

## Christianity and Arts: Integration of Faith and Learning Music in the Contemporary Society

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**Abstract:** The paper explores the possibility of integrating faith and the learning of music against the background of opposing worldviews in the contemporary society. This paper will concentrate on the Christian faith whose basis is the bible. The bible is believed to be the word of God that defines a Christian's lifestyle in all his/her operations in spheres of life. From the time of great philosophers like Socrates to the current time of postmodernism, knowledge and truth has kept on evolving as each new movement challenges the other. But the word of God still stands as the truth as it comes to pass in due course. In Mt. 5 : 18, Jesus says, "For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished." This makes the word of God credible and reliable in informing a Christian's life and influencing the learning of music. Music is one of the forms of art designed by God for His glorification in heaven and earth. But after the fall of man, it is one of the areas that have been adulterated by certain evolving world views. The main objectives of the study are: to establish the wider meaning of integration, to establish what the learning of music entails, to highlight the importance of integration, and to identify ways of integrating faith in music learning. The discourse is grounded in the Correspondence and Coherence Theory of Truth whose proponents are classical Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. The study adopts a philosophical, documentary analysis and scriptural interpretation approach to arrive at conclusions.

**Keywords:** Worldview, Integration, Christian Faith, Music Education

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the given paper is to discuss the possibility of integrating faith and learning music. Integration of faith becomes crucial in this contemporary society because Christian educators and learners are confronted by the dominating worldviews like naturalism and postmodernism hold that faith has no place in the quest for knowledge. In such an environment, how does Christian continue with his or her mission of spreading the good news of the gospel and transforming lives without inviting conflict? Is it true that faith has no place in the quest for knowledge? These are some of the questions that need to be answered in this discourse.

When God created man, He did so in His image and likeness. This implies that man possesses God's attributes including personality, self-transcendence, intelligence, morality, and social capacity. However, at the fall (Gen 3), man fell short of the glory of God in many ways. Self-knowledge was marred, his/her sight of God was impaired hence nature

became his/her dictator, human intelligence was impaired hence his/her reasoning and knowledge became inaccurate, morally he was flawed, socially he/she became exploitative and his/her creativity became an illusion [1]. In this respect, then, a man (and in this context a scholar) who is not redeemed is bound to make many mistakes in their creation of anything including knowledge in the scholarly world. In his proposition of a possible solution, Glanzer [2] states that, "When it comes to scholarship, the redemption of scholarship entails freeing it from the effects of sin since our learning faculties and created products are fallen" [3]. This implies that both our minds and research products are only transformed and deconstructed by God's word respectively.

Therefore, in relation to the learning of music, it is possible to consider redemption through the integration of faith and learning. "Asking how one integrates faith in to music...may sound like a difficult question" [4]. The implication of Glanzer's statement is that it is possible to integrate faith with music learning.

Music learning, like any other learning, has been marred in its creation and performance. Isaiah 14: 11 '...all your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of your harps...' in reference to Satan and his schemes. In this case, music which is represented by the instrument 'harp' has become noise to God and together with its master corrupter (Satan) it has been reduced to the lowest level; 'the grave'. In other words, music that emanates from a flawed mindset 'noise of your harps' including the performer (Satan) are rejected by God and discarded if not redeemed.

It is arguable, then, that music as an art is redeemable in all its aspects. Glanzer states that, If one thinks about the creation and redemption of music...as part of the divine task of Christian scholars, it is easy to think about the productive discussions and directions such conversations might take. Musical composers and performers would then understand their vocation in a theological context and may ask questions such as, when is music fallen? What does it mean to redeem music? What exactly is a fallen musical performance or a redemptive musical performance? [5].

Glazer's [6] philosophical questions can only be answered through the discussion of what music entails in God's perspective and its fallen nature. Learning music in this context is two way when analyzed broadly because Music Education is a field of study associated with the teaching and learning of music. Therefore, this article discusses the integration of faith in both learning and teaching of music as the two interact in knowledge acquisition and dissemination respectively, and at the same time learn from each other. The study submits that both parties (teacher and learner) play a key role in integration of faith and learning. However, of greater importance is for each to realize that their main mission is to bring redemption to humankind and their worldviews. In this respect, both the learner and teacher must also realize they too need redemption. In support of this Glance [7] argues:

Redemption of both the scholar and scholarship also involves a proper understanding that observing and further understanding God's creation should produce a response in the knower; that is worship. The tragedy for many Christian scientists is not that they employ scientific naturalism as a method but that their creative work does not lead to a response of awe and wonder at the creator and ultimately to worship [8].

From Glancer's [9] premise it is also arguable that as a music teacher and learner, the primary aim is to worship and glorify God in whatever endeavor. It is prudent to realize we are God's creation and all that we are and that which we are able to do is to be subscribed

to God. Accordingly, at no time in all our endeavors should we ever think we are the ultimate source of knowledge; even science with its criteria of knowledge formulation and its multiple discoveries is not plausible in their conclusions. The big question is, what is there to discover except what has been created by God?

### **The Essence of Teaching and Learning Music**

Music is considered significant in the lives of people because of its historical, cultural, social, economic, political, educational, and psychological functions among others. Some of the objectives of learning music in given institutions include: development of music literacy, being able to skillfully utilize music artifacts, being able to appreciate and contribute to the development of different types of music nationally and internationally, through participation, appreciation and composition develop a sense of co-operation and unity, develop creative skills and use music to acquire mental and physical health and to educate society in general [10].

The given objectives depict that music education is very instrumental in impacting and building up the lives of people as it touches on pertinent issues that affect people in the society. But from a Christian worldview music alone is not adequate to transform the lives of people ultimately unless it is furnished by the word of God which is absolute truth. This paper observes that the different kinds of music are influenced by different worldviews and each promotes its purpose or agenda. To back up this, Harris [11] argues that:

Scholars are human, and their beliefs and interests are often closely tied to personal political commitments, ideology, basic beliefs, and considerations. These commitments, sometimes emotionally rather than rationally based can influence their research and conclusions [12].

It can therefore be argued that these worldviews are presumptuous and biased in one way or another. That is why Harris [13] continues to argue that scholars do not work in a vacuum but are subject to social pressures and the influence of factors connected to the machinery of scholarship ( grants, promotions, tenure and so forth). In relation to this view, it can be concluded that music education as a scholarly product is not divorced from stakes of its curriculum developers and policy makers among others.

Furthermore, the way one teaches or learns music is influenced by his or her worldviews. It follows that "the way we define art (music) has the power to shape culture" [14]. Music as a form of art is known to penetrate the deepest level of one's soul and affect it tremendously. This means that music has the power to

“shape our thoughts, move our emotions, and enlarge our imaginations” [15]. As Colson and Pearcey succinctly put it, “the music we listen to, the images we plant in our minds, the stories we tell, have enormous power over the kind of people we are. They both express and shape our beliefs and values” [16]. Indeed this statement makes a lot of sense because from a biblical perspective, everything visible and invisible was created by God and reveals God’s glory to a perceiving eye, ear and heart. It is presumed that musicians are gifted with special ability to discern the deep meaning that creation presents, unearth them and weave them in their music compositions through which they can share with the world God’s glory and magnificence. God intended music to be used for His glory.

Philosophers of music education like Elliot [17], view performing and listening to music as a channel of building a person in many ways. He argues that when our levels of musicianship match the challenge levels of the pieces we interact with, we achieve the central values of music making and listening namely: musical enjoyment (or flow), self-growth, self-knowledge (or constructive knowledge) and through continuous involvement with music over time; self-esteem’. What Elliot [18] seems to suggest is that music learning is central in developing and transforming lives. He further explains that music is a rich form of thinking and knowing and is a unique source of self-knowledge, which is one of the most important kinds of knowledge humans can achieve. As much as [19] proposition is true, he fails to recognize that Knowledge drawn from a humanistic perspective is inadequate in facilitating human growth. Most importantly, is the knowledge dependent on the triune God as the source that is very crucial in the total and accurate growth of a human being. This paper suggests that music alone devoid of God’s truth is not adequate in meaningfully transforming people’s lives.

Additionally, music is seen to promote appreciation of cultural diversity among communities. Elliot [20], adds that “teaching and learning a variety of music comprehensively, as music cultures is an important form of multicultural education” [21] which enables one to appreciate other cultures drop prejudices. In other words, music teaching and learning enhances unity among people of different cultures. The given statement is agreeable to some extent, but from a Christian perspective, music in itself is not sufficient in transforming a heterogeneous society. We still witness fragmentation in multiple ways hence bringing unity between the diverse communities of contrasting cultures requires God’s divine intervention. This paper submits that if God is not at the center of anything, then music’s role is vain. Appreciation of other people’s culture alone is not enough in enhancing unity but the love of

God is an ingredient that cements any relationship. According to Elliot [22]:

Paraxial music curriculum is deliberately organized to engage learners in musical actions, transactions and with close approximations of real music cultures. The paraxial curriculum immerses students in music making projects that require them to draw upon musical standards, traditions, lore, landmark achievements, symbol systems, gestures and creative strategies of the musical practices of which their projects are a part [23].

Hence, the main objective here is to entrench the learners in their cultures, which may not necessarily subscribe to God’s culture. Elliot represents the postmodern thinking where knowledge is relative as it is discovered through experience; in this case, music making that is culturally oriented. Music knowledge therefore, has a great impact on those who study and engage with it. In view of this, this paper argues that, that kind of music should be free from flaws that would end up corrupting souls and instead liberate them and point them to God the Almighty who created music for His glory. That is why it is very crucial for a Christian learner or teacher to learn to see through the eyes of God when engaging with the process of learning and teaching music.

### **Integration and Faith**

Integration, according to the English dictionary’s definition, literally means the act or process of making whole or entire, or fitting in a society. It could also mean incorporating, blending or merging something with another; to some extent, it suggests mixing something with another. In reference to learning music then, it may imply merging faith with music. The question that arises is, is it possible to merge faith and music? According to Glancer [24],

The integration language emphasizes a synthesizing of ideas, theories, among others with one’s faith but also fails to capture the theological narrative in which this task must take place. Integration language, despite the transformationalist leaning of many of its proponents gives the impression that synthesizing is the primary task [25].

Glancer’s [26] argument is true because the implication here is that the primary task of a Christian is to merely mix his or her faith with learning. Faith in this case is the belief one has in something or someone in general. But specifically to Christian, it is the belief he she has in God and His word. When one considers synthesizing faith with learning, the premise is rather skewed. “Synthesizing” as a word means putting ideas together to form one functional one in one’s context after much study and consideration. Therefore, in Glancer’s [27] view synthesizing, as the word

“synthesizing” implies, in not the sole mandate of a Christian scholar. These definitions, to some extent, fall short of what is intended in terms of integrating faith with learning.

In view of the preceding argument, it can be posited that looking at the definition of integration from a dual perspective would give a more comprehensive understanding of the term. It can be suggested that integration be used alongside with the word ‘application’ which the English Dictionary defines as putting to use or employment for a particular purpose or in a particular case. In consideration of the two definitions then, this study posits that it is possible to apply Christian faith to learning music where knowledge from both parties is conflicting and blend or mix the two where knowledge from music and Christian faith and the music subject are coordinated. It is assumed that, to some extent, truths or knowledge that the teaching and learning music advances are similar to knowledge advanced by Christian faith, for all truth is God’s truth. This is to say, integration would be possible where the two parties agree but where the two worldviews clash then application of Bible truths to music teaching and learning would be prudently done.

Moreland and Craig [28] support the preceding premise by stating that, “In conceptual integration, one’s theological beliefs are blended and unified with propositions judged to be justifiably believed as true from other sources into a coherent, intellectually satisfying world. Similarly, Harris [29] affirms that, “Every time we learn something, we engage in the process of integrating knowledge, for integration is the process of connecting knowledge with knowledge or connecting facts, ideas, and other information. On the other hand, the essence of applying faith in this regard is to shed light to those values of music that are contradictory to God’s truth and enhance those that seem to have God’s truth with God’s word. In this respect Harris [30] adds that, “The process of integration should not be seen, then, as a method of rejecting knowledge, but as an activity of clarifying, filtering, and correcting misinterpretation” [31]. Integration of Christian faith and teaching and learning music, therefore allows for these two sets of worldviews to arrive at a harmonized consensus to some extent.

In this paper the term worldview is significant for deeper understanding of application of faith to the learning of music. Many scholars define the word ‘worldview’ but this study takes one that adequately advances the given discourse, for example, “...a world view is the sum total of our beliefs about the world, the “big picture” that directs our daily decisions and actions [32]. The implication in Colson and Pearce’s [33] definition is that there are certain things; experienced, observed or acquired that inform one about given issues

in life or reality. In other words, it is what is ingrained in our minds or even our hearts that determines how we perceive things, respond to issues, and live meaningfully on the earth. Further, Harris [34], expounds on worldview by stating that it ‘includes values, beliefs, commitments, attitudes, sometimes biases and prejudices. One’s epistemology or theory of knowledge is part of one’s worldview, as is one’s political orientation, social views, faith, morality, and so on’. Hence, worldview is a lens through which one view the world and is what dictates one’s lifestyle.

Consequently, the Word of God defines a Christian’s lifestyle, and as Colson and Pearcey [35] opine, our calling entails ordering our lives by divine principles and at the same time engaging the world. In this respect then, a Christian music student and teacher need to understand the deep truths from the Word of God that are their guiding principle to be able to see how best to apply it to the worldview of music education. Moreover it is incumbent upon a Christian learner and teacher to be able to evaluate the multiple philosophies, theories, ideologies, dogmas, among others, of a worldview of music education that they interact with which is in constant competition with their minds and hearts. Additionally, Christians can be viewed as ambassadors of Christ who commented on the Pharisees that tried to distort the truth and taught them the way as much as they resisted Him. Hence, Christians are expected to boldly and gently analyze what is false in relation to their faith hence fulfilling their mission of transforming the world and in this case the music worldview. According to Best’s [36] review of Harris [37] Faith, heart, soul, and intellect must function synergistically to empower students fully. In the wake of philosophical naturalism and postmodernism, teachers and learners of music need tools that would enable them critically evaluate and to construct or deconstruct knowledge that is presented in and outside the classroom.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study employs two related theories in explaining the relationship between faith integration and learning namely: Corresponding Theory and Coherence Theory. The proponents of the Correspondence theory include classical Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Russell. This theory states that a proposition is true if it tallies with the prevailing state of affairs or facts. In other words, if a statement is connected to the corresponding fact it means that it can be verified by appealing to good evidence, argument or reason. This theory is applicable to this discourse in that biblical truths correspond to some truths in the music arena. In addition, Christians are empowered by ‘the mind of Christ’ (1 Cor.2:16) to rationally defend their faith in Him based on the Bible in case there are conflicting ideas in the study of music.

The short fall of this theory is that for those who demand empirical evidence of every God's truth, there might be none and this would increase skepticism. However, it can be argued that spiritual matters are spiritually discerned (1Cor. 2:14).

The Coherence theory is also relevant in providing a framework for this discourse. Some of its proponents are Brandy and Young [38]. It states that a given statement is true if it does not contradict any other statement within a set of statements, which cohere with each other. In other words, there is a logical implication that connects a given statement to every other statement within a set of statements. In this regard, biblical truth is not the only source of truth but it coheres with other truths from different worldviews, which to some extent are consistent with biblical truth. As Harris explicitly puts it,

The two essential requirements for successful integration are consistency and coherence... two skills involved in any critical thinking activity. The new knowledge must be consistent with what we already know. There must not be a conflict between the claims. Contradictory ideas cannot both be true in the same way. If there is a conflict, the new knowledge claim must be adjusted, reinterpreted, or rejected, or what is already known must be adjusted, reinterpreted, or rejected. Coherence - one's entire set of knowledge must fit together into a unified whole. Our overall view of reality must make sense as a more or less harmonious, interrelated set of ideas. Our view of reality comes not only from facts we learn but through observation, experience, reason, interpretation, and even basic assumptions about the world, ourselves, and others' [39].

It follows, then, that the Coherence theory is relevant in this discourse as it facilitates music teachers and learners with a tool of gauging what is true in relation to their belief in the Word of God hence discerningly adopting it or refuting and correcting what is false. Harris [40] posits that a number of activities are required to facilitate harmony and consistency to the varied forms of knowledge. This includes connecting knowledge with knowledge where one sees how best the previously held knowledge fits with the new one. After serious evaluation "the new claim may be accepted, rejected, adjusted, or put on the shelf until later when sense can be made of it (that is, when it can be successfully integrated). And sometimes, current knowledge must be adjusted in light of the new. Another activity is connecting knowledge from different sources for example discoveries or theories. Reference to Harris, whose thinking is bible based gives us an insight into how we can go about in the process of integration.

### **What Integration of Christian Faith Entails**

The thinking behind integration is that the transformational knowledge should encompass the whole human being, that is the heart, soul, and mind and in all spheres of life including learning music. When it comes to teaching and learning of music it is important for both parties to understand that God's knowledge is supreme hence valid in illuminating the knowledge of the world. This is reflected in John 4:17 "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Hence one must be willing to accept the word of God as correctional in application to music knowledge that influenced by inaccurate worldviews. God's word points the teaching and learning of music to God's original architecture of music. The book of Ezekiel 28:13 states: "...the workmanship of thy tablets and of thy pipes was prepared in the in the day that thou was created." This verse reveals that a human being is divinely wired to make music as "tablets" and "pipes" here refer to the music instruments. Through divinely designed music, a human being interacts with God and fellow human beings and it serves as a source of knowledge about the meaning of life.

According to Harris [41], there are a number of assumptions behind the integration of faith and learning. To begin with, it is assumed that all truth is God's truth. Secondly, Christian knowledge is a key component of truth that can be found in any discipline and it helps in clarifying that truth. Moreover, where truth meets truth in integration there is harmony and seamless but where the truth of God encounters a contradictory standpoint, the truth of God supersedes it. Harris continues to explicate that, the most common work in the faith and learning area is that of integrating apparently conflicting interpretations rather than apparently conflicting facts. Furthermore, any kind of learning in the world can never be sufficient without the word of God that is pertinent in supplying clarity of all that exists. In fact, the word of God is absolute truth and is a measuring rod for all knowledge claims.

### **Ideal Music in a Christian Worldview**

As already discussed in the preceding paragraphs, the Christian worldview is based on the triune truth of God. Colson and Pearcey [42] hold that:

Artists (musicians) are gifted with special sensitivity to the glories of creation and through their work they can bring these glories in to sharper focus for others. The classical understanding is that the arts are a powerful means of communicating something significant about reality, a means of representing truth [43].

In echoing Colson and Pearcey, it can be concluded that any music that is composed and performed or listened to is expected to uphold God's values and principles. God is the initiator of all arts and in His wisdom, He made it beautiful. In support of this Cosgrove [44], describes God as wise and creative as well as righteous. Moreover, because of who He is, he created nature beautiful and understandable, creating human beings in his image and likeness with the capacity to know and to create. Cosgrove explains that, "God's work through us means developing human beings in moral, social, intellectual and aesthetic ways after the image of their creator. This statement implies that Christian musicians' compositions or creations should reflect the glory of God and honor Him. To give glory to God simply means that a music Christian composer should point to who He is, his nature, His creativity, His magnificence, His love, His might and so forth. The music that is created should inform the audience more about the power, the beautiful nature and mind of God. In essence, "we Christians should seek Christ's redemptive work in every facet of our personhood and our world" [45].

Similarly, Colson and Pearcey explain how music from ancient Greece was orderly. Christianity later adopted these styles, which became ingrained in the Biblical worldview. Art was in sync with God's creation, and there was harmony and structural order. In relation to this description, Colson and Pearcey conclude that,

The basic justification for art is in the doctrine of creation. Moreover when God created the world He cared enough to make it beautiful. There is no more convincing argument that God Himself is pleased with beauty...What's more, when God communicated His word to us he did so in a variety of literary styles: history, poetry, liturgical formulas, ethical principles, hymns, letters, maxims and proverbs and even a love song.

God is skillful and requires those who make music to be skillful in their endeavors. For example in 1Chr. 25: 1-35 and specifically verse 7 "...all of them trained and skilled in music for the Lord..." In Samuel 16: 14 a skillful harpist, David, was needed to play the harp for King Saul to drive away the evil spirit and David is seen in the book of Psalms exalting God. In this regard, Christian scholars and educators need to realize that they are endowed by God to project skill and affect the area of music education. Music is a noble field to explore and God is the Chief architect and wise master builder upon whose foundation musicians are to build. Music education that partners with God is bound to build an excellent music structure that will provide systems that reflect God's multifaceted wisdom and knowledge in the face of the earth. God's desire is that

Music education should produce quality artists equipped with skill and professional ethics. Musicians who can shape the world with their expertise and lifestyle. A people who will advance a kingdom culture in the earth; who fear God and attribute their potential, capabilities, talents and successes to Him and not their own ingenuity. A generation that will ascribe all the glory and honor to God in their execution of music and dance. Bustard [46] argues, "what the Almighty made was good in every way for its purpose. It was useful, healthy, and morally perfect".

### **The State of Music in the Contemporary Society**

Music provides an excellent means by which students may receive the best training possible while exploring the history of their faith from a musical perspective. Learning and teaching of music is expected to unearth talent and enable one to exploit the entire God given potentialities. But as Cosgrove posits, "...human beings as persons have free will and thus unlike, trees, they can choose to reveal their own natures (which are corrupted) rather than God's nature. In light of the fall of man music education and the nature of music has fallen prey to the enemy's schemes. Sire [47] summarizes the fall of man as follows; the image of God in humanity was defaced in all its aspects. In *personality*, we lost our capacity to know ourselves accurately and to determine our own course of action freely in response to our intelligence. Our *self-transcendence* was impaired by alienation from God, for as Adam and Eve turned from God, God let them go. And as we, humankind, slipped from close fellowship with the ultimately transcendent One, we lost our ability to stand over against the external universe, understand it, judge it accurately and thus make truly "free" decisions. Rather, humanity became more a servant to nature than to God. And our status as God's vice regent over nature (an aspect of the image of God) was reversed. Human *intelligence* also became impaired. Now we can no longer gain a fully accurate knowledge of the world around us, nor are we able to reason without constantly falling into error. *Morally*, we became less able to discern good and evil and less able to live by the standards we do perceive. *Socially*, we began to exploit other people. *Creatively*, our imagination became separated from reality; imagination became illusion, and artists who created gods in their own image led humanity further and further from its origin. The vacuum in each human soul created by this string of consequences is ominous indeed [48].

This 'fallen-ness' that Sire [49] describes precisely, is currently reflected in the music that is taught and learnt in class, because it is influenced by different worldviews that are in most cases devoid of God's nature. This is quite misleading because it makes truth relative, and the consequences are a decline in moral values because every person determines their

own code to subscribe to whether acceptable or not. In addition there is the philosophy of naturalism which capitalizes on materialism whereby knowledge is acquired experimentally, hence objectivity is exalted... position that everything knowable derives from an observation and interpretation of the natural world. Other knowledge, such as religious principles, moral concepts like good and evil, aesthetic ideas like beauty, and ethical concepts like justice and mercy, none of this knowledge is true in any real sense, but is all merely subjective belief or socially constructed preferences [50]. Colson and Pearcey continue to hold that:

There is the philosophy of existentialism that projects an individual as an autonomous self; Pragmatism, which denies God as the creator, elevates the process of experience and enquiry as the only source of knowledge, and strongly refutes the existence of transcended unchanging truths but exalts relativism in truth. That we develop a science of ethics through our different responses to particular conditions [51].

In the given world of conflicting views that are not plausible, therefore, the integration of Christian faith in learning of music is very necessary. In the era of postmodernism, knowledge is relative. Harris [52] describes postmodernism as follows:

Postmodernism can be described as anti-tradition, anti-foundational, anti-bourgeois, anti-universal, anti-individual, anti-metaphysical, anti-high art, anti-authority, anti-patriarchal, anti-Eurocentric, anti-Western tradition. By extension of its opposition to authority, tradition, and universal values, postmodernists are also anti-Christian. Postmodernists reject views that include everyone, such as views of human nature or the claims of God on all people [53].

In the contemporary world, postmodernism threatens to percolate all spheres of life including the teaching and learning of music. Therefore the "Christian worldview acquired through the bible, historical interactions with God, personal experiences with God, people; learning; helps us develop a more circumspect and coherent worldview. In quoting Killian [54] pinpoints that "sin occurs, not when we enjoy created things but when we misuse them." This statement is valid, however it may be argued that the way one enjoys, and the motive with which they do can be questionable. Hence, sin is embedded in the heart and motive of the doer. I submit that Christians are beings who live in a world riddled with myriad world views and it is their mandate to offer an objective solution to a world that is hungry for answers. The wisdom and counsel of God releases sanity in a mixed up world and especially where the quest for knowledge is concerned. With this in mind then integration of faith in music education is indispensable.

### **The Process of Integrating Faith and Learning Music**

In order to apply faith in teaching and learning music one has to be very well grounded in the bible. In sum, successful integration of faith and learning depends on a thorough, accurate, and carefully thought through understanding of the Bible, together with a good understanding of how academic knowledge claims are made and the worldviews underlying those claims. Skillful interpretation in both areas is a key factor in achieving ultimate goals. Sire [55] posits that:

For the Christian the Arts are also an important way to understand God and His creation... Artists operating within the theistic worldview have a solid basis for their work. Nothing is more freeing than for them to realize that because they are like God they can really invent. Artistic inventiveness is a reflection of God's unbounded capacity to create [56].

It can therefore be concluded that, the manifest wisdom of God and creativity can be expressed through music works, for example. In other words, music education and the resultant works, is an opportunity for a Christian to reflect God's nature in a world of aesthetics. As elucidated by Sire, the first principle for integrating faith and learning, therefore, is to be cautious, even a little skeptical, about information. Secondly, one does not have to make a decision to accept or reject every piece of knowledge presented to him or her. A third principle of integration is that the process of integration will require the rest of your life. In addition, as Moreland and Craig [57] remind us, the integration process is both a personal and a social one. It involves individual Bible reading, study, and thinking, together with discussions, reading, and working with others in the Christian community to come to the best understanding of each issue. In addition, Harris states that:

The process of integrating faith and learning allows faith to support and clarify learning, and at the same time allows learning to support and clarify faith. Engaging in the process of integration will increase your confidence in the learning process and make you eager to learn more, as you continue to develop strategies to combine faith and knowledge. The better you are able to use your growing knowledge of the faith to understand how knowledge works, the better educated you can become. And the more education you get, the more solidly grounded your faith will become [58].

As illustrated by Harris therefore, the process of integration allows those involved in it to grow in faith and makes education more purposeful. Both the

teacher and the learner need to be creative and innovative for effective integration to take place. In this case the word of God becomes “a lamp unto my feet” and “a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). If one is not deeply rooted in the word of God he/her may be shy or reluctant to employ faith in teaching or learning or may even find it uncomfortable. Similarly, if one does not know how to go about the process of integration, the whole attempt will be a failure. Hampton [59] clearly states that:

Many people struggle with the boundaries of what can be shared about faith within the classroom. Others struggle with understanding how to implement faith in the classroom when they do come from that type of background. Instructors either never attempt to do this because they feel uncomfortable doing it or they do it as many times as they can because it is a part of their fiber [60].

Hampton’s proposition signifies that integration of faith in learning is only possible when the teacher and learner are fully aware of their mission and have confidence and wisdom to execute. In support of this, Beckwith [61] explains that, there are two types of integration and these include conceptual and personal. In a conceptual integration, our theological beliefs, especially those derived from careful study of the bible, are blended and unified with important, reasonable ideas from our profession or a college major into a coherent, intellectually satisfying Christian worldview. In personal integration, we seek to live a unified life, a life in which we are the same in public as we are in private, a life in which the various aspects of our personality are consistent with each other and conducive to a life of human flourishing as disciple of Jesus Christ. Therefore, apart from applying Christian faith in content, one is expected to be a role model as well to create harmony and meaning in teaching and learning of a subject like music.

In addition, Kellian [62] identifies three goals of any Christ-centered music program, which include exaltation; involving thanksgiving, praise, and worship; edification; involving teaching, encouraging, and discipleship; and evangelism; involving out-reach to a lost world. He proposes that any Christian liberal arts institution must strive to help all its students, to achieve these goals. I concur with Kellian on this matter and it is the responsibility of a Christian music teacher and learner to advance Christ’s mission in the classroom or a given institution of learning. Kellian further gives examples in the bible of personalities that used music in exalting God and their victories like ‘Moses’ song to God after the parting of the Red Sea’ Exodus 15:10; Joshua 6:20), using music to create relief and calmness (1Sam. 16:23); songs of worship Psalms, Songs of Solomon, Miriam’s song of victory after crossing the

Red Sea, Deborah’s song, Mary’s song among others. “All music that seeks to glorify God through exaltation, edification, and reaching the lost draws us closer to fellowship with Him” [63]. I elucidate that Music is a gift from God hence in teaching and learning it is to be shared in a biblical perspective. Viewing the learning of music in this way enables one to build their faith in God and attribute all glory to him as the creator of music.

In reference to knowledge Harris states that multiple definitions of knowledge affect how one interprets the world, which affects how information is processed causing an application of biased standards and subjective interpretations. This suggests that in teaching and learning music one needs to exercise caution and discretion in receiving knowledge. “It is important to learn how to discern epistemology behind knowledge claims because professors and textbook writers usually do not announce their view of knowledge or their worldview in general” (Harris, [64] This calls for a lot of research to understand different worldviews and in-depth study of the word of God to guide in sieving new knowledge. To make Jesus alive in class, Lee [65] proposes that, “Assign projects that provide a structure for students to explore Christian faith in relation to course materials, such as an essay, a notebook interview or journal” [66].

In the same vein, Harris continues to explicate that:

Because we live in an age bombarded by media, a class could study both Scripture and culture in order to develop discerning Christian young people. Film clips, musical selections, TV news, advertisements, video games and internet sites would be engaged preparing Christian students to become cultural apologists. Non-Christian professors, articles, and groups should also be examined based through a Scriptural lens [67]

Harris’ proposition implies that Christian teachers and learners should scrutinize every source of knowledge to objectively come to a conclusion as to what is palatable or not as also supported by Lee [68]. In observing these premises on integration, it is, therefore, prudent to avoid a fundamentalist’s approach where only Christian materials are valid. It should be acknowledged that there is also some truth in non-Christian materials. Hence, it is advisable to look for theories and ideas that conflict with Christian faith and deconstruct them or correct them based on the word of God.

### **The Need for Integration**

Harris [69] views integration of faith as a key component in learning. And he opines that, “A key focus of Christian University is the integration of faith in learning and living in its teaching and scholarship.



Faith, heart, soul and intellect must function synergistically to empower students fully. In the same vein, Lee [70] argues that faith should be integrated in learning to inspire Christian college students to reach their fullest in intellectual potential, develop whole heads and hearts, understand faith and reason in theory of Christian epistemology; theory and philosophy of truth and knowledge and understand Christian scholarship in various fields. These ideals will help students develop sound academic scholarship practices, deepen walks with Jesus Christ, prepare students for workplaces and studies, challenge students to critique ideologies with informed Christian Skepticism and sow seeds of truth and love for eternity.

Similarly, Beckwith [71] profoundly explicates seven reasons why integration of faith and learning is crucial including the bible teachings as true, our vocation and the holistic character of discipleship demand integration, biblical teaching about the role of the mind in the Christian life and the value of extra biblical knowledge requires integration, and neglect of integration results in a costly division between secular and sacred. In addition to these reasons are the nature of spiritual warfare necessitates integration, the spiritual formation that calls for integration and that the integration is crucial to the current world new struggle and the contemporary crisis of knowledge.

### **Implications of an Integrated Mind**

-Drawing from the preceding discussion, it is now clear that knowledge springs from numerous sources with divergent worldviews. When each is analyzed in relation to another, there is bound to be similarities and at the same time debatable issues. It has been suggested that, in order to integrate faith with learning a lot of verification of a given episteme has to be done so as to either harmonize truths or deconstruct those that are conflicting amicably. In the context of this study, the goal is to harmonize Christian faith with music knowledge to restore or redeem music from its fallen state to its God's ordained status. Therefore, a number of implications come forth in the process of integrating faith and learning [72]. As succinctly explained by Harris "... as a student in this not only scholarly but social and political community, you should be aware of these forces that will be forcing you to conform. Remember that truth is neither established nor refuted by a vote of hands or committee. Look for truth" [73].

### **An Environment without Faith Integration**

A learning environment without faith integration simply means that scholars are susceptible to every bias in the knowledge presented to them. Harris affirms this by opining that, scholars may ignorantly adopt the prevailing thinking patterns or worldviews that could be faulty and competing with Christian truth.

In this way, the scholar may be torn apart and tempted to develop head knowledge as opposed to faith in God. Moreover, in the absence of integration, a scholar may be fragmented. This means that issues of faith will be separated from daily endeavors and thinking patterns. This is what Harris refers to as compartmentalizing faith. This is not God's will because His intention is for man to be whole, meaning that there needs to be a balance between the spirit, soul and body. The spiritual man yearns for godly impartation and builds the soul and body otherwise the soul and body will be impoverished.

Finally yet importantly, a scholar will tend to blindly take in unchallenged cultural values. According to Harris, engagement or discussion of incoming ideologies produces sight of what is valid and has a building capacity of the person and the society. In learning music, for example, a music scholar is able to distinguish flawed music from the genuine. In life, the right choices have to be made but it is very difficult to do so if one is not sighted. Wisdom comes from embracing God's truth as a guide. Otherwise, one can easily be scattered by amorphous decisions. One's mindset is a reflection of what it is exposed to, hence, integration of faith is necessary to rid it of any pollution from hallow premises.

### **The Way Forward: Redemption and Restoration of Music to its God Ordained Order**

Lee [74] elucidates that integration is a lifelong process-taking place in our daily endeavors. This is because new knowledge claims and interpretations take place on a daily basis. Therefore, integration of faith and learning should be seen as a pertinent tool to confronting divergent worldviews in the era of postmodernism and beyond. In quoting Gallagher and London, Lee [75] states that:

We can think of faith as a beautiful music composition, full of rich harmonies and intricate counterpoint. If we take out one or two parts, we may still recognize the melody even if the fullness has been diminished. Some works of literature are like this – thin versions of the complex Christian song. Other works may use some similar notes but add other, discordant passages. To evaluate what we read, we need to ask 'How well does this work resonate with my Christianity?'

What Lee implies is that other knowledge have some truth derived from Christian faith and it takes discernment to identify the legitimate from the illegitimate. Colson opine that one of "the greatest battles in culture war are over education and Christians "must be the salt of the world" and in this regard education. Christians must "restore high quality

education by supporting curricular reforms that restore an objective focus to the public school program. At the same time Christians must play an active role in promoting the teaching of general principles of truth and morality that though ultimately derived from scripture can also be supported on rational grounds. Because of common grace, these principles are often recognized by people of other faiths (Jews, Muslims, and Mormonsetc) as well as non-believers, allowing us to work together as allies in the fight.

It should be noted that, Christian education is not simply a matter of starting a class with Bible reading and prayer then teaching subjects out of secular textbooks. Rather, it consists of teaching everything (music) within the framework of integrated biblical worldview. It means teaching students to relate every academic discipline to God's truth and His self – revelation in scripture while detecting and critiquing non-biblical word view assumptions. In the context of operating in the Babylonian system/distorted world view/ fall of man we can ask like David when Israelites were facing a dominating force, the army of the philistines 'who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?' (1Samuel 17: 26 b).Christians have to take courage like David when facing the philistines, "David said to Saul, 'Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him'." (1Samuel 17:32). The world may present their philosophies and ideologies or dogmas as implied in Samuel 17:45, "David said to the philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin...' but a Christian scholar can present the truth and the knowledge of God in such a scenario/situation, "...but I come against you in the Name of the almighty, the God of the armies of Israel" (1Samuel 17:45).

When approaching the teaching and learning of music (a war tool) it is prudent to go in one's experience as a child of God whose identity is founded on the principles of God. One should always get dressed in the garment of faith, love, righteousness, peace, pure heart and do not dress like Saul as stated in 1Sam 17: 38-39, "But David said, 'I cannot go in these, because I am not used to them.' "So he took them off." In other words, a Christian cannot succeed in his or her mission of integrating faith and learning if he or she is entangled in worldly views. The word of God implores us to "...teach and admonish...in all wisdom..." (Col. 3:16); "...live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4). In the process of learning Christian scholars need to make a clear cut distinction of godly and ungodly traditions otherwise the bible clearly disapproves man made traditions as implied in Mathew 15:6 "So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God".

Moreover, teaching accurately is paramount because God demands accuracy. The English dictionary definition of accuracy is termed as, "freedom from mistakes; exact conformity to truth." Faith in God causes one to be accurate in the current music world plagued with deceptions. The key to accuracy is discernment, which enables one to see through the dark world. Isiah 60:2 states that, "See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples..." This implies that the world is marred with distortions of knowledge, which can be blinding and deceiving. It is therefore incumbent upon a Christian scholar to step out in faith to confront the enemy. Accuracy is refusal to be bound by the contradictory traditions, opinions, philosophies, science among others. It is by discerning the will of God and walking in the realm of the impossible (God's light) that can facilitate the victory of Christian in a dark world. Critically analyzing and deconstructing suggestions from alternative sources is a major requirement in integration of faith and learning because most are flawed. My proposition is that a music scholar should conform to the word of God to reflect godly characteristics (refer to 2 Timothy chap 1, 2, 3, 4). As a Christian music teacher:

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of God. Avoid godless chatter because those who indulge in it become more and more ungodly...who have wandered away from truth... and they destroy the faith of some. God's solid foundation stands firm sealed with this inscription: 'the Lord knows those who are His'...Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness... Flee from evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the name of the Lord out of a pure heart...don't have anything to do with foolish arguments because they produce quarrels...Those who oppose him he must gently instruct in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of truth, and that they will come back to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will (2 Tim. 2:15-26; Numbers 16:5). Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters (Colossians 3:23).

The preceding verses give direction to the way a Music scholar should carry out his or her mission in integrating faith and learning.

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