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Music as a bridge: an alternative for existing historical churches in reaching young adults

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

MUSIC AS A BRIDGE:
AN ALTERNATIVE FOR EXISTING HISTORICAL CHURCHES IN REACHING
YOUNG ADULTS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
DAVID B. PARKER

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

D.Min. Dissertation

This is to certify that the D.Min. Dissertation of

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for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Semiotics and Future Studies

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To: My wife,
Rev. Sarah Elizabeth Parker
And my children,
William David Parker
Anna Elizabeth Parker
Alexander James Parker

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ABSTRACT

Title: MUSIC AS A BRIDGE: AN ALTERNATIVE FOR EXISTING HISTORICAL CHURCHES IN REACHING YOUNG ADULTS

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The problem of young adults leaving the existing historical churches has caused many churches to look for ways to communicate the message of the gospel in new ways. New churches are springing up around the country in an attempt to minister to younger generations. Churches large and small are using technology to communicate in a new era, but one tool has been relatively untapped by existing historical churches when trying to continue ministry to younger generations. Music is a critical piece of the ministry in the twenty-first century and churches need to see the gift of music not as a dividing factor between the generations, but as a bridge. This thesis examined the importance of music in the life of congregational worship, how divisive it can be, the importance of familiarity in worship music, and the role music plays in teaching doctrine of the church. Additionally, the thesis will show that younger generations value music more deeply and differently than previous generations, and that they are looking for a connection to the past that they have not had previously. As a result, music should be used as a bridge for existing historical churches looking to reach out to future generations.

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SECTION 1: THE PROBLEM

The church in North America has been infected by many diseases that have taken a toll on its ministry and hope for the future such as: people seeking spiritual truth but not finding it in churches; while the world grows more multi-cultural the church remains mostly segregated; even though the church was called to serve the poor, poverty is growing in North America; even though access to education has grown, more people do not understand God's Word; and Technology has changed the way the secular world operates, but the church is mostly resistant to these new forms of communication.¹ In addition to these general problems with the church, there seems to be one that is affecting most of the congregations.

One of the greatest problems affecting the church in North America today, especially existing historical churches, is the drastic decline in young adults participating in the life of the congregations. From attendance in worship to overall membership, the numbers are dropping. This particular crisis spells a bleak future for these existing historical churches unless some changes take place.

The Numbers

Young adults are pulling away from the church in alarming numbers. In a study, released by Pew Research Center in February of 2010, shows that fewer young adults are becoming affiliated with church in general.

¹ George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church*, (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1998), 2-3.

Fewer young adults belong to any particular faith than older people do today. They also are less likely to be affiliated than their parents' and grandparents' generations were when they were young. Fully one-in-four members of the Millennial generation -- so called because they were born after 1980 and began to come of age around the year 2000 -- are unaffiliated with any particular faith. Indeed, Millennials are significantly more unaffiliated than Generation Xers were at a comparable point in their life cycle (20 percent in the late 1990s) and twice as unaffiliated as Baby Boomers were as young adults (13 percent in the late 1970s). Young adults also attend religious services less often than older Americans today. And compared with their elders today, fewer young people say that religion is very important in their lives.²

Another study conducted in 2008 highlighted the increasing number of people who are choosing no religious preference. “The ‘Nones’ (no stated religious preference, atheist, or agnostic) continue to grow from 8.2% in 1990, to 14.1% in 2001, to 15% in 2008.”³

The number of young adults in attendance at worship services is also in decline in comparison to their older counterparts. The Pew Research study looking at Millennials breaks down the gaps in regular worship attendance by looking at the different denominational sets. Table 1 shows the percentage of members of certain churches who actually attend worship at least once a week:

² Paul Taylor and Scott Keeter, *Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next* (New York: Pew Research Center, 2010), 85 www.pewresearch.org/millennials/ (accessed May 30, 2011).

³ Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, “American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) 2008,” Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut. (March 2009).

Table 1: Percentages of Young Adult Members Attending Worship⁴

Group	18-29 year olds	30+
Evangelical Protestant	55%	59%
Mainline Protestant	33%	35%
Hist. Black Protestant	55%	60%
Catholic	34%	43%

According to the data, the largest difference in attendance between younger adults and those over 30 occurs in the Catholic faith while the smallest difference in attendance by age is in the mainline Protestant church. Even though the difference between mainline Protestant young adults and older adults is 2%, mainline denominations seem to be suffering more than others because of the aging factor of the majority of their members.

An article from *Christian Century* highlights the problem.

Mainline churches have a disproportionate number of members age 65 and older. This proportion will only grow more pronounced as the first of the baby boomers reach 65 in 2011. While it does not appear that death rates are changing dramatically in the mainline churches from year to year, many older members may not be attending as often—for health or other reasons. The other side of this dilemma is the failure of churches to reach younger persons. This is particularly true for the smaller churches that constitute a large part of mainline denominations.⁵

With the numbers of young adults dropping out of churches and the higher numbers of older adults found in mainline denominational churches it seems “...the 21st century

⁴ Taylor and Keeter, *Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next*, 89.

⁵ Lovett H. Weems Jr., “No Shows: The Decline in Worship Attendance,” *The Christian Century* Vol. 127, No. 20 (Oct. 5, 2010), under “Aging Constiuencies,” <http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2010-09/no-shows> (Accessed December 13, 2011).

mainline churches will face perhaps their greatest challenge since they faced the American frontier of the 19th century.”⁶

Problems with Change

Change itself is the biggest stumbling block for many people inside the church and fear of change may be the reason. This would, in fact, point to the rationale as to why young adults are dropping the church in record numbers.

Some Christians are suspicious that churches that change methods, strategies, worship styles or musical volume are doing so for the wrong reasons. Robert Klenck says,

Touted as church growth, purpose- or mission-driven, disciple-making churches, cell – or meta-churches; a “new way of doing church”, and the 21st Century church; this movement should be of deep concern to anyone who consider themselves to be Christian.⁷

The problem with Klenck’s point of view is that he is only seeing changes in church as a relatively recent phenomenon. In actuality, the church has been changing since its inception. Many people in twenty-first century America worship God in churches with guitars, microphones, organs and projector screens holding prominent places. These elements were not even invented when the early church began in the first century. Change has taken place over the course of history and will continue throughout the future.

On the other hand, others believe that change is not only imminent, but is imperative and should take place immediately. George Barna suggests,

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Robert Klenck, *What’s wrong with the 21st Century Church?* (Kjos Ministries, August 8, 2000) <http://www.crossroad.to/News/Church/Klenck2.html> (accessed December 2, 2009).

The time and resources consumed in the turnaround process demand that we initiate this process immediately or, like an oil tanker that suddenly discovers an obstruction in its charted path, we may run aground before we know what hit us.⁸

Barna clearly reminds the church that change is a slow process and if not started early enough, the church may not survive. To assure that the church stays on course, some turns and changes in direction are needed for future ministry.

People seem to be more comfortable when the project is a new church plant rather than changing the traditional procedures. In older more established congregations there is a history. After the first pastor leaves, if the congregation continues, there will always be shoes to fill and pasts to compare with the present. Consequently change becomes more difficult in existing congregations. Churches with a history, especially ones that may represent pleasant feelings for some congregation members, will have a tendency to become complacent and be more resistant to change. David Kinnaman, President of the Barna Research Group, says, “We have difficulty just admitting that we have a problem. The truth is, we all have much to learn, and the more mature we are in our faith, the more we are able to see our need to grow.”⁹ According to Kinnaman, the stagnation many churches see in their development is a direct result of their inability to see the need for change.

Unfortunately, admitting that people outside the church have a problem with the church does not mean that we are dealing with the issue. Those who are a part of the Christian faith need to understand that in recent years our problem has become more of

⁸ Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church*, 9.

⁹ David Kinnaman, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity...And Why it Matters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 206.

an epidemic. We have a disease that has affected our “skin” and people looking at the church are frightened by what they see. In reality we have an image problem. According to Kinnaman,

We want young generations to participate in our churches, but we expect them to play by the rules, look the part, embrace the music, and use the right language. We condemn the moral compromises of Mosaics and Busters, but we lack the patience to restore them. We want them to become mature Christ followers, though we are unwilling to submit to the significant task of our own spiritual formation. All of this is making Mosaics and Busters conclude that the faith is unchristian.¹⁰

Although it may be difficult to understand that those outside of the church believe Christians have been acting in unchristian ways, the more telling description can come from within the church. Looking at the situation first hand, William Easum takes the analysis of the church to a new level:

Based on the conversations and action of the thousands of Protestant leaders with whom I worked over the years, I have concluded that most of them are spiritually dead and their institutions have ceased being the church. They have the form but not the substance of what it means to be the church.¹¹

This is a harsh criticism of the church, but Easum reminds us that the church’s need for change is not just an issue of survival, but of spirituality.

Cultural Challenges

While it may be true that many of the church members and leaders are struggling with the understanding of how to be the church, a more pressing concern is the church’s lack of attention to the culture around them. Over time there have been changes in how

¹⁰ Ibid, 219.

¹¹ William M. Easum, *A Second Resurrection* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 4.

churches do ministry. For instance, Rev. George Washington Gale who was the founder of First Presbyterian Church in Galesburg, began his pastoral career as a traveling preacher leading worship services in revival settings settled down and finished his time as church and community leader. Additionally, communities with just one church at the center of town have been replaced by church buildings on every street corner.

More telling than the physical changes in our communities are the emotional, social, economic, theological, educational and structural changes taking place in our communities. So much is taking place that we cannot seem to keep up enough to correctly identify what is happening around us. Tim Conder agrees,

Our culture is rapidly moving from a modern, rational, individualistic, Enlightenment society to a world increasingly described as postmodern, post-rational, and post-Christian. The uncertainty of our future is reflected in our use of words like postmodern, post-rational, and post-Christian. We find it much easier to talk about the familiar past than this unknown future. But one thing is clear: Amid the turbulence of this cultural transition, the church faces a time where change is both necessary and inevitable.¹²

Why is it so hard for Christians to notice the changes going on in the culture around them? Some theorists believe that this has happened because Christians have removed themselves from the culture over time: “Many churches and denominations are isolated from the realities of their community and the larger culture. In fact they have moved to build support services and a culture cut off from the larger community.”¹³ When churches

¹² Tim Conder, *The Church in Transition: The Journey of Existing Churches into the Emerging Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2006), 12-13.

¹³ M. Rex Miller, *The Millennium Matrix: Reclaiming the Past, Reframing the Future of the Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), xvi.

hide inside their buildings and fail to move outside their walls, they lose touch with the community around them.¹⁴

In the process of trying to form a supportive group that will nurture and care for one another, the church has found itself so far removed from society that frequently they do not know what the culture has been saying about them. The culture outside of the church is working with a different framework than the church is used to. Kimball says, “In our increasingly post-Christian culture, the influence and values shaping emerging generations are no longer aligned with Christianity.”¹⁵ This can be seen by the repeal of “blue laws” in communities and schools scheduling activities on Sundays and Wednesday night. As a result many students are forced to make choices between school activities and church.

During the 1940s and 1950s the cultural community had a much greater focus on the church and church-related values than they do today. Tim Conder writes about this in his book, *The Church in Transition*:

The American consciousness is no longer dominated by a Christian consensus on morality and truth. We’re moving from a culture with a single dominant story (Judeo-Christian meta-narrative) to a more heterogeneous ‘post-Christian’ society characterized by numerous, competing stories and rivaling views on ethics and truth.¹⁶

The post-Christian society that Conder writes about allows for more tolerance with other faiths, but it also expresses many negative feelings about the church and church-related thoughts, structures, and traditions. Conder adds, “Millions of outsiders are mentally and

¹⁴ Dan Kimball, *They Like Jesus But Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 13.

¹⁵ Ibid, 15.

¹⁶ Conder, *The Church in Transition*, 19-20.

emotionally disengaging from Christianity. The nation's population is increasingly resistant to Christianity, especially to the theologically conservative expressions of that faith."¹⁷

How widespread is this resistance to the church community? According to Kinnaman and the research done through the Barna group, 38% of young adults claim to have a "bad impression" of Christians today¹⁸ and less than 1 out of 10 young adults mention faith as their top priority. These radical numbers are even more shocking when combined with the fact that most of them grew up in a Christian church during their high school years.¹⁹

One cultural change that has affected emerging generations perception of churches is the advent of technology. With a smorgasbord of instant information at ones fingertips belief systems are on the table for discussion and embrace in a way that they never have been before. Elements of truth, knowledge, and reality, as church attendees have known, have come into question.

With all of the knowledge that is at a person's fingertips through technology, the single expert is becoming a thing of the past. Conder goes on to explain,

The postmodern mindset tends to reject global, one-size-fits-all-communities-and-contexts explanations of truth. Since the human ability to know truth is finite, postmodern thinkers tend to be wary of any person or institution that offers or demands a universal and infinite view, suspecting such perspectives are often rooted in a desire to control, manipulate, or even do violence to others.²⁰

¹⁷ Ibid, 39.

¹⁸ Ibid, 24.

¹⁹ Kinnaman, *UnChristian*, 23.

²⁰ Conder, *The Church in Transition*, 20.

Since emerging generations seem to mistrust individual experts and churches typically represent the beliefs of an individual leader, the young adults seem to have negative feelings about these churches. In Dan Kimball's recent book, *They Like Jesus, but Not the Church*, he explores many of the issues that young adults bring up about the church and Christianity in general. One girl Kimball interviewed spoke about her distrust in organized religion:

Why do I need church? It isn't necessary. I have a relationship with God, and I pray a lot. But I don't see the point of having to add on all these organized rules like the church leaders think you should do. It feels like they take something beautiful and natural and make it into this complex nonorganic structure where you now have to jump through hoops and do everything in the way the organized church tells you to. It seems to lose all its innocence when it becomes so structured and controlled.²¹

With thoughts like this girl's it is difficult to see how churches can reach young adults in our current settings.

George Barna says that while young adults see present-day Christianity as old-fashioned, too involved in politics, out of touch with reality, insensitive to others, boring, not accepting of other faiths, and confusing, there are three primary negatives that young adults see in Christianity. They say Christianity is anti-homosexual (91% of outsiders believe this), judgmental (87%), and hypocritical (85%).²² While it may be difficult for Christians to accept these thoughts about themselves, the fact is one third of young born-again Christians say "the way Christians act and the things they say make them

²¹ Kimball, *They Like Jesus but Not the Church*, 74.

²² Kinnaman, *UnChristian*, 27.

embarrassed to be a Christian.”²³ This point alone needs to be addressed by churches who are hoping to reach future generations. If young Christians feel the need to distance themselves from the faith in order to spend time with non-Christians, then the church needs pay attention to how young people are viewing the faith.

Younger generations see the church in such a different light than many of the older generations that it can become easy for the elders to simply dismiss young people as the ones with the problem. But churches need to realize their responsibility in bridging the gap between the older and younger generations:

If we do not deal with our part of the problem, we will fail to connect with a new generation. We are not responsible for outsider’s decisions, but we are accountable when our actions and attitudes—misrepresenting a holy, just and loving God—have pushed outsiders away. Often Christianity’s negative image reflects real problems, issues that Christians need to own and be accountable to change.²⁴

If there was only one element that proves a change needs to take place within the church, it is the startling fact that church membership, attendance, and overall esteem is dwindling quicker than at any other time in history. If the existing historical church does not begin to address this issue, it will continue to find itself increasingly rejected by the only generations that can insure its survival.

The struggle that is before the church is not simply an issue of survival it is about missing out on current ministry opportunities. “Young adults have been called ‘the future of the Church.’ They are not the future of the Church; they are the present Church

²³ Ibid, 35.

²⁴ Ibid, 14.

missing in action.”²⁵ An example of the understanding that young adults are the future is simply looking at the leadership of many churches. The majority of the elders at First Presbyterian in Galesburg in the 1950s and 1960s were around the age of 30. In 2011 the average age of elders at the church was 61.²⁶ The leaders of the past were young adults, but the leaders of today are older adults. Young adults need to be our present and not just our future.

In this section I have shown that the church is decreasing in numbers of members and the younger generations are moving away from existing historical churches. Churches must take some steps in addressing these issues. In section two I will present other possible solutions to the problem and discuss their viability in the existing historical church.

²⁵ Kate Cuddy, “‘Blest’ Art They...but ‘Where’ Are They?: Insights on Ministering to Teens and Young Adults,” *Pastoral Music* 34, no.1 (October 2009), under “Spiritual but not Religious,” http://0-gateway.proquest.com.catalog.georgefox.edu/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:iimp:&rft_dat=xri:iimp:article:citation:iimp00708751 (accessed June 17, 2011).

²⁶ According to session records and archives found at the church.

SECTION 2: OTHER POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Starting Something New

Churches are reaching out to young adults to counter the loss of these generations in their congregations. Some churches have found success at starting new churches just for a younger demographic that has been disenfranchised by the established institution. An example of this would be the congregation of Solomon's Porch²⁷ with pastor, Doug Padgitt, and church leader, Tony Jones, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Other churches have begun separate church programs specifically for young adults. These programs have grown into independent churches all on their own. Author and pastor Dan Kimball of Vintage Faith Church in Santa Cruz, California, started a young adult ministry in Santa Cruz Bible Church. The young adult ministry, called Graceland, grew into two Sunday night worship services and then officially became a church plant of Santa Cruz Bible Church.²⁸

Emerging church planters affirm the viability of starting new churches to reach younger generations. An article from Churchleadership.com states, "Plant emerging churches to reach young adults. New churches are more successful than established churches in reaching young adults. These churches may require

²⁷ For more information about Solomon's Porch: <http://www.solomonsporch.com/>

²⁸ For more information about Vintage Faith's history you can find it at: <http://www.vintagechurch.org/about/history>.

greater investment than some church plants, but the returns can be tremendous in lives changed.”²⁹

While some have seen success in new church plants reaching younger adults, the fact remains that there is still a generational gap when starting new churches. In three separate worship gatherings experienced at Jacob’s Well church in Kansas City, I noticed only two people out of a congregation over 200 who could have been over the age of 50. Jacob’s Well was started with the intention of reaching more young adults in the Kansas City area.³⁰ Even though some new church plants do well reaching young adults, many older people do not feel comfortable in these churches so they remain in their existing historical churches. An example of this is the fact that Harry and Margaret Smith, older members of First Presbyterian Church, attempted to worship at the new church plant that came to town in April of 2011. Their experience of worship at the new church plant did not resonate well and they knew it was not a place they felt comfortable because of the dark theater lighting, and the loud speakers playing the contemporary Christian music.³¹ New churches may have success at attracting some younger adults, but the generational gap is still present and the problem is not completely solved.

²⁹ Marty Cauley, “Why we are losing ground with young adults” *Albanroundtable.wordpress.com* (June 10, 2008), <http://albanroundtable.wordpress.com/2008/06/10/why-we-are-losing-ground-with-young-adults/> (accessed on January 7, 2012).

³⁰ While this information is not located on the church’s website: http://www.jacobswellchurch.org/our_story I have heard much of the story from my brother who was a member there for years.

³¹ The Smith’s names have been changed, but they are real members of First Presbyterian in Galesburg who visited Northwoods Church in July of 2011 and relayed to me their experience the following week.

In looking at church communities that are reaching younger adults, like Shane Claiborne's community, *Simple Way*, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, much of the attraction is that these churches are missional. Many young adults are drawn to this type of community: "There has been a strong response from younger people to involvement in planting missional churches that are incarnational (reaching out to and involvement in their community) more than invitational (expecting people to come to them)."³² The Bridge church in Portland is a good example of this way of being a church. Through their community food program they have been able to connect to many young adults looking to serve others as well as be served by living in a close community. This small community of believers brought in produce each week to share with those around them. Following each Sunday worship gathering they let others from the community come and take the items they needed. Milk, eggs, bread, vegetables and fruit were all included.³³

One reason young adults are attracted to churches living out its mission is that they are interested in living out their faith. It is not enough for young adults to say that they believe. They must be able to show their faith in tangible ways. Helping those around them, living in a closer community, and sharing what they have with one another are ways they are looking to live out their faith.

³² Aubrey Malphurs quoted in Camren Cheline, "Revolutionary Church Planting: Read the Bible, Do What it Says" *Church Executive* (November 1, 2010) under "Malphurs: Planters should use a 'hunting license' approach," <http://churchexecutive.com/archives/%E2%80%98revolutionary-church-planting%E2%80%99-read-the-bible-do-what-it-says> (accessed on June 17, 2011).

³³ I thoroughly enjoyed seeing the Sunday morning food program in action on a Sunday in June of 2011. The community experienced between the many young adults was authentic. I also felt the hearts of those serving were truly showing the light of Christ.

Problem with New Churches

Churches that are solely looking for the answer by starting something new to attract the next youngest group run the risk of some problems. While new churches can have leadership from elders, and can even use some liturgy, they do not have the history of years of faith development to support their ministry. For instance, one will find very few senior adults in worship at Vintage Faith Church, Solomon's Porch, Mars Hill church in Grand Rapids, The Bridge in Portland, or Jacob's Well in Kansas City. All of these churches were started with the intention of reaching out to a generation that has been unreached by other churches. The problem lies in the fact that generationally there is still a divide. Even though the churches are attempting to reach those young adults not already in worshipping communities, most of the older adults do not find the environment comfortable to them. The result is that instead of forming churches that minister to people of all ages, the new churches still have a clear generational gap with the older generations missing.

One reason churches need to bridge the gaps between the generations is that young adults are looking to connect to people in older generations. More than other generations, young adults are finding a connection to those who have gone before them. For instance, a recent study found that a majority of young adults in the church (68%) identified the opportunity to receive advice from people with similar life experiences as very important. Those young adults outside the church also had an interest in connecting inter-generationally. Slightly less (45%) of unchurched young adults identified the opportunity to receive advice from people with similar life experiences as very important.

³⁴ It seems that even though the culture works hard to put people in segmented groups like popular and unpopular, athletes and academics, younger adults are looking for connections to others who have traveled down the road before them.

First Presbyterian Church in Galesburg has seen younger adults looking to connect to other generations. A young college student, Elizabeth, came to the congregation with her college boyfriend in the fall of 2008. She had not grown up in church, but had gone to a Catholic girl's school in Portland, OR. Her mother was firmly rooted in the Jewish faith, even though she didn't practice it. Her father was not interested in any type of religion. She came to the church through her boyfriend, but found a connection immediately. She found comfort in a church community that was not just formed for the purpose of attracting younger adults. Her mother's connection to the Jewish faith taught her an appreciation for a faith that has roots in history, but her young adult spirit longed for something that could be lived out in tangible ways. In fact, this young woman's participation in the church grew as she found a home in a Sunday morning Bible study that was made up of mostly older adults. She also found herself using her own gifts in childcare by helping in the nursery and even leading some classes for the littlest ones in the church. One of her personal comments to me was that she enjoyed being a part of a community with other senior adults because her grandparents had passed away, and it made her feel good to be connected to that generation again.

Ed Stetzer addresses this point in his book, *Lost & Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches that Reach Them*:

³⁴ Ed Stetzer, *Lost & Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches that Reach Them* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2009), 124.

They would also love it if somebody older and wiser would mentor them. They are interested in other generations, but they also want to be of interest to other generations. They'll use their talents, their gifts, and their skills. They're willing to invest, so willing that they run the risk of spreading themselves too thin. They're looking for a connection. They're ready to link up, lock arms, serve, and learn from somebody else.³⁵

Churches that are interested in reaching young adults need to find a way to interact with the young adults in their community. If the older adults in our existing historical churches show an interest in the younger adults they will find a generation that is interested in hearing stories of the past and forming connections. The reciprocal effects of working inter-generationally will be positive for all parties moving forward.

Unfortunately not all leaders in the emerging generations have positive ideas of connecting to the existing historical church. Tony Jones, a voice for the emerging church movement and a leader of Solomon's Porch, spoke this year at a conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, called Relevance X. It was a conference for the United Methodist Church discussing the church for the future. Jones said, "One of the main problems with modern Christianity is how much it relies on big, ineffective institutions and traditions that are considered 'sacred.'"³⁶ The problems Jones identifies are interesting because his church still does use some traditions from the past, such as baptism and communion. Is he only referring to the dead traditions of the church or is there something else behind his disdain for the historical church?

³⁵ Ibid, 130.

³⁶ Joey Butler, "Young Adults Talk Church Relevance" (Nashville: UM Communications Feb. 28, 2011) under "Young Adults Must be Heard," <http://www.umc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=IwL4KnNlLh&b=5259669&ct=9143143> (accessed June 17, 2011).

John Herrington, director of church planting in the Hill Country Association³⁷

expresses similar concerns with new church planting pastors. Herrington said,

I do have some concerns about the attitudes on the part of some younger pastor planters. It seems that each new generation is rebelling to some degree against the one that preceded it. While this can be good and frees us up to pursue new ministry paradigms, we can miss learning from the wisdom of the past.³⁸

Herrington is accurate in understanding that when new churches and pastors try to begin something without the guidance of other churches or denominations they run the risk of not having the wisdom of past history. Mistakes have been made over the course of history and many new churches will have to make these same mistakes if they do not have other leaders guiding them through the process.

Beginning new churches to reach young adults has proved successful, as seen by some of the churches mentioned before.³⁹ Unfortunately, this possible solution doesn't work for the context of existing historical churches like First Presbyterian Church in Galesburg. It is a multigenerational church that has people in worship from infants to those in their late 90s. It is possible that a solution to reaching younger adults could be found in starting a new church community, but for existing historical churches with multiple generations present, it is often not the best option.

³⁷ Herrington has planted twenty-one churches since 1992 in the Austin, TX area.

³⁸ Malphurs in Cheline, "Revolutionary Church Planting: Read the Bible, Do what it Says."

³⁹ See page 15 for a list of some of these churches.

Technological Connections

Technology and the growing area of media holds promise to reach younger adults. Technology has grown rapidly and media has changed dramatically in the last sixty years with the advent of television, satellites and computers. In the last twenty years, the world has seen even more dramatic changes in the ways people communicate. Today, young adults use cell phones as their major source of communication, but not necessarily for talking. A study conducted by Thom and Jess Rainer shows that younger generations are using cell phones for their primary source of communication, but notice the difference of the preferences of the age groups.

Table 2: Technology Use for Communication in Millennials⁴⁰

Type of Media	Younger Millennials (18-23)	Older Millennials (24-30)
Phone	34%	43%
Text	47%	28%
E-Mail	10%	20%
IM (Instant Messaging)	8%	7%

In Table 2, one can see that communication via text messages is much more popular among the younger millennials than even their slightly older counterparts. The youngest of this generation use their phones for over 81% of their communication. The recent trend of using smart phones that can send and receive e-mail as well takes the total to a 91%.

Additionally, the use of personal computers and social media sites such as

⁴⁰ Thom & Jess Rainer, *The Millennials* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2011), 192.

Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace are finding a place in the lives of the younger generations. The top social media sites for millennials, also discovered by the Rainers, are Facebook (73%), MySpace (49%), Reading Blogs (30%) and Twitter (18%).⁴¹ If social media and the integration of technology is vital to the communication methods of younger adults, then churches need to pay attention to these trends and find ways they can connect via the new technologies.

One of the fastest growing churches in the country is LifeChurch.tv. It is a church that began in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and has expanded to fourteen different churches in five different states with an Internet campus being developed. The preacher gives the message from one location in Oklahoma; that message is then sent out over satellite feed around the country to the different sites. LifeChurch has continued in groundbreaking technological ventures by developing the top Bible application for mobile devices and tablets. It is called You Version. On this Bible application, an individual may read through the Bible in digital form in almost any version. There are reading plans, devotional guides, and ways to highlight and make comments about the passages one is reading.

Using new forms of media through technology requires flexibility. First Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts, found this out first hand when they began using Google groups as a way to interact with young adults throughout the year. Recently the church was working on a program on fasting with their young adults. The majority of the communication and engagement took place in a discussion through the Google groups.

⁴¹ Ibid., 194.

Interestingly, the church was surprised by some of the results of this particular project: “The program leader was surprised when she learned that some people who never participated in the Google discussion were actually reading every day and reported gaining a great deal of strength for their own fasts through doing so.”⁴² It seems, then, that it may be more difficult to track how successful using technology truly is with young adults.

Technology and media are vital to reaching the younger generation, mainly because it helps the church’s level of credibility with the younger generations. George Barna writes in his book, *The Second Coming of the Church*, “The medium used to transmit information impacts the perceived credibility of that information. Information conveyed through the use of technology often has a higher degree of believability than does information coming directly out of a speaker’s mouth.”⁴³ Dr. Len Sweet spoke about this phenomenon on the advance in Seattle the summer of 2010. Before attending worship at Mars Hill Church with pastor Mark Driscoll, Dr. Sweet mentioned that the screen validates the authority of the speaker. At the worship service we saw this play out as Pastor Driscoll appeared before the congregation on large screens reading the scripture on a video filmed from his trip to the holy lands prior to preaching his message. Personally, I was drawn in to the pastor because he had been to the holy lands and had been standing in the place where the scripture he read had actually taken place. Using

⁴² Sarah B. Drummond, “Church for the Under-Forty Crowd” *Alban Weekly* Spring 2010, 2 (April 2010), under “Tension 1: Flexibility, But with High Expectations” <http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=9116> (accessed July 25, 2011).

⁴³ George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church*, 58.

technology in church in this way gives a sense of power and authority to the person who is speaking.

First Presbyterian Church in Galesburg has seen a greater increase of younger adults participating in church functions thanks to the use of technology and new media forms. The young adult group (called 20/40) functions almost solely on Facebook group sites. The young adults communicate, encourage, and plan for gatherings with each other on the site. Three new couples joined the church after finding the church through the website. Another young couple was preparing to make a move across country and found us on Facebook and was able to connect via Facebook, messaging church members long before they made the move.

Other Uses of Technology in Churches

First Presbyterian has also had the opportunity to share in ministry partnership with a small African bush congregation in the Masaai land of Olepishet, Kenya, thanks to videos and e-mail. Even though the community has no running water, no electricity, many of the men have cell phones. The pastor also has a laptop that is charged by solar power that he uses to send e-mails when he has the opportunity to get Wi-Fi in the nearest town. The community of Olepishet relies on technology for communication even though the nearest town with electricity is a two-hour walk.

The online community of Second Life hosts many different quasi-church communities. Second Life is an online chat site that looks much like a video game as each person has a character or avatar. People may change their appearance from what they look like in real life, or they can attempt to create their avatar in their own real-life

image. On Second Life, one moves from “island” to “island” to simply chat with others in the area. Some have developed an intricate web of connections in the community and celebrate things they like, such as music, video gaming, and even faith.

As a part of the organizing team for the Presbyterian Church in Second Life, I had the opportunity to work with many others interested in sharing their faith and developing a community. Many of the beginning leaders were pastors, like I am, but connections were far and wide. I had only met a couple of the individuals in real life prior to establishing relationships in Second Life. The other connections were solely online. I saw an increase in participation from other pastors as well as people outside of the real-life church community. I have had many interesting conversations with people all over the world about their faith and the beliefs of the Presbyterian church. Except for a few select users, the perception seems that people in Second Life are younger adults. Statistically the data confirms this assumption. Maria Korolov reports findings from KZero Worldwide that the average age of a Second Life user is 36. “The fastest-growing age group, however, was those between 10 and 15, who gained 652 million new registered users.”⁴⁴

If churches look to new media forms and the changes in technology, there will be many opportunities for them to connect with the younger generations. Whether churches begin looking into avatar evangelism through Second Life, connective groups through Facebook, or communicate with congregations across the world online, the connections made with the younger generations could be priceless.

⁴⁴ Maria Korolov, “Virtual World Usage Accelerates” *Hypergrid Business* (July, 2011) <http://www.hypergridbusiness.com/2011/07/virtual-world-usage-accelerates/> (accessed January 7, 2012).

Problems with Technology

Technology has a few problems that churches need to be aware of. One difficult problem with the use of new technology is that often information cannot be distinguished as easily between fact and fiction. Barna writes,

Most people now assume that if it is on TV, the radio, or the Internet, apart from any small warnings regarding dangerous content, all information is created equal and provides value. In an information-driven society, where the distinction between entertainment and information is easily blurred, the notion of ‘appropriate context’ has become anachronistic.⁴⁵

Seeing something on a screen does not necessarily make the image or story true. One must check and crosscheck references before assuming that the information they have gathered is correct.

When someone assumes that the information is correct without adequate research, they are putting their trust in unfounded truths. If messages or ideas on the screen are granted an authority, this same authority is given to messages or ideas on TV and the Internet. A case in point is the recent DirecTV commercial that portrayed a wealthy Russian man who has all the riches of life, including miniature giraffes. These cute little creatures created such a stir that people began searching online to find out how they could purchase a giraffe. If a person searched the web for “miniature giraffes” or “lap giraffes” he or she would have found a website about a farm in Russia that raises these animals. Only upon further research would that person discover that the website was an elaborate ruse to continue the illusion of the “petite lap giraffes.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ I have to admit that I was taken by this scheme. I found myself extremely excited by the possibility of owning a miniature giraffe for nearly an hour before realizing the unfortunate truth. The website, established by someone from DirecTV, is <http://www.petitelapgiraffe.com>

The real problem here is not that people have a new resource for research and truth, but that the increases in technology have actually limited, to a degree, the amount of time people spend in community with one another. Instead of talking with a group, dissecting a passage of scripture together, and lifting one another up in prayer, many are going to the Internet for their information. I stopped participating in the Presbyterian Church in Second Life because there was no way to develop true community. Weekly, I would pray with and for people that I didn't know using only avatar names that could represent someone completely different. The difficulty lies in being able to establish a true connection with people when the characters on the screen can look nothing like the person sitting at the computer. It finally became difficult for me to pray with and for someone I didn't know.

Flamingo Road Church is another example of a congregation that has relied on technology. On February 17, 2008, this church, that conducts worship online, celebrated what they are calling the first Internet baptism. The minister was located in Cooper City, Florida, and Alyssa Eason, the one being baptized, was in her home in Fayetteville, Georgia. Another woman, Lisa, who is Alyssa's stepmother-in-law was the one who baptized Alyssa while the pastor asked questions and gave instructions through the web cameras that were set up.⁴⁷

Although this may be touted as a good and innovative thing, the idea of baptism without the laying on of hands and physical touch by the person set apart to do that may not be appropriate. The established churches have understood the importance of using water in baptisms since Jesus' own baptism. Some churches, like the Presbyterian church,

⁴⁷ This baptism can be viewed at this link:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qThUe1-RvXU>

consider baptism to be a Sacrament, which means it is a sacred event set apart by God for us. Presbyterians consider Baptism and the Lord's Supper sacraments because they were the two things that Jesus himself did and then commanded the disciples to do as well. But Jesus was baptized by a flesh-and-blood John the Baptizer.⁴⁸ In this case, technology has gone beyond the communal real-life touching of flesh to simply be a tool for some churches to raise the number of people baptized.

Churches can use technology as a tool for outreach, evangelism and connection with younger generations. As Dr. Len Sweet has frequently said in our class discussions and chats, "The more Facebook, the more face-to-face." This quote means that the more time people spend integrated with technology, like Facebook, the more time they are going to need to connect with people in a personal way. Technology can be a tool but must not come in place of the true message of the church: "As teachers of God's Word, we must never compromise the core of our message; however, the communication media, styles and strategies used to convey God's message to His people must change over the course of time because culture and context are constantly changing."⁴⁹

If churches can keep in mind that technology is only a tool to reach others, then the Gospel message will permeate through any media. When churches focus solely on the technology and forget the message they will run the risk of becoming only a cultural entity and not a spiritual entity. There are also financial considerations. The cost to add technology to worship space, the time dedicated to having an online presence, and the

⁴⁸ Matthew 3:13-17, (NIV, 1984).

⁴⁹ George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church*, 57.

wisdom to discern the best way to use the tool may overwhelm many churches, especially existing historical churches, from stepping forth in this new venture.

While many churches are trying to reach younger adults by starting new churches or venturing out into new technological media forms, these may not be sufficient.

Existing historical churches may choose another route to form a bridge between the generations. I will show in the next section that music may be a more viable solution for the problem at hand.

SECTION 3: THESIS

One of the greatest gifts the existing historical church has as a resource for ministry to younger adults is something that is often overlooked in congregations: music. This thesis will show the importance of music in the life of congregational worship, how divisive it can be, the importance of familiarity in worship music, and the role music plays in teaching the doctrine of the church. Additionally, the thesis will show that younger generations value music more deeply and differently than previous generations, and that they are looking for a connection to the past that they have not had previously. Consequently, by contextualizing local favorite hymns First Presbyterian Church in Galesburg has connected the younger generations to their elders and to the faith tradition.

Importance of Music

Music has been a vital part of worshipping communities since the beginning of time. Scripture points to Moses and Miriam leading the Israelites in singing after crossing the Red Sea,⁵⁰ King David wrote played the harp and wrote many songs of worship,⁵¹ and Mary sang praises to God after being told she would bear the Christ child.⁵² The church in the twenty-first century is no exception. Music is vital in the lives of worshipers today.

⁵⁰ Exodus 15, (NIV, 1984).

⁵¹ 1 Samuel 16:15-23, Book of Psalms, (NIV, 1984).

⁵² Luke 1:46-56, (NIV, 1984).

“People are naturally drawn to music and music is truly an integral part of one’s everyday life. We eat with it, shop with it, and relax with it.”⁵³

Even the leaders in the Reformation movement of the sixteenth century understood that music is vitally significant. Martin Luther saw the importance in music and is quoted in a journal of literature and quotations from the early nineteenth century: “Whoever despises music, said Martin Luther, I am displeased with him. Next to theology, I give a place to music: for thereby all anger is forgotten, the devil is driven away, and melancholy, and many tribulations, and evil thoughts are expelled. It is the best solace for a desponding mind.”⁵⁴ In fact, Luther’s connection with music was just as important as the theology he was teaching to a new group of Christians: “Luther loved German folk songs and Latin hymns, and he enjoyed singing in the family and church; he saw the potential of sacred music for elevating the experience of worship and tended to be tolerant, even encouraging, of innovation in liturgical music.”⁵⁵ Since Luther was a proponent of secular folk songs, he saw a way to use secular music as an influence on the sacred music. Unfortunately, not everyone shared his same opinion of music.

John Calvin, who criticized the use of organ for sacred music, was a proponent of vocal worship music. He was so committed to seeing good worship

⁵³ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 279.

⁵⁴ Samuel C. Atkinson and Charles Alexander, eds. *The Casket: Flowers of Literature, Wit and Sentiment*, Vol. 547 of American periodical series, 1800-1850 (Philadelphia: Atkinson & Alexander, 1830), 380.

⁵⁵ David W. Stowe, *How Sweet the Sound: Music in the Spiritual Lives of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 26.

music available for congregants that he published the Genevan Psalter for congregations to have a contemporary resource to sing the words of the Psalms in their own language. However, Calvin thought that congregational singing should take place “under the guidelines that the music and words of songs should be appropriate to worship and that the music should not obscure the words.”⁵⁶

Regardless of his differences with Martin Luther, John Calvin also recognized the importance of music in the life of worshiping communities.

Another leader in the historical church was Isaac Watts, who many consider to be one of the greatest and most prolific hymn writers of his time in England. He used hymns as a way of summarizing his sermons and explaining his theological beliefs on Calvinism. Watts believed that songs are “human offerings of praise to God, therefore, the words should be their own.”⁵⁷ For this reason, Watts took up the great task of writing thousands of hymns in a new language for a new people so they may worship God well.

Many others have seen music and faith intricately linked. Austin Lovelace and William Rice write, “The mind of man cannot comprehend the wonders of God; it can only see the occasional flashes of light which shine through the glory holes of life. In the awesome areas of life’s mystery, music helps man to express the inexpressible.”⁵⁸ T. David Gordon, a professor of religion and Greek at Grove City College who is a critic of the new contemporary music movement, also believes music is a gift from God: “Song is

⁵⁶ John H. Leith, *Introduction to the Reformed Tradition: A Way of Being the Christian Community* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1977, & 1981), 211.

⁵⁷ Kenneth W. Osbeck, *The Ministry of Music* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1985), 24.

⁵⁸ Austin Lovelace & William Rice, *Music and Worship in the Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1960), 15.

the divinely instituted, divinely commanded and divinely regulated means of responding to God's great works of creation, preservation and deliverance."⁵⁹ No matter the century throughout history, people have seen music as a gift from God.

For many of the church leaders like Luther, Calvin, and even Watts, music was seen as a tool to help teach the people the beliefs of the church. Martin Luther is known for taking a simple theological concept and putting it in poetry form to go along with a German folk song of the time. In this manner, the people could leave the church remembering the doctrine he taught even though they may not remember his sermon. Argentinean church musician Pablo Sosa affirmed this idea in perhaps even stronger terms, "The doctrines of the church do not become faith until they are sung."⁶⁰

Research supports the importance of music in the life of worship. Using a national omnibus survey conducted in April and May of 2002 by the Barna Research Group, 601 Senior Pastors of Protestant churches were interviewed, as well as 69 worship leaders. More than four out of five pastors (84%) said music is "very important to facilitate effective worship." In assessing the ranking of the ten worship elements studied, pastors rated music second only to prayer, and tied with the sermon in importance.⁶¹ Clearly music has a vital role in the life of congregational worship.

⁵⁹ T. David Gordon, *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2010), 31.

⁶⁰ Unattributed quotation in Pablo Sosa, "Spanish American hymnody: A global perspective," *The Hymnology Annual: An International Forum on the Hymn and Worship*, vol. 3, ed. Vernon Wicker (Berrien Springs, MI: Vande Vere, 1993), 60-61.

⁶¹ Barna Group, "Focus on Worship Wars: Hides The Real Issues Regarding Connection to God" (November 19, 2002), under "Some Mixed Signals," <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/85-focus-on-qworship-warsq-hides-the-real-issues-regarding-connection-to-god> (accessed August 23, 2011).

Research has shown that music is of vital importance in the life of worshipping congregations. It helps to connect people to God in ways that words do not. The lyrics set to tunes help to teach doctrine, and for many there is a deeper element that comes in to place with music. “Music elicits from deep within a person the sense of awe and mystery that accompanies a meeting with God. In this way music releases an inner, non-rational part of our being that mere words cannot set free to utter praise.”⁶² Because of the highly emotional nature that worship music brings forth in many people, there is no question that it is also one of the most debated and divisive issues in the church.

Divisiveness of Worship Music

Music has broken the hearts and ignited the fires of passion in millions of people throughout time. It has split congregations and divided families into different camps. Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Church*, acknowledges the importance and divisiveness of music: “The style of music you choose to use in your service will be one of the most critical (and controversial) decisions you make in the life of your church. It may also be *the* most influential factor in determining who your church reaches for Christ and whether or not your church grows.”⁶³ Although this thesis does not suggest that music is the source of strength for future growth of churches, the clear message here is that this is a controversial subject.

One of the more prominent issues of worship music is that personal taste plays a role in what people think is appropriate or not.

⁶² Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (New York: Oxford, 1977), 186.

⁶³ Rick Warren, 280.

Regardless of prior associations with a style of music, no exposure or lack of detailed and thorough study of a style of music, people seem to develop strong feelings about the music they hear. This is not new, for the church has always dealt with this situation. The difficulty of handling the problem, however, has become increasingly more acute from century to century because of the faster pace at which musical styles change.⁶⁴

I have seen this struggle first hand in my own life. As a classically trained piano and trumpet player with a bachelor's degree in music education, I have seen musicians criticized for the slightest artistic change in performances of pieces. As a former music minister of a church, I have seen people moved to tears through the use of choral anthems, vocal solos, and instrumental preludes. I have also seen good God-loving people get into heated and passionate arguments over the use of drums and guitars in the sanctuary. However, the debate over music has been going on for a long time.

With regards to musical aesthetics, musical historians remind us of riots that occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when significantly innovative classical music was first performed by composers such as Hector Berlioz, Richard Strauss, Igor Stravinsky, Erik Satie, and Béla Bartók. To suggest that musical aesthetics is an insignificant matter, then requires either dismissing or disagreeing profoundly with the entire Western tradition prior to the mid-twentieth century, Christian or otherwise.⁶⁵

Beyond the bounds of Western tradition, rules have been established against certain types of worship music for fear of what it might lead to. "The Babylonian Talmud refers to a woman's voice as 'a sexual incitement.' The early church forbade the men and women to sing together, because it was seen as a symbol of sexual union."⁶⁶ History has also

⁶⁴ Paul W. Wohlgenuth, *Rethinking Church Music: Revised* (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing, 1973, 1981), 17.

⁶⁵ T. David Gordon, *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2010), 55.

⁶⁶ Steve Miller, *The Contemporary Christian Music Debate: Worldly Compromise or Agent of Renewal?* (Waynesboro, GA: BookSurge Pub, 2007), 28.

referred to instruments such as the organ and violin as those that have come from the devil himself.

John Calvin shunned the organ as an instrument used in the church and “through his great influence, many organs were destroyed in succeeding years.”⁶⁷ Interestingly, the organ is a fairly recent addition in the life of the church as “authorization to use organs in the Presbyterian Church did not come about until the church granted permission in 1866.”⁶⁸

Often the debate stems from other musicians themselves. Either it is because they do not appreciate the music itself or possibly because they don’t understand it. Giovanni Artusi, a sixteenth century composer and music critic, abhorred the new style coming out at the turn of the seventeenth century, and Claudio Monteverdi was often his target:

You hear a medley of sounds, a variety of parts, a rumble of harmonies that are intolerable to the ear. One sings in quick tempo, another in slow; one voice has top notes, another deep notes; and as if this was not enough a third remains midway...with all the best will in the world, how can the mind see light in this chaos?⁶⁹

Even though the debate between Artusi and Monteverdi was centuries ago, the difference in musical tastes can still spark passion like no other subject.

Music has been divisive for worshiping congregations throughout the ages, but the controversy may not be as great as some think when it comes to Protestant churches in the United States. George Barna has noted that magazines have featured articles on the

⁶⁷ Ibid, 140.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ M.D. Calvocoressi, *The Principles and Methods of Musical Criticism* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), 81.

worship wars and has said that they are “raging in the nation’s churches.”⁷⁰ He goes on to write,

While there are definitely battles being waged within Protestant churches regarding music, the battle is not widespread. One-quarter (24%) of Senior Pastors say their church has music-related tensions, but only 5% of them claim that those tensions are ‘severe’—which amounts to just 1% of the Protestant congregations in the U.S. About three out of ten pastors at the music-conflicted churches say the tensions are ‘somewhat serious.’ All together, then, only 7% of Protestant churches have ‘severe’ or somewhat serious’ music issues rattling their congregation.⁷¹

One clarification about this disconnect between musical disagreements in Protestant churches is that many churches are moving toward having separate worship services for traditional⁷² and contemporary styles.⁷³ With the separation of these styles, the disagreements can subside in local congregations, but this separation does not mean that the disagreements are not present. It may simply allow them to be less severe. At First Presbyterian Church of Galesburg, the debate about music was more intense before the development of the contemporary service. Since the congregation has had separate services for about eight years, the debate has actually subsided. People who were concerned about the new music replacing their old favorites have not been as concerned because they are seeing that the two can coexist. There are two services with different

⁷⁰ The Barna Group, *Focusing on Worship Wars*, (2002).

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² By traditional styles I mean the service that includes hymns sung out of a hymnal, accompanied by organ or piano, an adult choir, the pastor in a robe and some sort of liturgy that is read.

⁷³ By contemporary styles I am referring to services that would include songs accompanied by guitars, bass and drums. Singers will use microphones, pastors do not usually wear robes and the style is more free.

types of music. Regardless, even in local congregations, people have differences in opinion about specific music that is important to their spiritual journey.

A recent survey conducted in the Galesburg, Illinois area during the fall/winter of 2010-2011 sought to find out if there were popular songs of the faith that were shared across denominational lines. Ten local churches were represented in the survey, and 262 surveys were returned from individual participants. Participants were asked to list their favorite hymn(s). They were asked to describe why that particular hymn was significant to them and which was more important, the lyrics or the musical tune (or both). Finally, the participants were asked if they believed their church sang their favorite hymn(s) regularly in services. The purpose in the final question was to see if participants felt their favorite music was being used as a part of their local worship gatherings.

The survey results proved interesting. Two hundred sixty-two surveys yielded 219 different hymns with a total of 615 hymns chosen altogether. Although there were some hymns that were listed more frequently than others, the number was much more diluted than theorized. The top two songs, “How Great Thou Art” and “Amazing Grace” only received 50 total votes (8.5% of the total votes). The third song “The Old Rugged Cross” received 33 votes (5.6%) followed closely by the fourth “In the Garden” (32 votes, 5.4%) and fifth “Here I Am Lord” (31 times, 5.3%) songs.⁷⁴

Although the survey results showed that there favorite hymns in common, even across denominational lines, the vast number of total favorite hymns reveals how passionate people can be about their worship music. Consequently, the passion people carry for music in their worship becomes the main argument within churches across the

⁷⁴ The full report of the results of the survey can be found in the Appendix.

country. Prior to the development of the contemporary worship service at First Presbyterian in Galesburg, one gentleman, Gene, had some harsh words with Sally, a proponent for the new service. After tempers had been calmed, he expressed his real concern, which was that the music he loved to sing during worship would be replaced with music that he did not know.⁷⁵ Music has been divisive since the beginning of the church, but one primary factor in this division is culture's effect on sacred music.

Music from the Culture

Since worshipers feel such passion for music, one can see how this divisive issue can bring depth of conviction in belief of what is appropriate and not appropriate in church worship settings. For decades, a battle has been continuing inside denominations and local churches in America as to what should and should not be used for worship. “The judgment of Christian music by these two distinct criteria—musical excellence or spiritual sincerity—has created ever-widening chasms between the styles of music in churches of differing denominations.”⁷⁶ It seems that the style of music used for worship has become a battleground for the debate.

At the forefront of the debate today is the use of contemporary-sounding music. For many churches that have begun as a church plant or a new church development, this argument isn't necessarily as contentious. The debate seems more contentious in existing historical churches that have been used to singing and playing more traditional hymns

⁷⁵ This conversation had been relayed to me by Sally in the fall of 2005 when I first began serving as the pastor.

⁷⁶ Andrew Wilson-Dickson, *The Story of Christian Music: From Gregorian Chant to Black Gospel, an Authoritative Illustrated Guide to All the Major Traditions of Music from Worship* (Minneapolis, MN, Augsburg Fortress Pub., 2003), 244.

and classical music. The question emerges, what is contemporary music? Applying the definition of the word “contemporary,” some have said that contemporary music is music that sounds modern, or up to date. Others take a more critical stance even in defining contemporary music. In T. David Gordon’s book, *Why Johnny Can’t Sing Hymns*, he writes, “Contemporaneity is more an aesthetic value than an ethical value; but it is a value, a sensibility, that considers the past passé. No other generation ever before found itself so utterly distant from the art forms (or other cultural expressions) of previous generations.”⁷⁷ Gordon believes that this generation is distant from past generations in musical styles and creativity, but his thought is incorrect. For instance, a new musical group on the Contemporary Christian music circuit right now is *Gungor*. Led by Michael Gungor, a classically trained guitarist, this musical group of faithful Christians combines classical cello and guitar solos in passionate and edgy new sounds for an emerging generation.⁷⁸ So while Gordon believes that this generation is far from the classical art forms, his sweeping judgment is clearly off base.

All writers and composers create material that fits the age in which they live. If a hymn is written in 2014, it will be considered contemporary to people living in 2014 simply because it was created at that time. It may have musical qualities from the seventeenth century, but it will be contemporary because it came out of the contemporary moment. On the other hand, one might write a musical song in 2014 with different tones and rhythms that we have not begun to imagine today. Either way, regardless of whether

⁷⁷ Gordon, *Why Johnny Can’t Sing Hymns*, 44-45.

⁷⁸ To see and hear an example of Gungor, go to this link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ljfs-msY0&feature=related> where the band plays an acoustic version of “Dry Bones” during their visit at George Fox University (accessed December 16, 2011).

the newly created piece contained older qualities or new ones, it would be considered contemporary.

Churches that take musical cues from the secular culture are not a new phenomenon. People have been drawing from the secular culture to write sacred songs for years.

The history of church music has recurring instances when the church borrowed from its environment. The church met the people where they were and appropriated what was familiar and meaningful to the people. However, it also distilled what it borrowed in such a way that the secular associations became secondary to the primacy of worship.⁷⁹

The historical precedence has been set for those churches looking to use music from the culture as a way to meet people where there are. By the nineteenth century, folk music had been written down and passed throughout Europe and North America, but it also shared many things in common with the sacred songs of the times: “From a purely musical point of view, there was little dissimilarity between a popular folk song about two lovers and a popular new hymn about the Resurrection.”⁸⁰

One of the reasons for the similarity between secular and sacred music is because many of the composers wrote both sacred and secular songs. For instance, Fanny Crosby is often touted as the most prolific hymn writer of all time. She is credited with writing some 8,000 hymns. In addition, though, she also found time to write secular cantatas, patriotic songs, and folk songs. Friends would give her poems and then she would quickly compose a song for the poem. This method was how the familiar hymn “Blessed

⁷⁹ Lloyd Pfautsch, “Worship & Crisis in Church Music,” *Music Ministry* (1969), 5.

⁸⁰ Patrick Kavanaugh, *The Music of Angels: A Listener’s Guide to Sacred Music from Chant to Christian Rock*, (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1999), 270-271.

Assurance” came to fruition. Similarly, Johann Sebastian Bach was known as a very accomplished composer of church music, but he also wrote many songs for secular performances. Because many artists played for and wrote for both secular and sacred settings, there is a good reason that songs would sound similar to each other. The line between secular and sacred was a fine one, often only identified by the lyrics.

There are contemporary artists who also fit the model of musicians who cross between secular and sacred. For instance, the popular rock band U2 is a perfect model of a musical group that crosses the lines between secular and sacred. U2 has been known for many years as group that has pushed the envelope musically as well as politically. Much of the band’s political comments and missional lifestyle can be attributed to the fact that they are faithful Christians. The group began together through a Bible study in a local church in Dublin. Since then they have had musical pieces that are direct representations of their faith beliefs. One example is their song “40,”⁸¹ which is a modern adaptation of Psalm 40. On U2’s more recent album “All That You Can’t Leave Behind”⁸² the songs are about certain elements in the world that they feel they cannot forget about or leave behind. Not coincidentally, the last song on the album, or the last thing that one can’t leave behind is “Grace.”

It is no surprise that many churches have taken up the practice of hosting U2 Eucharist services. First Presbyterian Church in Galesburg has held four of these services in recent years. Each service uses the music of the band U2 to sing praises to God and celebrate the call to work in the world to make it a better place. U2 has given permission

⁸¹ U2, *War*, “40”, Island Records, 1983.

⁸² U2, *All That You Can’t Leave Behind*, Interscope, 2000.

to churches⁸³ to hold these types of services without copyright infringement with the agreement that all money collected will not be kept in the local church, but be used to help achieve one of the Millennium Development Goals as established by the United Nations.⁸⁴

Even though a popular band like U2 can cross the divide between secular and sacred, critics see the similarity between the newer music that is being written for churches, worship gatherings and personal worship settings and the secular music in the culture.

“Contemporary” and “new” are not the same thing. “New” implies innovation, breaking fresh ground that, especially in the world of music and art, demands experimentation and not a small amount of risk. CCM (Contemporary Christian Music), by paralleling what is already musically happening, is both “contemporary” and musically conservative. Seen in this way, the phenomenon of CCM is less one of “what’s new” than “what’s preferred.”⁸⁵

Scripture supports the idea that many things are not really new in the world. The author wrote in Ecclesiastes, chapter 1: “What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one can say, ‘Look! This is something new’? It was here already, along ago; it was here before our time.”⁸⁶ Even Solomon understood that it is impossible to invent something new in the world. Instead, it seems all artists, musicians, and composers are drawing off of

⁸³ For information on the permission go to: <http://www.sarahlaughed.net/u2charist/2007/07/where-should-th.html>

⁸⁴ For more on the Millennium Development Goals go to: <http://www.endpoverty2015.org/>

⁸⁵ Harold Best, *Music Through the Eyes of Faith* (New York: HarperOne, 1993), 160.

⁸⁶ Ecc. 1:9-10, (NIV, 1984).

influences so greatly that nothing is truly becoming new, but simply recycled. In some ways, though, this is necessary and comforting.

Importance of Familiarity

Steve Miller cites a 1989 University of Illinois study that found subjects “generally performed better on tests when familiar, popular music was played in the background rather than less-familiar classical music.”⁸⁷ The importance of this study is that familiar music is more important than style. Ultimately, the key is the subject’s familiarity to the music.⁸⁸

It is also important to note that since performance is enhanced on tests by the use of familiar music, one could associate that with worship. Many people in church would say that their worship experiences are enhanced by the use of familiar music. Familiar worship music brings passionate worship, and most leaders of the church are looking for ways to help lead their people in engaging worship experiences. When the music is changed and not familiar to the worshiper it can become not only a detriment to worship, but also the subject of discord among worshipers.

A case in point is a recent musical project completed by a large group of popular CCM singers and songwriters. Together they collaborated on an album called *Love Divine: The Songs of Charles Wesley for Today’s Generation*. At the National Worship

⁸⁷ Miller, *The Contemporary Christian Music Debate*, 15.

⁸⁸ As a father of three children, I subjected them to the many musical stylings of the *Baby Einstein* videos, CDs and books thinking this would help their brain development. Later I realized that familiarity is the key. Every time my eldest hears the music, “Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies” from the Nutcracker ballet he associates it with the movie “Elf” starring Will Ferrel. He is familiar with the song, it brings good memories, but not of the ballet.

Leaders Conference in Kansas City in the summer of 2011, I had the opportunity to sit at the feet of some of these singers and songwriters to listen to some of these newly revised hymns. While the words were mostly the same⁸⁹, the melody lines and arrangements were brand new. There was nothing familiar about the melodies or tonal lines. The lack of familiarity actually caused some intriguing performance glitches at the workshop as the leaders tried to get different singers to perform the songs on the spot. Even the singers and songwriters weren't familiar with the songs so they had a difficult time singing them. Consequently, the worship team members from First Presbyterian Church of Galesburg made a point to ask me if this dissertation and project was being used to rewrite the songs completely or just arrange them in new styles. Since the need is so imperative to keep with the familiar, I chose to keep the integrity of the familiar melody lines of the hymns and arrange them differently.

A key component when using music, and specifically hymns, to reach younger generations is keeping some sense of familiarity: “Unfamiliarity with the music often becomes a barrier to congregational singing. Often people close their hymnals when they discover an unfamiliar tune. The problem is not the text—they read English. The problem is the unfamiliar tune.”⁹⁰ For existing historical churches looking at using hymns to reach younger adults, it is paramount that something stays very familiar. In many cases, the melody line needs to stay somewhat close to the original writing. If the changes are drastic with the arrangement and the words are changed even a little, the key would be to keep the melody line firm. A late member of First Presbyterian Church, Mary Beckham,

⁸⁹ A few exceptions were made to change words to make them fit the new music arrangements.

⁹⁰ Wohlgemuth, *Rethinking Church Music*, 40.

used to exclaim, “That one will never make it!” whenever a hymn was sung that she did not know.⁹¹ Mary understood the importance of keeping familiarity alive with worship music. As shown earlier by the University of Illinois Study, if the music is not familiar, it will not connect to the listener in the same way as a familiar song will.

The importance for familiarity in music lends itself in two ways to this particular thesis. Using music as a bridge between the older and younger generations allows for the connectivity between the two as well. The words and melody lines can stay the same and not be so foreign as to force the listener to automatically tune out. The younger generations can be given an opportunity to learn from the wisdom of the ages in the music and lyrics without having to sacrifice the familiar style of music they listen to.

To build a bridge between the generations means that one is keeping both generations in mind: neither get preferential treatment and neither is sacrificed for the sake of the other. “Whatever forms of expression used must be meaningful to those who are attempting to use them to worship. If ancient forms of worship are used, they must be explained in contemporary ways.”⁹²

The argument against using Christian music in a contemporary way is quite vast, but the points in its favor are also equally numerous. Examining the opposition to the use of contemporary Christian music for the church is necessary. Dan Lucarini, a former worship leader from evangelical churches in Colorado, has a unique perspective and quite a disdain for contemporary sounding music. In relating contemporary Christian music

⁹¹ This particular story has been told to me numerous times by Mary’s friends in the sewing circle of the church, most recently in October of 2011.

⁹² White, *Rethinking the Church*, p.105.

and the current pop/rock music scene, Lucarini writes, “I am now convinced that God will not accept our worship when it is offered with music styles that are also used by pagans for their immoral practices.”⁹³ He goes on to include an upbeat, edgier style of pop/rock music in his critique: “Punk music is the ultimate statement of musical rebellion. Changing the words and the artists and calling it Christian will never sanctify it. It has no place in a new Christian’s life.”^{94 95}

Clearly, Lucarini does not share the sentiment that all music is a gift of God. Instead, he believes that some styles of music are inappropriate for worship settings. Harold Best echoes these concerns in his book, *Music: Through the Eyes of Faith*: “When the Christian’s most noticeable music is so stylistically and procedurally identified with the very culture it sets out to confront, something—far deeper than the musical actions themselves—is wrong.”⁹⁶

These arguments point to the idea that much of contemporary Christian music sounds like the music one would hear in a bar or secular concert. One point in the critic’s position argues that the secular pop/rock music scene lends itself to many immoral actions such as drug use/abuse, promiscuity, and idolatry. Lucarini writes, “When we

⁹³ Dan Lucarini & John Blanchard, *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement: confessions of A Former Worship Leader* (Carlisle, PA, Evangelical Press, 2002), 57.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 59.

⁹⁵ When I read this quote it solidified my interest in making sure one of the songs on the project had to be done in a punk/ska style, so the song “OMG (O Mighty God)” is redone in this style.

⁹⁶ Best, *Music Through the Eyes of Faith*, 165.

brought rock music (and all its musical cousins) in the church service, we invited along with it a spirit of immorality with which that music is unavoidably associated.”⁹⁷

So for Lucarini, the style of music can lead to certain actions that may not be considered appropriate for worshipping Christians.

Additionally, T. David Gordon argues that the contemporary music is too individualistic. He writes, “Observers of contemporary pop music...have observed how individualistic (noncorporate or noncommunal) it is, in contrast to the communal nature of classical and folk idioms.”⁹⁸ Gordon points out that although different orchestras will play a Bach or Beethoven piece, only one artist will sing a particular song that was written by or specifically for that artist. Recently, though, the practice of artists being individualistic has dramatically changed. Looking at the Billboard’s top 20 songs on April 27, 2011, five of the top ten and eight of the top twenty songs were written and performed in collaboration by two different artists. It seems the new trend is to have artists working together and featuring another musician, possibly from a different genre.

Another argument that Gordon presents disagrees with the idea of simply rearranging old songs in new ways:

Would it make good sense, for instance, to take the lyrics of something like “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” and put it into a contemporary-sounding musical form? I suspect not; the form would then make the content a different thing, and create a kind of dissonance. A hymn such as this, whose lyrics expressly call attention to God’s providence in the past, cannot sound contemporary without there being a disconnect between the lyrics and the musical score.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Lucarini & Blanchard, *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement*, 42.

⁹⁸ Gordon, *Why Johnny Can’t Sing Hymns* 86.

⁹⁹ Gordon, *Why Johnny Can’t Sing Hymns*, 60.

There are two problems with this particular argument. The first is that Isaac Watts wrote *O God our Help* as a response to a challenge from his father after Watts complained about the psalms their church always sang. His father instructed Watts that if he did not like their music, he could start writing new music for the church. After the success of this song, Watts then wrote a new song every week for the church for the rest of the year. Isaac Watts wrote *O God our Help* as a contemporary hymn because he was tired of the old songs they had been singing. Secondly, the actual lyrics for the song go beyond thinking of God as someone in the past. The very next line in the hymn is “Our hope for years to come.” In reality, it is a hymn of hope for the future that God holds while respecting God’s actions in the past. Thus, there is not the dissonance that Gordon had feared. Instead, this particular song could not be a more perfect anthem for contemporary Christian music.

An investigation of the issue of music in worship also requires an understanding of the role that community and culture play in determining what is acceptable, comfortable, and useful in worship settings.

All worship styles reflect aspects of culture or else it would be impossible for believers in that culture to appreciate their worship. All believers will have worship preferences affected by their context and heritage. This is not wrong either. We only err when we fail to recognize that the cultural background affecting our preferences is not universal...¹⁰⁰

To take the culture into account, a church must become missional in their mindset and understand that there are people outside the walls of the church who need to hear the gospel. “A Christ-centered church asks not only how to minister to those most

¹⁰⁰ Bryan Chappel, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape our Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 130-131.

like us, but also how to minister to those who most need us.”¹⁰¹ So when the church begins to pay attention to the community and culture that they are in, they may be able to more effectively communicate with certain age and cultural groups by using musical styles that appeal to those groups. “Some groups may well find that traditional church music hinders their worship if the style does not appeal to those who are listening. We must be sensitive to the tastes of the people we are targeting if we want our music ministries to be effective.”¹⁰² While paying attention to people’s taste for certain styles of music, though, it is important to pay attention to other cultural nuances in the area of music.

Last fall, I spent some time in Kenya and had the opportunity to visit with a college friend of mine who is a missionary there. My friend, John Haspels, told me a story of his father, who, at one time, had been doing ministry with a tribe of Ethiopians. As his father began to share the gospel, receive converts, and begin a church, they discovered that it was imperative that they not use drums in their music for worship. In the tribe, drums had been used to call spirits in their cultural religion. John’s father did not want any confusion between singing songs of praise to the living God and calling spirits from the old religion. It was not until years later that the missionaries felt that these old habits had gone away and that it was appropriate to bring drums into the worship music.

Culture is vitally important when considering worship music and styles, but community is also vitally important:

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 131.

¹⁰² Miller, *The Contemporary Christian Music Debate*, 21.

As much as we like to think of ourselves as being original—and some people are startlingly so—we must own up to the impossibility of being creatively productive without recognizing our dependence on community. And the more creative and hardworking we are, the more we will draw on what lies around us.¹⁰³

If the church is taking its calling to be a missional community seriously and is trying to reach out to those who are outside the church, one must pay attention to the trends in the culture, especially in the area of music.

Importance of Music to Younger Generations

The largest population missing from today's churches are those adults between the ages of 18 and 40. "The truth is that young adults are just as important to the future of religious organizations, if not more so, than older adults. This potential can be seen from their share in the population. In 2002, adults age 20-44 make up 50.7% of the adult population of the United States.¹⁰⁴ If adults in this age range make up over half of the total adult population, and they are the largest group missing from churches, then church leaders and pastors need to pay more attention to their culture and specifically their music, so they may reach the younger generations with the gospel.

Each generation would say that music is important to their culture, beliefs, and society, but younger generations are more deeply imbedded in the musical culture than any other previous generations. To understand the younger adults and their connection to

¹⁰³ Best, *Music Through the Eyes of Faith*, 35.

¹⁰⁴ Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty-and Thirty-Somethings Are Shaping the Future of American Religion*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 8.

music, Allan Bloom writes regarding the formative years of many of these younger adults in *the Closing of the American Mind*:

Nothing is more singular about this generation than its addiction to music. Today, a large proportion of young people between the age of 10 and 20 live for music. It is their passion. Nothing else excites them as it does. They cannot take seriously anything alien to music. When they are in school and with their families, they are longing to plug themselves back into their music.¹⁰⁵

Interestingly, this book was written twenty-four years ago, and young people have only become more and more attached to their music since publication. With the inventions of the digital download, iPods, and cell phones that play music, anyone can conveniently carry music on their person wherever they go. Matt Hammett, lead pastor of *Flood*, a ministry to young adults at College Avenue Baptist Church in San Diego, which is only eleven years old but has over 1,500 attendees at two services, echoes this same sentiment about music: “I think music is playing a much larger role in the new models we’re seeking. Music is the medium in which the next generation speaks.”¹⁰⁶

In an article on music’s role in teens’ lives from 2010, a *Times-News* correspondent found that the type of music the younger generations listen to tells a great deal about them:

You will be hard-pressed to find a teenager who does not own an iPod or MP3 player and does not regularly have the music playing in their ears. This is largely due to the dominant role music plays in teen life. Music says something about what things you are into and about the kind of person you are. Whether it be hip-hop, R&B, heavy metal, or classic jazz, it all points to your personality.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 68.

¹⁰⁶ Jason Evans, “Voices of the Next Generation,” Outreach Magazine online, <http://www.churchleaders.com/outreach-missions/outreach-missions-articles/139634-voices-of-the-next-generation.html> (accessed November 7, 2011).

Consequently, the sheer amount of music that has been produced and is accessible to people today has caused young adult's preferences to become much more eclectic. Rather than listening to just one style of music for the majority of the time, the adult may have a playlist of songs that range in styles from classical, jazz, country, hip-hop, gospel and rock. Additionally, these individuals find a deeper connection to the music they listen to as compared to older adults. Wuthnow explains this understanding:

Younger adults take a more inclusive attitude toward the relationship between the arts and spirituality. Whereas older adults worry about music and art sending the wrong signals, younger adults accept it. For older adults, spiritually uplifting music and art is more likely to be found in churches; for younger adults, it can be found anywhere.¹⁰⁸

If the understanding is true that younger adults are more tolerant of musical styles, then the older adults that typically flock to existing historical churches need to be more sensitive to the younger generation's understanding that spiritual music (music that moves them spiritually) can be found outside the church building.

Steve Miller affirms that we need to pay attention to the current trends in music. "History has shown that the use of styles originated in and popularized by the world has been abundantly successful in the church. God can use—and has used—many popular styles to further his message."¹⁰⁹ In an article on a website dedicated to churches working with emerging generations, the authors lift up the importance of using music as a tool:

Because music is paramount, religious leaders need to be aware of how music shapes the lives of young adults and engenders conversation about

¹⁰⁷ Sarah Gray Lesley, "Music Plays a Big Role in Teens' Lives," *The Times-News.com*, (January 30, 2010) <http://www.thetimesnews.com/articles/music-31303-plays-big.html> (accessed on November 6, 2011).

¹⁰⁸ Robert Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers*, 130.

¹⁰⁹ Miller, *The Contemporary Christian Music Debate*, 144.

contemporary issues. Using popular music within religious settings can have a powerful effect on young adults as well as other members of religious organizations. Music is certainly capable of bringing new meaning to timeless religious teachings.¹¹⁰

Since younger adults are more attuned to music than older adults, churches must look at music as not only an element of worship, but also as a tool for reaching this generation that is vitally connected to the medium. The popular secular music of the day is rock and pop, but country music is also very important in many different areas of the country. In the Galesburg area, the most listened to radio stations are FM 95, The Country Station, followed by Pure Rock 92.7, The Laser.¹¹¹ With many country singers/songwriters providing music that is considered crossover (used in two different genres, like country and pop), this particular genre is just as popular as pop/rock.

While the success of using contemporary styles of music in worship has been undeniable, a small handful of young adults participate, instead, in the traditional service. Most of these younger adults grew up in a traditional church, and so traditional church music is familiar music to them. On the other hand, the vast majority of young adults attending the contemporary service are brand new to the Christian faith and are happy because the music is similar to that which they are familiar with on the radio. Since the band at the contemporary service plays many different styles from pop, bluegrass, classic rock, and edgier rock, there is an opportunity to connect to a broad range of musical styles for worshipers. One thing that has been apparent is that many of the new younger

¹¹⁰ Jill Dierberg & Lynn Schofield Clark, "Media in the Lives of Young Adults: Implications for Religious Organizations," *Changing Sea* <http://www.changingsea.net/dierberg.php> under "Conclusion," (accessed on November 6, 2011).

¹¹¹ This information was given to me in a conversation with Chris Postin, marketing director for Prairie Family Radio Stations, on September 7, 2011.

Christians are becoming more interested in the hymns of the faith. Occasionally the worship band has played hymns in re-arranged and modern styles, and this has really been successful with our younger adults. Thus, it is my thesis that existing historical churches have an opportunity to bridge the generational gap by continuing to use the hymns of the faith in revamped styles for a more contemporary culture.

Contemporary Christian Music Artists on Hymns

Even though many churches are using contemporary Christian music to reach those younger generations, the existing historical churches have a resource they may not have considered before, hymns. While the focus for many new and growing churches has been on using the latest and greatest worship songs produced by major record labels and recording artists, there has been a surge of late in the CCM market to go back to some of the old hymns that the artists grew up singing. Table 3 illustrates only a limited number of albums recently produced by modern Christian artists recording older hymns in new formats.

Table 3: Recent Hymn Albums by Popular CCM Artists¹¹²

Album Title	Artist(s)	Year Produced	Company
Passion: Hymns Ancient and Modern	Various	2004	Six Step Records
Greatest Hymns	Selah	2005	Curb Records
Hymned No. 1	Bart Millard	2005	Simple Records

¹¹² Information for this table gathered from a search on iTunes for albums based on hymns.

Faith: A Hymns Collection	Avalon	2006	Sparrow Records
WOW Hymns	Various	2007	Word Distribution
Peace Like a River: The Hymns Project	Chris Rice	2007	Eb+Flo Records
Amazing Grace: Timeless Hymns of Faith	Various	2007	Integrity Media
Hymned Again	Bart Millard	2008	Fair Trade Services
Legacy: Hymns & Faith	Amy Grant	2009	Sparrow Records

Table 3 shows only a limited number of the albums recently produced by mainstream CCM artists; it is safe to assume that many of the artists writing Christian music are finding new inspiration in old hymns.

In response to being questioned about the interest in these older hymns, Bart Millard, the lead singer of the band *Mercy Me*, said, “People are often saying, ‘What’s the big deal about remembering these songs?’ For me, I think it’s being reminded of how generations before us worshiped and why they worshiped and what they were going through.”¹¹³ Clearly, for Millard the connection is to the past and to something that is longer lasting than the songs that have been written in the last decade. Chris Tomlin, one of contemporary Christian music’s most prolific songwriters echoes this same thought: “I think hymns are extremely important, because you realize that you’re standing in a long line of believers that sang these songs.”¹¹⁴ It is very noticeable that major recording

¹¹³ Todd Herts & Russ Breimeier, “Bart Millard: Hooked on Hymns,” *Christianity Today*, (October 30, 2008) <http://www.christianitytoday.com/iyf/music/bandsartists/bartmillardhookedonhymns.html> under “What makes old hymns different from modern worship?” (Accessed November 6, 2011).

artists are recognizing the importance of hymns and are attempting to keep them alive by reintroducing them with new arrangements.

Hymns for Younger Generations

Longing for Connections to the Past

While it may be one thing to have contemporary Christian musicians speaking about the importance of hymns in their life, it could be assumed that young adults do not share the same feeling. To the contrary, however, Kevin Twit wrote an article that also supports the understanding that the younger generations do find a connection to these songs:

There is most definitely a hunger and longing among the emerging generations. College students and twenty-somethings, to connect with something real and solid rather than the faddish and ephemeral...Postmoderns long for experience with God, and hymns are some of the richest expression of Christian experience we have. They are a doorway into sensing the truth in our hearts rather than just “knowing” it in our heads.”¹¹⁵

Since hymns help to bring the mystery of God into the hearts of postmodern thinkers, churches looking to rest in the unknown will find young adults drawn to some of the ancient songs.

Young adults are looking for a connection to both God and some of the older generations. They want to know that their faith has stood the test of time and that it, too,

¹¹⁴ Leann Callaway, “Renewed Love for Hymns Make a Comeback Among You,” *Baptist Standard online*, (Feb 4, 2005).
http://www.baptiststandard.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3131&Itemid=133
 (accessed on Nov 7, 2011).

¹¹⁵ Kevin Twit, “My Grandmother Saved It, My Mothers threw it Away, and Now I’m Buying it Back: Why Young People are Returning to Old Hymn Texts,” *Reformed Worship*, no. 70 (December 2003)
<http://www.reformedworship.org/article/december-2003/my-grandmother-saved-it-my-mother-threw-it-away-and-now-im-buying-it-back> (accessed on September 25, 2011).

won't be nonsense blowing in the wind. Elizabeth, the young college student mentioned in the second section¹¹⁶ is a perfect example of a young adult looking to find stability in her faith and who found it in more traditional styles of Bible study, songs, and worship setting. Young adults who have grown up on the newest and greatest fashions and trends are often now seeking some sense of belonging to something greater than the “next best thing.” Churches have an opportunity to pass down their faith through the gift of music for future generations. Ed Stetzer agrees with this principle, especially in regards to churches looking to grow. “If churches are looking to build and are trying to reach the unchurched they should take into consideration this appreciation for the past.”¹¹⁷

The apostle Paul also instructs this principle in his letter to Titus. In the second chapter, Paul instructs the older women in the church to live lives of example and train the younger women in purity, virtues, and the finer points of marriage and motherhood.¹¹⁸ It was clear even then that churches have a duty to instruct the younger generations in the faith. Without proper instruction, the children, youth and young adults will not be willing participants in the life of the church.

For many existing historical churches, tradition plays a major role. Unfortunately, the perception by some is that tradition means formality, structure, and a somber demeanor. In reality, the definition is much different. It is “the passing down of elements of a culture from generation to generation, especially by oral communication” and “a mode of thought or behavior followed by a people continuously from generations to

¹¹⁶ See page 16.

¹¹⁷ Stetzer, *Lost and Found*, 132.

¹¹⁸ Titus 2:3-5, (NIV, 1984).

generation; a custom or usage.”¹¹⁹ Churches that are looking at younger generations must pay attention to their need for close relationships and instruction from the older generations. This instruction can come in the form of formal teaching, building relationships, or even sharing one’s faith through music.

Instruction Through Music

Young adults can also find what a congregation believes in by looking to their music. In the preface section of a book published in 1966 about new hymns in a new time, Albert van den Heuvel speaks directly to the connection of music and one’s faith:

It is hymns repeated over and over again, which form the container of much of our faith. They are probably in our age the only confessional documents which we learn by heart. As such, they have taken the place of our catechisms... There is ample literature about the great formative influence of the hymns of a tradition on its members. Tell me what you sing, and I’ll tell you who you are!¹²⁰

Heuvel is correct in stating that a congregation’s beliefs can be expressed directly from the music they sing. The idea of instruction through music is one that has been used for centuries in the life of the church. In fact, Moses was given instruction by God to use a song for teaching the Israelites:

Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them... And when many disasters and difficulties come upon them, this song will testify against them, because it will not be forgotten by their descendants.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Answers.com, “Dictionary” (Copyright 1999-2005 by Answers Corporation); available from <http://www.answers.com/topic/tradition>. (Accessed November 18, 2011).

¹²⁰ Albert Van den Heuvel, *Risk: New Hymns for a New Day*, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1966), preface.

¹²¹ Deuteronomy 31:19-21a, NIV.

Clearly, God understood the power of teaching through the gift of music. Another church leader to use music as a teaching tool was Martin Luther. It has been well documented that Luther used his hymns as a way to help teach the church about scripture stories as well as doctrine. Patrick Kavanaugh explains Luther's use of music in his book *The Music of Angels*:

Since one of their basic tenets involved the “priesthood of all believers,” they wanted every man, woman, and child in their new congregations to be directly involved in each worship service. Too often in the past, even the most devout congregants had understood little of what was being said or sung in the Latin masses. Luther's solution involved the replacement of Latin singing with vernacular hymns, which were often unabashedly set to the tune of local folk songs.¹²²

It seems Luther understood that with some minor changes music can be a helpful tool to teach congregations in addition to giving them something of value to sing as an act of worship. Luther understood that he could preach about a particular passage of the Bible, but the people would remember more if he set it to song. Through the rhyming of the lyrics and the movement of the musical tune the people could carry the message with them throughout the week.

Centuries later, an education scholar gave research backing to what Luther already knew. Harvard professor, Howard Gardner, developed the idea of multiple intelligences and defined intelligence as, “the ability to solve problems or fashion products that are of consequence in a particular cultural setting or community.”¹²³ Gardner goes on to explain that each person has different intelligences, which dictate how

¹²² Kavanaugh, *The Music of Angels: A Listener's guide to Sacred Music from Chant to Christian Rock*, 129.

¹²³ Howard Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice* (New York: Basic, 1993), 15.

someone learns. Some learn better by using music while others learn better by aural, visual, or kinesthetic ways.¹²⁴ Whether they know it or not, churches are communicating their beliefs through their music. The songs that congregations sing are putting words to what it is they believe. J. Nathan Corbitt echoes this thought in his book, *The Sound of the Harvest*: “Hymns educate a community’s religious growth by providing theological vocabulary.”¹²⁵ It’s imperative, therefore, that churches pay attention to what they are singing because people are learning from the songs.

Edwin Hallock Byinton wrote an article at the turn of the twentieth century about the use of music in the publication called the *Congregationalist*. In it, Byinton proposes the importance of using hymns as a way to teach:

Many object to didactic hymns; but all hymns are didactic, all hymns teach. In many churches there are no catechisms but the hymn-books. This is not the worst thing that could happen, *if they are good*. Teach a child to sing thoughtfully the great hymns, and you have given him an anchor that will hold often, when everything else fails to keep him off the rocks. Our hymns are filled with concise doctrinal statements; their music unbars the doors of the heart and lets them in; their rhyme and rhythm hold them in the memory.¹²⁶

Byinton speaks to the heart of the matter of using music as a way to teach. Rather than using mere words to teach, a song places the words with particular rhythms

¹²⁴ The understanding of multiple intelligences has revolutionized the educational system in America in the last few decades, as I learned receiving my bachelor’s degree in Music Education.

¹²⁵ Corbitt, *The Sound of the Harvest*, 216.

¹²⁶ Edwin Hallock Byinton, “The Thoughtful Use of Hymns” *Congregationalist (Christian World Number)* vol 86 (May 4, 1901), 709
<http://books.google.com/books?id=aA5QAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA709&lpg=PA709&dq=how+hymns+teach+doctrine&source=bl&ots=HfBEot5dVm&sig=i6a7mTw0Ggh0fAVthr5KcSk19q4&hl=en&sa=X&ei=sGXrTu7HAYWAgwfDqqj9CA&ved=0CFMQ6AEwCA#v=onepage&q=how%20hymns%20teach%20doctrine&f=false> (accessed on December 16, 2011).

and rhymes that help many remember the words in a better way. This idea is what Gardner was talking about in identifying music as an intelligence.

Churches that are interested in reaching the younger generations and teaching them about Christ need to use music as a key tool in this ministry. Just as Moses needed to use the song to teach the Israelites, churches need to use music to teach the younger generations about Christ and the beliefs of the church. David Kinnaman agrees with this thought in his book, *You Lost Me*: “Music functions as a teacher when it transfers knowledge and values from generation to generation.”¹²⁷ Churches will teach what they believe to future generations by using music in worship, but they will help bridge the gap of generations if they can find ways to use old hymns of the faith written in new ways.

Making the Old New Again

The key to using music as a bridge is being able to use the old hymn form in new ways. Churches who use the musical sounds from the culture and have an eye for growing their younger membership will go far in keeping the faith alive. In a similar manner, David Kinnaman writes about the importance of reevaluating programs and ministries of churches so that they are directed toward future generations: “I am saying that our programs need to be reevaluated and revamped where necessary to make intergenerational relationship a priority...I believe we are called to connect our past

¹²⁷ David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), Kindle e-book, location 3487.

(traditions and elders) with our future (the next generation).”¹²⁸ The idea of connecting the past with the future is not a new one, even in the area of music.

Many church hymnals include various hymns that have been written by one or another author, but have been reworked for a new environment. In *The Presbyterian Hymnal* there are many different hymns that have gone through changes over the years. For instance, hymn number 8, “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates” illustrates a couple changes that have been made. The lyrics were written by Georg Weissel in 1642, but it was translated into English by Catherine Winkworth in 1855. The music of this hymn is attributed to Thomas Williams from 1789, but the harmony of the tune is credited to Lowell Mason (1792-1872).¹²⁹ This particular song would not be sung in its current format without having gone through various changes over the time.

Likewise, churches need to understand the importance of routinely changing their music so they will continue to hold meaning for future generations. Hymns like “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates” that have gone through musical changes were altered so that organists could play the song and congregations could sing the song in four parts, which was something most late nineteenth century and early twentieth century churches were doing.

Many congregations are finding it difficult to provide an organist to play for worship services, and younger generations are not familiar with music played by an

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ LindaJo McKim ed., *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 25.

organ. J. Nathan Corbitt explains the need for churches to be open to new forms of worship music:

When congregations limit their musical practice to a relatively few well-loved and favorite songs, their lyric theology expresses very narrow categories. On the other hand, liturgical traditions, conservative by nature, may fail to contemporize their music to meet the musical needs and language of a contemporary congregation.¹³⁰

While it may be difficult for some churches to expand their lyrical theology, it is necessary for churches to do so to continue to grow in their corporate faith. If churches are what they sing, and they only sing a few different hymns their spiritual growth has been stunted.¹³¹

Interestingly, the idea of contemporizing older hymns for future generations is not only applicable for North American churches. In a Bishop's lunch fellowship in Singapore leaders of the Methodist church in Singapore spoke together about the issue of younger members not participating in the life of church. One lay leader, Mr. Yip Fook Yoon, said hymn singing does not pose a challenge in traditional services, but does not seem to appeal to those attending contemporary services, especially the younger churchgoers. Yoon says, "We must let the younger generation know the value of singing hymns, and encourage them to sing more hymns. Perhaps we may have to contemporize some

¹³⁰ Corbitt, *The Sound of the Harvest*, 216.

¹³¹ My father recently spoke to me about his music minister getting upset about having to sing a new hymn on a Sunday morning. Through the conversation the minister explained to my father that he had a difficult time with change. This is often the case and why many existing churches stop learning new songs.

hymns so that they will appeal to the younger set.”¹³² Even in other cultures it is possible that altering hymns for new contemporary formats will help younger generations grow in their faith and make connections to existing historical churches.

Just as harmonies have been added to hymn tunes over the centuries to allow for new instrumentations, this can be done for the newer musical configurations of churches today. While many churches are adding guitars, electric bass, and drums to lead the musical portions of worship many churches are doing away with organs and pianos as the lead instruments. This means hymns must be reconfigured for the current set of instrumentations. The key in reworking these songs is keeping a major component of the song familiar. As has been shown, people need familiarity in their music. If the song is changed too much, such as completely altering the melody line, it can have a negative effect.

When churches look to arrange hymns in a new way they must also look at the lyrics. If the community is not used to using words like “thee” or “thine” then songs that have these words in them can quickly become a barrier in trying to reach younger generations. In rewriting lyrics, one must also pay attention to the rhyme, rhythm and meter of the song. Typically, one cannot simply substitute one word for another, unless the new word means the same as the first word, has the same number of syllables as the first word, and fits into the rhyme of the lyrics. This particular task can become even more difficult than composing the new music to accompany the existing hymn tune.¹³³

¹³² Peter Teo, “Value of Singing Methodist Hymns Underscored by Bishop, Leaders,” *Methodist Message* (May 2011), www.methodistmessage.com/may2011/may2011index.html (accessed September 25, 2011).

¹³³ I found this was true as I was working through translating “How Great Thou Art” from its original Swedish into English. Being able to keep the meaning of the words the same as well as upholding the rhyme and meter of the song was a very difficult task.

Churches have been changing hymns throughout history so that they will stay fresh in contemporary cultures. Not only will they fail to bridge the gap between the generational divide, but they will greatly increase the gap over time.

Conclusion

Since music plays a vital role in worship gatherings and younger generations are being drawn to music in ways previous generations have not, the logical conclusion is for churches to look at music as a way to reach out. Newer churches are using contemporary sounding music with modern instrumentations, but these churches are lacking two important elements: history and younger generations interest in connecting to the past. Existing historical churches who desire to reach the younger generations would do well to look at their hymns of the faith as the bridge between the gaps of the generations. As long as the arrangements are modernized in a way that will be culturally relevant and the hymns continue to keep some semblance of familiarity and connection to the historical beliefs of the church, these new musical offerings have the potential to reach younger generations. Contemporary musical sounds combined with historical beliefs and truths will bridge the gaps that are widening each day between existing historical churches and the young adults in the community. Young adults are looking for a connection to the historical but enjoy music from their current culture. Consequently, contextualizing local favorite hymns First Presbyterian Church in Galesburg has connected the younger generations to their elders and to the faith tradition.

SECTION 4: ARTIFACT

The artifact for this dissertation is a recorded musical album developed and played by members of the First Presbyterian Church of Galesburg worship band. The music consists of newly arranged works of hymns that have been used in worship in the Galesburg, Illinois, community. Musically, the album highlights the eclectic skills of the individual members of the band.

Looking at the ministry problem of young adults dropping out of existing historical churches, this artifact sought to touch the souls of young adults while keeping true to the traditional hymns. The music is more of the style that many would listen to on the radio or on popular songs downloaded for personal music players. Another aspect of this project is that it is very eclectic stylistically, which is how many young adults prefer their music. The artifact offers styles of classic pop/rock, jazz, ska/punk, and a children's song for the youngest generations. One of the growing popular styles of music for younger adults currently is bluegrass. It was imperative, then to include a song in the bluegrass style as well.

Another element in this artifact's production is the design and packaging. If it is to appeal to the artistically aware younger generations, it must be done well and convey the message of the project. The artifact is making the old new again. The design for the top of the disc makes it look like a record. The album begins with an organ playing the old hymn "Amazing Grace" over the sound of a phonograph. Out of this opening lick come the sounds wailing sounds of guitar, bass and drums. The old has been made new.

SECTION 5: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATION SHEET

The artifact accompanying this dissertation is an audio CD of music developed by musicians and the congregation of First Presbyterian Church in Galesburg, IL. My thesis is that the church could touch the souls of younger generations who are longing to connect to the past by using older hymns that have been modernized. Thus, First Presbyterian Church in Galesburg has developed a musical CD to connect the younger generations to their elders and to the faith tradition.

Goals

- Have completed the composing, arranging, recording and producing of a musical album of hymns for the use of a band in a modern worship setting.
- Release the CD project to the public on the night of February 25, 2012, at First Presbyterian Church of Galesburg's 175th anniversary weekend.
- Provide each congregation who participated in the survey with a copy of the finished project in addition to the results of the research.
- Sell the CDs in select local businesses and through the church office.

Beta-testing

- At least six of the songs that will be on the CD project have been used during worship at First Presbyterian Church. In August of 2011, the Sunday messages explored the history, theology, and context of certain hymns that I researched for the project.

- We received positive feedback about the hymns from the congregation. In two cases we have adapted the song further from the way that we used it in worship.

Research for Artifact

A survey was issued to the churches in Galesburg, Illinois, in the fall of 2010. It sought to discover which songs of faith from the community were more popular than others. The survey asked¹³⁴:

- What is/are your favorite hymn(s)?
- Why is it special to you? (Was it played at a certain time in your life? How has it ministered to you?)
- Is it the music (tune) or the lyrics that “make” this song for you? (It could be both!)
- Do you sing this/these song(s) regularly in your church services?

The complete data from the research survey is located in the Appendix at the end of the dissertation.

In short, there were responses from ten different churches. The churches represent a variety of denominations and sizes of congregations. Five were Methodist, two were Baptist, one was Presbyterian and one was Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). There were a total of 262 surveys returned. Of those responses, there were 216 different songs chosen as favorites. The data were more diluted than expected because of the variety of songs mentioned, but there were still some clear choices as community favorites. For

¹³⁴ These were the actual questions asked on the music survey given to congregations in November of 2010. The last church to participate in the survey returned them in June of 2011.

example, the top two songs “Amazing Grace” and “How Great Thou Art” appeared 50 times each in the survey. The next three selections were only separated by one vote. They were, in order of most frequent to least: “Old Rugged Cross” (33), “In the Garden” (32), & “Here I am Lord” (31).

The point in conducting the survey was twofold: (1) to determine which songs are sung across denominational bounds because of their importance to congregants for their faith journey, and (2) to determine which songs to record for the CD project. Although it was most important to see what the common songs might be, the more interesting factor became how many different songs people consider as their favorites. This point is addressed in the thesis section regarding the divisiveness of worship music.

Although there were a variety of reasons for selecting a particular song as a favorite, the largest response was that the song spoke to the participant or they had an emotional connection to the song. This response was 25.2% of the total responses. Other responses included a family connection, like a parent or grandparent sang it (14.6%), the participant remembered it from childhood (11.6%), the participant sang it in church (10.3%), or the participant remembered the song from a funeral (5.4%).

Selections for the Artifact

Other factors were considered in selecting songs for the artifact¹³⁵, and the decision was made not to attempt to rework “Amazing Grace” for these reasons: The song is so well known that we felt like it stood on its own well enough that it didn’t need

¹³⁵ Throughout the project I consulted the band and the band leader, Mike Shumaker, in choosing which songs we should record as well as what styles we should use.

to be updated; additionally it was noted that another recording artist had remade this song and the team did not wish it's efforts to be redundant.¹³⁶ "Amazing Grace" begins this artifact project, paying homage to the fact that it is one of the top favorites, and it gives us an opportunity to show musically how the artifact is moving from the old into the new.

Four songs that did not come up in the survey were added to the project because of their popular appeal. Prior to receiving all of the surveys from the churches, "Blessed Assurance" was one of the top on the list. So the team¹³⁷ began working on a new rendition of the song. When all of the surveys were finally turned in, "Blessed Assurance" had only eight votes. The team had already begun working on this song and liked where it was going, so it was decided the song would stay. "Just As I Am" only appeared three times in the survey, but had been mentioned to me by some people in the church. The team had worked up an arrangement of "Just As I Am" for our worship service, and many people commented that they truly enjoyed it, so we decided to add it to the project as well.

"Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus" appeared on the survey the least of any song on the album, but the team felt the need to add it for historical significance. Reverend George Duffield, who was a former minister of the congregation in the 1860s wrote the poem of "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus." The largest stained glass window in the sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church was given in memory of Rev. Duffield by his family and includes a pane of the staff music of "Stand Up Stand Up for Jesus." The

¹³⁶ Chris Tomlin's rendition, "Amazing Grace/My Chains Are Gone," has been widely popular, and we felt that anything we tried to do would only look like we were attempting to imitate him.

¹³⁷ The core group of this team is made up by the praise band leader, Mike Shumaker, two of our vocalists, Sandra Mehl, and Rev. Sarah Parker, and myself.

congregation has added the hymn to the back of every hymnal in the church because the people feel a special historical bond to the song. The team chose to add this song to the artifact because of its significant historical presence in the life of the congregation.

The only other song in the artifact that is not part of the top-tier of songs from the survey is “I’ll Fly Away.” This song was added to the project when people from the congregation requested a recording of the song.¹³⁸

The songs included in the artifact are (in alphabetical order):

“Be Thou My Vision”

“Blessed Assurance”

“Dance!” (Lord of the Dance)

“I’ll Fly Away”

“In the Garden”

“Just As I Am”

“OMG (O Mighty God)”¹³⁹

“Old Rugged Cross”

“Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus”

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

The name of the song “How Great Thou Art” has been changed to “O Mighty God.” This is a more direct translation of the original Swedish poem written by Carl Boberg in 1885. Working with another translation from the original Swedish, I reworked

¹³⁸ After the band played this song at a recent memorial service for a man in early 2011, we had many positive comments that others would like to have this song played at their funeral as well. Some, including Debbie Pittard and Donna Booton, asked to have a recording of it in case the band wasn’t together when they died.

the words to try to include the themes of the original poem and bring the chorus back to the translation, “O Mighty God” rather than the 1953 English translation of a Russian translation of a German translation of the original poem, which we know as “How Great Thou Art.” In working with the song, we also sought to bring back the original feel of the song, which was first a Swedish jig, or upbeat dance.

Budget for Artifact

The area of financing for this project was not one that had been fully considered when beginning the artifact. It was understood that the engineer would receive a salary for the project, but the extra costs for a graphic arts designer, duplication and packaging of the product were not fully expected.

The costs for the artifact are as follows:

Recording Engineer/Producer	\$1,000
Graphic Arts Designer	\$ 850
Packaging/Duplication	\$1,560
Poster for CD release party	\$ 110
License Agreement with Fun Attic Music	\$ 91
Total	\$3,611

Recording the Artifact

The Artifact’s recording engineer and producer is Manuel Lopez III from Galesburg, IL. Manuel is a gifted musician and sound engineer, and a faithful member of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Galesburg. He has worked on many different projects

for secular and sacred groups alike. The team has enjoyed working with him because his creativity is not hindered by the knowledge that this is a church-related project. Other engineers we interviewed in the process were not as open to some of the creative ideas we were trying to work with on the album.

I have had complete oversight of the project, and even on the two occasions when I was not able to be present for the recording sessions, Manuel patched me in via a live web stream so that I could chat with him and the other musicians present, listen to the music as they worked on it, and make suggestions along the way.

SECTION 6: POSTSCRIPT

In reflecting on the execution of the artifact, many interesting points have come to light. Since the artifact (Music CD) has not been released to the public at this writing it is difficult to say how it will be received fully. For the select people that have heard the CD the response is somewhat expected.¹⁴⁰ With the eclectic selections of the musical styles the project took on a form more of a play list than a true album. Typically, an album put together by one group will have an overall feel and style to it. This project included upbeat disco-tech songs, ballads, classic rock guitar riffs, children singing, jazz, bluegrass and live songs.

The eclectic styles have spoken to people in different ways. For instance, some have commented that they like the upbeat ska song “OMG (O Mighty God), while others like “What a Friend,” “Just as I Am,” and “Dance!” “Stand Up” is my father’s favorite as his grandkids are singing the song. It seems that there is something that each listener can be drawn to with the eclectic nature of the project. While part of the goal was bringing different styles of music together on an album, it continues to show the diversity of people’s likes and dislikes in music.

If doing this project over again, it may be necessary to keep the eclectic nature of the musical styles simply to “become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.”¹⁴¹ As Paul states in the first letter to the Corinthians, sometimes we must be flexible so that different people with different likes and dislikes can come to

¹⁴⁰ Those who have heard this album before its release date include the band members who played on the album, family of band members, Drew Sams and Tom Ingram from the DMin cohort, and the advisors of this dissertation and project.

¹⁴¹ 1 Cor. 9:22, (NIV, 1984).

know Jesus. For this reason alone, I believe keeping the eclectic nature of the album is important.

The process of developing the album, including writing, recording, and mastering the music was a learning experience for most all of us. Except for the band leader, Mike Shumaker, none of the band members had much experience recording an album. Working with Manuel Lopez III as the sound engineer and producer was a success. He is a local man who plays drums in different bands and records music for people out of his home. He is a very strong Christian of Catholic faith and that helped us make sure the Holy Spirit was involved from the beginning. We would start off each session in prayer and give the recording over to God.

It was more difficult working with the production companies trying to replicate and package the CD. I had begun with one company in mind, but had my mind changed by the graphic designer, Joep Huijbregts, who had worked with this production company in the past with little to no success.¹⁴² At Joep's urging I began looking at a regional printing company for the production of the artifact. After a couple months of conversations with this company it became clear that the product would end up being around three times more expensive with them than with a national group that produced CD's on a regular basis. This was all a learning experience for me. In the end I settled with NationWide Disc and I have been very happy with their communication, quality of their work, and professionalism. At the time of this writing I do not have a completed CD

¹⁴² Joep Huijbregts showed me a CD he had designed that was printed and packaged by the company I was looking at using. It had many major mistakes and the printing was not clear on the CD cover.

in hand so I do not know what the final product will look like, but feel more confident in the communication, process and price of this company.

With the selection of the songs for the album, which I wrote about in the fifth section,¹⁴³ the process began with a survey of the community. One of the songs we chose, “Be Thou My Vision” was one of the most popular hymns selected when we began counting. This is why we chose to put it on the album. As more surveys were returned the song moved further down the list. It ended up 18th on the list of favorite hymns. If the project were to be redone to truly reflect favorites of the community, this hymn would need to be replaced and others that were not included on the project would need to be on it instead.

As with many things, the creators of projects often become their greatest critics. There are certain parts in the project that I would fix if possible. Three of these that I can think of are pitch problems in the singer’s voices. The acknowledgement of these problems only comes with listening to the album many times. The average listener may not pick up on these issues at all. Since I was trying to put out the best album I could, even though I was not at the controls of the recording or engineering, I would have liked to see these places fixed. Another shortcoming in this project is that more people were not involved in the recording of the music. We have two guitar players in our band who both play on the live songs on the album.¹⁴⁴ It would have been nice to have them more involved in the recording of the other songs. What we chose to do instead was have our band leader lay down the guitar tracks for those songs. We gained speed in being able to

¹⁴³ See pages 70-73.

¹⁴⁴ These are “The Old Rugged Cross” and “I’ll Fly Away.”

record more songs in a shorter amount of time with not needing to coordinate other people's schedules for the recording. What we lost, I believe, is the opportunity to have more people involved in the recording.

Additionally, if doing this project over again, I would not advise using another artist's song on the album. The song "Old Rugged Cross" was arranged by Jamie Statema and performed by Go Fish.¹⁴⁵ Performing someone else's song on the album requires more work in getting the proper license and costs more as well. The process was not too difficult but required a payment to the publishing company for the rights to have the song on the CD.¹⁴⁶ In the future, spending more time in being creative on another song would have been better than doing what someone else has done.

In conclusion of this section, I believe that a more thorough research study of young adults and their musical interests for worship would prove to be beneficial for churches. While it was suggested that young adults are gravitating to older styles of music, having hard and fast data to prove what types of music young adults prefer in worship settings would be more helpful for existing historical churches. The results of such a study may help churches more confidently move into the future knowing their music can and will help younger adults make a connection to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

¹⁴⁵ Go Fish, *Kickin' It Old School*, Go Fish Kids Records, 2010.

¹⁴⁶ The payment for the rights is 9.1 cents per CD produced. If placing the album on a digital music site like iTunes or Amazon, it requires a payment of 9.1 cents for the first 500 downloads up front.

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APPENDIX

Song Title	Frequency Selected	Percentage of Total Votes
Amazing Grace	50	8.0
How Great Thou Art	50	8.0
Old Rugged Cross	33	5.3
In the Garden	32	5.2
Here I Am Lord	31	5.0
What a Friend We Have in Jesus	17	2.7
Because He Lives	15	2.5
Lord of the Dance	13	2.1
Hymn of Promise	12	1.9
It is Well with My Soul	12	1.9
Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine	8	1.3
Jesus Loves Me	8	1.3
Great is Thy Faithfulness	7	1.1
Holy Holy Holy	7	1.1
I'll Fly Away	7	1.1
Just a Closer Walk With Thee	7	1.1
On Eagles Wings	7	1.1
Be Thou My Vision	6	1.0
God Will Take Care of You	6	1.0
Pass It On	6	1.0
Spirit	6	1.0
Are You Able?	5	0.8
Ode to Joy	5	0.8
Shine Jesus Shine	5	0.8
He Touched Me	4	0.6
Morning Has Broken	4	0.6
Precious Lord, Take My Hand	4	0.6
Sweet Hour of Prayer	4	0.6
They Will Know We are Christians By Our Love	4	0.6
A Mighty Fortress is Our God	3	0.5

Awesome God	3	0.5
Bringing in the Sheaves	3	0.5
Fairest Lord Jesus	3	0.5
He Lives	3	0.5
How Great is Our God	3	0.5
Just as I am Without One Plea	3	0.5
Joy to the World	3	0.5
Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore	3	0.5
Majesty, Worship His Majesty	3	0.5
Surely the Presence of the Lord is in this Place	3	0.5
To God Be the Glory	3	0.5
Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus	3	0.5
When in Our Music God is Glorified	3	0.5
All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name	2	0.3
Amazing Grace/My Chains are Gone	2	0.3
Be Still, My Soul	2	0.3
Beyond the Sunset	2	0.3
Blest Be the Tie That Binds	2	0.3
Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing	2	0.3
Give Thanks	2	0.3
He is Lord	2	0.3
He Reigns, He Reigns, Allelujah He Reigns	2	0.3
His Eye is on the Sparrow	2	0.3
I Love to Tell the Story	2	0.3
I Love You Lord	2	0.3
I Was There to Hear Your Morning Cry	2	0.3
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, There's Something About That Name	2	0.3
Living for Jesus	2	0.3
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	2	0.3

My Faith Looks Up to Thee	2	0.3
My Tribute	2	0.3
Onward Christian Soldiers	2	0.3
Open My Eyes	2	0.3
Our God	2	0.3
Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow	2	0.3
Reign in Us	2	0.3
Shout to the Lord	2	0.3
Silent Night	2	0.3
Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling	2	0.3
Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus	2	0.3
The Church's One Foundation	2	0.3
This is My Song	2	0.3
Wonderful Grace of Jesus	2	0.3
Agnus Dei	1	0.2
All Creatures of Our God and King	1	0.2
All Praise to God for Song God Gives	1	0.2
All the Way My Savior Leads Me	1	0.2
All Things Bright and Beautiful	1	0.2
Alleluia Alleluia	1	0.2
Amazing Love	1	0.2
Ancient of Days	1	0.2
And Can It Be	1	0.2
Angels We Have Heard on High	1	0.2
As the Deer	1	0.2
At the Altar	1	0.2
Ave Maria	1	0.2
Battle Hymn of the Republic	1	0.2
Beneath the Cross of Jesus	1	0.2
Brighten the Corner Where You Are	1	0.2
Children of the Heavenly Father	1	0.2
Church in the Wildwood	1	0.2

Cleanse Me	1	0.2
Come Ye Thankful People Come	1	0.2
Come, Labor On	1	0.2
Come, Now is the Time to Worship	1	0.2
Come, Ye Disconsolate	1	0.2
Count Your Blessings	1	0.2
Day By Day	1	0.2
Dear Lord and Father of Mankind	1	0.2
Did You Hear the Mountain Tremble?	1	0.2
Dwelling in Beulah Land	1	0.2
Earth and All Stars	1	0.2
Eternal Father Strong to Save	1	0.2
Every Step I Take	1	0.2
Eye of the Sparrow	1	0.2
Faith of our Fathers	1	0.2
Father of Mercies	1	0.2
Fill My Cup Lord	1	0.2
For God so Loved the World	1	0.2
For the Beauty of the Earth	1	0.2
Friend of God	1	0.2
From the Inside Out	1	0.2
Get Down	1	0.2
Glory to God	1	0.2
Go Tell It on the Mountain	1	0.2
God Hath Spoken by the Prophets	1	0.2
Great is the Lord	1	0.2
Hallelujah Chorus	1	0.2
Have a Little Talk with Jesus	1	0.2
Have Thine Own Way	1	0.2
He is Exalted	1	0.2
He Knows My Name	1	0.2
He Leadeth Me	1	0.2
Hold Me Now	1	0.2
How Beautiful	1	0.2
How Firm a Foundation	1	0.2
(How Long Has it Been)		

Since You Talked to the Lord	1	0.2
I Know that My Redeemer Lives	1	0.2
I Need Thee Every Hour	1	0.2
I Shall Live as One Forgiven	1	0.2
I Want to See Jesus Lifted High	1	0.2
I Will Trust in the Lord	1	0.2
I Would Be True	1	0.2
Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise	1	0.2
In Joseph's Lovely Garden	1	0.2
Is It Me Lord?	1	0.2
Ivory Palaces	1	0.2
Jesu Jesu	1	0.2
Jesus Christ is Risen Today	1	0.2
Jesus is All the World to Me	1	0.2
Knocking on the Door of Heaven	1	0.2
Let There Be Peace on Earth	1	0.2
Let Us Break Bread Together	1	0.2
Lord, Reign in Me	1	0.2
Love Lifted Me	1	0.2
Love the Lord Your God	1	0.2
Mary Did You Know?	1	0.2
Mighty to Save	1	0.2
More Love to Thee	1	0.2
My Faith Has Found a Resting Place	1	0.2
My Jesus, I Love You	1	0.2
My Mother's Faith	1	0.2
Nearer My God to Thee	1	0.2
Nothing But the Blood	1	0.2
Now is the Time to Worship	1	0.2
Now the Day is Over	1	0.2
O Holy Night	1	0.2
O How I Love Jesus	1	0.2
O Love that will not Let Me		

Go	1	0.2
O Sacred Head Now Wounded	1	0.2
O, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing	1	0.2
O God Our Help in Ages Past	1	0.2
Oh Holy Jesus	1	0.2
Oh How He Loves You Me	1	0.2
Oh Master Let Me Walk with Thee	1	0.2
Oh Praise the One Who Paid It All	1	0.2
Once to Every Man and Nation	1	0.2
One Day at a Time	1	0.2
Over All the Way	1	0.2
Prince of Peace	1	0.2
Rejoice Ye Pure in Heart	1	0.2
Rescue the Perishing	1	0.2
Revelation Song	1	0.2
Rise and Sing	1	0.2
River of Jordan	1	0.2
Seek Ye First	1	0.2
Show a Little Kindness	1	0.2
Sing to the Lord	1	0.2
Solid Rock	1	0.2
Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart	1	0.2
Spirit of the Living God	1	0.2
Standing on the Promises	1	0.2
Take My Life	1	0.2
Tell Me the Stories of Jesus	1	0.2
The Little Flowers	1	0.2
The Lord Bless You and Keep You	1	0.2
The Lord is Gracious and Compassionate	1	0.2
The Love of God	1	0.2
The Old Old Path	1	0.2
There is Sunshine in my Soul	1	0.2
There's a Song in the Air	1	0.2
The Stand	1	0.2

Thine is the Glory	1	0.2
This is my Father's World	1	0.2
This is Our Prayer	1	0.2
This Little Light of Mine	1	0.2
This World is Not My Home	1	0.2
Thy Word	1	0.2
Today is the Day	1	0.2
Trust and Obey	1	0.2
Up from the Grave He Arose	1	0.2
Victory in Jesus	1	0.2
What Wondrous Love is This	1	0.2
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross	1	0.2
When the Roll is Called Up Yonder	1	0.2
When We All Get to Heaven	1	0.2
Where Cross the Crowded Ways	1	0.2
Were You There?	1	0.2
Worthy is the Lamb	1	0.2
You Are God Alone	1	0.2
You Are Holy	1	0.2
You are my All in All	1	0.2
You'll Never Walk Alone	1	0.2
Your Love Never Fails	1	0.2
Your Majesty	1	0.2
Your Name	1	0.2