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Biblical - Pedagogical Foundations in the Training of the Church Musician for the Romanian Twenty-First Century Evangelical Church

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the biblical-pedagogical foundations related to the training of church musicians to serve the Romanian Evangelical church. The examination will centre around three pillars of Christian higher education taken from three pivotal pedagogical passages from the teachings of Christ as He prepared His disciples to become the worship leaders in the early church: (1) the *process* of Christian higher education is delineated in the Great Commandment, (2) the *purpose* of Christian higher education is defined in the Great Commission, and (3) the *product* of higher education is described in the Sermon on the Mount. An examination of these three pillars of Christian higher education will reveal relevant principles that can be applied by Emanuel University in the training of its church musicians for effective ministry in the modern culture.

KEY WORDS worship leader, Emanuel University training, Great Commandment, Great Commission, the Sermon on the Mount.

There is a mindset in Evangelical culture today that worship is just another spoke on the wheel of the ecclesiastical machine along with evangelism, missions, preaching, teaching, music, education, and all the other ministries of the church. Warren Wiersbe² challenges that mind set when he writes, “Worship is at the center of everything the church believes, practices, and seeks to accomplish.” Worship is not just another spoke on the wheel, but the very hub from which everything the church is and does should emanate, and that includes the ministry of Christian education as well.

Christian education is the proper worship response to the revealed all-knowing, omniscient God. God is knowledge personified. There is nothing to be known that He does not already know altogether. Education begins and ends with Him, as illustrated in the following verses:

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² Warren W. Wiersbe, *Real Worship, it Will Transform Your Life*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986), 17.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Prov. 1:7 ESV)

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!” (Ps 111:10 ESV)

“And he said to man, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.’” (Job 28:28 ESV)

David Lyle Jeffrey³ writes, “In Augustine’s view the incentive for so much learning is not then by any means mere mastery of knowledge for its own sake; such ambition ‘puffs up’ the mind and makes it an object of idolatrous worship. What prompts earnest and excellent scholarship in the Christian is the ‘fear of the Lord.’”

What is the biblical process of Christian higher education? What is its purpose? What is the product it hopes to produce? The answer to these questions can be found in the Great Commandment, the Great Commission, and in the Sermon on the Mount.

THE PROCESS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

One of the teachers of the law was standing by listening to Jesus debate the Sadducees. Impressed with Jesus’ knowledge of the Word, he decided to ask Him a question himself, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” (Mark 12:28) Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5:

“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31)

Everything done in God’s kingdom emanates from one’s love of God and love for people. There is no greater commandment than this. That being the case, James Smith⁴ affirms that education is not “first and foremost about what we know, but about what we love.” “God is Love,” (1 John 4:8 ESV), so it stands to reason, since man has been created in His image, his highest motivation for life and learning is love.

The psalmist, in talking about those who fashion with their own hands idols to

³ David Lyle Jeffrey, quoted in David S. Dockery, *Renewing Minds: Serving Church and Society through Higher Education* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008), 1.

⁴ James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 18.

worship— idols who cannot speak, see, hear, smell, handle, or walk—says that “those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them” (Ps 115:8 ESV). Man becomes like what he worships. Man is not so much what he thinks as much as what he loves. Again, Smith⁵ writes:

Many Christian schools, colleges, and universities—particularly in the Protestant tradition - have taken on board a picture of the human person that owes more to modernity and the Enlightenment than it does to the holistic, biblical vision of human persons. In particular, Christian education has absorbed a philosophical anthropology that sees human persons as primarily thinking things. The result has been an understanding of education largely in terms of *information*; more specifically, the end of Christian education has been seen to be the dissemination and communication of Christian ideas rather than the formation of a peculiar people. This can be seen most acutely, I think, in how visions of Christian education have been articulated in terms of “a Christian worldview.”

This understanding of education that Smith describes can be summarized in the philosophy of Plato and later Descartes, who says that man is primarily a thinker - “I think, therefore I am.” World-view teaching focuses on only one facet of our humanness - the mind. World-view teaching assumes that if we teach people to think like Christians, they will act like Christians.

Another alternative anthropological view of man seen in some educational philosophies is that man is not a thinking creature, but a believing one; man is essentially a “religious” being, for Smith,⁶ “defined by a worldview that is pre-rational or supra-rational. What defines us is not what we think—not the set of ideas we assent to - but rather what we *believe*, the commitments and trusts that orient our being-in-the-world.” This approach says that man is primarily a believer - “I believe in order to understand.”

The problem with these two models is that they reduce man to just a cognitive creature, as if he is only a brain without a heart. Jesus taught that genuine worship must be a balance between spirit and truth. Truth (the mind) is critically important, but so is spirit (the heart). Man is not primarily a thinker, or a believer, but a lover - “I am what I love.” Smith⁷ explains:

This Augustinian model of human persons resists the rationalism and quasi-rationalism of the earlier models by shifting the center of gravity of human identity, as it were, down from the heady regions of mind closer to the central regions of our bodies, in particular, our *kardia*—our gut or heart. The point is to

⁵ Ibid., 31.

⁶ Ibid., 43.

⁷ Ibid., 47.

emphasize that the way we inhabit the world is not primarily as thinkers, or even believers, but as more affective, embodied creatures who make our way in the world more by feeling our way around it.

Romanian Evangelical educators need to look beyond an informational understanding of discipleship to a more worship-centric view - a view that illustrates how individuals' liturgies form them into the people of God. Learning in this context is worship, and because it is, it follows the revelation-response rhythm of worship. A biblical worshiper does not offer prayers or sing songs to invoke God's presence like the pagan worshipers on Mount Carmel tried to do by shouting, dancing, and abusing themselves to get their god to show up. Biblical worshipers do not invite God into their presence. He is *omnipresent*. He is already there. He is the One extending the invitation. God reveals Himself and man responds in worship, and it is through that response that man learns of God and becomes like Him. In like manner, and, paradoxically, learning does not start with the head; it starts with the heart.

Scripture tells us that "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11:6 ESV). Romans 14:23 says, "For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" ESV. How then can a scholar please God in his scholarship? How can faith be expressed in pedagogy? Smith⁸ describes the relationship between learning and faith when he writes, "My contention is that given the sorts of animals we are, we pray *before* we believe, we worship before we know—or rather, we worship *in order* to know." Learning is a heart/worship/fait response to a revealed omniscient God.

Man is not one-dimensional. He is not just a mind; he is heart, soul, and strength as well. This has tremendous ramifications to how an educator approaches training a church musician. Education, as a heart/worship/fait response to an omniscient God, is a pedagogy of participation, as John Witvliet⁹ explains:

This practice-oriented pedagogy gives us a well-grounded model for pedagogy today at both colleges and seminaries. It is a picture of robust liturgical participation followed by rigorous theological reflection. It is a picture of profound theological depth, interdisciplinary rigor, and pastoral concern. It calls for leaving behind any vestige of Enlightenment-shaped theological pedagogy that is concerned merely with dispensing information so that we can pursue a

⁸ Ibid., 34.

⁹ John D. Witvliet, "Teaching Worship as a Christian Practice: Musing on Practical Theology and Pedagogy in Seminaries and Church-related Colleges," *Perspectives* 21, no. 6 (June 1 2006): 17-23, accessed February 24, 2017, <https://perspectives.journal.org/blog/2006/06/01/teaching-worship-as-a-christian-practice-musing-on-practical-theology-and-pedagogy-in-seminaries-and-church-related-colleges/>.

vision of theological teaching, research, and learning as profoundly formative (indeed, how can theology be anything other than “practical”?)

Witvliet asks the question, “How would the teaching of Christian worship change if it were more firmly rooted in a theologically robust understanding of Christian practice?” A worship pedagogy for training Romanian church musicians oriented to worship practice will point out the explicit “connections between the mechanics of liturgy in any culture and the theological commitments they reflect and shape.”¹⁰ The key word here is *connections*. The mechanics, style, form, and the meaning and purpose of worship cannot be taught in isolation of one another. Practice-orientated worship pedagogy will emphasize the connections between these elements and teach the student to “move easily and coherently among them.”¹¹

What Witvliet calls “practice oriented pedagogy,” Smith calls liturgies. The pedagogical strategy for learning is through the liturgies of life. In this case, Smith¹² uses the word liturgy as a synonym for formative, embodied worship practices of all kinds.

Liturgies—whether “sacred” or “secular”—shape and constitute our identities by forming our most fundamental desires and our most basic attunement to the world. In short, liturgies make us certain kinds of people, and what defines us is what we *love*. They do this because we are the sorts of animals whose orientation to the world is shaped from the body up more than from the head down. Liturgies aim our love to different ends precisely by training our hearts through our bodies.

In other words, Smith is saying God designed man in such a way that he does not jump into learning head first, but heart first. “Liturgies aim our love.” What a person loves informs his practices and actions (his liturgies), which, in turn, form his character and personhood. “Every liturgy constitutes a pedagogy that teaches us, in all sorts of precognitive ways, to be a certain kind of person. Hence every liturgy is an education, and embedded in every liturgy is an implicit worldview or ‘understanding’ of the world.”¹³

How might this concept appear in a classroom training Romanian church musicians? “Practices are things people do,” Witvliet¹⁴ writes:

Our study should not be limited merely to what people think about worship, how they think during worship, or whether or not they like what they are doing.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Smith, 25.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Witvliet.

A significant amount of energy should be reserved for encountering actual gestures, symbols, sermons, songs, images, and environments. Worship is a multi-sensory subject matter. This is why worship courses feature so many photographs, video-clips, and sound recordings of actual worship services. Worship faculty might require students to purchase a hymnal not only to analyze songs, but also to sing them. And students need to participate in worship, sometimes guided by the most savvy participant-observer methods our cultural anthropology colleagues can offer us, and sometime guided by their own intensive prior study of both the neighborhood and the liturgy of the congregation they visit.

The first and great commandment is for man to love God with everything he is: heart, soul, mind, and strength, and he does that all at the same time. Man is heart, soul, mind, and strength all in one person. He can't worship God with his heart and not his soul, or with his mind and not his strength. To do so would be schizophrenic. This is especially true as it applies to educating church musicians. The goal of Christian education for two millennia has been this integration of the whole person. David Dockery¹⁵ ties all these thoughts together:

The starting point for this integration has rested not only on the foundation of the words of Jesus' Great Commandment but also on the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Scriptures, which reminds us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding (Prov. 1:7; Ps 111:10; Job 28:28). Thus the beginning point for thinking, learning, and teaching is our reference before God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

In a word, the process of Christian education is worship.

What about the second part of the Great Commandment: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself? (Mark 12:31 ESV) One's vertical relationship with God is tied directly to His horizontal relationship with others and cannot be considered separately. That is why Jesus was so quick in his reply to the teacher of the law to emphasize this important connection. How does a church musician most effectively show his love for others in this context? And how is this love for others related to worship and to Christian higher education? The answers to these questions can be found in the Great Commission.

THE PURPOSE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

It is in the Great Commission, in conjunction with the Great Commandment, that Jesus shows us the purpose of Christian education.

"Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had

¹⁵ Dockery, 10-11.

directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:16-20 ESV)

It is understandable that a secular organization or institution of any kind would spend a great deal of time crafting a “mission statement.” A well-worded, thoughtful mission statement helps an organization clearly identify its purpose, guides its actions, spells out its overall goals, and provides a matrix and a guide for making decisions concerning the organization. It is less understandable (speaking hyperbolically) why an organization or institution that calls itself “Christian” would find it necessary to craft a mission statement that would improve on the one already given to them by Christ in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. That certainly includes a Christian institution of higher learning. Every kingdom individual and entity has the same mission statement: love God, love people, and make disciples.

Many Christian educational institutions are struggling with a crisis of identity because they don’t know what business they are in.¹⁶ Many think, understandably so, that they are in the education business. They think their job is to instill information and improve skills so that students can get a great job, make a good living, live in nice homes, send their children to good schools, and have a great life—goals very similar to those of secular universities for their graduates. They think their job is making better and more successful lawyers, doctors, teachers, musicians, and even better theologians. What is the business of a Christian university?

According to Matthew 28:18-20, a Christian educational institution of higher learning is in the business of making disciples, and if it is not making disciples, then its claim of being a Christian university is highly suspect. The call of the Great Commission is a pedagogical call. Jesus calls every believer to be an educator, a “discipler,” teaching others what Jesus has taught him.

Matthew 28:17 tells us that this pedagogical call to “make disciples” is a call rooted in worship: “And when they saw him they worshiped him” [ESV]. Michael Spradlin¹⁷ writes, “Since the call of discipleship is to live like the Lord

¹⁶ Dockery, 10-11.

¹⁷ Michael Spradlin, “Does Evangelism Play a Role in Biblical Worship?” *The Journal Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary* 3, (Spring 2016), accessed March 21, 2017, <http://www.mabts.edu/sites/all/themes/midamerica/uploads/Spradlin-Evangelism-and-Biblical-Worship.pdf>.

Jesus, then evangelism must be a part of our everyday life. In one sense, our daily obedience shows our reverence for our God and is a part of our worship of Him.” Warren Wiersbe¹⁸ writes:

Evangelism divorced from true worship can become merely a program tacked on to an already overloaded ecclesiastical machine, or, even worse, a struggle for statistics and “results.” Isaiah became an evangelist *after* attending a worship service in the temple and seeing God “high and lifted up” (Isaiah 6:1). Evangelism is an essential part of the church’s ministry, but it must be the result of worship, or it will not glorify God.

The Greek word translated “make disciples” in the Great Commission is the word *matheteō*. Spiros Zodhiates¹⁹ comments on this word:

Matheteuō must be distinguished from the verb *matheō* (which is not found in the NT), which simply means to learn without any attachment to the teacher who teaches. *Matheteuō* means not only to learn but to become attached to one’s teacher and to become his follower in doctrine and conduct. It is really not sufficient to translate this verb “learn” but as “making a disciple.”

This is the ultimate demonstration of a biblical worshiper’s love for others that Jesus talks about in the Great Commandment. The biblical worshiper shows his love for others by giving them the gospel, making them disciples, baptizing them, and then teaching them what Christ has taught him.

The assignment of a Christian educator is to make disciples. What is the aim of this assignment? What is its learning outcome? If the assignment is to make disciples, and the definition of a disciple is one that attaches himself to the teacher and begins to do what he does, then the aim of discipleship is Christlikeness – “to become his follower in doctrine and conduct.” That is God’s ultimate goal for every church musician: “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom 8:29 ESV). The assignment is to make disciples. The aim is to be like Christ. The approach is worship.

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:18 that the biblical means by which one is transformed into Christ’s likeness is worship: “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” [NASB]. Warren Wiersbe²⁰ agrees:

¹⁸ Wiersbe, *Real Worship: It Will Transform Your Life*, 16.

¹⁹ S. Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study New Testament*, s.v. “matheteuō,” 933.

²⁰ Wiersbe, *Real Worship*, 35.

As we worship Him and behold His glory, we are transformed by His Spirit to share in His own image and glory. Instead of hiding a fading glory [like Moses did], we reveal an increasing glory that causes others to see Christ and honor Him.

No one who has ever been in the presence of God ever walked away from that experience unchanged. Genuine worship is transforming. Paul writes, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Rom 12:1 ESV). The Greek word translated “spiritual worship” is *latreía*, which comes from *latreûō*, meaning “to serve, in a religious sense to worship God... It refers particularly to the performance of the Levitical service”²¹ – in other words, it is literally liturgy. It is in the daily liturgies of presenting one’s corporeal body as a living sacrifice in worship that one’s mind is transformed and renewed. “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12:2 ESV). Worship begins in the heart of a man, and as he works that love for God out in his daily liturgies – his corporeal actions and practices of worship, his mind is renewed and he is transformed. A Christian education is a progressive pedagogy; first, there is love, then liturgy, then learning.

James Smith²² argues that the goal of Christian education is more than just acquiring a Christian perspective or worldview:

The distorted understanding of worldview that dominates current models assumes a rationalist, intellectualist, cognitivist model of the human person; as a result, it fails to honor the fact that we are embodied, material, fundamentally *desiring* animals who are, whether we recognize it or not (and perhaps most when we don’t recognize it), every day being formed by the material liturgies of other pedagogies—at the mall, at the stadium, on television, and so forth. As such, Christian education becomes a missed opportunity because it fails to actually counter the cultural liturgies that are forming us every day. An important part of revisioning Christian education is to see it as a mode of counter – formation.

When asked, “What, then, is the goal of Christian education?” Smith²³ replies:

It’s goal, I’m suggesting, is the same as the goal of Christian worship: to form radical disciples of Jesus and citizens of the baptismal city who, communally, take up the creational task of being God’s image bearers, unfolding the cultural

²¹ Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study New Testament*, s.v. “*latreía*,” “*latreûō*,” 931.

²² Smith, 33.

²³ *Ibid.*, 220.

possibilities latent in creation – but doing so as empowered by the Spirit, following the example of Jesus’ cruciform cultural labor. If the goal of Christian worship and discipleship is the formation of a peculiar people, then the goal of Christian education should be the same. If something like Christian universities are to exist, they should be configured as extensions of the mission of the church – as chapels that extend and amplify what’s happening in the heart of the cathedral, at the altar of Christian worship.

If they are to be “extensions of the mission of the church,” in the making of “radical disciples,” then Christian educational institutions must be aggressive in staying accountable, connected, and responsive to the needs of the local churches they exist to serve. Albert Mohler²⁴ writes:

A theological seminary, if it is to remain faithful, must be directly accountable to its churches. Lacking this accountability, the institution will inevitably drift toward heterodox teachings. A robust confessionalism is necessary, but the constant oversight of churches is of equal importance.

This principle of local church accountability was demonstrated perfectly by the initiation of a case study survey of fifty-seven Romanian Baptist pastors by the EUO music department to ascertain their expectations of church musicians trained at Emanuel University.

The purpose of Christian higher education is to make disciples. In teaching church musicians and preparing them for ministry, Romanian Evangelical educators need to look beyond an informational understanding of teaching and discipleship centered in the inculcation of content, to a more formational understanding centered in worship that proceeds from a heart of love through the practice of transforming pedagogical liturgies resulting in an *anakainōsis*,²⁵ a renewed and renovated mind (Rom 12:1-2).

THE PRODUCT OF CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The process of Christian higher education is worship. The purpose of Christian higher education is to make disciples. The product of Christian higher education is cultural transformation. The Sermon on the Mount could be considered the syllabus for a comprehensive course on lifestyle worship, which is just another way to express the concept of discipleship. If the purpose of Christian education is to make disciples, teaching them everything that Jesus taught, then the Sermon on the Mount would most certainly be one of the required texts.

²⁴ Albert R. Mohler, “Training Pastors in Church,” *Tabletalk Magazine*, February 1, 2008, accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/training-pastors-church/>.

²⁵ Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study New Testament*, s.v. “*anakainōsis*,” 886.

With all that is going on in our world today, it would be very easy to become despondent and retreat in despair, thinking that society has become too secular, too vulgar, too pagan, too hopeless to save. Bill O'Reilly's book *Killing Jesus*,²⁶ while focusing on the humanity of Christ and downplaying His divinity, does a very good job of describing historically the Roman culture in which Jesus was born and lived. To say that it was incredibly perverse and wicked beyond imagination would be an understatement. The reader is impressed that it was in this spiritual and cultural darkness, full of unfathomable violence and depravity, that God's love burst through the blackness in radiant light in the form of a little baby boy. The apostle John writes of Him, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:4-5 ESV). No matter how black the darkness, light always prevails. It is getting very dark in the world, but as Adrian Rogers²⁷ preached, it is getting "gloriously dark, for it's after the darkest hour of night that the morning star appears."

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches that worship is not only transformational for the individual as he presents his body a living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:1-2), but, through that transformed individual, God can in turn transform a culture. Jesus said:

You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matt 5:13-16 ESV)

In these two metaphors Jesus draws a sharp distinction between Christian and non-Christian culture, between secular and sacred, between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. Jesus, in no uncertain terms, is saying that culture can be transformed, and these young worship-leaders-in-training will be the salt and light that will bring about that transformation. The same could be said concerning the young worship-leaders-in-training at Emanuel University of Oradea.

²⁶ Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard, *Killing Jesus* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2013).

²⁷ Adrian Rogers, "The Issues We Must Face, Part 1," *Love Worth Finding*, accessed March 29, 2017, <http://www.oneplace.com/ministries/love-worth-finding/read/articles/the-issues-we-must-face-part-1-13513.html>.

The Sermon on the Mount begins with this introduction by Matthew: “Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them” (Matt 5:1-2 ESV). Jesus, the Master Teacher, and his pupils, the disciples, are engaged in a pedagogical enterprise. Jesus is teaching a worship studies intensive to the future worship leaders of the church. This is higher Christian education at its finest. It is through this educational experience that Jesus is teaching these future worship leaders how they will need to live, if they are going to be the salt and light that transforms culture.

Salt would have been a powerful metaphor for Jesus to use with these men. Salt was a valuable commodity in Bible lands. Salt was a critical component of sacrificial worship. Leviticus 2:13 tells us that God instructed that all the offerings presented to Him must contain salt. But most likely, when Jesus started talking about salt with these fishermen, they understood the metaphor precisely. There was no such thing as refrigeration available to keep foods fresh, so if the fish they caught were not heavily salted, they would quickly spoil and become rancid. The most valuable quality of salt in the ancient world was its value as a preservative. Salt was also valued for its healing properties.²⁸ Jesus was telling these young worship leaders that if they would commit themselves to live spiritually mature, godly lives (Matt 5:48) built upon these teachings of Christ (Matt 7:24-27), they would become a preserving and healing agent in their culture. Their holy presence would inhibit the corruption and decay of sin in people’s lives and be a sanctifying force in society.

When a Christian institution like Emanuel University sends its young musicians out into the world, it is sprinkling sacred salt on a decaying culture, preserving it, curing it, redeeming it. A candle under a bushel basket is of no value. Its efficacy is only realized when it touches the darkness, illuminating the dark corners of society, forcing the evil to scurry away from its pure and radiant brilliance. Darkness cannot overcome light (John 1:5).

Romanian society needs godly church musicians who live out the Sermon on the Mount in their churches and communities. Romanian society needs to be salted with godly church musicians who know what it means to be poor in spirit, who know how to mourn, who are meek, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who are merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, and willing to suffer persecution for the advancement of the kingdom of God (Matt 5:1-12).

Romanian society needs the seasoning of godly church musicians who value

²⁸ J. H. Bratt, “Salt,” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975-1976), 5:220.

reconciliation over rage and purity over pleasure (vss. 21-30); who suffer slights and refuse revenge (vss. 38-42); who love their enemies by blessing those who curse them, doing good to those who hate them, and praying for those who persecute them (vss. 44-48).

Romanian society needs to be radiated with the healing light of godly church musicians who are men and women of prayer, who hallow God's name, who desire God's kingdom and His will above all else, who trust Him for daily provision, who forgive as quickly as they have been forgiven, and who are empowered to be victorious in the face of temptation (Matt 6:5-15).

Romanian society needs to be illuminated by the holy lives of godly church musicians who have more treasure in heaven than on earth, who trade worry for waiting on God, who do not judge hypocritically, and who know how to persistently ask, seek, and knock for the needs of those in their church and community (Matt 6:19-7:12).

The history of Emanuel University from its very beginning gives testimony to the powerful influence it has had on Romanian culture. Cheri Pierson,²⁹ in her case study of Emanuel University, then Emanuel Bible Institute, lists many specific examples of how the university has been salt and light in the surrounding Oradea community and in Romanian culture at large.

Pierson³⁰ observes that Emanuel University “contributes a positive moral influence through its general emphasis on the development of moral character in the students and through the students’ participation in teaching religion and ethics in the public school system.” Several people interviewed by Pierson for her study noted the university’s profound spiritual influence in local Romanian churches through the spiritual training of church leaders, its emphasis on non-exclusivity, its music department, its social assistance ministries, and its emphasis on encouraging the students in their personal walk with God through Bible study, prayer, and spiritual mentoring.³¹

Emanuel University has the reputation of caring for and ministering to those in society who have been marginalized by most. Prisoners, Gypsies, Turks, street children, and the terminally ill, just to name a few, have all been helped through

²⁹ Cheri Pierson, “Contributions of Adult Christian and English-Language Education to a Society in the Process of Transformation: A Case Study of the Emanuel Bible Institute, Oradea, Romania” (Ed.D. diss., Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, IL, 1999), accessed February 23, 2017, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/pqdtglobal/docview/304513875/8606D282D78F4F27PQ/9?accountid=12085>.

³⁰ Ibid., 132.

³¹ Ibid., 133.

Emanuel's social aid programs.³²

Currently, Emanuel University has nine different ministries that directly impact Romanian culture and society:³³

1. The Foundation Casa (providing assistance to single mothers, poor families, and families in crisis),
2. The Bethesda Medical Center and Pharmacy (providing medical care for the needy),
3. Logos School of Music (providing music lessons to regional children),
4. The Emanuel University Publishing House (translating and distributing Christian literature),
5. Child Life Ministries (ministering to sick children in hospitals),
6. Music Therapy (using music to minister to kindergarten children and children in hospice),
7. English Summer School (teaching English through Bible stories and songs),
8. Business Days (national business conference), and
9. Transparency International (promoting and encouraging ethical business practices in the workplace).

As a result of the university's commitment to spiritual integrity and academic excellence, it has gained considerable influence and respect in the academy throughout Romania, Europe, and the world. Emanuel University is deeply loved and respected by the city of Oradea and its leadership, who consider it one of its crown jewels. The university exerts a positive influence in the community through the employment of local citizens, the contributions of many foreign guests, the highly esteemed business and economic school, the teaching of English as an international language to community residents, and the extensive EUO library.³⁴

Nowhere is the sociological impact of the university on the community more evident than in its music pedagogy program. The Emanuel University music department, and especially its award-winning choir, has had considerable

³² Ibid., 138-139.

³³ Lois Verduva, e-mail message to author on April 18, 2017.

³⁴ Ibid., 139-142.

positive influence in the community through recordings and live concerts on campus and in churches and civic halls throughout Eastern Europe, many of them broadcasted by radio. The music department's seasonal productions are very popular and are always standing room only events.

The beloved clergyman, the late Dr. John Stott,³⁵ rector for many years at All Souls Church in London and visiting professor at Emanuel University in its early days, submits this challenge:

Do you want to see your national life made more pleasing to God? Do you have a vision of a new godliness, a new justice, a new freedom, a new righteousness, a new compassion? Do you wish to repent of sub-Christian pessimism [that says Christians can have no influence in society]? Will you reaffirm your confidence in the power of God, in the power of prayer, of truth, of example, of group commitment—and of the gospel? Let's offer ourselves to God, as instruments in his hands—as salt and light in the community. The church could have an enormous influence for good, in every nation on earth, if it would commit itself totally to Christ. Let's give ourselves to him, who gave himself for us.

Emanuel University and its students have made a tremendous sociological impact on their culture, being the salt and light Jesus talked about in the Sermon on the Mount. The development of a comprehensive Church Music/Worship Studies program built around the principles of process, purpose, and product found respectively in the Great Commandment, the Great Commission, and the Sermon on the Mount, can only further enhance and expand the university's historic contribution to the cultural transformation of Romania and Eastern Europe.

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³⁵ John Stott, "John Stott: Four Ways Christians Can Influence the World," *Christianity Today*, October 2011, accessed March 29, 2017, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/october/saltlight.html>.

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