hymneo determined the original artist would allow at least three alterations to their body of work while retaining the final

say on all changes. The second rule stated that if a song is brought into a collaborative session and developed, the creator would then permit Hymneo the use of the song free of charge. Third, all are free to contribute without the fear of insensitive criticism. Fourth, the community votes to determine if a song will receive continued development or if it will be queued for a later date. Fifth, only contributors physically present have the right to vote; voting in absentia is not permitted. Collaborative rules were difficult to write and maintain in such a transient and creative group. However, Hymneo strove to create parameters that aligned with biblical principles and mirrored the ideals of the SDA philosophy of music guidelines⁷⁸ and Luther's music methodology.

Music Structure and Guidelines

Taking into account a multiplicity of factors, including the Andrews University community, church influences, and biblical precedence, Hymneo established guidelines for composition. Accordingly, the first rule of composition is to compose a new song. This idea is based on what the Bible says about singing a new song to the Lord. Singing a new song is:

- a command and a joy in the Bible⁷⁹
- an expression of one's own personal experience and relationship with God.⁸⁰
- an outpouring of one's praise and worship as a testimony to the world around.

Singing a new song is many things, but one thing is clear: singing an old song is not a command in the Bible. Several Bible verses express this command and at times its purpose. This can be seen in the verses below:

⁷⁸ "A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music." 2019. *Seventh-Day Adventist Church Official Website*. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. December 18. <https://www.adventist.org/en/information/official-statements/guidelines/article/go/-/a-seventh-day-adventist-philosophy-of-music/>.

⁷⁹ Psalms 96:1, 81:1

⁸⁰ Myles Munroe, *Rediscovering Kingdom Worship: The Purpose and Power of Praise and Worship* (Shippensburg, PA, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2010), 57-58.

Oh sing to the Lord a new song...⁸¹
 Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!⁸²
 Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!⁸³
 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.⁸⁴
 Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy.⁸⁵
 Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and
 making melody to the Lord with your heart⁸⁶
 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another
 in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in
 your hearts to God.⁸⁷

Hymneo's second rule of composition is to share spiritual truth as a message or sermon in the song, not just share one's personal experience. Ellen G. White comments on this rule, stating, "Song is one of the most effective means of impressing spiritual truth upon the heart. Often by the words of sacred song, the springs of penitence and faith have been unsealed."⁸⁸ Luther also comments on this idea when he states, "Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the Word of God through music."⁸⁹ Luther understood the power of music in proclaiming the Word of God. Accordingly, music is only second to presenting the inspired Word and is efficacious in disseminating present truth just as speaking God's Word.

⁸¹ Psalms 96:1; 98:1; 149:1 & Isaiah 42:10 ESV

⁸² Psalms 105:2 ESV

⁸³ Psalms 100:2; 150 ESV

⁸⁴ Psalms 40:3 ESV

⁸⁵ Psalms 33:3 KJV

⁸⁶ Ephesians 5:19 ESV

⁸⁷ Colossians 3:16 ESV

⁸⁸ Ellen Gould Harmon White, *Evangelism* (Hagerstown, Michigan: Review and Herald Pub. Association, 2002), 500.3.

⁸⁹ Robin Leaver, "Luther on Music," *Lutheran Quarterly* 20 (2005),
<http://www.lutheranquarterly.com/uploads/7/4/0/1/7401289/timelineleaver.pdf>.

The third rule is to strive for excellence by not allowing the composition of music to be hurried and lose quality of lyrics or musical expression. For guidelines of excellence, the SDA philosophy of music was consulted.⁹⁰ In summary the philosophy guidelines state:

- All music developed or played for or within the church body should glorify God and cause its participants to dwell⁹¹ on pure, holy, and good things.⁹²
- All worship music should foster and appeal to Christ-centered emotivity, intellectualism, spirituality, psychology, and sociology, while keeping a balance of authenticity and appropriateness within its context.⁹³
- All worship music should impact its participants in a holistic and positive manner; employing lyrics, rhythms, and harmonies in a new, creative, biblically sound manner, which educates, uplifts, and reflects Christ and His biblical doctrine.⁹⁴
- These basic principles allow for old music, new music, diversity in sound, style, and instrumentation, all the while focusing on bringing glory to God and engaging the participant into truth and a response of worship to God.⁹⁵

By incorporating the SDA philosophy of music guidelines, Hymneo constructed authentic principles for 21st century USA music composition and expression.

Hymneo also found inspiration for principles of composition from the 2017 *Consumed Worship Experience Conference* in Maryland. There, leadership team members learned from the teachings of Reverend Nolan Williams. He taught the true role of the psalmist is to interpret the deep theological truths in the Bible, then share them with the listener in an accessible manner that penetrates the mind and touches the heart. Rev. Williams postulated music is not just a form of only praising God, but that the forgotten purpose and role of music in worship is teaching.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ "A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music," Seventh-day Adventist Church Official Website (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, December 18, 2019),

<https://www.adventist.org/en/information/official-statements/guidelines/article/go/-/a-seventh-day-adventist-philosophy-of-music/>.

⁹¹ I Corinthians 10:31, Philippians 4:8

⁹² "A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music," Seventh-day Adventist Church Official Website (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, December 18, 2019),

<https://www.adventist.org/en/information/official-statements/guidelines/article/go/-/a-seventh-day-adventist-philosophy-of-music/>.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Appendix A

“Worship without revelation is incomplete...What insights are we helping to disclose about God in the songs that we are writing?” he inquired. Hymneo leadership was forced to consider the ramification of theology, or lack thereof, being taught within each lyric and melody line. Rev. Williams appealed for new sacred music to find a niche where a theological topic is missing. His two-part workshop supplied seven easy ‘sacred’ steps to get any new writer going in the game of composition. The steps are as follows:

1. Seek the Lord in Prayer, first and always.
2. Know your goal - ask yourself, “What is it I’m trying to teach or share?”
3. Expand your pedagogies, meaning, have a wealth of knowledge pouring into you at all times
4. Then draw from what inspires you
5. Know what makes up a song, such as: verse, chorus, bridge, lyrics, melody, tempo, etc.
6. When writing use:
 - a. Text painting to engage the five senses
 - b. Storytelling with everyday words from casual conversation
 - c. Chordal progression that match the lyrics
7. Don’t be afraid to collaborate

Rev. Williams ended his workshop with a thought provoking final exercise. The exercise called for attendees to first think of a noun, then describe it. Participants then used those descriptions to generate phrases. The best phrases were chosen, organized to convey the original thought, then paired with chord progressions. At the conclusion of the exercise, five out of five groups were amazed with the short songs created. Equipped with the seven steps and a practical group exercise, leadership implemented the strategies of Rev. Williams. What resulted in subsequent Hymneo meetings were collaborative efforts for original verses delivering present truth.

Determining Needs

With foundational elements like the philosophy of Hymneo and rules of composition established, Hymneo grew exponentially with the creation of new music. Such growth necessitated new tools for sustainability. The first tool needed was a recording device to capture the creative process occurring at each Wednesday gathering. With so many instruments, voices, and ideas merging, taking minutes of each gathering proved an ineffective method of remembrance. The simple solution was for all contributors to record each session and review for possible secondary inspiration of thought, melody or lyric.

The second tool Hymneo utilized was Google Docs. The community observed a platform was needed for capturing written text. Lyrics and minutes were dictated using the “Voice Typing” feature. With the ability to “share” Docs, all contributors were given access to each session's minutes and the lyrics created. Google Docs proved invaluable to the creative process by maintaining a database for future reference.

Smartphones and tablets proved useful for a period of time, but ultimately the greater computational power of a laptop was needed. Editing videos, making professional posts on social media, and working for small groups was not efficient on a smaller device.

Engaging and Developing an Audience

As Hymneo grew in collaborators and content so did its reputation. During the developmental stages of 2018, opportunity was given to build support within the local community. Hymneo found itself in two written platforms on three separate occasions. The first platform was in the Pioneer Memorial Church weekly bulletin of March 3, 2018, where Michael invited people to be a part of Hymneo. Michael wrote heartwarming words in his invitation,

pulling from Psalm 96 which states, “sing to the Lord a new song... Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among the peoples.”⁹⁷ Michael’s post in the bulletin created several inquiries and within the church a small group for the project began. The small group facilitated spreading the news of Hymneo to an audience other than students.

Lake Union Herald later featured Hymneo in its 2018 September issue, calling Hymneo “new on the music hub hopes,”⁹⁸ while sharing a recently created music video. In the issue, they also shared Hymneo’s goals for project expansion. *Lake Union Herald* stated, “although Hymneo is at the beginning of its journey, their goal is to have an online presence with a database of music (including sheet music, instructional videos, etc.) that churches and individuals can access for free.”⁹⁹

Lake Union Herald later published an interview with Michelle Odinma. In her interview, Michelle shared being part of the songwriting group, Hymneo. Her blurb which spoke of her writing style said, “it’s not going to be something that you’ll hear every day.”¹⁰⁰ The article created additional buzz within the community and caused several people to reach out to Hymneo wanting to know more. As a result, Hymneo naturally experienced a growth in its community with songwriters and instrumentalists seeking an outlet for their creativity.

Over the course of the next two years Hymneo was involved in several events making connections with many different people. With men and women devoted to the Gospel

⁹⁷ Michael Gibson, “Pioneer Memorial Church,” *Pioneer Memorial Church* (blog) (Pioneer Connect: Church of Hearts – Can You Feel the Love?, March 3, 2018), https://pmcdata.s3.amazonaws.com/pmc-pdfs/Online_Bulletin_03-03-2018.pdf.

⁹⁸ Malissa Martin, “New Online Music Hub Hopes to Revive Hymns and Boost Congregational Singing,” *Lake Union Herald* (Seventh-day Adventist Lake Union Headquarters, September 25, 2018), <https://www.lakeunionherald.org/archive/articles/new-online-music-hub-aims-to-revive-hymns-and-boost-congregational-singing>.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Malissa Martin, “Singing Lessons: Michelle Odinma’s Music Ministry,” *Lake Union Herald* (Seventh-day Adventist Lake Union Headquarters, January 24, 2019), <https://www.lakeunionherald.org/archive/articles/singing-lessons>.

commission through the development of new music, Hymneo was able to embody the Andrews University calling of being a “world changer.”

HYMNEO’S CONTRIBUTION

Though still a budding ministry, this section will consider the impact of contributions Hymneo has made to music ministry within its local context. These various contributions, while small, speak to the purpose, vision, mission, and uniqueness of Hymneo’s present truth ministry.

Local Church Ministry

At the beginning of spring 2018 Hymneo leadership decided on the final sound and lyrics for a few of the songs developed and began to test them at Pioneer Memorial Church and other local churches in Berrien Springs. Performing the two main songs, *To You We Sing* and *Fairest Lord Jesus*, feedback was sought from the youth and young adults of the congregation. The overall feedback indicated that while the music was acceptable in the local aging churches, it was more reminiscent of the ’90s rather than 2020. People also suggested that Hymneo was only singing from the CCM genre.¹⁰¹ Leadership took this as a cue to continue developing the idea of Hymneo, ensuring people understood it was not just a new band but a collective starting a movement. Like Norman, Hymneo desired to convey it was not a group with one sound, but a collaboration sharing a present truth with the sounds and voices representative of all SDA musicians.

¹⁰¹ Contemporary Christian Music (CCM): a simple worship styled music that is closest to the modern day pop music which can fluctuate between alternative and contemporary gospel.

Hymneo the Collective

After singing a few originals in the local churches Hymneo planned a Collective. The Collective was a time for musicians, lyricists, and singers to come together to listen to all the new songs completed. The Collective took place on March 30, 2018, in the Andrews University Recreational Center. There, Chad Angasan led the congregation through a few well known songs in order to provide an environment of fellowship and familiarity. Later the Hymneo leadership team shared *To You We Sing* using only voice and guitar. Finally the floor was opened for other singer-songwriters to share their original pieces. Through the Hymneo Collective event five new songs were acquired from the 25 attendees.

Hymneo's Coffee Shop Ministry

Though the main outlet for ministry was in church settings, Hymneo thought it prudent to explore other avenues in an effort to fill the mission of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In response, Chad Angasan led the group to a weekend coffee shop experience in Bloomington, Indiana with the support of the Bloomington SDA Church. Located a few blocks from Indiana University Bloomington, The Pourhouse is a prime location in a college town. On the weekend of April 27- 28, 2018, Hymneo led the locals in an open but intimate form of worship. Normally, Bloomington is busy with over 40,000 students and more than 1500 full-time faculty members on its campus grounds. On that particular Friday night the streets were swarming with college students. From 7 to 10 PM Hymneo was in Pourhouse's overflow room sharing original and popular songs. The service also allowed 10 minutes of testimonies and concluded with a 10-minute homily. The response to the programming was overwhelming as the Holy Spirit moved in

the Pourhouse. The following day Hymneo performed at the Bloomington SDA church with songs and a powerful testimony¹⁰² from Melissa Gibson, Michael's wife. At the conclusion of the service, the church leadership advertised Hymneo's encore performance that evening in the Pourhouse. Again, the feedback and support from Bloomington was overwhelming. One outcome from the Bloomington experience was the recognition of Hymneo's need for donations. The church volunteered their support to the ministry and without knowing it provided money enough to pay for our first music videos.

Hymneo Music Videos

Following the Bloomington ministry an exciting, new opportunity arose for Hymneo. Richard Parke, Director of Media Ministries at Pioneer Memorial Church, volunteered his time and talents, along with church facilities, to create music videos for some of Hymneo's original music. The idea came from Richard who approached Michael to share his vision for a music video. Richard led a mammoth effort to acquire a film crew, audio team, actors, director, producer, band members, video editing team, audio editing team, lighting, equipment, storyboards, sheet music, color palette and attire, liability release forms, copyright forms, etc. Michael served as the middleman between Richard and the Hymneo team to allow smooth communication of expectations and needs.

July 1, 2018, was chosen as the date for recording both film and music. The eighteen-hour day began at 5:00 AM and ended approximately 11:00 PM, with only a thirty-minute lunch break. Three months post filming, the Hymneo community was able to view

¹⁰² L. Ann Hamel, "Return to Palau: A Journey of Healing and Restoration," Adventist Mission (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, October 3, 2019), <https://www.adventistmission.org/return-to-palau-a-journey-of-healing-and-restoration>.

the finished product. Using various church donations, primarily from Bloomington and Pioneer Memorial Church, Hymneo was able to defray the cost of work done by Richard and his team. The finished product merited an official viewing and launch party to celebrate and market the work accomplished in 2018. The development of the music videos further opened doors for the ministry and aided Hymneo in its goal to disseminate its music.

Hymneo Debut at the Howard Performing Arts Center

In the fall of 2018 a plan was established for a Hymneo concert to serve as a vesper service. The venue chosen was the Howard Performing Arts Center (HPAC) of Andrews University. The program would feature several Hymneo artists while also including other campus musicians and their compositional accomplishments. In order to succeed, Hymneo collaborated with the Music Department, Theological Seminary, and the Center for Youth Evangelism (CYE) during the annual Worship, Word, and Music Conference. The purpose of each year's annual conference, is to:

Provide biblically grounded training opportunities for church musicians, pastors, worship leaders, and anyone involved in worship ministry. Presenters and participants interact to learn principles and practices for incarnational worship ministry that glorifies God, transforms worshipers, and changes the world. The Conference provides an opportunity to worship together, be equipped, and connect with others who share a commitment to worship and music ministry.¹⁰³

With April 5, 2019, set as the date, Hymneo was advertised as the feature event in the annual Worship, Word, and Music Conference.

Before the feature event of Friday night, Hymneo leadership was given the opportunity to present an hour seminar lecture entitled “Creating New Songs in Community.” In the seminar

¹⁰³ “General Information,” Center for Youth Evangelism, October 2017, <https://www.cye.org/ministries/music--worship/general-information>.

various aspects regarding the influential power of music, its sacred history, the story of Hymneo thus far, and how SDA people could use music to share the gospel of Jesus Christ were discussed.

At 7 PM the Hymneo concert featured three solo artists, two choirs, one poet and one painter. The combination of artists provided the audience with a wide spectrum of CCM, from conventional to Christian Future Funk. All artists were given an opportunity to exhibit their art and provide a brief testimony to introduce their form of expression. Conference participants also shared an original song created under the leadership of Dr. Nicholas Zork. In addition to sharing their song, they led the congregation in singing other well known worship songs with new arrangements.

The orchestration of the concert vesper service required of Hymneo a new set of organizational skills and tools. To assist in the process the Music Department Chair, Adriana Perera, supplied the support from Edgar Luna, a fellow student and the music ministry Adorarte's¹⁰⁴ team leader. One new skill acquired was booking and preparing a venue with all the logistics included, such as lighting, speakers, chairs, microphones, etc. Furthermore, ensuring all artists were prepared and practiced was essential, especially when dealing with amateur artists. Marketing for the event included posters, flyers, emails, social media posts, and personal invitations to boost the event's presence in the community. Finally a team prior to and during the event, to whom tasks could be delegated, was essential for each step of the process. A final analysis proved Hymneo's vespers only succeeded because of collaboration with other entities and its own devoted team.

¹⁰⁴ Luna, Edgar, ed. 2018. "Proyecto Adorarte: Adorarte: Berrien Springs." *Adorarte*. <https://www.adorarte.org/>.

The outcome of the event proved to be mostly successful for Hymneo. It drew new, Millennial, and unknown SDA talent locally and from across the USA. The event also piqued the attention of the Center for Youth Evangelism's director, Ron Whitehead, who later sought the support of Hymneo for the Worldwide SDA International Pathfinder Camporee. The event showed Hymneo leadership there is a place for the sustainable development of current Christian music from within the SDA community.

Hymneo Collaborates with the International Pathfinder Camporee

The most recent and largest project Hymneo had the opportunity to be a part of was the 2019 Center for Youth Evangelism's International Pathfinder Camporee. Every five years in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, the Center for Youth Evangelism hosts an international camporee inviting Pathfinders from all over the world to play, share, learn and worship together. In 2019, over 50,000+ people from over 100 different countries attended the camporee. The camporee is an opportunity of a lifetime for individuals to strengthen their relationship with God within a world-wide community of fellow believers.

From August 7th to the 18th, Hymneo had the privilege of operating as the evening's worship team for the camporee. On an enormous stage, the camporee puts on a musical production which is preceded by a sermon, a puppet show, special music, announcements and a praise team. As the nightly praise team, Hymneo played an important role in setting the tone for the worship atmosphere every night. The camporee asked Hymneo leadership to produce a ten-minute praise and worship set. Hymneo was permitted to fill seven of the minutes with popular music, and the last three minutes were dedicated to the camporee theme song. The ten-minute set was meant to reach and inspire the hearts of thousands of ethnically and culturally

diverse people, while offending none. Hymneo was to represent the values of thousands of SDA people all over the world through song. While modern and forward thinking music was encouraged, Hymneo was charged with respecting the Seventh-day Adventist music tradition.

Prior to the camporee songs, vocalists, and musicians were carefully selected as Hymneo worked closely with CYE leadership. Later Hymneo was asked to choose and arrange the theme song from a list of submissions. After choosing the theme song, Hymneo tapped into its community of collaborators to perfect the instrumentation and vocal harmonies of the song. The process resulted in the community building the impact of the song each night of the camporee with new harmonies and instrumentals.

During the camporee experience many tools were needed to successfully complete the tasks given to us. Like the concert vespers, teams, vocalists, instrumentalists, a music director, and a liaison were all needed. Having set up the majority of these aspects Hymneo was again fairly successful in the execution and delivery of the International Pathfinder Camporee event.

Hymneo's Struggle and Areas for Improvement

Hymneo has created a ministry that, while useful to the development of new worship, will face many challenges. By virtue of its structure the community itself betrays challenges of governance, copyright and financial solvency. Ministry, of itself, is a voluntary act, therefore Hymneo is made of people who volunteer to align themselves with its purpose and mission. The act of voluntary service is compounded when artistic people subject themselves and their work to the governance of Hymneo. Along with governance, individual artists, who normally can expect personal financial gain from their own body of work, are now sharing the profits as they allow collaborators to influence their art. Considering the USA context, the Hymneo model for music

ministry seems contrary to the capitalistic values of the United States of America. In addition to this, popular Christian music is highly successful, often topping the music boards and making millions of dollars for its creator through recordings, film, and tours.¹⁰⁵ This makes it difficult to determine the future of a non-financially driven voluntary music ministry.

As a SDA organization, Hymneo believes Christian music should be a movement of present truth. Hymneo seeks to discover ways in which it can both support its community of artists, while focusing on sharing a present truth message. Aside from the Heritage Singers, Take 6, Committed, Virtue, Cadet Sisters, and King's Heralds, Hymneo has very few examples of music groups that have successfully led the way into financially sustainable music ministries. Some SDAs have found success as solo artists, such as Wintley Phipps, Rozonda Thomas, and Sunny Liu. While all have been successful in the world of Christian music, none have done what Hymneo is attempting to do.

Hymneo's desire is to foster its youth and young adults in writing, teaching, and supporting the development of new SDA biblical music. Hymneo seeks to move beyond the mindset of personal gain in solo artistry. It desires community development by empowering young musicians and lovers of the Bible to collaborate in spreading the Word of God. Hymneo has yet to see a ministry focused and dedicated on this mission. This is what makes Hymneo unique in its purpose, mission and vision in the USA.

Under student leadership, with a unique mission and vision, Hymneo has the potential to grow exponentially in the area of music ministry. However the area where most improvement is needed is songwriting. While everything else matters to the development and growth of the

¹⁰⁵ Spencer Ritchie, "Christian Music," Music Business Journal (Berklee College of Music, June 2016), <http://www.thembj.org/2016/06/christian-music/>.

organization, its mission is to write new music from the SDA biblical perspective. Throughout its various stages of growth and development Hymneo has struggled to acquire and maintain songwriters and musicians who can dedicate the time and energy to composing music on a consistent basis. As students graduate, the work of composition becomes more difficult and Hymneo is left with talent voids. Without the assurance of pay, musicians are forced to choose another form of work to supplement their financial needs. As a future fully developed organization and possibly record label, Hymneo could afford financial support to its pool of talent. Doing so would create a compounding effect of talent and present truth music development.

Hymneo Within Adventism

It is a sad fact that compensation and support for excellent musicianship has been overlooked in the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church. This thought process is reflected in the article *Biblical Perspective of Music and Worship: Implications for the Seventh-day Adventist Church*.¹⁰⁶ The author shares the biblically grounded importance of music by well trained organized musicians in any given worship service. The article falls short though by failing to mention the need for compensation of time and talent used to develop and perform music. Furthermore, SDA gatherings have been known to set musical standards and guidelines,¹⁰⁷ but rarely provide compensation for the work required by the skill of an excellent musician. The worldwide 2020 General Conference (GC) set professional level guidelines, restrictions,

¹⁰⁶ Evan Amponsah-Gyan, "Biblical Perspective of Music and Worship: Implications for the Seventh-day Adventist Church," *World Wide Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, July 12, 2018, file:///Users/imaginegreaterinc/Downloads/biblical-perspective-of-music-and-worship-implications-for-the-seventh-day-adventist-church_1530183113.pdf.

¹⁰⁷ "A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music," Seventh-day Adventist Church Official Website (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, December 18, 2019), <https://www.adventist.org/en/information/official-statements/guidelines/article/go/-/a-seventh-day-adventist-philosophy-of-music/>.

principles, applications, recordings, and deadlines for musicians. The GC set all of these expectations while explicitly stating the following:

Music participants are self-funded for all expenses involved with travel, lodging, performance, and all other expenses associated with their participation in the GC Session. Approved musicians, as well as sponsors, family members, and technical personnel, are responsible for all financial aspects related to performing at the GC Session. No funding, meal tickets or provisions for meals, or any remuneration is available from the GC Session Music Committee or from the General Conference for any Division's recommended musicians performing at the GC Session. All musicians must secure their own funding and provide for all their expenses including meals, transportation, hotels, and any other associated costs.¹⁰⁸

No onsite solicitation by approved musicians or music coordinators –The GC Session Management will not authorize any onsite solicitation by musicians or Division Music Coordinators for assistance with cash, meals, or meal tickets to any individual or GC Session representative at the GC Session. Musicians may not set up their own mini music shows anywhere onsite at the GC Session for the purpose of attracting people to contribute funds, offer assistance, or to sell their music.¹⁰⁹

For a worldwide religion and organization it is galling how tone deaf the SDA administration is to the importance of music and its financial support. The SDA Church has handicapped its own work of spreading the Gospel. Pastors, healthcare workers, educators, and even administrators all have SDA based organizations where they can find financial remuneration for their cultivated skills.

Other denominations understand the power of music as a tool in the creation of a worship experience and in the learning of spiritual principles. Due to the vital role music plays in the discipleship process many Christian churches use a three pillar leadership model of main

¹⁰⁸ "Music Guidelines," General Conference Session (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2018), <https://session.adventist.org/music/guidelines/>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

minister, youth minister, and music minister for church development.¹¹⁰ Often within Adventism the appointment of a music minister is often overlooked or underdeveloped. Found on the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists' website, there is no record shown of music ministries or companies in their summary of statistics as of December 31, 2018.¹¹¹ Unlike other mainstream and popular locally funded churches, with well known worship bands such as Hillsong, Elevate, Mosaic, Planetshakers, Crossroads, Cornerstone, Life Church and more, Adventism has failed to create an outlet for the talents of young musicians.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is organized with a representative form of church government.¹¹² This form of organization supports the function of a worldwide church. However, this model can slow the development, growth, and support of new forms of ministry, such as music. In comparison, the organizational structure of popular churches like Hillsong show operations in the form of a set of corporate goal based entities.¹¹³ Hillsong's simple model makes it easy for growth and a far more flexible form of ministry.¹¹⁴

If Hymneo were to operate under the SDA form of ministry it would find advancements in its development difficult. But, in utilizing the Hillsong model Hymneo may find growth and development far more accessible. Adopting the Hillsong model affords Hymneo the flexibility to change the way music is viewed and used in the SDA community, without forcing the SDA structure to change. With the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit Hymneo could steer the SDA

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ "Seventh-day Adventist World Church Statistics 2018," Seventh-day Adventist Church Official Website, January 22, 2020, <https://www.adventist.org/articles/seventh-day-adventist-world-church-statistics-2018/>.

¹¹² North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, "Organizational Structure," Organizational Structure | North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church), accessed March 17, 2020, <https://www.nadadventist.org/about-our-church/organizational-structure>.

¹¹³ Gerardo Martí, "The Global Phenomenon of Hillsong Church: An Initial Assessment1," *Sociology of Religion* 78, no. 4 (December 12, 2017): 377-386, <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/srx059>.

¹¹⁴ Riches Tanya and Tom Wagner, "The Evolution of Hillsong Music: From Australian Pentecostal Congregation into Global Brand," *Australian Journal of Communication* 39, no. 1 (June 12, 2012): 17-36.

church out of a 40% net loss in the retention of church members.¹¹⁵ The unique lyrics and worship styles that Hymneo will bring into the Christian community will allow for people to have an authentic revelation and response experience with Christ. An experience based on present truth will break up the stronghold of traditional worship styles or even modern day CCM, as history has demonstrated. The necessity of Hymneo creates an outlet for believers to exercise their faith in Christ by adoring Him. We know that God's Word does not reflect the external physical appearance, but rather shows the inward spiritual condition.¹¹⁶ It is the action and exercise within the life that makes one a follower of Christ. In his study of the discipleship process, Vincent Taylor states, "we do not first discover who Christ is and then believe in him, we believe in him and then discover who he is."¹¹⁷ By writing and creating new forms of music worship, believers can begin to learn and understand more of who Christ is. This part of discipleship reflects the model that Christ spoke of in Matthew 28 when he said, "go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."¹¹⁸ Hymneo activates the willing and able into the mission field through the writing and dissemination of biblical messages through music.

CONCLUSION

In the United States of America, where a vast number of people do not know John 3:16, there is a need to return to the biblical understanding of worship as outlined in the Old and New Testaments. The Bible teaches us to respond to God through worship, which supports the

¹¹⁵ David Trim, "Adventist World Statistics," Adventist World Statistics (Seventh-day Adventist World Church, October 2019), <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/ASR/ASR2019.pdf>.

¹¹⁶ Derek Prince, *Entering the Presence of God: Moving Beyond Praise and Thanksgiving to True Worship* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2007), 66.

¹¹⁷ Paul Waitman Hoon, *The Integrity of Worship: Ecumenical and Pastoral Studies in Liturgical Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1978), 77.

¹¹⁸ Matthew 28:19 KJV

development of a personal relationship with Him. The collective experiences of Luther, Watts, Crosby, and Norman reveal the power of music in the furthering of present truth. Considering the growing “none” denomination, there is a need for the reengagement of active faith. Hymneo has positioned itself to further the gospel of Jesus Christ to the unconverted through the edification of biblically sound music.

Though Hymneo has positioned itself to further present truth, there are still details within its structure to amend. As it currently stands, with or without support, the biggest challenge standing between Hymneo and success, is Hymneo itself. The ability to motivate and inspire young adult artists to write new music for its church is a difficult task. The cultivation and contribution of new music is an obstacle. Should Hymneo not secure the inspiration of new music, then all of its uniqueness or its complaints about a discouraging SDA church community die with its inability to create sustainable action.

To insure success, further areas of research, prayer, and questioning may be needed to answer the success needs of Hymneo. Some of the following questions may provide a starting point for such research:

1. What methods have and can be used to motivate volunteer youth and young adult composers?
2. How can programs like Hymneo maintain a steady stream of composition?
3. How can programs like Hymneo share, on a large scale, the music as ministry to the SDA community, the Christian community, and then the non-believing community?

Additionally, Hymneo may need to explore the possibilities of seeking a business model and mentorship from an individual, group, or a variety of sources. As a Christian organization, Hymneo will need to seek Divine support and clear guidance and direction from the Holy Spirit above all else. Hymneo must call into action all of its resources and supporters and cultivate the

writing of new music to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. In short, it is the desire and goal of Hymneo to continue striving and evaluating itself for success, as well as seek knowledge that will further equip Hymneo for the future.

Aside from Hymneo, music itself will never cease to be an influence both in and outside of the church. It is the job of ministers to seek the Lord's guidance in how to inspire and utilize music ministry for His glory. Martin Luther once said, "Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise.... The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the Word of God through Music."¹¹⁹ Hymneo, like many other music ministries before it, will be challenged and will struggle to find its place in this modern fast-paced world. However, if we strive for sustainable solutions through the engagement of 21st-century believers and with God, success is sure.

¹¹⁹ J. Andreas Loewe, "Musica Est Optimum': Martin Luther's Theory of Music," *Music and Letters* 94, no. 4 (November 1, 2013): 573-605, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/gct133>.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PERSONAL NOTES

Consumed Worship Conference 2017: Songwriting with Nolan Williams Part I

God is Not Dead by Margaret Pleasant Douroux - (Donald Vails the Choraleers)

The True role of the psalmist is to interpret the deep theological truths in an accessible and reachable way for the community.

–The true role of the psalmist is to interpret the deep theological truths in the Bible, then share them with the listener in an accessible manner that penetrates the mind and touches the heart.

The forgotten purpose and role of music in worship is TEACHING!

- Col 3:16
- Music is a form of not only praising God but a form of teaching about God
- Worship without revelation is incomplete - what insights are we helping to disclose about God.
- EXAMPLE: Martin Luther
 - Next to the Word of God the noble art of music
 - Hymn Pioneer, A

TEACHING THEOLOGY IN MUSIC: Where is it?

- PROJECT: Inspiration by Nolan Williams
- Where is the teaching music outside of VBS
- Where is the music about the LIFE of CHRIST vs Birth, Resurrection, and Return?
- SEARCHING FOR REVELATION
 - Find a niche that hasn't been written upon. The whole Bible has not been captured in music. The teaching, principles, reprimanding, life of Christ, symbols,
 - SONG: The cross still stands
 - The cross still stands amid our brokenness. God stretched between our wrong & unrighteousness. Oh, the grace of God's redemption plan. Praise Him for two thieves & Lamb.

POWER OF PRAYER

- If you ask God things will manifest these things
- God will put you in the places and with people

FINDING YOUR OWN VOICE

- PRAYER
- Psalmist
- What is your Goal?
- What are you trying to share/teach?

SONGS (Why do you love the song)

- *In Love* by Nolan Williams
- *O Come to Worship*
 - Vividness of lyrics
 - Testimony / relatability
 - Melody: beautiful, simplicity
 - singable, 4 notes, like the gospel, matches lyrics
- *Center of Your Will*
- *In the Garden* (hymn)
 - Setting: Word Painting, Tone painting,
 - Psalms: example Total Praise

COLLABORATION

Power of Collaboration is a Biblical Model

Example: Kirk Franklin

- Writer
- Lyricist
- Production

SONGWRITING WHY?

(Why do you write and where do you get your inspiration)

- Authenticity
- Diversity of Music Styles
- Adversity / World Issues
- Holy Spirit Inspiring
- Business (Understanding)
- Sermons Services
- Personal Devotion
- Inspiration
- Testimony
- Relatable Subjects

- Hymns / Spirituals
- Music Education
- Gift to Others
- Word of God
- Personal Experience

WHAT MAKES A SONG

- Verse
- Chorus
- Bridge
- Vamp
- Tag (exit)
- Melody
- Harmony

- Rhythm
- Lyrics
- Key* (Mode: M,m)
- Tempo
- Vibe / Feel / Mood
- Audience
- Purpose (Context)
- Voicing (Range, etc...)
- Dynamics
- Meter
- Instrumentation
- Theme
- Articulation

QUESTIONS

- Setting a Schedule?
 - Reflect on the songwriting ideas above
- What do we do about a song we feel stuck on?
 - Prayer
 - What is the song about
 - Example: Monique Griffith
 - *Standing Here*
 - Stuck in life and stuck in a song
 - Google: Phrases with what you are dealing with

WRITING - what is writing for me?

- Maybe Liberating
- May be an expression or a reaction to who God is
- God's Pouring + Our Pedagogy
 - Pedagogy = personal skill, development,
 - God can only use that which was presented, meaning God can only use what is being put in...
 - Unlimited (GOD) is pouring into the limited (ME) there is only so much that can be done.
 - EXPANDING PEDAGOGY
 - Resources: Bible, Public Domain, Books
 - Reading: Bible, History, Other Lyrics, Poetry
 - Composition
 - Structure
 - Form
 - Motif
 - Theme & Variation

TOPICS (driving for in life's journey)*FORGIVENESS*

- Backsliding
- God shows mercy or grace
- Guilt or Sorrow
- God is with us
- This Lion of a God who is tender towards me
- Text Verse
 - Faithless He is Faithful
 - If I make my place in Sheol

WORRY

- Before anyone is mine they were His - Song Hook
 - What happens to get here?
 - Acknowledgment
 - Surrender
 - Bible Verse
 - Will always be His, no matter what happens
- Example: Child
 - Unchristian world
 - Finding Rest
 - Needing God's Protection

Songwriting with Nolan Williams Part 2

REACTION:

- Text Painting
 - Driving
 - Long Road (miles and miles of road)
 - Fall:
 - Lack of sight, Kid in the back seat
- Storytelling
 - Contemplative
 - Kids relying on parental figures
- Chords
 - Progression
 - Depicts

THE POWER OF IMAGERY IN SONGWRITING

Exercise 1 P1: Think of an object (noun) and describe it = HOME

- | | | | |
|------------|--------------|------------|----------------|
| - Brick | - Pebbled Rd | - comfort | - warm shelter |
| - Colonial | - Fireplace | - Shutters | - Tall Columns |
| - Loud | - Love | | |

Exercise 1 P2: After describing the object then use those words to make a phrase = HOME

- | | |
|--|---|
| - Driving up the pebbled road | - The sweet fragrance drifts from the open window |
| - The tall columns in the distance | - Children's laughter in the backyard |
| - Grandma rocking in her chair as diamond runs to greet me | |

Exercise 1 P1: Think of an object (noun) and describe it = NEW YORK - The Big Apple

- | | | |
|----------|---------------|--------------------------|
| - busy | - Skyscrapers | - Statue of Liberty |
| - Lights | - Subways | (symbol of freedom) |
| - Noisy | - Pizza | - Empire State (fortune) |
| - Rush | - Crowd | - Times Square |
| - Lost | - Grimy | (Crowdedness) |

Exercise 1 P2: After describing the object then use those words to make a phrase = NEW YORK - Perspective: New Person, why are they coming?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| - Chasing my dream, believing | - Hustling Bustling crowds |
| - On my way to find my dreams | - Feeling lost and invisible |

Quotes about Imagery

1. Always use simple everyday words that would occur in casual convo
2. Beyond the meaning of the actual words you use
 - a. what else are your words doing aka
 - b. what are your words doing to engage your audience (5 senses)
3. Create word Lists to convey a thought with as few words as possible
4. Lyrics need to be matching the words
5. No one aspect of music works alone they all work in a vacuum

APPENDIX B

Post Event Anonymous Interviews by Hymneo Leadership Team

16th Annual AU Music & Worship Conference Hymneo Vespers April 5, 2019

Synthesized Responses

Positive Feedback

- I was hoping it would go on! I didn't want it to end
- When is the next one? How do I get involved?
- Why can't we do more music like this in the church, its relevant
- It was so diverse. I wish there was more.
- For the first time, I actually felt like I could actually worship without people stopping me
- I felt connected to the music and I didn't fall asleep!
- I would actually listen to that stuff in my car
- I wish I knew the songs, I want to join in so I just danced

Physical Actions Perceived (reported and reviewed from concert recording)

- Dancing at the back of the concert hall
- Hands raised

Overall External Negative feedback

- I wish the music genres would have been more mixed up.
- Where was the congregational music?
- This concert was too long and needed to start sooner.
- I wish there was a way to connect with the artists afterward
- This kind of program has been done before.
- It was fine but it wasn't a vespers
- I expected more classical music from Jamila

Physical Actions Perceived (reported and reviewed from concert recording)

- Exiting concert hall
- Waiting in foyer for specific artist only

Individual Artist Responses

Kenric Ramoni

External Positive Feedback

- The first song made me walk to talk to God

- I wasn't expecting that guy to rap but it was so cool
- I really like his testimony, it's like I knew him after that
- I liked the rapping, I connected to what he was saying.

External Negative feedback

- (People walked out during the rapping)
- It felt fake or like he was trying too hard
- The words were really good but it's not my style

Michelle Odinma

External Positive Feedback

- I felt like I had heard it before and I could relate
- It reminded me of a jazz club, very smooth sound
- Her message really struck a chord

External Negative feedback

- It was too familiar
- I didn't feel like I could sing to it
- I wasn't sure if I should dance or just read the words

Ashon Sylvester (Volocean)

External Positive Feedback

- Your music was awesome. Where can I listen to more of it?
- The words were super deep
- I have been dying to hear something new.
- How did you make your music? It has such a great sound.
- You (Volocean) are quite the lyricist.

External Negative feedback

- It (Volocean's Music) feels like something I could hear on the radio. It sounds no different than any other music.
- I don't know if it was for Adventists
- I wish he would have shared his testimony, I wanted to know the artist better (couldn't connect)

APPENDIX C

Post Event Anonymous Student Reflections

Assignment: Integrative Conference Notes & Reflection

Compiled by David A. Williams from LearningHub September 25, 2019

16th Annual AU Music & Worship Conference Hymneo Vespers April 5, 2019

Positive Anonymous Student Reflections

The Worship Conference was a great opportunity to fuel my inspiration for creative and innovative worship ideas. The Friday night portion was impactful in the sense of witnessing various forms of creativity from students. This seemed to be the thing that stood out, with an assortment of talented individuals showcasing creative ways in which worship and liturgy can be beautified.

Friday Evening worship service: This was an incredible service that was innovated and pushed the boundaries of what is traditionally done. Jamila had pulled together some great individual artists and groups to represent a very diverse approach to worship. I was refreshed and blessed. Personally, I was grateful for the option to move.

I didn't have much expectation, because I didn't know what was the program. I knew we talked about in the class about different type and style of worship and music and we need to look beyond the surface, but this style and type presentation was not what I expected. I was little bit like David's wife Michal saying, "how we as Adventist dancing on stage like that!" But I realize I needed to looked at the performance from a different point of view. Instead of judging from my cultural back, I decided to look at from our American culture and younger new generation. I am not custom to this kind of Hip-pop, rap, and radical type of worship music. I was shocked but I am starting to open up and see different type of worship music that is out there.

Friday Evening Reflection To prepare for the Vesper on Friday I had to spend the entire afternoon in the Howard running around doing final preparations. They were many things that were not completed on time. The program was not done until about 10 minutes before the doors opened for the program. And the most stressful thing form me that evening was having to put together over a 150 slides to display the lyrics for each artist. I finished preparing the slides about 2 minutes after the concert was supposed to start. It was a team of about 4 people preparing the slides. This needed to have been done long before the night of the Vesper. During the concert I was responsible for running the slides and doing master of ceremony responsibilities. This was an extremely stressful thing to do. I repeatedly had to run from the front of the stage to the back

of the Howard in order to change slides and do masters of ceremony responsibilities. We needed another person on the team to just run the slides. This was difficult though because the slides were based on the lyrics of the artist and our final artist had lyrics that not many people knew. Overall the concert went well. We received varying feedback but the majority of the people thought it was a unique experience. They enjoyed the display of several different tastes and styles of Christian music. Unfortunately not everyone felt that same way though. One of the things with that was a great irritation to me was having two choirs move on and off the stage on two separate occasions. This was a very cumbersome and time-consuming. And because the concert ran nearly two hours this was an unexpected delay. In future concerts it would be better to have either one wire or both choirs use the stage at one time. In my opinion though, the Vesper was a success and people were moved to experience new Christian music and they liked it. Many people requested this same concert be done again. A few people indicated that this Vesper service reminded them of an old worship service that used to take place on campus called Fusion. Fusion was a compilation of many different types of worship services to create a universal experience for all attendees.

As the week shifted into the Sabbath the Lord blessed me for my faithfulness to show up with a good attitude looking for a blessing. Yes, even in this diverse worship experience where I experienced all kinds of music styles and listened to lectures with a multitude of worship and music opinions and even knowledge given, God blessed me.

I think that the concert on Friday evening was a great initiative. I liked the fact that a lot of seminarians were able to take part of the performance of the song that they wrote with Zork just hours ago. They sang like a well a chorus that used to practice together. Saturday was as usual great. The protagonists of the program did a great

Reflection Hymneo This was probably the part of the conference that I connected with the most. I loved seeing aspiring artists trying to shine forth the gifts that God has blessed them with. It was a bittersweet night for me as I am a musician and need to accept and figure out my future moves in regards to music. I enjoyed seeing how close Jamila and her brother were, especially musically. I wish my sister and I could be like that especially because God has blessed us in that arena as well. The devil took me on a whirlwind that night from thinking about how my sibling relationship is to how much me and my sister resemble as compared to Jamila and her brother; it was a tough night. However, in the end, Jesus prevailed and recalibrated me amen

Sabbath Evening (April 6) Reflection The entire Sabbath experience, I felt, was a good reflection of the things we have been learning in class. Friday night was especially powerful in the statement it made towards diversity in music. I have never been to an event over the Sabbath hours that has been so inclusive of different styles of music as that session was. It was great to

not only see how different people connected with different styles of music, but to also hear original lyrics. This experience challenged me to really think about the attitude I have towards other people's expressions of worship. Just as Timothy Nixon spoke on in the very first session, I realized that I needed to be careful of judging how sincere another person's worship was. I appreciate a wide variety of music styles, but had always been under the mindset that some just weren't alright in a worship setting. Friday night challenged me on that mindset and helped me see how some people view other styles as their expression of worship.

The Friday night/Sabbath day sessions were definitely interesting and edifying. I appreciated the Friday night vespers and the breadth and depth of music that was shown. A lot of the ideas presented were interesting and unique. Michelle Odinma's one of a kind musical theme of Bible stories from the perspective of the "bad guys" is something that I would never even think to do, and hearing her sing Herod's thoughts on the death of John the Baptist and the preeminence of Jesus was highly creative. Hearing the choir sing the choral piece (I can't remember the name of it) about Jesus' night in Gethsemane was intense, and I found myself unconsciously holding my breath during the song.

My Sabbath Day Reflection The Sabbath presentations were all filled with really great information and practical advice that I could see myself taking into the field. The entire conference has a way of making you feel completely committed to bringing new perspectives to worship to our churches. While there is no one method or path to ensuring our churches continue to remain relevant in today's culture, I think that worship is one key to bringing new life to the churches that are struggling to thrive. I think back to the concert and the way that I felt going in. In my mind, I thought this was going to be just another simple and traditional concert with a number of performances that more or less mirror one another. However, I was completely blown away by the sheer variety of performances that were offered. I think the audience was also pleasantly surprised as well and I think what everyone appreciated the most, was that there was something for everyone. No one felt excluded. I think that is one of the key concepts that we need to bring to future worship services that we offer in our churches.

The Friday evening "Hymneo" program was truly something unique and special. I have honestly never experienced worship service of this nature featuring so much original music and such a variety of genres. I was especially blessed by the format that, from my perspective, managed to create an atmosphere of cooperative worship and not just of a performance. In considering why this was the case, I think it largely had to do with the discussions in our class and over the course of the conference that stretched my thinking and opened my mind to worship through music beyond what I traditionally view as worship music. I also think that having the words on the screen aided in allowing the congregation to participate more personally in the music. This idea

of having lyrics on a screen during all music in a service is a great one that I plan to try out when I return to pastoring, even in “special musics.”

My Sabbath experience felt a little stressful on Friday evening since I was hosting some visiting friends this weekend in addition to the Music and Worship Conference. A big motivator and source of joy however was participating on the choral group that accompanied Nick and Tacyana leading worship that evening. Somehow, worship made it all better and the sense of collaboration toward something that drew focus away from myself and all the school related stress ushered in an awesome Sabbath experience. The vespers had such an amazing variety of music, my favorite being Sleep, a piece by the Andrews choir. It almost drew me to tears, I pictured Jesus unable to sleep and wanting to while his disciples neglected him. We had very lively and modern pieces too, I absolutely loved the three backup singers on the last set.

The Friday night service was great for several reasons. First of all, it was very well done. All of the groups that performed were very well prepared and brought great content. I also appreciated the diversity in the program in the groups that were represented.

As I reflect on my time at the Worship Conference I truly enjoyed my Sabbath experiences as well. On Friday night we entered into a space of all different kinds of music coming together. I thought it was great because it stretched me to be exposed to music that I am not used to hearing for worship. My favorite part of the night was the choir performance done by the university singers. I have always loved choirs, but their performance of Sleep by Eric Whitacre was done so well that I felt as though I was brought into a multi-sensory worship experience. The way that they sang and read scripture at the same time was something I have never seen before. It helped me visualise the narrative in scripture that was being read, almost like a movie. A type of music that was harder for me to understand was the music that we ended on. I had a disconnect with the style of music and a seeming irreverence. I do however acknowledge that this is mostly a preference and not a moral obligation for all music to sound like the choir. If that music is what reaches someone’s heart, who am I to put a stop to that?

My experience in the Music and Worship Conference was great. I would like to say that nothing was just completely random or unexpected happen. The evening concert in HPAC was great and also the program was well organized. It truly was a different experience but I am just wondering where do they perform this kind of music style in the Seventh-day Adventist church. Though I enjoyed the concert, there were people who are not used to this kind of worship style. I really like a full band playing or even just piano with great songs. I like all the performance and presentations they were very inspiring and very well executed. However, I believe the sound controller or the IT people need to understand the balance of the songs and the music. When the music over-power the song it just lost the meaning of the song. This is just my opinion.

We started the Sabbath on Friday night at the Howard Performance Art Center, where a few bands and choirs presented an outstanding performance. One of my favorite one was Kenric and his brother, they did phenomenal; he is a pastor's kid and gave his testimony about how we can grow up in Adventist home and still not be a Christian. He writes his own music, and was very engaging with each one of his songs. Also, I liked the other singers who did a little bit more funky music and made us moved with their catchy rhythm. To be honest this is the first time I see this kind of worship experience within adventism, even when I consider myself pretty open minded and liberal. I did not have any issue with it, but I can imagine many people were shocked due to the style of these singers. I love the fact that these singers are still in our church promoting love, peace, and intimacy with our creator. Especially, coming from such a traditional church. They could have left the church, but their love for Jesus kept them in and He gave them a way to minister to others in their own special way.

I believe that those things which divide can also be what brings us together if seen through the eyes of God. Something that impacted me this weekend - and I did feel this way before but this sermon helped reinforce the idea - was the sermon on Friday night. In the Bible, Michal critiqued/judged David as he dressed down and danced before the Lord in an act of worship/praise to God. Only God knows whether or not the worship is directed towards Him... in the end, only God knows our hearts and He's made it clear that it is not our place to Judge but His. With that being said, I think that we should be open to hearing other styles of worship whether it be different cultures or genres. When we are placed in certain contexts, if we choose to be open to their worship style, we can go by unnoticed ready and willing to facilitate the worship to God in whatever way that culture is accustomed to doing rather than pushing our own agendas and creating a divide. I believe that is a better example of being lead by the Spirit of God versus changing things just because it is a personal agenda. The church is meant to be diverse made up of all nations and because a worship style may seem foreign or strange to us, this does not mean that it is foreign and unacceptable in the eyes of God. I am not saying that anything goes, I am saying that we can find common ground in worship styles and genres that will praise God if we are open minded to others before being critical.

The program on Sabbath was more relaxed and more practical and experiential. It began with a wonderful concert at the Howard Performing Arts Center. Just being about to listen to different styles of music. I was impressed by the composition of the songs in particular the scripture songs, I thought they were powerful and I could envision how such music could be incorporated in worship for a powerful worship experience.

I loved the Friday evening vespers experience. It reminded me of things we would do at Walla Walla for vespers- (vespers was a much bigger deal there since it was usually the only main one

on campus, which is much different than how things go at AU). The creativity was awesome. I loved the various artistic expressions, especially through music, but also the unique visuals used as well. The variety of genres was nice, but at times it didn't flow smoothly. And as wonderful as the service was, it was just too long for how late it started. I was so exhausted and tired by the end of it, it was too much sitting and felt more like a performance than a worship experience- which is why I think some people had a hard time getting into it at the end.

Hymneo Presents – An Artisan Vespers Curated by Jamila Sylvester Presenter's Name: Timothy Nixon (Seminary Chapel) Music is one of the most powerful and influential things that we interact with in this present world. Someone once said: give me the music of a nation (people) and I can inform their society for centuries. Music is not only vocal or instrumental sounds that are combined in such a way as to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion but it is also a medium through which people are able to express themselves to God and also to tell their story, to be listened to and to be acknowledged. The musical feast at Friday evening's service - Hymneo Presents- featured a plethora of artistes with their creative perspective and expression to God all of which captured the audience. I appreciated the different genre of both contemporary and conservative musical presentations. Through this experience, I have recognized that God has this amazing ability to use the mystical blending of voices and the sounds from instruments and imbue it with a message of love, tolerance, and diversity which calls for appreciation and understanding in the worship experience. As I sat there in awe in worship, I reflected on David's experience with his wife Michal who thought that her husband's expression of love and praise to God was a complete misrepresentation of his position and a mockery of true worship. I became conscious of my own judgments of the way some people worship; I realized that as a human being I am limited, and unable to tell what is acceptable and what is not, using my own narrow perspective. True worship is a matter of the heart and only God is able to determine whether someone is worshipping or not. 2 Samuel 6:12-15, 20 Jesus defines what true worship is and when he was asked about true worship he said those who worship me must worship in spirit and in truth. This is the criteria of true worship. Friday evening helped me to recognize that we cannot tell the content of the heart of men by the expression on their face. Therefore, the church as a whole needs to appreciate musical expression in a diverse cultural modernistic environment and allow room for the free expression of love to God. It is true that expression of Love is not limited to singing hymns or praise and worship. But music is a medium that we should use to connect with God in ways that other media does not provide for. God must be able to inhabit praise. On Friday evening I felt free and uninhibited in praise to God. The indelible mark of music on the human mind creates for us a medium of worshipping God that is not possible in any other way known to man.

Friday night Vesper Music Worship To me, Friday night's music worship was the climax of the three days' music conference. I have some thoughts about that as the following: 1. The music for

worshipping can be very diverse. In the church where I was at in China, there was only one form: the hymns. Now I see that the key point is that one has a heart for praising God, form is not the most important thing. Sing together with loud voice, the using of drums, the form of rap and mouth skills, the element of blue, solo praising, and so on. I appreciated for this precious night.

2. The audience can express their passion as well. In the music worship process, not only the music performers in the stage, but also the audience are all worshippers. We can express our passion for God by clapping the hands, speaking up to praise the Lord.
3. However, there is one thing I think needs to be cautious. I think to worship the Lord on Sabbath, we should focus on God and hide ourselves. Even the performers need to notice that and try to express their passion for God, but not for anything else.

Vespers Concert Howard Performing Arts Center Reflection: The worship experience was really meaningful as I listen to the variety of artists offering their talents for worship and praises to God. I love every song that was presented and performed during the concert as it opens my mind on a wider perspective that there are a lot of types of music that can be offered to God for praises and worship to Him. Moreover, The most meaningful part for me was my involvement in the praise team. It is really meaningful for me in some ways as it was my first time to stand at the stage of HPAC with much people listening. Involving myself and watching people sing altogether is indeed meaningful for me. Moreover, People are singing the song that we just recently composed. Thinking that you contributed something on the song and a lot of people were benefited and blessed by the song was a wonderful and humbling experience for me. It teaches me a lesson that despite my weakness and reserved character, I need to share and speak up to the things that I know in order to make a contribution for the church and God's people. Moreover, The worship experience was so meaningful for me. To see the bigger picture of our worship was just so amazing, knowing that we have different preferences in music and ways on expressing our praise to God, Our common denominator is Christ and His faithfulness towards us. Application: To maintain diversity in the church with intentionality is very important to maintain respect and creative ways on the worship experience in the church. It is just so meaningful to see that despite we have different colors, music preferences, culture, and background, We are still united in Christ.

Negative Anonymous Student Reflections

Music Conference Reflection: Sabbath begins at sundown, I will begin with Friday night “An Artisan Vespers,” by Hymneo. My experienced: Born and raised as SDA, never experienced disco fever of the 80s and 90s can now say that I have. Vicariously lived the scene from movies, now I have experienced, I supposed? The difference is that no alcoholic beverages being served and save the few performances, choirs and a poem. Funny to say, from reading Doukhan and class, I was ready to experience diversity in music of my life. However prepared, yet I’m still shock. Badly wanted to enjoy, but not, due to a large gap of what I had ready and the reality. In every way, my alarm sensors turned on. In deep thoughts back to Doukhan’s question: “Is music neutral?” Music is neutral on paper, in notations form, but not in presentation or the way it is presented. Now I understand that presentation of music (or style) affects how the listeners will perceived as threat vs. friendly, or just neutral. For example, on paper the word “yes” is neutral, but it can be presented in different ways. Say yes with a smile, that’s friendly; if yes with a frown/ scowl of the eye brows with head lifted, that’s a threat. Word or music gets added meaning from live presentation. In another aspect, high volume can be perceived as threat, I’m not one who listens music at high volume. As such, animals or even baby instinctively takes high volume as a threat. It seems, the purpose & planning of this event is to show case how diverse we can be in exploring the limit of the sky. Musical style is a lot like cuisine; accustomed cuisines are delighted, and different cuisine can be acquired. Case in point of spicy food, I’ve learned to eat spicy food and like it, but at this level is too spicy, hard to enjoy, for most Adventist in musical preferences. I think words and music are very similar; both give emotions, empowers, stimulates, and excites. Both are sound waves. Then words are like monotonous music of a certain range with restriction and lacking in variety. Scripture tells us, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned, (Matt 12:37). Aren’t all just sound waves? But certain sound waves will get you save, but other combinations of sound waves will be condemned. We are called to do all to the glory of God. All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful or buildup, let no one seek his own good but his neighbor, (1Cor 10:23). Understandably, this is vesper turned performance concert (?); not same as carefully chosen song singable by congregation. Music conference rated at 9 out of 10; vesper also 9 out of 10. I’m encouraged and not dismay.

Sabbath Reflection The first aspect of the Sabbath experience was going to the Hymneo concert on Friday night. While the talent was incredible and I was very much blessed, I found ironic that it was part of the conference. During that day I had just spent time learning about what worship is and what worship isn’t one of the ways I had learned what music isn’t was performing on stage with minimal interaction from the congregation besides applauding the talent of the musician. So while yes I was blessed, the irony didn’t escape me.

The Sabbath portion of the worship seminar was interesting. The concert on Friday night left me with mixed emotions and opinions. To me it started powerfully but it did not end well. I really appreciated Kinric's portion of the concert. I believe he had an appropriate balance between emotional expression and relevant theological content combined with excellence in delivery. Even though I don't like Rap, his brother's Rap solo I think was appropriate and effective in reaching a demographic of the audience that relates more to that form of musical expression. It was clear and understandable, and it communicated well. I personally don't think that we need to try and create excitement in our worship in our churches. Dancing is a biblically appropriate expression of worship in my opinion, but should we try to create those instances, or should we allow the Spirit to move and be in control of those times? I think there is a big difference in doing something just because we can, and doing it because it is appropriate, fitting, and warranted. I'm sure that I would be branded as an old-fashioned heretic legalist stuck in a 16th century worship traditionalist, but I am just very uncomfortable with allowing culture to move the church before we can formulate a biblical foundation that is agreed upon by the majority. But I've been wrong before. Perhaps I'm of the sort that would err on the side of caution. Change does not come easy to me when the evidence is not so clear. I also acknowledge that my tastes are very particular in these matters.

Reflection on Music and Worship Conference: In general, the Music and Worship Conference is quite fine. I learned that we could integrate two songs into one and it can be done with the hymns too. I remember that on the Sabbath day, Nicolas Zork led out one of the song services where one of the songs had integrated the doxology with another song that I do not know. It was quite a surprise for me, and I feel that it is special. However, I want to comment about the Friday night Vesper at Howard Performing Arts Center. I honestly felt very disturbed, as most of the music was played way too loud and noisy. I can't even hear the lyrics that were sung. Most did not have PowerPoint for their songs. When any music overpowers the singing, it is not a good thing. I believe that most songs deviated from the principle of good Christian music and did not lead to a reverent and uplifting sense of worship. The songs were claimed to be used for worshipping or praising of the Lord. If that is the case, it should be done reverently. For example, the national anthem of any country, would always be done in a reverent music style with a reverent attitude. I believe we will never find one national anthem of any country that is done in Rock n Roll, Jazz, blues, hip hop, rap, b-box, techno, reggae, R & B styles, etc. I believe the music itself is more powerful and influential than the lyrics. I believe that we need a good diversity in music for church worship. For example, if my church is a Southeast Asian church, our church should not just sing the music styles of hymns or gospel songs that were written by the Europeans or the American. Our church can also include music styles from Chinese, Malay, Indonesian, Philippines, etc. However, there should be a balance in choosing the right diversity that is in harmony with God's principle in music. Christians should distinguish what is sacred music and what is secular music. Although I do not oppose diversity in various Christian worship styles too,

however, I do believe that not all or any kind of music styles are acceptable for the church worship, nor even suitable for Christians to listen to on a daily basis. Some music styles are obviously conveying the messages of sensuality, seduction, anger, rebellious spirit, and etc. Just like one of the speakers of the Music and Worship Conference said, that when we put a Christian lyrics into another kind of music style, its meaning may be changed and be different. On Friday night Vesper, some of the songs were sung in a very sensual way and appeared seducing, plus, with the lighting effects, I thought I was brought into a nightclub. I grew up in a church that taught and advised its members not to go to a nightclub kind of places, where they are inappropriate for Christian to go to (back then, all the churches, including the Sunday churches, discouraged their members to go to this kind of places). Satan knew that since Christians were not willing to go to his “house” (the night club), so he slowly brought his night club into the Christian churches (Charismatic churches). Unfortunately, and sadly, now the “night club” has entered into our Seventh-day Adventist churches and even in our Seminary here too. The music on Friday night vesper has crossed the line too much. “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” (1 John 2 :16) “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.” (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)

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