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**“HOW DID THEY GET THERE?”
EXPLORING HOW CAREER WORSHIP DIRECTORS
BECAME EQUIPPED FOR LONG-TERM VOCATIONAL
WORSHIP MINISTRY IN REFORMED CHURCHES**

By

STEPHEN A. WHITNER

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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Abstract

Modern worship directors in Reformed churches are expected to be diversely proficient as musicians, shepherding pastors, administrators, and theologians. They also serve in a time of hotly debated issues, such as traditional worship versus contemporary worship. In the midst of these challenges, Reformed denominations have been slow to develop comprehensive training for aspiring church musicians. This begs the question, “Where and how are worship directors being equipped for worship ministry in Reformed churches?” The literature suggests that on-the-job experience and mentoring within the local church, as well as musical training in academic institutions, are important components in the development of worship directors. The literature also suggests that Reformed seminaries could serve a more important role in the development of worship directors. The purpose of this study was to explore how career worship directors became equipped for long-term vocational worship ministry in the Reformed church.

The study employed a qualitative design, using semi-structured interviews with ten demographically diverse worship directors from five states spanning the southeastern United States. The findings revealed that the participants received extensive equipping in the areas of musicality, spiritual formation, and leadership skills, but the results of the study were inconclusive regarding the extent of equipping in the area of Reformed theology of worship. The findings also demonstrated that on-the-job experience and mentoring within the local church, as well as musical training in academic institutions, were primary factors in the development of the worship directors. For some worship directors, Reformed academic institutions provided valuable assistance in the equipping process, particularly in the area of Reformed theology.

This study provided three primary conclusions. First, modeling, mentoring, and on-the-job experience in the local church, from early childhood to adulthood, can significantly influence the development of worship directors in Reformed churches. Secondly, academic institutions with quality music programs, from early childhood to adulthood, can significantly influence the development of worship directors in Reformed churches. Thirdly, Reformed academic institutions, particularly during college years and early adulthood, can significantly influence the development of worship directors in Reformed churches.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The worship of God is the highest calling of all humans. Hughes Oliphant Old, professor of Reformed theology and worship at Erskine Theological Seminary in Due West, South Carolina, states, “We worship God because God created us to worship him. Worship is at the center of our existence, at the heart of our reason for being.”¹ Similarly, in his book *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions*, John Piper asserts, “Worship is ultimate...because God is ultimate.... Worship abides forever!”²

This high view of worship represents more than the opinions of a few enthusiastic theologians; the scriptures are replete with commands to worship God. The psalmist proclaims, “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name, worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.”³ Later, the psalmist continues, “Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.”⁴ Jesus provides insight to his heavenly father’s high regard for worship when he states, “The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such

¹ Hughes Oliphant Old, *Worship: Reformed According to the Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 1.

² John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 17.

³ Psalm 29:2.

⁴ Psalm 95:6-7.

people to worship him.”⁵ The Apostle Paul urges his fellow believers to lay their whole beings before God as an act of worship, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”⁶

This high regard for the worship of God has been an important trademark of the Reformed faith dating back to the Reformation. One of the primary motivating factors for the reformers’ departure from the Catholic Church was the abuse taking place in corporate worship.⁷ The first doctrinal statement of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, a seminal theological document for many Reformed denominations, is “The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.”⁸ Old summarizes the early reformers’ convictions about worship when he states:

Throughout Scripture we find commandments to worship God and commandments regarding worship.... True worship is an act of obedience to the law of God. Reformed theology with its Augustinian sense for the continuity between the Old and New Testaments has taken very seriously what the first table of the law has to say about worship.⁹

Because God takes both worship and obedience to his law very seriously, it should be no surprise that he instituted a group of worship leaders in the Old Testament to direct the people in obedient, God-centered worship. These worship leaders were known as the

⁵ John 4:23.

⁶ Romans 12:1.

⁷ Elsie A. McKee, "Reformed Worship in the Sixteenth Century," in *Christian Worship in Reformed Churches Past and Present*, ed. Lukas Vischer (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 8-11.

⁸ *Westminster Shorter Catechism* Answer #1.

⁹ Old, 3.

Levites, and they served the nation of Israel in multiple ways.¹⁰ Some were priests who offered sacrifices;¹¹ some were song leaders.¹² They handled a plethora of administrative responsibilities, such as the maintenance and repair of the tabernacle,¹³ and later the temple.¹⁴ There were tools and utensils for worship to be stored and distributed;¹⁵ there were people and animals to be ushered from one area to another.¹⁶ The Levites also served as experts of the law, and they were entrusted with the responsibility of communicating God's commandments in a clear and accurate fashion.¹⁷ It is no stretch to say that the Levites were the guardians of Old Testament worship of God.¹⁸

While a number of New Testament passages indicate that members of the early church regularly gathered for worship,¹⁹ very little is said about the leadership of worship in the early church. Because the early church read scripture, sang,²⁰ prayed, preached, and celebrated the Lord's Supper,²¹ it is safe to assume that there were people who planned and led these services, but Donald Hustad, former senior professor of church music and

¹⁰ Numbers 3:12-13.

¹¹ Numbers 3:9-10.

¹² 2 Chronicles 29:30.

¹³ Numbers 1:50.

¹⁴ 2 Chronicles 23:6.

¹⁵ 1 Chronicles 9:28-29.

¹⁶ 2 Chronicles 31:2.

¹⁷ 2 Chronicles 34:13.

¹⁸ Numbers 1:53.

¹⁹ Acts 2:42-47.

²⁰ Colossians 3:16

²¹ Acts 2:42.

worship at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, believes it is unlikely that these worship leaders were professionals.²²

During the fifth century, congregational singing was largely eliminated, and church music was handled by musically trained choirs.²³ For centuries, the church musicians were primarily trained through an apprentice system within the churches. According to Talmage Dean, former dean of the School of Music at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, “The choirboys became the organists, composers, and conductors for each succeeding generation.”²⁴ During the Reformation, John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli eliminated the church choir, while Martin Luther retained the choir to lead congregational singing.²⁵ Many others in the free-church traditions, such as Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists, sought to distance themselves from Catholic worship by terminating their choirs and appointing a “precentor” to announce the psalms, set the pitch, and line the phrases for the congregation.²⁶

The early American churches followed patterns similar to those of their European predecessors until the evangelical expansion of churches in America during the nineteenth century revivalist movement, which:

...created demands for musicians with new commitments and new skills in conducting volunteer choirs, composing new music, and leading congregational singing. The singing schools provided the basic musical

²² Donald P. Hustad, *Jubilate 2: Church Music in Worship and Renewal* (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Co., 1993), 76.

²³ *Ibid.*, 420.

²⁴ Talmage W. Dean, *A Survey of Twentieth Century Protestant Church Music in America* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1988), 164.

²⁵ Harry Eskew and Hugh T. McElrath, *Sing with Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Hymnology* (Nashville: Church Street Press, 1995), 115.

²⁶ Hustad, 77.

needs of the small church, but the choirs and congregations of mass evangelism required specialized training in leadership, vocal instruction, band and orchestral instruments.²⁷

By the late nineteenth century, public school music education was improving the singing of amateur choirs in larger towns and cities. In rural America, “singing schools” contributed to the training of singers and development of church music leadership.²⁸

During the early twentieth century, “no uniform denominational standards were in practice, and few of the established institutions of higher learning were authorized, or qualified, to train musicians for the growing demands of church music.”²⁹ Non-liturgical churches began to train their children through graded choir programs, and occasionally a church would hire someone to lead those programs, but “it was commonly understood...that the ministry of music was performed by lay persons without compensation and in their spare time.”³⁰

During the last sixty years, “the concept of a professional ministry of music has been adopted by a growing number of churches.”³¹ Increasingly, churches are hiring part-time and full-time “ministers of music” to lead their music.³² As in the days of the Levites, once again there is a growing professional guild of musicians to oversee the worship of God.

²⁷ Dean, 164.

²⁸ Hustad, 78.

²⁹ Dean, 164.

³⁰ Hustad, 85-86.

³¹ Ibid., 75.

³² Ibid., 82.

Problem Statement

Modern day church music directors in the Reformed church face many challenges. One of those challenges is the wide range of expectations and responsibilities that come with the position. Paul Jones, organist and music director at Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, lists four roles that modern music directors need to fill: musician, theologian-pastor, administrator, and teacher.³³ How are aspiring Reformed church music directors being equipped for such diverse ministry positions?

Denominations such as the Southern Baptists and the Lutherans have developed rich traditions in their seminaries to train ministers of music.³⁴ However, Reformed denominations have been much slower to develop comprehensive seminary training programs for aspiring church musicians. Jones laments:

Reformed seminaries are not producing music directors, though some are training “worship pastors.”... Basically, there is no graduate school or seminary where a Reformed young person can study both music and theology at the highest possible level, without having to compromise.³⁵

In the absence of strong Reformed seminary training, where are future Reformed music directors receiving their training as theologians, pastors, teachers, and administrators of church ministry?

Another challenge encountered by modern day church music directors is the seismic shift that has been taking place in church music for the last sixty years. As Greg Scheer, minister of worship at Church of the Servant and music associate with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship in Grand Rapids, Michigan, notes:

³³ Paul S. Jones, *Singing and Making Music: Issues in Church Music Today* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 2006), 140-143.

³⁴ Ibid., 144.

³⁵ Ibid., 144-145.

Two worlds collide in today's worship: the world of the classically trained organist, choir director, or music minister, and the world of the play-by-ear, chord-chart-reading pop musician. Although these worlds have much in common, they rarely meet and they have no common language.³⁶

According to Barry Liesch, professor of music at Biola University in La Mirada, California, this "revolution in worship styles" which has swept across North America has created new challenges for pastors and worship leaders seeking to maneuver hotly debated issues such as "hymns versus choruses, seeker services versus worship services, choirs versus worship teams, traditional versus contemporary styles, and flowing praise versus singing one song at a time."³⁷

The Reformed church has been affected by these cultural changes. As senior pastor of Independent Presbyterian Church in Savannah, Georgia, Terry Johnson, notes:

Today, even among conservative Presbyterians one can never know when visiting their churches whether they will worship in the style of the Revivalistic Baptists, the Charismatics, the Episcopalians, 1950's styled Presbyterians, or the non-worship of the "seeker-friendly" model.³⁸

In the midst of increasing diversity in Reformed church music, where and how are aspiring music directors being trained to lead music and worship in Reformed worship services?

On the topic of music training in the church, there is a great deal of literature on building a children's music program. But in light of the changing landscape of church music and churches moving away from more traditional church music forms, this material is not particularly relevant to the training of future worship leaders. There are

³⁶ Greg Scheer, *The Art of Worship: A Musician's Guide to Leading Modern Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006), 11.

³⁷ Barry Liesch, *The New Worship: Straight Talk on Music and the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 13.

³⁸ Terry L. Johnson, *Leading in Worship* (Oak Ridge, TN: The Covenant Foundation, 1996), 1.

many modern books discussing Reformed theology of worship, however most of these books are heavy on theology and liturgical application, but light on equipping worship leaders.³⁹ There are also many modern books⁴⁰ and articles⁴¹ providing instruction for existing worship directors on how to build adult worship teams (i.e. praise bands) or how to strengthen their worship ministry. However, most of these books and articles are from non-Reformed authors, and the vast majority work under the assumption that the worship directors have already been trained enough to hold their leadership positions.

How did fruitful Reformed worship directors become equipped to lead a worship ministry? What experiences from their younger years served to develop their musicality? What experiences shaped their spiritual lives and prepared them for pastoral ministry? Where did they learn important leadership skills, such as how to administrate programs and manage people? What experiences shaped their theology of worship, and how is that theology implemented in the worship of Reformed churches? Simply stated, how did they get there? Nothing in the literature thoroughly addresses these questions.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore how career worship directors became equipped for long-term vocational worship ministry in the Reformed church. In order to research this topic, four areas of literature were important to understand: church music

³⁹ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009); John M. Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, Co., 1996); Timothy J. Keller, "Reformed Worship in the Global City," in *Worship by the Book*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002); Jeffrey J. Meyers, *The Lord's Service: The Grace of Covenant Renewal Worship* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003).

⁴⁰ Liesch; Rory Noland, *The Heart of the Artist* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999); see also Scheer.

⁴¹ Paul Baloch, "A Blue-Collar Singer," *Worship Leader*, November/December 2011, 20; Rory Noland, "The Worshipping Artist," *Worship Leader*, July/August 2011, 28-31.

education, spiritual formation, leadership development, and Reformed theology of worship. With this in mind, four research questions guided this study:

1. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' musicality?
 - a) During childhood and youth years
 - b) During college and early adulthood
 - c) During the early years of work in the church
2. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' spiritual formation?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church
3. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' leadership skills?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church
4. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' Reformed theology of worship?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church

Significance of the Study

This study has significance for churches, current career worship directors, and Reformed colleges and seminaries. This study can provide guidance for churches that have identified musically gifted children, youth, and young adults in their midst, and are seeking meaningful ways to equip these students and young adults to lead worship.

This study can also provide encouragement and direction to current worship directors who desire to assist in the development of future Reformed worship leaders. Recognizing that this type of development within the lives of future worship leaders may be organic, involving growth alternating and overlapping among musicality, spiritual

formation, leadership skills, and theology of worship, can provide heightened awareness of important opportunities and milestones in the fluid development of worship leaders.

Finally, this study can provide Reformed colleges and seminaries with a greater understanding of the unique needs and challenges faced by aspiring career worship directors, which will allow these institutions to assist in the development of future Reformed worship directors.

Definition of Terms

Worship: Actively and accurately rendering unto the one true and living God, the glory, honor, and submission due to him. This word may be used in different contexts, such as people singing worship music, people gathering together for corporate worship, or people living a life of worship.

Worship Director: Someone who has been hired by a church to oversee the music and worship ministries of that church. Similar titles are “music director,” “music minister,” and “worship minister.”

Worship Leader: Someone who leads worship during church worship services. This may be the worship director, but it may include volunteer lay leaders.

Long-Term Vocational Worship Minister: Someone who has served as a worship director in one or more churches for ten or more consecutive years.

Reformed Church: Protestant denominations that trace their historical and theological roots back to those Reformation era churches that were established under the teachings and influence of Swiss Reformers Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin. These churches, which were particularly concentrated in Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Scotland, were

noted for their high view of the scriptures and their call to reject much of Roman Catholicism of the day and to return to the teachings and practices of the early church.

PCA: An abbreviation for the Reformed denomination, Presbyterian Church in America.

Traditional Music: The wide field of classical church music and hymnody, as well as the way that music was performed during the first sixty years of the twentieth century in many protestant American churches, that predates the 1960s cultural and music revolution in America.

Contemporary Music: The wide field of church music that has been composed and performed in churches since the 1960s cultural and music revolution in America. Much of this church music follows the musical styles and instrumentation of secular popular music, although the lyrics will have religious meaning and purpose.

Christian Contemporary Music (CCM): A growing subset and industry of contemporary church music that features music producers such as *Hillsong Music* and *EMI*, and is also supported and fueled through businesses such as CCM magazine and Church Copyright License, Incorporated (CCLI), which provides a plethora of music resources for church musicians.

Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) Music: Reformed church music that emerged during the 1980s from the PCA's college campus ministry, Reformed University Fellowship. This movement, which began with college students applying new music to old hymn texts, has rapidly spread throughout the PCA and beyond and is fueled by producers such as *Indelible Grace Music* and *Red Mountain Music*. The *Calvin Institute of Worship* produced the "RUF Hymnbook," an online resource of sheet music and recordings that are widely used in Reformed churches and campus ministries.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to explore how career worship directors became equipped for long-term vocational worship ministry in the Reformed church. In order to research this topic, four areas of literature were important to understand: church music education, spiritual formation, leadership development, and Reformed theology of worship.

Church Music Education

When exploring the topic of how worship directors are equipped for vocational worship ministry in the Reformed church, it is important to understand how people are musically equipped, particularly in the church. Donald Hustad, senior professor of church music and worship at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, states:

Those who seek to prepare fully to be ministers of music face many challenges. They must become well-trained *musicians* and *music educators*.... They also must be prepared as *church* musicians, understanding fully the essential contribution of this functional art to the service of God and the church.⁴²

Edward Foley, professor of liturgy and music at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Illinois, concurs when he states, “Church musicians (as implied by the duality of their

⁴² Hustad, 93.

title) are responsible to two worlds: church and music. As such they need to be trained ecclesially and musically.”⁴³

So what musical knowledge and abilities are necessary to lead church music, and how do people obtain this knowledge and these abilities? There is not much literature available specifically detailing how Reformed worship directors receive their musical training and education, but there is an extensive body of literature on music education in the secular world and in the broader church. Therefore, in order to answer the questions above, the following areas will be examined: the importance of music education, music education in the church, musical expectations for modern worship directors, and ways that worship leaders are being equipped in Reformed churches

The Importance of Music Education

Music is an integral part of the Christian church. As Helen Kemp, choral clinician and Westminster Choir College faculty member, writes in her book *Music in Church Education with Children*, “Christians consider music to be one of God’s great gifts to man, to be used for the enrichment of human life and for the enhancement of man’s worship of God.”⁴⁴ But according to Paul Jones, organist and music director at Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in order to have quality music in worship, worship leaders need to possess some level of music education.⁴⁵

When discussing how worship directors are musically equipped for worship ministry, it is helpful to understand how the music education process worked in biblical

⁴³ Edward Foley, "Training Church Musicians: What Are the Appropriate Methods?," *Theological Education* 34, no. 2 (1998): 17.

⁴⁴ Helen Kemp, *Music in Church Education with Children* (Dallas: Choristers Guild Publishers, 1975), 7.

⁴⁵ Jones, 140.

times, in the church, and in the secular world. As Rhonda Edge, assistant professor of church music education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, states, “A knowledge of a history of...music education in one's denomination and in public and private schools is important in expanding future ministry opportunities through music.”⁴⁶ With this in mind, the following sections will examine the biblical foundation for music education, as well as the history and philosophy of music education throughout western civilization.

Biblical Foundation for Music Education

The teaching of music and the training of musicians are important concepts that are both implicitly and explicitly demonstrated throughout the scriptures. As Connie Fortunato, founder and director of Music Camp International, states, “The leaders of music ministry in Scripture had a responsibility to teach. Music education has been a part of the church since the Old Testament.”⁴⁷

Without doubt, the clearest example of music education in the Old Testament is seen during the reign of King David. After David moved the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, he commanded the chiefs of the Levites to appoint some of their musically gifted brothers to “play loudly on musical instruments, on harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise sounds of joy.”⁴⁸ Chenaniah, a highly skilled and knowledgeable musician and singer, was appointed to direct the choir of singers and the overall music program.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Rhonda J. Edge, "Ministry of Music in the Life of a Child," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 33, no. 3 (1991): 28-29.

⁴⁷ Connie Fortunato, *Children's Music Ministry: A Guide to Philosophy and Practice* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1981), 33.

⁴⁸ 1 Chronicles 15:16.

⁴⁹ 1 Chronicles 15:22, 27.

Asaph, poet, composer, singer, and percussionist, served as the chief musician under Chenaniah,⁵⁰ and he was “entrusted with the dissemination and preservation of worship music.”⁵¹ Jeduthun and Heman, who both played multiple instruments, prophesied as they played and led in worship.⁵² These men were given the great responsibility of training and directing their sons and other musical relatives—who numbered a total of four thousand people—in the performance of worship music for Israel.⁵³

From this account, it seems clear that some type of music education had been taking place among the Israelites prior to the period when David became king. As Fortunato states:

This musical talent did not just happen all of a sudden. It was the result of careful planning and foundation building. David could not have appointed the thousands of singers if he had not had a reservoir of many more singers whose musical training had been an integral part of the educational process throughout the history of the Israelite nation.⁵⁴

Undoubtedly, the tradition of music had been passed down from one generation to another, so that when David was ready to institute this massive worship music program, many of the resources were already in place. It is worth noting that this guild of worship leaders was such an important part of Israel’s worship that approximately five hundred years later when the people of Judah returned to Jerusalem and the surrounding

⁵⁰ 1 Chronicles 16:4-5.

⁵¹ Jones, 35.

⁵² 1 Chronicles 25:1.

⁵³ 1 Chronicles 23:5; 1 Chronicles 25:2-5.

⁵⁴ Fortunato, 29.

countryside from the Babylonian exile, one of their first orders of business was to restore this musical guild of worship leaders.⁵⁵

Why did so much effort and so many resources go into this musical guild? What purpose could be so great that this group of musicians would perpetuate their “music program” for so many centuries? The ultimate purpose for this guild of musicians was quite clear—to lead the people in giving thanks to the Lord for his goodness and steadfast love, which endures forever.⁵⁶ In the following centuries, this theme of thanksgiving was repeated through singing,⁵⁷ shouting,⁵⁸ bowing,⁵⁹ playing instrumental music,⁶⁰ offerings,⁶¹ and even through a choir leading an army to battle.⁶² These families of musicians were nurtured and trained in order to lead God’s people in praising his eternal goodness.

According to Fortunato, this biblical foundation of music education has been inherited by the church. As she states, “Church leadership that seeks to build its music ministry on the scriptural model must take into consideration the aspect of providing music education. In the Old Testament there was an active training program for both children and adults.”⁶³ It was through the Levites’ “ministry of teaching that music could

⁵⁵ Ezra 3:10.

⁵⁶ 1 Chronicles 16:8.

⁵⁷ 1 Chronicles 16:7-9

⁵⁸ Ezra 3:11.

⁵⁹ 2 Chronicles 7:3-6.

⁶⁰ 2 Chronicles 5:13.

⁶¹ 2 Chronicles 31:2.

⁶² 2 Chronicles 20:21.

be perpetuated as an integral part of worship” for God’s people, and that tradition has been passed on to the church today.⁶⁴

History and Philosophy of Music Education in Western Civilization

While music education was taking place in the nation of Israel, it was also an integral part of early western civilization. Some of the earliest writings on the philosophy and practice of music education date back to the second millennium B.C., when the Greeks invaded the Mediterranean area.⁶⁵ Music and music education were important elements of their culture because in the minds of the Greeks, they assisted in building “citizens of character, stamina, and grace.”⁶⁶ Plato⁶⁷ also believed that music and the arts helped maintain traditional cultural values.⁶⁸

Music education was important in the Christian church. Throughout the first millennium, formal music education was largely confined to the church.⁶⁹ However, Charles Leonhard, professor of music at University of Illinois, and Robert House, director of the school of music at Southern Illinois University, point out that much of the music curriculum in cathedral and monastery schools at this time was “studied as pure

⁶³ Fortunato, 33.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Charles Leonhard, and Robert W. House, *Foundations and Principles of Music Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1972), 47.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 48.

⁶⁷ C. 428 B.C. – c.348 B.C.

⁶⁸ Michael L. Mark, "The Evolution of Music Education Philosophy from Utilitarian to Aesthetic," in *Music Education Research: An Anthology from the Journal of Research in Music Education*, ed. Harry E. Price (Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference, 1982), 28.

⁶⁹ Leonhard, 49-50; Mark, 29.

science, requiring absolutely no understanding of live music nor any skill in performance.”⁷⁰

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, music education moved into the university setting, where the music curricula moved away from purely theoretical and began to incorporate the practical study of music.⁷¹ However, according to Leonhard and House, throughout this period the common people developed their own musical traditions, which were largely separate from the liberal education or cathedral choirs. “Practical musicianship was passed from father to son and from one member of a traveling troupe to another.”⁷²

During the Reformation period, the need for a universal music education increased. Leonhard notes, “With the impact of the humanistic philosophy and the advent of Protestantism,”⁷³ which placed an emphasis on the common people being able to sing in worship,⁷⁴ music began to be “prized for its intrinsic beauty and worth and for being naturally expressive of religious feelings.”⁷⁵ However, despite the advances in music education, in sixteenth century England, “the common people were still poorly schooled, and their musical development must have been on a lower level than we can imagine.”⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Leonhard, 49.

⁷¹ Ibid., 50.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Hustad, 420-421.

⁷⁵ Leonhard, 50.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 51.

During this time, the early colonists migrated to America looking for religious freedom, and it did not take long for congregational singing to become an integral part of their worship.⁷⁷ Because the congregational singing was of such poor quality, church-sponsored singing schools began to appear in the early 1700s.⁷⁸ Over the next one hundred years, these schools were so effective that in 1838, Lowell Mason, a leading figure in American church music, convinced the Boston school board to include music education in the public elementary schools.⁷⁹ This model soon spread to other schools throughout the country.⁸⁰

During the early twentieth century, children's music clubs exploded across the country, and by the 1940s there were two thousand and five hundred music clubs.⁸¹ In 1926, John F. Williamson established the Westminster Choir College with the belief that "training in choirs prepared children and older youth to be literate, capable singers in the congregation, whether or not they continued as members of the adult choir."⁸² As a result, church graded choirs began to flourish, particularly in the eastern and southern parts of the country, and these choirs "became the basis of a full-time ministry in many non-liturgical churches, and Westminster supplied many of their music leaders."⁸³ Music education also grew and improved in the public schools. As Leonhard and House noted in

⁷⁷ Ibid., 55.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 56.

⁷⁹ Dorothy T. McDonald and Gene M. Simons, *Musical Growth and Development: Birth through Six* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989), 11.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ William Jensen Reynolds, "The Graded Choir Movement among Southern Baptists," *Baptist History and Heritage* 19, no. 1 (1984): 55.

⁸² Hustad, 421.

⁸³ Ibid., 78.

the 1970s, “Music teaching has become more effective, on the whole, because the profession has reached a certain level of maturity.... Today, practically every child has some opportunity to extend his musical responsiveness within the schools.”⁸⁴

However, there has been a growing concern among church music educators in recent years. Edge notes that technological changes in American society, government budget cuts, and standardized testing—which does not work well in assessing musical skills—have led to the “demise of music in the lives of children in the public schools since the 1970s.”⁸⁵ Jones concurs, “Sadly, more and more we are witnessing the removal of music from the core of American education.”⁸⁶

Jones also expresses his concern that the church is abdicating its responsibility to teach the children of God to sing when it relies solely on secular music education to teach the children.⁸⁷ He contends that the church should take a leadership role in providing music education to children.⁸⁸ Edge agrees, “Because of the demise of music education in the public schools, churches have the unique opportunity...to minister through music to children who might otherwise never come to church.”⁸⁹ Much like musicians throughout church history, the church has both the opportunity and responsibility to be training musicians to “teach the children of God to sing.”⁹⁰

⁸⁴ Leonhard, 72.

⁸⁵ Edge, 29.

⁸⁶ Jones, 149.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 151.

⁸⁹ Edge, 29.

⁹⁰ Jones, 149.

Music Education in the Church

When speaking of music education in the church, Jones declares, “God has endowed every person with at least some potential to be musical.”⁹¹ Jones argues that it is the church’s responsibility to provide music education, “The bottom line is this: our churches and Sunday schools need to be involved in teaching singing and basic musical proficiency.”⁹² The following sections demonstrate how people of all ages are typically equipped through music education in the church.

Church Music Education for Children

When speaking of church music for children, Fortunato argues, “A biblically based children's music program will have...music education (including all elements of music literacy, appreciation, and involvement)...”⁹³ Interestingly, research has shown that the preschool and kindergarten years are the prime time for musical instruction.⁹⁴ As Rhonda Edge Buesher and Lyndel Vaught, associate professor of church music at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, observe:

The preschool years are the most important years of musical development because they are the years of developmental music aptitude.... Music education research has shown that musical training significantly affects preschoolers’ music aptitude. The singing success of youth choirs, adult choirs, and senior adult choirs depends upon the level at which music aptitude stabilizes after training in the preschool years.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Ibid., 148.

⁹² Ibid., 149.

⁹³ Fortunato, 87.

⁹⁴ Ibid., xiv.

⁹⁵ Rhonda Edge Buescher and W. Lyndel Vaught, "Music Education: Its Role in Faith Development and Spiritual Growth," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 38, no. 2 (1996): 4.

Ironically, those prime years for music instruction are the very years that have traditionally been neglected in many church and music education programs.⁹⁶

Between ages six and eight, children rapidly gain muscular coordination and mental comprehension.⁹⁷ As the children progress through elementary school, they are increasingly capable of reading notes and melodic passages, as well as recognizing specific rhythmic patterns. This is one of the most aggressive stages of intellectual development.⁹⁸ Edge maintains that by the time children leave sixth grade, they ideally will have developed “a positive attitude toward and an understanding of the use of music at church and in their world.”⁹⁹ They will also have developed the musical skills of listening, moving to music, singing with confidence, playing musical instruments, creating music, and reading and writing music.¹⁰⁰ Finally, the children will have gained knowledge and understanding of important areas of church music, such as worship and hymnology.¹⁰¹

Church Music Education for Youth

Because of the significant physical and emotional changes taking place during the teen years, youth choirs are often divided up between middle school (or junior high) and high school (or senior high). During the middle school years, most boys and girls experience puberty, leading to voice changes and mercurial behavior, both of which can

⁹⁶ John Feierabend, "Music in Early Childhood," in *Readings in Early Childhood Music Education*, ed. Barbara L. Andress and Linda M. Walker (Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference, 1992), 90.

⁹⁷ Hustad, 429.

⁹⁸ Fortunato, 79.

⁹⁹ Edge, 28.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

make working with this age group a challenge.¹⁰² These vocal changes, coupled with additional physical and psychological changes, make singing, and the enjoyment of singing, very difficult for adolescents.¹⁰³ In the past, the prevailing philosophy for this age group was to have the boys stop singing until their voices were set (out of fear that they would experience damage to their voices),¹⁰⁴ but there is a growing sentiment among educators and medical experts that in a “carefully monitored program of voice development, child and adolescent voices will thrive and avoid abuse.”¹⁰⁵ When speaking of older youth, Hustad declares, “Mentally, these youth are at their peak. Vocally, they are just short of being adults.”¹⁰⁶ In addition to vocal opportunities, Hustad notes that high school students “love to participate, to play all sorts of instruments (orchestral, guitars, drums, Orff instruments, and handbells), to lead singing, or to be an assistant to the choir director.”¹⁰⁷

Church Music Education for Adults

According to Hustad, “Music education in the church does not stop with teenagers. If there is validity in the music activities of the college, conservatory, university, or seminary, there is obviously much yet to be learned by adults in the church choir.”¹⁰⁸ Hustad believes that choirs “provide an opportunity for the development of

¹⁰² Hustad, 432.

¹⁰³ John Simons, “Working with Middle School Church Choirs,” in *Music Ministry: A Guidebook*, ed. Donald C. Measels (Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys Publishing Inc., 2004), 92.

¹⁰⁴ Kenneth H. Phillips, *Teaching Kids to Sing* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 3-4.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰⁶ Hustad, 433.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 433-434.

individuals in the church, as persons, as musicians, and as Christians.”¹⁰⁹ Musically, adult choirs provide opportunities to learn vocal techniques, and to grow in knowledge and practice of elements like intonation, rhythms, articulation, dynamic control, and phrasing.¹¹⁰

Other Church Music Education Opportunities

However, singing and choirs are not the only ways church members experience music education in the church. According to Tracy Wilson, minister of music at First Baptist Church in Dandridge, Tennessee, bell choirs are an excellent way to involve both children and adults, and particularly those adults who would never join a vocal ensemble.¹¹¹ Bell choir members will also learn elements of rhythm, dynamics, articulations, and general musicality.¹¹²

Orchestras and instrumental ensembles provide a good way to involve a wide range of musicians of all ages in the church. As Hustad notes, “In more typical churches the ensemble consists of a motley group of instruments which usually has more winds than strings.”¹¹³ Most significantly, “the use of instruments allows more individuals—those who play and may not be experts in singing—to offer their unique praise to God in the service of the church.”¹¹⁴ Praise bands, or worship teams, also provide opportunities

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 435.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 421.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 435.

¹¹¹ Tracy Wilson, "The Church Handbell Program," in *Music Ministry: A Guidebook*, ed. Donald C. Measels (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing Inc., 2004), 122.

¹¹² Ibid., 121.

¹¹³ Hustad, 508.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

for musical growth for a variety of ages. As Greg Scheer, minister of worship at Church of the Servant and music associate with the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, both in Grand Rapids, Michigan, observes:

It is important that your team structure allows for the growth and mentoring of younger or inexperienced musicians.... We need to foster the growth and discovery of gifts of those under our care—this is the difference between *using* and *nurturing* the musicians God has given us.¹¹⁵

Matching experienced musicians with inexperienced musicians and increasingly providing musical leadership opportunities for younger musicians, such as college students, are good ways to encourage musical growth.¹¹⁶

Musical Expectations for Modern Worship Directors

According to Hustad and Scheer, the landscape of music ministry has changed dramatically in the last fifty years.¹¹⁷ Gone are the days when music leadership was largely provided by lay volunteers¹¹⁸ and the primary task of music leaders was to direct the choir or to play the organ.¹¹⁹ The responsibilities of worship leaders have become far more expansive.¹²⁰ With this in mind, the following sections will discuss musical expectations for modern worship directors.

Worship Directors Are Expected to Lead in the Worship Music

According to Jones, “The music director...whether he leads singing from the pulpit/lectern or from the organ bench, is involved in leading worship—in helping the

¹¹⁵ Scheer, 35.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 35-36.

¹¹⁷ Hustad, 85-86; Scheer, 215.

¹¹⁸ Hustad, 85-86.

¹¹⁹ Scheer, 215.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 215-217.

congregation to praise God, to pray to him, and to proclaim his Word.”¹²¹ This process begins as they “plan the music for all the regular and special services.”¹²² Bob Kauflin, director of worship development for Sovereign Grace Ministries, notes that worship directors should draw upon a broad knowledge of appropriate, quality music when choosing what music to use in worship.¹²³ They should also choose music with contextual sensitivity, taking into consideration their congregations’ demographic mixes and levels of spiritual maturity.¹²⁴ As Hustad notes:

Remember that music, like speech, is a language; it should be intelligible to those who are expected to share it and to respond. They will understand that languages change from generation to generation, and that, just as we need new versions of scripture and new phrases and modes in preaching, we need new styles of expression in music.¹²⁵

According to Kauflin, this contextualization also includes knowing what has happened recently in the life of the church, and not choosing music that does not fit the occasion.¹²⁶

Worship directors should also plan and lead with musical sensitivity to the congregation, understanding what flows well musically, and what enhances the congregation’s worship.¹²⁷ This also includes being sensitive to the length of the songs, and not allowing the music to run too long.¹²⁸ Finally, worship directors should plan and

¹²¹ Jones, 139.

¹²² Hustad, 81.

¹²³ Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 109-119.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹²⁵ Hustad, 83.

¹²⁶ Kauflin, 113.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 114-117.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 117-118.

lead the music with what Kauflin calls “The Twenty Year Rule” in mind—“If someone was born in our church and grew up singing our songs over a course of twenty years, how well would they know God?”¹²⁹

Worship Directors Are Expected to be Competent Performers

Worship directors are expected to be competent performers. As Hustad describes:

Ministers of music are professional musicians, leaders and promoters of music in the church and in the community. They are performers.... They are always conductors, capable of working with singers and instrumentalists of all ages, at least arrangers of music who can dash off brass parts to accompany the Sunday anthem.¹³⁰

Jones concurs, highlighting the failure of churches to seek this type of musician:

A music director needs to be a trained, skilled, professional musician. This may be obvious enough to most people, but one might be surprised at some churches' choices for their musical worship leaders. These days it is not uncommon to find amateurs, self-taught guitarists, youth pastors, and other musically untrained persons beset with duties in music that are well beyond their capabilities and expertise.¹³¹

Jones goes on to say that these directors should be musically versatile, knowledgeable, and exceptionally competent in one or more instruments. Jones also adds that training in vocal, choral, ensemble, keyboard, and organ music is important.¹³²

Worship Directors Are Expected to Lead Musicians

Worship directors are also expected to lead other musicians. The topic of leadership will be dealt with in much greater detail in a later section, but suffice it to say for now that worship directors must “gain and retain the respect of even the finest

¹²⁹ Ibid., 119.

¹³⁰ Hustad, 80.

¹³¹ Jones, 140.

¹³² Ibid., 140-141.

musicians in the congregation.”¹³³ Since the mid-twentieth century, worship directors in many churches have been expected either to lead or oversee the leadership of music ministries such as adult choirs,¹³⁴ youth choirs,¹³⁵ children’s choirs,¹³⁶ bell choirs,¹³⁷ and instrumental orchestras and ensembles.¹³⁸ However, in the recent past a new group of musicians has entered the church music scene—the praise band or worship team. As Scheer describes:

When one considers Praise & Worship, it is almost impossible to imagine it without the “worship team.” The worship team is to modern worship what the organ was to American worship fifty years ago. Where once it was shocking to see a guitar in the sanctuary, today it is common to have guitar, bass, drums, synthesizer, piano, and a full complement of microphones and monitors. This list of equipment should make it clear what has happened—today’s worship is led by a rock band.¹³⁹

Scheer continues, “Worship teams are important in the Praise & Worship style because they play the essential musical role of rhythmic and chordal accompaniment.”¹⁴⁰ Scheer then concludes, “The congregation’s musical role in Praise & Worship makes no sense without the worship team’s accompaniment....”¹⁴¹

¹³³ Ibid., 141.

¹³⁴ Hustad, 420-421.

¹³⁵ Ken Avent, "Youth Choir Ministry - Planting a Heart Song," in *Music Ministry: A Guidebook*, ed. Donald C. Measels (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing Inc., 2004), 104-107; Simons, 87-99.

¹³⁶ Edge, 28.

¹³⁷ Wilson, 121-127.

¹³⁸ Jeff Cranfill, "Building a Church Instrumental Ministry," in *Music Ministry: A Guidebook*, ed. Donald C. Measels (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing Inc., 2004), 129.

¹³⁹ Scheer, 121.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 122.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

These new developments in worship music have brought about a tremendous clash of cultures for worship directors—those who were classically trained in music and those who grew up playing rock-n-roll by ear and chord charts.¹⁴² For classically trained musicians, Scheer offers this prediction:

Regardless of where you stand in the spectrum of historic and modern worship expressions, you must acknowledge the reality that many churches now employ some form of worship team.... If you are a “traditional” music minister, you will be involved in directing, overseeing, or collaborating with a worship team soon, if you aren’t already.¹⁴³

Scheer also maintains that just as there are musical principles that guide worship directors in traditional music, so are there musical principles that guide worship directors in the new Praise & Worship genre.¹⁴⁴ Scheer believes that classically trained worship directors will be well-served, and will better serve the church, if they learn these musical principles and know how to lead other musicians in them.¹⁴⁵

Worship Directors Are Expected to Teach Music

However, according to Hustad, worship directors must not only be good performers and leaders; they must also know how to teach music to their congregants.

Hustad notes:

I am convinced that the best music ministers consider themselves principally to be music educators who work in the context of the church. Like their counterparts in public school education, they teach (or supervise the teaching of) young children to produce good vocal sounds and to read musical symbols.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Ibid., 11.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 121-180.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 12.

¹⁴⁶ Hustad, 80.

Jones agrees and emphasizes that as with any other teacher, “A love of the subject matter, a desire to pass it on, and the skills to do so engagingly are essential to success.”¹⁴⁷ Given the church’s calling to provide music education to God’s people, it stands to reason that the worship director would be one of the key people leading the way in the music education programs of the church.¹⁴⁸

Musically Equipping Worship Directors

Given the musical expectations for modern worship directors, how are they musically equipped to carry out their responsibilities? More importantly, does the church assist future worship directors in that equipping process? The following sections will explore these questions.

Musically Equipped by the Local Church

The literature indicates that the local church can play a profound role in equipping future worship directors. The fact that so many current worship directors would write books and articles on the importance of church music education seems to demonstrate that they regard church music education as having played an important role in their own equipping process. But interestingly, in the few accounts when musician authors shared their personal stories of how they eventually became worship directors, they barely referenced the formal music training and teaching that they received in the church. Rather, they chose to focus on the ways they were able to use their musical gifts in a “leadership position” in some church music ministry.

¹⁴⁷ Jones, 143.

¹⁴⁸ Hustad, 93.

For Jones, this took place at an early age:

I have been a church musician since the age of nine, from the day I first accompanied the children's choir of which I was a member.... Our...church was progressive and was blessed to have a professional musical leader on staff.... His wife was the children's choir director, and she thought it was time for me to contribute at the keyboard. Thus began many years of sitting on a piano or organ bench for worship services. I was privileged to have this kind of encouragement and opportunity at a young age.¹⁴⁹

Similarly, Hustad reports that he was “accompanying in church (beginning at age eight) and improvising on the gospel music that was common in fundamentalist worship in the 1920s.”¹⁵⁰

Kauflin began his church music leadership ministry during the teen and college years:

My first experience of music in a church came as a Catholic, when I played the organ for Masses, weddings, and funerals. There wasn't much “leadership” involved. I just played what I was told. When I could, I'd sneak in “sacred” versions of Beatles tunes, college fight songs, or nursery rhymes to make it interesting. In the early seventies, I majored in piano.... I became a Christian during my first year and started visiting a Baptist church on campus.... Then someone invited us to a charismatic church.... I helped with the worship team there and eventually was asked to lead, to use the term generously.¹⁵¹

Scheer shares a similar story:

I never wanted to be a music minister.... By the time I was a junior [in college], my faith was wasting away.... Worship music wasn't even on my radar. In fact, the first time I led worship, I don't know if I would have called myself a Christian.... By the time I got to grad school...I still had no interest in using my musical skills in the church. However, I joined the choir at Bellefield Presbyterian Chrch, where I got my first vision for

¹⁴⁹ Jones, 133.

¹⁵⁰ Hustad, v.

¹⁵¹ Kauflin, 17.

music ministry.... I soon began to entertain thoughts of becoming involved in music ministry.¹⁵²

Interestingly, neither of these men is confident that they were Christians when they first started leading worship, but they have little doubt that God was preparing and equipping them during that time, and that he used the local church as part of that process.

Musically Equipped through Formal Training outside the Local Church

Formal music training outside the church also played a significant role in equipping future worship directors. Hustad spoke of studying piano at age four and playing Czerny etudes and Beethoven sonatas during grade school. Hustad also studied music in college, where he accompanied classic oratorios and motets of choral literature.¹⁵³ Kauflin and Scheer both spoke of majoring in music during the college years,¹⁵⁴ and Scheer mentioned music studies in graduate school as well.¹⁵⁵

Musically Equipped Through Informal Training Outside the Church

The literature offered very little information on informal music training for worship directors outside the church, other than Jones's earlier reference to churches hiring amateur, self-taught guitarists.¹⁵⁶ Kauflin and Scheer implied that they had rock-n-roll backgrounds, but that was alongside their formal music training. Scheer does note that as the Praise & Worship genre has dominated in recent years, worship leaders have

¹⁵² Scheer, 9-10.

¹⁵³ Hustad, v.

¹⁵⁴ Kauflin, 17.

¹⁵⁵ Scheer, 9.

¹⁵⁶ Jones, 140.

been culled out of local rock scenes. While these band leaders have spiritual passion, “their musical skills are limited to pop and rock styles.”¹⁵⁷

Musically Equipped Through Christian Colleges and Seminaries

According to Hustad, “Of all evangelical groups, Southern Baptists have made the most progress in church music in recent years.”¹⁵⁸ At the time of Hustad’s writing in 1993, there were six Southern Baptist seminaries training approximately five hundred graduate music students each year, most of whom were preparing to be ministers of music in Southern Baptist churches.¹⁵⁹ Jones adds that independent Bible colleges, Lutheran schools, and music schools like Westminster Choir College produce fine musicians, but for various reasons, Jones expresses concern and doubt regarding how well many of these musicians would fit into Reformed churches.¹⁶⁰ Jones laments, “Basically, there is no graduate school or seminary where a Reformed young person can study both music and theology at the highest possible level, without having to compromise.”¹⁶¹

In the meantime, Jones’s solution for churches looking for potential music leaders is for them to bring in musicians with non-Reformed college degrees, then mentor them and help finance their way through seminary or graduate school. Where talented musicians are already present, Jones recommends hiring interns “who can both assist the

¹⁵⁷ Scheer, 216.

¹⁵⁸ Hustad, viii.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 80.

¹⁶⁰ Jones, 144-145.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 145.

music program and apprentice their craft.”¹⁶² Jones adds that “every mature music director should be systematically doing this for younger people to some extent.”¹⁶³ He concludes by sharing his vision of how worship directors would be musically equipped in the future:

Someday, by God’s grace, we may establish a thriving music graduate school, at long last, for the Presbyterian, Reformed, and other churches that still desire biblical musicians or are awakening to such a need. A program or institution of this nature is sorely needed. Ideally, it would be born into an existing conservative seminary.... In such a place, the next generation of pastors and the next generation of pastoral musicians would train side by side.¹⁶⁴

Jones closes, “Let us join together in praying and praying to this end.”¹⁶⁵

Spiritual Formation

When discussing the equipping of worship directors for vocational worship ministry in the Reformed church, it is also important to understand how people are spiritually equipped for worship ministry in the church. As Kauflin states:

What’s the greatest challenge you face as a worship leader? You might think it’s deciding which songs to sing, getting along with your pastor, receiving feedback from church members, or leading a team of unorganized, independent musicians.... Your greatest challenge is what you yourself bring to the platform each and every Sunday. Your heart.¹⁶⁶

Rory Noland, author and former music director at Willow Creek Community Church, stresses the importance of this spiritual development for worship leaders when he states,

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 146.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Kauflin, 21.

“Given the responsibility of such a vital priestly function, one would assume that every artist would make spiritual preparation top priority.”¹⁶⁷

So how are Reformed worship directors spiritually equipped for vocational worship ministry? While there is sparse literature specifically detailing how Reformed worship directors become spiritually equipped for ministry, there is extensive literature available regarding spiritual formation in the lives of Christians and the church. Therefore, in order to address this question, the following areas will be discussed: the importance of spiritual formation, spiritual formation during the younger years of life, and spiritual formation for worship directors in Reformed churches.

The Importance of Spiritual Formation

What is spiritual formation? While there are a number of definitions of the term, Paul Pettit, director of spiritual formation at Dallas Theological Seminary, summarizes many of them, “Spiritual formation...is the ongoing process of the triune God transforming the believer's life and character toward the life and character of Jesus Christ—accomplished by the ministry of the Spirit in the context of biblical community.”¹⁶⁸ Pettit also lays out the ultimate vision of spiritual formation:

One glorious day all those who have placed their trust in Christ (justification) will enter into God's presence (glorification) and enjoy a long-awaited pilgrim's rest. But until that day, each of us who places faith in Jesus Christ and is living out the life of faith here on earth is being (present tense) transformed (sanctification) into the image and likeness of our Savior.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Rory Noland, *The Worshiping Artist: Equipping You and Your Ministry Team to Lead Others in Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 10.

¹⁶⁸ Paul Pettit, ed. *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008), 24.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

In other words, as Christians await the day that they will enter into God's presence, they are being conformed into the image of God's Son, Jesus Christ.¹⁷⁰

This spiritual transformation is an intentional process, both on the part of God, as well as the believers.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, spiritual maturity is a gift from God to his people, and while they cannot earn this gift, they can "exert effort to receive it."¹⁷² With this in mind, the following sections will discuss foundational elements of spiritual formation, as well as various means by which God's people receive this gift of spiritual maturity.

Foundational Elements of Spiritual Formation

For Christians to grow spiritually toward Christ-likeness, they must first know who they are, whose they are, and who they are becoming in Christ.¹⁷³ James Smith, instructor of practical theology and chaplain at Friends University in Wichita, Kansas, clarifies, "Part of the process of spiritual formation involves developing a sense of our true identity. Our *spirits* are *formed* as we take in information about who we really are and as we begin living our lives on the basis of that identity."¹⁷⁴ Smith continues, "The Christian finds identity in Jesus Christ. The Christian faith informs us that we are children of God, that He loves us despite our unloveliness, and that He chooses to save us

¹⁷⁰ Romans 8:27-29

¹⁷¹ James C. Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as If the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 23.

¹⁷² John M. Dettoni, "What Is Spiritual Formation," in *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation*, ed. Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994), 18.

¹⁷³ Pettit, ed., 270-271.

¹⁷⁴ James B. Smith, "Spiritual Formation of Adolescents," in *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation*, ed. Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994), 248.

instead of condemn us.”¹⁷⁵ As Christians increasingly acknowledge their identity in Christ, they are able to live in the confidence of that truth.¹⁷⁶

Secondly, spiritual formation must be rooted in the gospel message. As James Wilhoit, professor of Christian formation and ministry at Wheaton College, states, “The gospel must permeate any program of Christian spiritual formation. Returning to the cross in awareness of our sin, rebellion, and brokenness is the bedrock of spiritual formation.”¹⁷⁷ Wilhoit points out that often the gospel is presented as the “front door” to Christianity or “heaven’s minimum entrance requirement,” and spiritual formation is regarded as a “human-striving sanctification” process by which Christians make themselves more holy.¹⁷⁸ But Wilhoit disagrees with this approach:

A major task in spiritual formation involves increasing our awareness of our need for grace. One way of doing this is by letting the cross grow larger. This means facing up to the reality of sin and growing in awe of the majestic holiness of God. We are at our best spiritually when our sin drives us to the cross, when we cling to it and nothing else. The law, our sin, our failure, our ache for beauty, and our yearnings—all can drive us to the cross. We must resist our “natural” inclination to think that we can handle our sin (its guilt, shame, conviction, pain, enslaving power, and so on).¹⁷⁹

In other words, God’s grace and the power of the gospel are needed for the beginning, middle, and end of salvation.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, spiritual change can never be accomplished through the believer’s own power; they must be empowered by the Holy Spirit.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 253.

¹⁷⁷ Wilhoit, 26-27.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 106.

Thirdly, spiritual formation is communal—involving the whole church’s ministry.¹⁸² As Wilhoit declares, “Spiritual formation is *the* task of the church. Period.”¹⁸³ According to Pettit, “all believers should be growing as individual believers in *community*. This means Christians should find their place of service and participation within the larger, corporate body, the church.”¹⁸⁴ Pettit maintains that problems arise when Christians overemphasize their individual spiritual growth apart from their Christian communities.¹⁸⁵ Spiritual formation necessarily involves members of the church body maturing together,¹⁸⁶ that is, understanding themselves in relation to other Christians,¹⁸⁷ learning how they each uniquely contribute to the body of Christ,¹⁸⁸ and then living their lives in service to God and others.¹⁸⁹

Finally, spiritual formation is an ongoing, lifelong process for all believers.¹⁹⁰ None are excluded. Just as a child experiences the ongoing process of physical growth and maturity from infancy to adolescence, and then during adulthood, so will young

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 27.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 23.

¹⁸² Dettoni, 11.

¹⁸³ Wilhoit, 15.

¹⁸⁴ Pettit, ed., 22.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 21.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 269.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 272.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 272-273.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 274.

¹⁹⁰ Wilhoit, 23.

Christians experience a similar ongoing spiritual process.¹⁹¹ Moreover, Christians should not expect this process to be completed during their earthly lifetime. As Pettit observes, there are no “elite Christians [who] finally arrive at a plateau in their maturity where they no longer possess a need to be spiritually formed. Growth in Christian maturity is a lifelong process and goal.”¹⁹²

Various Means of Spiritual Formation

So how do Christians grow spiritually in community, finding their identity in Christ and being rooted in the gospel? How exactly does that ongoing, never-ending process take place in the lives of believers? Wilhoit maintains that this formation results from “multidimensional ministry, not just a technique or program.... No single dimension of church life can carry out this task alone.”¹⁹³ However, having said that, there are some more prominent and common means of spiritual formation.

One of the more long-standing, traditional approaches to spiritual formation has been through the spiritual disciplines. According to Dallas Willard, former professor in the School of Philosophy at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles:

A discipline for the spiritual life is...an activity undertaken to bring us into more effective cooperation with Christ and his Kingdom. When we understand that grace (*charis*) is gift (*charisma*), we then see that to grow in grace is to grow in what is given to us of God and by God. The disciplines are then...a means to that grace and also to those gifts.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ 1 Corinthians 3:1-2; Pettit, ed., 20.

¹⁹² Ibid., 269.

¹⁹³ Wilhoit, 23.

¹⁹⁴ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco Publishing, 1991), 156.

The spiritual disciplines do not earn favor from God, but they do lead God's people into a greater receptivity of the free outpouring of his grace, which results in spiritual growth.

Willard then continues by listing two categories of disciplines—the disciplines of abstinence (solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, secrecy, and sacrifice) and disciplines of engagement (study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, and submission).¹⁹⁵ The purpose of the disciplines of abstinence is “to abstain to some degree and for some time from the satisfaction of what we generally regard as normal and legitimate desires,” if those desires are deemed to harm the Christian's walk with God.¹⁹⁶ Whereas the disciplines of abstinence seek to “counteract tendencies to sins of commission,” the disciplines of engagement “counteract tendencies to sins of omission” by spurring the believer on to godly action.¹⁹⁷ Willard concludes, “Which disciplines must be central to our lives will be determined by the chief sins of commission and omission that entice or threaten us from day to day.”¹⁹⁸

But Smith cautions that if Christians are not secure in their identity in Christ, and not well-rooted in the grace of the gospel, then practicing the spiritual disciplines may lead them into a “deadly legalism.” Smith expands on his concern:

The spiritual disciplines are, by their nature, susceptible to misuse. It is easy to practice the disciplines as a way to improve our standing with God or to earn His love. Knowing that we cannot improve our standing (we have been made holy, unblemished, and beyond reproach; cf. Col. 1:21-22), nor earn more of His love, frees us from the performance trap. We

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 158.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 159-160.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 176.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 191.

can rest in what Christ has done and allow Him to complete the good work He began in us. The key is our identity.¹⁹⁹

While Smith does not disagree with Willard's positive regard for the spiritual disciplines, he does appear concerned that many believers may begin to regard the disciplines as a way to earn God's favor.

Worship is another means of spiritual formation. Byron Anderson, associate professor of worship at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, notes, "For most Christians today...corporate worship is the primary sustaining discipline or practice of the community."²⁰⁰ Richard Averbeck, professor of Old Testament and Semitic languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, , declares, "Worship of the triune God is the most spiritually formative practice available to us as Christians. It is *the* spiritual practice par excellence."²⁰¹

Spiritual formation begins when people become worshipers of the one true God, "bowing the knee and calling upon him."²⁰² According to Averbeck, under the empowerment and guidance of the Holy Spirit, worship is the "bright center line" that keeps believers traveling in the right direction on their ongoing road of spiritual formation. Through corporate worship, God's people gather together as a community of believers, and they are reminded and celebrate who God is and the tremendous mercy and

¹⁹⁹ Smith, 250.

²⁰⁰ E. Byron Anderson, "Worship: Schooling in the Tradition of Jesus," *Theology Today* 66, no. 1 (April 2009): 27.

²⁰¹ Richard Averbeck, "Worship and Spiritual Formation," in *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ*, ed. Paul Pettit (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008), 52.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 60.

grace that he has poured out upon his adopted children through Jesus Christ.²⁰³ Similarly, Noland believes that worship addresses the three most important questions in life: Who is God? Who am I? What is God inviting me to do?²⁰⁴ All of these are foundational elements of spiritual formation.

Finally, spiritual formation can take place through spiritual mentoring. Larry Kreider, leadership trainer and international director of DOVE Christian Fellowship Internationals, asserts, “There is a desperate need for spiritually mature men and women to mentor younger Christians, helping them to clarify what really matters in life and work.”²⁰⁵ Keith Anderson, campus pastor and associate professor at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Randy Reese, vice president for advancement and instructor of leadership formation at North American Baptist Seminary in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, define spiritual mentoring as a “triadic relationship between mentor, mentoree, and the Holy Spirit, where the mentoree can discover, through the already present action of God, intimacy with God, ultimate identity as a child of God and a unique voice for kingdom responsibility.”²⁰⁶ In other words, mentors allow themselves to be used by the Holy Spirit to assist mentorees in their ongoing spiritual process of learning who they are in Christ, and what it means to live out their lives in that assurance.

²⁰³ Ibid., 68-69.

²⁰⁴ Noland, *The Worshiping Artist: Equipping You and Your Ministry Team to Lead Others in Worship*, 91.

²⁰⁵ Larry Kreider, *Authentic Spiritual Mentoring: Nurturing Younger Believers toward Spiritual Maturity* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2008), 14.

²⁰⁶ Keith R. Anderson, & Randy D. Reese, *Spiritual Mentoring: A Guide for Seeking and Giving Direction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 12.

According to Anderson and Reese, spiritual mentoring is “one of the best ways to progress in the lifelong work of spiritual formation.”²⁰⁷ This is because, dating back to Jesus’s words to “follow me,” the Christian faith has always been an imitative faith.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, spiritual formation requires more than classroom instruction; it requires “a mentorship of the heart, a relationship with a teacher of life who is able to convey what was learned from the teacher's own faithful mentor, a way of life that is formed, not merely instructions that are given.”²⁰⁹

Anderson and Reese believe there are seven essential elements of spiritual mentoring. It is relational, autobiographical (sharing one’s life with another), in partnership with the Holy Spirit, purposeful, attuned to listening, adaptable and discerning, and the responsibility belongs to all of the priesthood of believers.²¹⁰ Spiritual mentoring will often take place in relationships such as parenting,²¹¹ one-on-one relationships,²¹² small groups,²¹³ and spiritual leadership in general.²¹⁴

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 27.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 15. Matthew 4:19; 8:22; 9:9; 10:38.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 17.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 37-55.

²¹¹ Jeter Basden, "The Influence of Christian Parents and a Christian Home on Persons Who Respond to a Call to Vocational Christian Ministry," *Journal of Family Ministry* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 69-70.

²¹² Dennis Fast, "Making Space in Ministry for Mentors," *Direction* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 102-105.

²¹³ Henry Cloud, and John Townsend, *Making Small Groups Work: What Every Small Group Leader Needs to Know* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2003), 92-93.

²¹⁴ Kreider, 104-105.

Spiritual Formation in the Younger Years

In 2 Timothy, the apostle Paul charges Timothy to “continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”²¹⁵ Earlier, Paul indicates that Timothy’s grandmother, Lois, and his mother Eunice were responsible for the early spiritual training that Timothy received.²¹⁶ Clearly, spiritual formation began at an early age for Timothy, and Paul attributes Timothy’s wisdom and salvation to that early training.

Robert Clark, retired professor of Christian Education at Moody Bible Institute, echoes this belief when he states, “As a human being created in God’s image from conception, each person is shaped by the Creator, by relationships with others, by environment and society. Parents and others responsible for nurturing children cannot begin too soon preparing them spiritually for life!”²¹⁷ Because spiritual formation ideally begins at a young age, the following sections will examine how this formation takes place in children, adolescents, and early adulthood.

Spiritual Formation for Children

According to Clark, “Spiritual formation is a step by step and stage by stage process through which a child is guided, encouraged, nurtured, admonished, and disciplined to embrace Christ as Savior and be disciplined to develop as a Christian through

²¹⁵ 2 Timothy 3:14-15.

²¹⁶ 2 Timothy 1:5.

²¹⁷ Robert Clark, “Spiritual Formation in Children,” in *The Christian Educator’s Handbook on Spiritual Formation*, ed. Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994), 234.

the work and power of the Holy Spirit.”²¹⁸ God intends for families to play a major role in this formational process, as is evidenced by the numerous scripture references in the Old and New Testaments commanding families to provide spiritual instruction and nurturing to their children.²¹⁹ As Clark asserts, “The home is the best place for a child to develop faith. The environment is a natural setting in day-to-day living for modeling the Christian faith.”²²⁰

Buescher and Vaught express the value of this modeling when they note that young children grow spiritually through acculturation, imitation, and assimilation—“Faith develops through exposure to biblical concepts, imitation of the activities of persons with faith, and assimilation of the concepts and activities into the daily routines of the individual.”²²¹ They also note how preschoolers naturally observe and imitate others, and “patterns for future spiritual growth develop in the preschool years through repetitive activities at home and at church.”²²² Perhaps most importantly, Buescher and Vaught point out that children tend to be more receptive to the gospel than adults, and when people make a profession of faith at a young age, they “usually have more years to grow spiritually, to serve God, and to share their faith with others than persons do who are saved later in life.”²²³ Not surprisingly, the people who are most effective in

²¹⁸ Ibid., 235.

²¹⁹ Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 22:6; Mark 10:13-16; Ephesians 6:4.

²²⁰ Clark, 239.

²²¹ Buescher and Vaught, 4.

²²² Ibid., 9.

²²³ Ibid., 8.

empowering children in this way are those who have been empowered by the Holy Spirit and God's unconditional love.²²⁴

Spiritual Formation for Adolescents

As indicated earlier, understanding one's identity plays a tremendous role in spiritual formation. Smith points out that identity is one of the struggles for adolescents, "Many of the problems experienced by adolescents stem from the lack of a solid identity, Uncertain of who they are, locked in rapidly changing physical bodies, and confused by the changing opinions of others, adolescents live in a turbulent inner world."²²⁵ Smith agrees with research asserting that the "primary task for the teenage years is to construct a sense of personal identity,"²²⁶ and that identity must be grounded on who they are in Jesus Christ.²²⁷

According to Smith, there are two primary ways that young people develop their sense of identity: imitation and integration. Imitation is "the process of adapting to one's surroundings by patching together the beliefs and behaviors of others. Adolescents try to develop a sense of who they are by attempting to look, act, think, and sound like someone else."²²⁸ Integration is "the process of testing, separating, and discriminating between several types of beliefs and behaviors until one discovers that which is genuine and real."²²⁹ Smith believes that integration, while more difficult and chosen less frequently

²²⁴ Clark, 240.

²²⁵ Smith, 250.

²²⁶ Ibid., 250-251.

²²⁷ Ibid., 248-249, 254.

²²⁸ Ibid., 251.

by teenagers, is indeed the better path to development of a healthy sense of identity.²³⁰

Smith posits that “spiritual formation can only occur in the midst of struggle,” and he believes the church should encourage youth to explore and test ideas so that they will “learn to own their beliefs.”²³¹ This integration process should unfold in the context of discipling and mentoring relationships within the church,²³² and exercising the “classical disciplines of prayer, reading, studying, and meditating on the Scriptures, fellowship with other believers, worship, solitude, and so on.”²³³

Jason Lanker, assistant professor of youth ministry at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arizona, believes that the church is perfectly suited to address the spiritual needs of adolescents through mentoring relationships. As he states:

Since adolescence is regarded as the key time for identity development..., purposefully engaging adolescents in meaningful relationships with God and others may be the most important means of establishing those identities—especially when the adults in their life model a sacrificial understanding of who God has created them to be that serves as a mirror from which to find reflective guidance....²³⁴

In other words, wise and godly mentors can aid adolescents by helping them understand who they are in Christ, and how God has uniquely created them.

Lanker and Klaus Issler, professor of Christian education and theology at Biola University in La Mirada, California, maintain that the most effective mentoring

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid., 251-252.

²³¹ Ibid., 252.

²³² Ibid., 254.

²³³ Ibid., 255.

²³⁴ Jason Lanker, "The Family of Faith: The Place of Natural Mentoring in the Church's Christian Formation of Adolescents," *Christian Education Journal* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 277.

relationships in the church are “natural” ones that develop when adolescents and non-parent adults work and serve side-by-side in church programming that is not specifically designated as “youth ministry.”²³⁵ According to Lanker and Issler, adolescents who experienced this type of “natural mentoring” appeared to have a higher level of spirituality,²³⁶ were more willing to serve others,²³⁷ and felt a greater connection to the Christian community.²³⁸ Lanker and Issler conclude, “Because respondents reported knowing their natural mentor since late childhood, it appears clear that these natural relationships need the time and space to develop. So communities seeking to help adolescents develop well should begin fostering mentoring relationships early.”²³⁹ Perhaps it is no surprise that Lanker and Issler’s study also demonstrates that natural mentoring relationships within the context of the church are not only “beneficial for the spirituality of adolescents, but for their overall thriving as individuals....”²⁴⁰

Spiritual Formation for College Age and Early Adulthood

According to well-known sociologist Christian Smith’s book *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*, “Emerging adults are, on most sociological measures, the least religious adults in the United States today.”²⁴¹ This report

²³⁵ Jason Lanker and Klaus Issler, “The Relationship between Natural Mentoring and Spirituality in Christian Adolescents,” *Journal of Youth Ministry* 9, no. 1 (Fall 2010): 105.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 100.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 105.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 106.

²⁴¹ Christian Smith, with Patricia Snell, *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2009), 102.

is particularly disturbing in light of the fact that emerging adulthood also serves as a “hinge” moment in the lives of many individuals. As David Setran, associate professor of Christian formation and ministry at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, and Chris Kiesling, professor of human development and Christian discipleship at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, state, “Caught in the ‘liminal space’ between adolescence and adulthood, these years represent a pivot point for the soul.”²⁴² For many emerging adults, a growing apathy and indifference toward religion and a life of faith coincides with this important transitional period.²⁴³

Smith posits that the majority posture among emerging adults is one of “moralistic therapeutic deism,” the underlying view that God is a distant creator who wants humans to be happy, moral people, but who is not particularly involved in their lives unless there is a need to bestow blessings or resolve problems.²⁴⁴ In this mindset, spiritual formation is not particularly important because the “purpose of life is happiness and self-fulfillment, and a degree of goodness sufficient to earn entrance to heaven.”²⁴⁵

Rather than a “process of therapeutic personal improvement,” Setran and Kiesling believe emerging adults need spiritual formation that is “a process of reorienting the heart’s affections, counting the cost of discipleship, and abiding with Christ in all of life.”²⁴⁶ While proposing a number of ways for this formation to take place, they see

²⁴² David P. Setran, and Chris A. Kiesling, *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood: A Practical Theology for College and Young Adult Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 205.

²⁴³ Ibid., 16.

²⁴⁴ Christian Smith, with Melinda L. Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2005), 162-167. Setran, 22.

²⁴⁵ Setran, 22.

spiritual mentoring as an essential part of spiritual formation for emerging adults. As Setran and Kiesling state, “Effective mentoring requires a keen awareness of the postures necessary at the hinge. At this ‘in between’ juncture, mentors must help emerging adults open their eyes to God’s work in their lives and in the world through attentiveness to the past, present, and future.”²⁴⁷ They believe that as mentors help emerging adults see Christ in their stories, they will begin to recognize that their lives are not dictated by random events, but rather by a God who is always at work, often in a hidden way.²⁴⁸ Setran and Kiesling conclude that this type of mentoring, coupled with mentors who model lives that are “infused with divine purpose and providing pictures of faithfulness” are the best means of facilitating Christian faith in emerging adults.²⁴⁹

Spiritual Formation for Reformed Worship Directors

So how are worship directors spiritually equipped to lead in worship ministry? Specifically, what unique spiritual challenges do they commonly encounter in worship leadership, and what spiritual formation during their younger years prepared them to face these spiritual challenges? The following sections will seek to answer these questions.

Unique Spiritual Challenges for Worship Leaders

According to Noland, “Character is fast becoming the hottest issue facing artists in the church today.”²⁵⁰ In fact, Noland reports that the most common questions he receives about church music ministry have to do with the spiritual character of the

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 53.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 205.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 217.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 226.

²⁵⁰ Noland, *The Heart of the Artist*, 13.

musicians. Noland laments the fact that for many churches, “The music department and other arts-related ministries have become a hotbed for major character problems....”²⁵¹ When it comes to spiritual formation and being equipped to lead a worship ministry, artists encounter unique challenges. One challenge is for them to seek God’s glory rather than their own when they perform. Noland declares, “We artists can be very selfish and self-absorbed at times. We like the attention that our talents bring us.”²⁵² In sharing his own story, Kauflin admits that he spent most of his early years seeking his own glory, and even after becoming a Christian, he still struggled with that sin well into adulthood.²⁵³

Another spiritual challenge for artists is a tendency to isolate themselves. Because many artists are introverts, they often shy away from relationships. Noland laments, “We think we can handle life on our own, but that is such a lie.... Instead of confessing our sin to one another with vulnerable transparency, we hide it from others.”²⁵⁴ Artists also battle perfectionism,²⁵⁵ and they can find it difficult to handle criticism.²⁵⁶ Noland attributes these struggles to the way that some artists base their self-worth on what they do rather than who they are in Christ—beloved children of God.²⁵⁷ Kauflin also believes the

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid., 53.

²⁵³ Kauflin, 22-24.

²⁵⁴ Noland, *The Heart of the Artist*, 275.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 125.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 150.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 126.

problem stems from artists seeking approval from people rather than God.²⁵⁸ According to Noland, artists also battle jealousy and envy,²⁵⁹ and they struggle to manage their emotions.²⁶⁰ They often avoid leadership roles,²⁶¹ they are “easy victims” to sinful cravings,²⁶² and they can struggle to be faithful in the most basic of spiritual disciplines.²⁶³ For these reasons, Noland soberly contends that “those of us with artistic temperaments are more susceptible to sin than are any other group of people.”²⁶⁴

Spiritual Formation for Worship Leaders

Given these rather harsh descriptions of artists, one might wonder how any of them ever become spiritually mature worship leaders and worship directors. But while candid and realistic in his assessment, Noland is not fatalistic:

I believe that God has redeemed the artistic temperament. If you're in Christ, you are a new creature. “The old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor. 5:17). In Christ there is such a thing as a transformed, well-adjusted, Spirit-filled artist.... He doesn't look at us a “those strange artsy types.” After all, He made us. He loves us and He understands us.²⁶⁵

²⁵⁸ Kauflin, 24-25.

²⁵⁹ Noland, *The Heart of the Artist*, 179.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 202-203.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 235-237. This will be discussed in greater detail in a later section.

²⁶² Ibid., 270-271.

²⁶³ Ibid., 312-314.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 270.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 16.

Noland applauds the unique ability that artists have to see beauty and meaning where others miss it. That ability, combined with their artistic talents, enables artists to communicate God's beauty and purpose in meaningful ways.²⁶⁶

So how are worship leaders spiritually formed? They are formed in much the same way that was spelled out in earlier sections: by finding their identity in Christ,²⁶⁷ by being rooted in the gospel message,²⁶⁸ by staying involved in the whole church ministry,²⁶⁹ and by willingly embarking on a life-long process that will not bring spiritual perfection on this earth,²⁷⁰ but will increasingly conform them into the image of Christ.²⁷¹ With these foundational elements of spiritual formation in place, worship leaders can grow spiritually by faithfully engaging in spiritual disciplines,²⁷² by worshiping in spirit and truth,²⁷³ and through the ministry of Christian mentors who are more spiritually mature.²⁷⁴

Spiritually Equipping Reformed Worship Directors

There was very little literature found detailing how worship directors, Reformed or otherwise, were spiritually equipped for worship ministry during their younger years.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 17.

²⁶⁷ Kevin J. Navarro, *The Complete Worship Leader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 54-57.

²⁶⁸ Kauflin, 25.

²⁶⁹ Noland, *The Heart of the Artist*, 88, 100.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 121-131.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 46.

²⁷² Navarro, 57-58; Noland, *The Heart of the Artist*, 314-316.

²⁷³ Noland, *The Worshiping Artist: Equipping You and Your Ministry Team to Lead Others in Worship*, 89-91.

²⁷⁴ Kauflin, 44-48.

Barry Liesch, professor of music at Biola University in La Mirada, California, and church worship leader, shares that when he was eighteen years old, his home church paid for him to attend their denominational Bible college for a year. In that story, he speaks of both the spiritual value of growing up singing hymns, as well as the graciousness of his home church to invest in him in such a generous fashion. Clearly, the worship ministry in Liesch's church aided his spiritual formation.²⁷⁵

Noland relays the story that in his early twenties, he struggled with handling criticism and was highly defensive. One day, an older man lovingly pulled Noland aside and gently admonished him. Noland reports, "That person who pulled me aside and pointed out my defensiveness is someone to whom I owe a great deal.... I certainly don't think I would be in ministry today had that friend not confronted me."²⁷⁶ Noland also shares about the importance of a small group of friends that held him spiritually accountable when he was a young Christian.²⁷⁷ He greatly benefitted from both one-on-one and small group mentoring relationships within the church body.

Scheer believes so strongly in the role that worship and mentoring can play in spiritual formation that he is sometimes willing to allow non-Christians to participate in more low-profile areas of a praise band. As he states, "If someone wants to take part in worship, it probably means that they are open to the gospel. Giving them a chance to participate in a music ministry is often a point of entry into the faith."²⁷⁸ Kauflin relays a story of how God used the support, correction, love, and patient counsel of various

²⁷⁵ Liesch, 35.

²⁷⁶ Noland, *The Heart of the Artist*, 168.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 276.

²⁷⁸ Scheer, 37.

Christian family members and friends to transform his heart. Although Kaulfin appears to have been well into adulthood at this period, clearly these mentoring relationships played a significant role in his spiritual development.²⁷⁹

Leadership Development

In order to understand how worship directors are equipped for ministry, it is helpful to understand how people develop into leaders. While there is only a limited amount of literature available regarding how worship directors are equipped for leadership, there is a more extensive body of literature available regarding the development of leaders in the secular world, and more specifically within the Christian church. To fully understand this process, three areas need to be examined: the role of leadership in organizations, identification of potential leaders, and the process of equipping leaders.

The Role of Leadership in Organizations

To better understand the role of leadership in organizations, the following sections discuss the importance of leadership, the primary functions of leadership, and some of the challenges involved in developing strong leadership.

The Importance of Leadership

According to George Barna, founder and president of Barna Research Group, one of the challenges in discussing leadership is that “there is no universally accepted definition of leadership.”²⁸⁰ Furthermore, in their book *Leaders: The Strategies for*

²⁷⁹ Kauflin, 25.

²⁸⁰ George Barna, "Nothing Is More Important Than Leadership," in *Leaders on Leadership: Wisdom, Advice, and Encouragement on the Art of Leading God's People*, ed. George Barna (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1997), 21.

Taking Charge, Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, professors of business administration at the University of Southern California, add that most of the existing definitions don't even agree with one another.²⁸¹ While there is wide-spread disagreement in the literature on the definition of leadership, there is almost universal agreement that leadership is essential for organizations to function effectively. As Ted W. Engstrom, president emeritus of World Vision International, observes, "It is the leader who determines to a large measure the success or failure of any group or organization."²⁸²

Leadership is even more important in the church. In *Managing the Nonprofit Organization: Principles and Practices*, management consultant Peter Drucker notes, "You can't be satisfied in non-profit organizations with doing adequately as a leader. You have to do exceptionally well...."²⁸³ Bill Hybels, founding pastor of Willow Creek Community Church, "believes that the church is the most leadership-intensive enterprise in society.... In voluntary organizations, such as churches, the only thing that works is leadership in its purest form."²⁸⁴

Increasingly, church leaders are recognizing the importance of strong, qualified leadership within their worship ministries. Gordon MacDonald, former president of InterVarsity Fellowship, observes, "Mediocre preaching may be tolerated, but an inept worship leader can sink things fast."²⁸⁵ Scheer seems to echo this sentiment when he

²⁸¹ Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1985), 4.

²⁸² Ted W. Engstrom, *The Making of a Christian Leader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 83.

²⁸³ Peter F. Drucker, *Managing the Nonprofit Organization: Principles and Practices* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 1990), 17.

²⁸⁴ John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1998), 18.

states, “More and more churches are realizing the advantages of having a worship specialist on staff rather than trying to plan worship with...volunteers. In fact, a worship leader or music minister is often the next position added after the pastor.”²⁸⁶

The Primary Functions of Leadership

While there are many definitions of leadership, most of them can be condensed into two primary, overarching functions: good leadership establishes the right direction, and then it moves people in that right direction. As Jay A. Conger states in his book *Learning to Lead: The Art of Transforming Managers into Leaders*, “Leaders are individuals who establish direction for a working group of individuals, who gain commitment from these group members to this direction, and who then motivate these members to achieve the direction's outcomes.”²⁸⁷

“Vision” is a word often used to describe establishing the right direction for an organization. Vision is both present and future-oriented. Leaders gifted with vision accurately assess the present, envision a better future, and then create a plan to move the people and organization in that direction.²⁸⁸ Once that vision has been established, effective leaders will recruit and mobilize people around a common goal, and then influence the people to follow the leader toward that goal.²⁸⁹ When speaking of the topic of vision, many experts emphasize the difference between managers and leaders. As well-

²⁸⁵ Gordon MacDonald, "To Find a Worship Leader," *Leadership Journal* 23, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 83-84.

²⁸⁶ Scheer, 215.

²⁸⁷ Jay A. Conger, *Learning to Lead: The Art of Transforming Managers into Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1992), 18.

²⁸⁸ Warren Bennis and Joan Goldsmith, *Learning to Lead: A Workbook on Becoming a Leader* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Inc., 1994), 5.

²⁸⁹ Barna, 23.

known author Stephen Covey writes in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*, “Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.”²⁹⁰ Calvin Miller, professor of preaching and pastoral ministry at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama, states it in a slightly different manner, “Leadership and management are two very different commodities. Leadership has to do with direction and management with organizing and mobilizing an organization to go in that direction.”²⁹¹

While the functions of leadership in the church are essentially the same—to establish the right direction and to lead people in that direction—there are a couple of important differences. Christian leadership is motivated by love and service, and it is subjected to the control of the Lord Jesus Christ.²⁹² The leadership functions for music directors have changed dramatically over the past few decades. Not long ago, music directors generally functioned as managers. As Scheer highlights, “The pastor chose the three hymns for the day, the choir director rehearsed the choir anthem, and the organist played a prelude and postlude. Little discussion was necessary.”²⁹³ However, music directors are increasingly being called upon to function as leaders rather than managers. They are being asked to build worship teams, often from nothing, to cast a worship vision, and to lead these teams in a direction that fits the overall vision of the church.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁰ Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1989), 101.

²⁹¹ Calvin Miller, *The Empowered Leader: 10 Keys to Servant Leadership* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 158.

²⁹² Engstrom, 199.

²⁹³ Scheer, 215.

Challenges in Developing Strong Leadership

According to Max DePree, Junior Achievement's U.S. Business Hall of Fame inductee, "Choosing leaders is the most vital and important matter corporations and institutions face."²⁹⁵ However, this can be a challenging task for organizations. Engstrom observes, "Leaders are different. Organizations are different. At any given time the leadership needs of an organization may vary from another time."²⁹⁶ Different situations will likely demand different leadership styles.²⁹⁷ Also, not everyone wants to be a leader. As Conger notes, "Many of us simply do not want the responsibilities and hardships of leadership.... Leaders must often break away from the status quo to lead. Yet many of us are driven by a need to conform...."²⁹⁸ Bennis and Joan Goldsmith, founder of Cambridge College and former professor of education at Harvard University, give insight on why many people do not want to become leaders:

There is an unconscious conspiracy in our country to discourage and suppress genuine leadership. A widespread unspoken fear of the potentially negative consequences of creative leadership blankets our thoughts and actions. It prevents the most talented among us from talking boldly or expressing ourselves as leaders. This conspiracy is all-encompassing, lulling us into conformity, complacency, cynicism, and inaction.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 17-54.

²⁹⁵ Max DePree, *Leadership Is an Art* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1989), 134.

²⁹⁶ Engstrom, 78.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Conger, 32.

²⁹⁹ Bennis and Goldsmith, *Learning to Lead: A Workbook on Becoming a Leader*, 45.

Bennis and Goldsmith further contend, “Our culture consistently fails to support the growth and development of leadership.”³⁰⁰ This concern is not limited to the secular world. Barna argues that the American church is dying due to a lack of strong leadership.³⁰¹ While not as gloomy in his assertion, J. Oswald Sanders, former director of China Inland Mission, maintains in his book *Spiritual Leadership* that “the overriding need of the church, if it is to discharge its obligation to the rising generation, is for a leadership that is authoritative, spiritual, and sacrificial.”³⁰²

The process of developing leaders within worship ministries presents its own unique challenges. In *Life Keys*, Jane Kise, founder of Differentiated Coaching Associates, Sandra Hirsch, principal of Sandra Hirsch Consulting, and David Stark, president at BusinessKeys Church Consulting, note that artistic people generally tend to avoid leadership positions unless they believe they have crucial knowledge or they determine that no one else will do it. They also prefer to lead through facilitation and persuasion rather than giving specific instructions on what people are supposed to do,³⁰³ and they like to work alone with as little set structure as possible.³⁰⁴ These characteristics do not always work well in leadership. As Noland points out, “Being a leader of a ministry and being an artist don't often go well together.... I think they work against each

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Barna, 18.

³⁰² J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 24-25.

³⁰³ Jane A. G. Kise, David Stark, and Sandra K. Hirsch, *Life Keys* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1996), 143, 147.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 43.

other. The dual role of artist-leader creates constant conflict.”³⁰⁵ Noland speaks of the implications for many worship ministries:

Many of us artists are somewhat introverted by nature, but you can't be a good leader and not be with people a lot.... To complicate matters, many artists don't really see themselves as leaders.... As a result, we have a leadership crisis in the arts department of a lot of churches these days. There is lack of leadership because artists who find themselves in positions of leadership are experiencing an identity crisis due to this conflict between being an artist and being a leader.³⁰⁶

Clearly, it is a challenge for many artists to pursue leadership, even when they recognize how important it is.

Identifying Potential Leaders

According to Rowland Forman, founding president of Living Stones School of Church Leadership, and Jeff Jones and Bruce Miller, co-founders of Center for Church Based Training, there are three important components in the leadership development process: identifying key leadership qualities, inviting people who seem to have those leadership qualities, and investing in those potential leaders.³⁰⁷ In order to provide insight on how organizations identify potential leaders, the following sections will discuss important qualities found in effective leaders, both inside and outside the Christian church, as well as a scriptural support for these qualities. However, before discussing these qualities, it is first necessary to address two important questions. Where do leaders come from, and are leadership qualities universal?

³⁰⁵ Noland, *The Heart of the Artist*, 235-236.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 236.

³⁰⁷ Rowland Forman, Jeff Jones, and Bruce Miller, *The Leadership Baton: An Intentional Strategy for Developing Leaders in Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 148-150.

Where Do Leaders Come From?

Are leaders born or are they developed? This is an age-old question. For centuries, “it was assumed...that leadership was inherited or passed on from generation to generation. Leaders were born—not made.”³⁰⁸ Later came the notion that great events turned ordinary people into leaders.³⁰⁹ Increasingly, leadership experts are convinced that leaders are both born and made.³¹⁰ As Conger notes, “The majority of leadership researchers believe that the origins of leadership go beyond genes and family to other sources. Work experiences, hardship, opportunities, education, role models, and mentors all go together to craft a leader.”³¹¹ Bennis and Nanus go a step further than Conger and voice their belief that the potential for leadership is not only common, but dwells within a majority of people. However, they maintain that only a minority fulfill that leadership potential, even though “It’s something that can be learned by anyone, taught to everyone, denied to no one.”³¹²

Are Leadership Qualities Universal?

When discussing qualities found in effective church leaders, an obvious question arises: “Are leadership qualities universal?” In other words, “Are the qualities needed for church leaders the same as the qualities needed for leaders in the secular world?” The answer is “yes” and “no.” Kenneth Gangel, former professor of Christian education at Dallas Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas, reports that the “leadership style which

³⁰⁸ Engstrom, 61.

³⁰⁹ Bennis and Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, 5.

³¹⁰ Sanders, 37; Conger, 33.

³¹¹ Conger, 29.

³¹² Bennis and Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, 27.

evolved from multimillion dollars of research on the part of industrial management science is not far removed from the leadership style which Scripture delineates from the start!”³¹³ Although its motives may be more utilitarian, the secular world has increasingly acknowledged that leadership styles which recognize the worth of people (a very biblical concept of leadership) seem to best motivate people to work more productively.³¹⁴

Similarly, Engstrom maintains that “What is true of the secular man as regards these traits is equally true of a Christian....”³¹⁵ In other words, certain universal traits are essential for effective leadership, and just because people are Christians does not mean they will be effective leaders; they still need to possess leadership qualities. Ideally, people’s Christian faith will inform their motives and goals, but just like people in the secular world, they will still need to develop the same basic leadership qualities.³¹⁶

Although the basic leadership qualities are the same for secular and church leaders, there is a fundamental difference in what is needed. As Sanders states:

Spiritual leadership is a blending of natural and spiritual qualities. Even the natural qualities are not self-produced but God-given.... The spiritual leader...influences others not by the power of his own personality alone but by that personality irradiated, interpenetrated, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Because he permits the Holy Spirit undisputed control of his life, the Spirit's power can flow unhindered through him to others.³¹⁷

If church leaders seek to accomplish spiritual purposes, they cannot rely merely on their natural leadership gifts; they must be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

³¹³ Kenneth O. Gangel, *Competent to Lead* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 10.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 73-77.

³¹⁵ Engstrom, 89.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ Sanders, 36.

Kauflin seems to resonate with this when he states, “A worship leader exercises gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, and elsewhere.... He combines those gifts with musical skill to care for, guide, and instruct God’s people as they sing his praises.”³¹⁸ All of this is to be carried out “through the power of the Holy Spirit by skillfully combining God’s Word with music, thereby motivating the gathered church to proclaim the gospel, to cherish God’s presence, and to live for God’s glory.”³¹⁹

Qualities Found in Effective Leaders

Having acknowledged that there are universal qualities of effective leadership that apply to the secular world and the church, an obvious question is “What are these qualities?” While beliefs regarding important leadership qualities vary widely, there are certain personal qualities that seemed to be mentioned more frequently in literature. Though not exhaustive, the following list summarizes those qualities which were mentioned most frequently in the literature, and also gives specific examples in a worship ministry context.

Know Themselves

Effective leaders know themselves.³²⁰ According to Gangel, “An analysis of history seems to indicate that outstanding leaders throughout the ages have had a clear grasp of themselves as persons.”³²¹ Carson Pue, president of Arrow Leadership Ministries, is even more specific when he declares, “The best of the best leaders have a

³¹⁸ Kauflin, 54.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 55.

³²⁰ Bennis and Goldsmith, *Learning to Lead: A Workbook on Becoming a Leader*, 69; Engstrom, 90.

³²¹ Gangel, 122.

very clear grasp of how they are feeling at any given moment.”³²² These leaders recognize their strengths and weaknesses, they apply and nurture their skills and competencies with discipline, and they are able to discern how their abilities can help their organization.³²³ These leaders also tend to be emotionally stable,³²⁴ and they generally enjoy their work and are proud of it.³²⁵ They are motivated to learn new things, and they seek to maintain a teachable attitude.³²⁶

Perhaps most significantly, Bennis explains that these leaders instill within others “a sense of confidence and high expectations.”³²⁷ He continues, “Leaders with positive self-regard rarely, if ever, have to rely on criticism or negative sanctions.”³²⁸ Noland espouses this quality when he maintains that worship leaders need to be willing to take whatever steps are necessary to know themselves, so that their weaknesses will not limit or sabotage their ministries.³²⁹ Kevin Navarro, pastor and worship leader at Bethany Evangelical Free Church in Littleton, Colorado, echoes this sentiment when he states, “[Worship leaders] must take a hard look at [their] own lives...and be honest about what needs to change for the purpose of God being glorified.”³³⁰

³²² Carson Pue, *Mentoring Leaders: Wisdom for Developing Character, Calling, & Competency* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 31.

³²³ Bennis and Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, 57-60.

³²⁴ Engstrom, 86.

³²⁵ Bennis and Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, 61-62.

³²⁶ John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1999), 144-146.

³²⁷ Bennis and Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, 65.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 64.

³²⁹ Noland, *The Heart of the Artist*, 246.

Future and Vision-oriented

DePree states, “Leaders, in a special way, are liable for what happens in the future, rather than what is happening day to day....”³³¹ Effective leaders are good navigators who see the trip ahead, and they always remember that other people are depending on them.³³² Pue adds, “The most significant thing in navigation—the very most important piece of information—is knowing exactly where you are.”³³³ In other words, effective leaders can accurately assess the present situation while simultaneously envisioning where the organization needs to go. After interviews with ninety proven leaders from corporations and the public sector, Bennis and Nanus concluded that all of the ninety people they studied concerned themselves with their organizations’ basic purposes and general direction. Their perspective was “vision-oriented.”³³⁴ Navarro seems to concur when he declares of worship leaders, “Leadership, in the Christian context, is...about moving the people of God (through community) to accomplish (through organization) God’s purposes (through vision).”³³⁵

Inspirational Communication

It is not enough to derive a vision for an organization; this vision must be communicated in a way that inspires people to move in that direction in a unified manner. “Communication creates meaning for people.... Getting the message across

³³⁰ Navarro, 121.

³³¹ DePree, 114.

³³² Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, 36-37.

³³³ Pue, 31.

³³⁴ Bennis and Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, 21-22.

³³⁵ Navarro, 121.

unequivocally at every level is an absolute key.”³³⁶ Good communication also conveys, preserves, sharpens, embodies, and helps to enact a common corporate vision.³³⁷ Kauflin maintains that effective worship leaders will also inspire people in worship through effective communication.³³⁸ Effective leaders will motivate the followers through their lives and words to carry out God’s purpose for corporate worship (i.e. to proclaim the gospel, to cherish God’s presence, and to live for God’s glory).³³⁹

Trustworthy Character

Trustworthy character was one of the most commonly mentioned traits for effective leaders, and although this trait was described in a variety of ways, it was regarded as essential for the selection of new leaders.³⁴⁰ According to Engstrom, “The ethics practiced by a person are a good measure of one’s character. This includes the ability to make proper decisions, to know whether a course of action is morally right or wrong.”³⁴¹ Furthermore, John Maxwell, best-selling author and founder of Equip and Injoy Stewardship Services, explains that leaders must be trustworthy, because “Trust is the foundation of leadership.”³⁴² Bennis concurs, “Trust implies accountability, predictability, reliability. It’s what sells products and keeps organizations humming.

³³⁶ Bennis and Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, 43.

³³⁷ DePree, 107.

³³⁸ Kauflin, 123.

³³⁹ Ibid., 55.

³⁴⁰ Drucker, 16.

³⁴¹ Engstrom, 121.

³⁴² Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, 58.

Trust is the glue that maintains organizational integrity.”³⁴³ In order for leaders to gain trust, they need to be competent in their leadership area, people of integrity, constant and reliable (they will not abandon their followers in hard times), and genuinely concerned about the wellbeing of the people with whom they work.³⁴⁴

Trustworthy character is essential for worship leadership. A worship leader must have godly character, as described in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.³⁴⁵ As Noland asserts, “We artists need to be able to walk through the church lobby with integrity in our hearts. Integrity simply means doing what’s right in God’s eyes.”³⁴⁶ Effective worship leaders will take ownership of their ministries, exhibit initiative, and lead with boldness, rejecting passivity.³⁴⁷

Think “Team” (“We” versus “Me”)

When speaking of leadership, Drucker states, “The leaders who work most effectively...never say ‘I.’... They don’t *think* ‘I.’ They think ‘we;’ they think ‘team.’ They understand their job to be to make the team function. They accept the responsibility and don’t sidestep it, but ‘we’ gets the credit.”³⁴⁸ Maxwell agrees, “Leaders find a way for the team to win.”³⁴⁹ DePree adds that effective leaders also foster environments where

³⁴³ Bennis and Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, 43-44.

³⁴⁴ Bennis and Goldsmith, *Learning to Lead: A Workbook on Becoming a Leader*, 5-6.

³⁴⁵ Kauflin, 253.

³⁴⁶ Noland, *The Heart of the Artist*, 38.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 240.

³⁴⁸ Drucker, 18-19.

³⁴⁹ Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, 153.

people can “develop high-quality relationships—relationships with each other, relationships with the groups with which [they] work...”³⁵⁰

Effective leaders also have the added ability to look beyond themselves and to perceive the traits in others that are most essential for the good of the organization.³⁵¹ As Miller observes, “You can never achieve great leadership without effective delegation.... As others feel more responsible for the work, they begin to care about the outcome.”³⁵² The most effective leaders reach a point where they learn they cannot be autonomous; rather they are inseparable parts of the groups to which they belong.³⁵³

To be effective, worship leaders must learn to swallow their own egos and develop a team spirit among a group of people who may also have strong egos. When speaking of worship leaders, Kauflin declares, “If someone wants to lead worship in your church because he loves the spotlight and attention, he’s the wrong person for the job, no matter how gifted he is.”³⁵⁴ Scheer describes some of the challenges of leading a worship team:

Before establishing team ground rules, you must understand the worship team’s unique environment. The worship team is an odd mix of prayer circle, church choir, and garage band. It’s this blend of elements that makes working with worship teams so invigorating...and so frustrating.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁰ DePree, 25.

³⁵¹ Engstrom, 88.

³⁵² Miller, 160.

³⁵³ Engstrom, 86.

³⁵⁴ Kauflin, 253.

³⁵⁵ Scheer, 49.

Effective worship leaders must learn to maneuver these challenging team dynamics, while at the same time encouraging loving relations among the team members and “shaping all of the individual instruments of the team into a coherent whole.”³⁵⁶

Servant-minded

Effective leaders are servant-minded. DePree admonishes his readers to think about leadership in terms of stewardship rather than ownership, “The art of leadership requires us to think about the leader-as-steward in terms of relationships: of assets and legacy, of momentum and effectiveness, of civility and values.”³⁵⁷ Later in an interview with DePree, Drucker expands even further on this idea, “[Leaders] owe the followers, whether that’s faculty, or employees, or volunteers. And what they owe is really to enable people to realize their potential, to realize their purpose in serving the organization.”³⁵⁸ Worship leaders must also have this type of servant heart. As Noland states, “Jesus modeled servant leadership. He was very giving. We need to serve those we lead. We need to love and cherish artists.”³⁵⁹

Faith

Another important trait in effective leaders is faith. Engstrom teaches, “The greatest leaders have always had a strong faith in themselves to lead.”³⁶⁰ The basis of this faith generally comes from two sources. The first is the leaders’ belief that there is a higher meaning or purpose to be achieved. The second is the leaders’ conviction that they

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 168.

³⁵⁷ DePree, 12-13.

³⁵⁸ Drucker, 44.

³⁵⁹ Noland, *The Heart of the Artist*, 260.

³⁶⁰ Engstrom, 84.

are empowered—be it from personal abilities, or a calling from a higher divine force, or both—to achieve this higher purpose.³⁶¹ People who have no faith in their own ability to lead do not function well as leaders because they do not have the confidence to lead; people who have no faith in a higher cause do not function well as leaders because they have no reason to lead. Conversely, people who have faith lead with confidence and purpose.

Kauflin makes it clear that faith lends confidence and purpose to his worship leadership when he states:

Worship matters. It matters to God because he is the one ultimately worthy of all worship. It matters to us because worshiping God is the reason for which we were created. And it matters to every worship leader, because we have no greater privilege than leading others to encounter the greatness of God. That's why it's so important to think carefully about what we do and why we do it.³⁶²

In other words, Kauflin believes there is a higher purpose for worship leadership. God himself cares about worship, therefore people should not become worship leaders unless they are confident they have been called and equipped by God for this high task.

A Sense of Legacy

Maxwell writes of the “Law of Legacy,” teaching that “A leader’s lasting value is measured by succession.”³⁶³ DePree clearly supports this belief when he states, “Leaders are also responsible for future leadership. They need to identify, develop, and nurture future leaders.”³⁶⁴ However, despite the importance of legacy, Maxwell contends that “of

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Kauflin, 19.

³⁶³ Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, 215.

³⁶⁴ DePree, 14.

all the laws of leadership, the Law of Legacy is the one that the fewest leaders seem to learn.”³⁶⁵ According to Maxwell, for leaders to feel motivated to create a legacy, they must both care about people and recognize how insignificant they are in comparison to the task with which they have been entrusted as leader.³⁶⁶

Although there were no explicit references found concerning worship leaders creating a legacy, Scheer concludes his chapter “Looking to the Future” with the statement, “I pray that the next generation of worship leaders will be more faithful than my generation.... That you will write melodies of unsurpassed beauty and words that perspire with conviction.”³⁶⁷ Clearly, Scheer had future generations in mind when he wrote his book and penned this statement.

Scriptural Support for Qualities in Effective Leaders

It is important to note that all of the leadership qualities mentioned in the previous sections are grounded in the scriptures. Gangel cites Philippians 3:10-14 to indicate “that the apostle Paul is a shining example of the power of self-realization.”³⁶⁸ Proverbs 29:18 declares, “Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint.” The scriptures are replete with leaders who mobilized the people with inspirational communication, such as in Joshua 3, where Joshua inspired the people to cross into the promised land of Canaan. Concerning trustworthy character, Paul admonishes in 1 Tim. 3:2-7 that leaders should be competent (able to teach, managing well their own affairs), people of integrity

³⁶⁵ Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, 221.

³⁶⁶ John C. Maxwell, *Leadership Gold: Lessons I've Learned from a Lifetime of Leading* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2008), 248.

³⁶⁷ Scheer, 217.

³⁶⁸ Gangel, 123.

(above reproach), constant and reliable (sober-minded, self-controlled, and respectable), and genuinely concerned for the wellbeing of people (gentle, not violent, and well respected by outsiders). A team-approach to carrying out the work of the Lord, where all the believers use their unique gifts and talents for a common purpose, is clearly described in Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-30.

Jesus is the epitome of servant leadership in John 13, as he washes the feet of his disciples and admonishes them to do likewise. In Ephesians 3, Paul boldly proclaims the foundation of faith, which ultimately enables him to lead a team of missionaries all over the ancient Roman world. He was called by God to proclaim to the gospel to the Gentiles in order that they might discover the unsearchable riches which are found in Christ Jesus. Also, in 2 Timothy, during Paul's last days upon the earth, he has legacy in mind as he admonishes Timothy, the man he has mentored for decades, to be strong in the Christ Jesus and to continue the work that Paul began.

Equipping Leaders

As indicated earlier, it is not enough to identify potential leadership qualities in future leaders. People must be invited into a process where those qualities will be developed and nurtured.³⁶⁹ The literature revealed that there are several different ways that people are equipped for leadership, and many of these developmental areas overlap and work in conjunction with one another. While there are a variety of descriptions of leadership development, they can generally be categorized as follows: formal training outside the job environment, mentoring or apprenticeship, on-the-job experience, and self-motivated learning. The following sections describe and discuss the effectiveness of each of these areas in equipping leaders inside and outside the church.

³⁶⁹ DePree, 14.

Formal Training Outside the Job Environment

Training leaders for business enterprises has a relatively recent history. The first undergraduate commerce program appeared at the end of the nineteenth century.³⁷⁰ During the 1980s, the “role of strategic vision in leadership suddenly became particularly important in training.”³⁷¹ In more recent times, academic leadership programs have proliferated,³⁷² and these days, corporations rely almost entirely on outside vendors for leadership training programs.³⁷³

Interestingly, training schools for spiritual leaders date back to the Old Testament, when the prophet Samuel established schools to train prophets.³⁷⁴ During the medieval period in Europe, most church leadership training moved away from the local churches and into the monasteries, but that leadership was largely separated from the life and ministry of the local church.³⁷⁵ Between 1300–1800 AD, universities were established and learned professors replaced priests in the training of future church leaders. Though those universities effectively transmitted knowledge to emerging leaders, the students were often unskilled in practical church ministry.³⁷⁶ Beginning around the eighteenth century in America, seminaries were developed in order to increase the skill level of

³⁷⁰ Conger, 40.

³⁷¹ Ibid., 42.

³⁷² Ibid., 44.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Engstrom, 63.

³⁷⁵ Forman, 45-46.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 46.

ministers. Seminaries took on two important tasks – academically grounding students in theology and training students in practical ministry.³⁷⁷

Forman, Jones, and Miller express concern that churches have become too dependent on academic institutions to provide the kind of leadership training needed in practical ministry. They charge that the churches have “neglected the training of leaders within the congregation and largely abdicated to professional schools the responsibility for training pastoral leaders.”³⁷⁸ Rick Thoman, Dean of Faculty and Department Chair of the Christian Ministry Department at the University of Northwestern in St. Paul, Minnesota, asserts that seminaries and churches need to recognize the essential role of the local church in leadership development, and must intentionally and creatively partner with one another to develop future church leaders.³⁷⁹

Although a number of authors emphasize the importance of seminary training for professional worship leaders, a closer examination reveals that these authors consider the seminaries’ greatest contribution to future worship leaders to be in the areas of theology or music studies, but not necessarily in leadership development.³⁸⁰ It would appear that most church leaders, including worship leaders, believe that training within the local church is essential for effective leadership development. This will be discussed further in the following section.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 46-47.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 48.

³⁷⁹ Rick Thoman, "Leadership Development: Churches Don't Have to Go It Alone, Part 2," *Christian Education Journal* 8, no. 1 (2011): 41-42.

³⁸⁰ Jones, 144-145; Liesch, 229-231.

Mentoring or Apprenticeship

According to Fred Smith, internationally noted author, speaker, management consultant, and contributing editor to *Leadership Journal*, mentoring is once again in favor, and the current trend appears to be an update of one of the oldest and best methods of learning—the apprenticeship model.³⁸¹ Long before university degrees, “the mentoring system was the accepted one, not only in manual skills but in the professions, such as in medicine and law.”³⁸² As Forman, Jones, and Miller note, “A chapter on...mentoring wouldn’t have been necessary a hundred years ago.... Long before degrees and diplomas, carpenters, surgeons and sailors employed mentoring techniques to train their successors.”³⁸³ However, in recent years, there has been a resurgence of confidence in the mentoring model in the business world and in education.³⁸⁴

Smith describes three different types of mentoring relationships: role-models, lifestyle mentoring, and skills-art mentoring.³⁸⁵ According to Smith, role-model and lifestyle mentoring are unique, occurring in only a minority of mentoring relationships. They focus more on who people want to become and how they want to live their lives, rather than on learning particular skills or ways to perform.³⁸⁶ The most common type is skills-art mentoring.³⁸⁷ This type of mentoring is “a one-on-one relation between a mentor and

³⁸¹ Fred Smith, *Leading with Integrity* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1999), 134.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Forman, 99.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 100.

³⁸⁵ Smith, *Leading with Integrity*, 134-135.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 135-138.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 138.

mentoree for the specific and definable development of a skill or an art.”³⁸⁸ One variation of skills-art mentoring is the simple apprentice model: I do it; I do it, and you watch; you do it, and I watch; you do it. In this type of leadership development, the leader is initially working side by side with the apprentice, modeling firsthand how responsibilities should be handled.³⁸⁹

Mentoring is often a very organic process. As Smith notes, “It’s a living relationship and progresses in fits and starts. It can involve a specific area or several areas.”³⁹⁰ In an interview with Peter Drucker, DePree states:

In my experience, it’s never been easy formally to establish mentorship programs. I think that mentorship, in a certain sense, depends on chemistry. People make a connection. One person feels ready to help another. One person feels ready to accept help from a certain person. I believe that the best way to have mentorship take place is to reward visibly when it happens rather than to try to structure it.³⁹¹

In other words, because people are different and relationships are so dynamic, it is difficult to derive a “cookie-cutter” method for mentoring. A structure that may work for one mentoring relationship may fail with another.

Mentoring is greatly valued in many churches. In fact, there are pastors who believe the apprentice system of pastoring to be more effective than most seminary programs, and they make it a practice to always have a few men on staff for the purpose of mentoring.³⁹² Forman, Jones, and Miller point out that Jesus used the mentoring model

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 139.

³⁸⁹ John C. Maxwell, *Mentoring 101: What Every Leader Needs to Know* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2008), 17.

³⁹⁰ Smith, *Leading with Integrity*, 139.

³⁹¹ Drucker, 42.

with his twelve disciples.³⁹³ Likewise, Jonathan and Sarah Edwards, the famous First Great Awakening preacher and his wife, “regularly had one or two pastor-trainees living in their home, where the budding ministers had opportunity to observe the quality of their marriage, the reality of their spiritual life, and the demands of pastoral duties.”³⁹⁴

Church leaders such as Forman, Jones, and Miller believe the church can have a significant impact on the equipping of future leaders in the church if the hearts of the current leaders are motivated toward mentoring. As they state, “The churches doing the best job of leadership development...embed the value of leadership development deep into their church culture. Leadership development has more to do with who they *are* than with what particular things they *do*.”³⁹⁵ For this reason, Forman, Jones, and Miller place great value on church internships and report that most of their pastoral staff members were developed through their internship process.³⁹⁶

The literature did contain some references to current worship ministers intentionally mentoring potential worship ministers of the future. Noland uses the mother/father language of 1 Thessalonians to exhort worship leaders to nurture the artists who serve with them, but he does not speak specifically about mentoring future leaders.³⁹⁷ Navarro shares that he is currently in a leadership development phase at his

³⁹² Smith, *Leading with Integrity*, 134.

³⁹³ Forman, 90.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 99.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 30.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 173.

³⁹⁷ Noland, *The Heart of the Artist*, 254-259.

church, which includes skills and leadership training, but he does not give a lot of specifics regarding what that looks like.³⁹⁸ Paul Jones is more explicit:

Bring a good prospect to your church and help that person continue to grow—by financing some seminary or graduate-school education and by providing both time to practice and some form of accountability. In churches where a fine musician is present, interns can be brought on...who can both assist the music program and apprentice their craft. In fact, every mature music director should be systematically doing this for younger people to some extent.³⁹⁹

Clearly, some form of mentoring seems to be valued by a number of current, experienced worship leaders.

On-the-Job Experience

Another area of leadership training comes simply from on-the-job experience. As helpful as training programs and mentors might be, ultimately, people have to experience it to learn it. As Bennis and Goldsmith assert, “Too often, the learning environment we encounter is low-risk and protected.... As we see it, active, risky, self-conscious, and committed learning is required in order to become the leaders demanded by today’s complex and crisis-oriented environment.”⁴⁰⁰ This kind of learning generally comes from actual on-the-job experience, rather than from a controlled environment.

Conger reports on a study performed with 191 successful executives to determine what forces were behind their success. The conclusion clearly stated that experience was the common denominator in the ability of those executives to lead.⁴⁰¹ Conger contends, “Few, if any leaders have achieved their positions because of formal training programs.

³⁹⁸ Navarro, 170.

³⁹⁹ Jones, 145.

⁴⁰⁰ Bennis and Goldsmith, *Learning to Lead: A Workbook on Becoming a Leader*, 73.

⁴⁰¹ Conger, 29.

They see themselves as having learned from the ‘school of hard knocks.’”⁴⁰² For potential Christian leaders, this on-the-job experience would ideally take place in the midst of a loving community. Forman, Jones, and Miller state:

When church leaders emphasize the priority of community and consistently model it, their example will shape leaders-in-training and the whole congregation.... If you want God to breathe life into your leadership development, start where God starts and love what God loves—authentic, loving community among the leaders—then watch it flow to other leaders and to the entire church body.⁴⁰³

God has intended the church to be a place where people can receive on-the-job experience;⁴⁰⁴ a place where the leadership will patiently allow people to explore their gifts, to learn how to lead, and even to fail at times in their pursuit of leadership training.⁴⁰⁵ Scheer echoes this sentiment of a church creating a healthy learning environment where worship leaders may receive valuable experience:

I don’t believe it is too much to expect worship leaders to have training and experience in all the facets of a full-orbed music ministry. We should encourage musicians to be faithful with the gifts God has given them, and we should honor their efforts by paying them well for the work they do.⁴⁰⁶

Budding worship leaders will flourish in an environment where they are loved, gently exhorted and challenged, and encouraged.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰² Ibid., 39.

⁴⁰³ Forman, 89.

⁴⁰⁴ Thoman: 32.

⁴⁰⁵ Sanders, 183-184.

⁴⁰⁶ Scheer, 216.

⁴⁰⁷ Noland, *The Heart of the Artist*, 254-259.

Self-Motivated Learning

It bears mentioning that self-motivated learning is an important component of leadership development. Drucker asserts that most leaders are self-made.⁴⁰⁸ As indicated earlier, development of leadership skills will largely rest with the participant's own motivation and talent and how receptive their organizations is to support and coach the newly learned skills.⁴⁰⁹ Maxwell tells the story of a self-motivated Indian pastor who grew as a leader by reading Maxwell's books for seven years. Indeed, it is fairly safe to conclude that when authors write books about leadership, they assume that there will be self-motivated people who, in their desire to learn how to be better leaders, will purchase and read those books.

Reformed Theology of Worship

When discussing the topic of how worship directors are equipped for vocational worship ministry in the Reformed church, it is important to understand how people learn the Reformed theology of worship. As Jones states, "To properly lead the people of God in worship, knowledge of the Word of God and some conception of one's doctrinal tradition is essential."⁴¹⁰

So what is the Reformed doctrinal tradition of worship, and how and where do worship directors in Reformed churches receive a historical and theological understanding of this tradition? In order to answer these questions, the following sections will discuss some of the more prominent theological themes that aspiring worship

⁴⁰⁸ Drucker, 21.

⁴⁰⁹ Conger, 180.

⁴¹⁰ Jones, 141.

directors will need to learn in order to understand Reformed worship, current theological disagreements these worship directors will likely encounter in Reformed worship, a biblical understanding of Christ-centered worship leadership, and ways that worship leaders are currently being theologically equipped in Reformed churches.

Theological Principles of Reformed Worship

Worship is extremely important in the Reformed tradition. As John Frame, professor of apologetics and systematic theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Escondido, California, states in his book *Worship in Spirit and Truth*, “In one sense, worship is the whole point of everything. It is the purpose of history, the goal of the whole Christian story.”⁴¹¹ In his book *Leading in Worship*, Terry Johnson, senior pastor of Independent Presbyterian church in Savannah, Georgia, maintains that this high view of worship dates back to the early Reformed Presbyterians, for whom worship was not simply a secondary issue, but “*the* issue.”⁴¹² Since the Protestant Reformation, several theological principles of worship have emerged out of the Reformed tradition. The following sections discuss a few of the more prominent theological principles of worship in Reformed churches.

Rooted in Scriptures (Regulative Principle of Worship)

In her article “Reformed Worship in the United States of America,” Marsha M. Wilfong, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Bellevue, Iowa, teaches that rooted deeply in the Reformed tradition is the strong conviction that God has established in the scriptures the appropriate way to worship him, and therefore, no element of worship is

⁴¹¹ Frame, 11.

⁴¹² Johnson, 3-4.

acceptable unless it is deemed to be specifically authorized by the scriptures.⁴¹³ This belief, commonly known as the Regulative Principle of Worship (RPW), was espoused by early Reformers such as Martin Bucer and John Calvin,⁴¹⁴ and is summarized in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*:

The acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture.⁴¹⁵

As Frame explains, when it comes to worship, “whatever Scripture does not command is forbidden.”⁴¹⁶

In the early days of the Reformed tradition, the “primary elements of worship were the reading of Scriptures, prayer, the singing of psalms, and the sermon.”⁴¹⁷ Over the centuries, Reformed churches have interpreted the RPW in different ways, resulting in a wide range of permissible external worship forms among Reformed churches and denominations,⁴¹⁸ but in recent years, this debate has intensified.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹³ Marsha M. Wilfong, “Reformed Worship in the United States of America,” in *Christian Worship in Reformed Churches Past and Present*, ed. Lukas Vischer (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 108.

⁴¹⁴ Chapell, 42-44.

⁴¹⁵ *Westminster Confession of Faith* 21.1.

⁴¹⁶ Frame, 38.

⁴¹⁷ Wilfong, 108.

⁴¹⁸ Frame, xii-xiii.

⁴¹⁹ Mark L. Dalbey, “A Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Look at the Regulative Principle of Worship” (D.Min. Diss., Covenant Theological Seminary, 1999), 2.

Priesthood of Believers

A second important theological principle of Reformed worship is the belief that worship is not the job of an exclusive, sacred priesthood; all believers are called to worship God.⁴²⁰ As Frame states, “Worship is not one segment of the Christian life among others. Worship is the entire Christian life, seen as a priestly offering to God.”⁴²¹ Bucer and Calvin described this “priesthood of believers” in a couple of ways—worship in the vernacular and active lay participation.⁴²² Calvin believed that understanding God’s word was essential to worship, and he argued that the only way God’s people would understand how to worship him was to make the scriptures available to the public in the vernacular language. With this conviction, Calvin was committed to “Bible translation, prayer, and worship in the language of the people.”⁴²³

According to Frame, this is what the Apostle Paul is talking about in 1 Corinthians 14, where he “places a high priority on the clarity, the intelligibility, of the language in worship.”⁴²⁴ Frame also maintains that “intelligibility, to some extent, implies contemporaneity,” and he applies that principle to allow not only modern translations of scripture, but modern music and worship forms as well.⁴²⁵ Calvin also encouraged active participation of the laity in the worship service. The people sang, followed along with the readings, participated in the liturgy, and were encouraged to

⁴²⁰ Chapell, 36.

⁴²¹ Frame, 11.

⁴²² Chapell, 42-44.

⁴²³ Ibid., 43.

⁴²⁴ John M. Frame, *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 1997), 18.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 19.

grow familiar with the progress of the worship service.⁴²⁶ Robert Webber, former professor of ministry at Northern Seminary in Lombard, Illinois, seems to concur with Calvin when he states, “WORSHIP IS A VERB. It is not something done to us or for us, but by us.”⁴²⁷

Word and Table

Another important theological principle in Reformed worship is the complementary roles of word and table. According to Bryan Chapell, president emeritus of Covenant Theological Seminary, “As early as the second century, records indicate that the church divided its worship into two major segments: the Liturgy of the Word...and the Liturgy of the Upper Room.”⁴²⁸ Although Reformed churches celebrate communion at different frequencies, when they have celebrated communion, they have historically followed this pattern, with the “Liturgy of the Word” culminating with the sermon, then transitioning into the “Liturgy of the Upper Room,” which is the celebration of the Lord’s supper.⁴²⁹ According to Chapell, “The order of worship in the Liturgy of the Word is actually a ‘re-presentation’ of the gospel. When the Liturgy of the Upper Room follows the Liturgy of the Word, this gospel message gets reinforced.”⁴³⁰

In general, Reformed churches tend to regard the Lord’s supper in one of two ways. There is the memorial or Zwinglian view, which was espoused by Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli. Those who hold this view regard communion as merely or mainly a

⁴²⁶ Chapell, 43.

⁴²⁷ Robert E. Webber, *Worship Is a Verb* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 12.

⁴²⁸ Chapell, 19.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 99.

commemoration, and do not believe that Christ is present at the Lord's supper in any special way.⁴³¹ The second view, which is often called the Reformed view, was promoted by Calvin, another Swiss reformer. Those who hold this view maintain that Christ is spiritually present in a special way through the Holy Spirit. As Robert Rayburn, founding president of both Covenant College and Covenant Theological Seminary, writes in his book *O Come, Let Us Worship: Corporate Worship in the Evangelical Church*, "The Lord's Supper itself is His own established means of feeding His children on the rich spiritual resources of His own being. The whole Christ is really ministered in the sacrament."⁴³² Although many Reformed churches "trace their historical origins to Calvin," their actual practices on communion have been more reflective of Zwingli's memorial view.⁴³³

Trinitarian Worship

Another important theological principle is that Reformed worship must be Trinitarian worship. James Torrance, professor emeritus of systematic theology at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, states that Trinitarian worship "recognizes that there is only one way to come to the Father, namely through Christ in the communion of the Spirit, in the communion of saints, whatever the outward form our worship may take."⁴³⁴

⁴³¹ Robert G. Rayburn, *O Come, Let Us Worship: Corporate Worship in the Evangelical Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), 257.

⁴³² Ibid., 258.

⁴³³ Ibid., 257.

⁴³⁴ James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 22.

He continues, “It was the concern of the Reformers to recover this New Testament and early Christian view of worship.”⁴³⁵

Frame expands on this idea by declaring that Trinitarian worship is also Christ-centered, because when God’s people call on the name of the Lord, they are calling upon the name of Christ.⁴³⁶ According to Torrance, the Reformers realized that “God does not accept us because we have offered worthy worship. In his love, he accepts us freely in the person of his beloved Son.”⁴³⁷ Rayburn adds that worshipers “...must not eliminate any of the essential elements of His being, His life, and His work—the deity, the incarnation, the sinless life, the atonement, the resurrection, the eschatological hope, and the sacraments which He has established for His church.”⁴³⁸ Jesus Christ is to be at the center of all that takes place in true worship of God.

However, Chapell makes it clear that Christ-centered worship in no way diminishes the honor of the other members of the Trinity, nor does it imply that mention of other members of the Trinity should be omitted in worship services. Rather, Christ-centered worship “commits us to honor Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by worshiping them in the context of the redeeming work that culminates in Christ.”⁴³⁹

Gospel-Centered Worship

Frame lists gospel-centeredness as one of the primary principles of worship, and he declares, “In all our worship, the good news that Jesus has died for our sins and risen

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth*, 7.

⁴³⁷ Torrance, 23.

⁴³⁸ Rayburn, 34.

⁴³⁹ Chapell, 114.

gloriously from the dead should be central.”⁴⁴⁰ Chapell concurs, and argues convincingly that although historical Christian liturgies have continuously changed throughout the centuries, there has been a consistent, common gospel pattern at the core of Christian orders of worship, and more specifically, Reformed orders of worship.⁴⁴¹ Despite the liturgical changes that have occurred over the centuries, this common gospel sequence has served as the core structure in ordering worship around the liturgical themes of adoration, confession, assurance, thanksgiving, petition, instruction, charge, and blessing.⁴⁴² In other words, denominations and churches have consistently structured their worship services according to the gospel flow. As Chapell states, “If we did not know this sequence was describing a liturgical pattern, we would probably think it was describing something else: the progress of the gospel in the life of an individual.”⁴⁴³

Other Theological Principles in Reformed Worship

The aforementioned list represents the most prominent and historic theological worship principles in the Reformed tradition. However, this list is by no means exhaustive. Other worship principles mentioned in Reformed literature include the following: worship as dialogical (God speaks to his people, they answer him, he speaks again, and they reply);⁴⁴⁴ worship as both vertical and horizontal (directed to the triune God, yet edifying and evangelistic for fellow humans);⁴⁴⁵ worship as covenantal (God’s

⁴⁴⁰ Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth*, 6.

⁴⁴¹ Chapell, 42, 59-63, 99.

⁴⁴² Ibid., 86-99.

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 99.

⁴⁴⁴ Rayburn, 118.

new covenant is renewed, affirmed, and sealed);⁴⁴⁶ and worship as communal (an otherwise disparate group of people joining together in worship).⁴⁴⁷

Current Disagreements in Reformed Worship

At a high level, there has been and continues to be universal adherence in Reformed churches to the aforementioned theological worship principles. However, there have been significant disagreements about the application of these principles, particularly in three areas: the RPW and contemporary forms of worship, laity and worship leadership, and the interpretive view of Christ's presence in and frequency of the Lord's supper. Because these issues can impact how worship directors approach the planning and implementation of Reformed worship, these areas will be discussed in the following sections.

The Regulative Principle and Contemporary Forms of Worship

As stated earlier, for centuries, Reformed churches have interpreted the RPW in different ways, resulting in a wide and varying range of permissible external worship forms among Reformed churches and denominations.⁴⁴⁸ However, in recent years, this debate has intensified.⁴⁴⁹ There are both historical and interpretive reasons for these strong differences of opinion. Historically, there has been a lack of uniformity in the application of the RPW since the earliest days of the Reformed tradition. As Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, points out, "Zwingli and

⁴⁴⁵ Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth*, 7-8.

⁴⁴⁶ Emily R. Brink and John D. Witvliet, eds., *The Worship Sourcebook* (Grand Rapids, MI: CRC Publications, 2004), 16; see also Meyers.

⁴⁴⁷ Brink and Witvliet, eds., 17.

⁴⁴⁸ Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth*, xii-xiii.

⁴⁴⁹ Dalbey, 2.

Calvin, both working with the same biblical commitments, came to such different conclusions that they birthed two distinct corporate worship traditions.”⁴⁵⁰ Zwingli’s service focused almost exclusively on preaching and prayer, and included little to no liturgy or music. Conversely, Calvin’s service included fixed forms of liturgy, more music, and more congregational participation.⁴⁵¹

In 1645, in an effort to produce unity and uniformity in worship, the Westminster Assembly of Divines published *A Directory for the Publicke Worship of God*.⁴⁵² However, because of the complexities of the *Directory for Publicke Worship*, and power struggles that were taking place among the different religious traditions,⁴⁵³ many of the prescribed forms of worship “proved impractical and quickly fell into disuse.”⁴⁵⁴ In 1788, the American Presbyterians, in a similar attempt to produce unity and uniformity in worship, produced the *American Directory for Worship*, a revision of the *Westminster Directory for Publicke Worship*.⁴⁵⁵ However, because this document was never viewed as binding, and because the directives remained “vague and allowed for great diversity of practice,” the *American Directory* “failed to achieve the purpose its drafters envisioned of unifying worship practices among Presbyterian congregations.”⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁰ Keller, 200.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 199.

⁴⁵² James F. White, *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989), 71.

⁴⁵³ Chapell, 56-57.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁵⁵ Wilfong, 115.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 117.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, revival swept through America, bringing with it worship patterns that infiltrated mainstream Presbyterian churches.⁴⁵⁷

The consequence was “a further erosion of historical consciousness among Presbyterians and a discarding of almost everything particularly characteristic of Reformed worship in favor of American revival patterns.”⁴⁵⁸ John Witvliet, director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship and associate professor of worship, theology, and music at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, believes that the Reformed church’s failure to resist the revival movement was due to:

...the reticence of Reformed and Presbyterian churches to be too authoritarian in matters of worship. Still reacting to the perceived liturgical authoritarianism of the Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions, Reformed assemblies consistently refused to endorse set orders of worship or liturgical texts.⁴⁵⁹

The Reformed tradition, which had developed in reaction to extreme worship authoritarianism, now found it difficult to exercise worship authority within its own denominations and churches. As a result, Reformed pastors looked not to the Reformed tradition for hymnals and liturgical materials, but rather to those who were publishing from the revivalist tradition.⁴⁶⁰ The outcome was predictable:

There was diversity in the use of free or fixed worship patterns, the singing of psalms and hymns, the frequency of celebration of the Lord’s Supper, and the attention paid to the liturgical calendar. Worship practices varied not simply among Reformed denominations, but among congregations within denominations.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁷ White, 72-73.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 73.

⁴⁵⁹ John D. Witvliet, *Worship Seeking Understanding: Windows in Christian Practices* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 171.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

Not only did Reformed churches fail to achieve liturgical uniformity, but they became even more diverse in their practice.

Although there have been subsequent attempts, particularly in the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, to develop liturgical consistency among Reformed churches, there is still very little uniformity—and many would argue very little unity—regarding the forms of worships. As Johnson states, “Today, even among conservative Presbyterians one can never know when visiting their churches whether they will worship in the style of the Revivalistic Baptists, the Charismatics, the Episcopalians, 1950’s styled Presbyterians, or the non-worship of the ‘seeker-friendly’ model.”⁴⁶² Jack D. Kineer, professor of Greek and New Testament at Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, frames it another way, “It is evident...that ‘almost’ anything goes in Presbyterian worship.”⁴⁶³

This historical ambiguity in the application of the RPW has led to interpretive differences, and many heated debates, particularly as they relate to “the relevance of worship to contemporary culture.”⁴⁶⁴ Presbyterians universally adhere to the RPW and agree with the worship elements clearly stated in scripture; the challenge comes when seeking to determine what form those elements should take. As Johnson emphasizes, “the real battleground today is not over elements but forms.”⁴⁶⁵ For example, Presbyterians

⁴⁶¹ Wilfong, 129.

⁴⁶² Johnson, 1.

⁴⁶³ Jack D. Kineer, “Worship Diversity among Presbyterians,” *Roots of Reformed Worship* (January, 1998). <http://kinneer.rpts.edu/home/liturgy/RootsofReformedWorship%2CNo2.pdf?attredirects=0&d=1> (accessed October 27, 2013).

⁴⁶⁴ Dalbey, 38.

will easily agree that singing is a permissible element for worship, but there is much debate on whether contemporary music is an appropriate form of that element.⁴⁶⁶

Mark Dalbey, president of Covenant Theological Seminary and professor of practical theology, describes two approaches to the RPW within Presbyterian and Reformed circles: an approach that applies the RPW in a stricter manner, seeking to make normative particular historical expressions of worship; and a second approach that “allows far more freedom of application of the RPW with a desire to be faithful to Scripture yet more flexible in the forms the biblical elements take in particular cultures and generations up to the present day.”⁴⁶⁷

Proponents of the stricter approach express grave concern for the other group’s “malleable” brand of Presbyterianism,⁴⁶⁸ and seriously doubt that “contemporary forms are adequate for the expression of the Reformed faith.”⁴⁶⁹ This group also questions the long-term survival of Presbyterianism itself if diverse, contemporary forms of worship continue to be utilized over a long period of time. As Johnson states, “Can a connectional church survive from one generation to the next if the worship of each of its congregations is idiosyncratic?... We may face the defection of a whole generation if we do not achieve a greater uniformity of worship.”⁴⁷⁰ Johnson’s concern lies primarily in the belief that when Reformed children grow up and relocate to other areas, they will likely look for a

⁴⁶⁵ Terry L. Johnson, “The Regulative Principle,” in *The Worship of God: Reformed Concepts of Biblical Worship*, ed. Terry L. Johnson (Glasgow, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 28.

⁴⁶⁶ Frame, *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense*, 2-3.

⁴⁶⁷ Dalbey, 26.

⁴⁶⁸ Johnson, *Leading in Worship*, 1.

⁴⁶⁹ Johnson, “The Regulative Principle,” 28.

⁴⁷⁰ Johnson, *Leading in Worship*, 2.

church that worships in a similar style to the church they left, rather than looking for a church with the same doctrine and ministry orientation.⁴⁷¹ Johnson seems to place great confidence in historic Reformed worship structures to maintain the unity and ongoing participation of future generations. But Johnson is also convinced that many young people today are “looking for something more rooted in history and substantial in content,”⁴⁷² and he posits that the “simple, spiritual, reverent worship of the Reformed church may prove to be just the food upon which the hungry souls of our day are longing to feast.”⁴⁷³

Proponents of the less strict interpretive group believe those in the stricter group “underestimate the amount of freedom that Scripture permits in worship.”⁴⁷⁴ Frame explains:

Historically oriented books typically try to make us feel guilty if we do not follow traditional patterns. Theological traditionalists also typically want to minimize freedom and flexibility. Even those who offer suggestions for “meaningful worship” are often very restrictive, for they tend to be very negative toward churches that don't follow their suggestions.⁴⁷⁵

Dalbey expands this thought when he states, “To reject some applications of the RPW in particular historical settings is not the same as rejecting the RPW. A flexible understanding of the RPW is not in itself a denial of the RPW.”⁴⁷⁶ Dalbey goes on to say,

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

⁴⁷² Johnson, “Worship from the Heart,” 180.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth*, xvi.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Dalbey, 27.

“Making use of forms from the past as well as new and fresh forms in the present is consistent with the biblical understanding of the RPW.”⁴⁷⁷

Frame believes the utilization of new and fresh forms is also consistent with the Reformed concept of worship in the vernacular, including striving for worship that is intelligible and relevant.⁴⁷⁸ Frame, who attended highly traditional Presbyterian churches for almost forty years, shares about his own personal struggle to accept contemporary worship music when he became the director of worship at a new Presbyterian church plant. He recalls:

God’s grace enabled me to persevere through the discomfort. The main biblical considerations motivating me through this time were the Great Commission and the emphasis on intelligible worship in 1 Cor. 14. We wanted to have a form of worship that spoke intelligibly to the community we sought to reach: not only long-time Presbyterians, but also non-Presbyterian Christians and the unchurched. To reach that goal, we all needed to put aside, to a large extent, our own prejudices and preferences, to esteem the interests of others above our own. God blessed that desire, and many came to a saving knowledge of Christ through the church’s ministry.⁴⁷⁹

Frame continues, “Both those who love traditional hymns and those who love the new songs need to be flexible, to understand one another and minister to one another.”⁴⁸⁰

It would appear that Frame’s personal story is not all that unique. In his research, Dalbey found that “churches that put the focus of worship on biblical elements with latitude in application and expression of the RPW in shaping those elements” made use of

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁷⁸ Frame, *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense*, 18-19.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 143.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

some type of blended worship.⁴⁸¹ Furthermore, as those congregations learned to “stretch toward one another with love and forbearance and without insisting on their personal preferences,” a deeper unity in worship emerged, focusing on Christ rather than worship styles.⁴⁸²

Laity and Worship Leading

Another controversial issue in many Reformed churches and denominations concerns the level of spiritual authority required to serve as a worship leader, particularly in situations that involve women. Simply stated, is it permissible for non-ordained people (including women) to lead in worship? Once again, the historical roots of the issue can be traced back to the early Reformers.

Dating back to the *Westminster Directory of Worship*, the Divines declared, “Reading of the word in the congregation, being part of the publick worship of God,...is to be performed by the pastors and teachers.”⁴⁸³ Since women were not ordained as pastors and teachers, this naturally precluded their involvement. This view was essentially adopted in the 1788 *American Directory of Worship*, which stated, “The reading of the holy Scriptures, in the congregation, is a part of the public worship of God, and ought to be performed by the ministers and teachers.”⁴⁸⁴ In 1894, the Southern Presbyterian Church eased its worship leadership restrictions somewhat when it changed the language “by the ministers and teachers” to “by the minister or some other authorized

⁴⁸¹ Dalbey, 56.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ *Westminster Directory for Publicke Worship*, III.1

⁴⁸⁴ PCA Historical Center, “The Public Reading of the Holy Scriptures,” <http://www.pcahistory.org/bco/dfw/50/02.html> (accessed October 28, 2013).

person.”⁴⁸⁵ In 1975, the newly established Presbyterian Church in America broadened the language further by declaring that the reading of scripture in public worship should be performed by “the minister, or by some other person.”⁴⁸⁶ Clearly, the restrictions of who can stand as a leader before the congregation have lessened over the centuries.

The more recent debates have focused on whether it is permissible for women to lead worship. Those opposed to women leading in worship cite passages like 1 Corinthians 13:34, where Paul admonishes women to keep silent in churches, and also 1 Timothy 2:12-15, where Paul states that women are not to teach or exercise authority over men, but rather they must remain silent.⁴⁸⁷

The other side of the debate is largely represented in a paper written by Tim and Kathy Keller for their church, Redeemer Presbyterian in New York City. After providing a lengthy theological rationale and defense for their position, the Kellers state:

Though the job of elder is a high calling, every believer is a “prophet, priest, and king.” All non-elders in the church must and can use their gifts in the church, whatever they are. In a nutshell, our position is this: whatever a non-ruling elder male can do in the church, a woman can do. We do not believe that I Timothy 2:11 or I Corinthians 14:35-36 precludes women teaching the Bible to men or speaking publicly.... Thus, women at Redeemer will be free to use all the gifts, privately, and publicly. There are no restrictions on ministry at all. There is a restriction on the office of elder.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ "PCA Assembly Gives Reason for Women Not Leading in Public Worship," *Presbyterian and Reformed News*, Presbyterian International News Service, <http://www.presbyteriannews.org/volumes/v4/3/womenleading.htm> (accessed October 27, 2013).

⁴⁸⁸ Timothy J. Keller and Kathy Keller, "Women and Ministry," (1989). http://christcommunitychurchmedia.org/Women/resources/University_Presbyterian_Church.pdf (accessed October 28, 2013).

In other words, the Kellers, and others who would concur with their position, find it permissible for women and non-ordained men to lead in worship. To date, there are a number of worship directors in Reformed churches who are non-ordained, and a portion of those worship directors are women.⁴⁸⁹

Interpretive View of Christ's Presence in the Lord's Supper

Another area of disagreement among Reformed denominations and churches lies in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. As Rayburn laments, "The central and most solemn act of the church's worship has traditionally been the Lord's Supper. It is regrettable indeed that this same central exercise of Christian devotion should also be the point at which Christians divide and contend, sometimes bitterly, with one another."⁴⁹⁰ Unfortunately, Reformed churches are not immune to this conflict, and there can be sharp disagreements within a denomination, or even inside a church congregation. Such conflict primarily focuses on how churches interpret Christ's presence in the Lord's supper. Those who hold to the Zwinglian memorial view regard communion as commemorative, and they do not believe that Christ is present at the Lord's supper in any special way.⁴⁹¹ Proponents of the Calvinian Reformed view maintain that Christ is spiritually present in a special way through the Holy Spirit,⁴⁹² and those who partake of

⁴⁸⁹ Mark D. Roberts, "Redeemer Presbyterian Church: Why Is It Thriving?" <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/markdroberts/series/redeemer-presbyterian-church-why-is-it-thriving/> (accessed October 27, 2013). See Perimeter Presbyterian Church webpage: <http://www.perimeter.org/staff/>

⁴⁹⁰ Rayburn, 255-256.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 257.

⁴⁹² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, 2 vols. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, c. 1960; reissued, 2006), 1362-1363, 1370-1371.

communion in faith have special union with Christ⁴⁹³ and receive special blessings and spiritual nourishment through the work of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁹⁴ Calvin states, “In this Sacrament we have such full witness of all these things that we must certainly consider them as if Christ here present were himself set before our eyes and touched by our hands.”⁴⁹⁵

Interestingly, though Reformed churches trace their historical and theological heritage back to Calvin (who strongly opposed Zwingli’s view of the Lord’s supper), and though many of these churches would espouse the Calvinian view of the Lord’s presence at communion, their practical approach to and implementation of the Lord’s supper tend to reflect the memorial view of communion.⁴⁹⁶ Webber believes the root cause for this has been “a failure among Christians shaped by Enlightenment rationalism to see any supernatural divine presence at Table worship.”⁴⁹⁷ Rather than communion being something that Jesus does through his Spirit—blessing and nourishing his people—communion becomes something that the people do through the strength and efficacy of their remembering.⁴⁹⁸ But Leonard Vander Zee, editor-in-chief for Faith Alive Christian Resources and a strong proponent of the Calvinian view, observes in *Christ, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper: Recovering the Sacraments for Evangelical Worship* that “the wonderful thing about the Lord’s Supper is that its benefit does not depend on my

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 1361-1362, 1368-1369, 1371-1372.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 1359-1365, 1369-1372.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 1362.

⁴⁹⁶ Rayburn, 257.

⁴⁹⁷ Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Worship: Proclaiming and Enacting God's Narrative* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), 134.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., 134, 137.

feelings at the time, but on the Lord's promise of his personal presence made known in the bread and wine."⁴⁹⁹

This controversy is not limited to erudite disagreements. There are very real differences in the way Reformed churches approach and celebrate communion, depending on which view they hold. One of the most common debates relates to the frequency of the communion celebration. Those with memorialistic leanings tend to celebrate communion less frequently, because they are fearful that frequent celebrations will lead to communion becoming less special.⁵⁰⁰ Proponents of Christ's spiritual presence counter this practice with arguments like, "Would you suggest we preach the Bible less so that it will become more special?"⁵⁰¹ As Vander Zee states, "If God feeds and confirms our faith in the sacrament, then we deprive ourselves of the fullness of his grace when we sit around the table only once in a while."⁵⁰² For these reasons, those who hold to Christ's spiritual presence often advocate for more frequent communion.⁵⁰³

Another area of disagreement pertains to the mood of communion. Those who focus on communion as a memorial tend to emphasize remembering, much like a memorial service, which can create a more cerebral and reflective atmosphere.⁵⁰⁴ However, while remembering and reflecting on the way that Christ's death, resurrection,

⁴⁹⁹ Leonard J. Vander Zee, *Christ, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper: Recovering the Sacraments for Evangelical Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 140.

⁵⁰⁰ Rayburn, 259.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid. Webber, *Ancient-Future Worship: Proclaiming and Enacting God's Narrative*, 148.

⁵⁰² Vander Zee, 232.

⁵⁰³ Rayburn, 259.

⁵⁰⁴ Webber, *Ancient-Future Worship: Proclaiming and Enacting God's Narrative*, 134-135.

and return are clearly prescribed in the scriptures,⁵⁰⁵ those who believe that Christ is truly present at communion in a special way tend to approach the table with a heightened sense of awe at the supernatural mystery of Christ's presence,⁵⁰⁶ with hearts of gratitude that they have been invited to Christ's table,⁵⁰⁷ and with an air of celebration that Christ has defeated sin and death. As Rayburn observes, "The Lord's Supper has never been a solemn wake held in sorrowful remembrance of a dead person. From its beginning in the early church it has been a joyful time of fellowship, dominated by thanksgiving."⁵⁰⁸

Christ-Centered Worship Leading

As discussed earlier, Reformed worship is to be Trinitarian worship, and Jesus Christ is to be at the center of all that takes place in the true worship of God. This is only fitting, because through Christ's atoning death and victorious resurrection, the curtain separating God and his people has been torn asunder,⁵⁰⁹ and Jesus Christ, the perfect high priest, leads his people to worship in God's presence.⁵¹⁰ Yet Jesus does not serve only as an "usher" in the worship service. He is the worship leader who stands before the congregation. As Torrance states, "The real agent in worship, in a New Testament understanding, is Jesus Christ who leads us in our praises and prayers, 'the one true minister of the sanctuary.'"⁵¹¹ Amazingly, those gifted musicians who stand before God's

⁵⁰⁵ Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-30.

⁵⁰⁶ Webber, *Ancient-Future Worship: Proclaiming and Enacting God's Narrative*, 135.

⁵⁰⁷ Vander Zee, 139-140.

⁵⁰⁸ Rayburn, 257-258.

⁵⁰⁹ Matthew 27:51

⁵¹⁰ Hebrews 7:23-8:2.

⁵¹¹ Torrance, 23.

people leading in worship actually serve as “sub-agents” whereby Christ sings to the congregation. The following sections will discuss this in greater detail.

David – The “Sweet Singer of Israel”

Music and singing in worship, which began as a spontaneous corporate expression of gratitude toward God after the crossing of the Red Sea,⁵¹² eventually increased in importance and became part of the religious rites of worship.⁵¹³ However, beginning with the story of King David, music took on new significance in worship. Reggie Kidd, professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida, notes in his book *With One Voice: Discovering Christ's Song in Our Worship* that two “instructive portraits” emerge from David’s life and from the psalms he composed. The first is the “Sweet Singer of Israel,”⁵¹⁴ who through song “relentlessly pursues the Lord in the midst of travails, while his inner person is being molded and shaped by his God.”⁵¹⁵ The second is the “Architect of Praise,” who “bequeaths a musical tradition to his beloved Israel.”⁵¹⁶ In other words, while David inwardly expressed worship to God through the music he composed, he simultaneously created music that would one day become a voice by which the people of Israel could worship God. One man’s song would become everybody’s song.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹² Exodus 15.

⁵¹³ Alfred Sendrey, *Music in Ancient Israel* (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1969), 73-74.

⁵¹⁴ 2 Samuel 23:1.

⁵¹⁵ Reggie M. Kidd, *With One Voice: Discovering Christ's Song in Our Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 52.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., 63.

However, according to Calvin, when David composed and sang his songs in worship to God, he was also speaking for Jesus Christ.⁵¹⁸ As will be shown later, Christ himself used the songs of David, such as Psalm 22, to articulate his sufferings, his victory, and his missionary heart.⁵¹⁹ As Richard Phillips, senior minister of First Presbyterian Church of Coral Springs/Margate, Florida, states, “This reminds us that Jesus is the true singer of the Psalms; they were written first and foremost for him, and it is always with him in mind that we sing them most truly.”⁵²⁰

The Sons of Asaph – A Singing Guild of Worship Leaders

As discussed in an earlier section, David did more than simply bequeath worship music to Israel. In order to ensure that music would continue to be an integral part of the Israel’s worship of God, he also instituted a guild of musicians, led by Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun.⁵²¹ With the establishment of these corporate worship leaders, “David’s ministry of song now belongs, through Asaph, to all the people of God.”⁵²² In other words, David not only served as the architect of the temple building, which would become the location of worship for God’s people, but he also served as the “aural architect,” thus ensuring that God’s people would have songs, instruments, and musical forms by which they could corporately sing of God’s praise long after David’s death.⁵²³

⁵¹⁸ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, Calvin's Commentaries, Vol. 22 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 67.

⁵¹⁹ Edmund P. Clowney, "The Singing Savior," *Moody Monthly* July - August, 1979, 41-42.

⁵²⁰ Richard D Phillips, *Hebrews* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2006), 74.

⁵²¹ I Chronicles 25:1; See also “Biblical Foundations for Music Education” section of this paper.

⁵²² Kidd, 66.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, 68.

Christ – The Singing Savior

In Matthew 27:51, the gospel writer reports that when Jesus died on the cross, the curtain of the temple was supernaturally torn in two, from top to bottom. This signified that through his sacrificial death, Jesus had fully atoned for the sins of the people, and they now had direct access to worship God through faith in Jesus. Webber points out that the early Jerusalem Christians were very aware that the temple and its worship rites were fulfilled in Christ.⁵²⁴ All worship was tied to him and achieved through him.

The writer of Hebrews picks up on this theme when he presents Jesus as the “singing Savior” who stands before the congregation and leads in worship.⁵²⁵ Jesus uses Psalm 22 to lead his people in a song of lament,⁵²⁶ a song of triumph over sin and affliction,⁵²⁷ and a missionary hymn of doxological praise, calling all the nations to join together with him in singing praise to his Father in heaven.⁵²⁸ As Kidd teaches, “In the church Jesus is chief liturgist or worship leader, both declaring the Father's name and singing his praises.”⁵²⁹ Calvin adds, “Christ leads our songs, and is the chief composer of our hymns.”⁵³⁰

⁵²⁴ Robert E. Webber, *Worship Old and New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 44.

⁵²⁵ Clowney, 40.

⁵²⁶ Psalm 22:1.

⁵²⁷ Psalm 22:22-26.

⁵²⁸ Psalm 22:27-31.

⁵²⁹ Kidd, 85.

⁵³⁰ Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, 67.

Modern Worship Leaders – Leading the Nations in Jesus’ Song

According to Dalbey, “The goal in worship singing is for Christ to dwell richly in the worshipping congregation. This is done through teaching and admonishing in song; singing to both God and one another; and in embracing a variety of forms.”⁵³¹ When worship leaders stand before the congregation, their singing is more Christ’s than their own.⁵³² They serve as agents indwelt by Christ, whereby Christ sings to the congregation. Calvin supports this idea when he comments on Hebrews 2, sharing:

We must further notice the office which Christ assumes which is that of proclaiming the name of God; and this began to be done when the gospel was first promulgated, and is now done daily by the ministry of pastors.... And this ought to add no small reverence to the gospel, since we ought not so much to consider men as speaking to us, as Christ by his own mouth....⁵³³

The implication from his statement, “whatever manner it may be offered to us,” is that just as pastors speak for Christ when they proclaim the gospel through words, so do the worship leaders sing for Christ when they proclaim the gospel through song.

Nevertheless, the writer of Hebrews is not merely referring to a few churches or denominations. In referencing Psalm 22, the writer is portraying a picture in which all the nations of earth and all generations will join together with a multiplicity of voices to sing with Christ his song of celebration to the heavenly Father.⁵³⁴ Kidd describes it this way, “Let me suggest that every group brings its own voice, but no group brings the official voice. One Voice sings above them all, and this Voice sings in all their voices, excluding

⁵³¹ Dalbey, 12.

⁵³² Kidd, 117.

⁵³³ Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, 66.

⁵³⁴ Psalm 22:27-31; Dalbey, 11.

none. Because there are so many dimensions to his own being, the multiplicity of voices amplifies his song.”⁵³⁵ Like choir directors in a symphony of choirs, worship leaders have the privilege of leading their particular group of earthly musicians in a chorus that unites heaven and earth in proclaiming the greatness and goodness of God.⁵³⁶ The conductor of this symphony is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Equipping Worship Directors in Reformed Theology of Worship

So where and how are worship directors being equipped to learn these Reformed principles of worship? How are aspiring worship directors learning to navigate the unique theological challenges they will face in Reformed worship? Where are they learning that they stand and sing in the place of Jesus when they lead in worship? While there is extensive literature describing these principles and challenges, little has been written about how Reformed worship directors obtain this knowledge.

Generally, authors agree that in order to be effective, worship leaders must have a solid historical and theological understanding of their tradition of worship.⁵³⁷ Many of these authors believe that seminary is the best route to provide this historical and theological understanding.⁵³⁸ Jones further nuances this by expressing his concern that most Reformed seminaries are not offering adequate education and training for worship directors:

⁵³⁵ Kidd, 126.

⁵³⁶ Dalbey, 14. Citing Hebrews 12:22-24, Dalbey speaks of the fact that New Testament worship is linked with the heavenly worship that never ceases. Therefore, earthly worship now participates in heavenly worship.

⁵³⁷ Jones, 141; Hustad, 94; Liesch, 229.

⁵³⁸ Jones, 141; Hustad, 94; Liesch, 229. Kauflin (253), while agreeing that worship leaders should have “an appetite and aptitude for sound doctrine,” maintains that a Master of Divinity degree from a seminary is not essential.

It would not be unreasonable for chief musicians to have seminary training—particularly if more seminaries were offering music degrees and one did not have to sacrifice musical education to attend. But this is rarely the case. Why education of such importance to the church is not occurring in more seminaries is a mystery and a great tragedy.... Neither musical education for pastors nor theological education for musicians is sufficient in most seminaries or music graduate schools.⁵³⁹

Reformed authors largely agree that theological training is necessary, and they believe seminaries are a good source for such education, but at the same time they question whether seminaries are adequately structured and equipped to provide what aspiring Reformed worship directors need. Almost nothing was found in the literature indicating whether churches are theologically equipping future worship directors.

⁵³⁹ Jones, 141-142.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore how career worship directors became equipped for long-term vocational worship ministry in the Reformed church. The assumption of this study was that through their own experiences, career worship directors learned important principles which were involved in equipping them for long-term vocational worship ministry in the Reformed church. In order to address this purpose, the researcher identified four main areas of focus that are central to equipping future worship directors for long-term worship ministry in the Reformed church. These included the areas of church music education, spiritual formation, leadership development, and Reformed theology of worship. To examine these more closely, the following questions served as the intended focus of the qualitative research:

1. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' musicality?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church
2. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' spiritual formation?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church
3. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' leadership skills?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church

4. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' Reformed theology of worship?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church

Design of the Study

Sharan B. Merriam, professor of adult education at the University of Georgia, identifies four characteristics of qualitative research. First, the focus is on process, understanding, and meaning, that is, how people interpret their experiences and make sense out of their lives. Second, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. Third, the process is inductive, that is, qualitative researchers build toward theory from observations and intuitive understandings gleaned from being in the field. Fourth, the product is richly descriptive, meaning that words and pictures are used rather than numbers to convey what the researcher has learned about a phenomenon.⁵⁴⁰ The experiential and inductive nature of qualitative research fits the purposes of this study because it provides a rich description of how skilled, professional Reformed worship directors recall, interpret, and evaluate prior experiences that were fundamental in equipping them for long-term vocational worship ministry in the Reformed church.

Participant Sample Selection

The type of sampling utilized in this study was “purposeful sampling,” the most common form of “nonprobability sampling.”⁵⁴¹ Merriam writes, “Purposeful sampling is

⁵⁴⁰ Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2009), 14-16.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned.”⁵⁴² Thus, this research required participants who were able to communicate in depth about prior experiences which were vital for them to become sufficiently equipped to serve as full-time vocational worship directors in a Reformed church. Furthermore, because the influence of the Christian church, particularly during childhood, was an important consideration in this research, participants needed extended exposure to a Christian church during their childhood and/or youth years. Therefore, the purposeful study sample⁵⁴³ consisted of worship directors who met three criteria. First, they have attended church three or more years during their childhood and/or youth. Second, they are either currently serving full-time, or were recently serving full-time, in churches that would identify themselves as a “conservative Reformed church.” Finally, they have served as a worship director of one or more churches for at least ten years.

Because Reformed churches range widely in size and worship styles, participants were chosen to provide maximum variation within the criteria listed above.⁵⁴⁴ Both men and women were chosen to participate in the interviews, which provided variation in gender. Both younger and older worship directors participated, which provided variation in years of experience and generational perspective. The sizes of the local churches varied from small to large, which provided variation in available church resources and job description expectations. The styles of worship music ranged from churches that are

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 78.

primarily traditional in their worship style to churches that are primarily contemporary in their worship style, as well as churches that are a blend of the two. The final study was conducted through personal interviews with ten worship directors who fit the criteria above. They were invited to participate via an introductory letter. The researcher used pseudonyms to protect the identities of the participants.

Data Collection

This study utilized semi-structured interviews for primary data gathering. The open-ended nature of the interview questions facilitated the researcher's ability to build upon participant responses to complex issues in order to explore them more thoroughly.⁵⁴⁵ Ultimately, these methods enabled the researcher to look for common themes, patterns, concerns, and contrasting views across the variation of participants.⁵⁴⁶ A pilot test of the interview protocol was performed to help evaluate the questions for clarity and usefulness in eliciting relevant data. Initial interview protocol categories were derived from the literature but evolved around the explanations and descriptions that emerged from doing constant comparison work during the interview process. Coding and categorizing the data while continuing the process of interviewing allowed for the emergence of new sources of data.⁵⁴⁷

Ten worship directors were interviewed for approximately sixty to ninety minutes each. Prior to each interview, the worship directors received confirmation of the time and location of the interview. In order to accommodate participant schedules, and to facilitate a relaxed and confidential atmosphere, the researcher met with the subjects at the location

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., 90.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 181.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 178-183.

of their choice, which were in church offices, coffee shops, or restaurants. Each subject was informed of the purpose of the research and signed a consent form, and then the researcher proceeded to the semi-structured portion of the interview. Interviews were informal and unhurried, structured around the four areas of research interest previously stated. Interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. While the interview was underway, the researcher recorded field notes. After each interview, field notes with descriptive and reflective observations were written.

Data Analysis

Within one day of each meeting, the researcher sent the digital audio file of the interview to a professional transcription service. Within four days of sending the audio file, the transcription service returned a typed transcription of the interview to the researcher. This study utilized the constant comparison method of routinely analyzing the data throughout the interview process. This method provided for the ongoing revision, clarification, and evaluation of the resultant data categories.⁵⁴⁸ When the interviews and observation notes were fully transcribed into computer files, they were coded and analyzed. The analysis focused on discovering and identifying common themes and patterns across the variation of participants, as well as congruence or discrepancy among the different participants.

Researcher Position

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. In light of this, some challenge the trustworthiness of qualitative research, questioning the validity and reliability of the instrument, since researchers bring their own biases, assumptions, and worldviews into their analyses. In order to address this

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., 183.

concern and enhance the internal validity of research, Merriam suggests that the researcher's "assumptions, experiences, worldview, and theoretical orientation" should be clarified at the outset of the study.⁵⁴⁹

The researcher in this study was very active in the local church during his childhood and youth years. While the researcher received very little formal music education from the church during these years, he benefitted from multiple opportunities to utilize musical gifts in the church. Furthermore, as a worship director in a Reformed church, the researcher has a great desire to identify meaningful ways the Reformed church can encourage and equip potential future worship leaders. This desire has motivated this study. Such experiences and motivations could have led the researcher to inflate the role of the local church in equipping worship directors for full-time vocational worship ministry.

Study Limitations

As stated in the previous section, the participants in this study were limited to worship directors who attended church three or more years during their childhood and/or youth years. Therefore, the study's findings are limited to a particular group of people who have a shared background (i.e. raised with some connection to a local Christian church). If this research were conducted with worship directors who did not grow up with a church background, different findings might result.

Furthermore, worship directors interviewed for this study were limited to those currently serving full-time in churches that are part of the Reformed denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Therefore, the study's findings are limited to a

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 219.

particular group who serve in churches with that particular, shared theological tradition. If this research were conducted with worship directors who do not serve in the PCA, the findings might differ.

Third, worship directors interviewed for this study were limited to those who have served as worship directors for more than a decade. Therefore, the study's findings are limited to a particular group who were largely equipped during the second half of the twentieth century. If this research were conducted with worship directors who were equipped at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the findings might differ.

Finally, this study has a geographic limitation. Participants all live in a five-state area of the "Deep South." If this research were conducted in Reformed churches in other regions of the United States, different findings might result. Readers who desire to generalize some of the particular aspects of this study's conclusions for their church setting should test those aspects in their particular context. As with all qualitative studies, the reader bears the responsibility to determine what can be appropriately applied to their context.

Chapter Four

Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore how career worship directors became equipped for long-term vocational worship ministry in the Reformed church. The following four research questions guided this study:

1. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' musicality?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church
2. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' spiritual formation?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church
3. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' leadership skills?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church
4. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' theology of worship?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church

This chapter will introduce the participants of this study and present their insights concerning how their experiences from childhood through their early years of work equipped them for long-term vocational ministry in the Reformed church. The research

questions listed above will serve as section headings, under which the researcher will group the research findings.

Study Participants

Ten worship directors in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) participated in this study, and all of them met the interview subject criteria laid out in chapter three. At the time of this research, the participants, two women and eight men, resided in five different states throughout the southeastern United States. Two of these worship directors worked in churches that ranged in size from 151-500 congregants. Four worked in churches that ranged in size from 501-1000 congregants. Four others worked in churches with more than one thousand people. Interestingly, congregation size did not correspond with the number of worship ministries offered within a given church. In other words, the number of worship ministries offered by smaller churches was no less, and sometimes was more, than what was offered in the larger churches.

Andrew grew up in a Baptist church and received a Bachelor's degree in music. He has been working in worship ministry for twenty-nine years, and has been serving at his current church for seventeen years. His current church has a children's choir, a youth choir, an adult choir, vocal ensembles, orchestra and/or instrumental ensembles, a bell choir, and a praise band for the youth. The church's worship is a blend of traditional and contemporary styles.

Beth grew up in a Baptist church and received a Bachelor's degree in music. She has worked in worship ministry for twenty-three years, and all of those years have been spent at her current church. Her church has a children's choir, a youth choir, an adult

choir, vocal ensembles, orchestra and/or instrumental ensembles, and a praise band. The church's worship is a blend of traditional and contemporary styles.

Daniel grew up in the Catholic Church and received a Bachelor's degree in music. He has been working in the worship ministry for sixteen years, and has been serving at his current church for ten years. His current church has a children's choir, a youth choir, an adult choir, vocal ensembles, orchestra and/or instrumental ensembles, and a praise band. The church's style of worship is contemporary.

Eric grew up in a Presbyterian church and received a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in music. He has been working in the worship ministry for thirty-five years, and all of those years have been at his current church. His church has a children's choir, a youth choir, an adult choir, vocal ensembles, orchestra and/or instrumental ensembles, and a praise band. The church's style of worship is contemporary.

Gregory grew up in a Baptist church and received a Bachelor's degree in music. He has been working in the worship ministry for thirty-nine years, and has been serving at his current church for sixteen years. His current church has a children's choir, a youth choir, an adult choir, vocal ensembles, orchestra and/or instrumental ensembles, a bell choir, and a praise band. The church has a traditional worship service and a separate contemporary worship service.

Nathan grew up in a Baptist church and studied piano for many years with a college professor. He has been working in the worship ministry for twenty years, and has been serving his current church for eighteen years. His current church has a children's choir and a praise band. The church's style of worship is contemporary.

Scott spent most of his childhood years in the Methodist church, and he received a Bachelor's degree in music, a Master's of Divinity, and Doctorate of Ministry. He has been working in the worship ministry for more than fifty years, and has been serving at his current church for forty-six years. His current church has a children's choir, a youth choir, an adult choir, vocal ensembles, orchestra and/or instrumental ensembles, and a bell choir. The church's style of worship is traditional.

Susan grew up in a Presbyterian church and received both a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in music. She has been working in the worship ministry for thirty-five years, and all of those years have been at her current church. Her church has a children's choir, a youth choir, an adult choir, vocal ensembles, orchestra and/or instrumental ensembles, a bell choir, and a praise band. The church's worship is a blend of traditional and contemporary styles.

Tim grew up in a Baptist church and received both a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in music. He has been working in the worship ministry for thirty-two years, and has been serving at his current church for twenty years. His current church has a children's choir, a youth choir, an adult choir, vocal ensembles, orchestra and/or instrumental ensembles, a bell choir, and a praise band. The church's worship is a blend of traditional and contemporary styles.

Tyler grew up in a Lutheran church and received a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in music. He has been working in the worship ministry for fifteen years, and has been serving at his current church for fifteen months. His current church has a children's choir, a youth choir, an adult choir, vocal ensembles, orchestra and/or

instrumental ensembles, a bell choir, and a praise band. The church has two traditional worship services and a separate contemporary worship service.

Experiences That Developed Musicality

As discussed in chapter two, music is an integral part of the Christian church, and good musicality is a necessity for worship directors. With that in mind, the researcher interviewed the participants regarding their musical equipping during their childhood years through their early years of work in the church. The results of these findings are discussed in the following sections.

During Childhood and Youth Years

The interviews indicated that significant musical equipping took place for the participants during their childhood and youth years. The following sections discuss some of the more prominent ways this musical development occurred.

Musical Equipping through the Family

The majority of the participants' families provided significant impetus in their musical development. As Gregory stated, "I grew up in an extremely musical home.... We sang around the piano frequently, more than once a week. We sang in the car [and I] learned part singing before I was four. We were just a very musical family." Tim's story was very similar, "My mother was a piano teacher, so from the womb, from conception forward, I have always been exposed to music.... Her love for music and her desire to use music for God's glory was probably the most profound influence on me, as far as developing me musically." Even siblings could play an important role. As Tyler quipped, "At one point, my sister started taking organ lessons, [and] I wasn't going to just sit and be left behind...so I started playing the organ."

But musical equipping was not limited only to those whose parents were highly musical. All of the participants' parents played significant roles in their children's musical development through facilitating private music lessons for their children.

Musical Equipping through Private Lessons

All ten participants took at least some piano lessons during their childhood years, and they all indicated that they currently have at least some degree of proficiency on the piano. Nathan and Daniel had highly skilled piano teachers and poured themselves into their lessons. Eric, who also obtained a high proficiency on the piano, described his teachers as “not professional pedagogues...[but] they were people who were serving in a local community, helping kids like me [develop] basic skills.” Others, like Gregory, Susan, and Tim, had piano lessons but did not enjoy them and eventually stopped taking them.

There were also additional private music lessons for several of the participants during the childhood years, such as voice lessons, organ, guitar, and band instruments. Tim, who began voice lessons at the beginning of his high school junior year, regarded these lessons as “formative” in his musical development.

Musical Equipping in the Local Church

The interviews clearly indicated that the local church had a tremendous impact on the musical development of all ten of the participants. The following sections discuss some of these areas of development.

Developing a Love and Skill for Singing

The church helped many of the participants to develop a love and skill for singing. Eight of the participants indicated that they sang in their church's children's

choir. (The other two who did not mention singing in the choir were also actively involved in the music of the church through accompanying and/or singing with an ensemble.) Seven of the participants emphasized the vocal experiences or training they received at the church during their childhood years. Gregory started singing early, “My first solo [was] at the age of five at the [church].” Susan benefited from “just being able to sing in a choir and [getting] that experience, which grew my love for it, and then being able to sing in the adult choir even when I was in high school.” Scott spoke of the tremendous training he received in his youth church choir, “I was in the seventh grade...in a youth choir that did really good stuff. We did the ‘Fauré Requiem,’ all kinds of things like that, which would be unusual today, but not so much back in that time.”

Musical Growth Through Church Opportunities to Use Musical Gifts

All ten of the participants attended church during their childhood, and they found meaningful ways to use their musical gifts within the local church. Many of them held leadership positions, and these opportunities helped equip them for their current ministries. In fact, nine out of the ten indicated that as adolescents, they had musical opportunities that required them to regularly interact and perform with adult musicians. For some the participants, these opportunities were initiated by adult leaders. As Beth reminisced about the little country church where she grew up, “I started when I was sixteen playing the piano at our church. The pastor’s wife began a choir, and I accompanied. And that’s where I actually accompanied my first Easter cantata.” Just a few years later, Beth would start her church music career as a piano accompanist.

The opportunities for Susan and Eric were initiated by their parents, who were on the church staff. Susan, whose father was the choral director for their church, talked

about playing piano for the Sunday evening services, “I’m thankful for my dad strongly encouraging me to do that, even though at the time I really hated it, and I was very intimidated and nervous about it and made mistakes. But I think it helped me to be able to accompany enough, and to play well enough to be able to do that at times [now] when I have to.”

Other participants saw opportunities that interested them, so they initiated contact with the adults. As a thirteen year old, Daniel approached the adults who played in the band for the Catholic Folk Service and asked if he could join them. “They were really good folks, and they were very patient and took a risk on a thirteen year old who said he wanted to play. Having said that, I think I did a pretty good job. I was a very fast learner, and I added a lot to what they were doing, but they were very gracious even allowing me to participate.” To this day, a big part of Daniel’s ministry is leading a praise band.

Other participants pursued paid music positions. Scott and Tyler were both hired as church organists, Scott as a tenth grader and Tyler as an eighth grader. As Tyler described, “My sister started playing the organ at church [and] was making a ridiculous amount of money—ten dollars a Sunday. And I [thought], ‘Oh, this is a good moneymaker!’ So in eighth grade, I started playing for church services.”

The Musical Environment of the Church

During their childhood, all ten of the participants attended churches which intentionally provided musical opportunities for children. Andrew noted that every six months, “the evening service was turned over to the youth department, and the youth would do everything.... I got to direct the congregation on the congregational singing, which was fun.” Seven of the participants felt that the musical environment of their

churches was encouraging and supportive for aspiring, young musicians. Beth shared one church experience:

[They were] very welcoming and encouraging.... One of the key things that happened, that was formational for me, was when I was about twelve or thirteen. I had only taken piano for a short time, and I was at church that day, in that small church, and the piano player was sick and they [said to me], “Oh honey you can play, you come up here and play.” And it was “Trust and Obey.” I still remember it to this day. And I couldn’t do it. I could just barely pick out the melody. And so I really started crying and I was so embarrassed.... [But] everybody was so encouraging.... So God used that in my life, and I’ve been able to encourage a lot of children if they did not do so well. I tell them, “I didn’t do well either.”

Beth was not the only participant who felt loved and cared for as a child in the church.

Andrew shared about his church choral director, “He had time for me. If I came to him with questions...he would always help. We didn’t spend one on one time...learning from the Bible.... It wasn’t like that. But I observed everything he did, every move he made....” Gregory also shared that while growing up in his church, he learned “the joy of doing music in God’s house.” He continued, “Baptists have more joy in their music. They know how to sing about heaven.... They know how to sing about sin and salvation and they love to celebrate grace. These are not bad things. So I inherited a love for that.”

However, some of the participants also expressed negatives aspects of the musical environment of the church. For example, although Gregory appreciated the joy expressed through music, he lamented, “I got exposed to music that was not for the glory of God, but for the manipulation of God’s people’s emotion.” Nathan, who played at his church on Sunday evenings and accompanied the youth choir at age fifteen, did not find his church to be encouraging. As a member of a traveling Christian contemporary band at that time, he struggled with his church’s reaction to the Christian contemporary music that he loved to play:

In my home church that I grew up in, it was a very traditional piano/organ dynamic, especially in my teens. And we were the first group to ever bring drums into the church. That was just like we were really testing the gates of hell by doing that. And so it wasn't as widely accepted or encouraged, and thinking outside the box wasn't [encouraged].... It was kind of a legalistic across the board.... And so, since there was so much of "what God didn't like and what God did like,...that just carried into my artistic understanding. So I had very early on a specific idea about what it meant to be a Christian and to use your music. I even had people in my church tell me that if you didn't use it for the Lord, you would lose your talent. "God could take that away from you. You could wake up tomorrow [and] have an aneurysm and you won't even know how to read music!"... So it was not a nurturing place unless you gave them what they wanted. And so I learned to do that musically and otherwise. I...played what they wanted to hear and things were "great." Except I wasn't [great].

Nathan wondered if his musical development might have taken a different direction had he been given "more permission at the time" to use his full range of musical talent. At a minimum, Nathan believed that if he had grown up at a church like his current one, he "would have had a whole different understanding about what was the distinction between sacred and secular things."

A First Step in God's Calling

Several of the participants indicated that without their musical experiences in the local church, they would not have pursued a career in church music (although a few of them indicated they still might have pursued some type of career in music outside the local church). Andrew remarked, "I don't think I'd be doing what I'm doing. I think [those musical experiences] provided the groundwork for my being where I am." Beth noted, "I think that's where God started to call me, because I knew when I was fourteen that this was what he had called me to. I can't even imagine my life without those experiences."

Musical Equipping in the Schools

The interviews also indicated that school music programs significantly influenced their musical development. Eight out of the ten participants indicated that they regularly participated in either the school choir, the school band, or in school sponsored musicals. Seven out of those eight described those school opportunities as very significant in their musical development.

For some participants, the music training in the schools was inspiring and fun, and it encouraged them to pursue music as a career. Susan noted:

I was blessed to have wonderful music teachers in elementary school, which were a good influence, [and] in high school as well.... The beauty of the music we were able to create in those groups in choirs, it was just inspiring.... Having been under good choral directors, the way they handled the choirs and led the choirs, all of that was an inspiration. So I think that helped guide me to go on to college and do [music] study.

Gregory found great joy in the opportunities to sing in school musicals. Interestingly, he has found very creative and effective ways to incorporate musical drama into his current ministry to the church and to the outside community.

School musical training and opportunities also significantly assisted the participants in both musical proficiency and leadership skills. Scott noted about one choral director during his seventh grade year:

[She] knew that I could play the piano and asked me if I would play for the class or the choir, and I said I would but I couldn't read music at that stage.... I'd always played since I was about four by ear. And so when she discovered I couldn't read music, she said, "I want you learn how to read music." So I took a stack of music home and started sight reading, and that became fun for me.... When I got into high school, I could play for choirs.

Daniel was elected the band captain of a 140-piece marching band, and "from both a musical and leadership standpoint, the band was a huge influence for [him] in high

school.” Starting in the sixth grade, Tyler would skip recess in order to play the organ in the chapel services at his Lutheran school. These school experiences helped to lay a musical foundation for these future worship directors.

Musical Equipping Through Popular Secular Music

Popular secular music served as a significant means of musical equipping during the childhoods of at least four out of the ten participants. During high school, Eric developed an interest in folk music, and he began to listen to pop singers such as Peter, Paul, & Mary, and Simon & Garfunkel. The influence of this genre encouraged him to play the banjo and guitar. Beth discovered rock and roll music during her teen years, so she took a few guitar lessons, and then continued to learn by teaching herself to play. Nathan taught himself to play music by listening to pop singers such as Elton John, Sly & the Family Stone, and Billy Joel, and then mimicking what he heard on his stereo records. Secular music also had a profound impact on Daniel’s musical development during his childhood years. As he described, “I’m a huge Elton John fan.... When I was twelve or thirteen, I got an Elton John book and learned how to mimic his sound play by actually reading through the transcriptions of what he does on the piano. So that ended up being a huge influence on...how I actually play and sing.” This secular pop musician had such an impact on Daniel that he noted, “If you go to an Elton John concert now and then you compare it to the way I set up my stage, it’s almost exactly the same.”

Additional Musical Equipping Outside the Church and Schools

For at least four of the participants, there were two other means of musical equipping which took place outside the church and schools. Tim, Daniel, and Nathan were all in Christian contemporary rock bands during their high school years. During his

junior and senior years, Tim band “played around town for youth rallies...where we wrote our own music and performed.” Tim still loves to play his guitar with the praise band. Daniel indicated that his high school experience with a Christian rock band proved to be beneficial for him when he later took a music director position in a church plant and immediately began to lead a praise band. Nathan started touring with a band during the summers when he was fifteen years old, and he continued to play with that group for five years. In terms of how that touring helped prepare him for his future work as a worship director, Nathan reflected, “I got a really good feel for the cross-section, and what the evangelical sub-culture was at that time, and what it felt like to be in music ministry in some capacity.”

Beth’s equipping outside the church and school looked very different. She shared, “One of the things that most helped me was I lived in a rural area where we had singing schools...and shape note singings. I would go every week. And I did that from when I was fourteen up until I finished high school.” According to Beth, she not only learned to sing, but also grew in her knowledge of music theory, which greatly benefitted her later when she started leading a praise band.

During College Years and Early Adulthood

The interviews indicated that significant musical equipping also took place for the participants during the college years and early adulthood. The following sections discuss some of the more prominent ways this musical development occurred.

Musical Equipping in College and Graduate School

Music programs in colleges and graduate schools had a significant influence on the participants’ musical development. All ten participants studied music at the college

level, and nine of them received a bachelor's degree in music. Five of the participants earned a master's degree (four in music and one in divinity). All participants viewed their college training as very important in their musical development. The following sections discuss some of these areas of musical equipping.

Honing Their Musical Skills Under Demanding, But Caring Instructors

Several of the participants' college and graduate school experiences helped them to hone their musical skills. This equipping often took place under the tutelage of music instructors who demanded a lot from the participants, but who also demonstrated genuine care for them. While speaking of his piano instructor, Daniel reflected:

Basically, what he did was strip away any illusion that I had about being a good piano player and he took me down to the basics.... My first jury I used music. I counted out loud and the piece was 25% of the tempo that it was supposed to be.... But he created a technical foundation for me that is now a part of everything that I do in ministry, and a part of everything that I do as far as the way I coach bands, the way I do vocals.... There were more times than not in my first year of piano that I left crying—and I was a big dude—but I left crying out of my piano lesson.... But he knew who I was, and he cared about me as a person.

Tim's experience with a choral instructor in graduate school was very similar:

He was one of those guys that demanded more than you thought you could give.... I remember when I went in to audition for the masters degree program (I had done well in conducting in college and thought I had good firm patterns), and he and the other conducting teacher...were just sitting there laughing at me. I was so humiliated, but God used that in my life to help me understand that there was much more I needed to learn, and through that he really began to work. [The instructor] motivated me to work hard and to be the best I could be, and at the end of my time with him, he was very encouraging to me about how I had developed.

Tim also remarked that the training he received at that time now enables him to feel at ease when he periodically conducts a professional symphony orchestra in special choral performances at the church.

Susan, who studied choral music under a teacher who had worked as an assistant under renowned choral director Robert Shaw, had a very similar experience:

In the classes, he was very demanding. He expected perfection—for you to do what he considered the right way, the best way, and it worked. What he taught us, I could see time after time that it really did work. It wasn't just for show. It really had a meaning and got the choirs to do what he wanted them to do.

But Susan felt a personal relationship to him as well: “I grew close to him. I babysat for his kids...and I knew his wife, and had a personal relationship...”

Learning to Love Good Music

For most of the participants, college and graduate experiences increased their knowledge and discernment for good music. Eric’s college choral director “was a phenomenal influence on my sense of taste, and what is good and what it takes to make music sound good.” Gregory’s time in college was “primarily marked by learning to love fine music instead of just all music [and] learning to know the difference.” Scott, who was a staff accompanist in college, noted that through “the repertoire of the college choir..., I was exposed to a lot of good choral music.”

Developing Musical Leadership Skills

Some of the participants’ college and graduate school experiences provided them with opportunities to develop their musical leadership. Gregory shared how he formed a seventy-member student choir, and with the help of that choir and an orchestra, led a two-hour worship service utilizing liturgy that he had written. This proved to be a formative experience for Gregory.

Training in Music Theory

The college experience also provided a greater understanding of music theory, which has especially helped some participants like Andrew and Tyler. They did not grow up playing contemporary music, yet their churches have increasingly incorporated contemporary music and instruments into their worship services. Andrew commented, “It’s hard. I find it very difficult to talk music lingo with the musicians who don’t really know what a G2 is.... I’m not a guitarist, so I downloaded a couple of apps to keep myself current on [telling them] ‘It needs to be this,’ because they’re generic in their understanding.” In a similar vein, Tyler reflected on the benefits of a strong music theory foundation, “I think the big reason so many contemporary services that I’ve been to are so bad is because there’s no musical ability besides ‘I can play the guitar,’ and I think you need to have the [music] theory knowledge to really pull things together and make these things happen.” Because Tyler has a strong theory background, he was still able to note with a measured degree of confidence, “It’s not an area that I’m used to working in, but I have the skill. I just need to transfer the skill into this area.”

But Gregory noted his concern for musicians who have no broad training in fine arts music when he spoke of a musician that he knows who currently leads a contemporary service in a Reformed church. He explained, “He’s a fine musician, and he’s well trained. He’s equipped for that service, but he’s not equipped for [a more traditional worship] ministry. That’s just candid, but that’s true.... He’s a great guy, but he’s just not qualified.”

Musical Equipping in the Local Church

The interviews also revealed that the local church had a tremendous influence on the musical development of the participants during their college years. All ten participants served in the church during their college years. Six served in the church as a choir director for either a children's, youth, or adult choir, and four played piano or organ for the church during college. Some also served as song leaders. Perhaps one of the greatest benefits for most of the participants during this period of music education was that the church provided an immediate lab practicum to what the students were learning in the classroom. Tim said it this way:

The great thing I found was being able to serve in these churches while I was being educated, rather than being educated, and then walking out and trying to shove down a volunteer's throat, "This is what they told me in the classroom I was supposed to do."... Because I was in ministry...when a teacher said, "Well, you need to do this,"...[I knew] that this guy had obviously not been in the ministry before. So it was always helpful for me to have that side-by-side experience. It was a lab, basically.

Andrew seemed to have had similar feelings about his years in college, "I got to a point where I felt like a saturated sponge, and I needed an outlet, so I started looking for a part time job.... I found a position at a Methodist church nearby...a hundred member church, ten member choir and that was...an eye opener in many aspects."

Tim and Andrew were not the only ones who benefited musically from their church jobs. Beth, who worked both as a part-time church accompanist and as a piano player for a band in a church Bible study ministry, grew in her piano and musical skills and expanded her knowledge of church choral music. Daniel learned that he enjoyed teaching piano. Eric discovered that he enjoyed playing and leading music for an urban ministry. Gregory received his first lessons in song leading and worship leading. Through

his accompanying, Scott was exposed to quality choral music. Susan directed her first choir during the summer months. And Tyler began to learn what music was realistic, and what was not, for his volunteer church choir to sing in a worship service.

Musical Equipping Outside the Church and Schools

The interviews also indicated that significant musical equipping took place outside the local church and schools for at least three of the participants. Beth traveled with the Baptist Festival Singers and the Continental Singers. In fact, it was Beth's childhood choir director who encouraged her to participate, and Beth shared that these experiences taught her "things that I didn't even know I would need one day."

Eric formed a rock band during his college years, and that experience profoundly impacted his musical development. He shared:

A song came on the radio called "Oh Happy Day".... That song captured my imagination. I wanted to do it so badly that I posted a sign on campus, and we immediately began to rehearse it.... It was a life changing experience for me.... I was studying classical piano, but it drew me back into my pop involvement, back to the piano...and at the end of college, I was beginning to tour with a small group of classmates, and play at various denominational churches throughout the northeast.

As will be discussed in a later section, this experience laid the foundation for what Eric's music ministry would eventually look like within the context of a multi-racial church.

During Nathan's early adulthood, he moved to Nashville and began to work with a music publishing company as a songwriter and performer. During this period, Nathan had the opportunity to work with a number of very talented, professional Christian musicians, both in the studios and in churches, and these musicians had a profound impact on Nathan's musical development. Nathan shared one story about a prominent musician who took a personal interest in him:

I would go over [to his home] and play and he'd talk about song writing and he'd talk about music.... I was there one day and I was [telling him], "I'm really not that cool.... I don't write music that sounds like the radio. I write songs that people can sing."... And the worship wave hadn't quite caught the momentum that it eventually did, but [he] said, "Write melodies people can sing, and write melodies people can remember and your music will live forever.... The song that impacts people is the song that they remember; it's the song they can sing.... And especially [do this] if you're staying in the church, because the church has to have music they can sing."

Nathan continued, "Had [he] not given me permission to really feel like that was valid—I don't know. It was the kind of stuff I resonated with as a writer and as a person that creates, and so he really influenced me greatly. I think it is because of [him] that I write the kind of songs that I do."

During the Early Years of Work in the Church

The interviews also revealed that significant musical development continued during the participants' early years of work in the church. The following sections discuss some of the more prominent areas of musical development.

Musical Equipping Through Learning What Works and What Doesn't

One of the more important things learned during this period was how to adapt the music to the strengths and limitation of the musicians, or as Beth put it, "Learning what works and what doesn't." Tyler recounted an early experience:

You really have to tailor the music to the talent that you have.... I was bound and determined that I was going to be able to do the Christmas portion of the Messiah with these people. We bought Messiah books. Oh my word! It was a nightmare, and what a waste of money. I probably didn't have the skill at that point. They certainly didn't have the skill. It's good to dream big, but you've got to work with the people and the place that you have, and I think that was a great lesson learned.

Similarly, Gregory shared how when he first started working in a Presbyterian church, he thought the people only wanted to hear "the finest of fine art music." But one day after

overhearing Gregory playing “Blessed Assurance,” the pastor suggested, “Why don’t you do this for the worship service,” Gregory then realized “that’s all he had wanted.”

For Eric, this adaptation process looked different. After graduation, he increasingly toured the country, performing Christian music in churches, colleges, Christians conference, and with parachurch organizations. He was also writing and recording music. While on the road, Eric was honing his singing and piano skills, and he was expanding his musical knowledge into African-American gospel, avant-garde, and eventually jazz. A couple of times a month, Eric would travel back to play and lead music in the small urban church which he had attended during college, and he found the church to be “a fertile place for creativity and for writing songs.” Eric noted about his dual role between touring and working in the church during that time, “The church [was] key—it was woven into the fabric of my performance tunes.... It was basically inseparable.”

Musical Equipping Through Continued Growth in Personal Musical Skills

The interviews also revealed that several participants continued to develop their musical skills in a more intentional and focused manner. This often happened when the participants found themselves in situations where they needed to be more musically competent. When Scott became a church choir director for the first time, he realized that he needed more training in choral and orchestral conducting, so with the church’s support, he attended three semesters of graduate studies in music. Similarly, Susan indicated that she developed vocally during the early years of her work more than she did in college or graduate school, partially because she taught voice in a nearby preparatory department. Out of necessity, Daniel had to start singing with a microphone for the first time when he became the worship leader in a church plant. As he stated, “I did not sing

into a microphone until I got [the] job at the church plant. From day one I had to pretend like I'd always sung in the microphone.... That was a huge development component of those first couple of years.... I either did this, or it wasn't going to fly."

Musical Equipping They Wish Had Happened

Although there was clearly a great deal of musical equipping that took place between the participants' childhood and the early years of work, some of them indicated that they wish they had received more musical training. As Beth stated, "I always regret that I didn't continue on in my schooling and get my masters or something in choral education. I don't feel like I'm equipped musically...for some of the things I wish I knew." Similarly, Andrew noted that he wishes he had received more experience in music performances outside the church, as well as more focused vocal training. Gregory commented that he found out early in his career that "It's not enough to be a choral vocal training musician if you're going to do fine arts music in the church. You need to have an orchestral background. You need to have orchestral training." Gregory also lamented not being more proficient on the keyboard.

Although not speaking for himself, Nathan noted that he regularly has church leaders approach him and complain that potential worship directors do not have more of a commercial music background. According to Nathan:

[People say to me], "The [Reformed] seminaries aren't really training up [the musicians] we want to hire as worship leaders because they don't have practical musical applications...." And I've had churches tell me, "We'll take somebody with commercial music background and help shape their theological position over somebody [from seminaries] who doesn't have [that] background."

Nathan continued, “I have often wondered why seminaries [aren’t] bringing in somebody...who could at least talk about...some of the ideology behind the practical [musical] aspects of formulating a worship service.”

Experiences that Developed Spiritual Formation

As discussed in chapter two, all Christians experience the lifelong process of growing in spiritual maturity, and much of that spiritual formation is universal for all Christians. However, for the purposes of this research, the researcher sought to narrow the discussion to spiritual formation for worship directors. Therefore, the researcher addressed the following topics concerning spiritual formation: spiritual responsibilities for worship directors, unique spiritual challenges for worship directors, spiritual equipping that was necessary to fulfill those responsibilities and to face those challenges, and the importance of God’s calling to worship ministry. The results of these findings are discussed in the following sections.

Spiritual Responsibilities

When the participants were asked what they considered to be their primary spiritual responsibilities in their positions as worship directors, there was remarkable uniformity in their responses. The following sections discuss four primary themes which emerged from the interviews.

Ensure That They are Worshiping God

Several of the participants indicated that first and foremost, their primary spiritual responsibility is to ensure that they are living out their lives as active worshipers of God.

Tim stated:

I think the main thing for me is making sure that I am staying connected to Christ in my own personal life, which is a struggle for all of us as far as

constant time studying the word in prayer. That is the most important thing because if I'm not leading by example in worship...people can see that.... I think my own personal spiritual health is important because if that is not good, I can't lead.

Similarly, Beth spoke of taking the time to “work on my spiritual relationship with God and not just the [ministry] work that I do.” Eric pointed out, “The reason that you are doing the job to begin with is that you yourself are walking with God, and you have a dynamic, sustaining, developing relationship with God.”

Shepherd the Congregation by Leading in Worship that Glorifies God

All of the participants indicated that one of their primary spiritual responsibilities is to shepherd the congregation in worship that glorifies God. Gregory noted, “The person who writes the liturgy every week [is] shepherding the people through the worship experience.” Eric, who ministers in a cross-cultural church, explained that it is important for the worship leader to bring “the congregation together in a unified expression” of worship in order to glorify God. Nathan passionately emphasized the importance of making the worship accessible to the people and helping them understand what is truly happening:

I feel like that spiritual responsibility isn't to give them a particular feeling when they leave—“Wow, that was great; that worship was awesome!”... We have a culture that has adopted the flavor of the month worship mentality in a lot of evangelical churches. It's market driven.... And so, these people all feel like they've got to be doing all that new stuff. And so half the time the congregation doesn't even know the songs they are being asked to sing.... If it is not corporately friendly and accessible...it upsets them to come to church and not be able to participate. I mean, it's like, “Dude, am I here?” Is [the music] in a key that they can sing in? And most of the worship stuff [is] right in the “male tenor artist” keys. It makes for great records; it makes for terrible congregational singing.... If you're putting something out that people can't access, then it's not going to be an enriching thing. So I think it's got to be accessible, and we've got to help them connect the dots.”

Nathan also added, “Our people see themselves as lead worshippers. They are not there...to entertain or to motivate in any way. They are there to worship God and invite these people on that journey with them, giving them the opportunity to do that.”

Shepherd the Musicians of the Church

All participants also indicated that they considered shepherding the musicians of the church to be one of their primary spiritual responsibilities. This shepherding can take different forms. Andrew described the importance of taking time to get to know the church musicians when he described some who participate with him in a community orchestra, “We’ve got a forty-five minute drive one way, and so we’ve got ninety minutes that we’ll share with each other.... They are ‘Sunday-morning-onlys,’ so it helps to talk and to get to know [them].” Eric spoke of encouraging and inspiring the musicians as they minister in the church:

I think for me that pastoral aspect also means that I have a sense of the hearts of all my participants, my volunteers, and the people that I am working with.... It depends on your personality, [but] I tend to be more of a facilitator and an encourager rather than someone who is prophetic or a confronter, so I am trying to encourage my musicians by my example that music in the church is worth our time, and it is worth our effort, and that it is something that we strive for—to do our best to give glory to God.

Scott emphasized helping church musicians through their own spiritual journeys:

For so many folks, this is their primary way to serve and to respond in thanksgiving to the Lord for salvation. So I take it terribly seriously that everybody here who is involved in the ministry, whether they are good at what they do, or just moderately good at what they do...nevertheless is important and that in their own spiritual lives, this is extremely significant.... So their hearts are just as important as their voices, and it’s important to me that people are growing spiritually.... I try to be pastoral in the way that I’m responding—wherever they are—realizing that the Lord is taking them along on their spiritual journey, at the pace he wants. And so I just need to be able...to help them along the way, and to help us all to work together.

Nathan noted about his musicians, “When things are going on in their lives, I’m the person they call.... It’s a pastoral position.”

Respond Faithfully to God’s Calling

Almost all of the participants spoke of God’s calling on their lives. Some of them referred to it when they were talking about their musical equipping. Some brought it up in reference to their leadership or theological equipping. Still others mentioned it in light of their spiritual equipping. Although the discussion about “God’s calling” did not fit neatly into any one area of equipping for the participants, it was very clear that this subject was a vital component of their spiritual journeys, and therefore the researcher has chosen to discuss this topic in this section.

As different participants discussed the importance of their calling, three themes emerged. The first theme was the sense of purpose that participants found in the knowledge and conviction that God led them to their ministry as a worship director. As Eric stated, “Having a sense of calling to a church music position is an essential part of the Isaiah 6 vision—‘Here I am, send me’—recognizing that this is not just a job that you are being hired for, that you have talents for, but that you will do it because you are called to it. And that means you will do it even when it is hard or when it is unpleasant.”

A second theme that emerged was the fact that although the final destination in this calling was very similar for all of the participants, the road leading to it looked different for many of them. Beth knew from age fourteen that she was being called to some kind of music ministry. For Scott, the road was gradual but fairly direct. He shared:

I think that in the broadest sense, calling in the area of music had to do with gifting for it and interests that I had, and an inclination to go that way. All of those things were a preparation.... Early on in college I just had this great sense that maybe the Lord was calling me to Christian

ministry, and...I thought it certainly wouldn't hurt to be prepared if he were actually calling me to what we call full-time Christian work. But then the call...was affirmed by other people saying, "You should do this" and "We want you to do this."... And so it worked both internally and externally in that I really sensed that this was a way I could serve. It was a way that I was compelled to serve, and then was out rightly affirmed by other people.

In other words, God used Scott's gifting and interest, along with affirmation from other people, to confirm Scott's calling to worship ministry. As God continued to provide opportunities, Scott felt compelled to serve.

The circumstances of some of the other participants' callings seemed much more random. Tim recalled, "Finding the Lord's will for my vocation was the funnel technique. I started at the broad end of the funnel [at this point Tim began making zig-zag motions with his finger] and finally got to where he wanted me." Scott also noted that in talking with fellow worship directors, he had observed that God directed many of them on "zig-zag routes" that seemed to meander from point to another, but providentially led them to their church positions.

The third theme was the comfort that the participants found in knowing that because God had called them to that ministry, he would give them all that they needed to handle the task, and he would be faithful to see them to the end, even through the difficult times. Beth shared:

God equips us for it.... If you're called to this ministry, God has equipped you with some kind of spiritual gift that you can't get away from, and you don't really know how it happens or why. When I think about what else I would do, it's just like there's nothing else I could do.... This is what I do. And even when it gets hard...God always brings me back to it.... I just can't quit. It's like being in a marriage.

Similarly, Tim shared about his struggles with being an introvert in a very public leadership position, "I would rather not be up front... but God chose me, and he used all

the circumstances and situations in my life to channel me to where I am today. And I think the biggest thing I have learned is to rest in that assurance of his call.”

Unique Spiritual Challenges

During the interviews, the participants shared a variety of unique spiritual challenges that they encounter in their ministries. These are discussed in the following sections.

The Motivations of the Heart

The most common responses from the participants were related to the motivations of their hearts as they lead music, particularly in the worship services. Some described the spiritual challenge as being so concerned about the musical excellence that they lose perspective on why they are leading in worship. Susan commented about the early years of her ministry:

A lot of what I would try to do is based on performance for the audience, and to do well for them.... It took time, but I remember learning (and having to learn still) that the performance that we do on Sunday morning...is not for the pleasure or the entertainment of the audience. We are there as a ministry to those who will hear what we do, as well as for God's glory.... It was a hard lesson to learn. It took awhile, but I feel like that's one area that is still growing and [I'm] having to be reminded about often, especially in special programs when we work so hard.

Eric shared similar sentiments, “A tremendous temptation for a church musician is to set high standards, and then when they are disappointed, they become discouraged, or they resent the congregation, or burnout—where they are trying to do everything, and they can't give it up to God and walk away from it.” Daniel spoke of the temptation for musicians to “wrap our self worth up in our competency and how we're able to perform our craft or our art.”

Closely related to that problem is the struggle of forgetting who is to receive the glory in the worship. As Susan stated, “I think that the biggest [struggle] is separating that idea of performing for accolades, performing for praise for us as opposed to performing as praise for God.” Similarly, Tyler commented, “The first thing is [to] know that the music I do is for the Lord and not for personal glory.... That's a huge thing, making sure that what I do musically is for God.... And keeping your goal, your focus on Jesus Christ, and not on you receiving the praise and the honor and the glory.”

Others simply get so distracted with all the details that they lose perspective on why they are there. As Andrew stated:

Sometimes I get too bogged or detailed on everything being just right, and that gets in the way of worship, of genuine worship. And so, I have to keep that in check. I have to take a breath and go, “This will be okay. We’ll do our best and that’s what we are called to do. It may not be what I would prefer it to be, but it will be what God has required.”

Beth concurred, “Sometimes I don’t feel like I really worship because I’m so focused on everything that’s going on in the service. I’m too busy worrying about ‘[Will] that really turn on? What’s going to happen here? Is anybody going to show up?’ Just so many things!”

Submitting to Authority with the Right Attitude

Another spiritual challenge for some of the participants was being submissive to authority, particularly the senior pastors. One participant described the frustration that worship directors can feel when the pastor infringes on their area of expertise:

I think in reference to being on a staff of a church and relating to the pastors...it was a temptation sometimes to resent their authority.... Depending on the pastor and the structure of the church, you may or may not have autonomy in what you’re doing. So one pastor might be extremely controlling and want to “pick all the hymns,” as they say. And I know churches...where the pastor picks all the songs. So that is one type

of heavy handedness from the pastor, and it is really inappropriate for the pastor to do that.

Another participant spoke of the struggle that occurs when worship directors do not feel they are being respected and heard:

People who are theologians and pastors and have studied in a seminary frequently consider themselves to be the final arbiters of spiritual knowledge in the church, the one who dispenses it to all points of interest in the church. And sometimes they'll treat musicians as only technicians whose only capability is going to be in the area of music and the arts. [But] every one of them considered themselves to be something of an expert in one area of music or another, so they did not hesitate to give me advice in the area of music and how I should do [this or] that. And I...take it, but that is not reciprocated [by the pastor]. And that can cause tension and make you feel like "Well, [am I] just an appliance plugged in over here in the corner?"

This participant continued, "I've had to learn to discern when my pastor is...speaking forth the truth of God's word, embodying that in his preferences, and [when he is] just speaking his own preferences."

For another participant, the challenge rests in his submitting to the pastor's musical tastes and opinions, even when he realizes it may make him look bad. He shared:

I have to remember that my calling is not to do what I think is always right, but to work under the structure of leadership here. And then, if a pastor says, "I really want this song," if it is not theologically whacko, then even if I don't like it, I have to understand, "Well, I am going to have to risk that people think I'm a goober because they think I picked that," but I will do it anyway because it is what he really feels like we need for a certain situation.... Now obviously sometimes you need to stand up and say this is just not going to work.... And sometimes I have to do that, just to save him and the people. But I love him and respect him, [and] I will do as much as I can. I feel like it is one of my spiritual responsibilities to submit to the shepherd and to help him achieve the vision he has for the church as well.

This participant continued, “I want to rise up and say, ‘That is not good music!’... [But I am] learning to be submissive...to the people above me who have no clue what it takes to do what I do, and no clue what it takes for me to get this group ready to sing.”

Other Spiritual Challenges

Other spiritual challenges shared by the participants related more to fleshly temptations. Andrew mentioned the challenge of being a good steward with time in the midst of the typical variable schedules of worship directors. Eric admitted his temptation to be envious of the success of other musicians. He also declared, “There is lust in the music department,” referring to the temptations that musicians often can face in the church.

Nathan revealed that when he was struggling through a particular sin in his life, he did not realize at the time that he was compartmentalizing the worship of God to Sunday mornings rather than seeing all of life as an act of worship toward God. He shared:

I think that spiritual challenges to me are really just heart challenges. Where is my heart these days and, and where am I investing myself when I’m not leading worship? And what am I about? And do I see worship as just this slice of the week that I do between nine and eleven on Sunday? Because if I see worship as all of life and where I’m investing myself in my life, this experience is just an outgrowth of those things. And so the challenge is for me to always bring us back to the fact that “just this” is not worship. And there’s part of us that forgets that this is a celebration of how we live the rest of our lives, how we see the rest of our lives, where we see God in the rest of our lives.

He continued, “It’s really about being honest with yourself, because in my experience anyway, if you’re not, it’ll just come back and bite you. I mean it will come out one way or the other.”

Spiritual Equipping to Fulfill Responsibilities and Face Challenges

So how were these worship directors equipped to fulfill these particular spiritual responsibilities and to face these unique spiritual challenges? The following sections discuss the important truths that had to be learned through spiritual equipping, as well as where and when that spiritual equipping took place.

Important Truths Learned through Spiritual Equipping

Although the participants spoke of spiritual truths in a variety of ways, several common themes emerged from their responses. First, several of the respondents spoke of their sinfulness and brokenness, and their dependence and need for God's grace, because within themselves they have nothing good to offer. As Eric stated, "Every Sunday when you are leading worship, every time you are picking a song, everything that you're doing, and interacting with people, you're doing it as a broken person; you're doing it as a person [through which] God's grace has shined in spite of your own weaknesses." Similarly, Nathan commented, "I have nothing to bring but my filthy rags. I believe God has gifted us uniquely, and we should celebrate that...but it's not our gift that's going to precipitate any change of heart. It's absolutely his working in spirit, and we get the privilege of being a part of that."

A second common theme was that because God has poured out his undeserved grace upon the participants through his Son, Jesus Christ, he alone is worthy of their praise. Therefore, it is only natural that musicians would want to use their musical gifts as a means to demonstrate their hearts of love and gratitude by celebrating God's glory and goodness. Beth recounted the exciting spiritual truths she learned during her first years of working in a Reformed church:

I remember it was an exciting time of learning what it means to be a Reformed Christian.... I took Evangelism Explosion during that time from a man in our church, so that was a big thing to learn that we are sinners and we cannot save ourselves, but Christ...loves us and wants us to be with him. But he is just, and he can't tolerate our sins.... [So when] we place our faith in him [and] trust him and repent and turn from [our] sins to him...it's going to affect [our] whole life. So it's not just a Sunday theme.... It affects me as a worship director because I love this God now, and I want everybody else to love him.

Beth continued, "So when you know he has saved you and you know him, then...I get excited about the truth in the songs, and I want to share those with everybody else."

A third common theme was the importance of community, particularly in dealing with sinful temptations. Nathan spoke of his own struggles with sin, and the importance of leaders not compartmentalizing their lives between church and home, but being authentic with God and God's people. He shared, "I feel like the more authentic I am with myself and with God, in the sense of not trying to perform...it is very freeing and that's probably been the best shift in my approach to leadership." He added, "When I finally told people what was going on, that was very freeing.... I want to know where they are, I want to know where their hearts [are], what they are struggling with...what [they're] saying [they] believe, but maybe don't live out."

Spiritual Equipping in the Local Church

Not surprisingly, results from the interviews indicated that most of the spiritual equipping for the participants regarding their spiritual responsibilities and unique spiritual challenges as worship directors took place within the ministry of the local church. Three participants mentioned specific ways that they were spiritually equipped during their childhood and youth years. Beth spoke of a warm and loving church, and Tim shared about a man who disciplined him during his high school years. Andrew mentioned his

church and school music director, who had a great love for people. He indicated that the clear demonstration of a shepherding heart by this music director has continued to influence his own approach to ministry.

At least half of the participants, although appreciative of the spiritual foundation from their childhood churches, could not think of specific examples of spiritual equipping that prepared them for the spiritual responsibilities and challenges found in worship ministries. Susan's statement seemed to summarize what a number of the participants felt about their spiritual equipping in their childhood churches:

I'm not sure it helped me that much, to be quite honest.... It was very different from the church that I'm in now...not that we didn't learn scripture and weren't taught from the Bible. We were. But it was a lot of "Do the right thing," that kind of approach.... I think just the fact that in the church that I grew up in, it was obviously important to have music—we worshipped and sang hymns—that was important in the church I grew up in. I think they may have equipped me to a certain degree to know that music is important in worship as far as spiritual aspects. But as far as separating the idea of a performance from who you are performing for, I'm not sure that was ever really brought out very strongly.

According to Susan, that spiritual equipping did not come until years later.

Some of the participants were far less complimentary of their childhood churches. Speaking of spiritual equipping, Daniel declared, "I would say that there's nothing in the early years." Nathan was even more adamant in his response, declaring that he still carries the baggage of being raised in a very legalistic church.

Very few participants spoke of spiritual equipping in the local church during their college years, unless they had already begun to work as a worship director. When recalling his early years in college, Tyler admitted, "I'm sorry to say that during the college years, there wasn't much going on church-wise." In contrast, Beth was discipled by her pastor's wife during her college years, and there were several ladies in her church

who would “meet with me, and made up my prayer partners through college...and just talked to me and encouraged me and got in the word [with me].... That’s where I really started growing.” Scott also spoke of people in the church who affirmed what he sensed was a growing internal call to ministry.

All ten of the participants experienced significant spiritual growth during the early years of their work, and eight of them mentioned at least one person from the local church who had a significant influence on their spiritual growth during this period. For five of the participants, the senior pastor was the most important person involved in that spiritual equipping. As Nathan shared about his senior pastor:

He really was single handedly the most influential person in my spiritual formation, in my adult life...because he didn’t see me as an employee or the “pain-in-the-butt-worship-guy.” He had to sit down with me every week and tolerate my input.... He really saw his role with me as development, as an investment.... It was just very normal dialogue, and in dialogue with him you would hear the gospel in ways that were refreshing to you and that were new to me, especially early.... A pastor/worship leader relationship is so vital, and I’ve talked to so many guys in my position who feel like the pastors just put up with them, and they don’t really want to talk to them, and they don’t want to engage them, and they don’t [want to] know them. I don’t have that story.

Nathan added, “[It’s] not like we just skipped through tulips...we didn’t.” But what meant the most to Nathan was “[he] believed in me enough that when he took me on staff, he wanted to invest in me, and he wanted to spend time with me.”

Susan shared about the spiritual impact the pastor had early in her ministry, “One [Sunday] morning, I was particularly concerned about the [choral] piece, and [my pastor] could tell and said ‘Susan, your righteousness does not depend on a perfect performance,’ and that just hit me, ‘That’s true. He is so right,’ and I think from that moment on I just kept hearing him say that in my mind.” Susan also shared how she benefited from the

interaction and teaching of “some of the older ladies [whose] spiritual lives [were] just so strong.”

Spiritual Equipping Outside the Local Church

Results from the interviews indicated that some spiritual equipping for the participants took place outside of the local church. Daniel, Eric, and Tim mentioned family members in their early years of development. Scott shared that his spiritual equipping began to take place during his college years, but “mainly through [his] own personal Bible reading.”

However, most of the spiritual equipping for the participants took place during their early years of work. A few of them mentioned various conferences, and Andrew and Beth specifically mentioned the Reformed *Worship of God* conferences that were hosted by Christ Community Church (PCA) in Franklin, Tennessee. Beth also mentioned some personal hymn studies that she had done. Susan spoke of the spiritual benefits she received from some of the community choir directors under whom she served during her early years of work.

Tyler shared that much of his spiritual growth during those early years of work came through difficult circumstances that he and his wife encountered in his work at churches. As he stated, “It was a very stressful time, but [a time of] incredible spiritual growth that we would trade for nothing. So [it was] circumstances—working at this church or that church...that’s how God grew [us] through trials.” Interestingly, Tyler added that a large part of his spiritual equipping during this time came through reading books by Christian author John MacArthur. In a very real sense, MacArthur served as Tyler’s mentor during this period.

Spiritual Equipping Through a Personal Ministry Philosophy

The researcher was particularly intrigued that several of the participants, without any prompting, volunteered the information that at some point early in their ministries, they developed a type of personal ministry philosophy. Much like the discussion about God's calling, different participants brought up the topic at different points in the interviews. Yet regardless of what area of research they related it to, it was clear that the process of developing that ministry philosophy was very important to their spiritual development. For this reason, the topic will be discussed in this section.

The common theme for several of the participants was that through some mental and/or physical process, they experienced a type of personal ministry enlightenment that profoundly affected and directed how they carry out their worship ministry. Eric and Nathan received greater clarity on how they could glorify God through their musical gifts. Eric spoke of hearing Francis Schaeffer speak during his college years, "[He] was giving our generation permission to explore the arts, as much as our previous generations had explored missions and the pastorate, and we were encouraged to get out there and become politicians, become economists, become entrepreneurs, become musicians and artists." Similarly, during the early years of his work, Nathan had three key people, his senior pastor and two professional musicians, who helped him to understand how God could use all of his music for his glory.

At some point early in their ministries, Gregory and Tim developed ministry philosophies, which they expressed by slogans. Gregory's philosophy continues to guide how he thinks about the spiritual and theological needs of the congregation, and how he chooses music in light of those needs. Tim, whose ministry philosophy slogan is printed

on some of his materials, stated, “Everything that I do here is through that filter—the music that I select, the music that the choir sings, our programs, everything that we do. Does it meet and fulfill those vision and mission statements of our ministry?”

Early in Daniel’s ministry, while contemplating a call from a church, he sat down one evening to pen his thoughts about the job offer. Instead, however, he got up an hour and a half later having created his “manifesto.” He reflected, “When I got it done, I had bullet points and headings and neatly organized paragraphs, and I had this ministry manifesto, [and] to this day, I still adhere to it.”

Right after Scott graduated from seminary, he was asked to teach a class on worship, so in preparation for that, he went through a personal study where he “went back to the scriptures to prepare class notes” so that in the classroom he would be able to clearly articulate his views on worship. In terms of his music ministry in the church, he noted that this process “...helped me to decide what we were doing here, and so whenever there [was] a decision [to be made], that [decision] would be influenced by what my philosophy was. It was helpful to have already done that.”

Spiritual Equipping They Wish Had Happened

Despite their significant spiritual development, some participants indicated that there were gaps or deficiencies in their spiritual equipping. Tim shared that he wishes he could have received more training so that he would have “more confidence in my ability to communicate and to give myself away.... I’m a quiet man. My tendency is to lay back rather than to step forward, and I think that is something that the Lord has been working with me through the years and continues to do so. I wish I had had more situations in my younger days that had drawn me out more.”

Gregory noted that he wished someone had told him ahead of time how important counseling would be in his position. He commented:

Every person who works in any level of the church needs a basic understanding of Christian counseling—when you need to back...out of that situation and turn it over to a real psychologist, and when you can actually be helpful....We need to be able to sense when a person's psychological need is pastor-skill set...and when they are a danger to themselves or somebody else.

He continued, "I don't think our pastors really know that [when] they get out of seminary. They learn it the hard way, and...the risk of liability that they put the church in is horrible."

Experiences that Developed Leadership Skills

As discussed in chapter two, strong leadership is important in any organization, and worship ministry is no exception. For the purposes of this research, the researcher sought to narrow the discussion to effective leadership in worship ministry by focusing on the participants' leadership strengths and weaknesses, the unique leadership challenges involved in working with artistic people, and the ways worship directors were equipped to fulfill these responsibilities and to face these unique challenges. The results of these findings are discussed in the following sections.

Important Leadership Qualities

The researcher worked under the assumption that no leader has "the full package" when it comes to discussing leadership qualities. All effective leaders have strengths and weaknesses, and part of a leader's effectiveness comes from learning how to maximize strengths and compensate for weaknesses. Therefore, in order to avoid portraying a "perfect" worship ministry leader, who in reality does not exist, and to give a more

realistic picture of the leadership gifts of the participants, the researcher chose to focus on both leadership strengths and weaknesses.

Leadership Strengths

The participants shared a wide variety of leadership strengths, four of which were mentioned most frequently. The most common response can be described as “They know what they want; they know how to make it happen (which includes accurately assessing the available talent); and they will persist to see that it happens.” Daniel described:

I have, like a neurosis where I can play out scenarios in my head, and so most of the time before I even get to a decision I’ve already played it out in my head, and I know which way I want to go. I know that...going this way is going to be the best way to get us there. You name it, I’ve probably already factored it in, and so let’s just stop talking about it. Let’s just do it.

Similarly, Tim stated, “I know where we’ve got to go. I know what we have planned. I know how much time I have to get it done, and I know that these are the steps I have set in place [to get us there].”

Perhaps a bit surprising was that seven participants described themselves as administratively gifted. Daniel stated, “I consider myself bizarrely administrative, which I’m told is unusual for a musician.” Beth noted, “I do think I have administration skills. I know how to organize a group and make sure that everybody knows what’s going on... [and] that things run smoothly.”

Several of the participants indicated that caring for the people whom they lead is one of their leadership strengths. Tyler stated, “Being a leader, you have to be a lover of people, and you care about their needs, and you meet them where they are, and you know they are people as well.” Beth added, “People always tell me that I care more about [them]. I want my heart to care more about [them] than [the things they] do for me.”

The fourth most common leadership strength among the participants was the ability to inspire people to participate. Gregory revealed, “I’m better at casting a vision for a new thing and infusing it with an excitement and enthusiasm that make people want to give it a try.” Tyler noted, “I have such a strong passion for what I do, and I think people are quick to come along with me. They see what I have and where I want to take them.” This quality is especially important because as Eric noted, “In the world of volunteers...there’s another kind of motivation that has to be at play, and you’re not going to get [them] to come out and give six or eight hours on a weekend...by being negative, and telling them that they are not doing well.”

Some of the participants spoke of their leadership in equipping other musicians.

Eric shared:

The church has been an educational institution and not a performance venue. The church has historically been a place where people learn to be skilled in music.... The church should continue to be a place where our kids learn how to worship God, and to do it to the best of their ability.... I believe that we as church musicians should not become preoccupied with our own performance to the extent that we’re surrounding ourselves with pros and we’re constantly trying to make the music perfect, and we don’t recognize that there are kids growing up in the church that we need to mentor, and we need to invest in them—not only their chops, but the sense of the value of the time spent to worship God with their music.... So for me, I think it’s an important component for church musicians to be educators to whatever degree they can.

Eric added that he has seen this type of equipping taking place in his church for more than a decade.

Several other leadership strengths mentioned by the participants included the following: they are able to make the rehearsals an enjoyable experience, they continually remind the volunteers why they are doing what they are doing, they are willing to do the hard things (like confronting people) and make the hard choices in order to maintain the

integrity of the ministry, they know how to work under and with authority, they are willing to be flexible and have a Plan B, they clearly communicate expectations, and they are competent in their musical skills.

Leadership Weaknesses

The participants also shared a range of leadership weaknesses. Some of the participants felt that their leadership is hindered because in certain areas, they are not as musically competent as they would like to be. Andrew noted that he would like to be “stronger vocally and instrumentally.” Beth wishes she had more choral education. Gregory lamented that he was not more proficient on keyboard.

Another weakness is a lack of administrative ability. Gregory noted that he is not administratively gifted, but he also shared that he sees the importance of good administration, and works closely with his wife, who is administratively gifted.

A third leadership weakness is what Tyler described as being “too soft on some issues.” He shared, “I don’t want to infringe on them and their time schedules.” Similarly, Susan noted, “Sometimes, I guess I’m just too nice.... I think sometimes I like to be—and this is a weakness and an idol—a people pleaser.”

A fourth leadership weakness is the struggle of working with groups of people. Susan acknowledged, “I get very nervous. I’m sure that’s not unique to me. I don’t mind speaking in front of a group if I feel like I really know my subject well. But if it’s something that I just enjoy, I tend not be able to lead a good group discussion.” Tim shared, “Because my nature is introverted, I don’t put myself out there. I don’t step up all the time and say well, ‘I will take charge.’ At least initially I don’t.”

A fifth leadership weakness is the struggle to adapt to sudden change. Nathan admitted, “I don’t like change very much.... I’m great at executing plan A...but the fact that B is a norm, I need to be better about helping people get to B [when] B is where we are going.”

A final leadership weakness is that the participants can become so focused on the work at hand that they overlook or forget people in the process. Interestingly, Daniel noted that this weakness for him is also the flip-side of one of his strengths. As described earlier, Daniel’s gift to focus on the planning and execution of a task at hand makes him a very effective leader, but he acknowledged that when pushed to an extreme, it can become a weakness: “I’m decisive, almost to a fault. I can get so focused on something. On Sunday mornings, I will have conversations with people, and I’ll get home, and I’ll start replaying things in my head, and I will think to myself, ‘Did I even end that conversation?...Did I just stop talking and walk away?’”

Unique Challenges in Leading Artistic People

When discussing some of the unique challenges in leading artistic people, the participants’ responses generally fell into two categories: the artist’s temperament and effective ways to lead artistic people. The following sections discuss these responses.

Artist’s Temperament

A word that was often used by participants in their interviews was the word “creative.” Artists are creative people. As Gregory noted about himself, “I have the ability to think of things that haven’t happened yet, to dream of things that haven’t been heard yet, to imagine a type of service that hasn’t been worshipped yet.” This creativity is one of the tremendous gifts that artists bring to God’s people. As Susan described, “We

hopefully will have an influence spiritually in somebody's life, maybe through the song we sang or the words of the text, and that we can give back to God creatively and beautifully, using the gifts that he has given us."

But some of the participants spoke of the tension that can exist between artists and church leadership, particularly when the leadership does not fully understand that the creative works of artists are an expression of who they are and what they care about.

Nathan described why some of that tension might exist:

Creatively, spiritually, personally—because that's who the artist is—they want to make a difference with what they do. It has to matter, the creative stuff that we do. Otherwise it's just like musical wallpaper—it's like when I used to have to play dinner music at cocktail parties. I was just musical wallpaper, and I made three hundred dollars, and they paid me, and I left and that's all there was to it. It was kind of whorish, because we all knew what this was. We just did it, and you got what you wanted, and I got what I wanted. For artists, it's got to matter for them to invest themselves.

In a similar vein, Eric spoke about churches that can, in their enthusiasm for evangelism, "subjugate art to some kind of propagandistic purpose."

But there was another word that participants used to describe artistic people—"ego." Daniel noted, "Musicians are sensitive. Musicians are insecure. Musicians are egotistical. We can get so wrapped up in identifying our self worth with our competence." In other words, when church leaders criticize (or even block) the artistic performances of musicians, the leaders may not realize that the musicians might receive the criticism as a critique on who they are as people. Putting that into a worship ministry context, Scott succinctly commented, "It is hard sometimes for [the musicians] to separate their own personal egotistical reaction to what they are doing, from the most worthy spiritual motivation that they may have."

Effectively Leading Artistic People

So what are effective ways to lead artistic people? The overall responses of the participants indicated that there were two important components to leading artistic people—building just enough organizational structure to allow for freedom and creativity among the artists, and building meaningful relationships through respect, care, and love.

Nathan described organizational structure as a “necessary evil” for creative people. Daniel spoke of the importance of structure and rules, as well as the musicians’ willingness to “die to themselves a little bit,” as being necessary to ensure that a group of creative types will function as a team. Scott also noted about his musicians, “They are offering their services, and it’s my job to help them to be able to do the very best they can. So a minimum of help that I can give is just being organized, so that we don’t waste their time, and we use that time efficiently, [and we] are as well prepared as can be.”

Building relationships is essential as well. Nathan observed:

Pastors can make [artists] feel so much more validated and inspired and encouraged by just wanting to have a relationship with us, by wanting to enter into our crazy little world where we think funny things and have crazy ideas. Because it’s an investment, you know, it really is. It has been for me, and that’s what changed me.

Nathan continued, “They need your guidance. They need your encouragement.... It’s always easier to say, ‘Yeah a bunch of creatives. They all need their egos stroked.’ But what they really want is to be disciplined.... They want to be led, and they want to be invested in, and if you invest in them, they will do anything in the world for you.”

The process of building these relationships can also present challenges. As Tim noted, “Leadership is helping people learn how check their egos.” Tim shared about one particular musician:

I have learned how to deal with [him], and to help him, and to sit down with him. I think what you have to do, and it is hard for me, you've got to learn to confront the difficulties of peoples' personalities, and to sit down with them and reason with them, and help them understand, "Here is what our objectives are; here is what the ministry's objectives are," and get them to buy into that to [the point] they understand there are going to be times [when] we are going to have to pull something that may have featured [them], but it is never a personal thing, where we are trying to push [them] aside or squelch [them]. It is all for the good of where we are going on a particular Sunday or in a particular program.

According to Daniel, this willingness to confront people in love meets the challenge of "having the guts to be able to defend the integrity of the worship ministry."

Equipping for Leadership

So how were these worship directors equipped to fulfill their leadership responsibilities and to face the unique challenges in leading artistic people? The following sections discuss where and when that leadership development took place.

Leadership Equipping in the Local Church

Results from the interviews indicated that the local church played a significant role in the leadership equipping of the participants. During their childhood and youth years, this equipping primarily occurred through watching and emulating church leaders. Tim spoke of his youth music minister, "[It was] just watching him. I don't know if there is any specific thing, other than the fact that I knew he loved me. I know that he loved music, he loved me, he loved the Lord—all those things together—he was always giving up himself and his time for our development." Tim added, "I didn't know at that time, but he had invested himself in preparation. He invested himself in the energy and excitement of wanting to teach us, and for us to have the joy of singing together." Furthermore, as previously discussed, the interviews also indicated that participants received leadership

equipping during their childhood and youth years through the local church when they were given opportunities to lead in musical settings.

The only participants who indicated that they received leadership equipping from their local church during their college and early adult years were those who had begun directing a choir in a nearby local church. The two primary ways they were equipped was through observing church leaders and on-the-job experience. Similarly, the participants indicated that the two primary ways that the local church equipped them to lead during their early years of work was primarily through observing church leadership (particularly the senior pastors) and through on-the-job experience with their first musical groups. Seven participants indicated that their pastor significantly influenced their leadership development during those early years of work. Gregory described some of his early pastors, “[Pastor 1] was one of the best Reformed preachers I’ve ever worked with. His leadership for the church was primarily by example. He didn’t bully people; he didn’t boss them around.... There was [Pastor 2], who was the kind of leader who led quietly by persuasion and not by intimidation.” Daniel spoke of one of his early pastors, “I’ve always had a high respect for [him] and his leadership ability.... I’ve interacted with him [in a] very limited [way] on a personal level, but just to watch him in the way he leads.” And as indicated earlier, Nathan learned firsthand how to invest in people’s lives as a leader by receiving that kind of leadership investment from his own pastor.

Scott noted that he was highly influenced by elders in the church. “They were so good at what they were doing that they really could teach a lot in terms of leadership.... They were highly organized...and clear thinking in what they did; didn’t waste committee time, but led...well by both the organization and clear assignments.”

Tim shared about choral directors who mentored him:

[Director #1] was an incredible administrator, but a mediocre musician. He had a huge choir though. People loved him because he was an administrator. And he was a people person.... [Director #2] didn't have an administrative bone in his body, but he was so creative. And so I had these two guys who together were supermen [of music ministry].... I'm just so thankful because I saw great administration in one and great creativity in the other, and so I am always trying my best to meld those two together.

While observing and working with these directors, Tim saw the value of both administration and creativity, and he was able to incorporate both into his own leadership style.

The other primary means of equipping was through on-the-job experience. The most common response from participants about leadership development during this period could be summarized by Susan's statement that some of the most valuable equipping she received was through "learning what worked and what didn't; how to approach certain things; ... and learning to accept it when things did not go well."

Leadership Equipping Outside the Local Church

Results from the interviews indicated that for almost all of the participants, leadership development outside the local church during the childhood and youth years, as well as during the college and early adulthood years, took place through musical opportunities in the schools. As described in the earlier sections on musical equipping, a couple of the participants served as leaders in high school music groups. College and graduate school was another time that several of the participants honed their choral and orchestral conducting skills. Likewise, several of the participants mentioned college choir directors and other music instructors who were very influential in their musical

development during those years. Eric indicated that he grew in his leadership as he formed and led various bands during his college and early adulthood years.

A few of the participants discussed specific ways they were equipped for leadership outside the local church during their early years of work. Nathan benefited from a retail job:

Oddly, one of the things that really prepared me for administrative work was...selling furniture.... I ended up managing this furniture store for a little while.... I learned how to think about everything, from when we were running promotions, to managing people and schedules, and ordering shipments.... But it made me think in a way that I didn't [normally] think about things as a person [who] was just a creative mind going through life with music playing in my head. I had to fire people; I had to deal with people who didn't show up; I had to deal with people lying to me and stealing from us. And it was a really, really good experience for me.

Similarly, Susan shared of her secular experience teaching music for a short time in a middle school, "You either led or you were dead, and so I didn't do a very good job many times. But I learned what not to do, and I learned what I needed to learn to do, and I think that was a big influence."

Leadership Equipping They Wish Had Happened

Daniel indicated that he wished there could have been (or still could be for others) "some kind of degree program or some kind of intern program where you can go and shadow somebody that's doing ministry successfully and just spend time with them and see how they do it." He commented that often when he talks to other people about music leadership involving shepherding and equipping volunteers, "You would think that I'm speaking Swahili." He noted that new worship directors will often feel overrun by volunteers, so if this kind of leadership has never been modeled for them, they can feel overwhelmed and simply gravitate to a few musicians who are highly talented.

Andrew and Gregory also mentioned a number of practical issues that “nobody ever told me.” Andrew wishes he had received administrative training in areas such as church budgeting, sound systems, choral music filing systems, and copyright issues. Gregory quipped, “Another thing they never tell you is that you need a strong back. You’re going to be moving instruments and church furniture, setting up and taking down sound equipment and raising speakers on sticks, and all of that’s heavy work.”

Experiences that Developed Reformed Theology of Worship

As discussed in chapter two, knowledge of the word of God and the Reformed tradition of worship is an essential component of leading worship in a Reformed church. With that in mind, the researcher interviewed the participants to explore some of the theological themes of Reformed worship that are most prominent in their minds, the theological challenges that they have encountered in Reformed worship, their theological equipping during their childhood years through their early years of work in the church, and the theological equipping they wish had happened. The results of these findings are discussed in the following sections.

Reformed Theology of Worship for Those Who Lead Reformed Worship

During the interviews, the researcher asked the participants to share a short synopsis of their philosophy of worship, as well as any Reformed theological themes of worship they wanted to highlight. The researcher was not expecting the participants to articulate a fully developed theology of worship in such a short amount of time, nor was the researcher looking for any one “right answer.” Rather, he was curious to see how much commonality would exist in the participants’ responses with such an open-ended question. The following sections discuss the results.

Philosophy of Worship

Regarding a philosophy of worship, the responses of the participants ranged widely, but generally speaking, there were thirteen different themes or elements that emerged. All ten participants indicated that the goal of worship is to bring glory to God. All ten participants also mentioned music in their responses. Seven participants spoke of God's grace and love poured out upon his people, and three of those seven highlighted God's pursuit of his people. Six participants mentioned the good news of the gospel, demonstrated through Christ's love, salvation, and forgiveness of sin. Six participants highlighted the centrality of the word—God's truth to his people. Four participants spoke of confession of sin. Four participants also mentioned edification of the body of Christ through worship. Three participants indicated the importance of engaging both the head and the heart in worship. Two participants noted the fact that some are called to be lead worshipers. Two participants spoke of God's people being made holy. One participant mentioned prayer and the Lord's Supper, and one participant mentioned trusting God.

Reformed Themes

Almost all of the participants referenced some Reformed theme of worship, although they did not necessarily use Reformed "titles" in their descriptions. Andrew specifically stated that the worship service elements point to the gospel. He elaborated, "You've got your confession—we confess privately, we confess corporately, and then we are assured of our forgiveness. We celebrate that and we rejoice in that by singing hymns of praise, by responding to his word, sometimes in song and by listening to the other elements." His response also touched on the theme of worship being dialogical, "In the liturgy, we talk, we respond, and we hear. I like for the whole service to be interactive."

Beth spoke of both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of worship:

[Our worship] is more vertical than horizontal worship and so our songs are...going to be focused to our God. We are actually singing to God, or we are singing about God. We're not singing horizontal songs of encouragement to each other, which there's nothing wrong with those in their right context, but just for our Sunday morning worship service, I pray for our service to be vertical and content-driven.

Beth also mentioned a brief period when she internally debated the contention of some historic Scottish Reformers that there should be no instruments in the church, but it did not take her long to decide that instruments are appropriate in worship.

Daniel addressed the doctrines of election when he stated:

The songs that I do, the songs that really resonate with me, all have a theme of him pursuing me, him choosing me, him seeking me out. I'm turned off to songs that talk about what we will do; here's what we will do. I am much more concerned with celebrating the fact that we have a God that radically and relentlessly pursues us, regardless of whether or not we are trying to run away.

He also seemed to have a heightened sense of the priesthood of believers (though he never used that term) when he maintained, "The gospel tells us that we all [are sinners]. Nobody is better than the other, so why not apply that to a worship ministry philosophy.... I think that God has called me specifically to use anybody that he brings into my midst regardless of their skill level...and it's my responsibility to train them for the fit."

Eric shared that in more recent years, he has had an increased sense of "the power of music as it pertains to knowing God and having a relationship with him." This has led him to an increased appreciation for God's sovereign work in worship to edify his people. He noted, "So now when we pick songs, I see every week how God orchestrates the

service, and sometimes even in the personnel—one person declines and another person steps up.... God selects the people that he wants.”

Gregory placed a high value on the centrality of God’s word, but he also noted, “Grace has to be the framework for the whole service, but there’s plenty of room for the law.” Gregory also spoke of the richness of psalmody, and his determination that he “not allow the Psalms to be pushed aside.”

Like Daniel, Nathan was moved by the thought of God’s pursuit of his people. As he stated, “A life changer for me, a heart changer was realizing that God was pursuing me.... The idea that God passionately pursues me is actually a lot more flabbergasting than whether or not I choose to follow Jesus.” Nathan also referred to his role as a “lead worshiper” in such a way that is very reminiscent of Hebrews 2, where Jesus stands before the congregation leading in worship. He noted, “I think my people know that they are lead worshippers.... They are not there to...entertain or to motivate in any way. They are there to worship God and invite these people on that journey with them.” Scott emphasized Christ-centered worship in the context of Trinitarian worship, “Our worship needs to reflect we are God-centered.... We are not here to hear somebody perform.... [The Holy Spirit’s] job is to point to Jesus so if we did a lot of things that talk about...Holy Spirit signs and that kind of stuff, I would be a little bit uncomfortable.” Scott concluded, “I would rather that we are pointing to God, particularly the Lord Jesus, in our worship; God the Father, second; the Holy Spirit, third, I would say.”

Susan was the only one who spoke about communion, and she noted that in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, “Jesus’ sacrifice and God’s grace...are reflected and shown through the Lord’s Supper.” Susan’s church moved to weekly communion a few

years ago, and she reflected on the scene of the community celebrating together, describing it as a “beautiful picture of what it will be like in heaven.”

Tim emphasized glorifying God, edifying the body of Christ, and magnifying the message of salvation in Christ alone. He noted, “Everything that I do here is through that filter. The music that I select, the music that the choir sings, our programs, everything that we do—does it meet and fulfill those vision and mission statements of our ministry.”

Tyler spoke in terms of worship in spirit and truth, with the full person engaged in worship. He stated, “I want worship to be exciting. There should be truth...but without the emotions, it’s kind of dead. It’s lifeless. God gave us emotions and we should use them.... The twenty-four elders fell on their face, and that’s emotion! There’s passion and emotion, and I want to carry that into worship because I think God deserves that.”

Theological Challenges in Worship

During the interviews, some of the participants mentioned specific areas where there have been theological challenges in either their churches’ worship, or in their own minds. These are discussed in the following sections.

Traditional and Contemporary Music

The most commonly mentioned challenge revolved around the issue of music styles. Six participants mentioned that this has been an issue in their churches, and five of them are still dealing with the issue at varying degrees. As Beth described, “There are some people [who] still don’t like the...more contemporary music. Sadly, we even have one man who, on some songs if he doesn’t like them, he’ll go stand out in the hallway and then come back in.”

Andrew, Beth, Susan, and Tim all have services that consistently blend the traditional and contemporary music content, instruments, and performance styles. Tim mentioned that several years ago, there was controversy in his church surrounding a separate contemporary service that was very stylistically different from the traditional services, and this was beginning to polarize the membership of the church. However, when a new pastor came in, he was very clear on what he was looking for in the worship. He combined the services into a more blended worship service, and the controversy eventually settled down.

Tyler and Gregory both serve in churches that are currently struggling with services that are very stylistically different. The philosophy behind the separate services in both churches is to target a wider group of people than those who might attend a traditional service. Both Tyler and Gregory expressed concerns over this plan. Tyler, who is highly committed to seeing that church music is performed with quality and skill, was recently asked to undertake more responsibility in the contemporary service, and he feels uneasy because of his lack of experience with that style of music. Gregory does not want separate services to polarize his church, and he expressed questions and concerns about how much substance can be obtained from a heavy diet of contemporary music in the worship experience. He noted about some of the contemporary music he has heard, “A little bit of that goes a real long way with me. It’s too much spice and not enough pudding.” Andrew, who serves in a more blended service, shared similar concerns about contemporary music when he stated, “It seems bane; it seems easy to do; it seems to fit in with today’s societal desires of instant gratification. Put a microphone in front of somebody, and they could be a star. There’s no effort put into...regular, daily practice.”

Scott, whose church is more traditional, occasionally incorporates CCM and RUF music in the worship services. He indicated that his church has not had significant struggles in this area, and he attributes that largely to the pastors, who have been very clear on what they believe and where they stand on worship. However, regarding the contemporary music issue, Scott expressed deep concern for the PCA as a denomination:

What concerns me about the PCA...is that a lot of the churches are going toward mainly contemporary. What if you went to a museum and they said, "Now look, we are not going to show any paintings that were painted more than five years ago. This is art. This is the best now. Art is progressive...so this is what we are going to enjoy." I think the artists would be in horror. What about the Rembrandts? What about the Monets?... You can just take it to other disciplines and see suddenly that we are doing this with church music. No hymnal is perfect, but there are a lot of hymns that still work for every generation because of the richness of the text.... I think that you are really impoverishing your worship if you just stick to things that were immediately written.... My feeling is that we ought to think about what we want to be the song of our congregation, what do we want our music to be? And I think it should include some contemporary [songs] because in every generation it has.... But [we need to think] purposefully, "Here is what our people need to sing," and in choosing the music, as much as we can, I think we ought to choose music that we think is going to be around so that the music that our kids learn, they'll be singing when they are eighty years old.

Scott continued, "I think about this narrowing down of musical leadership in the church to only a praise team. I've got some really biblical questions about that.... The Lord has put a lot of people in the church with some musical gifts; are we going to ignore all those and just use seven people? Are we not going to train our kids anymore to do music?"

The Role of Women in Worship

Another issue mentioned by some of the participants dealt with the role of women in worship. Six of the participants commented on this issue. Andrew, Beth, Daniel, Nathan, and Susan stated that their churches do not forbid women to lead in the worship service, and all of them could think of a time when women had served as a worship

leader in their church. However, Andrew, Beth, and Susan indicated that this is not a common practice in their churches. Tim shared that his church takes a harder line on women leading in worship, and while the leadership would be okay with a woman giving a ministry report, they would not be comfortable with a woman praying or reading scripture in a worship leader role.

Regarding their personal convictions, Daniel and Tim both acknowledged that they are somewhat ambivalent on the issue. Daniel noted, “Quite honestly, for me to get involved in discussions like that distracts me...not to say that it’s not important, but it distracts me from what it is that I’m here to do.” Nathan stated that he did not have a problem with women being ordained. However, all participants reasserted their willingness to submit to the leadership of the church on the issue. Andrew shared that he is personally more comfortable with men leading in worship. Beth and Susan stated that they both have led in worship at times, but they prefer to let others do it.

Presbyterian Reserve in Worship

Andrew and Tyler both commented that the stiffness of Presbyterians in worship can be something of a personal challenge for them. Andrew stated:

I like for the whole service to be interactive. I don’t like it to be where they come, they sit, they observe, they may sing, they sit, and they go home. Our church doesn’t necessarily receive the benediction, but I’m up there receiving it. And there are a few that I’ve [wanted to tell], “He’s going to pronounce it, you can hold your hands out.”

Tyler, who is new to the Reformed church, noted that his biggest challenge has been the caution and reserve exhibited by much of the congregation during worship. After commenting on the need for both truth and emotion in worship, he shared, “I think worship should be fun, and I feel like [we’re] missing out. I talked in-depth with the choir

about this, and there's almost this underlying surge of 'We want to be set free from some people [who] need to keep it very formalized.'" Tyler also stated that he believes this reserved approach to worship in his church is more cultural than theological.

Frequency of Communion

Only Susan mentioned frequency of communion as a theological challenge in her church. She shared that a few years ago, after much study, preparation, investigation, and prayer, the church made the decision to celebrate the Lord's Supper on a weekly basis. She noted that some people left the church because of that decision, but now it seems well accepted by the congregation, and as indicated earlier, she regards it as a "beautiful picture of what it will be like in heaven."

Equipping in Reformed Theology

So how were these worship directors equipped in Reformed theology? The following sections discuss when and where that theological development took place.

During their Childhood and Youth Years

Research indicated that Reformed theological equipping was very limited for most of the participants during their childhood and youth years. As indicated earlier, Andrew, Beth, Gregory, Nathan, and Tim all grew up in Baptist churches. Andrew described the main thrust of worship as "altar-call salvation." Although Gregory loved the joy expressed through the worship music in his childhood church, he was also "exposed to music that was not for the glory of God, but for the manipulation of God's people's emotion." Both the positive and negative exposure profoundly impacted him musically, spiritually, and theologically. Similarly, Nathan grew up in a very legalistic

church, and this impacted him in a very negative way musically, spiritually, and theologically.

Eric and Susan grew up in Reformed churches. Eric's father was the pastor of a Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, so Eric was surrounded by the Reformed tradition. Scripture memorization played a key role in his spiritual and theological development. Susan was reared in the southern Presbyterian Church (PCUS), where she "sang and there was prayer, but it was more like this is just what we do."

Daniel grew up in the Catholic Church, but he eventually left it at the age of sixteen because he "had a major problem with transubstantiation and a major problem with their lack of individual priesthood of the believer." Scott grew up in the Methodist church, but began playing in a PCUS church during his sophomore year in high school. Tyler grew up in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, which is theologically conservative and liturgical in worship. There was no indication from the participants regarding any Reformed theological equipping outside of the local church during their childhood and youth years.

During Their College and Early Adulthood Years

Research indicated that the local church significantly influenced the participants' Reformed theological equipping during their college and early adulthood years. Despite the low number of participants who were raised in Reformed churches, five out of the eight participants who did not grow up in the Reformed tradition were exposed to Reformed theology during their college years, and seven out of the total ten participants ended up working in a Reformed church during their college years. Daniel interned for a short period of time at a Presbyterian church. Gregory, Beth, and Scott worked in

Reformed churches during their college years—Gregory in a Reformed Presbyterian Church, Beth in a PCA church, and Scott in a PCUS church. Beth benefited greatly from the preaching of the pastor, and she reflected on the things she learned for the first time:

God’s sovereignty over all things, and nothing he allows is by accident.... That was the first time I was learning about God’s election of us, that he loved us unconditionally from all time, that we [can] have security in that assurance of our salvation...and that God had a plan for me and loved me.

Similarly, Scott shared about the theological influence his pastor had, “We might go out to lunch or something like that, because he was always a mentor to people who were in seminary and college, especially [those] headed towards the ministry, and so conversations would take place informally in an office setting or through lunch.”

During his college years, Andrew took a part-time job at a Baptist church, and he began to talk and work with a Reformed Baptist pastor. He noted, “That was the beginning of starting to understand that it’s more than just the gospel message of salvation; that it is daily living.... A lot of maturing happened.” During college, Andrew eventually moved to a Presbyterian church, where he continued to grow in his understanding of Reformed theology by working with the pastor. He shared,

I had been intrigued by [Reformed thinking], and now...every day I was going to the office [where] it would be him and I, and we would have time to talk about Reformed traditions and Reformed theology, and there were still a lot of questions that I had as to, “Why do we do this?” and “What’s going on here?” So I had a lot of personal one-on-one time with this really good teacher and so I learned a lot more about the Reformed traditions, and that structure that is used in the worship service.

Additionally, both Eric and Susan worked part-time in Reformed churches during their college years.

Significant theological equipping also took place outside the local church. During those years, Eric, Gregory, and Scott attended Reformed colleges, and this served as an

important time of theological development for all three of them. Gregory, who had wonderful theological training under the teaching of his college professors, noted:

I didn't realize how empty I was, but I was hungry for theology that actually answered the real questions about how God relates to man, what's the sin problem, why did the sin problem have to be solved, [why] the old covenant was not an adequate covenant, but was a foreshadowing covenant....

Gregory admitted that he walked away from his college training “kind of puffed up, arrogant...prideful,” but God worked in his heart, and within a couple of years, he had learned “how to love people who are 4.3 Calvinists.”

During Their Early Years of Work in the Church

Research indicated that the local church was very important in the participants' Reformed theological equipping during their early years of work. In fact, all of the participants except for Tim and Tyler worked in Reformed churches during that time. Andrew, Beth, Gregory, Nathan, Scott, Susan, and Tim all indicated that their primary theological influence during their early years of work was the pastor of their church. Nathan reminisced about his early days of exposure to Reformed theology, “That was really one of my first encounters with [the pastor] and hearing him preach, I was like, ‘Did it sound to you like he’s sick?’ And as we got more into all of that, it was a real game changer.”

Tim worked for a Reformed Baptist pastor in a Baptist church as soon as he finished college. As he shared:

He began to introduce me to Reformed theology and he gave me some cassette tapes from R.C. Sproul...all these different places that addressed issues that Southern Baptist steer away from, like the Romans Chapter 9—we always skipped over that in our Southern Baptist Sunday School class.... So he began to get me thinking along those lines of Reformed theology, and during that time I really moved into that and accepting the

doctrines of grace, and understanding predestination—not understanding—but I believe receiving that and those hard things that we struggle with sometimes.

By the time Tim left that church, he had developed a strong, Reformed theological foundation and considered himself to be thoroughly Reformed.

Daniel stated that he was “not very churchy in college, and I just didn’t care.”

However, that began to change when soon out of college, he started working in a technical position in a Reformed church:

I started to get a grasp of Reformed faith...and I started learning what Romans 8 and 9 teach, and I started coming into an understanding of what the Reformed faith is [and how] that crafts the whole idea of worship. It changes the entire paradigm. You’re no longer trying to earn approval.... I’m just bringing “this,” and I’m believing that not only is it enough, but it is good because of the way he sees me through Christ. That has to be the biggest catalyst for change in the way I even thought about worship.

A large reason for this change was due to a man at the church who started discipling Daniel. “He walked up to me and he wanted me to be in a discipleship group, and I said, ‘What are we going to study?’ And he said, ‘We’ll talk about things like predestination’.... He was a huge influence.”

Theological equipping also took place outside the church during this time. Seven participants indicated that during this time, they were learning about worship and Reformed theology by reading books on worship from authors such as Robert Webber, Donald Hustad, Terry Johnson, John Frame, Bob Kauflin, Bryan Chapell, and noted PCA seminary professor, author, and founder of Key Life Ministries, Steve Brown. Andrew was greatly influenced by Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship conferences, where he experienced not only solid Reformed teaching, but also dynamic community life and worship among people in the PCA and other Reformed churches. Andrew and Beth both

indicated that the *Worship of God* conferences at Christ Community Church (PCA) in Franklin, Tennessee heavily influenced their thinking on Reformed theology of worship. Beth also indicated that personal hymn studies assisted her theological development. Similarly, Susan took a New Testament course and a systematic theology course in seminary and “absolutely loved those classes.”

Theological Equipping They Wish Had Happened

Andrew, Susan and Tyler shared they wish they had received more theological equipping. Although Andrew received Reformed theological training during his early years of work in the church, he lamented not having earlier exposure to it. He stated, “I received good Bible knowledge teaching growing up, but I think an understanding of the Reformed faith earlier in life would have been nice, because that would have given me a perspective—a spring board from earlier on.” Andrew also commented that he thought a number of times about going back to school to receive more training in theology, but with church and family responsibilities, he has never found a good time to go.

Susan, who loved her two seminary courses, wished that there was something available from a Reformed seminary for working worship directors like her, or students starting out, to develop a more sound theological foundation to assist them “when choosing music and looking for biblically sound information and texts.” She noted that such a solid theological foundation would also have been helpful to her when her church was struggling through issues regarding traditional and contemporary styles of worship.

Tyler acknowledged that he wishes he had received more theological training where he could have obtained a more solid grasp of the scriptures. He also stated that since he is new to the Reformed church, it would be helpful to him to have a “simple five

point book” that would paint a picture of the Reformed theology of worship. However, he did say that his current pastor has been very helpful in orienting him to Reformed theology.

Conclusion

The interview findings detailed in this chapter provided in-depth insight into how career worship directors became equipped for long-term vocational ministry in the Reformed church. The next chapter will discuss conclusions drawn in light of these findings and those reported in chapter two.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore how career worship directors became equipped for long-term vocational worship ministry in the Reformed church. The following four research questions guided this study:

1. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' musicality?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church
2. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' spiritual formation?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church
3. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' leadership skills?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church
4. In what ways and to what extent did experiences develop worship directors' Reformed theology of worship?
 - a. During childhood and youth years
 - b. During college and early adulthood
 - c. During the early years of work in the church

In this chapter, I will summarize my research findings, present the conclusions I was able to draw from the research, and make recommendations for pastoral and academic practice, as well as further study.

Summary and Findings

Summary of Literature Review

The literature review in chapter two demonstrates that there are four primary areas of development that are necessary to effectively equip career worship directors for long-term worship ministry in the Reformed church—musicality, spiritual formation, leadership skills, and Reformed theology of worship.

The first section of the literature review, which explores musicality, reveals a number of important findings. First, music education in the church has a biblical foundation, and it is important for the church to train musicians to lead worship. Since the early twentieth century in America, the traditional means of music training in the church has been through children's, youth, and adult choirs, as well as instrumental ensembles. For many years, these music groups were mostly led by lay volunteers. However, in the past fifty years, there have been dramatic changes in church music ministry and in the expectations for worship directors. Modern worship directors are often expected to lead worship, to perform competently, to lead groups of musicians, and to teach music. The contemporary praise band is a new music group that has quickly become an integral part of worship in many churches, and worship directors are also expected to lead these groups.

The literature reveals that the primary means of musical equipping for worship directors has been through the local church, through formal training outside the church, such as private lessons, schools, and universities, through informal training like popular music, and through denominational religious schools of higher education, such as Baptist

seminaries. However, very little literature specifically addresses how Reformed worship directors are being musically equipped.

The second section of the literature review, which explores spiritual formation, reveals four foundational elements of spiritual formation for Christians: finding identity in Christ, being rooted in the gospel message, growing spiritually in the context of church community, and all three of these being part of a lifelong process. Some of the normal means by which this spiritual formation takes place are spiritual disciplines, worship, and modeling and mentoring by spiritually mature adults. Modeling, integration, and mentoring are very important components of the spiritual formation of children, adolescents, and emerging adults.

The literature also indicates that worship leaders often face unique spiritual challenges due to their temperament and gifting, but the foundational elements and means of spiritual formation are no different for worship directors than for other Christians. However, there is very little literature available regarding where and how this spiritual formation actually takes place for Reformed worship directors.

The third section of the literature review, which explores leadership development, discusses the importance of strong leadership for worship ministries and the unique challenges that come with finding and developing those strong leaders. The section reveals that leadership qualities found in effective leaders in the business world and in non-worship areas of the church are essentially the same qualities that are needed for strong leadership in worship ministries. The literature also indicates that academic institutions, mentoring and apprenticeships, on-the-job experience, and self-motivated learning are the primary ways that business people and church workers gain leadership

skills. There is some literature that indicates that this is true for worship leaders, but there is very little literature indicating where and how leadership development actually takes place for Reformed worship directors.

The fourth section of the literature review, which explores the development of Reformed theology of worship in worship directors, discusses primary theological principles of the Reformed theology of worship, current disagreements on worship that are taking place within Reformed churches, and the biblical and theological rationale for why all worship leaders should regard themselves as representatives of Christ, who is the ultimate worship leader. While there is extensive literature discussing Reformed theology of worship, and some literature stating why worship directors in Reformed churches should be trained in Reformed theology, very little has been written about whether, where, or how this equipping might be happening.

Summary of the Interview Data

A summary of the interview findings provided in chapter four demonstrates that a group of ten worship directors who have demonstrated effectiveness in worship ministry for more than a decade have received extensive equipping in the areas of musicality, spiritual formation, and leadership skills. The interviews also demonstrate that the participants have been equipped in the area of Reformed theology of worship, but results were inconclusive regarding the extent of that equipping.

The discussions regarding musical development revealed that the means by which the participants were musically equipped corresponds very closely with the literature—private lessons, formal training within the local church and schools, and informal training through popular music and participation in music groups such as rock-and-roll bands.

One means of equipping that was highlighted by several participants, but did not appear as much in the literature, was the importance of the family in musical equipping.

When speaking of the importance of musical equipping during their childhood and youth years, several participants spoke of their musical opportunities as inspiring and fun experiences that established a foundation for musical proficiency. They also highlighted their interactions with adult musicians, many of whom served as musical role models and mentors to the participants. Most of the participants were encouraged in their musical development by their local churches. A few of the participants regarded those early musical opportunities in the local church as their first step in God's calling to music ministry.

College and graduate school musical training was particularly important for almost all of the participants because it honed their musical skills, taught them to love good music, developed their leadership skills, and trained them in music theory. Many of the participants noted that their music instructors, who were demanding, yet caring, had a profound impact on their musical development. During those college years, leading choirs and other music groups in the local church provided the participants with valuable experience that allowed them to apply what they were learning in the classroom.

During the early years of work in the church, many of the participants stated that their on-the-job experience equipped them by teaching them "what worked and what did not work," and also by forcing them to develop their personal musical skills. Some of the participants wished that they had received more musical training in areas such as choral and orchestral conducting, keyboard proficiency, and leading a contemporary praise band.

The discussions regarding spiritual formation revealed that the participants consider their primary spiritual responsibilities as worship directors to be ensuring that they are worshiping God, shepherding the congregation by leading them in worship that glorifies God, shepherding the musicians of the church, and responding faithfully to God's calling in their lives. When asked to talk about unique challenges that worship directors encounter in their ministries, the participants spoke of struggles that correspond very closely with the challenges discussed in the literature. The important truths the participants have learned through these responsibilities and challenges also correspond very closely with the foundational elements of spiritual formation discussed in the literature. These include recognizing who they are in Christ, understanding the message of the gospel, valuing the church community, and realizing that because God has called them to this ministry, he will sustain them to the end.

Almost all of the participants' spiritual equipping took place within the local church, and it generally occurred through relationships with older adults. During their childhood and youth years, a few of the participants spent time with adults who loved them and loved the Lord. Some participants spoke of general spiritual equipping that took place in their Christian faith through worship and scripture, but few could think of specific ways they were equipped for the spiritual responsibilities and challenges in their worship ministries. Likewise, participants experienced little spiritual equipping during their college years unless they worked in a local church. During their early years of work in the church, their pastor was generally the most important influence in their spiritual equipping. For some, this was primarily through his preaching, but others indicated that it was through his mentoring. A few other participants, including both females, indicated

that they were also spiritually equipped either by older men or women in the church during that time. One participant cited difficult circumstances in the church and subsequent reading of Christian books as his primary means of spiritual growth.

In a variety of ways, several participants also described what I called a “personal ministry philosophy.” This is a type of personal ministry enlightenment that profoundly influenced them in their spiritual journeys, particularly in the ways they view and conduct their worship ministries. This idea of a personal ministry philosophy was not emphasized in the literature.

The discussions regarding leadership development revealed that the participants’ leadership strengths correspond very closely with important leadership qualities identified in the literature. The interviews also revealed that there can be unique challenges involved in leading artists because of their temperaments, but an effective means of leading artistic people is by building just enough organizational structure to allow for freedom of expression and creativity, while at the same time, building meaningful relationships with the artists through respect, care, and love.

Participants received leadership training both inside and outside the local church. Within the church, from childhood through their early years of work in the church, the participants’ leadership equipping largely took place through the blend of observing church leaders, being mentored by church leaders, and learning from on-the-job experience while leading music groups. Leadership development outside the church from childhood through college primarily took place in the schools (although there were a few exceptions), and once again largely resulted from a blend of observing music leaders, being trained by music instructors, and learning from on-the-job experience while leading

music groups. A few participants also benefited from leadership positions in the secular world during their early adulthood.

Some of the participants wished that they had received more administrative training to equip them to deal with common issues such as budgeting, music filing systems, and copyright issues. One participant spoke of the need for more intentionality in developing intern partnerships between colleges/seminaries and the local church to provide better leadership training.

The participants' responses regarding their development in Reformed theology of worship indicated that there was some correspondence with the literature. When asked to articulate a brief philosophy of worship, all ten participants stated that worship was intended for God's glory, and they all mentioned the involvement of music in worship. Beyond that, responses varied widely. Their collective responses touched on most of the primary theological principles of the Reformed theology of worship discussed in the literature, but it was difficult to determine the level of theological understanding for each individual participant. Several of the participants mentioned the Reformed theological themes of God's sovereignty and election, and it was clear that these doctrinal beliefs greatly influenced their views on worship. The participants also mentioned a few of the theological disagreements on worship discussed in the literature, but by far, the most prevalent issue dealt with the controversies surrounding traditional and contemporary church music. No participant spoke directly about the issue of worship leaders being representatives of Christ, the ultimate worship leader, although a few indicated that worship leaders are called to be "lead worshipers" in the assembly of God's people.

Only two out of the ten participants grew up in a Reformed church, and those two indicated that they received some theological equipping during that time, primarily through family or observation. During their college years, seven out of the ten participants worked in Reformed churches, and the preaching and interaction with the pastors of those churches were their primary means of theological equipping inside the local church. Three of the participants also attended Reformed colleges, and this proved to be a very important influence in their theological equipping.

During their early years of ministry, eight of the participants worked in Reformed churches, and one of the two participants working outside the Reformed church was being mentored by a Reformed Baptist minister. Once again, the primary means of theological equipping was the preaching and the interaction with the pastor of the church, although a few were also discipled by older men or women. Participants also indicated that they were theologically equipped while reading books on Reformed worship and theology, and through Reformed conferences, personal hymn studies, and seminary courses.

Some of the participants wished that they had received more theological training, particularly at a seminary level. The one participant who is a relative newcomer to the Reformed church wished that there was a concise resource available to help non-Reformed worship directors understand important theological principles of worship for Reformed churches.

Discussion of Findings

A discussion of the findings from the research will provide a rich description of how worship directors became equipped for long-term vocational worship ministry in the

Reformed church. The following sections will discuss opportunities the participants had for equipping, people who helped with their development, and important things they learned during the development process.

Opportunities for Equipping

My First Solo was at the Age of Five

“My first solo [was] at the age of five.” Gregory made this statement while answering the question about how the local church helped to equip him musically during his childhood. It was significant to me that the first thing he mentioned was not technical training in church choirs, nor big music productions, but rather a little solo at the age of five. Gregory demonstrated that from his earliest memories, the church provided meaningful opportunities for him to grow in his love and skill for music.

Through this research, I have seen the very important role that the church can have in establishing a solid musical foundation for children and youth. The church has weekly access to children during those preschool and kindergarten years, which the literature describes as the “most important years of musical development because they are the years of developmental music aptitude.”⁵⁵⁰ In other words, the church has the opportunity to directly impact their children’s musical aptitude. When Gregory’s church allowed him to sing his little solo (as well as providing him other musical opportunities at a young age), they probably had no idea that they were contributing to the growth of his musical aptitude.

There are also other important roles the church can play in musical development. The literature stated that ideally, by the time children complete the sixth grade, they will have developed “a positive attitude toward and an understanding of the use of music at

⁵⁵⁰ Buescher and Vaught, 4.

church and in their world.”⁵⁵¹ This is how Susan viewed her childhood experience in church when she shared that “just being able to sing in a choir and [getting] that experience...grew my love for it.” Similarly, Gregory shared that his church taught him “the joy of doing music in God’s house.”

The literature also spoke of the important role the church can play in the musical development of the youth, who are “at their peak.”⁵⁵² At this age, they “love to participate, to play all sorts of instruments...to lead singing, or to be an assistant to the choir director.”⁵⁵³ This was demonstrated in multiple ways throughout the interviews. Amazingly, in the seventh grade, Scott sang the “Fauré Requiem” in a church youth choir. At the age of thirteen, Daniel was playing piano with the folk band in the Catholic mass, and doing a “pretty good job.” During those same years, Beth, Nathan, Susan, and Eric all regularly played the piano in church services or church choirs. At age sixteen, Beth accompanied the adult choir on her “first Easter cantata.” As a youth, Andrew was playing in the church orchestra and occasionally directing “the congregation on the congregational singing, which was fun.” Tyler started playing the organ in church as an eighth grader, and Scott took a job as an organist in the tenth grade.

But these things did not happen by accident. A number of elements had to be in place in the churches for the participants to have these opportunities. It is significant that all ten participants sang in children’s choirs. It seems evident that to some degree, these churches agreed with Paul Jones, who noted that “churches and Sunday schools need to

⁵⁵¹ Edge, 28.

⁵⁵² Hustad, 433.

⁵⁵³ Ibid., 433-434.

be involved in teaching singing and basic musical proficiency.”⁵⁵⁴ It is highly unlikely that all of these church choirs were singing music at the level of Scott’s choir, but the fact that the churches even had children’s choirs, thus providing opportunities for the children to grow in their love and skill for singing and music, appears to have been an important factor.

For many of the churches, there also seems to have been a nurturing environment that actively encouraged individual participation from children and youth. As Greg Scheer observed, “We need to foster the growth and discovery of gifts of those under our care—this is the difference between *using* and *nurturing* the musicians God has given us.”⁵⁵⁵ At the age of twelve, Beth, who attended a small rural church, was invited to fill in for the sick piano player, but when she messed up the song, she “started crying and...was so embarrassed.” But the story did not stop there, “Everybody was so encouraging.... So God used that in my life and I’ve been able to encourage a lot of children if they did not do so well. I tell them, ‘I didn’t do well either.’” Later, at the age of sixteen, the pastor’s wife asked Beth to accompany the church choir, and she truly began to blossom as a pianist and musician. Her story was reminiscent of Jones’s story when the children’s choir director asked him to start accompanying the children’s choir when he was nine years old.⁵⁵⁶ It seems that there was a similar environment among some of the musicians in Daniel’s church. As a young thirteen year old, he felt comfortable enough to approach one of the adults to ask if he could participate on the adult team. They welcomed him, and even though he left a few years later for doctrinal reasons, he was still able to say of

⁵⁵⁴ Jones, 149.

⁵⁵⁵ Scheer, 35.

⁵⁵⁶ Jones, 133.

those musicians, “They were really good folks, and they were very patient and took a risk on a thirteen year old who said he wanted to play.”

However, as Scheer notes, there is a difference between churches “nurturing” musicians and “using” musicians. Unfortunately, Nathan has suffered lasting harm in his life because he felt used by his childhood church in two primary ways. First, his church was very legalistic, and they taught that using one’s musical gifts in service to God was a matter of appeasing God rather than joyfully offering one’s gifts to a loving and merciful heavenly father. As Nathan shared,

It was kind of a legalistic across the board.... And so, since there was so much of “what God didn’t like and what God did like”...that just carried into my artistic understanding. So I had very early on a specific idea about what it meant to be a Christian and to use your music. I even had people in my church tell me that if you didn’t use it for the Lord, you would lose your talent. “God could take that away from you. You could wake up tomorrow [and] have an aneurysm, and you won’t even know how to read music!”...so it was not a nurturing place unless you gave them what they wanted. And so I learned to do that musically and otherwise. I...played what they wanted to hear and things were “great.” Except I wasn’t [great].

Similarly, Susan commented, “It was a lot of ‘Do the right thing,’ that kind of approach.”

Both Nathan and Susan had to overcome negative experiences that influenced how they viewed the role of their music in worship. I am convinced that this is why the gospel message being applied to worship (which will be discussed in more detail in a later section) has been such an important theological concept for both of them.

Nathan’s church also provided him a very narrow view on what music was acceptable to God. As he shared:

In my home church that I grew up in, it was a very traditional piano/organ dynamic, especially in my teens. And we were the first group to ever bring drums into the church. That was just like we were really testing the gates of hell by doing that. And so it wasn’t as widely accepted or encouraged, and thinking outside the box wasn’t [encouraged]....

Nathan still laments the fact that he was not given “more permission at the time” to use his full range of musical talent, and it was clear from the interview that he still cannot help but wonder what might have been if his childhood church had been more encouraging of the musical gifts that they deemed unacceptable.

Not Professional Pedagogues

Eric shared when he was a child, his piano teachers were “not professional pedagogues...[but] they were people who were serving in a local community, helping kids like me [develop] basic skills.” Over time, Eric became a highly skilled piano player, and it was evident that he still appreciated those early piano teachers who laid a foundation for his musical development. Similarly, former music professor at Southwestern Theological Seminary, Donald Hustad, stated that he began studying piano at the age of four and was playing Czerny etudes and Beethoven sonatas by the time he was in grade school.⁵⁵⁷ All ten of the interview participants received piano lessons at some point, and several of them also had other private lessons, such as voice, organ, guitar, and band instruments. It was clear from both the literature and the interviews that private music lessons, particularly piano, can play a very important in the musical development of children and youth.

I Want You to Learn How to Read Music

One day Scott’s school choral director declared to him, “I want you to learn how to read music.” Scott had been playing music by ear since he was four years old, and he seemed to be doing very well on the piano. However, during Scott’s seventh grade year, it became clear to the schoolteacher that this talented young musician had a serious

⁵⁵⁷ Hustad, v.

handicap—he could not read music. Fortunately, she was in the position to do something about it, so she sent him home with a stack of music. He learned to read music, and by the time he reached high school, he was accompanying choirs. As I thought about Scott’s story, I could not help but wonder what his future would have held if that teacher had never encouraged him to learn to read music. It is likely that he would have continued playing the piano in some type of venue, but it is highly unlikely that he would have ever directed church choirs and professional symphony musicians.

It was clear from Scott’s story that God used both the school music program and an observant music instructor to equip Scott for his future as a worship director. As the literature indicates, music education in American school systems has been an important part of musical development in children for more than a century, and it was clear that this was true for Scott and many of the other participants. As Susan described, “I was blessed to have wonderful music teachers in elementary school, which were a good influence, [and] in high school as well.... The beauty of the music we were able to create in those groups in choirs, it was just inspiring....” Susan continued to note that these experiences “helped guide me to go on to college and do [music] study.”

I’m a Huge Elton John Fan

“I’m a huge Elton John fan.” Daniel made this statement as he recounted the experiences that impacted his musical development. Daniel continued, “When I was twelve or thirteen, I got an Elton John book and learned how to mimic his sound by actually reading through the transcriptions of what he does on the piano. So that ended up being a huge influence on...how I actually play and sing.” He also added, “If you go to

an Elton John concert now and then you compare it to the way I set up my stage, it's almost exactly the same."

Daniel was not alone in referencing popular secular music as a major part of his musical equipping process. Eric spoke of his great interest during high school for 1970s pop legends, Peter, Paul, & Mary, and Simon & Garfunkel. Beth discovered rock-and-roll music during her teen years, so she took a few guitar lessons, and then she taught herself to play. Nathan taught himself to play music by listening to pop singers such as Elton John, Sly & the Family Stone, and Billy Joel, and then mimicking what he heard on his stereo records.

Stories from the literature are very similar. Bob Kauflin and Scheer both had rock-and-roll backgrounds, and Kauflin speaks of "[sneaking] in 'sacred versions' of Beatles tunes" when playing the organ for Masses, weddings, and funerals in the Catholic Church.⁵⁵⁸ These men are not confident that they were Christians at the time they were playing rock-in-roll and serving in churches, but they are convinced that God used those experiences as part of their musical equipping process.

What if Daniel had not fallen in love with the music of Elton John and other secular musicians? What if Nathan had not been allowed to learn secular music? Would they have pursued music as passionately as they did? I cannot answer those questions, but I am convinced that while young people always have to be careful about secular music, there is a lot of creativity and good music in the secular world. With the proper guidance, discernment, and encouragement from parents, and submissive hearts from their musical children, young musicians can grow in their musicality through exposure to good secular popular music.

⁵⁵⁸ Kauflin, 17.

I Was Hungry for Theology

“I didn't realize how empty I was, but I was hungry for theology that actually answered the real questions about how God relates to man....” These words were spoken by Gregory, who did not grow up in a Reformed church, but attended a Reformed college, where he received very strong teaching in Reformed theology. Similarly, Eric and Scott attended Reformed colleges, and they also spoke of the strong theological foundation they received during that time.

Jones addresses the importance of worship directors in Reformed churches understanding Reformed theology when he urges, “To properly lead the people of God in worship, knowledge of the Word of God and some conception of one’s doctrinal tradition is essential.”⁵⁵⁹ Although Andrew received Reformed theological training during his early years of work in the church, he lamented not being exposed to it earlier. He stated, “I received good Bible knowledge teaching growing up, but I think an understanding of the Reformed faith earlier in life would have been nice, because that would have given me a perspective—a spring board from earlier on.” It seems clear that a Reformed college could have provided that solid theological foundation for Andrew, had he known at the time that he would one day be serving as a worship director in a Reformed church.

It Was a Nightmare, and What a Waste of Money

“It was a nightmare, and what a waste of money.” These words were spoken by Tyler as he recounted his early experience as a church choir director when he was “bound and determined that [he] was going to be able to do the Christmas portion of the Messiah with these people.” In hindsight, Tyler realized, “I probably didn’t have the skill at that point. They certainly didn’t have the skill.”

⁵⁵⁹ Jones, 141.

Jay Conger writes about a study with one hundred ninety-one successful executive leaders, which concluded that experience was the common denominator in the ability of those executives to lead.⁵⁶⁰ They all had to go through the “school of hard knocks.”⁵⁶¹ The interviews with the participants revealed a similar theme. Both Beth and Susan spoke of “learning what works and what doesn’t.” Gregory shared how he had to learn to discern what the people really wanted in their church music. Daniel commented on becoming the worship director in a church plant, “From day one, I had to pretend like I’d always sung in the microphone.... That was a huge development component of those first couple of years.... I either did this, or it wasn’t going to fly.” Andrew shared, “I found a position at a Methodist church nearby...a hundred member church, ten member choir and that was...an eye opener in many aspects.” There are some things that cannot be taught in the classroom; they must be learned on the job.

It was a Lab Basically

“It was a lab, basically.” Those words were spoken by Tim as he described the value of working as a church choral director while attending school. He stated:

The great thing I found was being able to serve in these churches while I was being educated, rather than being educated, and then walking out and trying to shove down a volunteer’s throat, “This is what they told me in the classroom I was supposed to do.”... Because I was in ministry...when a teacher said, “Well, you need to do this,”...[I knew] that this guy had obviously not been in the ministry before. So it was always helpful for me to have that side-by-side experience.

Interestingly, all ten participants were involved in serving in the church during their college years, and several of those participants spoke of the value of working in the church while they attended classes.

⁵⁶⁰ Conger, 29.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., 39.

The literature agrees with Tim and the other participants about the way that serving in the church while attending school can help aspiring church workers to develop their skills. Rowland Forman, Jeff Jones, and Bruce Miller, pastors and leadership trainers, are concerned that churches have become too dependent on academic institutions to provide the kind of leadership training needed in practical ministry, and they lament that churches have “neglected the training of leaders within the congregation and largely abdicated to professional schools the responsibility for training pastoral leaders.”⁵⁶² They believe the church can have significant impact in equipping future leaders in the church, and they place great value on church internships.⁵⁶³ Paul Jones seems to share in their assessment, and he encourages Reformed churches to create paid internships for musically talented students interns “who can both assist the music program and apprentice their craft.”⁵⁶⁴

Not Much Going on Church-wise During the College Years

When speaking of his early years in college, Tyler admitted, “I’m sorry to say that during the college years there wasn’t much going on church-wise.” Similarly, Daniel stated that he was “not very church-ed in college, and I just didn’t care.” This corresponds with the literature, which indicates that for many emerging adults, a growing apathy and indifference toward religion and a life of faith coincides with this important transitional period.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶² Forman, 48.

⁵⁶³ Ibid., 30.

⁵⁶⁴ Jones, 145.

⁵⁶⁵ Setran, 16.

As educators and authors on Christian formation, David Setran and Chris Kiesling, state, “Effective mentoring requires a keen awareness of the postures necessary at the hinge. At this ‘in between’ juncture, mentors must help emerging adults open their eyes to God's work in their lives and in the world through attentiveness to the past, present, and future.”⁵⁶⁶ Both Tyler and Daniel were mentored during these pivotal emerging adulthood years, but it looked very different for each of them. Though spiritually immature, Tyler became a full-time worship director, and God began to use difficult circumstances in his early years of church work to encourage spiritual growth for him and his wife. He recalled, “It was a very stressful time, but [a time of] incredible spiritual growth that we would trade for nothing. So [it was] circumstances—working at this church or that church...that’s how God grew [us] through trials.” Tyler added that a large part of his spiritual equipping during this time came from books by Christian author, John MacArthur. In a very real sense, MacArthur served as Tyler’s mentor during this period, but Tyler still regarded his connection to the church as very important in his spiritual growth.

Much of Daniel’s spiritual growth during those early years came through a godly man in the church who served as his mentor. Daniel considered that relationship very important in his spiritual development. Though he did not state this explicitly, it seems that when his church hired him, he still had a lot of growing to do spiritually. However, the fact that he was working in a church provided opportunities for spiritual growth.

These stories present an interesting dilemma in worship ministry—how spiritually mature do musicians need to be in order to minister in a church? When considering the

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 205.

statement from the literature that worship directors are expected to lead in worship, to be spiritually mature,⁵⁶⁷ and to be theologians,⁵⁶⁸ then clearly they need to have some level of spiritual maturity. But when looking at the stories of Tyler and Daniel, as well as the stories of Scheer and Kauflin from the literature, it is also evident that God uses involvement in church music ministry to draw these servants to himself during those pivotal emerging adult years when they easily could have drifted away from the church and from the Lord. Is there a way for churches to involve and minister to emerging adults who may be weak in their faith, yet protect the integrity of the leadership position in the church?

It seems that churches may be able to find a healthy balance by providing paid internships or lower leadership positions to talented young musicians who are spiritually open to God's work, but who are admittedly still working through their own spiritual questions and struggles. Clearly, churches opening the door to musicians in this way would have to be handled with much discernment, and there would have to be clearly stated expectations for the interns or new workers. Because of their love of music, however, there also seems to be incredible potential for spiritually immature adults to be drawn into the church at a time when many emerging adults are fleeing.

People Who Helped With Their Development

I Left Crying, Out of My Piano Lesson

When speaking of his college piano teacher, Daniel declared, "There were more times than not in my first year of piano that I left crying—and I was a big dude—but I left crying, out of my piano lesson...." Daniel was not complaining about his piano

⁵⁶⁷ Noland, *The Worshiping Artist: Equipping You and Your Ministry Team to Lead Others in Worship*, 10.

⁵⁶⁸ Jones, 141; Hustad, 94; Liesch, 229.

instructor. Rather, he was speaking of his deep respect and admiration for this man who “created a technical foundation for me that is now a part of everything that I do in ministry, and a part of everything that I do as far as the way I coach bands, the way I do vocals....” According to Daniel, he grew markedly as a musician because this piano teacher demanded so much from him musically, but at the same time cared for him as a person.

Daniel’s story was not unique. Tim shared about his choral instructor in graduate school:

He was one of those guys that demanded more than you thought you could give.... I remember when I went in to audition for the masters degree program (I had done well in conducting in college and thought I had good firm patterns), and he and the other conducting teacher...were just sitting there laughing at me. I was so humiliated, but God used that in my life to help me understand that there was much more I needed to learn, and through that he really began to work. [The instructor] motivated me to work hard and to be the best I could be, and at the end of my time with him, he was very encouraging to me about how I had developed.

Susan spoke of her college choral director in similar terms:

In the classes, he was very demanding. He expected perfection—for you to do what he considered the right way, the best way, and it worked. What he taught us, I could see time after time that it really did work. It wasn't just for show. It really had a meaning and got the choirs to do what he wanted them to do.

There were other stories from the participants about music instructors who demanded a lot from them, but who were also able to equip them to do things they never thought they would be able to do. Almost all of these accounts took place within the context of college or graduate school.

The interviews indicated that whereas gentle encouragement and nurturing were important parts of the equipping process during the participants’ childhood and youth

years, particularly in the context of the local church, it seems that rigorous, demanding musical instruction was needed at some point to move them to a “next level” of musical proficiency. Musical development is particularly important for worship directors, because as stated in chapter two, “Worship directors are expected to be competent performers.”

As Jones contends:

A music director needs to be a trained, skilled, professional musician. This may be obvious enough to most people, but one might be surprised at some churches’ choices for their musical worship leaders. These days it is not uncommon to find amateurs, self-taught guitarists, youth pastors, and other musically untrained persons beset with duties in music that are well beyond their capabilities and expertise.⁵⁶⁹

Jones adds that worship directors must be musically versatile, knowledgeable, and exceptionally competent in one or more instruments.

Several of the participants seemed to feel this expectation as they discussed their musical equipping. Both Scott and Tim worked in the church for some time before they realized that they needed additional musical training because they did not feel as musically competent as they wanted to be. One of the benefits of this additional education was the increased ease they felt conducting professional symphony members, even though that was not their primary musical area. Beth and Andrew both wished they could have received more musical training. It may be coincidental, but those participants who emphasized demanding instructors did not express concerns about musical competency.

He Loved Music, He Loved Me, He Loved the Lord

“[It was] just watching him. I don’t know if there is any specific thing, other than the fact that I knew he loved me. I know that he loved music, he loved me, he loved the

⁵⁶⁹ Jones, 140.

Lord—all those things together—he was always giving up himself and his time for our development.” These words were spoken by Tim, and they capture much of what the literature says about the tremendous potential for equipping through mentoring at all stages of life. In fact, the literature is very clear that mentoring is one of the most effective means of equipping people, and the interviews overwhelmingly demonstrated that this was true in the musical, spiritual, leadership, and theological development of the participants.

The literature states that an important part of spiritual formation for young children, adolescents, and emerging adults comes through observing and subsequently modeling their lives after mature Christian adults. Tim had no doubt that this man loved music, he loved Tim, and he loved the Lord, and that knowledge was an important part of Tim’s equipping process. Similarly, Andrew stated of his church choral director, “He had time for me. If I came to him with questions...he would always help. We didn’t spend one on one time...learning from the Bible.... It wasn’t like that. But I observed everything he did, every move he made....”

Another important factor was the manner in which both the child and the adult loved music. According to Jason Lanker and Klaus Issler, the most effective mentoring relationships in the church are “natural” ones that develop when adolescents and non-parent adults work and serve side-by-side in church programming that is not specifically designated as “youth ministry.”⁵⁷⁰ There were several stories from the participants, such as a sixteen year-old Beth accompanying an adult choir and a thirteen year-old Daniel

⁵⁷⁰ Lanker and Issler, "The Relationship between Natural Mentoring and Spirituality in Christian Adolescents," 105.

playing in a band with a group of adults, discussing how valuable that interaction and serving together with adults was in their equipping process.

Very intentional mentoring also took place. One such man in Daniel's church approached him during his emerging adult years and asked if he would like to be in a discipleship group. Similarly, Beth was discipled by the pastor's wife during those pivotal early adult years, and Susan was mentored by older women in the church during her early adult years. It is clear that through modeling, natural mentoring, and intentional mentoring, godly people in the church, both musicians and non-musicians, served as powerful means of equipping.

He Didn't See Me as...the "Pain-in-the-Butt-Worship-Guy"

When speaking of his senior pastor, Nathan stated:

He really was single handedly the most influential person in my spiritual formation, in my adult life.... Because he didn't see me as an employee or the "pain-in-the-butt-worship-guy" he had to sit down with every week and tolerate my input.... He really saw his role with me as development, as an investment.... A pastor/worship leader relationship is so vital...."

Half of the participants indicated that a pastor from the early years of their work was the most important person involved in their spiritual formation. Furthermore, seven participants indicated that the pastor of the church was a significant influence on their leadership development during those early years of work. As Gregory described of some of his early pastors: "[Pastor 1] was one of the best Reformed preachers I've ever worked with. His leadership for the church was primarily by example. He didn't bully people; he didn't boss them around.... There was [Pastor 2], who was the kind of leader who led quietly by persuasion and not by intimidation." Seven participants also indicated that their primary theological influence during their early years of work was the pastor of the

church. As Andrew spoke of his pastor during his college years while he was working in a Reformed church, “I had been intrigued by [Reformed thinking], and now...every day I was going to the office [where] it would be him and I, and we would have time to talk about Reformed traditions and Reformed theology....” There were several similar stories shared by other participants.

But not all of the stories were positive. A theme among a few of the participants touched on the frustration experienced by worship directors who feel they are not being respected and heard, and who feel the pastor is infringing into their area of expertise. As one participant shared:

I think in reference to being on a staff of a church and relating to the pastors...it was a temptation sometimes to resent their authority.... Depending on the pastor and the structure of the church, you may or may not have autonomy in what you’re doing. So one pastor might be extremely controlling and want to “pick all the hymns,” as they say. And I know churches...where the pastor picks all the songs. So that is one type of heavy handedness from the pastor, and it is really inappropriate for the pastor to do that.

Another participant expressed similar frustrations:

People who are theologians and pastors and have studied in a seminary frequently consider themselves to be the final arbiters of spiritual knowledge in the church, the one who dispenses it to all points of interest in the church. And sometimes they’ll treat musicians as only technicians whose only capability is going to be in the area of music and the arts. [But] every one of them considered themselves to be something of an expert in one area of music or another, so they did not hesitate to give me advice in the area of music and how I should do [this or] that.

A third participant shared that when he encounters situations like this, “I have to remember that my calling is not to do what I think is always right, but to work under the structure of leadership here.... I am going to have to risk that people think I’m a goober because they think I picked that, but I will do it anyway because it is what he really feels

like we need for a certain situation....” This participant continued, “But I love him and respect him, [and] I will do as much as I can.”

Interestingly, I encountered very little literature about the positive influence pastors can have on worship directors in these areas of spiritual formation, leadership development, and theological training. Forman, Jones, and Miller hint at it when they speak of internships for pastoral staff members, “The churches doing the best job of leadership development...embed the value of leadership development deep into their church culture. Leadership development has more to do with who they *are* than with what particular things they *do*.”⁵⁷¹ Jones spoke of the value of providing internships for young musicians,⁵⁷² but again, there was little literature discussing this tremendous potential influence on new worship directors.

It seems clear that pastors, especially senior pastors, have the potential to greatly influence the spiritual, leadership, and theological development of worship directors, particularly when they value investing in them. Furthermore, senior pastors should also be cognizant that it can be very frustrating to worship directors when they micro-manage the musical aspect of worship. Mutual trust and respect in each other’s areas of expertise should be the goal for both pastors and worship directors.

Important Things They Had to Learn in Their Development

Your Righteousness Does Not Depend on a Perfect Performance

One Sunday morning when Susan was particularly concerned about a choir anthem that was to be performed later in the worship service, her pastor reminded her, “Your righteousness does not depend on a perfect performance.” That succinct statement

⁵⁷¹ Forman, 30.

⁵⁷² Jones, 145.

revealed Susan's sinful self-righteousness, while at the same time pointing her heart to Jesus Christ, who covered her in his true righteousness. In other words, the pastor gently reminded her about the message and power of the gospel.

James Wilhoit, professor of Christian formation and ministry at Wheaton College, points out that the gospel is often presented as the "front door" to Christianity or "heaven's minimum entrance requirement," and spiritual formation is regarded as a "human-striving sanctification" process by which Christians make themselves more holy.⁵⁷³ But God's grace and the power of the gospel are needed for the beginning, middle, and end of salvation.⁵⁷⁴ In other words, God's grace and the power of the gospel are needed every day and for every activity of life, including choral conducting and worship leading. As Eric stated, "Every Sunday when you are leading worship, every time you are picking a song, everything that you're doing, and interacting with people, you're doing it as a broken person; you're doing it as a person [through which] God's grace has shined in spite of your own weaknesses." Susan, who realized from her pastor's statement that she was depending on her "human-striving" to make her performance acceptable to God and to others, shared that "from that moment on I just kept hearing him say that in my mind." To this day when she begins to feel those worries rising in her heart, she will repeat that sentence to herself.

This can be hard for musicians who are trained to seek perfection in their musical performances. Yet, in a worship context, they have to remember that their goal is not perfection or entertainment, but rather that people would truly worship God and that their lives would be changed. Nathan commented, "I have nothing to bring, but my filthy rags.

⁵⁷³ Wilhoit, 26-27.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 27.

I believe God has gifted us uniquely, and we should celebrate that...but it's not our gift that's going to precipitate any change of heart. It's absolutely his working in spirit and we get the privilege of being a part of that." It can be very freeing for musicians to realize that they are covered in the righteousness of Christ, and because of him, their worship is acceptable to God, even when they mess up the musical performance. It is not up to them to make something supernatural happen.

I Try to Be Pastoral

"I try to be pastoral in the way that I'm responding—wherever they are—realizing that the Lord is taking them along on their spiritual journey, at the pace he wants. And so I just need to be able...to help them along the way...." Scott spoke these words about his musicians when asked about the spiritual responsibility that he feels as a worship director. Similarly, Eric stated, "I think for me that pastoral aspect also means that I have a sense of the hearts of all my participants, my volunteers, and the people that I am working with...."

When it comes to ministry leaders and spiritual formation, the literature is very clear on a couple of points. First, people of all ages in the church are closely watching and spiritually modeling themselves after their ministry leaders. Second, ministry leaders will work with people who are struggling in their own spiritual lives. The combination of these two points means that worship directors are going to be regarded in a pastoral manner by the people in the church, particularly those who serve in the music ministry. This means that not only do they need to be faithful and diligent in their spiritual walks because people are looking to them as pastoral models, but they also need to realize that at some point, people will come to them for pastoral advice. Nathan noted about his

musicians, “When things are going on in their lives, I’m the person they call.... It’s a pastoral position.”

In the World of Volunteers...There’s Another Kind of Motivation

Eric sagely noted, “In the world of volunteers...there’s another kind of motivation that has to be at play, and you’re not going to get [them] to come out and give six or eight hours on a weekend...by being negative, and telling them that they are not doing well.” Similarly, Peter Drucker, author and management consultant, notes, “You can’t be satisfied in non-profit organizations with doing adequately as a leader. You have to do exceptionally well....”⁵⁷⁵ Bill Hybels “believes that the church is the most leadership-intensive enterprise in society.... In voluntary organizations, such as churches, the only thing that works is leadership in its purest form.”⁵⁷⁶

So from a strictly leadership standpoint, what does it look like for a worship director to do “exceptionally well?” What does effective church music leadership look like in its “purest form?” I believe that several leadership qualities must be in place for worship directors to lead effectively. First, the literature and interviews demonstrate that worship directors who are effective leaders will establish the right direction, and then move people in that right direction. This was the most commonly reflected response from the participants. As Tim stated, “I know where we’ve got to go. I know what we have planned. I know how much time I have to get it done, and I know that these are the steps I have set in place [to get us there].” Building on that, Gregory stated that he has the ability to inspire people to participate by creating “an excitement and enthusiasm that make people want to give it a try.”

⁵⁷⁵ Drucker, 17.

⁵⁷⁶ Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, 18.

Additionally, worship directors must have enough musical competency and organizational structure to carry out their plan in such a way that allows musicians to enter into those plans with relative ease and to maximize their musical gifts. As Tim stated about former directors who served as mentors to him:

[Director #1] was an incredible administrator, but a mediocre musician. He had a huge choir though. People loved him because he was an administrator. And he was a people person.... [Director #2] didn't have an administrative bone in his body, but he was so creative. And so I had these two guys who together were supermen [of music ministry].... I'm just so thankful because I saw great administration in one and great creativity in the other, and so I am always trying my best to meld those two together.

Nathan described organizational structure as the “necessary evil” for creative people, and Daniel spoke of the importance of structure and rules to ensure that a group of creative people will function together as a team. Scott also noted about his musicians, “They are offering their services, and it’s my job to help them to be able to do the very best they can.” Gregory, who noted that he does not have the gift of administration but recognizes its importance, expressed his gratitude for his wife, who is administratively gifted and assists him in his ministry.

Furthermore, the literature and interviews reveal that worship directors need to demonstrate that they will not abandon their followers in hard times. As Eric stated about the power of a sense of calling, “...you will do it because you are called to it. And that means you will do it even when it is hard or when it is unpleasant.” Worship directors will also seek to build meaningful relationship among the musicians. As Rory Noland states, “Jesus modeled servant leadership. He was very giving. We need to serve those we lead. We need to love and cherish artists.”⁵⁷⁷ Similarly, Nathan maintains, “They want to

⁵⁷⁷ Noland, *The Heart of the Artist*, 260.

be led, and they want to be invested in, and if you invest in them, they will do anything in the world for you.”

Finally, the literature demonstrates that worship directors who are strong leaders will have a keen discernment to determine in their own lives which of these qualities are strengths, and which are weaknesses. They will have the ability to capitalize on their strengths and the willingness to work on their weaknesses. As Tim implied, no one person has the full package. Worship directors should seek to develop as many of these gifts as they can, but if they encounter areas of weakness, then they must be willing to do as Gregory did and delegate those areas to people who are better equipped.

Although there are other important qualities needed in order to be an effective leader in worship ministry, I believe that when a leader struggles in the ministry, it is often because one or more of these leadership components is not in place. Frequently, the gap exists because worship directors are either unwilling to admit that their leadership is weak in a particular area, or they are unwilling to acknowledge the value of a particular leadership quality (such as the need for administration), and therefore they are not willing to address the weakness.

That Was the First Time I Was Learning About God's Election

“That was the first time I was learning about God's election.” Those were Beth's words as she recounted her first experience of hearing Reformed theology in a Reformed church. Similarly, Tim spoke about his Reformed Baptist pastor, “He began to introduce me to Reformed theology, and he gave me some cassette tapes from R.C. Sproul...all these different places that addressed issues that Southern Baptists steer away from...” Several participants who grew up in non-Reformed churches made similar statements.

While the literature speaks of how important it is for worship directors in Reformed churches to learn about Reformed theology, and Jones encourages churches to fund theological training in seminaries for worship directors, I was not prepared for the enthusiasm expressed by several of the participants when speaking of their theological equipping during those early years of work. It was especially clear that the doctrines of God's sovereignty, election, and predestination were particularly important to them, and still factor heavily into their work as worship directors. As Daniel stated, "The songs that I do, the songs that really resonate with me, all have a theme of him pursuing me, him choosing me, him seeking me out." Similarly, Nathan stated, "The idea that God passionately pursues me is actually a lot more flabbergasting than whether or not I choose to follow Jesus."

But while most of the participants were clearly enthusiastic about these particular Reformed doctrines, it was difficult to determine how broadly their theological interests went beyond these basic Reformed doctrinal standards. Regarding the role of women in the church, Daniel and Tim admitted to being somewhat ambivalent on the issue, and Nathan stated that he did not have a problem with women being ordained. The only participants who spoke of anything that sounded historically Reformed in terms of worship were the following: Gregory's determination that he "not allow the Psalms to be pushed aside," Beth's brief internal debate about the Scottish Reformers' tradition of not allowing instruments in worship, and Andrew's and Tyler's mild frustration with what they perceived to be the historic tradition of Presbyterians being emotionally reserved in their worship. When encouraged to comment on Reformed theological challenges in worship, other than the topic of traditional and contemporary music, most of the

participants either did not seem comfortable or interested in discussing these theological subjects. Daniel's statement when asked about some of the theological controversies on worship in the Reformed church seemed to summarize what many of them felt, "Quite honestly, for me to get involved in discussions like that distracts me...not to say that it's not important, but it distracts me from what it is that I'm here to do."

I'm Not a Guitarist

When describing his work with some of his musicians in a contemporary music setting, Andrew commented, "It's hard. I find it very difficult to talk music lingo with the musicians who don't really know what a G2 is.... I'm not a guitarist...." Neither Andrew nor Tyler grew up playing contemporary music, but as their churches have increasingly incorporated contemporary music and instruments into their worship services, they have been forced to learn new things. Scheer predicted, "If you are a 'traditional' music minister, you will be involved in directing, overseeing, or collaborating with a worship team soon, if you aren't already."⁵⁷⁸ On this subject, Nathan notes, "[People say to me], 'The [Reformed] seminaries aren't really training up [the musicians] we want to hire as worship leaders because they don't have practical musical applications....'"

So what are musicians like Andrew and Tyler to do in the changing landscape of worship music? Fortunately, these men both have strong music theory backgrounds, and that has enabled them to adapt and communicate with the musicians who were not formally trained in music. As Tyler stated, "It's not an area that I'm used to working in, but I have the skill. I just need to transfer the skill into this area."

But what about those contemporary musicians who were not trained in the fine arts and who do not have a music theory background? What happens when they are asked

⁵⁷⁸ Scheer, 11.

by churches to lead trained musicians or to lead more traditional music? Jones addresses this scenario when he states, “These days it is not uncommon to find amateurs, self-taught guitarists, youth pastors, and other musically untrained persons beset with duties in music that are well beyond their capabilities and expertise.”⁵⁷⁹ Jones continues to emphasize how important it is for worship directors to be musically versatile, knowledgeable, and exceptionally competent in one or more instruments. He adds that training in vocal, choral, ensemble, keyboard, and organ music are important as well.⁵⁸⁰ Gregory addressed this issue when he spoke of a musician who currently leads a contemporary service in a Reformed church, “He’s a fine musician, and he’s well trained. He’s equipped for that service, but he’s not equipped for [a more traditional worship] ministry. That’s just candid, but that’s true.... He’s a great guy, but he’s just not qualified.”

There are always exceptions, but from a strictly technical standpoint, it seems that a musician who has an extensive music theory background and classical performance experience can more quickly learn how to perform and lead contemporary music than a contemporary musician with little to no classical training can learn how to lead and perform classical and traditional church music. When churches hire contemporary musicians who have very little classical experience, they need to be aware that these worship directors may be limited on how much classical or even traditional church music they can competently lead. In effect, it is very likely that the churches will mostly be limited to contemporary music, or if they insist on incorporating traditional and classical

⁵⁷⁹ Jones, 140.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 140-141.

church music, they will continuously put their worship directors in awkward and frustrating positions.

What About the Rembrandts?

On the topic of contemporary music, Scott shared his concerns about his PCA denomination:

What concerns me about the PCA...is that a lot of the churches are going toward mainly contemporary. What if you went to a museum and they said, “Now look, we are not going to show any paintings that were painted more than five years ago. This is art. This is the best now. Art is progressive....so this is what we are going to enjoy.” I think the artists would be in horror. What about the Rembrandts? What about the Monets?... You can just take it to other disciplines and see suddenly that we are doing this with church music.

Scott continued, “I think that you are really impoverishing your worship if you just stick to things that were immediately written....” It is important to note that Scott is not opposed to all contemporary music. In fact, Scott asserted that churches “should include some contemporary [songs] because in every generation it has...” and his church, which is largely traditional, will occasionally incorporate some CCM or RUF music into its worship. However, Scott expressed concern that if trends continue, within another generation, traditional hymns and other church music that have blessed Christians for centuries could largely disappear from Reformed churches.

Upon an initial glance, Scott’s concerns seem to be the same as those of Reformed pastor and author, Terry Johnson, who states, “Can a connectional church survive from one generation to the next if the worship of each of its congregations is idiosyncratic?... We may face the defection of a whole generation if we do not achieve a greater uniformity of worship.”⁵⁸¹ However, unlike Johnson, Scott’s concern does not

⁵⁸¹ Johnson, *Leading in Worship*, 2.

seem to rest in maintaining the historic forms of Reformed worship as much as in maintaining the wide, rich tradition of church music that spans over a thousand years.⁵⁸²

Yet, according to Scheer, and as discussed in the previous section, contemporary music has become a fact of life for church musicians in today's culture. As he comments, "Regardless of where you stand in the spectrum of historic and modern worship expressions, you must acknowledge the reality that many churches now employ some form of worship team."⁵⁸³

Given the stated concerns on both sides—the danger of losing a rich heritage of church music, but also the reality that there will always be new music, and in today's culture, that new music is largely being played by praise bands—is there room for middle ground in these arguments? John Frame believes that there is room for a middle ground option, and that option can be found through blended worship. Frame, who attended highly traditional Presbyterian churches for almost forty years, shares about his personal struggle to accept contemporary worship music when he became the director of worship at a new Presbyterian church plant:

We wanted to have a form of worship that spoke intelligibly to the community we sought to reach: not only long-time Presbyterians, but also non-Presbyterian Christians and the unchurched. To reach that goal, we all needed to put aside, to a large extent, our own prejudices and preferences, to esteem the interests of others above our own.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸² That is not say that Scott agrees or disagrees with Johnson. He simply did not address the topic of historic forms of Reformed worship other than music, so I am hesitant to assert how Scott would line up with Johnson's beliefs.

⁵⁸³ Scheer, 11.

⁵⁸⁴ Frame, *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense*, 143.

Frame continues, “Both those who love traditional hymns and those who love the new songs need to be flexible, to understand one another and minister to one another.”⁵⁸⁵

Is this approach in accord with the traditional Reformed regulative principle of worship? Mark Dalbey argues in the affirmative when he states, “Making use of forms from the past as well as new and fresh forms in the present is consistent with the biblical understanding of the RPW.”⁵⁸⁶ Furthermore, in his research, Dalbey determined that as congregations learned to “stretch toward one another with love and forbearance and without insisting on their personal preferences,” a deeper unity in worship emerged, focusing on Christ rather than worship styles.⁵⁸⁷ I must say that after working for more than twenty years in a church that strives for blended worship, this has been true for my experience as well.

You Would Think That I’m Speaking Swahili

“You would think that I’m speaking Swahili!” These words were spoken by Daniel, as he reflected on the response that he often receives from other worship directors when he starts talking about the importance of shepherding and equipping musicians. It was clear from the interviews that Daniel has a high view of the priesthood of believers, and he sees it as part of his calling to be actively pursuing and equipping musicians to use their musical gifts for God’s glory through worship. Daniel also noted that new worship directors will often feel overrun by volunteers, so if this kind of leadership has never been

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁶ Dalbey, 56.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

modeled for them, they can feel overwhelmed and gravitate to a few musicians who are highly talented.

John Maxwell speaks of the “Law of Legacy” when he states, “A leader’s lasting value is measured by succession.”⁵⁸⁸ Max DePree clearly supports this belief when he states, “Leaders are also responsible for future leadership. They need to identify, develop, and nurture future leaders.”⁵⁸⁹ But despite the importance of legacy, Maxwell contends, “...of all the laws of leadership, the Law of Legacy is the one that the fewest leaders seem to learn.”⁵⁹⁰ Thankfully, not everyone is oblivious to this high calling. Eric addressed this issue when he stated:

The church has been an educational institution and not a performance venue. The church has historically been a place where people learn to be skilled in music.... The church should continue to be a place where our kids learn how to worship God, and to do it to the best of their ability.... I believe that we as church musicians should not become preoccupied with our own performance to the extent that we’re surrounding ourselves with pros and we’re constantly trying to make the music perfect, and we don’t recognize that there are kids growing up in the church that we need to mentor, and we need to invest in them—not only their chops, but the sense of the value of the time spent to worship God with their music.... So for me, I think it’s an important component for church musicians to be educators to whatever degree they can.

Eric noted that he has seen this type of equipping taking place in his church for more than a decade. Unfortunately, I have to concur with both Daniel and Maxwell that investment in the equipping of future worship leaders does not often happen and I can certainly understand why—it is a lot more work!

⁵⁸⁸ Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, 215.

⁵⁸⁹ DePree, 14.

⁵⁹⁰ Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, 221.

The Zig-Zag Routes

At one point during the interview, Scott noted that in talking with fellow worship directors, he observed that God directed many of their lives on “zig-zag routes” that seemed to meander from point to another, but providentially led them to their church positions. Tim described his spiritual calling, “Finding the Lord’s will for my vocation was the funnel technique. I started at the broad end of the funnel⁵⁹¹ and finally got to where he wanted me.” Both Kauflin and Scheer shared similar stories, where they started as rock musicians, never dreaming that one day they would be called to worship ministry.

I purposely choose this truth to close this dissertation, because even as worship leaders desire to be more intentional and strategic in our efforts to train future worship leaders, we must always keep in mind that ultimately, this is God’s work, not ours. We should strive to be faithful in equipping all of God’s people to be true worshipers. We should also seek, in the words of Forman, Jones, and Miller, to identify, invite, and invest in children, youth, and emerging adults who demonstrate the potential gifts to be worship leaders. But ultimately, it is God who chooses and God who sends. We just need to say, “Here I am. Send me!”

Recommendations for Practice

Through this research, I have sought to give rich descriptions of how career worship directors became equipped for long-term vocational worship ministry in the Reformed church. The following are recommendations that might prove helpful for Reformed churches, Reformed worship directors, and Reformed academic institutions in light of the conclusions.

⁵⁹¹ At this point Tim began making zig-zag motions with his finger.

Recommendations for Reformed Churches and Worship Directors

First, this research has demonstrated that musical opportunities in the local church can play a significant role in the musical and spiritual equipping of children and youth. Reformed churches and worship directors would do well to provide inspiring and fun opportunities for singing and music training for these age groups. Since musical aptitude expands during the kindergarten years, churches may want to focus that age group on non-choir singing and music activities that involve a combination of movement and song. When resources are available and the leadership can generate interest among the children and youth, graded choirs are still an effective means for music education, spiritual formation, and leadership development, particularly when leaders incorporate singing, music theory, hymns, spiritual training, and opportunities for older kids to lead their peers and younger children. Because of their calling to equip God's people in worship and to equip future worship leaders in the church, Reformed worship directors would do well to personally support and encourage the leadership of those choirs, either by serving as directors or as strong promoters for those endeavors.

Second, this research has demonstrated that private lessons can be an important means of musical equipping. Reformed churches and worship directors would do well to encourage parents to consider providing private lessons for their children. When possible, churches may occasionally sponsor group venues that "celebrate" the children's progress in their private lessons. If space and resources are available, churches may want to provide space for local music teachers who give private lessons. If considerable space and resources are available, the worship directors and churches may even want to consider establishing a fine arts academy for children and youth.

Third, this research has demonstrated that local school music programs can have a significant positive influence on musical and leadership development in children and youth. When appropriate, Reformed churches and worship directors would do well to encourage children and youth to participate in these school music programs. The worship directors and other church music leadership would also do well to incorporate into the church music ministry the musical skills that the children and youth learn in the schools.

Fourth, this research has demonstrated that churches can have a significant positive influence on the musical, spiritual, and leadership development of children and youth by affirming and encouraging their musical creativity and expression. Reformed churches and worship directors would do well to establish frequent venues for children and youth to express this creativity with their peers, such as youth praise bands that lead children or youth in worship, and possibly even allowing them to lead in adult worship services on occasion. Because of their calling to equip God's people in worship and to equip future worship leaders in the church, Reformed worship directors would do well to personally support and encourage the leadership of these music groups, either by serving as directors or as strong promoters for these groups.

Fifth, this research has demonstrated that when utilized with wisdom and discernment, secular popular music can have a significant positive influence on the musical and leadership development of children and youth. With discerning leadership in place, Reformed churches and worship directors may want to sponsor music and arts camps that would allow children and youth to explore creativity in music and other artistic areas that are not necessarily "church music," but that are important venues for musical and artistic development.

Sixth, this research has demonstrated that allowing musically gifted children and youth to serve alongside adults in music ministries and activities can have a significant positive influence on the children's musical, spiritual, and leadership development. When possible and appropriate, Reformed churches and worship directors would do well to provide frequent meaningful music opportunities for musically talented youth (and possibly children when appropriate) to serve alongside the adults in music ministries such as church orchestras, adult choirs, handbell choirs, and adult praise bands.

Seventh, this research has demonstrated that providing paid music ministry internships for emerging adults who are studying music in college can be one of the most effective means of musical, spiritual, leadership, and theological equipping for future worship directors. Reformed churches and worship directors would do well to offer paid music internship to local college students who are studying music. Furthermore, because this research has demonstrated that a pastor (particularly the senior pastor) or a spiritually mature mentor is one of the most significant influences on spiritual, leadership, and theological equipping, churches should consider assigning the worship director or a pastor to serve as a supervisor and mentor to the college intern. In addition to opportunities for musical growth, mentoring should include spiritual training (including the foundational elements of spiritual formation for worship directors, the means of spiritual formation for worship directors, spiritual responsibilities in worship ministry, and unique challenges of spiritual formation for worship directors), leadership training (including the purpose and function of leadership in worship ministries, as well as effective leadership qualities for worship directors, including the Law of Legacy), and theological training in the Reformed theology of worship. The worship directors and

churches may even want to establish a partnership with local college music departments, providing internships while the students are studying music. Even if Reformed churches are not able to pay for music interns, they should still actively seek to involve college students in their music ministries.

Eighth, this research has demonstrated that paid music ministry internships or full-time music positions for emerging adults who have earned music degrees in college can also be one of the most effective means of musical, spiritual, leadership, and theological equipping for future worship directors. Reformed churches and worship directors would do well to hire these college graduates.

Ninth, this research has demonstrated that children and youth serving in musical venues led by older adults who share a love and passion for music, for the children and youth, and for the Lord, can be one of the most effective means of musical, spiritual, and leadership growth. Reformed churches and worship directors would do well to seek out and train leaders who can fill all of these roles for the children and youth. Worship directors should seek to fill these roles either themselves, through paid interns, through mature volunteers, or some combination of those three. Devotional material geared for children and youth dealing with spiritual formation topics such as identity in Christ, the gospel and worship, the importance of community, and calling from God, as well as spiritual challenges that musicians can face when leading worship, would be especially appropriate for these venues. Furthermore, theological material geared toward children, youth, and adults dealing with theological issues in Reformed worship would be appropriate for these venues.

Tenth, this research has demonstrated that blended worship is a viable option for Reformed churches seeking a doctrinally sound middle ground on the traditional and contemporary music controversies. This research has also demonstrated that blended worship can provide important opportunities for children, youth, and adults to be musically equipped for leading both traditional and contemporary church music. Reformed churches and worship directors would do well to value and utilize the best of traditional church music, while at the same time embracing the best of the contemporary music (which includes both RUF and CCM music). Reformed churches and worship directors would also do well to provide a musical, spiritual, and theological foundation and understanding of blended worship to the children, youth, adult members, and paid music interns of the church. Furthermore, when appropriate to the overall church environment, Reformed churches and worship directors would do well to provide leadership opportunities for paid music interns and musically gifted adults and youth volunteers to lead in both traditional and contemporary music styles. When possible, some degree of music theory training should be included.

Finally, this research has demonstrated that strong, rigorous musical training during college and graduate school can be one of the most significant influences on musical development for emerging adults. Reformed churches and worship directors would do well to encourage their churches' musically gifted prospective college students to pursue music education at academic institutions that have proven reputations in musical development, including strong foundations in music theory. Furthermore, this research has demonstrated that Reformed colleges with strong music programs can play a significant role in the musical, spiritual, leadership, and theological equipping of

emerging adults. Churches and worship directors would do well to steer prospective students who are considering worship directing as a career toward Reformed colleges with strong music programs. Churches and worship directors would also do well to strongly encourage these students to be musically active in a spiritually and theologically sound local church, preferably a Reformed church, if at all possible.

Recommendations for Reformed Colleges

First, this research has demonstrated that strong, rigorous musical training during college and graduate school can be one of the most significant influences on musical development for emerging adults. Reformed colleges would do well to provide quality music programs that are musically demanding, but which are led by professors who truly care about their students and who themselves are spiritually mature and well-versed in Reformed theology.

Second, this research has demonstrated that spiritual and theological training in Reformed colleges can be one of the most significant influences on spiritual, leadership, and theological development for future worship directors. Reformed colleges would do well to offer classes that provide spiritual training, (including the foundational elements of spiritual formation for worship directors, the means of spiritual formation for worship directors, the spiritual responsibilities of worship ministry, and the unique challenges of spiritual formation for worship directors), leadership training (including the purpose and function of leadership in worship ministries and effective leadership qualities for worship directors, including the Law of Legacy), and theological training in the Reformed theology of worship.

Third, as stated earlier, this research has demonstrated that paid music ministry internships for emerging adults during the time they are studying music in college is one of the most effective means of musical, spiritual, leadership, and theological equipping. Reformed colleges would do well to facilitate their music programs in such a way as to strongly encourage (or require) students pursuing a career in church music to use their gifts in local churches (preferably Reformed) that agree to provide mentoring in music, spiritual formation, leadership, and theological training.

Recommendations for Reformed Seminaries

First, as stated earlier, this research has demonstrated that a pastor, particularly the senior pastor, or a spiritually mature mentor can be one of the most significant influences on spiritual, leadership, and theological equipping. Reformed seminaries would do well to be aware of the great potential that pastors have to be the primary source of spiritual, leadership and theological development in the lives of worship directors. Based on this awareness, Reformed seminaries would do well to encourage and train their pastors to enter into those relationships with a mentoring mentality, knowing that it won't always be easy, but understanding that the investment could reap great dividends in both the worship directors' lives and in the church.

Furthermore, based on the tremendous potential influence that pastors may have on worship directors, Reformed seminaries would do well to instruct pastors in how they can train worship directors in the Reformed theology of worship, while at the same time giving the musicians the freedom to take the lead musically. Reformed seminaries and pastors should not assume that musicians have received training in Reformed theology, or that they are trained in worship planning and worship leading, even if they took a worship

class during college. Most of the participants (even one of the participants who grew up in the Reformed church) knew very little about Reformed theology of worship when they began working in a Reformed church. They needed the direct guidance and wisdom of their pastors in spiritual and theological areas. However, worship directors generally do not want the pastors micro-managing the music aspect of worship. Ideally, seminaries should provide pastors some instruction from mature, seasoned Reformed worship directors who have learned how to work effectively with Reformed pastors in worship planning and implementation.

Second, this research has demonstrated that theological training from a Reformed seminary would be valuable for Reformed worship directors. There is also evidence to suggest that Reformed worship directors would welcome the opportunity for theological training from a Reformed seminary, although they are unclear exactly how that would work.⁵⁹²

Third, as stated earlier, this research has demonstrated that strong, rigorous musical training during college and graduate school is one of the most significant influences on musical development. Based on this research, Reformed seminaries would do well to examine their available resources to determine whether they can provide this type of rigorous musical training. If they cannot, then Reformed seminaries would do well to partner with Reformed colleges to create a comprehensive, developmental track that would allow aspiring worship directors to move seamlessly from the college institution (which would specialize in musical equipping, but also provide solid spiritual,

⁵⁹² Some participants suggested online courses. Others were unclear what kind of worship degrees are being offered by Reformed seminaries, and how it would work for worship directors who are working full-time. One participant specifically mentioned that he would like to see the Reformed seminaries offering some type of internship program for future worship directors.

leadership, and theological training through classes and intern partnerships with local Reformed churches) to the seminary institution (which would specialize in spiritual, leadership, and theological training, but also provide practical worship music training through special classes and intern partnerships with local Reformed churches).

Recommendations for Further Study

This study has explored how career worship directors became equipped for long-term vocational worship ministry in the Reformed church. Through this research, other questions have emerged that are worthy of study. This section offers a few of those for consideration.

This research has focused on worship directors who have been serving more than a decade. It was significant that all of these participants had extensive classical music training at the college level. Yet, as discussed in the literature, the landscape of worship music has change dramatically during the last decade, and Reformed churches have clearly felt these changes. It would be interesting to conduct a similar research project focusing on how Reformed worship directors who have served full-time less than ten years have been equipped for their worship ministries. How do the musical qualifications of worship directors serving less than ten years compare to the participants in this research? Have Reformed churches' musical expectations for their worship directors drastically changed during the last decade? And how does their equipping process compare with the participants in this study?

Another interesting study would be to interview current Reformed church planters to learn what styles of worship they are adopting. It would also be interesting to find out

whether Reformed church planters who currently have a contemporary style of music have any plans to ultimately move in a more traditional direction with their music.

Another interesting study would be to interview current Reformed worship directors who have both a heart for equipping church musicians and a successful track record in that endeavor. It would especially be interesting to research their “keys to success.”

A final interesting study would be to interview the pertinent administration and faculty members of a Reformed seminary and the pertinent administration and faculty members of a Reformed college to determine the potential benefits (if there are any) and the feasibility of my third recommendation for Reformed seminaries to consider partnering with a Reformed college to create a developmental track for aspiring Reformed worship directors.

Conclusion

I began this project by expressing what I perceived to be a potential problem—Reformed churches are having to go outside the Reformed denominations to find worship directors. Though there is no statistical evidence to say this is true of the Reformed churches at large, I found it significant that eighty percent of the worship directors I interviewed were not reared in the Reformed church. If that is an accurate indication that Reformed churches are failing to train future worship leaders, then there is a problem.

I also realized that good things are happening in Reformed churches with respect to equipping worship directors. Before I started this project, I was thinking almost completely in terms of focusing on children raised in Reformed churches to one day serve as worship directors in Reformed churches. I still desire that, but through this research, I

think my vision has expanded. For almost all of the participants who did not grow up in Reformed churches, God used musical opportunities in Reformed churches and exposure to Reformed theology during their pivotal emerging adult years to build a solid spiritual and theological foundation in their lives and in their worship ministries. The effective combination of natural mentoring, solid academic training, and on-the-job experience within the church put them on a course of spiritual maturity and faithful service as worship directors. It seems to me that there is an important ministry opportunity through this medium of music for Reformed churches, not only to develop the children and youth in their churches, but also to reach out to emerging adults outside the Reformed church community. My hope and prayer as I conclude this project is that I, and others who read this study, will be reenergized to equip the children, youth, and adults of our Reformed churches, but we will also have a vision to reach out to musically gifted emerging adults from other church traditions, not so much to make them Reformed, but to help them to grow as leaders, as well as musically, spiritually, and theologically, so that they can lives that are filled with joy, and bring glory to God to through their music.

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