

Does Manchester Need a Concert With Ariana Grande, Miley Cyrus and Katy Perry?

I assume the performers mean well. I assume they intend their concert to be an act of redemption and healing for the people of Manchester, England. But does this hurting city really need a performance featuring Ariana Grande, Katy Perry and Miley Cyrus (among others)? Is this the best way to bring healing to these open wounds?

Before I go any further, let me allow some of you (my critics) a moment to blast me. In fact, I'll write out what you're thinking to save you the trouble.

Perhaps it's something like this: "Who in the (obscenity) do you think you are? What gives you the right to tell the people of Manchester what's best for them? It's antiquated religious hypocrites like you who are messing up the world. So, go find a rock and hide under it, old man. We could care less what you have to say."

Do you feel better now? Did that help you vent?

Good. Then let's move on and try to have a fair-minded, heart-to-heart conversation. I mean to help, not hurt, to be constructive, not destructive.

Of course, whatever concert is or was held, however degraded or debased it might be or have been, it does not merit a terrorist attack. God forbid!

Even if the performers sang the vilest songs and had a corrupting effect on young people. Even if they mocked every religion on the planet. Even if their words and actions were deeply offensive, you don't blow up their audience with a

bomb. Never!

You don't maim them. You don't injure them. You don't kill them. No, no, no, no. (Rather than write it out, I'll just say "a thousand times no!")

The suicide bomber was doing the devil's work, not God's work, and there is no possible religious justification for his acts. What he did represents the worst of humanity and is hellish, not holy. It was horrific. It was barbaric. It was despicable. Every person of conscience, of every faith and non-faith, needs to denounce the act for what it was: a vile, cowardly act of mass murder.

Have I made myself clear?

The question now, is this: What would bring the most healing to the people of Manchester? What would help them rebuild their broken world, one life at a time?

The *Daily Mail* reported that on June 4th, Ariana Grande will "join forces with Katy Perry, Miley Cyrus and a star-studded line-up at [a] One Love Manchester benefit gig for victims of terror attack."

Perhaps they'll raise lots of money for the victims and their families. Perhaps they'll infuse the community with vigor and energy. Perhaps they'll shout to the world, "We will not be intimidated by violence and hatred!"

That's all good and commendable. And, to repeat, I assume the performers mean well. They obviously have busy schedules and they're coming together to say, "People of Manchester, we care about you."

I get it, and I appreciate it.

It's just that there's something amiss with the whole picture.

Remember that Ariana Grande's concert tour was called

“Dangerous Woman,” and as innocent as she may look, her songs are as vulgar as they come.

According to one post I received, “Ariana Grande’s ‘music’ is, very simply, pornography. EVERY SONG, and I do mean EVERY SONG has exactly the same theme: the physical, mechanical act of sex, including manual, oral and anal sodomy.”

Is this overstated? Perhaps. I haven’t read the lyrics to most of her songs. And there is plenty about the rest of the post that I differ with, especially its tone. But the lyrics I have read are absolutely gross—that is, once their meaning was explained to me. As the Huffington Post reported, “The Meaning of Ariana Grande’s ‘Side to Side’ Is Way More Sexual Than We Thought.”

To make matters worse, I’ve read that Grande’s target audience is pre-pubescent girls. As another article stated, “The 23-year-old’s most dedicated fans—largely made up of girls between the ages of 8 and 18—call themselves Arianators.”

Am I blaming these young girls for following stars like Grande? Certainly not. Most of them haven’t the slightest clue what she’s talking about.

Am I saying that the young girls and teenagers killed at her concert deserved it? To repeat: a thousand times no! As a father and grandfather, the very thought of this kind of violence makes me sick.

I’m simply stating that what Manchester needs most will not be found in a concert featuring the likes of Ariana Grande or Miley Cyrus (she of naked, wrecking-ball fame) or Katy Perry (she of a recent cannibalistic-fetish video; the links are too vile to provide).

What Manchester needs is hope from above.

What Manchester needs only the Lord can provide.

What Manchester needs is the beauty of love and the presence of true goodness, not a bunch of scantily-clad stars gyrating to sex-charged lyrics. And even if the benefit concert strikes a higher tone and the performers are on their best behavior, they are still not the ones the city needs to be looking to.

How wonderful it would be if the top worship bands of the nation came together for a night of worship and prayer. (Perhaps this is being planned as I write?)

How wonderful it would be if the Christian leaders of the region joined as one to declare a message of hope and redemption. (Perhaps this is being arranged as well?)

How wonderful it would be if the church of the city (and country) shouted out to their friends and neighbors, "God has a better way! In Jesus, you can find true life! Manchester turn to Him!"

My assumption is that many Christian leaders and churches in the U.K. are seeking to do this very thing, and my prayer is that the message of the gospel would touch that wounded city and country, reaching the Muslim communities as well.

Surely that would do far more good for Manchester than Arianna, Miley, Katy and friends. (And let's pray for them too.)

Do you agree? {eoa}