

# SAW WORSHIP

MAGAZINE 

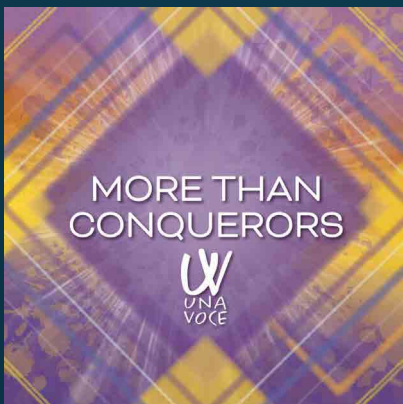
MAY 2022

## WHAT DOES GOD REALLY REALLY WANT FROM OUR WORSHIP?



SIMON MORTON  
TALKS BASS  
GUITAR FOR  
WORSHIP

Get your  
songs in  
SAWM  SING  
SEARCH



THE OTHER  
WORSHIP  
TEAM MEMBER



ISSUE NO. 15

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2** Editor's Article  
Correct posture
- 3** The Other Worship Team Member  
Josh Cowing USA Western Territory Multimedia Ministries
- 5** SAWM SONG SEARCH 2022  
All the information on how to share your song
- 7** Worship Theology  
I'll tell you what I want, what I really *REALLY* want
- 11** Bass Guitar for Worship  
Simon Morton shares his insights
- 15** Una Voce - Worship Leading Choir  
New album information
- 17** USA Western Territory Creative Arts Conference  
Delegates encouraged to connect with God to "Tell the Story"



Published by the Music and Gospel Arts Department  
of The Salvation Army Canada & Bermuda Territory  
© 2022  
Contact [simon.gough@salvationarmy.ca](mailto:simon.gough@salvationarmy.ca)

# CORRECT POSTURE

For those of us who spend a long time in an office chair, the absence of correct posture can have a huge impact on the rest of our day. You can stand up after typing away on a report or working on graphics and experience the worst pain in your neck, back, shoulders or any other joint. If your posture hasn't been correct, the result can be restricted movement and even long-term pain. The same is true if you are working at a construction site or doing any kind of physical labour. The posture you have as you lift can be incredibly important to your physical health.

As worship leaders, we are serving a diverse group of people in our congregations. Not only in age or ethnicity, but in varied experiences during their week or even on a morning before a worship service. Much like our physical posture, our spiritual posture needs to be correct as we come to worship. We cannot worship for our congregations, but we can help them to adjust their posture and realign themselves so they can receive what God has in store for them.

I was taken through an exercise recently where we broke up the Lord's Prayer into parts. I have done this before, but the difference for me was that it was focused on making sure our posture was correctly aligned so that I could be right with God to receive the message He had for me through the speaker. It was a profound and powerful experience to use a prayer that I have prayed thousands of times in a new way and brought me an awareness that how I hold myself sometimes can restrict the Holy Spirit's movement in my life.

Recently, I was preparing to lead worship and the passage that the sermon focused on was the woman who had been caught in adultery and brought before the Pharisees for judgement. Not a lot of worship songs came to mind for this topic. I knew the response song would be focused on the compassion of Jesus, but I was stuck on how to serve the congregation through song during that service. I remembered the breaking down of the Lord's Prayer and I decided to apply that principle to my worship set. I chose songs that highlighted the greatness of God first and then about His love for us. Before the songs, I spoke about our posture before God and invited the congregation to consider this as they sang in worship. I didn't speak between the songs but transitioned in a way that provided space for everyone to consider their own situation and allow the lyrics to take them on a journey of realignment. I prayed at the end, having put Him in His rightful place in our lives, and asked that we would hear a message from God through the speaker to each person individually.

How much have you considered your ability and responsibility to help your congregation correct their posture? We can do it in physical ways by providing opportunity to kneel or stand in worship. However, providing the space and time to allow them to realign their spirit so they can hear from God in an unrestricted manner is even more important.

Simon Gough



# The other worship team member

Have you ever heard of the “fifth Beatle”? Over the decades, we’ve seen a variety of individuals who have been labeled, or tried to claim for themselves, this connection to the lads from Liverpool. These would include original bass player Stuart Sutcliffe, and Pete Best, the drummer before Ringo came on to the scene. While your own praise team might not (yet) have the same notoriety as the “Fab Four,” you may still have something in common with the Beatles in the form of an often-overlooked member of your group: your audio engineer.

No matter the size of your corps or your praise team, there will most certainly be someone whose responsibility it is to ensure at minimum that the sound is on and working each week. But perhaps it’s time we look beyond the basics of this role in order to give it the attention it truly deserves.

Ironically, when an audio engineer performs their role well, it goes largely unnoticed. Most of the time, we prefer it that way as we serve behind the scenes rather than in the spotlight. But when something goes wrong, everyone notices because there is a distraction from worship that is created. If we truly believe (and I certainly hope we do) that our time spent in worship and fellowship is among the most important time we spend all week, then it is incumbent on us as creators of that worship

space to try and limit anything that would distract from that.

One of the most vital ways to accomplish this is by ensuring your audio and video tech is set up and run properly. How do we best approach this? To begin, at the very least we must acknowledge the necessity of sound engineering. The audio engineer is the last stop for the music as it travels from the artists on stage to the audience. As much as any other member of the band, this role helps determine the quality of the worship experience of the congregation. It doesn’t matter if you have Bono himself leading worship at your corps. If the mix is bad, the band will not be able to perform at their best and the result will be a lesser worship encounter for the congregation.

The remedy is simple: make your audio and visual team an integral part of your worship team. This means that they rehearse when you rehearse. They know the music and the lyrics so they will be able to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit just like any other member of the team. Truly, the musicians are each playing their individual instruments, but I heard it once said that it’s the audio engineer that plays the entire band. Make sure your audio engineer and whoever runs any visual component are present and engaged during rehearsal.



You would never expect someone to get up on stage and lead worship without rehearsing properly, so why would you expect your tech team to be able to guide a worship service without practicing either?

The A/V team should also be included in the planning and preparation for the worship meeting as a whole. It's unfair to come up to your team with your presentation, whether worship or sermon support, on a USB drive with only five minutes to go before a service begins and expect it to come off without a hitch. We want to avoid distractions so the best way to do that is to give the team adequate time to prepare. If you include them as part of the planning, they may be able to come up with suggestions for supportive videos or other multimedia that may not otherwise have been considered.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it is vital to recognize that your A/V team is not just a ministry support but is truly a ministry in and of itself. Those that work and practice to serve in this capacity are fulfilling a very specialized ministry role that is no different than a praise team leader, youth pastor, or anyone else involved in planning and executing a worship service.

Consider recognizing this at your own corps by enrolling a Multimedia Sergeant as a local officer position. This can help your volunteers to recognize the importance of the role they play while offering them a bit of encouragement. Just because we prefer to be behind the scenes doesn't mean that techies don't like to be recognized for a job well done!

Don't make the mistake of overlooking this critical piece of your worship ministry team. Instead, look for ways to include them in worship planning every week. When you do, you will find that you encounter less distractions from worship and more opportunities to affirm the work of your team.

Written by Josh Cowing. Josh is a member of the Multimedia Ministries Team for the USA Western Territory.

# SAWM SING SEARCH



It is with great excitement that we announce a call for submissions for SAWM Song Search 2022. Songs selected from this round of the search will be included in Volumes 5 and 6 of Salvation Worship which will be published in 2023. We are excited to find new songs from Salvationists around the world. Check out our website to see Volumes 1 – 4 by visiting [www.salvationworship.com](http://www.salvationworship.com).

## Psalm 96

**1 Sing to the Lord a new song;  
sing to the Lord, all the earth.**

**2 Sing to the Lord, praise his name;  
proclaim his salvation day after day.**

**3 Declare his glory among the nations,  
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.**

Psalm 96 calls for us to sing a new song as an outpouring of our experience with God. It is a privilege to provide songs to congregations around the world with words of worship and commitment that they can sing to God. The SAWM Song Search exists to provide the opportunity for new songs to be discovered and published for congregational worship. Some of the submitted songs are entirely original. Other submissions have taken lyrics from our Song Book and have given them new life to fit today's musical worship style. No matter the style, we want songs that will work for congregations around the Army and church world.

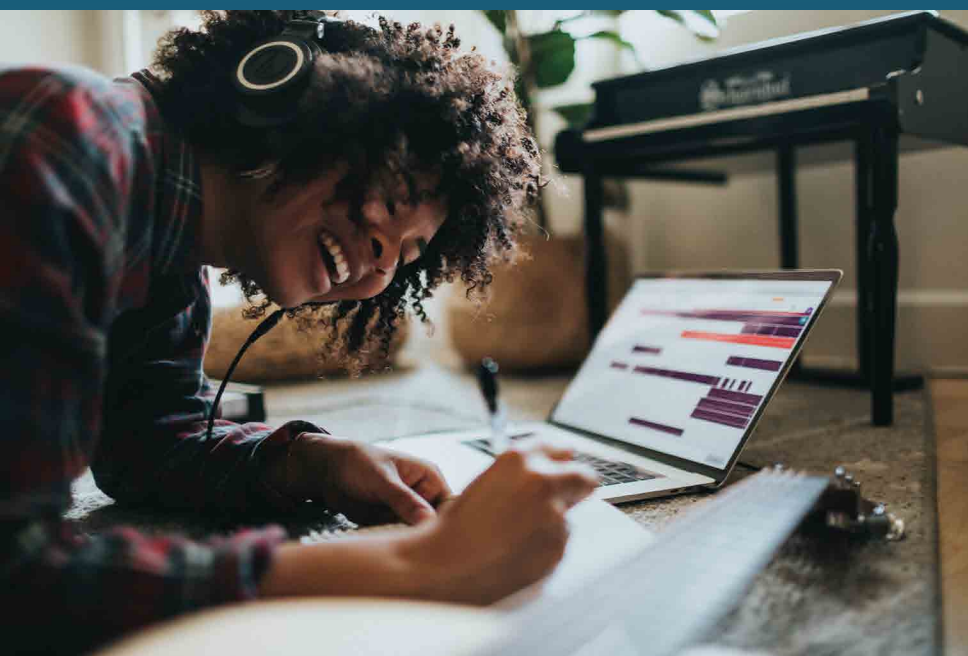
The adjudication process involves looking at the music and lyrics for each song. Feedback is provided to each writer to help them improve their craft. The adjudication panel is made up of leaders in Salvation Army contemporary music from around the world. The adjudication is blind, so no names are given to the panel. Piano tracks are created to ensure that all songs are recorded at an equal level.

We want to produce high quality resources for corps with varying levels of musical support. Published songs are recorded, lyric videos are created, and sheet music is provided to support all types of worship musicians.

# How to send your songs to **SAWM SING SEARCH**



Please submit your song by **September 2, 2022** to [Simon.Gough@salvationarmy.ca](mailto:Simon.Gough@salvationarmy.ca)



Please include the following with your submission:

- Full name
- Contact information
- Corps/Division/Territory
- Lyric sheet (arranged in the format of the song)
- Song recording
- Lead sheet and/or chord chart (if possible)

Written music is not mandatory but greatly appreciated.

Songs that are selected for publication in Salvation Worship during 2023 will be made available in the following formats:

- |                  |             |                     |
|------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Lead sheet       | Chord chart | Piano chart         |
| Choral chart     | Lyric video | Devotional material |
| Backing track    | Punch brass | Brass pads          |
| Multitrack stems |             |                     |

All resources will be available at [www.salvationworship.com](http://www.salvationworship.com).

# “I’ll Tell You What I Want, What I Really, *Really* Want...”

Do you remember the first single that you bought on record, cassette, CD, mp3 or stream (depending on your age)? As a product of the 1990s, mine was the hit *Wannabe* by pop sensation The Spice Girls. As a child, I never really understood the lyrics, and I am not so sure that I do now either. The key phrase of the song that I bounced around my bedroom singing was the refrain, “I’ll tell you what I want, what I really really want.”

**W**hilst it is very catchy (apologies if I have given you an earworm!), throughout the song we never really find out what the singer really, really wants; the answer that comes is “zig-a-zig, ah,” whatever that means. I have been wondering though, when it comes to our worship, what might it be that God really really wants?

In a nutshell, worship is about bringing God what He wants. The English word comes from the Old English *weorthscipe*, meaning “an acknowledgement of worth or worthiness.” In other words, worship is worth-ship – the act of giving God what He wants and is worth and deserves. In many of our churches, acts of worship have often become synonymous with times of

corporate singing and music-making. Is it that God is simply a massive music fan and the thing that He really really wants is to be whilst He reclines on His throne in highest Heaven? This isn’t to belittle our music-making, but it is to serve as a reminder that, as Matt Redman puts it, “A song in itself is not what You have required.”

The music we use and the way that we use it is intended to help us bring to God what He really really wants. What might some of those things be?

At the same time, anyone who has been around the church for a little while will be able to testify to the potential that music also has to divide people.

## UNITY

**A**nyone who has sung loudly in a crowd will testify to the incredible power that music has to form community. Music has a unique ability to bring and bind people from all kinds of backgrounds together. At the same time, anyone who has been around the church for a little while will be able to testify to the potential that music also has to divide people. Perhaps because music is so powerful, individuals can hold strong views about the best ways to utilize it in worship. For one person, a hymn that conveys timeless truths set to powerful harmonies and regal, hymnodic chord patterns fit for a king may be to another person outdated, unengaging, and irrelevant expression of the 1800s. A song may give someone the space and means to connect with God through simplicity and repletion, but for someone else may be banal, shallow, and saccharine.



Song choice can split congregations. As a worship leader and preacher, getting the balance of songs right whilst being alert to this fact has caused me more angst than any other aspect of meeting preparation. People – even people who are part of the family of God – can be complex!

Jesus tells an interesting short story on the relationship between worship and unity in Matthew 5:23-24. He describes a person arriving at the altar of the temple, ready to offer a gift to God. The process of landing in front of the altar was a lengthy, involved, and complex one, as people navigated the rituals and geography of the temple to bring their offering to God. In the story, Jesus then instructs that if, having undergone the rigmarole of arriving at the altar, the person remembers that there is someone they have fallen out with, they need to go and first be reconciled to that person before making their offering. Jesus' first audience would have laughed at the hilarious thought of the would-be-worshipper needing to perform all of the ritual ceremony again. Jesus' point is that the offering of worship loses its meaning, and even becomes contradictory, if you are

performing an act intended to express your reconciliation with God whilst being wilfully or knowingly unreconciled to a brother or sister.

For our worship to be what God really really wants, it needs to come from a place of unity. Colossians 1:20 tells us that Christ died in order to "reconcile all things to himself." This is God's great mission for the whole world, so it must surely start with the church living as witnessing proof of this possibility. Singing tunefully and melodically, whilst accepting disunity within the congregation, is not the kind of worship that God really wants.

**Q: How can the songs I select in worship help to foster and create unity? What are the relationships with others that I need to address?**

For our worship to be what God really really wants, it needs to come from a place of unity. Colossians 1:20 tells us that Christ died in order to "reconcile all things to himself."

# INTEGRITY

The Bible is full of examples of God (usually through the Prophets in the Old Testament, or Jesus in the New Testament) offering helpful (or vicious!) critique of the way in which His people worship. To my knowledge, the critique is never really directed at their dodgy tuning or because they keep speeding up when the song gets louder, or because the drummer messed up the modulation during the killer key change. The critique usually centres on the fact that whilst they are performing the outward rituals with expertise, these actions don't correlate to their hearts and intentions, or the other stuff that is going on in their lives. If you check out Jesus' critique of the Pharisees in Matthew 24, you will see what I'm talking about: it's full of some of His harshest condemnation and "woes" because of the hypocrisy the Pharisees display in their worship.

Our worship needs to be characterized by integrity. Our lips and our lives need to be in agreement. This is the kind of worship that God really really wants. I remember a guest worship leader from another church being at camp when I was a teenager. We were a bunch of slightly socially awkward and reserved British teens, and despite his best efforts, it didn't seem that we were entering into the times of sung worship in the way that the worship leader might have hoped. I can't remember his exact words, but the intimation was that we needed to let go a little and be a bit more holy and Spirit-filled. Then, on the Thursday afternoon, came the highlight of the week: the staff versus delegates football match. I'll always remember the aggression and choice language of the worship leader on the pitch. Like all of us, he was imperfect, and, in many ways, he was used by God during that week but his behaviour on the pitch didn't really role model worship to us teenagers positively. The integrity of the worship was hampered by its incongruence with the leader's actions outside of the chapel. This has served, often painfully, as a reminder for me in my own leadership.

Worship leaders, like all worshippers, have to be prepared to live out on Monday what they sing about on Sunday.

Q: What did I sing about last week in church that I've been struggling to live out in practice?

# JUSTICE

**R**elated to integrity comes a third thing that Scripture tells us God really really wants from worship. The prophet Amos (Chapter 5) laments at the state of Israel's worshipping life: the poor are being cheated and the vulnerable exploited. He imagines God speaking to the people and saying (5:21-23), "I hate your religious festivals, I despise your assemblies [...] away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps!" !" The Message translation puts it pertinently when it says, "I can't stand your religious meetings, I'm fed up with your conferences and conventions. I want nothing to do with your religion projects, your pretentious slogans and goals. I'm sick of your fund-raising schemes, your public relations and image making."

The sucker-punch is delivered in verse 24, when God, almost bellowing at His people says, "Do you know what I want? I want justice—oceans of it. I want fairness—rivers of it. That's what I want. That's all I want."

It seems in the context of our worship that God really really wants justice. It's a reminder to us all that our worship is not intended to merely be a privatized, internalized affair, concerned only

with ourselves and our hearts, but rather is part of God's plan to put the whole world right. As we encounter the living and loving God in worship, God intends to send us back out into the world to roll up our sleeves and participate in His redeeming work in the world. The songs that we sing to God are also supposed to be anthems and songs that fuel our action for "Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven." They are the soundtrack to the Kingdom revolution. This is a costly element of worship but ultimately takes us to the heart of being the kind of worshippers that God really really wants.

Q: Which songs are we using at the moment which might fuel and inspire missional action in the world?

# PUT IT INTO PRACTICE IN YOUR LEADING

Songs which...

## **Foster Unity:**

Come, People of the Risen King (Townend/Getty)

Come Let Us Worship the King/Great Things

(Phil Wickham)

In the Name of the Father/Our God Saves

(Paul Baloche)

## **Encourage Integrity:**

May the Words of My Mouth (Tim Hughes)

The Heart of Worship (Matt Redman)

## **Fuel Justice:**

Build Your Kingdom Here (Rend Collective)

The World for God (Evangeline Booth/  
Transmission)

Build My Life (Housefires)

Build My Life (Housefires)

# BASS GUITAR IN WORSHIP

Article By Simon Morton

I am an '80s baby but really a product of the '90s. Other than brass banding, my musical influence came from what my parents listened to at home which included everything from Mahler symphonies to Harry Connick Jr. to Queen! As a teenager, that '90s grunge music took hold of me, made especially easy by mail order subscription services like BMG and Columbia House. I had an electric guitar and tried to play along with some of the bands I listened to, but it never clicked for me.

It wasn't until my senior year of high school when our very small volunteer drama club decided to put on the show *Little Shop of Horrors*. My friend Jesse, who also played bass guitar, asked if I was willing to play in the pit band for the show. He knew I was a musician that could read well and would just need to learn bass guitar technique. I gladly said yes, so I borrowed Jesse's bass and got to work. I was immediately thrown into the deep end as far as technique goes. There was a lot of slap bass, sixteenth note funk rhythms, and a sound world that I was unaccustomed to, but I loved it!

I fell in love with bass guitar and immediately my musical palette switched from teenage grunge and alternative to smooth soul, jazz, and gospel music. For bass players, there was much more feeling and a lot of technique in this world, so I found myself immersed in stacks of "gospel greats" albums along with classic and modern soul. I never took lessons (more on this later) but I learned that playing bass is all about feel and groove. This is something I've spent many years trying to get right, and I'm still working on it today.

You might be wondering how this applies to playing bass in worship. I think there are two parts to this. The first part is experiential, and the second part is educational/pedagogical.

My first gig was accompanying the songsters (choir) that was led by my mother. Not quite the same as turning up the volume to 11 and rocking out, but it helped me to be a sensitive, team player during Sunday morning worship. I also started playing at an alternative Saturday night young adult worship service at my corps (church) where I was exposed to a lot of contemporary Christian music.

This was around the same time that I was still working on technique and exploring the virtuosic side of the bass guitar. For one Saturday night service, I thought I would try and throw in some flashy slap bass into a relatively mellow worship song. My brother was in the audience and had this look on his face. Afterwards, he said to me, "What were you trying to do in that song? It was so out of place and distracting." He wasn't wrong.

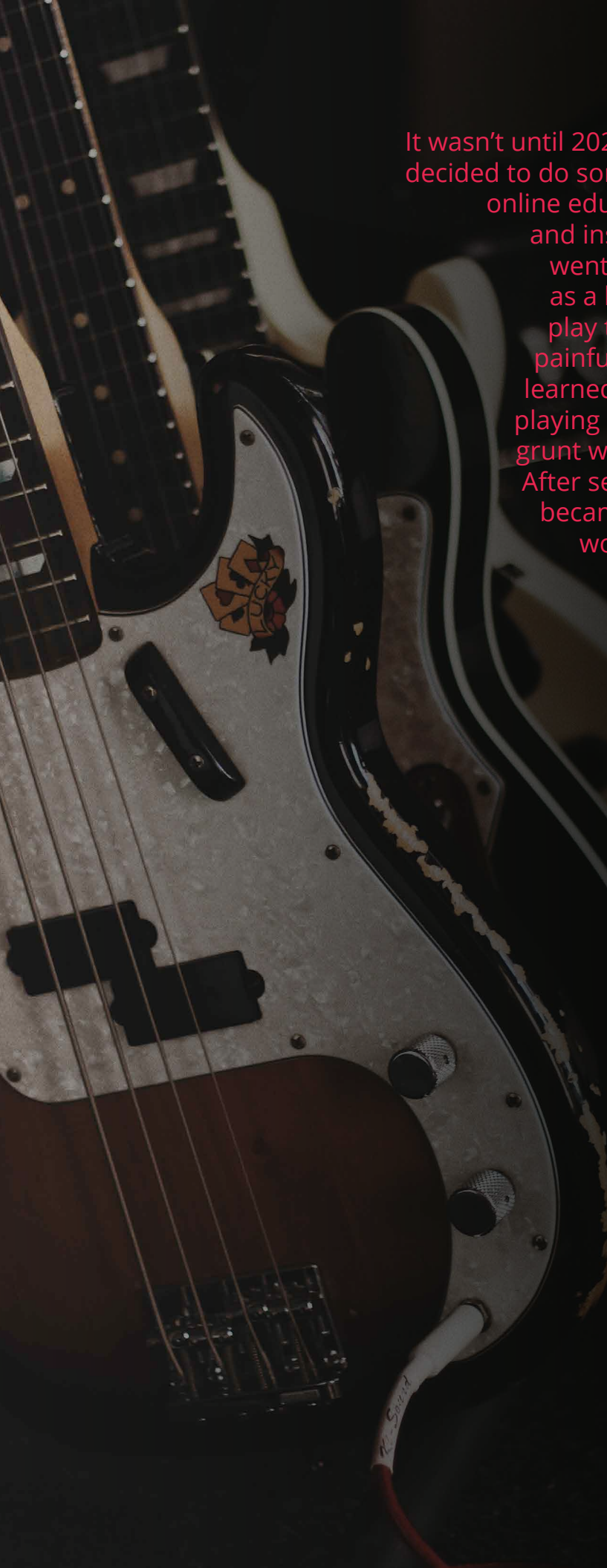
A couple years later, I was fortunate enough to play with a fantastic Dove Award winning gospel choir that was associated with my university (Michigan – Flint). This was one of the more memorable events that shaped me as a player. There was absolute freedom in worship and a true leading of the Spirit in the music.

I highlight all of this to show that the role of a worship bassist can look very different. We need to do the best we can to be well-rounded musicians. To be honest, at times there is not a whole lot going on musically for bass players in contemporary Christian music so it can feel like everything becomes repetitive. But why not try to bring a higher standard of musicality to whatever genre you are playing? I don't mean slapping your way through a song and completely putting the focus on you, the bassist, instead of our Creator and the One we are worshipping! But it is okay to add some elements that can enhance a phrase or lyric or bring attention to a poignant moment in the worship experience.

I mentioned previously that listening played a valuable role in my journey as a bass player. I wouldn't trade it for anything, and I find myself never being bored of music because there is always so much to learn from all the great genres that use the electric bass. However, I would change a few things on my own journey. I mentioned before that I had never taken private lessons. As a student of the tuba for more than a decade before I picked up a bass guitar, I felt that I could figure it out on my own. For the most part, this worked out for me except for the basic fundamentals that any instrumentalist should learn, no matter what their instrument may be. I admit that I skipped over playing scales, arpeggios, and learning proper finger positioning and technique. This started to haunt me after 20 years of playing, even with live, studio, volunteer, and professional experience. I was struggling to play in a finger style that I so desperately wanted to be able to do. It was very frustrating for me.



**Simon Morton is the Assistant Territorial Music Secretary for the USA Eastern Territory. He plays bass guitar for their Territorial Worship Team UNBOUND.**



It wasn't until 2020 during the COVID lockdown that I decided to do something about it. I found a fantastic online educational resource that provided videos and instruction for the issue I wanted to fix. I went back to basics! I started from square one as a bass player and completely relearned to play the instrument. It was slow and physically painful as I worked on undoing bad habits learned over the years. I stuck to the plan, playing my scales and arpeggios, doing the boring grunt work that most instrumentalists despise. After several weeks, I started to see a change. I became less fatigued and was able to slowly work up my speed and ease of playing even when I had the metronome set to a high speed. I never lost the feel that I had for playing bass, but I was more efficient and much more disciplined. I started to feel so much more freedom when playing in live worship since I focused less on the technical aspects of playing and focused more on why and who I was playing for.

The possibilities are endless on the bass guitar. There is no right way or wrong way, as long as it is appropriate. Tone, equipment, and instrument maintenance are all important factors in being successful, but if you love playing as much as I do, you will understand that feeling when you hear a great line or lick. Try to harness that feeling in your own playing and don't neglect the basics. And yes, take a lesson.

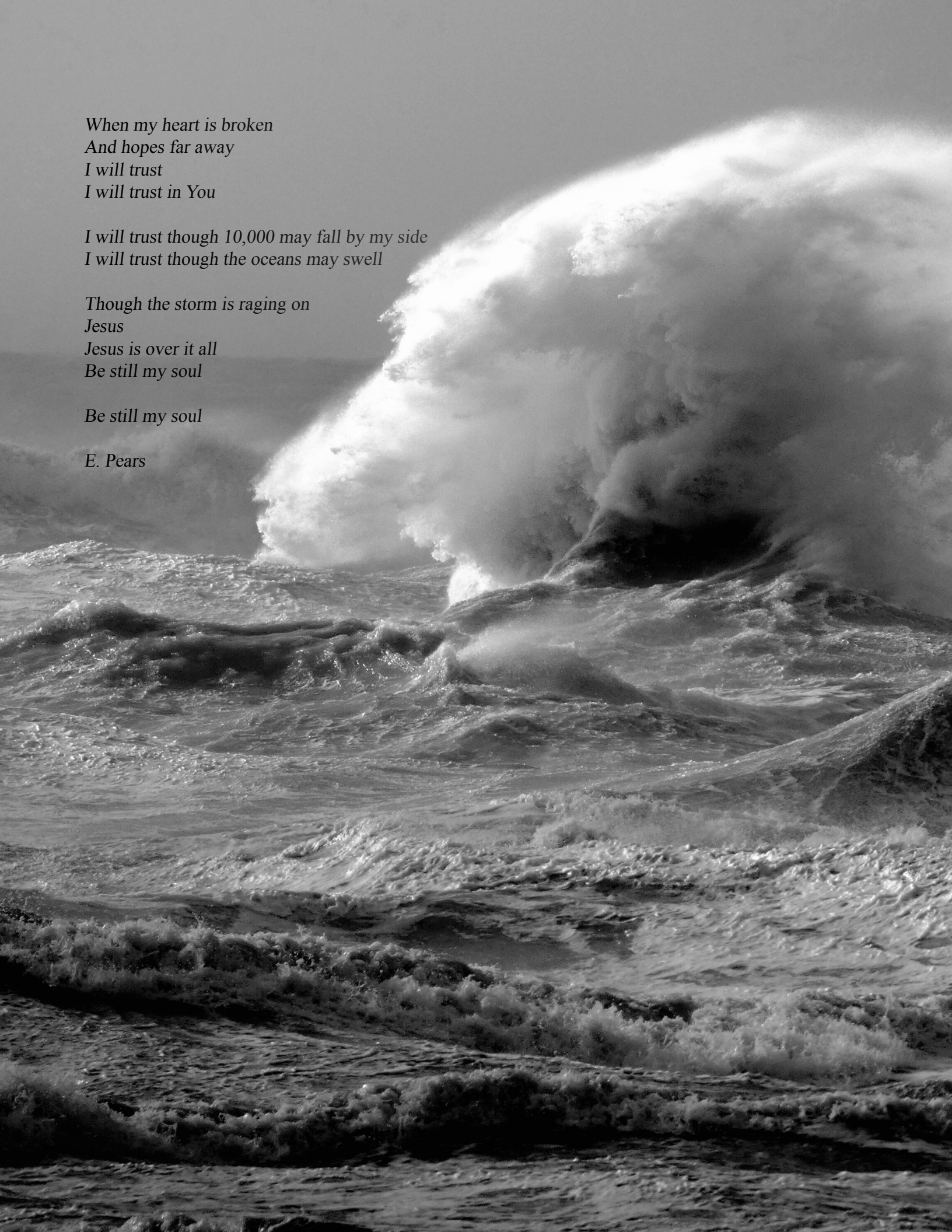
When my heart is broken  
And hopes far away  
I will trust  
I will trust in You

I will trust though 10,000 may fall by my side  
I will trust though the oceans may swell

Though the storm is raging on  
Jesus  
Jesus is over it all  
Be still my soul

Be still my soul

E. Pears



# Worship Leading Choir releases first album



Una Voce is a choral group made up of young adult Salvationists in the United Kingdom and Ireland Territory. The name, meaning one voice in Latin, was inspired by Romans 15:5-6 (TPT) which also acts as the group's mission statement: "Now may God, the source of great endurance and comfort, grace you with unity among yourselves, which flows from your relationship with Jesus, the Anointed One. Then, with a unanimous rush of passion, you will with one voice glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The essence of this passage of Romans is that as God's people, we should value each other equally in Jesus. This is a central value of the group, that everyone equally plays their part.

We have been so excited in recent months to have recorded our debut album, with thanks to World of Sound studios. This has been a great experience for Una Voce, being able to spend time working on producing high quality music.

When it came to titling Una Voce's debut album, the song that kept being suggested was *We Are More Than Conquerors*.

With the words directly from Romans 8, we are always so excited to proclaim that absolutely nothing in this world will separate us from the love of God. In my opinion, there is no greater feeling than proclaiming our faith with others in unison, as one body of Christ.

It doesn't escape my attention that three of the 15 tracks begin with the plural pronoun, "we". It is a beautiful thing to sing our individual, personal praises to God, and many contemporary songs and ancient hymns alike are written with a singular perspective of "I" and "my". Within a choral setting, however, there is profound unity to be found in acknowledging that our experience of Christ's love is shared and singing of it together. So much of Una Voce's mission is to celebrate and magnify Salvation Army choral music. We are pleased to have included several Army songs on the album. One in particular being *Praise the Lord* from the pen of Richard Phillips. This will be known to many songster fans of the 1990/early 00s. The choric speaking is quite an exciting moment, which then leads into our "McFly" moment of the album – be sure to listen out for it!



We are also keen to bring in external choral influences to our repertoire. An obvious choice was the song *Indodana*, which is sung everywhere by some of the most accomplished choirs in the world. It's a beautiful thing to explore new languages and new ways of expressing our deep longing to be near to God. This song, in the traditional South African language of isiXhosa, relates with John 3:16 in a striking way.

Whenever Una Voce has a gig, we are always wanting to centre our programme around sharing in worship together. This is why it was so important to include worship songs such as *Be Still My Soul* and *Great Are You, Lord* on the album to reflect that. It is our hope and prayer that as you listen and relax in God's presence, you feel able to freely worship in any way you wish.

Finally, it has to be said that we have the BEST accompaniment group. Their talent is unreal! We are extremely grateful that they share their giftings with us, as it completely enhances our ministry. If anything, you want to buy this album just to hear their genius music-making, all for the glory of God! The album is being released on Friday 29th April and will be available for download on [www.sps-shop.com](http://www.sps-shop.com). Be sure to check out Una Voce on Facebook and YouTube for the latest news from the group!



MORE THAN  
CONQUERORS

UN  
UNA  
VOCE

# CREATIVE ARTS CONFERENCE REVEALS POTENTIAL OF THE ARTS TO HELP AND HEAL

## Delegates encouraged to connect with God to “Tell the Story.”

The Western Territorial Creative Arts Conference, March 11–13, challenged delegates to “Tell the Story” amid the towering pine trees and burbling brooks of The Salvation Army’s Camp Kuratli at Trestle Glen in Boring, Oregon. Salvationists, aged 18–60-plus, attended from around the territory to engage in one of five creative tracks: drama, visual arts, writing, praise team leading, and dance.

“When we create, we are making culture—are making sense of our world,” said Joy Yi, who organized the conference with the Territorial Music Department. “Rather than just consuming culture, we want to create culture in order to tell the redemptive and restorative story of God. We want to encourage the churches to create in prayerful and excellent ways... in ways that appeal to our imagination and ignite a sense of wonder for worship and in our everyday walk with the Lord.”

Speaker, author, and advocate for the arts in church, J. Scott McElroy, led the main sessions Friday night and Saturday morning. Guest instructors included Canada and Bermuda Territorial New Media Youth and Worship Arts Specialist Simon Gough for Praise and Worship Leading; Coeur d’Alene Kroc Center Corps Officer Major Ronda Gilger for Visual Arts; Theater for the Thirsty for Drama; Western Territorial Editor in Chief and Literary Secretary Christin Thieme for Writing; and New Jersey Divisional Arts and Special Events Director Olivia Renkel for Dance.

On Friday, McElroy explored how individuals can locate their own stories within God’s larger story. “We have the opportunity to collaborate with God in our creations by hearing His voice and understanding His unconditional love,” he said.

McElroy offered three keys to discovering our individual story: identity—finding both our personal calling and our Christian calling;

perspective—keeping our sense of wonder and becoming like a little child seeking Heaven (Matt. 18:3); and alignment—staying on God’s path, using the Lord’s Prayer to stay on track.

During Saturday’s main session, McElroy spoke about the power of the arts to create change, and how the church can harness this power.

“Through art we can show compassion,” he said. “This is an underutilized asset in the church. Art, music, poetry, and drama convey God’s love when words fail. Words often fail...Art can create bridges to wonder.”

During the meeting, Gilger did live painting, creating an intercessory piece for Ukraine. Renkel offered a physical prayer for Ukraine through dance.

This is an abbreviation of the article that was originally published in March 2022 in Caring Magazine.

To read the full article [click here](#)



"This is what compassion through the arts can look like in a church service," McElroy said. "It's an act of faith, taking a risk. The Holy Spirit can speak to you through the art."

On Saturday evening, Jeremiah and Vanessa Gamble—Theater for the Thirsty—performed their latest original musical, "This is My Story, This is My Song," a rediscovery of beloved hymns and the stories of those who created them.

Saturday evening and Sunday morning delegates met in groups to discuss and debate questions surrounding form vs. substance including: Can substance be revitalized in a form? Since forms of worship and the creative arts are subjective, who decides what stays and what goes, and why? Is church tradition meaningful? How much weight should it have?

"[I learned] about incorporating different creative worship mediums that you are not normally comfortable with," said El Centro (California) Corps delegate Elida Doria. "But it's not about you. It's about God...It's about the substance, and it always needs to be there with the form, because one without the other, it just doesn't work."

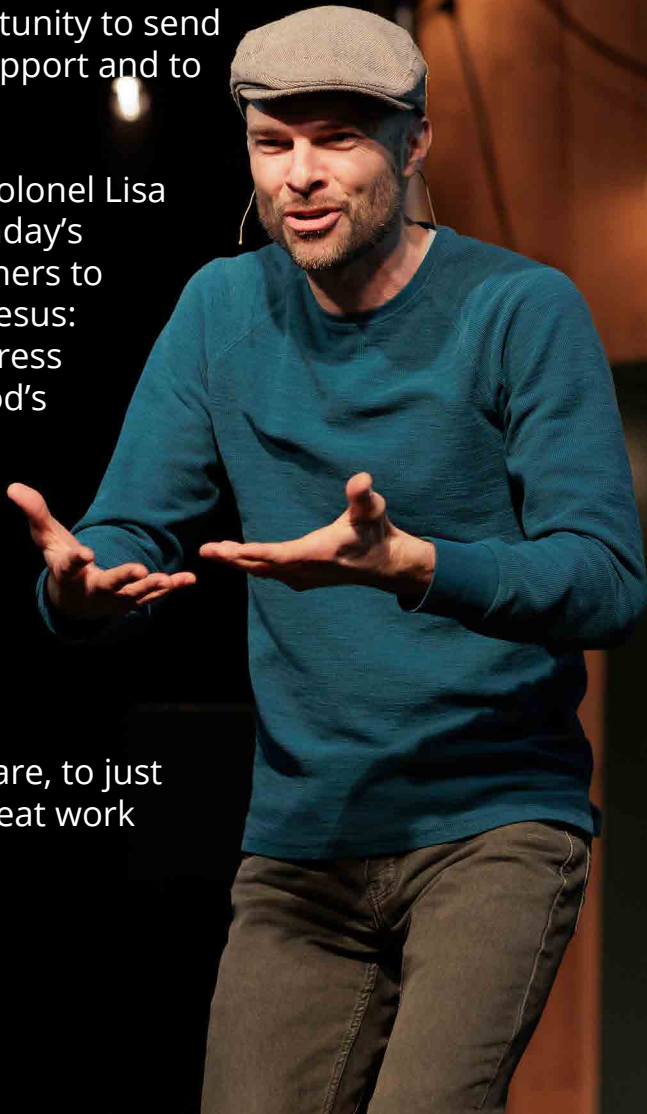
San Diego Kroc Center delegate Marina Winter said the conference offered "a lot of learning."

"One of the main things was to understand how important it is to utilize creative arts as a way to transform people's lives...in a form that doesn't have to use language, so it can be universal," she said. "And then we take this opportunity to send God's message to heal, to show support and to show his love to everyone."

Territorial Program Secretary Lt. Colonel Lisa Smith brought the message at Sunday's worship service, encouraging listeners to become like little children before Jesus: fearless, free to take risks and express their creativity. She said that as God's people, we are safe and secure, knowing His love is boundless.

Territorial Music Director Neil Smith closed the conference. "Don't forget what you've learned," he said. "It's important that we meet in our own spheres, wherever we are, to just keep encouraging...keep up the great work across our fabulous territory."

Written By Karen Gleeson  
for Caring Magazine



**TO SUBSCRIBE, CLICK THIS LINK**

<http://eepurl.com/dN845D>



**SA WORSHIP MAGAZINE**

Issue No. 15, Released May 2022  
Published by the Music and Gospel Arts Department  
The Salvation Army Canada & Bermuda Territory  
For information, contact  
[simon.gough@salvationarmy.ca](mailto:simon.gough@salvationarmy.ca)