

# Sweet Victory



Victory Church's new \$7 million building has a wide platform with an orchestra pit, choir risers, a baptistery, and state-of-the-art sound, lighting and video projection systems designed and installed by All Pro Sound.

Formerly First Assembly of God Church, Victory Church in Winchester, VA changed its name in January 2005 by unanimous vote of its more than 1,000-member congregation. When they celebrated the opening of their new 60,000-square-foot facility on May 22 of this year, the church completed its transformation.

"We chose Victory Church because it symbolizes our purpose," said the church pastor, the Reverend Larry Hickey. "To win people to Christ, build them in faith, and send them out of our church and into the world."

A little over a year ago, Victory Church broke ground for its \$7 million building. The sanctuary seats 1,200 with average attendance of about 850 for Sunday worship at two services, and has a wide platform with an orchestra pit, choir risers, a baptistery, and sound, lighting and video projection systems designed and installed by All Pro Sound of Pensacola, FL. A complete video production system was assembled by the church itself, and interfaced to the other systems by All Pro Sound and lead designer, Chad Edwardson.

Central to the new sound system is a Yamaha DM2000, 96-channel

digital console, capable of handling 24-bit/96 kHz audio, plus effects and processing. Important options specified for the Victory Church console are three Yamaha AD8HRs, combination 8-channel mic preamp and analog-to-digital converters, and two MY16AE 16-channel digital I/O cards for interface with digital recording devices.

The church initially had in mind a standard analog console. But dialogue between All Pro Sound's Edwardson, project coordinator, Frank Iddings, and Tim Putprush, Victory Church head of technical ministry (a title he shares with wife, Charlene) later moved toward digital.

"One thing that dawned on us almost simultaneously," said Putprush, as the AV systems committee discussed systems details, "is that technology could be used to enhance worship." While he admits that this "revelation" seems quite obvious in retrospect, nonetheless the idea permeated the church's thinking about AV technology for the facility. "Even in our old location, we were always a little bit out front technologically. But our old sound system never quite fit our building or our ambitions. Ultimately, what we try to achieve in the

worship setting is the feeling of a personal relationship with God, for anywhere from 500 to 1,200 people. To do this, we needed a sound system that would be crystal-clear; clear to the point of being transparent to the worshippers, no more noticeable than the chairs or pews they sat in, but something that would move people to communion with God."

A good sound system is only part of the formula for achieving such a goal, really only "a delivery system for the content," Putprush noted. But by involving All Pro Sound early in discussions with the architects for the new facility, the church was able to maintain its focus on first principles. Technically speaking, said Putprush, "we achieved a uniform sound pressure level for every seat in the sanctuary. The sound is impressive but not overwhelming, and it's beautifully clear."

The notion of transparent technology carried through to the selection of the Yamaha DM2000 as well. In the worship setting, where most often various tech crews are made up of volunteers, the DM2000 makes friends easily and can prove its value quickly. "Chad trained 12 opera-

tors on the DM2000," Putprush revealed. "Not all of them ended up operating the console, but those who do have found it fairly easy to grasp. At the same time, the console can take a high-level operator deep into the setup in order to make very, very fine changes. It's really a fantastic piece of equipment."

Among the things the church wanted to accomplish with a front-of-house console were the ability to expand their capabilities as their needs grew, and scene recall. The church is using scene recall for a variety of base setups, at this point, six in all: Sunday morning service, Wednesday night Bible study, weddings, etc. "We're also adding things as we go along," Putprush reported, "like the Aviom personal monitoring system with the optional plug-in card for the DM2000."

The Aviom system was purchased in part because of unpleasant memories of the acoustically dead platform in the old church sanctuary, Putprush admitted, where the volume for the stage monitors had to be turned up so high that they reflected out of the platform shell, spilling into the sanctuary itself. "Now we can supply each player with his or her own mix, right out of the console." Six JBL SF12M floor monitors supply a traditional monitor mix to the platform, as well as two EAW monitors for the choir. "The architecture of the Yamaha makes it very easy to make changes to the Aviom system via the board itself, like adding a new mic set for drums."

Though the church is not using the DM2000's full complement of 96 channels, the extra audio real estate is not going to waste. "We're able to take a channel, use it as a template, and store it on a higher layer for recall whenever we need it by selecting Copy," Putprush explained.

"For bass player number two, for instance, and storing that setting on channel 72 for recall whenever we need it."

FOH loudspeakers mounted to the proscenium above the platform EAWs: two EAW AX364s (with a horn pattern of 60 x 45 degrees) flanking one EAW AX396 (with a horn pattern of 90 x 60 degrees) and two EAW MK2164s serve for left and right fills. The FOH system is supported by two Turbosound 2 x 15-inch subwoofers. Six OAP NF-241s in the front face of the platform stairs serve as front-fill speakers.

Edwardson specified a single Turbosound CS40 (a 2-way speaker with two 8-inch LF drivers and a 1-inch

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HF driver) to cover the problematic small upper balcony behind the FOH position, which extends from the balcony and down a few steps, out over the main floor of the sanctuary balcony area. "There was some skepticism that we could get the sound in the balcony area to match the sound on the floor," Edwardson said. "We spent a good deal of time tuning the system, getting the SPL set as well as the EQ curve in the balcony to match the floor. We were successful, completely satisfying the most critical listeners."

FOH loudspeakers are driven by eight QSC PLX model amplifiers and one Crown MA model. Digital signal routing is via Biamp Audia Solo 4 x 12.

Video projection in the church is based around three Sony M3 cameras on the floor, five Eiki digital



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projectors, and five Da-Lite screens (four 90 x 120-inch and one 87 x 116-inch). Central to this setup is a ScreenPro Plus multi-screen presentation switcher from Folsom Research that supports up to six screens, with the ability to select from up to 16 video sources. The switcher takes video in different formats and converts to RGBHV video signals that are sent to the projectors. "We send video direct from the video cards in the computers," Putprush said, "NTSC composite video from each of the cameras on the floor, and video from the DVD/VHS tape player. In the future we will be adding satellite video reception from the Global Pastor's Network."

"We did make an addition to the system," Putprush added. "We took an aux output from the Folsom matrix and designated it to follow the center screen. That aux is fed to a scan converter to give NTSC composite video from the digital computer inputs. The video is sent to the videotape production switcher so the computer generated video can be recorded on tape."

SongShow Plus, a database-driven worship presentation software program that the church has used for a number of years in various upgraded versions, Charlene Putprush said, allows instant display of song lyrics, scriptures, images and videos during praise and worship service.

"Basically, we have the ability to project simultaneously from the floor and from our video production studio with a live feed of materials we've put together in either SongShow or PowerPoint," Tim Putprush explained. "That was a big jump; we didn't have live feed in our other facility."

Video production began quite modestly as basically a service for shut-ins: video recordings of their pastor's sermons for those who could not attend services. "At this point," Putprush said, "we're taping the entire service, including praise and worship. We're still going to VHS, but we're in the process of moving to a full editing suite and producing on DVD. For one of our congregation serving in Iraq, we duped an edited VHS to DVD." Looking ahead three to five years, broadcast starting with the local cable TV channel is their goal.

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