

[Article] Worship from the Nations: A Response to Scott Aniol

GLENN STALLSMITH



Glenn Stallsmith is a licensed local United Methodist pastor and a Master of Divinity candidate at Duke University. He served in the Philippines with SIL International for 12 years before heeding a call to pastoral ministry. Glenn has an M.A. in Ethnomusicology from Bethel University, in St. Paul, Minnesota. He is the Reviews Editor for the *Global Forum on Arts and Christian Faith*.

In “Worship from the Nations’: A Survey and Preliminary Analysis of the Ethnodoxology Movement” (Aniol et al. 2015; available at <http://tinyurl.com/worshipfromthenations>), Scott Aniol and his co-authors have given a gift to the ethnodoxology movement and its main organization, the International Council of Ethnodoxologists (ICE).¹ If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then thoughtful critique probably ranks a close second. As a participant in this movement and a member of ICE since its inception, I have often wondered if anyone else was paying attention to what we are doing. Each year it seems like I hear from a larger and more diverse group of people who are involved in contextualizing music and arts for Christian mission, but it has been difficult to gauge how much the church at large is noticing. Aniol’s article is an acknowledgment that there are indeed others who are aware of our humble attempts to do mission according to a unique calling—that is, to combine research methods from the social sciences with missiological principles of contextualization.

Aniol’s article does several things well. My favorite aspect is his in-depth historical overview of the people and organizations that birthed ICE. His article traces the movement’s origins so thoroughly that I plan to assign it as required reading for future courses on music and mission. At the conclusion of his comprehensive overview Aniol names some concerns about the ethnodoxology movement. His two main critiques involve ethnodoxologists’ claims about the nature of multicultural eschatological worship, and the movement’s hesitancy to search for universals in the world’s diverse music systems. In this response I would like to address these two critiques, first by filling in some of the gaps that go unmentioned in Aniol’s original article. Specifically, I will argue that in order to understand the direction of ethnodoxology as a movement, one should see ICE as an organization that has taken its cues from the Society of Ethnomusicology. That is, our intellectual heritage is more closely aligned to the social sciences than it is to any single other discipline. In order to support this claim, I will explore two additional moments in the history of ethnodoxology that Aniol did not cover: 1) the influence of Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) from the 1970s onward, and 2) the

¹ Aniol wrote his article as part of a team which includes Robert Pendergraft, Lori Danielson, Jessica Wan, Da Jeong Chung, and Kughaho Chishi. However, for the sake of simplicity I will refer to the team and their article in the singular through the remainder of this article.



publication of a 2003 article by John Vallier, “Ethnomusicology as Tool for the Christian Missionary” (Vallier 2003). The founders of ICE reacted to each of these two historical moments, and their responses shaped the course of the ethnodoxology movement into what it is today. After exploring these two moments of history, I will address Aniol’s two main critiques: the vision of multicultural worship in Revelation and the reticence to discuss universal features in the world’s music systems.

Historical Moment #1: CCM

As Aniol has pointed out, the ethnodoxology movement was birthed from a confluence of other developments within evangelical Christianity. Most of the founders whom Aniol profiled in his article are Boomers who were high school or university students during the rise of CCM in the 1970s and 80s. Contemporary Christian Music and its progenitors, such as “Christian Rock” and “Jesus Music,” grew out of a conviction that Christianity could relate to contemporary culture. As Monique Ingalls writes, early CCM artists began by “arguing for the inclusion of popular musical styles in worship by unmooring musical style from its social and cultural contexts, attempting to remove the associational ‘baggage’ from the music” (Ingalls 2008, 72). These Christian rockers were not necessarily averring that Christians should listen to the Beatles and the Stones. Rather, they wanted to create contemporary-sounding music that carried a different set of messages, with lyrical ideas that Christians could affirm. If there was a consistent sentiment among those artists in the early CCM days, it could be summarized by Larry Norman’s 1972 song, “Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music?”²

Even if not all the founders of ethnodoxology were fans of Norman, this idea of drawing on secular musical influences for Christian purposes is certainly one of the movement’s core principles. When I took my initial training course on Music and Mission from Tom Avery in the summer of 2000, Norman’s song title was presented as a foundational tenet of mission strategy. The logic followed that if American rock music was neither inherently good nor evil, then no music system could be judged as such; the same assumption could be made about the music of an indigenous community in the jungles of Brazil. This way of approaching secular culture helped cement the belief that music is not a universal language—it is a neutral vessel that carries only the meanings that a society places in it. The homepage of ICE states that the organization’s first value is that “music is a universal phenomenon but not a universal language; our response to music is learned and not innate” (“Our Values” 2015).

² For a concise history of the development of Contemporary Christian Music, see Mall 2012, Chapter 2.

This theory about the arbitrary nature of music’s meaning was related to the CCM movement, but it was in ethnomusicology that ICE’s founders found an intellectual basis for this conviction. As Aniol notes, one of the most important forerunners to the ethnodoxology movement was ethnomusicologist and linguist Vida Chenoweth. Chenoweth, who published an article called “Spare Them Western Music!” (exclamation mark included), was deeply committed to the principle that music is meaningful only within the shared particulars of a given society—that is, few, if any, meta-structures in music carry inherent meanings across cultures. Chenoweth’s claim comes straight from an underlying philosophy about music that is shared by many, if not most, ethnomusicologists. As Michael Tenzer notes in a recent article in the journal *Ethnomusicology*, even the suggestion that music might contain objective, universal meaning is considered a kind of heresy in the discipline (2015, 4). So while early Christian rockers had very little to do with ethnomusicologists, these two disparate movements each contributed to the foundational belief of ethnodoxology. Contemporary Christian Music convinced the first generation of ethnodoxologists that music could be redeemed and used for better purposes; the discipline of ethnomusicology affirmed that music’s meanings could not be automatically transferred from one cultural group to another. If the former won over their hearts, then the latter supplied the movement’s academic theories.

Historical Moment #2: the John Vallier critique

The influence of CCM on ethnodoxology happened over decades, but the second historical moment lasted for a much shorter span. In 2003 John Vallier, then a graduate student in UCLA’s Ethnomusicology program, published an article in *European Meetings in Ethnomusicology* called “Ethnomusicology as a Tool for the Christian Missionary.” Among other things, it contained accusations against what he called “ethnomusical missionaries” (the term “ethnodoxologist” had not yet been coined) of unethical representation in their field work. Brian Schrag and Neil R. Coulter wrote a response which addressed some of the shortcomings in Vallier’s own research methods (Schrag and Coulter 2003). However, some of Vallier’s critiques hit close to home, especially when he cited missionaries who misrepresented their academic credentials. This critique was published just as the ethnodoxology movement was being born—the first Global Consultation on Music and Missions was held in September 2003, which in many ways served as a catalyst for the founding of ICE. As a result of Vallier’s criticisms, ICE was established—at least in part—to provide a clearinghouse for this growing group of music missionaries. The organization began to offer a three-tiered certification process to ensure that ethnodoxologists around the world were representing themselves with a consistent set of standards. The founders of the ethnodoxology movement believed that an organizational anchor could prevent renegade, if well-intentioned, missionaries from misrepresenting its core values.

During this historical moment, right at the birth of ICE, the movement's founders had another opportunity to align its practices with the discipline of ethnomusicology. In order to be certified by ICE standards, a candidate must demonstrate significant achievements in social science research and fieldwork ("ICE Certification: Training, Experience, Credibility" 2015). The Arts Worker, Arts Specialist, and Arts Training Specialist certificates each require applicants to document their education, practical service, ongoing professional growth and scholarship, and teaching experience. In each of these areas of expertise, the applicant must be proficient in skills and knowledge that are largely compatible with those one might attain at any graduate program in ethnomusicology. In other words, obtaining an M.A. degree in ethnomusicology would in itself nearly fulfill all the requirements for ICE certification. Necessary professional development points for certification can be gained by being a member of the Society for Ethnomusicology or the International Council on Traditional Music. These prerequisites demonstrate that, from the beginning of the movement, ICE members would most likely be experts in the social sciences, particularly in research methods and theories related to ethnomusicology. In seeking validation from a broader community of scholars, ICE has consistently made a disciplinary commitment toward theories that line up closely with those of ethnomusicologists.

Responses

I have described these two historical moments to add more detail to Aniol's account and to underscore the extent of ICE's intellectual commitments to ethnomusicology. This alliance with social science theories has served ICE well in some instances, but it has also created some blind spots. I will proceed with examples of each, even as I respond to Aniol's two main critiques. First, I will argue that a social-science perspective on ethnicity, performance, and identity is one way that the ethnodoxology movement has benefited the church as a whole. Contra Aniol, I believe that such a view enhances orthodox interpretations of the eschatological worship scenes in the book of Revelation. Second, I acknowledge that ICE's commitment to the core principles of ethnomusicology have left some weaknesses, particularly in the discussion about universal features in music.

Eschatological worship in Revelation

Aniol disagrees with the way in which some ethnodoxologists interpret the worship scenes from Revelation 5:9 and 7:9. While he celebrates that people *from* every tribe, tongue, people, and nation are gathered before the throne, he does not accept that these humans will be worshipping God *as* members of ethnic, language, cultural, or national groups. This is a fair point. Jesus himself indicated that life in the eschaton would be free of some of the most basic markers of human institutions, specifically that of marriage (Matthew 22:30). St. Paul also flattens out certain this-worldly distinctions in Galatians 3:28 by proclaiming that a Christian's

identity is rooted in her new status as an adopted child of God. So if Aniol wants us to see that the diverse crowd in Revelation 7:9 is wearing white baptismal robes because these clothes signify a new identity—one that trumps old allegiances to nation, tribe, people or language group—then I would heartily agree. However, I’m not sure that’s really what is driving Aniol’s concerns. Rather, the crux for him seems to come down to the definition of the term “culture.” Specifically, he claims that culture is not primarily about identity but rather has to do *only* with human behavior. For instance, he writes: “Regardless, the New Testament idea that more closely resembles a contemporary notion of ‘culture’ includes terms that describe behavior, not ethnicity” (19). Aniol takes a modern word with its current definitions—in this case, “culture”—and tries to find a one-world equivalent in Koine Greek: ἀναστροφή. This word is usually glossed as “conduct” (1 Peter 3:16) or “way of life” (Hebrews 13:7). Based on this assumption, Aniol then argues that a biblical perspective on culture is actually equivalent to behavior—that is, human action.³

This is my major point of disagreement with Aniol, and I think that he is making a false distinction. “Ethnicity” and “behavior” are not so easily disentangled in the complex set of human interactions that we call culture. My reading of the Revelation scenes shows that John the Revealer does not call us to make such distinction. The two passages in question (5:9 and 7:9) describe the eschatological worship services with the same four Greek words: φυλή, γλῶσσα, λαός, and ἔθνος. This string of terms forms a merism—that is, a set of synonyms with overlapping senses of meaning. Different combinations of these terms appear a total of seven times throughout Revelation, and there is no indication that John intends for them to be distinguished from one another in significant ways. Three of these terms coincide with identity markers that I presume Aniol would define as “ethnicity”: φυλή, λαός, and ἔθνος. However, language (γλῶσσα) is also included in this four-fold list. Language is not a distinction of ethnicity or nationality, but rather one that is signified by differences in behavior. That is, the utterance of words is a kind of behavior that sets people apart; different ways of speaking are performances—that is, behavior—of linguistic concepts. I take this to mean that Revelation’s portrayal of cultural identity consists of a mixture of national, regional, tribal, and linguistic features—those related to ethnicity *and* behavior. In contrast to Aniol, I believe that the concept of culture in the scriptures, and especially in Revelation, matches our contemporary understanding of it as a meaning-making human attribute that includes physical matter, geographical places, and activities. “Culture” certainly includes the behavior and activities of a particular people, but physical materials and ethnic identity are also a part of its complicated formula. Aniol would like to emphasize the *behavioral* aspects of culture, but his choice of ἀναστροφή is not robust enough to carry the full weight of such an important concept. That’s why John had to

³ This fuller description of Aniol’s critique of this interpretation of culture is found in Aniol 2012, 40–56.

use four words to capture the breadth and depth of the ways that humans create identity and interact with one another through complex systems of meaning.

I believe that training in ethnomusicology can help ethnodoxologists read the nuances embedded in these scripture passages. A social science–informed reading of Revelation urges us to see culture as a combination of material and non-material attributes—artifacts (like clothing and food) as well as performances (such utterances of spoken words or dances). Ethnographic studies conducted by ethnomusicologists have consistently demonstrated that culture consists of both the seen and the unseen, the material and the immaterial. Consider ethnomusicologist Anthony Seeger’s description about culture-making among the Suyá people of Brazil:

To consider song and ceremonial life to be mechanical products of other aspects of social life is to miss the essential nature of musical and ceremonial performances. Suyá ceremonies created euphoria out of silence, a village community out of a collection of residences, a socialized adult out of physical matter. (Seeger 2004, 86)

Furthermore, culture per se is not a problem for God throughout the unfolding drama of Revelation. The first two instances of this four-word merism describe the people as redeemed Lamb-worshippers, but the next five (10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15) describe humans of every nation, tribe, language, and people under the influence of the evil beast. Richard Bauckham writes that this transition in Revelation underscores one of the main themes in all of scripture: God invites people from every nation to be in the business of redeeming people from all nations and societies (Bauckham 1998, 265). Culture—as the complex interaction of nationality, ethnicity, geography, language, and, yes, behavior—has a role to play in God’s saving history. Of course that doesn’t mean that all human culture is good, or even neutral; culture can be used in the service of the beast (for example, Rev. 11:7–8; 17:15). God’s ultimate work of healing and redemption is certainly a mystery, but it seems to involve the transformation of human culture, not its extinction. Of course we don’t know that contemporary national, linguistic, or tribal identities will transfer to the eschaton, as many of these identities are fraught with historical tension and conflicting values. However, it is clear that God has used and will continue to use Christians *as* persons embedded in culture, national identity, and language communities to bring about the reign of the Lamb. The ethnodoxology movement has a strong scriptural basis for viewing the whole of human culture as a part of the lovingly complex plan to restore and save God’s people. This is the basis for the contextualization perspective in missions, from whose wells ethnodoxology has drunk deeply. Aniol clearly has misgivings about this missional perspective, but I find his attempt to parse “culture” from its ethnic realities unconvincing.

Aniol's article also lists a second, related concern about the theology of the ethnodoxology movement. He states that because ethnodoxologists tend to affirm culture's power to communicate that there is also an "assumption that newly converted Christians will naturally worship God appropriately" (Aniol et al. 2015, 20). Since Aniol cites little evidence for this concern, I am not sure that I can respond to directly to what bothers him most. Does he feel that ethnodoxologists don't take the doctrine of sin seriously, assuming that people are inherently good and know intuitively how to worship God? If that is the case, then I would simply reply that my own training and field experience do not bear that out. For every workshop that I ever led in the Philippines, at least half of the content was about scriptural foundations of worship. I learned this approach in my formal training from SIL, and it was reinforced through continued follow-up sessions with mentors and colleagues in the field. Other ethnodoxologists whom I correspond with also teach scriptural principles of worship—whether they are addressing new Christians or those who have been baptized for decades. If ethnodoxologists really believed that people knew inherently how to worship, then Aniol should rightly be concerned. But I don't see that as the reality on the ground. Perhaps he is relying on some of the movement's promotional materials that emphasize the importance of contextualized worship music. New and meaningful worship songs do not automatically turn people into faithful worshipers. Music is but one element in an ongoing process of discipleship and spiritual formation. If ethnodoxologists have at times overstated the importance of musical style and language, it has mostly been in response to a perspective on mission that did not give enough attention to artistic communication. Some ethnodoxologists may place too much emphasis on contextualized forms, but this is not a tendency within the work as a whole. In fact many of Aniol's concerns throughout his article are leveled at "some ethnodoxologists," even if there is little evidence that these trends are widespread in the movement.

The search for universals in music

Though I disagree with Aniol's definition of culture and its role in Revelation worship, I basically agree with his other main critique of the ethnodoxology movement: We have been too reticent to join in cross-cultural comparative studies of different music systems. In order to understand this aversion to the search for universal features in the musics of the world, one must start by investigating the same trend in the discipline of ethnomusicology. The field of ethnomusicology was built on the belief that culture groups should be studied on their own terms. For instance, an ethnomusicologist will approach the music system of Maoris in New Zealand with the assumption that their songs and dances make sense within the lives, language, and practices of the people who perform them. The goal of most ethnomusicology work, and the ethnographic methods that it usually employs, is to describe the ways that music functions in its own society and how it is understood by the people who make and perceive that music.

Ethnomusicologists, however, have not always been disinterested in comparisons across cultures. In fact, “comparative musicology” was one of the labels the discipline used at first, before finally settling on the hyphenated “ethno-musicology” in the early 1950s. Ethnomusicology later veered away from comparative studies—not because they were uninteresting, but because of what people started to do with them.⁴ Unfortunately, many of these early comparative studies were built on assumptions about cultural evolution that ranked societies along a scale from “primitive” to “advanced”—a tendency that was borrowed from 19th century anthropology.⁵ In the mid- to late 20th century, ethnomusicologists rightly rejected these social Darwinist theories and the “armchair ethnomusicology” methods that such studies employed. Hence the problem with large-scale music comparisons: their conclusions were difficult to prove without on-the-ground contextual research that investigated how people really experience and perceive the music.⁶

Ethnomusicologists also prioritize particularist approaches to music because universalist approaches can be dehumanizing. Early comparative studies were almost always conducted by those in positions of power, usually by university professors from historically colonizing nations. Their comparison systems tended to place the researcher's home culture at the pinnacle of human evolution, with the rest of the world's music systems ranked further down the list in supporting roles. It's not an accident that the statement “music is a universal language” is largely propagated by people in powerful, historically colonizing nations.⁷ In addition, the colonizer–colonized relationship also tends to make music into a commodity that can be exported and exploited. Ethnomusicologists have long guarded against the theft and inappropriate use of cultural materials. The most salient example of this kind of ethno-exploitation happened when the producers of the 1992 *Deep Forest* album remixed field recordings from Ghana, the Solomon Islands, and central Africa without getting permission from the recordists or the original performers. The album's creators and its record label profited

⁴ For a succinct summary of reservations about comparative studies, see Savage and Brown 2013. Savage and Brown advocate for reinvigorating comparative studies, but they acknowledge difficulties in past projects, beginning on page 182.

⁵ For example, anthropologist James George Frazer (1854–1941) compared religious practices of various cultures in order to prove a hypothesis that humans “progressed” through different stages of belief. He was convinced that people moved from primitive practices that he called magic into more formal religions before finally arriving at the pinnacle human achievement—the belief in science. See Chapter 2 about Frazer, in Larsen 2014.

⁶ For a description of the complexities related to comparative studies, see John Szwed's description of why Alan Lomax's cantometrics project ultimately failed: “The real work of the project was in Lomax's mind: he knew the musical and social background of American pop song better than anyone else, but lacked the time to put together what they had discovered in the research with the knowledge he had already accumulated over a lifetime” (Szwed 2010, 381).

⁷ Robin Harris writes that the first published instance of this statement come from Longfellow (Harris 2013, 83).

from selling over three million of these re-purposed recordings. Stephen Feld suggests that this musical heist was rationalized by the perpetrators' (mis)understanding of cultural evolution: since these primal sounds presumably belong to all of us, it is the privilege of the one in power to selectively claim solidarity with the other when it suits (Feld 1996, 25). Ethnomusicologists have noticed that the ones profiting from these recordings tend to glean from the voiceless, often without feeling any obligation to repatriate the profits.

A priority of ethnodoxologists is privileging local voices and guarding the cultural property of the less powerful. The International Council of Ethnodoxologists also adheres to the maxim that music is not a universal language, mainly because of abuses in the history of missionary endeavors where the voices of the evangelized were suppressed or ignored. Some of the church's most unfortunate historical moments happened when worship songs and liturgical practices were presented to new converts as if they carried universal meaning. Songs and rituals were imported to new places under the assumption that if they worked in one place (Western Europe or the USA) then they could work just as well in another (Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, or Asia). Even worse, that colonial mindset was usually coupled with the above-mentioned theories of cultural evolution that placed missionary-sending nations at the pinnacle of human achievement. These early missionaries thought they were bringing a better form of music (or art or culture) to replace inferior forms among the people they were evangelizing. The history of mission is full of accounts of indigenous people being made to feel that God the Creator is not pleased with their pre-contact forms of singing and dancing. While there are a few bright spots of missionaries who valued traditional music and ritual, many others preached against what they didn't understand.⁸ This is one reason that ethnodoxologists instinctively stay away from the search for universals in music: they don't want to continue the kind of cultural superiority that discourages the voices of those being evangelized.

The International Council of Ethnodoxologists exists in large part because of a shared desire among ethnodoxologists to champion these local forms of expression. Global pop music is a powerful cultural force that threatens to overpower indigenous and traditional music. Ethnodoxologists feel strongly that the worship of the church should be one context in which the less powerful are given voices, and we see that local songs and art forms are something to fight for. That underdog stance makes us passionate. When people start talking about universals in music, it makes us think about colonialism, cultural superiority, and unjust comparative systems. This is, in part, what I love about ICE. But we probably need to be talked down from the ledge—even if just a little bit—lest we become a parody of ourselves. The fact that Aniol finds us a subject

⁸ For positive examples of missionaries who found traditional songs to be a productive form of communication, see Olson 1995, about Bruce Olson, and Casas et al. 1975, about the work of 16th century Spanish priest Bartolome de Las Casas.

worthy of critique is a good sign of that. In my opinion as an ethnodoxologist (and perhaps I don't represent all ethnodoxologists), it's time to open up to new and objective methods that examine the universal features found in the world's various music systems. Once again, it is time for the ethnodoxology movement to take some cues from ethnomusicology, just as we have followed in those theoretical footsteps so often in the past.

The Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) doesn't lack scholars who are ready to discuss the role of universals in the world's music systems. Michael Tenzer recently challenged his colleagues in SEM to re-engage in objective comparative analysis (Tenzer 2015). He recognizes the tendencies of many ethnomusicologists, himself included, to lose the forest (a big, universal picture) for the leaves (the particularist approach of most ethnomusicology research). His challenge is not that we resurrect antiquated comparative models, but rather that we find features in music itself that might reveal aspects of the universe's natural order. In this way he sees music analysis like mathematics, and he wonders if musics across all cultures contain an irreducible complexity that, amidst its wonderfully diverse realizations, still contains some common structure that all humans are hard-wired to perceive. Judith Becker is another ethnomusicologist who has recently used objective methods to examine human responses to music—for example, measuring biological responses of people who are intensely engaged in listening (Becker 2009). While the listeners' individual responses are shaped by the kinds of music they have been acculturated to appreciate, Becker wanted to discover what is fundamentally human about immersive musical encounters. A new generation of comparative scholars is taking its cues from research like Becker's, finding culturally grounded ways to locate and study features that might be common throughout all cultures. A study just published in July 2015 compared universal features in 304 recorded performances from around the globe, and in order to guard against cultural superiority these researchers factored in specific cultural contexts for the songs they were analyzing (Savage et al. 2015). The results show that there probably are some fundamental building blocks that all music shares. This may not be a radical conclusion, but this kind of work signals a possible way forward in doing contextual and appropriate comparative work.

I agree with Aniol that the ethnodoxology movement needs to acknowledge the existence of universal features in the world's music systems, but I don't agree with his reasoning for why we should. His article claims that music and language communicate in inherently different ways. Based on that assumption, he then concludes that music communicates universally because it contains identifiable common features, some of which are found in most, if not all, cultures:

Thus music and spoken language are not equivalent categories since the meaning of spoken language is mostly conventional, while musical meaning can be universally perceived, on at least some levels,

due to that fact that all people share a common physiology and thus a culture of humanity. (Aniol et al. 2015, 21)

I find this assertion unconvincing. Granted that music and language communicate in different ways, but it doesn't necessarily follow that they employ opposite poles along the spectrum of human meaning-making. Aniol is arguing that because music does not communicate in a conventional, denotative way, then music must therefore communicate universally. I believe that this sets up a false dichotomy of human performance and meaning-making.

The human experience of making and perceiving meaning occurs in both music and speech—in some ways that are indeed quite different, but also in many other ways that are strikingly similar. Again, this is where social science theories can be helpful. Thomas Turino has applied a Peircian model of semiotics to music. To Turino, music and language are really two different iterations of the same phenomenon: the encoding and decoding of “signs,” with a sign being anything that stands for something else (Turino 1999). The abundant meanings that signs can employ—whether in the form of a melodic phrase within a national anthem, a painting on a cave wall, or a speech by Martin Luther King, Jr.—are formed within a cultural system of interconnected and reinforcing references. In other words, the idea that a sign can mean anything at all is predicated on the assumption that it refers to something else, and this referent must be known to the one who perceives it. Without a field of common reference, a sign such as a spoken sentence or a sung melody carries no meaning. This is essentially why music is not a universal language. The meanings of signs in music are assigned by the listener's culture, just as the meanings of specific words and phrases are created in a shared social context. Aniol agrees with half of that statement—that words of a language gain their meanings from a cultural context. But he argues that music works on a different semiotic level that can (somehow) transfer meanings which transcend normal human communication methods. I disagree. Music and language communicate in different ways, but Aniol's argument fails to convince me that they are *that* much different.

Conclusions

In this response I have added to and answered Aniol's critiques of the ethnodoxology movement. My hope is that the reader better understands some of the background and history of ICE, especially some rationale for our theoretical commitments to the discipline of ethnomusicology. I read Aniol's article, like all good critique, as a call for us to be better. My answers to his concerns are not so much an attempt to correct him and clear up his misunderstandings (where they might exist) as they are a way to clarify how we can indeed be better ethnodoxologists. So in conclusion, I would like to add some of my own ideas about next steps—both to ethnodoxology as a general movement and to ICE as a specific organization.

I would like ethnodoxologists to engage in more sincere dialogue with the church, including academic theologians who might press us further than we would like in regard to music's universals. Theology is necessarily a universalizing discipline—if God is truly God, then that God speaks to all people of the world in all times in history. Theologians are therefore by nature most interested in those aspects of human experience that are shared most widely. As I mentioned above, ethnodoxology's particularizing tendencies are grounded in good instincts. But they have also prevented us from engaging with theologians who could be among our greatest allies. Theologian and musician Jeremy Begbie, for instance, is contributing interesting work in theology and the arts, even acknowledging the importance of cultural-embedded views provided by ethnomusicology (Begbie 2007, 30). However, his suggestion that there might be something universalizing in music has (at least until now) led ethnodoxologists to keep him at a distance. I would like to call my brothers and sisters to see theologians as friends, not opponents. This movement might include ethnodoxologists presenting their academic work in forums like the American Academy of Religion and the Society for Biblical Languages. So far we have been active in SEM and ICTM proceedings, but there are other academic communities we should be engaging with, too. Aniol's historical account shows that ICE has been limited in its theological input. I call my colleagues to strengthen ties with the church's best thinkers, especially those who are already interested in what we do.

I would also like ICE to be more intentional about engaging the church's worship practitioners, even song leaders who might be inclined to see the Western pop music idiom as a universal form.⁹ As I described in the first part of this essay, ethnodoxology was born out of the same commitments as the founders of the CCM scene. However, as CCM has become a global force, lined up with the power and influence of major record labels, it threatens local and traditional musics. These forces of the marketplace have unintentionally led to CCM—and now Contemporary Worship Songs (CWS)—and ethnodoxology working at cross purposes. Unfortunately, many CWS practitioners don't even know that there is a fence. Ethnodoxologists might see ourselves as a David up against a Goliath backed by global music marketing, but that Goliath hasn't even noticed us yet. Although the principles of ethnodoxology have won over some CCMers (most notably Michael Card) we haven't really engaged with the record producers, churches, and worship leaders who are presently setting the tone. In order to do that, we may need to admit that the spread and adoption of Western worship music is not an unmitigated evil. I love that ethnodoxology is at its core a champion of the local and traditional. But the reality of many of the world's people groups is that "local" cultures are increasingly hybrids

⁹ Participation by Robin Harris and Brian Schrag as panelists at the Pre-Conference Symposium of the National Worship Leaders Conference (Dallas, Texas, September 29, 2015) may be an indication that ethnodoxology is in fact moving in this direction.

that include several different local traditions as well as urban influences. In his chapter about charismatic Christians in Papua, Indonesia, Charles Farhadian describes a scene of blended music and worship styles in the “Glory Hut” church. These town settlers have backgrounds in the surrounding tribal groups, but the worshipers from these diverse communities find it difficult to use common local expressions they can share in a worship setting (Farhadian 2007). Instead they find the modern elements of guitar-driven pop songs a common denominator, even if that form is indigenous to none of them. This is a feature found in churches all around the world. Trying to find a single indigenous music or art form to speak to a diverse congregation in a blended urban area is a challenge fraught with tension. Therefore, it is easier to borrow songs that people already like and are easily (if not always in a masterly way) mimicked from YouTube. Ethnodoxologists should not embrace the elimination of local artistic expressions, but we should be in conversation with the purveyors of global pop worship streams, together finding innovative ways to mitigate the weakening of the world’s traditional musics.¹⁰

Finally, I would like ethnodoxologists to enact their place within the church’s most important liturgical practices—that is, I want us to be more sacramental. I was hopeful that Aniol would call us to participate more in the sacramental life of the church, but I was surprised that this was absent in his critique. The ethnodoxology movement has not emphasized working within liturgies for celebrating communion and baptism. This is a point of personal regret for me in my own ethnodoxology career. In more than ten years of collaboration with church groups in the Philippines, I never encouraged a group to compose a worship song to be used in the celebration of baptism or the Eucharist, nor do the sacraments appear in a manual I compiled for encouraging local songwriting.¹¹ I wish I could say this was an intentional effort to remain ecumenical and open to a variety of church traditions—but honestly, it simply didn’t occur to me to do so. I believe that this is a blind spot for the ethnodoxology movement as a whole: the recent *Worship and Mission for the Global Church: An Ethnodoxology Handbook*, spanning over 500 pages written by dozens of contributors, doesn’t list the words *baptism*, *communion*, or *sacrament* in the index.¹² This is probably a product of the broad parachurch environment in which ethnodoxology was born, with an emphasis on God’s mission accomplished through the grass roots rather than the church hierarchy. Nonetheless, this is a major hole that ethnodoxologists need to start filling in. The importance of language, ethnicity, nation, or tribal affiliation

¹⁰ I have written elsewhere about a hybrid worship style in Matigsalug Manobo churches in the southern Philippines: see Stallsmith 2006.

¹¹ See Stallsmith 2008. Note: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper only appear in the manual when quoting the Calvin Institute’s Ten Core Convictions (“Ten Core Convictions” 2007).

¹² Sacramental key terms appear approximately 20 times throughout the *Handbook*, but none are indexed.

plays a necessarily subservient role to baptism, which provides the Christian with an identity that overrides all these earthly ones. When Aniol worries that ethnodoxologists might view culture as inherently good—that is, untouched by the fall—then our baptism should remind us of the priorities of our identities. Likewise, communion is the ritual rehearsal of the moment of true universal and eschatological cooperation in worship. Its ultimate purpose is not to create authentic, culturally grounded songs and dances, but to be a response of gratitude to the resurrected Christ, who continually invites us to one table to share the same meal. Ethnodoxologists are identified with Christ through his baptism, which brings us to the table of Christ's eschatological banquet, where we will be joined by many other people representing different races, ethnicities, and language communities. Our role as champions of diversity, though important, is secondary to that primary identity.

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