

enrichment

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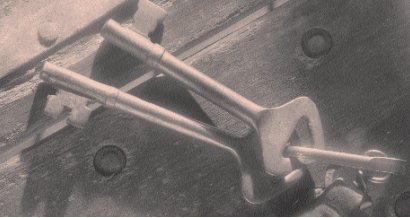
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WORSHIP in the Church





ministry matters

BY GARY R. ALLEN



Inspiring Worship

The purpose of this issue of *Enrichment* is to help ministers provide worship services that are balanced and inspiring to all who attend.

WHAT IS INSPIRING WORSHIP?

Personal worship emerges from our intimate relationship with God and focuses on who He is. What we do in personal and corporate worship is important, but *who* God is must remain central.

Corporate worship is what the people of God do when they gather in God's presence. In corporate worship we bring our cognitive perceptions and emotional preferences with us. However, we are obligated to submit and defer to one another for the good of the community of faith.

Corporate worship needs to be balanced and promote unity in generational and cultural diversity. We need to be intentional in developing and demonstrating a Pentecostal spirituality that is greater than our worship style. His presence and our worship response to Him should be so precious that preference and style become secondary.

Christian Schwarz, a German church-health researcher, says, "Whenever the Holy Spirit is truly at work (and His presence is not merely presumed), He will have a concrete effect upon the way a worship service is conducted including the entire atmosphere of a gathering."

WHAT DID JESUS SAY ABOUT WORSHIP?

The Jews and Samaritans had long

disagreed over where to worship: Mount Zion or Mount Gerizim. When Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman at the well, her primary issue was where to worship. Jesus responded that "A time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23,24*).

Worshiping God in *spirit* is worship from the inner person—a direct contact with God no longer dependent on location and external forms and rituals. Worshiping God in *truth* is worship that is not dependent on shadows and types or animal sacrifices but focuses on Him who said, "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

WHAT IS BALANCE IN WORSHIP?

A corporate worship service needs to include Scripture reading, congregational prayer, pastoral prayer, congregational singing, special music, receiving tithes and offerings, preaching the Word, and altar time. There needs to be balance. Any element of the worship service emphasized at the expense of the other elements may appear to lessen the value of the other valid and needed worship elements.

Balance is more than compromise and accommodation of styles and culture. Compromise and accommodation alone can remove the freshness of creativity of the Holy Spirit.

Balance in the elements of worship

Equal emphasis should be placed on the various elements of the worship service but not necessarily equal time. A worship service with 45 minutes of singing and 5 minutes of prayer may need balance. We should never plan a worship service that depends on only one or two elements to sustain it. No single element of the worship service should ever substitute for excellence in the other elements.

Balance in the style of worship

Balance is being intentional about meeting the worship needs of all the worshipers. Worship and musical styles must be inclusive of the style and culture of everyone attending the service. We all need to learn to appreciate and utilize various styles of worship.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WORSHIP SERVICE?

The pastor is ultimately responsible for the worship service. Even if others are designated to pray, read Scripture, lead singing, or play music, the pastor should be intentional about seeing that the service is inspiring to all who attend.

I hope you begin to lead worship services that are more inspiring.

** Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version.*

Gary R. Allen, D.Min., is executive editor of *Enrichment* journal and national coordinator of the Ministerial Enrichment Office, Springfield, Missouri.



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COVER ILLUSTRATION BY WILL SELF

Next time in *Enrichment* Managing the Local Church

What is the role of the pastor as manager of the local church? How does a pastor manage his/her office? What is the best way to manage ministry staff? These and many other church management issues will be discussed by T. Ray Rachels, Richard L. Dresselhaus, Dan Reiland, Shirley J. Good, and others. This issue of *Enrichment* is part one of a two-part series on church management. To order extra copies for your staff/volunteers or to subscribe, call 1-800-641-4310.

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Clergy Watch **PROTESTANT PASTORS NOT ON SAME PAGE AS THEIR DENOMINATIONS**

The results of the American Minister 2002 study just released by Ellison Research of Phoenix, Arizona, explored how the personal convictions of Protestant ministers matched the official political and theological positions of their denomination. A nationally representative sample of 475 churches with a denominational connection provided input to the study. The study included every Protestant denomination in proportion to the number of churches it has nationally (even churches in small denominations were sampled in the research).

The research demonstrated that about 4 of every 10 senior pastors in Protestant churches have some significant differences with the political and/or theological positions taken by their denomination. Pastors who differ with their denomination theologically tend to be split almost evenly between those who feel the denomination is too liberal and those who believe it is too conservative. Politically it is more common for ministers to complain that their denomination is too liberal.

The study's total sample is accurate to within ± 4.1 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level with a 50 percent response distribution. Respondents' geography, church size, and denomination were carefully tracked to ensure appropriate representation and accuracy.

COMPARED TO YOUR PERSONAL THEOLOGICAL POSITIONS, ARE THE OFFICIAL THEOLOGICAL POSITIONS OF YOUR DENOMINATION...

Type of Pastor/Church	Much More Conservative	Little More Conservative	In Line With Yours	Little More Liberal	Much More Liberal
All Protestant clergy	3%	16%	59%	16%	7%
Political conservatives	1	11	69	13	5
Political moderates	2	11	50	26	10
Political liberals	8	34	48	6	4
Members of the NCCC	3	16	43	24	15
Members of the NAE	—	1	81	6	—
Mainline churches	2	18	52	21	7
Evangelical churches	2	16	59	18	6
Baptist denominations	6	20	59	13	2
Methodist denominations	4	20	33	28	14
Pentecostal denominations	2	12	82	4	—
Lutheran denominations	2	15	67	10	7
All other denominations	1	12	58	20	9

COMPARED TO YOUR PERSONAL POLITICAL POSITIONS, ARE THE OFFICIAL POLITICAL POSITIONS OF YOUR DENOMINATION...

Type of Pastor/Church	Much More Conservative	Little More Conservative	In Line With Yours	Little More Liberal	Much More Liberal
All Protestant clergy	3%	13%	58%	18%	9%
Political conservatives	—	9	69	14	8
Political moderates	3	10	46	9	14
Political liberals	7	29	50	10	4
Members of the NCCC	1	13	39	25	22
Members of the NAE	2	13	79	6	—
Mainline churches	4	15	45	24	12
Evangelical churches	2	11	60	19	7
Baptist denominations	7	16	66	10	2
Methodist denominations	1	19	29	25	26
Pentecostal denominations	—	11	82	7	—
Lutheran denominations	—	14	57	24	5
All other denominations	2	9	57	21	12

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Boomers to Zoomers

THE CHANGING FACE OF SUBURBAN MINISTRY

The migration to the suburbs is one of the most important demographic realities of the 20th century. Millions of builder-generation Americans sought a better life in the tract housing that began in our cities in the late 1940s. They brought their children with them. As a result, most baby boomers are a product of suburban culture—or the lack thereof.

The idea of suburbia as the home of married households with children was quite accurate for many years. Consequently, ministry styles that reached this type of family unit effectively produced considerable fruit in many regions. In fact, you will notice

more similarities than differences among effective suburban churches.

But things have changed. The latest census shows that the Ozzie and Harriet stereotype (husband, wife, and kids) no longer represents the majority of suburban

life. The Associated Press reported in February 2002: “Nonfamily households—homes headed by a young, single professional or an elderly widow, for instance—now outnumber married couples with kids in the suburbs of the nation’s largest metropolitan areas.”

Diversity is the name of the game for the future. With boomers having grown up and moved out, and divorce (among other causes) breaking up families, the once familiar face of the suburban families is being replaced by many faces.

These faces are depicted in a Brookings Institute analysis of 2000 statistics for the nation’s 102 largest metropolitan areas. The report

found that only 29 percent of suburban households are made up of dad/mom/kids.¹

There are at least two significant implications of this trend toward diversity:

Ministry models that were cutting edge in the 1980s may begin to age out because they are based on demographic assumptions that are no longer true.

Church planting by effective suburban congregations may be the quickest route to reaching the unreached people groups that are appearing in the ‘burbs.

My major recommendation: The leadership of any suburban church needs to reevaluate the nature of its community, challenging

every assumption about the people they intend to reach, and be willing to add new ministry that will extend their effectiveness to those groups.

Recommended

resource: *Moving Off the Map: A Field Guide To Changing the Congregation* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press, 352 pp., paperback)

E N D N O T E

1. Adapted from *SAM Journal* 143:11,12.

—Earl Creps, *doctor of ministry director, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary*

Did You Know?

- The poverty rate rose to 11.7 percent in 2001, up from 11.3 percent in 2000, marking a noticeable change from the prior 4 years when the rate actually dropped (U.S. Census Bureau).

- Spending at family clothing stores totaled \$5.1 billion in August 2001, compared to bookstore sales of \$2 billion that same month (U.S. Census Bureau).

- Teen pregnancies dropped to a record low in 2001 to 45.9 births per 1,000 girls aged 15–19. The decline from 48.5 such births per 1,000 females marked the 10th consecutive year the teen birthrate declined, and a 26 percent decrease since 1991 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

- Family (96 percent) and health (90 percent) led the list of nine aspects of life ranked most or extremely important to Americans responding to a December 2002 Gallup Poll. Work (73 percent), friends (70 percent), and money (67 percent) were more important than religion (65 percent). The least important aspects were leisure time (59 percent), hobbies (46 percent), and community activities (32 percent).

- The IRS reduced the standard mileage rate for reimbursable business travel in 2003 to 36 cents per mile, down from 36.5 cents per mile in 2002.

- You can easily determine the dollar value of an international donation, or how far your money will stretch while traveling, by using the currency converter at: www.oanda.com/converter/classic.

- Information on elected officials in every state is available at: <http://yahoo.capwiz.com/y/dbq/oficials>.

- GovBenefits is an online resource that can help individuals discover whether they are eligible for any of the diverse benefits provided by 200 government programs. Preliminary questionnaire: www.govbenefits.gov/jsp/GovBenefits.jsp.

—Lisa Crayton



CrossRoads EMERGING REALITIES

Syndicated columnist Don Feder has written that the philosophers of the 19th century confidently announced God's demise, while the ideologues of the 20th century showed us how ghastly existence could be with such a gaping hole in our souls. The 21st century is already showing indications of social horrors that could reach apocalyptic proportions. AIDS is rapidly reshaping the social structure of sub-Saharan Africa. Nationalism/tribalism is demonstrating the vast depths of human hatred. The end of the Cold War has unleashed a volatile new era of terrorism that uses human targets as pawns in a chess match of global politics.

Neil Postman, the author of *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, recently said that "if there are children starving in Somalia, . . . if crime is rampant in our streets, it has nothing to do with inadequate information." Postman continues, "What we really need is a transcendent narrative to weave the unquestioned and uncombined facts of our lives into a fabric." Postman's poignant observation calls Christians to respond with more than a technique or program.

The social tragedies dawning on the horizon of the 21st century are very real. However, followers of Jesus Christ, bound together in communities, can confidently flesh out the old, old story of Jesus and His love because we have more than a solution to

inadequate information or a diplomatic answer to political upheaval. Christians can live a life-changing story, not merely restate it in new propositions or novel sound bytes.

The reality of Pentecost is the empowerment of countless people with little renown who faithfully embody the words and deeds of Jesus Christ. The 21st century will propose challenges unlike any in history, yet as with all mountains, even the gates of hell itself will not prevail against the inevitable triumph of the gospel faithfully lived out by God's people.

—Byron Klaus, D.Min., president, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary



Photo: PhotoDisc

History at a Glance

JAN HUS—THE GOOSE OF BOHEMIA

590 YEARS AGO—1413

In 1412, after being excommunicated for the fourth time, Jan Hus left Prague and went into exile. He took refuge at Austi in the southern part of Bohemia. There, in 1413–14, he wrote his principal work, *De Ecclesiâ* (The Church), which encouraged Christians to trust God but to question the Church. During this time of exile he wrote other books and preached to supporters in nearby barns, fields, towns, and forest before standing trial for heresy in 1415. (For more on Jan Hus, see the article, "Jan Hus—The Goose of Bohemia" on page 114.)

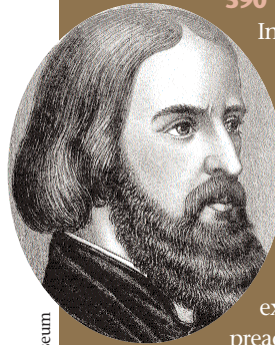


Photo: Courtesy of the Billy Graham Center Museum

100 YEARS AGO—1903

Mary Arthur was dramatically healed of blindness and other ailments during Charles Parham's meetings in El Dorado Springs, Missouri, on August 17. She then encouraged Parham to come to Galena, Kansas, to hold meetings. He later set up his headquarters at nearby Baxter Springs and a mighty revival spread to neighboring towns and the South. Mary Arthur became a leader in the Pentecostal movement and ministered as a pastor and evangelist with the Assemblies of God.

75 YEARS AGO—1928

Pentecostalism was formally rejected as "fanatical and unscriptural" by the World's Christian Fundamentals Association, an umbrella organization for all fundamentalists.

50 YEARS AGO—1953

Ralph Riggs was elected general superintendent of the Assemblies of God. He boosted educational interests and was instrumental in establishing Evangel University as a liberal arts college. He also promoted Sunday School work, was a prolific writer, and taught at Bethany Bible College in California.

25 YEARS AGO—1978

The New International Version of the Bible was completed. Since 1968, over 100 transdenominational scholars had worked directly from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts. Assisting this project was the National Association of Evangelicals, the New York Bible Society (now the International Bible Society), and many church bodies, including the Assemblies of God. This new contemporary translation is hailed as dignified and readable.

—Glenn Gohr, assistant archivist, Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center

Health Watch

FIT 4 LIFE

How much does it cost to exercise? It's not the memberships, clothes, shoes, or equipment. The biggest cost and excuse for not exercising is time.

According to the American Heart Association, we need a minimum of 20 minutes of consistent moderate exercise at least three times a week to maintain adequate cardiovascular health.

Walking requires little to no equipment and can be done inside or outside. It strengthens your heart, lungs, and muscles and allows you to spend time with a friend or family member. Walking clears your mind and helps you focus on God's gift of your body.

You can create a more active lifestyle in a number of ways. Incorporating any combination of these suggestions every day will keep your muscles and joints strong and functioning properly for years to come:

- Take walking breaks.
- Climb stairs.
- Choose the farthest parking spot and walk to the door.
- Use exercise equipment, like a stationary bike or treadmill, while you read or watch TV.

- Stand rather than sit to talk on the phone.
- Play an active game with your children or grandchildren.
 - Sweep your driveway with a push broom.
 - Rake leaves, shovel snow, or dig holes for planting flowers.

If weight loss is a part of your wellness goals, you need to do more than the minimum required to burn extra calories. Combine an active lifestyle with 30 to 60 minutes a day of continuous movement to reap the calorie-burning benefits that lead to weight loss.

Fit 4: A LifeWay Christian Wellness Plan is a biblically based fitness study designed to help you fully develop a balanced fitness plan

and healthy lifestyle. For information about Fit 4, visit www.fit4.com or e-mail Fit 4 at fit4@lifeway.com.

—Branda Polk, former Fit 4 Consultant for LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville, Tennessee, and a certified personal trainer and lifestyle wellness coach



Photo: Digital Stock

Crossing Cultures

AN ETHNIC PERSPECTIVE

- The most common place of birth for foreign-born citizens is Mexico with 4.5 million. Other nations exceeding 500,000 are the Philippines, Cuba, Korea, Vietnam, and China.
- Since 1970, the number of Buddhists has grown from 200,000 to 1.8 million, Hindus from 100,000 to 2.7 million, and Muslims from 800,000 to 6.5 million. The number indicating they are nonreligious has grown from 11.7 million to 29.4 million.
- According to the *Dallas Morning News*, Patterson, New Jersey, schools have seen an increase in Mexican students of more than 200 percent during the past 5 years. In Portland, Oregon, the number of Mexican students has grown from 7,000 to over 50,000 in the last 20 years.

—David J. Moore

The Inside Track

DOES MORE EDUCATION REALLY = LESS RELIGION?

Conventional wisdom has it that there is an inverse relationship between individuals' education and religiosity levels. That is, the higher a person's level of education, the less likely he or she is to be religious. That may be accurate with regard to some aspects of religion, but recent Gallup research suggests that in others it is not necessarily the case.

But these data don't tell the whole story. Results from other survey questions indicate that more highly educated people are at least as likely to go to church.

The data also reveals a fascinating and important difference between those with a high level of education and those with minimal education. The former group is less likely to trust organized religion but more likely to trust clergy members, while the latter is more likely to trust organized religion and less likely to trust the clergy.

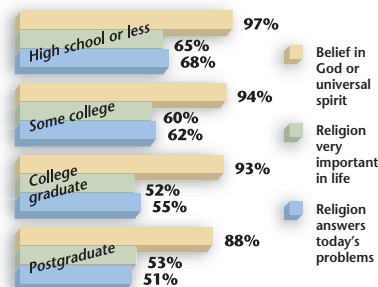
BOTTOM LINE

To some degree, those with a lower level of education are more likely to "talk the talk" when it comes to religion. That is, they're more likely to say they believe in God, place religion prominently in their lives, and recognize religion's importance in the world. But those with a higher level of education are as likely as those with less education to "walk the walk" by belonging to a congregation and attending services regularly. These results may point to a failure on the part of organized religion to attract and connect with those with a lower education level, perhaps reflecting the trend in the last century toward more highly educated clergy.

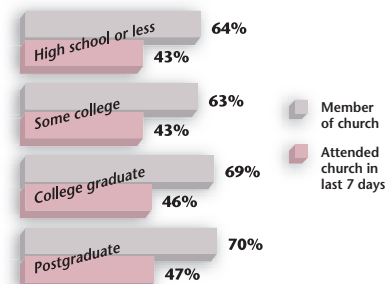
The 2002 Index was compiled from surveys of national adults, aged 18 and older, conducted throughout 2002.

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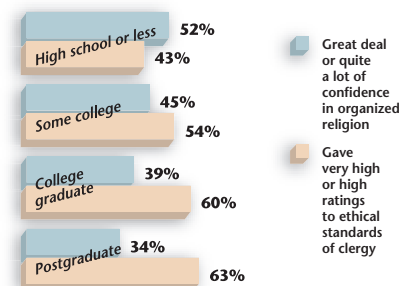
Religion and Education: Belief and Importance



Religion and Education: Membership and Attendance



Religion and Education: Confidence in Institutions and Leaders



Amu^zing Grace

YOU MIGHT BE A WORSHIP LEADER IF . . .

- Your favorite "Sunday go to meeting" outfit is a choir robe.
- You like Rock and Bach.
- You know the difference between Charles and John Wesley.
- You own all the Gaither Homecoming videos.
- You are married to the senior pastor and are willing to work for free.
- Your cell phone ring sounds like a pipe organ.
- Your idea of a family evening is learning parts to Handel's *Messiah*.
- You can spell cantata.
- You know the *third* stanza of all the hymns.
- Your daughter is named Fanny and your son is named Crosby.

—Steve Phelps

ShelfTalk

ESSENTIAL BOOKS FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

While pastors constantly give out spiritual energy, sometimes their own needs for refreshing go unmet. Spiritual formation must be at the core of every well-balanced pastor's life. Here are some recommended books for developing spiritual formation.

1. *Disciplines of the Holy Spirit: How To Connect to the Spirit's Power and Presence* by Siang-Yang Tan and Douglas H. Gregg (Zondervan, 240 pp., paperback).

Why buy? This excellent book on the traditional disciplines of the Christian life is written by two Christian counselors who themselves have a profound experience of the Spirit and who further understand that the "journey into true spirituality requires the transforming presence of the Holy Spirit." A wonderful guide for all who cherish the work of the Spirit in their own lives and the lives of those they serve.

2. *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith* by Richard J. Foster (Harper, San Francisco, 448 pp., hardcover).

Why buy? While giving

much needed attention to the contemporary work of the Spirit in the Pentecostal-charismatic tradition, this book pours into our tributary the powerful and viable spiritual streams of other traditions that have shaped the Christian faith as we know it today. It provides a great way to learn and grow through exposure to the best of the contemplative, holiness, social justice, evangelical, and incarnational spiritual traditions.

3. *Wasting Time With God: A Christian Spirituality of Friendship With God* by Klaus Issler (InterVarsity Press, 296 pp., paperback).

Why buy? Here is a fine book on personal intimacy with God by His Spirit that dips deeply into biblical wellsprings and pours them refreshingly on the lives of Christian leaders who often confuse activity and orthodoxy with spirituality. Humility, faith, commitment, communication, apprenticeship, and partnership are all lifted up as vital characteristics of the spiritual journey.

—Edgar Lee, senior professor of spiritual formation and pastoral theology, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary



The Him Behind the Hymn

A TASTE OF HIS OWN MEDICINE

When W.P. Mackay left home for college, his mother was concerned about the decisions he would make on his own. She gave him a Bible and inscribed a verse in the flyleaf. At the university, Mackay got carried away by the world of pleasure much as his mother had feared. Once he needed money for whiskey and pawned the Bible his mother had given him. In spite of his preoccupation with having a good time, Mackay eventually graduated college and medical school.

One day Mackay treated a dying man in the hospital. He was impressed by the man's request that "his book" be brought to his bedside. When the patient died, Mackay, curious about what book was so meaningful to the man, picked it up and saw that it was a Bible. As he opened the cover, he couldn't believe his eyes. It was the Bible his mother had given him that he had bartered away for booze. There on the flyleaf was his name and the Scripture verse his mother had written out.

Retreating to his office, Mackay read "his book," and within a few hours, under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, surrendered his life to Jesus. His own life revived and renewed, this medical doctor would become a physician of souls. As a minister of the gospel, W.P. Mackay wrote a hymn that has stood the test of time.

"Revive us again. Fill each heart with thy love. May each soul be rekindled with fire from above. Hallelujah! Thine the glory. Hallelujah! Amen. Hallelujah! Thine the glory. Revive us again."

—Greg Asimakoupoulos

A Single Word

SEX ON THE WEDDING NIGHT

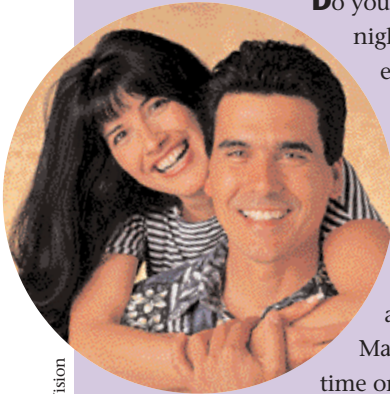


Photo: Digital Vision

Do you remember your wedding night? Do you remember the excitement, the mystique, the anticipation of expressing your love to your spouse through God's special gift between husband and wife—the act of marriage, as it used to be called? Making love for the first time on the wedding night is becoming less frequent.

Asra Q. Nomani of the *Wall Street Journal* writes, "The wedding night—cultural totem, the stuff of romantic movies, the object of a million gentle jokes about anxiety and performance . . . is becoming increasingly rare."

Among the trends:

- Ubiquitous premarital sex.
- Prenuptial cohabitation.
- Growing numbers of second and third marriages.

Says one wife, after marrying her beau of 8 years, "I think I wore matching underwear for the first time in my life, but please, we'd been together 8 years. The wedding night is just not as romantic as it used to be."

What does all this mean to pastors? What implications are presented to the church? At the very least, we must understand the following:

- A higher percentage of single adults have been or are sexually active than were years ago.
- We need biblical teaching on sexuality to single and single-again adults from an unmarried perspective.
- Our premarital counseling must include the biblical perspective and importance of sex.
- Our spiritual terms and principles may be foreign to some people who get married in our churches.
- We need biblical postmarital education.
- We need mature Christian role models in marriage.

—Dennis Franck, director, Single Adult Ministries Agency

What In The World

WHEN THE GOSPEL INTERSECTS MADISON AVENUE

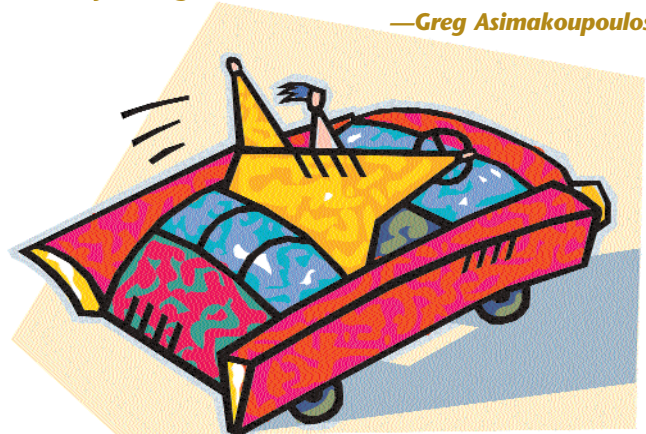
A signature earmark of Billy Graham's sermons is the way he begins his messages with reference to what is going on in popular culture. This is an approach he adopted in 1943 when he was pastor of a small congregation in Western Springs, Illinois. The purpose is to draw the congregation in with something they are familiar with or have recently been thinking about.

A variation of this approach could be referencing slogans that appear in advertisements on highway billboards. For example, in metropolitan Chicago there is a signboard for ESPN. It reads, "Without sports, weekends would just be weekdays." That is a lie of our culture that could easily be challenged in the pulpit as we celebrate the gift of a day of rest God intended us to enjoy. It has absolutely nothing to do with being a spectator in a stadium or on a couch.

How about a television commercial? General Motors recently ran a series of ads in which an automobile architect from the early 20th century has come back from the dead. In the commercial, we see a man dressed in 1930s clothing saying, "My name is Harley Earl. I've come back to build a car for you." What a great launching pad to take off on why Jesus is coming back for us. His purpose in His resurrection from the dead (and returning to earth) has a lot more significance than designing a trendy car that will soon be in some wrecking yard.

The next time you need a creative illustration for your sermon, don't run to your book of 3,001 favorite illustrations. Open your eyes to ads on billboards or television. There's more theology there than you might think.

—Greg Asimakoupoulos





TimeWise MULTITASKING



Photo: RubberBall

Multitasking has become a buzzword. In today's too-busy world, it is imperative that ministers learn to do several things at a time—to multitask.

Most of us would agree that mothers with small children who run an efficient household have mastered the art of multitasking. Who else can wash a load of clothes, dry a load of clothes, run the dishwasher, take or make three phone calls, feed the baby, and color with the toddler all at the same time? Perhaps you have no interest in juggling that many duties, but consider the following multitasking tips:

- Rehearse next Sunday's message while commuting to/from the office.
 - Make calendar notes while stopped at traffic lights.
 - While waiting for medical and other appointments, formulate notes to family or close friends that you prefer in your own handwriting. Keep notepads and envelopes in your briefcase for this.
 - Make phone calls on your cell phone while walking to and from buildings or while waiting in drive-through lines. Keep your planner handy to make follow-up notes.
 - Balance your checkbook while eating lunch (if you're eating alone). Have a calculator in your briefcase. If you have an electronic check register, bring along your laptop.
 - Run a large printing job such as downloaded sermon/reference material from the Internet while talking with a staffer.
 - While searching for a piece of correspondence, clean out the file you're looking through.
- Multitasking during a 1-week time period can give you back 1-5 hours of precious time.

—Faith Hamilton,
Enrichment Journal

LeaderLife

SURVIVING DIFFICULTIES

Isolation can be one of the devastating challenges in the ministry. The feeling that I am the only one who has a certain problem and that there is no one to talk to about it can turn small issues into calamities. However, we can survive difficulties if the right helps are available.

Information can help us define reasonable expectations. In pursuit of this information, I have surveyed ministers at district functions. After a year of giving this survey, I have been surprised by the uniformity of results from district to district. Here are how the results average out cumulatively:

1. Is the ministry harder than it used to be?

Seventy percent say it is. If you are feeling the ministry is more challenging than ever, you are not alone. It appears, then, that our trials are indeed "common to man" (1 Corinthians 10:13)—even in ministry.

2. What are your top two or three leadership challenges?

Both men and women gave one overwhelmingly prevalent response to this question: lay-leadership development. All other answers paled into insignificance by comparison. This issue strikes at the heart of the pastoral responsibility "to prepare God's people for works of service" (Ephesians

4:12, NIV). This finding tells me that at least we are working on the right things. It also speaks to the challenge every pastor feels in motivating, training, and retaining lay leaders.

3. What one word describes your life right now?

While dozens of words were recorded, I could summarize them by saying they reflected a positive attitude by a ratio of about 2 to 1. In one case this was 10 to 1. The men who responded could be characterized as "fulfilled/busy/challenged." The female respondents were even more positive.

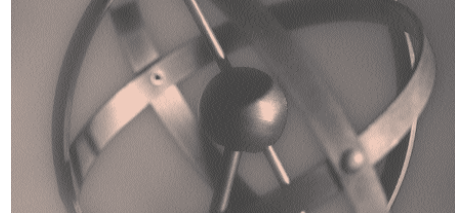
Overall, the picture is of pastoral leaders who are feeling significant stress, struggling with the same issue (lay leadership), but have a generally positive orientation toward their calling.

My major recommendation: Take comfort in the fact you are not alone. When facing times of struggle, open a line of communication with a trusted peer for dialogue and prayer.

Resource recommendation:

Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership by Gary L. McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima (Baker Book House, 240 pp., paperback)

—Earl Creps, Doctor of
Ministry Director, AGTS



Ask the Superintendent— Worship in the Church

We dare not become worshipers of worship. You cannot have 45 minutes of worship and 15 minutes of the Word and expect people to mature spiritually.



Not many subjects inside the church strike up as lively a discussion as worship. There are about as many preferences of worship styles and tastes in the church as Baskin Robbins® has flavors of ice cream. Although this interview with General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask is not intended to be the final word on worship, it does shed valuable insight on this most important aspect of church life.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR IN THE WORSHIP SERVICE?

TRASK: While the music pastor may be responsible for the music, the pastor is responsible for the whole service. When I was senior pastor, I regularly discussed the Sunday services with my music pastor. He wanted to know my preferences for special music. I would let him know if I was preaching a series, and if so, for how long or the subject of my next sermon. What better way than music to bring my sermon subject into focus. I didn't dictate to him, but I gave him direction and explained what I wanted to see God accomplish in the hearts of the people. This provided unity for our worship

services. The senior pastor and the worship leader must be on the same page.

WHAT IS THE CORRELATION BETWEEN MUSIC AND THE WORD OF GOD IN A WORSHIP SERVICE?

TRASK: The worship service must be centered around the Word of God. Music and worship prepare people for the Word by softening their hearts so the seed of the Word falls on fertile ground.

We dare not become worshipers of worship. You cannot have 45 minutes of worship and 15 minutes of the Word and expect people to mature spiritually. Those priorities are wrong. Some pastors might say, "I have a strong worship leader, and he doesn't want to be under the authority of the senior pastor." The worship leader is not to do his own thing; he must be under the authority of the senior pastor.

WHAT CHANGES IN WORSHIP STYLE HAVE YOU OBSERVED OVER THE LAST DECADE?

TRASK: In the last decade, we have introduced many new songs into the church.

This has been good. We need fresh and vital worship. Pastors also need a mix of old and new songs to keep freshness in the congregation. Many churches have formed worship teams. These are healthy changes.

I do have some concerns, however. In many congregations, people know the old choruses and songs because they have sung them for years. It is hard for some people to learn new songs when the worship director projects on the screen only the words and not the music. We must also appreciate the hymns of the church and some of the older choruses because a segment of the body identifies with them.

Also, some worship leaders and worship teams do not watch to see if the congregation is participating. If the congregation is not worshipping, then you are not leading worship. Good worship leaders make sure their congregations are participating.

HOW CAN PASTORS AVOID THE DIVISIVE ISSUES CONCERNING WORSHIP STYLES?

TRASK: It is important that the style of worship reflects the personality of a congregation. Pastors sometimes unwisely impose change on their congregations. For example, I am grateful for the worship that was birthed at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida. This church and its worship leaders have been used of God in a beautiful way. But to take the Brownsville music and style and impose it on a congregation hundreds or thousands of miles away is a mistake. God is a God of diversity. Rather than simply copy their music and style, pastors need to learn from their example and develop the music God wants for their congregations.

Some pastors are not being sensitive to their congregations by not allowing changes in worship styles to take place in an acceptable time and manner. In the past, people were not asked to stand and sing for 30 to 60 minutes. Now they are. Some people are not comfortable with this style of worship. Shouldn't worshipers be free to worship as they please? Yes. But to impose a lengthy worship

time is a mistake. If people want to stand and worship for a long time, that is fine, but do not force it on others and cause them to become uncomfortable.

Worship issues should not cause people to leave our churches. Something is wrong when a leader says, "Well, if they don't like it here, let them go someplace else." That attitude is not right. Many people have been in the same church for many years, participated in the ministry of the church, and have developed a network of friends. For a pastor or worship leader to tell church members they can go elsewhere shows a lack of sensitivity.

IN WHAT WAYS IS MUSIC AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR WORSHIP SERVICES?

TRASK: A church's worship service should encourage those who attend. Some people work in atmospheres where they are subjected to unwholesome language. Others have domestic problems and physical needs, so worship should strive to lift people into joy and gladness and bring them to a time of prayer. In that stillness we allow God to speak.

Pentecostals are Spirit-led people. At times God desires to break into our worship services. We must be willing to lay aside our schedule and say to the Holy Spirit, "You are welcome in this place. What do You want to say to us?" In our worship, there may need to be a time of brokenness and repentance. I have given altar calls during the worship service that were orchestrated by the Holy Spirit. We must be obedient to what God is leading us to do.

HOW CAN LESS EXPERIENCED PASTORS AND WORSHIP LEADERS LEARN TO LEAD AN EFFECTIVE WORSHIP SERVICE?

TRASK: Younger ministers and worship leaders should watch those who are sensitive to the Spirit as they lead in worship and learn from them. Some people are gifted to lead in worship. That is something you can't teach; it comes from the ministry of the Holy Spirit. People can learn the mechanics

of worship, and we need that training. But spiritual worship is not just entertainment or a formality. Worship leaders must be worshipers themselves.

It is critical that worship leaders and teams have a time of preparation. This is more than simply rehearsing for the service, though. Setting aside time for spiritual preparation is critical, the same way pastors prepare themselves spiritually before they go into the pulpit. Please understand, there is a difference in leading a song and leading in worship. A worship leader brings people into the presence of God. The worship leader understands that it is not a performance; it's a spiritual act. A good worship leader brings a congregation into the presence of God rather than hinder what God wants to do in a particular service.

HOW CAN PENTECOSTALS ORGANIZE THEIR WORSHIP SERVICE AND STILL HAVE THE FREEDOM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

TRASK: A service needs to be planned. That's a spiritual act. A pastor should not go to the platform without an order of service. Planning provides direction. It is important for people to see their pastor is not flying by the seat of his pants waiting for an inspiration to do something. This sometimes happens when the pastor and music director have not adequately communicated and planned the flow of the service.

Contrary to what some believe, the Holy Spirit can minister in a well-planned service. It is important that we give the Spirit liberty in our services for what He wants to do.

SHARE SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON WORSHIP.

TRASK: The worship service is not a place for pastors or music directors to flaunt their egos. Rather, in worship, we need to bring men, women, and children into the presence of God. When people respond to worship and the Word, God can accomplish His purposes in them. After the ministry of the Word, we need to give opportunity for response. This is often accomplished at an altar. **e**



The ESSENCE of Pentecostal Worship

There are seven axioms that every Pentecostal church must embrace to help reach its maximum potential in worship.

Harvey Cox, in *Fire From Heaven*, identifies an indispensable ingredient in Pentecostal worship. “One Sunday morning in September 1993, I attended a lively Latino Pentecostal church housed in a former synagogue in what had once been the German-Jewish section of Chicago. While the mostly Puerto Rican worshipers were swaying and singing ‘*Dios Está Aquí*’ (God Is Here), I spotted a small sticker. It was attached to the gleaming red and white mother-of-pearl trap drums a young devotee was beating with an astonishing series of slams, rolls, and paradiddles. From my location about a third of the way back, I could see that the first word on the placard was ‘Music’ and the last word was ‘Jesus.’ But the intervening words were in smaller print, and no matter how hard I squinted, I could not quite make them out. My curiosity had been piqued, so after the service I slipped up to the band area to take a closer look. Now I could see the whole message. It said ‘Music Brought Me to Jesus.’”¹

On the Day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter preached a sermon in response to the question, “What does this mean?” It is significant that the word translated “addressed” in Acts 2:14 is the same as “enabled” in Acts 2:4. Peter’s sermon, no less than the speaking in tongues, was the Spirit’s work.

Peter quoted Joel to indicate that the outpouring of the Spirit was a sign the last days had begun. The remaining 75 percent of his sermon focused on the life, ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God. This sermon evoked a question from the hearers, “What shall we do?”

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38*). The result? “Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day” (Acts 2:41).

Harvey Cox's story and the apostle Peter's sermon identify two salient components of Pentecostal worship—music and preaching. If we define Pentecostal worship as an authentic heart-level expression of love to our Heavenly Father quickened by the Holy Spirit, then worship is a verb rather than a noun. The vocabulary of worship in the Bible is extensive, but the primary Old Testament Hebrew word used for worship means “a bowing down.” The same idea is behind the New Testament Greek word for worship, which means “to serve.”

How does the Pentecostal church extrapolate this so the Sunday morning service incarnates the essence of Pentecostal worship? Before we

order, but is a God-ordained means for advancing our restoration and reinstatement in that order.

3. Worship is God's gift to us for our blessing more than His. His objective is not the securing of our adulation, but our discovery and realization of advancement in His intended purpose for our fulfillment.

4. Worship is not only a means of reaffirming man's relational dependence upon, submission to, and obedience before God; it is the means (through grace) to reinstating man's partnership with God in ruling the earth—one that begins in a present practical, yet partial, realization—and will succeed after Christ's coming unto a complete and full realization.

confront the fact biblical worship (a) will always require the humbling of human pride through worship; (b) must appropriately be conducted according to divine patterns for worship; and (c) will regularly manifest in the transforming joy and humility distilling from worship.

BIBLICAL PERIODS OF WORSHIP

In patriarchal times, there was both the privacy of prayer (Genesis 18:16–33) and the public act of setting up the altar (Genesis 12:7). From the patriarchs onward, the Bible is divided into four periods. First, under Moses, the tabernacle was the focal point of public worship. The second period became highly organized, and priests, assisted by the

**If sons and daughters are prophesying,
young men are seeing visions, and old men
are dreaming dreams under the same Spirit,
surely we can find a worship service
that connects rather than divides the
bookend generations.**

respond to this question, let us look at the theological and biblical underpinnings of the concept of worship.

TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP

An abridged theology of worship is essential to provide a framework for our journey. I am borrowing from a teaching session by Jack Hayford² to provide a *Reader's Digest* version of a theology of worship.

1. As God above all, the Lord Almighty is our Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, and as the Sovereign of the universe, is worthy of our worship and deserving of our praise.

2. The objective in our worship is not merely to fulfill a prerequisite, acknowledging our place in the created

5. For the redeemed, worship is the essential key to welcoming the rule of the kingdom of God into human experience: i.e., into our daily affairs, our homes, our congregations, our business affairs, and our cities and nations.

6. Worship is the primary means for establishing an atmosphere (a) for the transforming entry of God's presence; (b) for the clear entry of God's Word; (c) for the loving entry of God's Spirit; and (d) for the dynamic entry of God's works of power.

7. Accordingly, leadership needs to approach worship with the conviction that we are not providing an optional moment but determining a pivotal one.

8. With this understanding, we must

Levites, led the temple ritual. It included a complex system of sacrifices. The third stage centered on the synagogue, which was developed by those who remained in exile. In the synagogue, the emphasis was more on instruction than worship. The fourth stage was the early Christian church.

As far as the New Testament is concerned, our information on Christian worship is vague. Clearly the day of worship was the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7), although there were daily services at the beginning (Acts 2:46). Worship was conducted in believers' homes. Simplicity marked the house-church worship services. They consisted, for the most part, of praise (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), prayer, reading from the

Scriptures, exposition, prophesying and tongues, and other spiritual gifts. The love feast followed by the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23–28) was also a common feature of Christian worship. But the emphasis throughout would be on the Spirit and the inner love and devotion of the heart.

SEVEN AXIOMS OF PENTECOSTAL WORSHIP

There are seven axioms that every Pentecostal church must embrace to help reach its maximum potential in worship.

Make spiritual preparation.

At the primary level, every worship service must be networked with prayer. Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost was preceded by 10 days in the Upper Room. When I pastored at West End Assembly of God in Richmond, Virginia, we gathered for prayer every Saturday night. We prepared our hearts for the Sunday morning service and interceded for every person who would attend, especially non-Christians. I rarely accepted an invitation to attend a function on Saturday night. Yes, it was a sacrifice, but we believed prayer was endemic to the success of the worship service. One evidence was the long list of people who were saved during our 22 years there.

Appoint a worship leader who is a worshiper.

Finding a song leader is not difficult, but finding someone who can lead people as they sing is essential. This person must himself be a worshiper if he is to lead others in worship. Judson Cornwall³ has three questions every worship leader should ask.

First, where do we start? Leading people requires beginning where the people are. Most people arrive at the service with a minimum God-consciousness and a lot of self-consciousness. Starting with songs of personal experience or testimony meets people where they are and gives them something with which to identify early in the service.

Second, where are we going? Let the congregation enjoy singing songs of testimony until they are sufficiently united to begin moving closer to God. Songs of testimony often give way to songs of thanksgiving. The worship leader must carefully weigh his or her words in transition. On more than one occasion, an overzealous song leader has talked a worship service to death. Songs of thanksgiving can often lead into majestic hymns that give expression to higher concepts of God than do some of the simple choruses.

Third, how do we know when we have arrived? If the leader has been successful, there will be responses from

the human spirit that have depth and devotion in them. Worship takes time, so it is important not to rush the congregation. Repeat the verse or chorus of the hymn that seems to give honest expression to what people are feeling at the moment. Just worship. Cleverness is inappropriate. Talk is unnecessary. Singing should not be considered an end in itself. It should be a release of the Holy Spirit in a worship expression. People need to be led from the natural to the spiritual and from expression of self-need to Spirit-worship. This is the goal of the worship leader—being a leader of worshipers more than a leader of songs.

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Worship is conversation between God and man, a dialogue that should go on constantly in the life of a Christian.

1. Worship is giving to God and involves a lifetime of giving to Him the sacrifice He asks for: our total selves.

2. Worship is our affirmative response to the self-revelation of the Triune God. For the Christian, each act of life is an act of worship when it is done with love that responds to the Father's love. Living should be constant worshipping, since worship may be said to provide the metabolism for spiritual life.

3. Worship was the outcome of the fellowship of love between the Creator and man and is the highest point man can reach in response to the love of God. It is the first and principal purpose of man's eternal calling.

4. Worship is one's heart expression of love, adoration, and praise to God with an attitude and acknowledgement of His supremacy and lordship.

5. Worship is an act by a redeemed man, the creature, toward God, his Creator, whereby his will, intellect, and emotions gratefully respond in reverence, honor, and devotion to the revelation of Jesus Christ.

6. Worship means "to feel in the heart." Worship also means to express in some appropriate manner what we feel.

7. True worship and praise are awesome wonder and overpowering love in the presence of our God.

8. Worship is the ability to magnify God with our whole being—body, soul, and spirit.

9. The heart of true worship is the unashamed pouring out of our inner self upon the Lord Jesus Christ in affectionate devotion.

10. Worship is fundamentally God's Spirit within us contacting the Spirit of the Godhead.

11. Worship is the response of God's Spirit in us to that Spirit in Him whereby we answer, "Abba, Father," deep calling unto deep.

12. Worship is the ideally normal attitude of a rational creature properly related to the Creator.

Worship is extravagant love and extreme obedience.

—Excerpted from *Exploring Worship: A Practical Guide to Praise & Worship* by Bob Sorge, Oasis House Publishers, www.oasishouse.net. Used with permission.

Embrace all generations.

If you want to send a message to young people that they are not important, eliminate their music. If you want to marginalize the older saints, get rid of their music. In his book *Built To Last*, Jim Collins says companies that last adopt a both/and rather than an either/or attitude. The church must embrace this concept in preparing for a preferred future in worship. If sons and daughters are prophesying, young men are seeing visions and old men are dreaming dreams under the

to influence the church in worship at various seasons. The decade of the 60s produced Chuck Smith and the Jesus Movement. The 2nd Chapter of Acts and Bill and Gloria Gaither influenced the decade of the 70s. Carol Cymbala and The Brooklyn Tabernacle gave a new sound to the 80s. At the same time, Hosanna and Integrity music were household names. Lindell Cooley emerged in the mid 90s. Today Darlene Zschech and Hillsong are making a world impact. None of these

classic hymns that express sound theology with the synchronic (with or in time) music that emerges and then fades. May we incorporate change and the new while at the same time embracing and maintaining what is important from the past.

Choose substance over style.

I have no idea what style of worship they were experiencing in Acts 13:2,3 when the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to

Every worship service must have the potential and expectation to experience the substantive acts of God in our lives.

same Spirit, surely we can find a worship service that connects rather than divides the bookend generations.

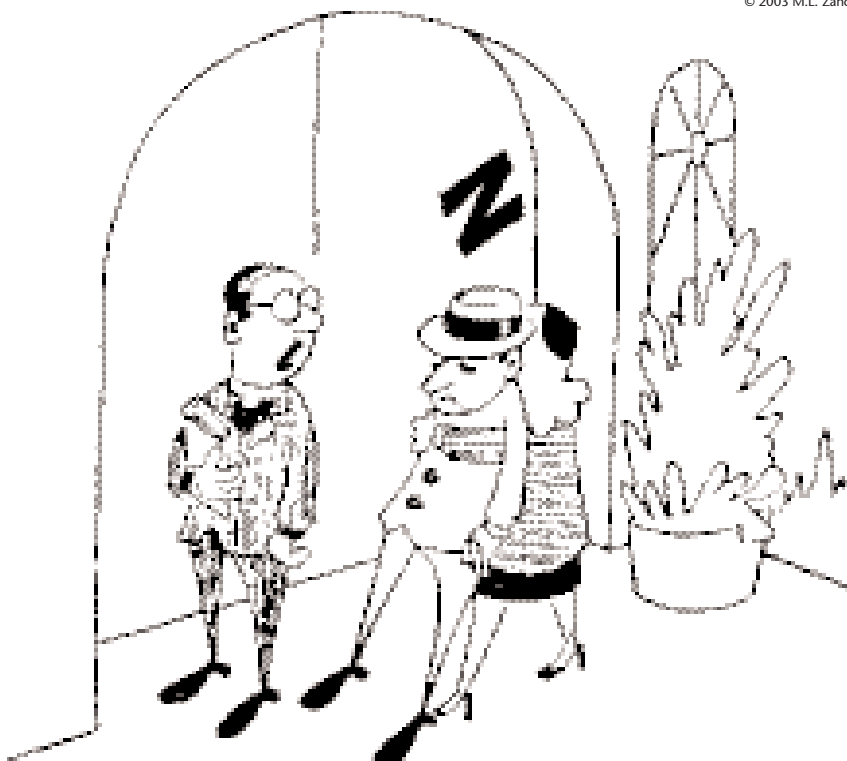
Change, not eliminate, the past.

God has always raised up individuals

gifted people would suggest their music is intended to compete with or eliminate other music of the past. As a matter of fact, it is always a delicate tension to hold the diachronic (through time) music such as the

which I have called them." What I do know is substance is more important than style. It was an atmosphere in which the Holy Spirit could call out the called. This gathering was not about what the Danish philosopher Kierkegaard called the aesthetic or "feel good" level of worship or even the ethical level of "a code of rules." It was worship at a spiritual level that creates a readiness to trust oneself wholly to God. Every worship service must have the potential and expectation to experience the substantive acts of God in our lives.

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"I'm happy to hear that my sermons play a major role in curing your husband's insomnia."

Be open to the miraculous.

Mark Batterson, a pastor friend in Washington, D.C., preached a sermon entitled "The Miracle of Music." I love his description of the Paul and Silas jail experience:

Worship is where spiritual breakthroughs happen. It was midnight in a Middle Eastern prison cell when Paul and Silas started praising God. Their bodies were chained, but their spirits soared. As they sang, there was a violent earthquake. Acts 16:26 says that prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. That's what

happens when we worship. Worship sets the stage for the miraculous.⁴

While we do not focus on miracles, it is important to see the worship service as a place that uniquely opens us to the miraculous. Once the prison doors were opened, the jailer and his household were saved. God exercises His power with a purpose—reaching the lost. Testimonies in a worship service of God's miracle-working power will often be the catalyst to bring lost people to Jesus.

Freedom finds its greatest expression where boundaries are clearly established. Sensitivity and respect for others is a clear biblical teaching (1 Corinthians 12). It is not an oxymoron to plan a Pentecostal worship service, to expect excellence from the musicians, and to have teaching moments, especially when tongues and interpretation are a part of the service. As a general rule, I explained from Scripture what we were experiencing

greater participation. Not everybody will be comfortable with the expressions of a Pentecostal worship service. We accept that. But we must make sure their uneasiness is not our misuse of freedom.

CONCLUSION

Last year an article in the *Washington Times* said, "The most common reason people leave church is that it's too similar to their everyday lives."⁵ They are

While we do not focus on miracles, it is important to see the worship service as a place that uniquely opens us to the miraculous.

Promote freedom in worship.

The most common expression I heard from new people coming to West End about the worship service was "such freedom, yet safe." Paul declared, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Corinthians 3:17).

after a message in tongues and interpretation. We also printed and verbalized the scriptural basis for clapping and raising our hands in worship. Good teaching and active pastoral leadership will foster an atmosphere of freedom in a Pentecostal worship service that will encourage

searching for a spiritual community radically different from their working environment. May every Pentecostal church purpose to be a place where the worship service is a transforming experience as we "worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). **E**

WORSHIP: NOUN OR VERB?

When worship is perceived more as a noun than a verb, we tend to seek a worship experience. The congregation becomes the audience rather than the performers. However, the reality in true worship is that God is the audience. The question on the way to church Sunday morning is not, "What is in this for me?" but rather, "What do I have to give?" Scripture is clear about our role in worship.

1. Participation. "When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church" (1 Corinthians 14:26*).

2. Physical expression. We are instructed to clap our hands, shout to God with cries of joy (Psalm 47:1), and to lift up holy hands in prayer (1 Timothy 2:8).

3. Praise. "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name" (Psalm 100:4). "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:6).

4. Prayer. "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed" (James 5:16).

This illustrative list, although not exhaustive, makes it obvious that worship is a verb.

—H. Robert Rhoden, D.Min., Fairfax, Virginia.

*Scripture references are from the New International Version.

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* Scripture references are from the New International Version.

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WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH

The Power of Prayer

BY MARK RUTLAND



**THE GOAL
OF WORSHIP
IS NOT TO
SHOWCASE
MUSICAL
TALENT,
BUT TO
BRING PEOPLE
INTO GOD'S
PRESENCE.**

PHOTO BY GAYLON WAMPLER
IMAGING BY RICHARD SLATON

TThere is hardly an element of the Christian subculture more adept at the mechanics of worship than Pentecostals and charismatics. Our music is contemporary, congregational energy is ferocious, and the skill of our platform musicians unrivaled among evangelicals. We have mastered the methodology of the cutting edge. Yet in the doing we dare not forsake our longing for the one variable we cannot contribute: the presence.

Consider the instructions for the composition of holy oil and incense, a surprisingly scientific recipe in terms of its detail (Exodus 30:22–38). Included with the ingredients and their respective weights and measures is insight into the method of preparation. The art of the apothecary—to infuse spices into oil then strain them out again leaving behind a sticky, sweet ointment-like residue—is prescribed in these verses. Such a compounding chemistry is a sophisticated operation demanding time, precision, and a slavish adherence to detail.

The result, however, was an aromatic gum which, when burned, would thoroughly impregnate the air of any enclosed space. In the candlelit darkness of a large tent, the smoke from incense—thick and white and rich—combined with the aroma of perfumed ointment rubbed into the furnishings, appointments, vessels, and the skin of the priests would surely have been a sensual delight. God knew that and forbade its use for common purposes (verses 32,33,38).

THE RISK OF THE SENSUAL

Our longing for intimacy makes the perfume of God's presence powerful and dangerous. There is a deep need for intimacy within the arid, corporate soul of our alienated, post-Christian society. This profound need lures the needy into debauchery, dysfunction, and despair as they pursue a tender touch, the presence of others, and more specifically, another—the presence of God.

The burden of balance, difficult to find and even more difficult to maintain, makes worship leadership a high and holy honor and a terrifying responsibility.

We live in a disconnected culture. Westerners long for intimacy, but remain unable to find it, generate it, or even identify it. What we want is presence, not mere physical presence, but to be with, to communicate with, to hear from and be heard by another.

Frequently this heartwarming inner ache for meaningful relationships draws the world through the church's threshold. However, worship technicians, even those who have passionately mastered their trade, can offer little more than sugar pills—beautiful, well choreographed, exciting, upbeat sugar pills. But sugar, nonetheless.

When worship becomes nothing more than hi-tech mood music, the souls of the hungry go wanting for a

divine encounter. The sensual appeal, the ambient tingles, and expenditure of excess energy can leave the worship experience stranded at the level of the superficial. A self-accelerated downward cycle begins there. Superficiality leads to sensuality, and sensuality, to sin.

In addition to its negative effect on worship and worshipers, superficiality without substance imposes a performance mentality on leadership, which is highly destructive and creatively imprisoning. Where demands of style and/or sensation limit latitude, worship leaders cannot lead congregations to seek the presence of God in new and rich fields of spirituality.

Where tradition reigns supreme, fresh expressions will be rejected

regardless of spiritual or artistic value. By the same token, where contemporaneity and calisthenics rule the day and hype is confused with anointing oil, more contemplative aspects of worship will be recklessly branded as dead weight. Thus, under the burden to make the congregation leave each service on a high note, worship leaders are forced to become Dr. Feelgood and the Traveling Medicine Show. The goal of our gatherings is to meet with God, not the expert application of forbidden perfume on our own flesh.

Indeed, a divine encounter is the very promise of God and the great power of worship. Near the end of this Exodus passage, following all the detailed pharmaceutical instructions, God makes the most astonishingly wonderful statement in such a casual tone that it might easily be missed—"where I will meet with thee."

Our inner longing is not for stacte or galbanum or frankincense, but for presence. The presence is the sweet aroma of worship. We should do all we know to mix with care a recipe of worship that is orderly and beautiful. But if God is not present, the cloying smell of ersatz—flesh-made intimacy—will sicken, not heal.

High atop Chipinque Mountain near Monterrey, Mexico, after a day of horseback riding along a beautiful waterfall, some Bible school students and I perched amid the boulders and peered down at the clouds below us. Someone produced a battered guitar, and we sang an old hymn. "*Maravilloso es, Maravilloso es, cuando pienso que Dios me ama a mi.*" (How marvelous it is, how marvelous it is, when I think that God loves even me.)



© 2003 Steve Phelps

Public worship, even that which is designed with pharmacological precision, is utterly incapable of manufacturing the one element God never ordered man to produce: the presence.

How marvelous indeed.

Then the music drifted, gently, unmanaged from chorus to chorus until, as we sang, a moist white cloud rolled up the mountain's shoulder and engulfed us. First one, then another, began to weep, or pray, or prostrate himself on the wet grass until one boy whispered what we all knew: "*El esta aqui.*" (He is here.)

That moment, that awesome, precious, almost terrifying moment—amid all the church services and revivals and camp meetings of my life—lingers like perfume in my nostrils.

OUR ACHE FOR THE PRESENCE

Public worship, even that which is designed with pharmacological precision, is utterly incapable of manufacturing the one element God never ordered man to produce: the presence. God alone can supply himself.

The intimacy of worship—intimacy with God and with each other—can be so wonderful we may be tempted to feel the pleasure of the sensation rather than the power of the presence. In the tabernacle, the anointing oil and the white smoke of incense blended into a residential aroma that filled the air. Combined with the visual beauty of the art and pageantry of sacrificial worship, it must have had an arresting effect. None of that, however, nor all of it, combined with the essence: "I will meet with thee." The essence was the presence.

When by our excellence of music, creativity of composition, or beauty of architecture, we dare to use the oil for our own pleasures, we undo all that we had hoped for in the recipe. This is no

defense of slovenly, ugly worship in rundown venues. We should study to get it right. Good music, excellent drama, splendid choirs, and well-lit, climate-controlled auditoriums all go in the mix; they are important. Christ, however, prophesied a new worship reaching beyond locale and style: "True worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth" (John 4:23, NASB).

The reverse of that passage is startling. False worship will be in flesh and deceit. Forget the worship wars. That pathetic argument is nothing more than Style vs. Style, a family lawsuit embarrassing to the whole household. Whether singing hymns or hot, new choruses, the real question remains: Is God in the house? If He is not, then contemporary vigor and liturgical formalism alike are but flesh and deceit. Neither the bells and smells of liturgical order nor the wild abandon of Pentecostal liberty can generate God. We cannot make Him be where He is not.

PRESIDING TRUTHS

Having said that, important truths, frequently ignored by all sides in the infantile arguments over worship, need to be stewarded carefully, lest in the fray, they become forgotten. Here are seven of them:

1. Music is not the only expression of corporate worship.

Pentecostals unanimously use worship leader to mean song leader. There are other valid forms: prayer, verbal praise, directed expressions of faith, meditation, offerings, foot washing, and Communion.

2. No style has higher moral value than another.

Robed liturgists, gospel singers, hymnologists, and seeker-sensitive modernists glare at each other over the dinner table, all having forgotten that He, not their cultural preferences, is the issue. One teacher even claims that beyond a certain number of beats per measure, music becomes sensual and demonic. Now where would he get this revelation? Show us the golden tablets that we all may believe. Such idiotic teachings can degenerate into ethnic or even racist arguments draped in spiritual language. A converted Muslim from Iraq, for example, may not write Christian music that sounds like Augustus Toplady. We Pentecostals sit at a table big enough for all the kids.

THREE VALUES DERIVED FROM PRAISING GOD:

1. It affords the praiser a ready-made praise vocabulary.
2. It contributes to a unity in our response.
3. It helps release the inner emotions that have been locked up behind the veneer of our culture.

FOUR BENEFITS TO SINGING PRAISE:

1. It brings honesty to our midst.
2. It enlarges our concepts of God.
3. It moves us from negative to positive attitudes.
4. It will change our services from identification to participation.

—Excerpted from *Let Us Praise* by Judson Cornwall, published by Logos International. Used with permission.

3. There is no spiritual compromise in expanding the style parameters of one's worship experience.

Those who want only hymns will not lose their souls if they sing "I'm Trading My Sorrows." Indeed, perhaps they should consider just such a trade. By the same token, many who only want choruses written in the last 20 minutes carelessly squander the great theology and the rich poetic joy of "Oh, For a Thousand Tongues To Sing." The arrogant that lightly despise the great hymns are often guilty of an egregious and juvenile chronocentrism which we can ill afford.

There are times when stuffy old

Pentecostals need to shake off tradition, kick off their shoes, and boogie for Jesus. There are also times when smug teenagers need a big dose of Charles Wesley to realize that there is great worship music, the lyrics of which have more depth than "hallelujah, do-wa, diddy, diddy, yay."

We must remember whom we seek, who it is that desires to meet with us, and why we long for His presence. We are all made for intimacy with God, yet, because of differences of age, experience, background, or culture, find it in different ways. We must let love be the law. In other words, cut each other and God a little slack.

HOW I WROTE "IN THE PRESENCE OF JEHOVAH"

It was transition time. For a young couple still learning the ins and outs of balancing marriage and ministry, that time can be scary. I met Becky Cannon in college, fell in love, and married her before she could change her mind. Our shared passion for creating music and crafting lyrics only strengthened our relationship and our ministry. A church in Irving, Texas, hired us while we were still engaged. After we married, we moved there and served for 2 years. It was a wonderful time that still evokes fond memories.

Thoughts of transition began to tug on our hearts, but we were really happy where we were. Why did God want us to move? Still, we sensed it was time.

I'll never forget the drive from Dallas to Alexandria, Louisiana. Becky drove the car, and I drove U-Haul's smallest truck (we were poor newlyweds). I was nervous. Were we crazy for leaving what we loved? Would we crash and burn as a result of my stupidity? As I drove, I asked God to show us that we were in His will. As soon as we arrived, we had one night to halfway unpack.

The next morning we left on a weekend tour with the chorale (a smaller group of singers from the choir). During the weekend, as we spent time with our new family, we sensed God knitting our hearts together. As we shared time in the late night hours, a melody and lyric began to grow in my heart. On the bus ride home, something incredible happened. One by one, people began sharing testimonies. A prayer meeting broke out. Tears flowed. In the middle of all this, I started singing my new lyric:

In the presence of Jehovah,
God Almighty, Prince of Peace:
Troubles vanish, hearts are mended
In the presence of the King.

As the group began to sing, His sweet presence filled the bus and saturated all of us. It was powerful. Sometime later, God anointed Becky to write the first verse and we cowrote the second verse. That was over 18 years ago, and God has been using us ever since.

I will never forget that the birth of this particular tune was the Heavenly Father reminding a scared kid that He was still on the throne. That lesson and those lyrics have reminded us many times that every answer to every question can always be found in the presence of the King.

—Geron Davis, Brentwood, Tennessee

4. Structure is not the enemy of liberty.

Sometimes, in an honest and wholesome fear of quenching the Spirit, we have striven for informality and landed squarely in the midst of chaos. God deliver us from that old mindset that confuses being unprepared with the liberty of the Spirit. In preaching and worship, we must "study to show ourselves approved." Choirs should be disciplined, worship sets carefully designed, and platform musicians well trained. Disorderliness produces little more than awkward moments where disengaged congregations watch confused, lost-in-space leadership search for inspiration while covering it with spiritual language and a good keyboard. Order in worship is not a barrier to the Holy Spirit but a prepared tabernacle in which God can meet with us—and then redesign as He pleases—when He leads, through sensitive and yielded leadership.

5. Christian worship has always and will always find unique expression in terms of culture.

Do we honestly think first-century Jewish believers who gathered for worship in Solomon's Porch sang, "Just a Little Talk With Jesus Makes It Right"? They undoubtedly sang music that sounded more like Hava Nagila. Gregory's chants were medieval because he was medieval. Luther wrote music that sounded like Oktoberfest, and our forerunners who wrote country gospel had obviously heard a lot of Hank Williams. Indian Christians sing music that sounds amazingly Indian, and Ghanaians dance to buoyant pentatonic choruses in their tribal languages. This cultural diversity, however, is a threat only to an Americanized gospel, which is not biblical anyway.

The fun starts when we experiment with the songs of our brethren. Upscale Pentecostals in North Atlanta occasionally need to sing "*Soy Feliz, Cristo me Salvo*." ("I am happy. Jesus saved me.") Teenagers with multicolored hair ought to try "*A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*." OK, not every night, but sometimes.

Likewise, senior citizens in Wisconsin should be willing to experience a Vineyard song or two without having a cerebral hemorrhage.

6. Neither enthusiasm nor form equals presence.

In my early years of missionary evangelism, the journey home was always filled with anticipation. I envisioned the reunion—my children running to clutch at my legs, my wife's sweet kisses—and I was never disappointed. There is nothing like children rushing into a tired preacher's arms and shouting, "Daddy's home."

Imagine, however, if I arrived to find them seated quietly in the living room, chairs in a tidy line. When I burst through the door and throw wide my arms of love, my wife stands to direct the children. "Please rise," she says, after which they sing, without even looking at me, a bloodless aria, "Father's home, Father's home, A-a-le-lu-u-jah." No joy for Daddy in such cool and formal detachment.

Now, imagine that I open the door and my wife and children hurl themselves on the floor in unrestrained ecstasy, banging their heads on the walls, leaping on the furniture, and screaming at each other, "Daddy's home." And in the uninhibited celebration, they ignore me.

In both scenes I stand unmet and

unreceived on the threshold of their self-absorption. "Where I will meet with thee" is the promise of the tabernacle.

7. The platform is a dangerous place.

An awesome weight falls squarely on the shoulders of worship leadership. The burden of balance, difficult to find and even more difficult to maintain, makes worship leadership a high and holy honor and a terrifying responsibility. Authentic passion mixed with diligent professionalism, genuine spirituality laced with expertise, and order open to liberty are possible only where motives are constantly crucified and where love fuels the fire.

There are great blessings in powerful worship and, as with all things powerful, great dangers as well. The most dangerous place in a worship service is the platform. It should be approached with fear and trembling, in sober awareness of those who, like Aaron's sons, took matters in their own hands and died there.

How we have watched in grief as the supremely talented among us, while they stirred us to worship God, lost their own ministries and marriages. The inner life of the leader grows more important the further in and higher up he or she takes the people. The closer to the flame we get, the greater the warmth, and the greater the danger.

THE WILLING PRESENCE

John Wesley said, "The best part is, God is with us." Nowhere is that more thrilling than in a worship service where, by His grace, the promise becomes presence. He is willing to be found by those who seek Him. He is willing to be Immanuel, God with us, again and again.

God is willing to condescend into the praise of His own creatures. His awesome presence is the one indispensable that makes worship truth and spirit rather than sensual perfume on the flesh of strangers. He is willing to be wherever He is wanted, welcomed, and waited on.

In our first chapel of the year at Southeastern College, the room was packed, overcrowded actually, the excitement palpable, and the special music exquisite. The student worship team was filled with youthful energy and drenched in talent. All good. Very good. But not enough. Then as we prayed, sang, and entered into worship, God came in all His grace and filled the place. Suddenly we knew again, and wept at the knowledge, that the power is in the presence, not the presentation. **e**

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"Fire drill? I just asked for Sunday School volunteers."

A FUNDAMENTAL ASPECT OF WORSHIP THAT HAS NOT BEEN FREQUENTLY CONSIDERED
IS THE THEME OF WORSHIP. WE MUST GO BACK TO BASICS, AND THE THEME OF WORSHIP
IS SO BASIC IT GOES BEYOND STYLE, CULTURE, AND PERSONAL PREFERENCES.

BY MELVIN T. JOHNSON

WORSHIP THE LORD IN TRUTH:

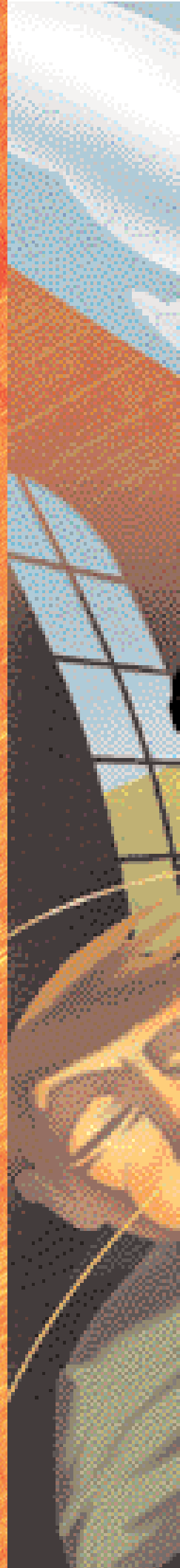
Sing a New Song, Sing a True Song

Choruses versus hymns, drums and guitars as opposed to an organ, formality versus informality, standing rather than sitting, loud compared to quiet, overheads in contrast to hymnals, traditional in place of contemporary, worship team or song leader—the worship war seems to have no limit to its battle lines. In spite of the differences, a fresh wind of the Holy Spirit is blowing through the church, renewing in hearts a desire to worship. We must not let diversity divide and rob us of unity in worship, one of our most precious legacies as God's people.

No one disputes the fact saints meet to worship. We worship in prayer, music, the Word, giving, fellowship, and more. Most would agree that the pastor, assisted by others, is the worship leader. But the accord seems to end there.

Debate on the form of public worship has been going on for decades or maybe even centuries. Even biblical saints became confused in their worship. John the revelator bowed at the feet of an angel only to be told it wasn't appropriate worship.

In recent years, the discussion has centered mostly on the style of worship, especially music. Much of this has to do with personal preferences that grow out of cultural and subcultural backgrounds. A fundamental aspect of worship that has not been frequently considered is the theme of worship. The theme has to do with the topic emphasized in worship. Its importance and influence on worship is crucial. We must go back to basics, and the theme of worship is so basic it goes beyond style, culture, and personal preferences. Find some middle ground here, and the debate may not be as sharp as we have been led to believe.





Someone wrote: "Methods are many, principles are few. Methods always change, principles never do." This verse could be rewritten to read: "Worship styles are many, worship themes are few. Worship styles often change, but worship themes never do." God-honoring worship themes have remained the same throughout the history of the church. They are always in style and up-to-date. Worship styles, to the contrary, are subject to frequent change and many individual preferences.

Think about one dimension of our worship—singing—and the variety of themes available to us as we sing. Sometime ago, a friend commented to me, "Don't bother about the words of a song. Music is all about achieving a certain effect or mood." Laying aside the meaning of a song's words in favor of effect or mood leaves us open to almost anything, including heresy.

Jesus said, "True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him" (John 4:23*). Content has no substitute. The meaning and themes of our songs profoundly impact our worship

experience, our view of God, our way of thinking, and our lifestyle.

Four broad categories of themes are apparent in worship songs. I refer to them as truth levels.

WORSHIP—SINGING ABOUT WHO GOD IS

No loftier theme exists than extolling God. The church is at her best in worship when caught up in the virtue and character of her Lord. Focusing on the nature of God and exalting His attributes brings us to sincere and appropriate recognition of the Lord's majesty. When the sanctuary reverberates with "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," "Holy, Holy, Holy," "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," or "To Him Who Sits on the Throne," the character of God is being acclaimed. "I Exalt Thee," "Jesus, Name Above All Names," and "Majesty" are other examples. This was the level of worship the Psalmist had in mind when he wrote, "Sing out the honor of His name" (Psalm 66:2).

On level one, worship flows out of our hearts in an expression that says, "You alone are God. You are worthy of

all praise and glory." It is the only type of transcendent worship; we sing beyond or above ourselves. We are not the focus of such worship; God and His character are. This level, full of adoration and glorification of God, is closest to His heart. It is sung in the "key of Thee."

Worship that fails to touch us with a profound sense of awe about who God is becomes something less than real worship. We might call this basic worship. We simply lift up His holy name for who He is, nothing else.

TESTIMONY—WHAT GOD HAS DONE OR IS DOING

Inseparable with the first level, we worship at a high level when telling of the Lord's magnificent works, His deeds. Psalm 66:16 says, "I will declare what He has done for my soul."

In describing the works of God in Romans 4:17, the apostle Paul included God's two most evident displays of power—creation and resurrection. He wrote that God "gives life to the dead [resurrection] and calls those things which do not exist as though they did [creation]." Here we have the two most noteworthy works of God. Singing about creation or the resurrection of Christ is worship centering on what God has done. He is glorified when we acknowledge Him as the God who does great deeds. We sing, "He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!" because it honors Him for what He has done. "God Is Moving by His Spirit" worships the Lord for what He is doing.

On level two, the celebration and acclamation of God are also sung in the "key of Thee." Moses expressed, "For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds?" (Deuteronomy 3:24). In fact, a great deal of Israel's worship referred to the works of God, sometimes called "His awesome deeds." The chorus, "Ah, Lord God," is a clear what-God-has-done theme.

This, of course, includes singing about the salvation of the Lord. He has accomplished the work of redemption.

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The choir could barely contain its enthusiasm for the new choir director and his upbeat selections.

SHAPED BY OUR WORSHIP— AT THE CROSSROADS OF RITUAL AND BELIEF

"Whatever happened to the gospel?" I raise this question because of an experience in a contemporary church whose worship led me to believe that a relationship with God is based on what I do, and that this relationship is romantic.

There are many churches that do not foster a legalistic and romantic Christianity through their worship. But because of a recent commitment of mine to visit various churches and to study contemporary worship more intentionally, I am alarmed by the poor quality of worship, but even more concerned by the wrong message communicated by many worshipping communities. Nearly everyone who has responded to me shares a similar concern. A conversation over the truth content and experiential nature of worship is in order.

Craig Boehlke, who serves at King of Kings Lutheran Church in Gardner, Kansas, put his finger on the issue in an e-mail response. He wrote: "We are currently in the midst of a new dark age even while we are highly educated and literate. We are surrounded by so much technology; we are bombarded with so much information; we are able to reproduce and create music of unparalleled depth and beauty—yet the gospel is obscured and for many totally lost."

Boehlke understands that if our worship is corrupt, the message it sends is equally corrupt. False worship will bring us to a spiritual dark age, a time when the gospel of God's grace is held in captivity.

Have we cycled back to where the Church was in the late medieval era? Are we selling a new kind of indulgence? Does the gospel need to be heard again with fresh clarity in our postmodern dark age?

I think so. If the content of worship is not the clear, unmitigated content of the Christian faith, what the Christian will believe will be a false gospel.

The crux of this article is to say that how we worship shapes what we believe and how we will live. Worship will form the community into the image of its content.

I have spoken to too many people who don't seem to grasp this connection. Some people seem to see truth as one thing and worship as another. But worship and truth are one and the same. Consequently, how you worship will determine what you believe.

If your worship is characterized by the current culture of romantic narcissism, then Christianity is seen as little more than a private experience with God.

If, on the other hand, worship is only an intellectual head-trip, an "aha" gained from a heady sermon, then God becomes the God of the philosophical construct, beyond the reach of many.

If worship is primarily therapeutic, intending to bring healing to the wounded, then Christianity falls into the trap of "God is here to make you healthy and happy." If worship has a moral agenda as its centerpiece, then Christianity ends up looking rather legalistic.

Instead, what we want and need worship to be is a hands-down truth in a valid experience, one that brings healing to our lives and engenders a life of discipleship and obedience to the imperatives of the gospel.

Frequently in our experiential culture, we look for experience, a good feeling, a warm fuzzy, or something like that. Don't get me wrong. I'm not against experience. But experience at the sake of content is a grave mistake. So let's not be afraid to think more deeply and critically about what we do in worship. Our future depends on it.

It's the historic faith, the unchangeable truth, the tradition of the apostles that we want to recover and hand down today and tomorrow. The early Christians caught this truth in the expression, *lex orandi; lex credendi; est*. Loosely translated, this means, "The rule of prayer (public worship) is the rule of faith." We would do well to remember their wisdom as we enter the postmodern world.

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"Redeemed, How I Love To Proclaim It" and "He Is My Peace" acclaim God for His work of salvation.

In level three, a major shift takes place.

PRAYER—I NEED OR WANT GOD

Worship that does not connect the humble worshiper with the God of majestic character and mighty works

does not realize worship's full potential. We cannot sing long about who He is and what He has done without seeing our great need for Him, which is followed by a welling up within us to personally relate to Him.

Have you ever considered how much of our worship is actually prayer? At level three the worshiper says, "Because of who You are and what You have

done, I see my need, and I want to be more like You."

"I Need Thee Every Hour," "Jesus, We Just Want To Thank You," "Take My Life and Let It Be," and "Change My Heart, O God" are expressions of a worshiper who is making the personal connection. He or she makes petition to God sung in the "key of me," and it is delightful to God's heart.

Some pitfalls exist at this level of worship that every believer, especially the worship leader, must be aware of. The greatest of these is getting the cart before the horse. The issue is this: How can we make a significant connection with God and want more of Him without first having experienced Him? When we try to worship at this level without first having worshiped at the first two levels, it is like attempting to build a house without a foundation.

It is here that much contemporary worship misses the mark. We are often left with an empty sense of futility in a worship service, not because the music is lacking or the intention is not good, but because God has not first been lifted up. To sing of needing and wanting God, without first seeing something of who He is and what He has done, leaves a worshiper in uncertain territory.

DEDICATION—WHAT I WANT TO DO OR HAVE DONE FOR GOD

Can we really worship without wanting to engage in some act of devotion? Going and doing for God are natural responses from true worshipers. “I’ll Go Where You Want Me To Go” is an expression of deep worship. Songs of this type are plentiful today. “Because He Lives” and “I Offer My Life” are expressions of the believer’s desire for action as a result of worship.

The prophet Isaiah is the classic example of such an experience (Isaiah 6). His encounter with God led him to say, “Here am I! Send me.” Worship must have its personal commitment to be complete. Level four, with prayer and testimony sung in the “key of me,” is pleasing to God’s heart.

However, danger lies here as well. A worship service that begins, continues, and ends with “I will” songs cannot truly be called a worship service. All songs have been sung in the “key of me,” and surely the vanity of such an exercise cannot take worshipers into God’s presence. We stand on a shaky platform when all we do is declare what we have done without first recognizing and extolling the

MUSIC IN PENTECOSTAL WORSHIP

Music has always had a vital role in Pentecostal worship. Curious visitors have often been attracted by our music. As full-gospel fellowships began to form in the first decades of the 20th century, the background of the worshipers often determined musical preferences.

Believers with extensive background in church circles appreciated the hymns that had been meaningful to them through the years. New converts, however, may have lacked any exposure to church music from the past. Consequently, they were more inclined to write new words—perhaps a personal testimony—that could be sung to tunes they had known in the world. These newcomers were also inclined to bring their musical instruments with them. Therefore, an early Pentecostal church was more likely to have guitars than an organ.

In recent years, the music portion of worship services in many churches has undergone significant change. The use of overheads and video screen projection, singing new choruses and the lack of hymns, and the practice of standing for extended periods while singing are innovations welcomed by some. Younger people in particular have been responsive to new styles. On the other hand, there are others in the congregation who have found the new styles and practices disconcerting.

For a church that embraces the primacy of the Scriptures, music is expected to help prepare participants for the proclamation of the Word. The entire body of believers is strengthened when the choruses, gospel songs, and hymns selected emphasize a theme that will be incorporated in a biblically based message.

Music also needs to be selected on the basis of the message conveyed by the lyrics. It is important to consider what the words are suggesting or teaching. Hymns and gospel songs that give emphasis to our cardinal doctrines—the love of God, the sacrificial death of our Savior, the atonement through the blood of Jesus, the Cross, the Resurrection, and our blessed hope of eternal life—add value to our worship.

We have been keenly disappointed to see denominations that were once noted for evangelistic fervor decide to delete all music from their hymnals that refers to such subjects as the blood of Jesus. But we do not have to remove these songs from our hymnals to suffer the same loss; all we need do is stop singing them.

Two key words are so important in music ministry: *balance* and *blending*. Gifted and anointed worship leaders desire everyone’s response. A balance of styles and a blending of preferences can provide for the distinctive needs of young people, seniors, new converts, and seasoned saints. We need every one of them.

—Robert H. Spence is president of Evangel University, Springfield, Missouri, and commissioner of the Assemblies of God Commission on Christian Higher Education.

God by whose grace we have done it. We must avoid the danger of singing more about us and for us than singing about God and His majesty and love. I read recently, “Worship has become an expression of how we feel about God rather than a response to what God has done for us.”

Centering more on self than on the Lord is a mistake Christians are inclined to make in other areas of our faith. Worship by its very definition and nature cannot primarily be a self-centered

experience. Certainly, it cannot exclude self, but it must not chiefly be about who we are and what we do and what we want. It must primarily be about who God is, what He does, and what He wants. Singing in the “key of Thee,” singing about our Lord, remains an absolute essential to true worship.

SEQUENCE OF WORSHIP THEMES

Many songs contain blended themes. They can be mixed together in any one worship song. In fact, they usually are.

But most songs have a major theme easily determined by simple analysis.

The sequence of worship themes is imperative. When we attempt to experience the personal presence of God without first focusing on the character and work of God, confusion and disappointment come. As one who worships in many different churches throughout the year, I sadly note that often the effort is made to experience God without first properly acknowledging Him. It can be a dry and grinding experience, as opposed to the refreshing that results when God is first given His rightful honor.

If someone asks you a favor but fails to acknowledge you, you probably don't want to help. You might even be offended by such a breach in common courtesy. This is what we do when the sequence of our worship is reversed. For our worship to unfold in the most worthwhile way, we need to first focus on God and only later on our relationship with Him. This sequence produces rich blessings. When ignored, emptiness often ensues.

Conversely, when all is God-centered, worship is unfinished. It may appeal to some proud sense of religiosity within us to exclude ourselves, but God longs to relate to and engage us through worship. True worship is a two-way encounter: We meet God, and God meets us.

MUSIC VERSUS WORSHIP

Another formidable challenge to worship is the power of music versus the supremacy of worship. For the Christian, songs are intended to be mere vehicles. They are not in and of themselves the purpose of worship. Music is the mere means by which we direct our love and devotion to God.

Music is an enthralling and commanding medium that can, if unguarded, displace worship. Charming lyrics, melodic chords, and an exciting beat are elements of music that can cause us to rise in the Spirit, open our hearts, and worship the Lord. But these very same elements can also overpower us with their charm (and even sensuality)

and direct our hearts away from God. We are less likely to worship a song and more likely to worship God when the emphasis of our singing is about Him and not us.

CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, what takes place in the worshiper's heart determines the authenticity of worship. Isaiah 29:13 speaks of mouth and lip worship compared to heart worship. Jesus quoted the prophet in Mark 7:6,7, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship . . ."

The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day characterize vain, empty, meaningless worship. This is still a possibility in our day. One way of getting from lip worship to heart worship, from vain worship to God-honoring worship, is by the truth. Singing and speaking the truth has powerful impact on our hearts.

Hear again the words of Jesus, "True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him" (John 4:23). The Lord mentioned two traits or features of true worshipers: They worship in spirit and truth. While we are emphasizing the truth here, the attitude in which we offer worship, the spirit, is equally important.

Those of us who are responsible for what is said and sung in our public worship carry a grave duty. It is not given to us to reach into the hearts of people and make them true worshipers. It is futile to try and talk people into worship or by some means manipulate them into worship. But we certainly can see to it that God's truth, a balanced diet of truth, is incorporated into our public worship experiences.

At best, our worship here and now is incomplete. All of the majestic anthems and inspiring choruses ever written and sung down through the years of church history fall short of fully exalting God. But some day we will sing "the heavenly anthem that drowns all music but its own." We long for worship that will be completely free from limitation. Our hearts will touch the heart of God. We

THE WORSHIP SERVICE

When planning a worship service, ask:

1. Will this worship service glorify God?
2. Will this worship service be Christ-centered?
3. Will this worship service edify believers?
4. Will this worship service appeal to visitors?

The four imperatives of a worship service are meant:

1. to inspire.
2. to instruct.
3. to involve.
4. to integrate.

The five balances for a worship service include:

1. a balanced appeal to the mind, the heart, and the spirit.
2. a balance of order and freedom—structure with flexibility.
3. a balance of liturgy with life.
4. balancing the ageless experience of encountering God with forms of worship relevant to this time and place.
5. a balance between solemnity and celebration.

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will at last bring perfect worship.

In the meantime, we struggle to bring praise to the God we love and adore. Let us struggle well. Let us only be content with worship that centers on the Lord himself. The more we give God His rightful place in worship, the closer we come to the quality of worship we will someday enjoy in eternity. **E**

Melvin T. Johnson, retired educator, is involved in overseas ministry, Roseville, California.

** Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version.*







The Role of the Senior Pastor in Worship

An Empowered Imperative of Leadership

How does the pastor define and fill the role of worship leader? Scripture suggests at least four functions of a pastor that can put this goal within reach.

Since the pastor—as teacher and leader—is God’s gift to the church to equip it for service and guide its development toward maturity (Ephesians 4), he* must not fail in his essential role as spiritual leader. This is not a role pastors assume at particular moments and abdicate at other moments; it is who they are, what they cannot rightfully escape being.

Being a leader, however, does not preclude others from participation through their God-given gifts. Some church members or staff are excellent leaders of congregational music and other components of worship. But these expressions must be extensions of the pastor’s leadership, not independently directed. What Scripture teaches and a church believes about worship, and what the congregation experiences as people worship, should not be incongruous. The pastor has no greater role than to guide that experience.

THE CHALLENGE: WORSHIP WARS

According to many church leaders, the single most divisive issue in the church today is style of worship, especially in the area of music. This struggle may not seem to rate with the evils of abortion and other social ills. But to the degree a church is divided and robbed of the incomparable riches and strength available in “together-worship,” and functions at a lesser level, its power and will to address other issues is greatly diminished. When that which should unite separates, the solution has become the pathology.

New terminology has evolved to express this struggle—*worship wars*. These are not wars against evil, but internecine—brother against brother—or more likely, one generation against another. In their self-assertion, people contradict the nature of the body of Christ, Scripture, and the goal and spirit of worship. Division over worship acts as a reverse alchemy, changing the gold of Christ-worship into the lead of self-pleasure.

A healthy church is not homogeneous; all people are not alike. God himself fashioned these differences and made each person essential and integral

to the church. These differences are more than surface illusions. They are differences in structure, expression, ability, interest, background, taste, and experience. The widest possible spectrum of individuals are joined by a singular Lord, faith, and baptism. In all other areas of the church we celebrate our differences and need each person's contribution toward the completion of the Body. These differences both strengthen and challenge the church.

The struggle over differences is not new. They were present in the followers of Jesus when He was on earth and His followers that comprised the Early Church. First Corinthians 12 addressed that struggle.

In the context of acknowledging differences in giftedness (Ephesians 4:8–11), Paul defined the work of the pastor-teacher in affecting the maturing unity of the church (4:12–16). Part of the challenge pastors face is the inevitable reality of change—change from growth, changes in technology, music appreciation, emphasis, and understanding, and even in music availability. The list is endless. The church is eternal, but its essence is unchanging.

REDIRECTING THE FOCUS OF WORSHIP: FUNCTION OVER FORM

True worship is the product of neither mechanical nor deceptive manipulation. Worship must first please an all-knowing, holy, self-sufficient God—a God who does not need us, but has chosen to create, accept, and love us. The historic insight of the church was that we were created to worship Him. In the creative act, God created worship. He also energizes worship through the active presence of the Holy Spirit. This is the essence of Pentecost. Manipulation, deception, and their deliberate appeal to carnality—all of which constitute ungodliness—cannot become part of the tools of worship leadership.

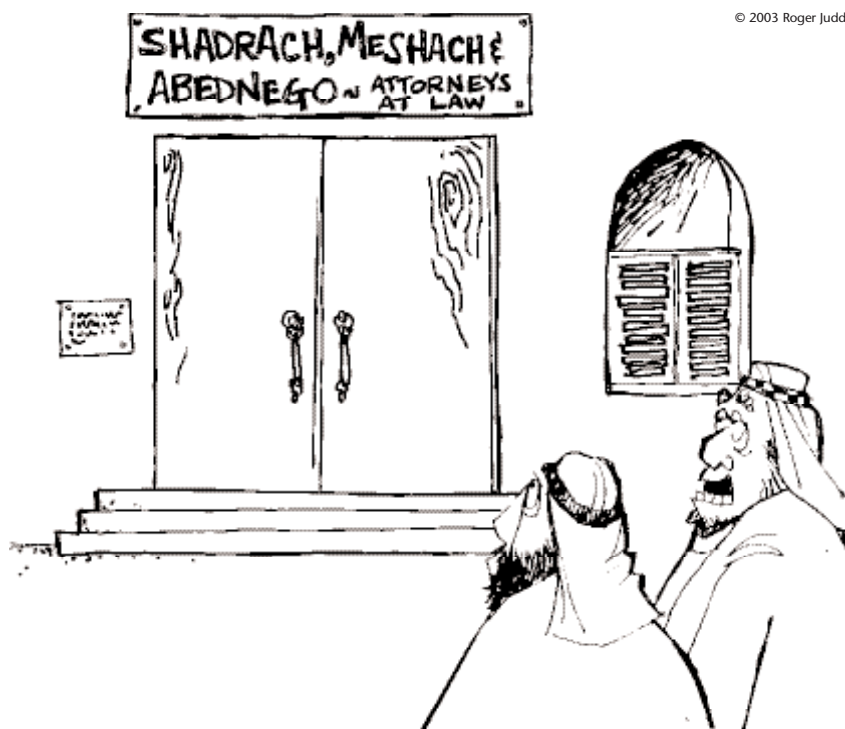
How then does the pastor define and fill the role of worship leader? How does he gather the various segments of the congregation into a singular, shared, corporate, cooperative experience that is pleasing to God and edifying to the Body? Scripture suggests at least four functions of a pastor that can put this goal within reach—teacher, shepherd, model, and coach.

The Pastor as Teacher: Laying the Foundation

As a teacher, the pastor shapes how the congregation perceives God. It is not the impact of one sermon that makes the real difference; it is the accumulative impact of message after message, lesson after lesson that helps people grow in their understanding. The educational process never ends. Education takes time, overlap, and repetition.

God is infinite in all His characteristics. He is infinitely holy, infinitely knowing, infinitely loving. The insights into God's nature will increase; and, if the pastor understands his role, the worship of the church will reflect that increase in understanding.

As a pastor addresses God's attributes through teaching/preaching, he also shapes how people perceive God in terms of their experiences. God is tender and reachable. To the brokenhearted, humble, exhausted, and frightened, He



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“Remember the big wrongful worship/fiery-furnace lawsuit? It put these guys on the map.”

is close, a very present help. But God is not close in our consuming drive for immediate gratification.

Balance in a church and its worship begins with balance in pastoral teaching and preaching. God is not just great; He is clearly revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. The glory and position of Christ, His atoning work, His self-humbling, and His exaltation by the Father, must find their place as the core focus of

preaching and teaching more than simply seeing God as the answer to felt needs. Our understanding of God is the basis from which we address our needs.

Pentecostal preaching and teaching emphasize the imminence and activity of the Holy Spirit. With that emphasis comes an encouragement to respond to His presence. The balance is brought when we teach, not only what the Holy Spirit does, but who He is. He is God,

part of the Trinity, equal with the Father and Son. He is from heaven and is here as willingly as the Son was willing to come to earth. The Holy Spirit is not dependent on our emotions. An encounter with the Holy Spirit should stir everything within us, but our being stirred emotionally is not necessarily evidence of His work. When our emotions become confused and think it is the work of the Spirit, worship may not

TEN THINGS THE SENIOR PASTOR CAN DO TO ASSIST THE WORSHIP LEADER THE SENIOR PASTOR IS RESPONSIBLE TO:

- 1. Understand and assume the role of leading the church in worship.** If the pastor has an internal conflict concerning his or her role, it may lead to confusion within other leaders and the worshipping body.
- 2. Communicate clear worship objectives.** These objectives should result in extending the worship experience to all areas of the believer's life, encompassing the ministry and lifestyle that flows from that ministry.
- 3. Share the vision of worship for the church with everyone involved in facilitating worship.** A church has both a theology and philosophy of worship. All who influence the worship experience must embrace these truths. While sensitive individuals learn by observation and intuition, this does not replace teaching by the pastor.
- 4. Provide freedom through guidelines.** Communicate expectations for all service elements including timing, styles of music, when people are to sit or stand, the role of instruments, media, drama, etc. These guidelines do not inhibit the worship leader, but provide a framework of liberty.
- 5. Communicate the calendar.** Alert your worship leader to upcoming events such as Communion, water baptism, missions emphasis, guest speakers, and other variables that can affect planning and preparation. Also include any special sermon series or focus.
- 6. Remove barriers to worship.** Barriers may include lack of preparation, poorly prepared facilities or equipment, inadequate lighting, and insufficient or untrained personnel. Functional needs may seem incongruous to worship, but ignored elements can become barriers.
- 7. Debrief services.** If the team has been made part of the vision and given freedom to lead, they should be able to honestly discuss what went well and what could be done better in the service. Debriefings should be constructive. They often work best after a short period of reflection.
- 8. Be genuinely and publicly supportive.** It is important for the team to feel they are fulfilling God's will for their church by following the pastor's leadership in worship.
- 9. Challenge worship leaders to be creative.** If part of our overall agenda for worship is to perpetuate a worship lifestyle, then leaders must not remain static in their approach. Encourage creativity in drama, use of technology, the visual arts, and other appropriate genre.
- 10. Be sensitive to the church body and to the Holy Spirit.** We must acknowledge that we cannot manufacture a sense of God's presence or the sovereign move of His Spirit. We must handle God's people carefully, never needlessly jarring them or seeking to manipulate to fulfill our own agenda. The agenda of the Holy Spirit for each worship service is never closed; it emerges as the service progresses. Pastors and worship leaders alike need to maintain vigilant sensitivity.

—Ronald A. Steen is minister of fine arts at Northland Cathedral, Kansas City, Missouri.

be taking place, even though we may exhibit worship activity. When we do encounter the Holy Spirit, the pastor who has prepared his congregation with teaching that has built faith and expectation for this encounter will find it easy to guide and encourage worshipers toward right response and an understanding of what is taking place and what they are feeling.

Mindless worship is an oxymoron, self-contradictory. It implies a mindless God, not the God of majesty whose very creative expression is Word, in fact, whose Son is the Word. If worship demands some degree of understanding, and understanding is the result of teaching, then the first responsibility of

the pastor is that of teacher. The worship of the church will flow from that teaching.

The Pastor as Shepherd: Removing All Obstacles

The word for *shepherd* is translated “pastor” in Ephesians 4:11. As a shepherd, a pastor must look to the Chief Shepherd as the pattern to follow. He is the One to whom we will answer.

Historically, the role of shepherd was not an exalted role. David was a shepherd because he had little else to contribute to his family. But David reflected his character when he faced a lion and a bear rather than give up a single lamb. David also had a heart after God, and

that was the quality for which God was searching.

When David said, “The Lord is my shepherd,” he knew the potential of his position. With the Lord as his shepherd, he was secure.

The goal of the shepherd is the welfare of his sheep, providing for their needs. The pastor will see that the overflow of the worship experience restores the soul, rather than produces agitation. The shepherd clears debris from the part of the spring called the cup, the reservoir from which sheep drink. Likewise, the wise pastor clears away those things from a service that impede the flow of the Spirit and the ability of his people to drink from the well of the Holy Spirit. As

ARE YOU BREAKING THE LAW?

DO ANY OF THESE THINGS GO ON IN YOUR CHURCH?

- Overheads, slides, or PowerPoint are used to project song lyrics for worship.
- Song lyrics are printed in the church bulletin or on a separate song sheet.
- Copies of music are made from a hymnal or songbook for instrumentalists, the choir, or the worship team.
- Audio or video recordings are made of your entire service and sold or given away to members of the church.

If you answer yes to any of these, then ask yourself: *Does my church have a CCLI license?*

If you answer no, then you are breaking the law and need to read on.

Why is it breaking the law to make copies of music or books that I purchased or reproduce the lyrics in printed form even without the music?

When a song is under copyright, it is considered property of the copyright owner. Any other person or organization must obtain permission from the copyright owner to do anything with that person's property. Even though you buy a book with that music in it, it does not give you the right to do anything you wish with it.

Why?

The U.S. copyright laws of 1990 and 1976 determined that copyright is property and that copyright owners should be paid for the use of their property.

How do I know if a song is under copyright?

First, look at the bottom of the song page for something like this: © 1987 Manna Music. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Then it is safe to assume the song is under copyright. That means permission is needed to make copies, reproduce only the words, do an arrangement of the song, or make a recording.

In a hymnal, if you do not see a copyright line, the song is probably public domain. You can also find information about a song in many places on the Internet. A good place to find information on music is at www.nmpa.org.

What is public domain?

Music and lyrics written by an American author and published in 1922 or earlier are in the public domain (PD) in the United States. No one can claim ownership of a song in public domain, therefore everyone may use such songs. PD songs may be used for profit-making without paying any royalties. If you create a new version or derivative of a PD song, you can copyright your version, and no one can use it without your permission. However, the song remains in the public domain, and anyone else can also make and copyright his or her own version of the same PD song.

Songs change over time. Even though a PD version exists, some versions may still be under copyright protection. The only way to confidently identify a PD version is to find a copy of the song with a copyright date old enough for public domain status. You can

the worship leader, this is critical.

Each service in a church has a unique, eternal purpose. God has a plan, a goal, a particular blessing, a gift He wants to impart. This does not prohibit our planning; on the contrary, it mandates seeking God as we plan a service to find the mind of the Spirit. The goal is not to determine for God what He needs to do and then make it happen, but to listen to the Spirit.

In many worship services there is a critical moment when God wants to turn the water of our effort into the finest wine. Spiritual sensitivity in a leader, and a holy boldness, equip a pastor to seize that moment—often without the people realizing what has taken

place—and lead the people to God's provision. These are the moments in which we have "Emmaus Road" experiences: "And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him . . . and they said to one another, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us . . . ?' " (Luke 24:31,32, NASB).

Maintaining Unity Amid Diversity

In his role as shepherd, a pastor addresses the issues that lead to divisions within a church. These divisions may be struggles over music styles used in worship. Most churches have departments divided by age. Each department or subgroup has its own service—the youth have theirs and children have children's

church. It is natural that the style of each service be sensitive to each group.

In biology, there is an idea called genetic drift. Species of animals separated from each other by too many generations—such as those on the island of Madagascar separated from the mainland of Africa—do not form new species. They may, however, lose the ability to breed with members of their own species.

No stylistic preference within any subgroup should be so dominant to cause that subgroup to lose its ability to interact with other believers. It is not a matter of who is the stronger. Scripture teaches that the strong are to bear the infirmity of the weak and not

then use that PD version or work from it to create your own derivative work. If you work from a version still under copyright protection, the copyright owner can likely make a valid claim for royalties.

What about fair use?

Fair use does not apply to churches. It applies to schools and even then is limited.

What is a CCLI license and how does it assist in this matter of copyright?

Christian Copyright Licensing International is a company that works with copyright owners in obtaining limited permission for churches to use their music for congregational worship. By registering for a CCLI license, you obtain a blanket permission (on CCLI covered songs) to do the things listed at the beginning of this article. This prevents you from breaking copyright laws pertaining to worship music in your church. A yearly fee, based on the size of your church, is paid to CCLI, and they disburse it to the copyright owners. If you did not have a CCLI license, you would need to obtain permission from each copyright owner for each song you wanted to use for worship. That would create an expensive headache.

People do it all the time. How will anyone know if my church doesn't have the correct permissions?

While there are not copyright police lurking in churches, it is the church's responsibility to uphold laws, set an example, and be found blameless in the eyes of the Lord.

Here is a real-life example:

A pastor asks his music minister to put together a book of the church's favorite choruses. They will be reproduced and used for congregational worship. The church does not have a CCLI license and the book contains 25 songs. Somehow that book ends up in the hands of one of the songwriters, and he is aware that no permissions were obtained. He writes a letter to the music minister saying that he is aware that this book was produced illegally. He also sends this letter to every company that has a song in that book. The music minister and church are in hot water.

Each company could file legal action against the church, including serious fines and possibly even imprisonment of the music minister. With a CCLI license, all this could have been avoided. The songbooks could have been produced for congregational worship without penalty.

Copyright is a serious issue to our churches. The penalties for infringement are harsh. The court can award up to \$100,000 for each separate act of willful infringement. Willful infringement means that you knew you were infringing, and you did it anyway. Ignorance of the law, though, is no excuse. If you don't know you're infringing, you still are liable for damages—only the amount of the award will be affected.

For more information regarding CCLI and copyright, visit the national Music Department Web site: www.music.ag.org, look under "Useful tools," and click on "Copyright Information"; or call 1-417-862-2781, ext. 4134, for more information.

—Adapted from Network News. Used with permission.

superimpose their preferences on them.

God's pleasure in our worship is essential. He gives His glory to affect our "oneness" (John 17:22,23). He will honor His appointed leaders with wisdom to guide their church through unity in worship.

Many struggles in a service or church result from differing agendas. A pastor guides the worship of a church, not by personally doing everything, but by making sure all leadership is following one agenda, both for a particular service and for the church as a whole. If all staff members have the same agenda, then whether a service is being led by a music professional, a praise team, or the pastor himself, all share the same goal. This is not true only in relation to music. The pastor cannot do all the teaching. In fact, he will do only a minority of the teaching that takes place. But all curricula that are used must support one agenda. If what is taught ultimately finds expression in worship, there is obviously no room for conflicting efforts.

The Pastor as Model: Exemplifying a Life of Worship

A church will not only follow the teaching and leadership of a pastor, it will interpret all that is said by the example it sees. If the pastor is the worship leader, he must be the lead worshiper. This does not mean he will be the most physically active or vocal; it does mean that the real worship of the pastor will be sensed by the people—whether or not he is the one standing in front at the moment. Times of congregational worship are not times to send notes about the direction of the service, talk with associates, or watch. The pastor will flesh out his teaching about God in those moments before God in the eyes of the people. They will soon emulate his attitude and spirit, even if they maintain their own styles.

A two-way channel exists between corporate worship and individual worship. Our response to daily experiences will bleed into our public worship. If

we do not worship through our daily experience, something will be missing in the shared, public experience (1 Corinthians 10:1–11).

If the pastor is to be the example, he must approach God in absolute humility, realizing the holiness, the otherness of God from one's self, and one's own inescapable commonness and likeness, with those he is leading. This will not diminish one's leadership, nor make one less effective. It allows for the activity of the Holy Spirit through one's personality, mind, and skills. It will make the pastor careful in relation to how he handles the emotions and responses of those being led. It will keep the pastor sensitive to the direction of the Holy Spirit and preserve him from the powerful, but subtle, temptation of any form of self-aggrandizement. Having led others in worshiping God in the power of the Holy Spirit, one should walk away trembling and humbled, not self-satisfied.

The Pastor as Coach: Moving From Understanding to Action

While the term *coach* is not biblical, its function is. The connotation of coaching is taking one through an experiential learning process. Paul told Timothy that Scripture was effective in that process (2 Timothy 3:16). Training assures there is no disconnect between idea and action. It repeatedly takes one through a correct set of actions (whether math, sports, arts, or anything else) until the correct way of doing something is the norm for the one being trained. Training cannot be done without correction, even rebuke.

Successful trainers create in their followers a desire to do something right. The standard will not be higher than that set by the coach. If he approves a lesser standard, no learner will rise higher.

How a church worships will ultimately reflect its training and teaching. Our worship should conform to standards and biblical norms. We are Pentecostal. The Holy Spirit frees us

from the chains of fad and transcends tradition, even our own.

Spiritual worship is prophetic in nature. The alternative is pathetic. Pentecostal worship is based on understanding the mind of God, His desire, and His expression. It must be done with an appreciation of others who are present (avoiding the cliché "*forgetting those around you*"). We encourage each other and do not intimidate or discourage one another.

Pentecostal worship answers to the standard of unity in diversity, of the privilege of shared experience, community. It is spiritual synergism at its best and powerful, the whole being greater than the sum of the parts. It is taught; it is led. It is demonstrated by example; it is trained into a congregation.

CONCLUSION

God has given pastors to the church. As pastors, our role and function must begin with that premise. God has clearly stated our goals. We equip the saints, the holy ones, for service.

There is no greater service to God than that of worshiper. From our worship of God flow other expressions of service. We guide our people to unity, maturity, and the fullness of Christ. We establish and stabilize. We recognize the unique value and contribution of each individual. In corporate worship, all these factors come together and find expression. Christ is exalted. The spiritual nature of the church, often unseen, takes precedence over the institutional nature. The pastor who has waited on God, faithfully taught, fearlessly led, lovingly corrected, and carefully demonstrated Christ, will be looked to as both the lead worshiper and the worship leader. **e**

J. Lowell Harrup is senior pastor, Northland Cathedral (Assemblies of God), Kansas City, Missouri.



**No gender bias is intended by use of the masculine pronoun.*

interview

WITH GERON DAVIS, SALLY
MORGENTHALER, AND GEORGE WOOD

Worship—Maintaining Unity and Experiencing God's Presence



GERON DAVIS



SALLY MORGENTHALER



GEORGE WOOD

Given the struggle in many churches to engage their members in a positive worship experience, are pastors and worship leaders betraying themselves by their own misunderstanding of what true worship is? Important considerations must be given to the central principles of worship if we are to connect the people of God with the presence of God.

Tom McDonald, director of the national Music Department, discussed the topic of worship in the church in a very candid conversation with three key leaders.

Geron Davis, a well-known songwriter, is a regular guest on the Gaither Homecoming concert videos. He was also the 2000 Dove Award Winner for Choral Project of the Year. Two of Davis' most notable songs are "On Holy Ground," and "In the Presence of Jehovah." Geron lives in Nashville, Tennessee.

*Sally Morgenthaler is an author, speaker, and worship consultant. She is the author of *Worship Evangelism: Inviting Unbelievers Into the Presence of God* (Zondervan). She has taught at several universities and seminaries and has been a featured speaker at numerous worship conferences across the U.S. Her Web site, www.sacramentis.com, is devoted to reimagining worship for a new world. She lives in Centennial, Colorado.*

George Wood is the general secretary for The General Council of the Assemblies of God, former superintendent of the Southern California District, and former pastor of Newport-Mesa Christian Center, Costa Mesa, California.

DEFINE WORSHIP. WHAT ROLE DOES CHURCH MUSIC HAVE IN WORSHIP?

WOOD: In the Old and New Testaments, the most fundamental thing that defines worship is service to the Lord. Perhaps the best definition of worship was given by Jesus. In Matthew 22:37, Jesus said we are to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Worship is a way of expressing what Jesus asked of us through our lives, words, and conduct. Church music is designed to help us express that love. We don't tend to think of worship as involving strength, but I have been in congregations

relationships and relationships with our children. We love people best when we know them best.

Here is another aspect of worship. King David played for Saul and helped soothe his spirit. Music helps us open our hearts to God more quickly and more completely and helps us reflect on what God has done. Worship is not just to get us emotional for emotion's sake but to open us to truth.

DAVIS: Concerning Jesus' interaction with the woman at the well, He said the Father is seeking true worshipers. God is a spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and

the Bible but it was like being at a funeral. Jesus is saying there has to be balance.

Worship is not something we do on Wednesday or Sunday; it's 24/7. Worship is not a style; it is a lifestyle. And worship music is a by-product of a worship lifestyle.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT OUTCOMES OF THE WORSHIP EXPERIENCE IN CHURCH?

MORGENTHALER: In Isaiah 6, Isaiah saw God for who God is and he saw himself for who he was. We sometimes compare ourselves to each other, but scripturally, we are to see

We need other avenues of worship expression that are not so explosive, not so ridden with generational division.

—Morgenthaler



where the singing has been weak, and they wished for greater strength in what was being done.

MORGENTHALER: I agree. Through worship we express our love relationship with God. That also involves what Jesus talked about with the Samaritan woman. That love expression must involve our spirits, and it must be genuine and authentic. It also involves the truth of whom we are worshiping. God is naturally a part of that love relationship. We see this principle in marital

in truth. This lady of the night was asking theological questions of the Word incarnate. But He set the tone for worship.

We cannot make worship all theology, and we cannot make it all emotion. Worship must be both. While worship in spirit involves the emotional side, worship in truth involves the intellectual side. I have been to some churches that were Spirit-oriented but as shallow as a wading pool. I have been to others that could quote every Scripture in

ourselves against the backdrop of who God is. This is what I call realignment. This realignment happened when Isaiah felt the full weight of God's presence. Isaiah's response is important. It was not, "How wonderful!" but rather, "Woe is me. I'm a man of unclean lips." That's the realignment that needs to happen if we are going to be brought back to what we are created to do—give all the glory to God. We need to continually be brought back to this because our natural direction is self-glory.

WOOD: Sally nailed it on the head in terms of the Isaiah 6 example. I would add a third component. After Isaiah had a vision of God and a vision of himself, God gave him a responsibility to others. And for Isaiah, that was a difficult task. Think about going to people who would not hear and who would not see. One of the outcomes of worship should be strengthening us for our ministry in the world.

In a biblical model of worship, we worship to see who God is. And it

they sing, they are less inclined to sing meaningful songs that emphasize *thee* and *thou* than songs that emphasize *I, me*, and *my*.

It is easy, especially within the charismatic-Pentecostal wing of the church, to slip into a worship that reaches for a subjective nirvana—if I can just feel this particular tone. Those kinds of mental moods or emotional states are heavily warped in the subjectivity of touchy, feely kinds of things. They don't focus on the character of

the worship event, but a preparation for worship. Worship is not just what we do when we are together with other believers, but it is what we do back in the world when we worship Him through our lifestyles.

It is mandatory for us as worshipers that our spiritual batteries be recharged when we get together. But many Christians live from Sunday to Sunday, only tolerating the people in the world. They lose sight of what the Sunday experience is all about—to prepare

**Pastors need to know
their congregations
and make sure they
are being ministered
to and fed.—Davis**



helps us see who we really are. But worship edifies and empowers us to go about the service that the Lord has called us to in this world.

A satirical book was written when I was a young minister on how to become a bishop without being religious. The author wrote about climbing the ecclesiastical ladder. He had a chapter on how to pick the right wife and how to drive the right car at the right stage of ministry. His thesis on his chapter on worship was that people have not really come to church to worship God, although they say they do. They have come to subconsciously worship themselves. For example, if you look at the songs

God and the many aspects of doctrine relating to God that music can convey. Worship should not slip into the totally subjective side. It has an objective side where it is being given to God, and it's not just benefiting me personally.

DAVIS: Worship also helps us see ourselves for who we are not. We have a tendency to make worship about us. The less we enter into God's presence, the bigger we become in our own eyes. It is only in His presence that we are made aware of how great He is and how unworthy we are.

The American church has misconstrued the worship event. When we gather corporately, that is not necessarily

them to go into the world on Monday. The worship event takes us into God's presence and charges our batteries, but mostly it helps us become light in the darkness.

HOW IS THE MUSIC COMPONENT DIFFERENT FROM THE PREACHING COMPONENT IN A WORSHIP SERVICE IN ITS EFFECT ON A CONGREGATION?

WOOD: Worship is the one act that the congregation as a whole participates in together. They listen to preaching, but congregational singing is the one point in the service where they are all participating. There is a collective sense of being in this

together. When the congregation is singing at a level of excitement and earnestness, it brings a sense of God's presence. That is unique. Worship brings a softening of the heart. But what is going to occur in the rest of the service? I shudder as a preacher when I step to the pulpit and it's dead because leadership decided to make announcements, show a video, or do something that is unrelated to setting the tone for people's hearts to be receptive to the Word.

MORGENTHALER: I encourage pastors to work more closely with those who lead worship so there will be preparation for the Word. Pastors should not give the sense that the only important time in the service is the preaching. There is a huge disconnect in too many services between what happens in the musical portion and what happens from the pulpit. That tells me there's not a whole lot going on during the week between the pastor and worship leader. Preaching is complemented by singing and other arts that point to the character and works of God.

ACCORDING TO A RECENT BARNABY SURVEY, ONE OUT OF THREE EVANGELICALS WHO ATTEND CHURCH ON A REGULAR BASIS HAS NEVER SENSED THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN CHURCH. HOW CAN THIS BE?

DAVIS: First, the sense of not experiencing God's presence in our services can in part be attributed to pastors not understanding the importance of their role as the primary worship leader. They think, *We have a worship leader who draws a great salary. That's not my job. They don't understand that worship starts at the top.*

Second, it is leadership's responsibility to educate people biblically in their roles as believers and worshipers. As children of God, they have access to the very presence of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. That makes what pastors and worship leaders do on Sunday incredibly important because this isn't about us; it's about the people

that God has called us to lead.

A third thing that can keep people from experiencing the presence of God in our services is excessive activity on the platform. We are called to bring the lost to Jesus and to encourage believers. If we have competing agendas, this can hinder the move of God's Spirit.

Finally, for worship leaders the song selection is not nearly as important as the preparation of the people who will be singing and playing those songs. If they have spent time on their face in prayer seeking God's presence in their lives, then they are ready and the people in the pew will be more likely to experience the presence of God. When I lead people in worship, I want to lead them to a place I have already been on my own during the past week. Then I can take them into His presence.

MORGENTHALER: I speak to younger people who go to church, but many of them haven't grown up in church. Their euphemism for God's presence is that it is real. That's their litmus test. That's their barometer. When they leave, they ask themselves whether it was real or not. If Jesus isn't being lived out among the people who are facilitating worship, people are going to be hindered from experiencing God's presence.

I encourage pastors and those who facilitate worship to do more than just think about clearly communicating the text or having an appropriate song list. They need to plan community. That means the worship leader and the pastor get together on a weekly basis to pray, fellowship, and seek God in terms of how they want the service to go. If they do that, we will see different services and an attitude of worship will overflow on Sunday morning. The reverse is also true. Pastors and worship leaders need to decide they are going to have community and not just imitate it.

WOOD: I agree. When I pastored, I saw my role as pastor as the primary

worship leader of the church. That didn't mean I led the song service, but it was my pastoral responsibility during the week to sit down with the people most directly involved in the service to plan the service. I wanted to know who would be singing, what they were going to sing, and the songs the congregation would be singing. I wanted to know how these things would blend into the message I was going to preach and how they would blend with the times of prayer.

It is critical that we get away from the sense that anything is preliminary. The whole worship service is integrated toward the common goal of glorifying Christ, strengthening believers, and reaching the unsaved.

LYLE SCHALLER SAYS MUSIC HAS REPLACED DOCTRINE AS THE MOST DIVISIVE ISSUE IN THE CHURCH. WHY IS THAT?

MORGENTHALER: This has happened because we are doctrinally illiterate. Martin Luther talked about worship being the school of the church. If it was true in his day, it is much more so now because we don't have other places to learn theology. We are not getting it on Sunday mornings.

There has been a shift in the last 20 to 30 years to a more person-centered worship—worship organized around felt needs. I am not saying what we feel is not important, but there has been that shift. We are doctrinally challenged. Doctrine is not in the forefront. We don't know how to tell whether a teaching is heretical or doctrinally sound. We revert to our personal experience because that is what has been promoted.

What has your experience of worship been like? Was it fun? Did it energize you? Did it sound good? Did it look good? This is a great deficit that we are not doctrinally astute and aware.

It is important for us to be aware of the musical languages people speak. Music is an aesthetic language. My concern is that not only are we

**Music helps us open
our hearts to God more
quickly and more
completely and helps us
reflect on what God has
done.—Morgenthauer**



concerned with musical style, but also we are narcissistic in our view of what worship is. We have divided things up, and worship has been equated with music. We have thrown out doctrine and are oriented to the music we like. Whatever style is or is not on the platform becomes the worship issue.

Nowhere do I see that music is worship. Music is a medium by which we respond to God and we hear from God. But music in and of itself is not worship.

DAVIS: In some ways music has always been surrounded by controversy. Some of our hymns are lyrics set to bar tunes. At the time, these were not accepted by some, but are now beloved hymns.

People have a tendency to be self-centered. I have heard people say that God's favorite kind of music is southern gospel. They say it in a joking way, but we seem to believe that what we like is God's favorite and probably will be the music we hear in heaven.

Worship music helps us glorify God and enter into His presence. But what worship music is to my kids and what worship music is to me and what worship music is to my parents are

different. But we are all right.

God can work through multiple styles of music. The reason we are seeing musical styles becoming such a big issue now is people are more vocal than they were 20 or 30 years ago. Years ago a core group controlled the church, so people went to concerts to get their taste of music style. But now our churches are growing, and each group in the church has grown and wants input. Many churches have contemporary, blended, and traditional-type services. One church even has a southern gospel service. This is an attempt for people to be saturated with what they like. The negative part of this is much like going to a family reunion and saying, "All those 13 and under go to this house, and everybody 14 to 20 go to that house," and so on. That is not a family reunion; that is a meeting by age categories. When I do this, I rob my grandparents of the youth and zeal they get from being around my kids. And I'm robbing my kids of the heritage of hearing my grandparents tell their stories. Everyone is robbed when people are selfish in church.

WHAT ARE COMMON MISTAKES PASTORS AND WORSHIP LEADERS MAKE WITH REGARD TO THE WORSHIP SERVICE?

WOOD: One common mistake I see is that during a time when pastors are asking people to come forward for prayer, the worship is so loud that those who are praying for people cannot even hear their prayer requests. We need to be attentive to those kinds of issues.

Another mistake pastors make, and one that communicates to congregations that pastors are no longer the primary worship leader, is this: In many churches the pastor sits on the front row instead of on the platform. This has come from an attempt to truly be a humble servant of the Lord and be one with the congregation. Pastors are not better than anybody else. I understand that. But the presence of the pastor on the platform helps.

I am in several churches throughout the year, and I learn things by being on the platform and looking over the congregation. I learn immediately whether the congregation is responding to the worship team or not. If I was senior pastor and I noticed that about half the people were coming into the service 15 minutes late, I would want to know

why. I see this happening in church after church. It is not just that people are tardy; it is because some people don't like the worship. They say, "I'll get as little of it as possible. I'll come and hear the preacher."

If pastors are sitting on the platform, they will notice what is going on in the congregation. They will notice the participation, the flow, and the reception by the congregation to what is happening in the service. You can tell a lot by looking at people and responding to them.

There is another important reason for the pastor to be on the platform. In Pentecostal or charismatic services, we believe in the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. If pastors are going to promote the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, there needs to be a control mechanism. If a person who is out of order needs correction or an explanation needs to be made, a pastor can do that immediately. Pastors can size up an atmosphere within a congregation much better when they are facing a congregation than when their back is turned to them.

When we reverted to the pastor sitting on the front row with his or her back to the congregation, we lost a vital

tool of communication and leadership as it relates to worship. The pastor became secondary, defined more as a preacher, announcement maker, and offering taker than as a worshiper.

DAVIS: I would like to add to what George Wood has said. Congregations read pastors. When pastors sit on the platform with their legs crossed and not participating, that sends a signal to the congregation that this is not really important. On the other hand, when pastors sit on the platform where the congregation can see them and they are worshipping, that sends a great message.

I have also seen musicians and worship leaders lead in worship and when it's time for the message, they slip out and have coffee and doughnuts. I want to ask, "When did you reach such spiritual maturity that you can say to the congregation, 'I don't need what you're about to get'?"

The congregation needs to see the pastor fully supporting the worship leader and the worship leader fully supporting other ministries. I tell choirs that I don't care if someone is making announcements about the senior citizens dinner; they are to act

like it is the most important thing they have heard all week. When we do this, we are sending a strong signal to the congregation that what is being said is important.

MULTIPLE GENERATIONS ARE PRESENT IN MOST CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP SERVICES. HOW CAN EVERYONE'S MUSICAL PREFERENCES BE SERVED?

WOOD: In newer churches and in church plants, the style of worship music is not a divisive issue because these churches began using one style of music and people are used to it. Where you have an established multi-generational church, and a pastor comes in and totally changes things overnight, this is where the conflict is occurring.

If you are going to have an inter-generational church—and that is your goal—then you need to find a way to bring people together. The reason there are worship wars is simply a failure of love. The older people are regarded as not being sufficiently mature to flex and handle the new music. And then the older people look at the younger people and see their music as rock and roll nightclub

When the congregation is singing at a level of excitement and earnestness, it brings a sense of God's presence.—Wood

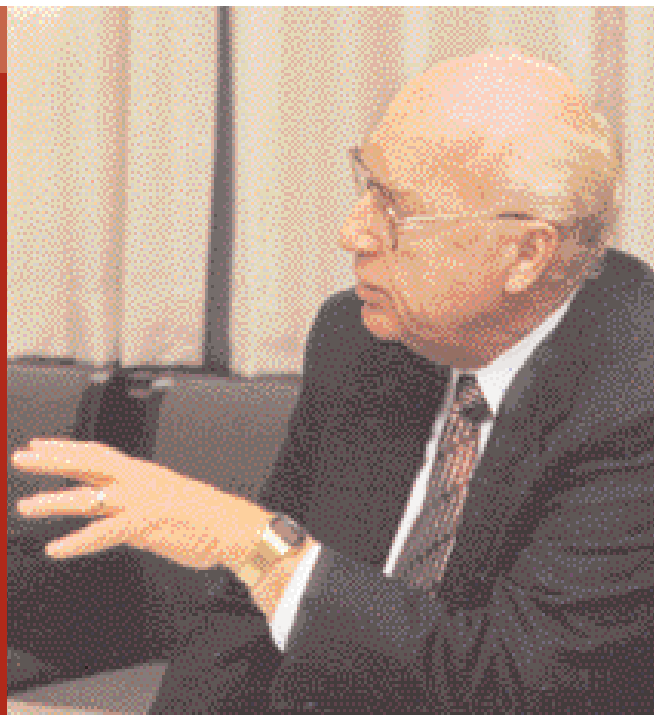


Photo: Donald Musgrove

music. This whole issue goes back to pastoral leadership, which has to set the agenda. We must have an attitude that we are coming together.

I can tell story after story where churches have been emptied of a generation—usually an older generation—who went somewhere else because the music styles changed. They were basically told, either verbally or nonverbally, “If you don’t like it here, there’s the door.” That is a failure of love.

We are to bring people together in the bonds of Jesus Christ. The whole issue of loving has to be addressed,

them to rejoice because somebody else in the congregation likes it and is getting blessed and your turn will come. We will get a song that you like. We had a track record of building community in the church by letting the worship service minister to all people. Don’t cut out a significant slice of the congregation because they can’t bring themselves to participate in what’s going on because it’s unfamiliar to them.

DAVIS: Pastors need to know their congregations and make sure they are

they might ask, “What’s going on?”

MORGENTHALER: I have thought about that. In a mainline traditional church in the rural Midwest, their DNA is going to be vastly different than an urban church from a different faith tradition. Knowing your culture is important. This is where collaborative worship planning comes into play. Don’t live a cubical life by yourself. If I ask two or three others to come alongside me, I have four or six eyes and ears, and we can talk through these things together. We can experiment. We can expand the

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older generation could
safeguard the younger
generation and save
them many mistakes.**

—Davis



because where there is true love among believers, there is going to be an ability to be flexible and tolerant of other forms of music.

On a given Sunday morning in the church I pastored, we would have everything from Bach to soft rock. We had purposed to be a multigenerational church. If I had a worship band that had people stand for 45 minutes, 25 to 30 percent of my congregation would not enjoy that. I wanted something that crossed generations and brought people together. I told the congregation they might hear a song this morning they may not like. I told

being ministered to and fed. Pastors can’t promote a musical style that caters to one segment of the congregation. The question should not be, “What do I think is the latest trend?” but rather, “What does my flock need?” “What will feed them?” “What kind of music will help them grow?”

A lot of the problem has to do with culture. For instance, Pentecostals have a cultural predisposition to respond in a certain way. The music in their services might be fervent and emotional. This is what they are used to. In some of these churches, if somebody did something outside their particular box,

power as we expand our sensitivity to our community. That is what I love about planning in community, because I don’t have to think to myself, *Is this the right thing to do?* Even if you have six or eight people working on something, you are still going to flop at times, but it is less likely. We are more likely to be responsive to the whole congregation if there are more working together.

It is also easier to bridge the generations if music is not so important. One of the reasons we are having these worship wars is different styles of music in the church are a new phenomenon. Within the history of the church, it is

new having cultures and generations built around musical styles. Part of the problem is exalting music to this high level where it equals worship, and we don't have other avenues of expression. We need other avenues of worship expression that are not so explosive, not so ridden with generational division. There is a stronger connection culturally to the music style that we were exposed to between the ages of about 13 to 23 than anything else. And because we do not have other ways to express and respond to God, we are lost with this one area that is divisive, because in our culture it is.

We need to find creative ways to help people get past the investment they have in a musical style. There are other legitimate expressions of worship—corporate reading, prayer, or other expressions. I see generations coming together where the worship options are expanded and generations don't fight over musical style.

WHAT PRACTICAL WISDOM CAN YOUNGER WORSHIP LEADERS GLEAN FROM THOSE WHO ARE OLDER AND MORE SEASONED IN MUSIC MINISTRY?

WOOD: The most critical thing is to begin a conversation. Older people are more flexible when there's a personal relationship. We all are more flexible when there's a personal relationship. But if younger people are leading the worship service, it would be wonderful—and maybe the pastor should arrange this—for the worship leader to sit down and have a heart-to-heart talk with some of the older people in the congregation. The worship leader needs to ask, "What is meaningful to you?" Many older people today are sensing that even if they have been faithful to their church that it doesn't matter because they feel ignored. Some of this is self-serving on the part of older people, but these are the people who made the sacrifices to buy the property, build the buildings, and other aspects of the church. Now they are being told, "Move


over." When the current generation gets to about 55 years of age, suddenly all their songs might be thrown out when a whole new group comes in. Then they will understand the feelings of rejection that some older people feel now.

It is sad when people who have been in a church for many years and have been faithful to the Lord and taught Sunday School feel left out. These people are not grippers and complainers. They say, "I don't feel that's my church anymore." That is a sad commentary on a church and on pastoral leadership that allows this disenfranchisement to happen. However, this fallout can be prevented through loving care and through dialogue. That is what I would urge younger ministers and younger worship leaders to do.

One of the difficult things for an older generation is standing for 45 minutes. A lot of people past 50 years of age have back problems, and standing for 45 minutes is torture, not worship. If you have more highly educated people in your congregation, sometimes singing the same monosyllabic words 10 times in a row drives people out of their minds. Being sensitive and loving says we're going to take those people's needs into account as well. And maybe we need to think about not only mixing the variety of the music but also the sitting and standing.

DAVIS: The older I have become, the smarter my dad has become. The wisdom from an older generation could safeguard the younger generation and save them many mistakes. Human nature is pretty much the same from generation to generation. An experienced worship leader has dealt with some issues and has learned some things along the way. By dialoguing with a mature person, I can learn things that will help me in my role. If I learn some things that didn't work, then maybe I can avoid the same problems. We learn and benefit from their wisdom and years of experience, which can help quantum leap us further

down the road and save us from having to go through the same hard knocks. What I encourage ministers of music to do—and this is what I did when I served on staff—is to arrive at church early, even before rehearsal. Older people tend to arrive early. Visit with the people, shake their hands, and hug them, and tell the older ladies how pretty they are. And then stay late. When church is over, don't rush down through the tunnel and act like you're being protected by the CIA to keep from being mobbed. The older people knew I had them at heart. The young people liked me too because I tried to align myself with every age group in the church. It paid off. We did a variety of music. I earned their trust. I could get away with almost anything musically, trying different styles, as long as I had earned the trust of the people. You don't earn that any other way than just by getting out there with them and talking with them and becoming their friends. It's the smartest thing I ever did.

MORGENTHALER: One word comes to me: *incarnation*. That is what God did. He came to us and landed where we were at a specific place and time. He went the distance. We have to be the leaders of a ministry of incarnation, being totally in tune with who people are and where they are. We need this relational base. We've lost that. Generations need to get involved with each other around a task. We need to involve our seniors as photographers, videographers, composers, musicians, and greeters working collaboratively with them in planning services. That doesn't mean just sitting down and having a cup of coffee, but going a step further and getting their talents involved. Maybe they're not going to be on the worship team, but maybe they will be behind the scenes creating some incredible things for you. When we work together for the glory of God, our relationships deepen incredibly. 



BY TOM MCDONALD

Bridging the Generations in Worship

The choice of how to minister
to multiple generations in worship
is a serious dilemma.

I was driving to the office recently and noticed an intriguing church sign: “We are traditional at 8 a.m. We are contemporary at 9 a.m. We are blended at 11 a.m.”

The sign reminded me of an ad I had seen in the newspaper: “We are charismatic in our worship, Baptist in our preaching, and Episcopal at the table.”

Comparing those two examples of life in today’s church shows how demanding it is on pastors and worship leaders to program services that appeal to multiple generations worshipping together under one roof. Interestingly, numerous churches program different kinds of music at different service times, yet have the same sermon throughout the Sunday schedule.

My question is: Is scheduling different worship styles at different times healthy for a local church? There are many voices calling pastors and worship leaders to adapt new trends when contemplating their style of worship in their churches. These novel methods for contemporizing worship seem compelling at first blush. Yet for the Pentecostal church of the 21st century, much is at stake.

OUR DILEMMA

Pleasing multiple generations

The choice of how to minister to multiple generations in worship is a serious dilemma. Never before in church history have we had the complexities of four generations present in one service: builders (G.I. generation, silent generation, war babies), boomers, busters (Gen X), and bridgers (Gen Y, millennials). The dilemma unravels further when we consider divergent musical tastes of the older and younger generations.

A growing church with multiple services must carefully analyze the implications of either administering diverse worship services, as the church signs indicated, or programming multiple services that are identical. My pastor observed, “With our growth, it has been important that we keep everyone on the same page. Because people are hearing

and singing the same thing, it has been easier to maintain unity in the midst of the various building programs and programmatic changes we have made. In today’s culture, people appreciate being flexible on Sunday—choosing a morning service format that fits into their schedule, knowing fully that whatever service they attend, they will not miss anything.”

Without vigilant teaching by pastors and worship leaders, sheep gravitate toward selfishness in matters related to worship music. We all like the music that was being sung when we were saved, whether it was 70 years or 7 minutes ago. And that is not to mention the preferences of ethnic congregants who also deserve a place at the table.

In an attempt to minister to the diverse elements in his congregation, one worship leader brings two outfits to church each Sunday. He sports a business-casual look at 9 a.m. and a suit and tie at 11 a.m. The early service features contemporary worship, and the later, traditional. My colleague also admitted a tinge of worry about the “unity thing.” Beyond the unity component, however, is a more insidious dilemma to this generational worship matter.

The majority of our churches have enough space to accommodate their multigenerational parishioners in one service. These churches must carefully monitor the style of worship being programmed to ensure balance and the disarming of potential worship wars. Worship wars spark in parish settings where intentional decisions about the worship life are either avoided or overlooked. (See sidebar, “Focus on ‘Worship Wars’ Hides the Real Issue Regarding Connection to God, page 64.”) Even if a pastor is not musical, he or she is still the lead worshiper. As such, there are mandates to be served and cues to be observed. The pastoral mandate is to remain watchful of the worship life of the church. The cues a congregation renders, relative to the fruitfulness of corporate worship, are somewhat more subtle to monitor. Following is a list of

congregational cues, which if ignored, ignite worship wars:

1. When a worship leader ignores a congregation’s musical preferences long-term, the effect is demoralizing.

2. When a pastoral change occurs with radical alterations to the sound or look of the worship, the effect is disheartening.

3. When one attends a lifeless church or one that does not have adequate instrumental support to present contemporary music with authenticity, the effect is disappointing.

These terms—*demoralizing*, *disheartening*, and *disappointing*—are not the emotions we are to feel as we enter His courts with praise. These emotions do not produce “joy unspeakable, full of glory.” Keeping worship alive and life-giving presupposes attention to detail.

Limiting the move of the Holy Spirit

Running tandem with the decision to change the dress of the clergy and the style of the worship is the tendency to capitulate on the moving of the Holy Spirit. Another leader recently reflected, “We’re trying to reach greater numbers of visitors on Sunday, so we discourage any public demonstrations in the Spirit. Instead, we wait until Wednesday evening—in a believer’s meeting—to manifest the Spirit.” Dumbing down a Pentecostal church’s response to the manifest presence of the Lord is dangerous to the health of the church and disingenuous to our Fellowship’s heritage.

Wayne Benson, president of Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, says, “A tree cannot grow apart from its roots.” In my experience, visitors have been greatly moved by the proper use of the gifts in public services. Visitors long for a demonstration of the supernatural; they crave a touch from the Master. They want a power encounter when they attend church, especially Gen X and Gen Y persons. It is indicting to ponder the recent Barna research that states: “Our surveys among regular churchgoing

adults indicate that one-third of those people have never experienced God's presence. Half of all regular churchgoing adults admit that they have not experienced God's presence at any time during the past year."¹

As Pentecostals, we must balance the trend to value a visitor's comfort with the charge to welcome the Holy Spirit among us each time we gather. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus. His comforting and peace-giving attributes are necessary as congregants and visitors battle the cares of the day. One speaker mused, "I have come to believe that life is a continuous circle of being in a trial, coming out of a trial, or getting ready for the next trial."

Because life is choppy, filled with irregular circumstances and dysfunctional people, I question moving the manifestations of the Holy Spirit to a midweek expression. One needs to encounter Jesus through authentic worship and transformational preaching each Sunday. Welcoming the presence of Jesus into a sanctuary by singing fosters breakthrough, deliverance, and healing. These attributes of the Master's touch function in all settings, large or small. Jesus responds to our worship of Him.

Changing worship styles

I served a pastor who felt something must change in our approach to worship every 6 to 9 months or the touch of revival would lessen. We learned new songs, massaged the worship order between services, altered the liturgy—anything to keep soft before the Lord. Change theory, though, requires insight in terms of its application—presupposing trust, sensitivity, and avid communication. If worship leaders do not consider these areas, disaster may ensue.

But many new pastors and worship leaders—even with good intentions—make changes too fast after being elected. Conversely, long-timers who have not changed their approach to corporate worship in a decade suffer from the same sword. Either extreme is

problematic. Considering both sides, the challenge of rapid change is more rampant today.

This quick-fix approach to the worship life of a church, without bringing the congregation along philosophically, asks for difficulty. A lack of communication about changing the scope of worship leaves parishioners with the unfortunate choice of interpreting the pastor's ideas without context. Worship is a personal journey into the presence of the Lord. Long-term church members travel a road well-worn and trusted. By changing the style of the transportation midstream, the cart often gets in front of the horse. Frustrated, the faithful exit the worship encounter without connecting to God.

How can a pastor make so obvious a mistake? Pastors do not intentionally lead their flocks into worship chaos. Rather, many simply rely on the visible to the exclusion of the invisible. It is easier to attend a conference than to hear from the Lord. After being inspired at a conference, a pastor may return home and make a paradigm shift without taking into account the need to stair-step his congregation in the process. As I travel the country, I continually hear similar stories. Zeal outweighs prudence. Dramatic changes in worship style, without considering the impact on the faithful, create trauma for a congregation.

Further, quantum leaps in worship style for reasons related to visitor

MOST POPULAR WORSHIP CHORUSES BY DECADE

	TITLE	COMPOSER
50s	Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus	Helen Lemmel
	His Name Is Wonderful	Audrey Mieir
	It Is No Secret	Stuart Hamblin
	Room at the Cross for You	Ira Stanphill
	Spirit of the Living God	Daniel Iverson
60s	He Touched Me	Bill Gaither
	The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power	Andrae Crouch
	Sweep Over My Soul	Stuart Hamblin
	Nothing Is Impossible	Eugene Clark
	Sweet, Sweet Spirit	Doris Akers
70s	His Banner Over Me Is Love	Stuart Hamblin
	There Is a River	David and Max Sapp
	Alleluia	Jerry Sinclair
	Surely the Presence of the Lord Is in This Place	Lanny Wolfe
	Because He Lives	Bill Gaither
80s	Majesty	Jack Hayford
	We Exalt Thee	Peter Sanchez, Jr.
	Give Thanks	Henry Smith
	As the Deer	Marty Nystrom
	Lord, Be Glorified	Bob Kilpatrick
90s	Holy Ground	Geron Davis
	Shout to the Lord	Darlene Zschech
	Lord, I Lift Your Name on High	Rick Founds
	Oh, the Glory of Your Presence	Steve Fry
	God Will Make a Way	Don Moen
2000s	The Heart of Worship	Matt Redman
	Forever	Chris Tomlin
	Above All	Lenny LeBlanc & Paul Baloche
	Here I Am to Worship	Tim Hughes
	Open the Eyes of My Heart	Paul Baloche

—Tom McDonald

friendliness tend to alienate the church's base. This also leaves the wistful pastor in a tentative position, now relying on new members and the foggy commitment of visitors to hold the bag for the budget.

A change in church life as monumental as altering worship style or space is a process that requires careful management. For example, a pastor may sense stagnancy in the worship and attempt to solve the dilemma pragmatically by attending a conference on church growth. At the conference, the dynamism of the megachurch and its charismatic leader blur the core issue in the pastor's mind. The pastor then returns home and substitutes the look of the worship space for discerning what God would say prophetically, through His still, small voice. I know situations where pastors came home from a conference, canceled the choral program, fired their music staff, and altered their worship so severely they alienated hosts of members. All this was done in an effort to replicate what was happening in another region of the country. These kinds of wild maneuvers prove counterproductive in time. What may work in a megachurch halfway around the country may not work in your church.

Conferences are a great way to explore new ideas, obtain fresh perspective, and observe different applications to our mission. However, greater strategy is found on our knees. E.M. Bounds wrote: "The work of the ministry is prayer." Often, Pentecostal leaders do not need more information; they need more revelation.

God has a unique plan for your church and its worship identity. While large churches hold keys to unlock or codes to decipher relevant cultural clues, many times these keys and codes only work in a specific geographical or demographical setting. Those codes may unlock their community, but not necessarily yours.

To minister grace to multiple generations in a local church, pastors must first hear from God about the worship

life of the church. Biblical models for worship must be taught. Issues of Pentecostal tradition must be caught. And leadership from the Holy Spirit must be sought.

THE DECISION

Pastors face a dilemma—either program identical services or completely unique worship components for each service. Then, one must contend with the following challenges, which demand a verdict.

1. The challenge of unity (Ephesians 4:3). We are called to protect the unity of the church. How can we maintain the spiritual focus of the congregation with differing music being sung in worship from service to service?

2. The challenge of diversity (1 Corinthians 12:12,26). We are called to care for one another by valuing the preferences of others. Can God be in a musical style that is different from what I prefer?

3. The challenge of mutuality (John 13:35). We are called to unlimited availability, unlimited liability. How can the older care for the younger if we are segregated by musical preference in separate services?

If the choice is to keep the entire body thinking and saying the same thing in identical services, the respective challenge then becomes one of keeping multiple generations on task by blending hymns, choruses, and gospel songs into a flow. This flow, if done correctly, transports the congregation into the presence of the Lord.

The Lord's presence is not welcomed by a certain "hip" repertoire, but by joining humble hearts hungry to worship God. Choosing music that speaks across generational lines unifies a congregation in this pursuit. After all, as Tom Brooks wrote, "It's not the state of the art, but the state of the heart that matters most to God."

Young worship leaders are capable of singing the contemporary songs well, but are often unfamiliar with hymns. Therefore, they generally avoid singing hymns altogether or show little vitality

when they do sing them. The focus of a worship encounter, however, is to welcome the life-giving flow of Jesus by singing passionately. Enthusiasm replicates.

A balanced Pentecostal service is one in which a hymn is sung with the same authority as a newly written chorus. Young worship leaders have a responsibility to invest in hymns, and seasoned worship leaders need to incorporate contemporary compositions in the flow of worship. And both need to do it with authenticity. This may stretch the mode of accompaniment from the traditional piano and organ to a rhythm section. Pastors also need to be worship savvy, assisting the different generations to gain a healthy perspective about a balanced musical repertoire.

In a conversation with Edward Polochick, conductor of the Lincoln, Nebraska, symphony orchestra, I gleaned an important insight into how conductors program new music into the repertoire of an orchestra. He said, "When I program something new, I converse with the audience before we play the selection. I do not wait for the listeners to form an opinion based on personal criteria. Rather, I bring them along on my journey, teaching them about the piece in question, giving them the composer's background, why I feel the selection has merit."

Too often, pastors do not assist a congregation in developing a balanced view toward worship, especially if something new is being presented. But there has to be context to make an intelligible decision. Otherwise, one's participation in something new in worship becomes arbitrary.

OUR DUTY

Our duty as pastors in bridging the generations in worship is threefold. First, as Polochick has reminded us, explain everything that is new. A contextualization is a gesture in peacemaking and diplomacy. There is an adage in the profession of education that has merit here: "To be terrific, you first must be specific." *Continued on page 67*

FOCUSING ON “WORSHIP WARS” HIDES THE

Magazines have featured articles on the worship wars said to be raging in the nation’s churches. According to data from a new study presented at Baylor University by researcher George Barna, however, the real issue is not the choice of music by churches but rather people’s interest in, understanding of, and engagement in the act of worshipping God.

Describing the national research conducted by his company for the Billy Ray Hearn Symposium on Christian Music, held at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, Barna indicated that the coverage afforded the worship wars has exaggerated the scope of the problem while ignoring the real issues regarding worship. “The major challenge,” according to Barna, “is not about how to use music to facilitate worship as much as it is to help people understand worship and have an intense passion to connect with God.” Citing various findings from three recent nationwide surveys he directed on the issue, Barna noted that relatively few churches have intense musical battles, but most churches have too few people who truly engage God in worship.

“Most of the church people who fight about their musical preference do so because they don’t understand the relationship between music, communication, God, and worship. Church leaders foster the problem by focusing on how to please people with music or how to offer enough styles of music to meet everyone’s tastes rather than dealing with the underlying issues of limited interest in, comprehension of, and investment in fervent worship of a holy, deserving God.” Barna also stated that although music is important in the worship process, it is often elevated beyond its rightful place in the worship effort.

CREATING A CONTROVERSY

Drawing on national surveys among churchgoers, senior pastors of Protestant churches and worship leaders from those churches, Barna revealed that while there are definitely battles being waged within Protestant churches regarding music, the battle is not widespread. One-quarter (24 percent) of senior pastors say their church has music-related tensions, but only 5 percent of them claim those tensions are severe, which amounts to just 1 percent of the Protestant congregations in the U.S.

One reason identified by Barna for the limited severity of the tensions is that most church people appreciate the use of music for worship, but are not obsessed with the style used. The research found that the style of music relied upon in the service is a matter of high significance to just one-third of all church attenders. In fact, only 17 percent said that they would definitely or probably change their attendance pattern if their church altered the musical style of the service they usually attend. Three-quarters (76 percent) said they would just go along with the new style and not make any change in their attendance habits. These figures suggest that in spite of the controversy surrounding church music, people may be more accepting or flexible than assumed.

As confirmation of the limited significance of the worship wars controversy, the research also pointed out that only 3 out of 10 adults say worship music is the single, most important factor in their choice of what church to attend. The people most likely to list music as a key factor were blacks, people 56 or older, adults who attend a church that has 500 or more attenders, women, and born-again Christians.

MUSIC THAT DOMINATES

There is plenty of opportunity for people to gain exposure to the style of music they prefer. Three-quarters of Protestant churches (73 percent) have multiple worship services. Overall, 27 percent have just one service, 32 percent offer two services, 33 percent provide three options, and 8 percent have four or more distinct services.

What type of worship music do congregants gravitate toward? If the service attended is any indication, traditional worship music still reigns, although a minority of churchgoing adults experiences it. Presently, 40 percent of adults say they attend a service that uses traditional music (e.g., a choir, hymns, organ). The next most common styles are “blended” music (used in the services frequented by 12 percent of adults); gospel (11 percent); praise and worship (10 percent); and contemporary Christian (i.e., CCM) or Christian rock (9 percent). One out of every eight attenders (13 percent) said they don’t know what the style of music is at their services.

REAL ISSUES REGARDING CONNECTION TO GOD

THE REAL ISSUES

The Barna study discovered that among the key worship issues is that churchgoing adults and Protestant senior pastors do not share a common perception of the most important outcome of worship. Congregants were most likely to understand worship as activity undertaken for their personal benefit (47 percent), while senior pastors described the purpose of worship as connecting with God (41 percent) or experiencing His presence (30 percent). Only 3 out of 10 churchgoing adults (29 percent) indicated that they view worship as something that is focused primarily on God. One out of every five attenders admitted that they had no idea what the most important outcome of worship is.

Another relevant research finding was that most pastors do not prioritize worship as a main thrust of their church's ministry. When asked to list the two or three top ministry priorities of their church, the survey revealed that worship was included in that list by only one out of every four pastors (26 percent). Other top-rated priorities included evangelism (listed as a top-3 priority by 41 percent), preaching/teaching (34 percent), ministry to youth and children (25 percent), and discipleship (19 percent).

SOME MIXED SIGNALS

If significant changes will be made in worship, don't expect them to be driven by the laity. For the most part, people are satisfied with the worship experiences they currently have. Four out of five individuals (83 percent) say they leave the services feeling accepted or completely loved by God "every time" or "most of the time."

However, Barna pointed out that churchgoers and pastors have conflicting notions of what is considered necessary to worship effectively. Out of 10 facilitation factors studied, parishioners and pastors differed substantially on the importance of 6 of these items.

The areas of agreement related to prayer, which 9 out of 10 pastors and parishioners said was very important to facilitate effective worship. More than four out of five pastors (84 percent) said music is very important to facilitate effective worship. However, barely half of the congregants (55 percent) agreed. In fact, in assessing the ranking of the 10 worship elements studied, pastors rated music second only to prayer, and tied with the sermon, in importance. Congregants, however, rated music in a tie for fifth place, following prayer, the sermon, Communion, and a time for reflection. The music was deemed no more important than the public reading of Scripture, confession, the offering, and the turn-and-greet time. In fact, music was more important than only 1 of the 10 elements evaluated: reciting creeds and responsive readings.

If the people in the pews are going to push for changes, those transitions may relate to the substance of the songs they sing and being able to sing songs they know more often. Overall, nearly half of all worship attenders said that the words in the currently popular praise and worship songs lack the spiritual depth of traditional hymns. Three out of 10 adults noted that too many new worship songs are introduced into their services.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

Based on the data from the studies, Barna cited two important patterns of behavior. "Notice that the churches most likely to have worship-related problems are those that utilize blended music, which is a questionable attempt to please everyone at once. It appears that the use of blended music merely reminds people of the fact they have to share the music space with others who cannot tolerate their own preferences, just as they cannot tolerate those of others. The reliance on blended music seems to actually fuel rather than dampen the fires of discord. Other recent studies we have conducted even show that people are less likely to feel connected to God in a blended service than in one that uses a single style of music.

Returning to his main takeaway from the research, Barna encouraged church leaders to get back to basics. "Many church people fight about music because they have yet to understand the purpose of music in the worship process. That lack of insight causes them to focus on and fight for their preferred sound, instruments, presentation techniques, or their desired order of service. Too often, church leaders get caught up in the fuss. "These battles are inappropriate distractions from meaningful ministry and fruitful discipleship. Christians need to be more zealous about and devoted to worshipping God."

—Abridged from Barna Research Group Online, Ventura, Calif., www.barna.org Research Archives. Used by permission.

Second, teach a yearly series on worship. Too much is at stake in these tempestuous times to not address this topic annually from the pulpit. As has been said, "Music has replaced doctrine as the most divisive issue in thousands of congregations."² Invite a pulpit guest to occasionally punctuate your worship series. Cap off the series with a Sunday evening worship encounter—an entire service dedicated to lingering in the presence of the Lord via song.

Finally, schedule a yearly retreat with the worship community of the church. Wait on God and process the relative vitality of the worship life of the congregation. Do not delegate the worship of your church to a committee or a subordinate.

Robert Rhoden, Potomac District superintendent, says, "A church is like a plane. It takes two wings to fly. Relative to the church, those two wings are preaching and worship. If the preaching and worship are in order, the church will fly."

Too many pastors are trying to fly the church on one wing. We need both. Our duty as worship leaders is to prepare, rehearse, and present worship with sensitivity and introspection. When I am asked to lead worship, I always begin the process by quieting my spirit in the presence of the Lord. Reflectively, I ask two questions: First, Lord Jesus, what would please You in the service? Second, what will the people attending this service need from Your hand?

Only after I have prayed do I feel a rush of creativity for that service's

worship component. Then I remember Ephesians 5:19: "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord" (NIV). The text is about singing heartily to the Lord in a variety of styles. Psalms are songs about the character of God. Hymns are melodies of consecration and doctrine. And spiritual songs are tunes in which we give testimony to His goodness.

This verse indicates a triplicate of music genres to be sung in worship. That correlates with having at least three generations present in the typical Pentecostal congregation on any given Sunday. Blending worship material is biblical. In fact, worship leaders need to plan music to appeal to older believers, middle-agers, and young people whenever possible. Creating a medley of worship songs that magnifies the Lord and edifies the believers is an art form that carries a lofty responsibility. (See sidebar "Music in Pentecostal Worship," page 38.)

It is a serious task to lead a congregation to the throne of God each week and avoid the minefields of the worship wars. These disputes about worship are not a phenomena limited to the evangelical church of North America. Alan Philps wrote that a fight broke out in July 2002, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem about the placement of a chair used by an Egyptian monk near the entrance to the roof. It was a hot day and the chair was moved to the shade—against written policy derived in 1757—and, as such, violated the status quo.

"The fracas involved monks from the Ethiopian Orthodox church and the Coptic church of Egypt, who have been vying for control of the rooftop for centuries," said Philps. As a result, 11 monks were treated in a hospital for their injuries.³ At issue—the position of a chair. Before we shake our heads, let us reflect on our own lives as pastors and worship leaders. How often have we fought over the trivial, not wanting to be moved?

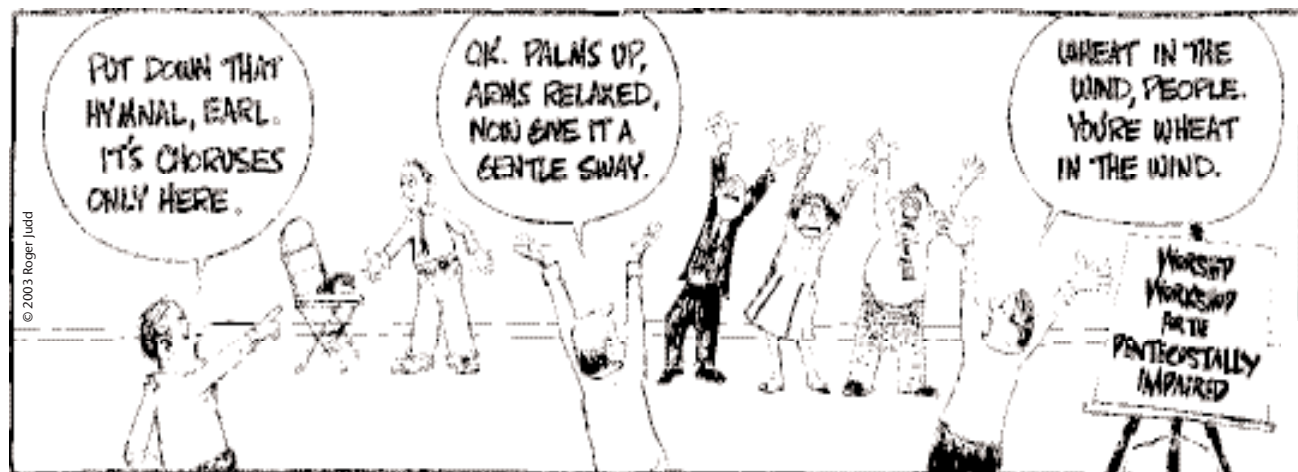
Simply put, worship in the 21st-century church is evolving. We are enfolding the music of revivals and of the youth into the mainstream of the Pentecostal ethos. I, therefore, call for pastors and worship leaders to be open to the wind of the Spirit and to the values of our Pentecostal heritage as we—grandparent, parent, and child—all sing to the Lord under the same roof. **E**

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BY DON AND LORETTA STEIGER

From Nursery to Adulthood: The Priority of MUSIC in the Local Church

NO MATTER ONE'S AGE, ONCE AN APPRECIATION FOR GOD IS FORMED, THERE IS A NEED TO EXPRESS PRAISE AND ADORATION.

When you're up against a struggle that shatters all your dreams Don't let the faith you're standing in, seem to disappear Praise the Lord! He can work through those who praise Him"

More than 20 years later, phrases from this song still come to mind, bringing hope and strength. God had used this song to encourage us during a time of great personal challenge. We were caught in a vice of economic troubles during a church building program and our faith was disappearing. The message of this song lifted us out of despair and gave us hope. It is now far more than a nostalgic melody and lyric; it is a reminder of God's faithfulness and a special memorial of something He did for us.

Music does that. Melodies and words remain in our memories, providing a source of comfort, reflection, and hope. For this reason, the earlier a person is introduced to the life-changing message of the music of the church, the greater the opportunity for personal growth in God. Whether used as an expression of worship, a tool for teaching, or a means for outreach, music is an important ingredient in the life of the church and must be used to its best advantage.

EXPRESSING WORSHIP

“Praise the Lord. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him!” (Psalm 147:1*).

Music is a God-ordained means of expressing worship. No matter one’s age, once an appreciation for God is formed, there is a need to express praise and adoration. Music provides a natural means for all ages to do this. When the children in Bethel’s preschool and kindergarten gather for chapel, the sound of their singing reminds us of the pure joy of children worshipping God. And when the older saints gather for their monthly hymn sing-a-long, tears flow freely in expressing their appreciation for God’s faithfulness. Blessed is the church that recognizes the need for musical expression of worship for all ages.

Leaders of children’s ministries must intentionally provide music on a child’s level, but must also introduce music similar to what will be experienced when the children enter the adult service. Teach children to worship so worship will be sustained into the teenage and adult years. Music programs such as a children’s choir or private lessons can prepare young people to be musicians, singers, and worship leaders in the future. At Bethel, we have a school of music that provides professional instrumental and vocal training for children and teenagers. Many who are involved in our choir, orchestra, and worship teams are products of this school. A church has a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to teach

children to worship God through music.

While it is beneficial to provide distinct and separate musical ministries in the church, we must never lose our emphasis on corporate worship. Music provides a tangible way of expressing unity in the body of Christ. Worshiping together in song provides a corporate declaration of what we believe. It is a beautiful illustration of the body of Christ being made up of many unique members all working together to achieve the same objective.

Different age groups in the church express their music with their unique styles. But when the whole church gathers, personal preferences need to be set aside as the Body unites in a multigenerational expression of worship.

On Sunday we worship through the leadership of our adult choir, worship teams comprised of a wide range of ages, occasional numbers from the children’s choir, special songs presented by teenagers and older singers, and a band and orchestra proficient in all styles of music. And each group or individual sings or plays to give glory to God in the simplicity of unity.

God promises to bestow His blessing when there is unity (Psalm 133). This quality in a church is a mark of maturity as each member defers to another in singing songs that may not appeal stylistically to all. Is this unrealistic? No. It is the pattern given by God to His church. We are told: “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:2,3).

We experience God’s presence in the context of heartfelt worship. The message of Christian music causes us to focus our attention on God. The message together with the music stirs emotions that help us draw near to God. As our attention is given fully to Him and we reflect on His greatness, the Holy Spirit is free to work in the lives of all who are present. We frequently hear testimonies of people

who committed their lives to Christ, received healing, or were filled with the Holy Spirit as the church worshiped through music.

Experiencing God-honoring music will produce encounters with Him. At Bethel Church, we normally conduct our primary worship time, including the opportunity for people to approach an elder for prayer, after the preaching of God’s Word. In so doing we have experienced increased opportunities to minister to people of all ages. As the congregation worships through song, needs are met and lives are changed in response to God’s presence.

Finally, music provides a means of worship by memorializing victories we have won through Christ. When Israel achieved a great milestone, God instructed them to build a memorial so they would not forget what He had done. The current popularity of gospel songs from decades ago among older people is due in part to the memories of God working in their lives. Music often reminds us of God’s faithfulness to us and we respond with worship.

LEARNING

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God” (Colossians 3:16). “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” (Ephesians 5:19).

Music is a great teaching tool. Most of us learned to sing our ABCs. The church has a tremendous opportunity to teach the principles of God’s Word through the medium of music. “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so” is a refrain filled with profound theology and can be assimilated easily by any child. Words to hymns such as “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” or “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” declare the character and attributes of God. Singing psalms with contemporary melodies places Scripture in our memories. Ballads and gospel songs evoke mental images of God’s goodness and stir our

emotions in positive ways. Whether it is in the toddler class, preschool, children's church, Sunday School, youth group, or adult worship services, music can be used to teach the truth of God's Word. A doctrinal principle becomes memorable if it is tied to a melody.

We should never underestimate the power of music in providing enjoyment in learning. Children's ministry teams know that introducing wholesome entertainment into the teaching menu is critical to holding youngsters' attention and capturing their desire to learn. Music is a common denominator among teenagers. Youth ministry is strengthened when it provides Christ-centered music that grabs the emotions, opening a way for the Holy Spirit to drive truth home to the heart. And how wonderful it is to walk into a sanctuary during corporate worship and sense the pure joy and excitement of great music dedicated to the One who is our joy.

DRAWING PEOPLE TO CHRIST

"The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation" (Isaiah 12:2).

Having lived in California for only a short time, we are learning each day to adapt to the West Coast culture. Recently, Loretta and I were walking through a beautiful coastal redwood forest and heard a choir singing in the distance. We were attracted by the music and walked close enough to hear the words. To our amusement, we discovered they were heartily singing, "Save the redwoods, save the redwoods." The music got our attention and drew us in. Then we listened to the message. Just as the singing of a group of active environmentalists gained our notice, so should the music of the church arrest the attention of the world. Music is a tool for the church to draw in outsiders to hear the message of God's love.

When the kingdom of Judah was taken captive by ancient Babylon, the people of God refused to "sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land" (Psalm 137:4). They hung their harps on

the trees and sat down and wept. Ministering the message of God to the pagan Babylonians was the last thing on their mind. God was displeased with this self-centered attitude and told them plainly to seek the peace and prosperity of the city and to pray for its welfare (Jeremiah 29:7). He wanted His people to boldly sing the songs of the Lord and let the Babylonians know of His goodness. As the church, we also live in a foreign land and have the opportunity to seek its welfare by presenting the gospel. Music is a medium that reaches every heart at some level and should be used skillfully and effectively to draw in the unsaved.

When are the best opportunities for evangelism? The holidays, both secular and religious, provide avenues for music to draw in people to hear the gospel. Our music director seizes an opportunity each December by having the Voices of Bethel and the orchestra perform at "Christmas in the Park" here in San Jose. Thousands of people stream through a beautifully decorated downtown park and hear music that honors the Christ of Christmas. Bethel people stand in the crowd and personally invite the listeners to our services. Easter, the Fourth of July, and Christmas are wonderful opportunities to use music for outreach.

We pray over the music for our weekly services. Our music is also well planned and diligently rehearsed because of its importance in our worship and outreach. Occasionally we dedicate an entire Sunday evening service to worship through music. These services are attractive, drawing in both the believer and the unbeliever.

We cannot ignore the entertainment factor in church music. Our music should be done well so it is pleasing to hear. Poorly done music inhibits worship and outreach. When music is presented skillfully, the believer is set at ease to worship. The unbeliever hears and enjoys great music. The gospel is presented and seed for salvation is planted. God's Word will accomplish what He desires (Isaiah 55:11).

CONCLUSION

Make music available to all ages in your church. Babies in the nursery, preteens in their classrooms, young married couples, the elderly—all will appreciate and respond to Christ-centered melodies and lyrics done within the context of their age and preference of style. But hear a word of caution. When the Body gathers together for corporate worship, set style preferences aside. Place the emphasis on the message.

During our 25 years as pastors, it has been our practice to earnestly seek what the Holy Spirit wanted for our worship in music, whether it involved teaching a new chorus, or singing a hymn that was written 50 or 100 years ago. This fosters an attitude of acceptance and magnanimity among young and old alike. Worship in unity, not selectivity. GenXers earnestly sing the theologically profound concepts of the hymn "Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty" and the older ones among us learn the equally powerful words to "Did You Feel the Mountains Tremble?" displayed on PowerPoint. And we all attempt to clap on beats two and four.

Perhaps churches have created a problem where there really wasn't one. Are we expending too much emotional energy in trying to please people's personal tastes? Let us be bold enough to simply present what the Holy Spirit places in our hearts as spiritual shepherds.

Evaluate the place of music in your church. Give it priority as a medium for worship, teaching, and outreach. Start in the nursery and continue through adulthood. When used appropriately, Christ-centered music is a source of blessing, strength, and edification for all ages in the body of Christ. **e**

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**Scripture references are from the New International Version.*

BY JASON SALAZAR

The Dynamics of Music Ministry in a SMALL CHURCH

Four principles to an effective music ministry in the smaller church.

Praise teams, choirs with people of all ages, rhythm sections, and orchestras are commonplace in churches today. These ensembles perform varied repertoire from Mozart to Redman while multimedia projectors splash the text of songs on large screens to prompt congregational singing. In other locales, a hundred-voice choir sways in tempo to the beat of the music. Yet, in another place, congregants reflect as the church orchestra performs a moving rendition of a beloved hymn. Each situation is unique, yet one constant permeates each setting—each church is large and has the resources to accomplish these endeavors. In a large church, building a music ministry that features the latest bells and whistles may be accomplished quite easily. However, the challenge arises when one is given the same task in the smaller church.

The wise leader must recognize the differences in the smaller church: 1) little or no budget; 2) little or no personnel; 3) limited resources; 4) potential years of frustration over the lack of credible music. What procedures or protocol does one follow to develop an effective music ministry in the smaller church? How does a pastor with little or no budget acquire resources and attract personnel?

In a recent survey about music in the local church conducted by the national Music Department, 53 percent of the respondents were from churches with less than 100 attendees. Another 24 percent were from churches with an attendance of 100 to 200 people. Thus, 77 percent of the churches represented in this survey had a weekly attendance of 200 people or less.



A dialogue about techniques to strengthen the smaller-church music program is appropriate. To improve quality, generate growth, and increase effectiveness, I suggest four principles to utilize within the framework of the church's existing vision—prayer, priority, promotion, and procedure. These principles are not exhaustive, but can be a springboard to accelerate the effectiveness of the small-church music program.

PRAYER

Before a note of music has been sung or played, before a rehearsal has been called, and even before a person has been asked to lead any music ministry, prayer must be at the core. It is insane to attempt church musical endeavors without asking for God's help. A music program's survival is contingent on prayer.

As Christians, we are completely dependent on the Lord for strength, wisdom, and help. We should be swift to ask the Lord to go before us as we strive to build a music program designed to worship Him.

Pray for God to lead the music ministry.

Even if the music is not a ministry yet, or the task seems overwhelming, take heart. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31, NIV). God

has called His servants, and He will guide them. Since "nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37, NIV), we must place Him at the center of our planning.

Pray for God to grant creativity for your music ministry. We were created in the image of God, and one of the qualities present in creation is creativity. God can stimulate our minds with new and fresh ideas. He can spark the creative juices that run through each person involved in music ministry. With the Lord's help, blinders and limitations can be removed, and we can enter a new realm of creative activity.

Pray for God to guide the right people to your music ministry. Is it

wrong to pray for larger numbers? Is it wrong to pray for specific musicians? Of course not. God can bring the person or persons who will fit perfectly into the

While prayer is the best marketing strategy for the small-church music program, there are other steps to attract potential members.

scheme of your music ministry. The Lord is able to accomplish more than we could ever imagine through prayer.

PRIORITY

The success of your music ministry hinges on the level of priority this ministry has within your church. If any church desires great music but is not willing to give time, energy, and finances to improve the quality, then its music ministry will steadily decrease. Music needs to maintain a high priority for continued growth and excellence. Many churches miss this critical point. They desire great music, but are not willing to give high priority in fulfilling the process. Too many churches miss out by throwing their musical portion of the service together at the last minute. Although music is not the most important aspect of the church, it is one that warrants a high degree of our attention.

Support by the senior pastor and church leadership is crucial. Without their support, no changes or new attempts in the music program should be considered. A wealth of ideas will never overcome a lack of support by leadership. In fact, one way to accelerate division within a church is to implement changes and ideas without leadership's support. On the other hand, their support can be the greatest asset in the smooth implementation of changes and new ideas. If a senior pastor is excited about an idea, then that excitement will saturate the church body.

Crafting and maintaining a vision is not new. To unify a group of people toward a common goal requires each member to move forward together. Great things cannot be accomplished by

WAYS TO ENHANCE WORSHIP IN THE SMALLER CHURCH

- Ask a larger church to help with your music, resources, and personnel.
- Host a worship team from a larger church to model and help establish goals for your worship team.
- Use accompaniment tracks for worship if no qualified musicians exist. (See sidebar "Ten Music Resources for Churches," page 77.)
- Utilize youth and children in corporate worship.
- Network with established musical resource groups (national Music Department, The Church Music Report, etc.).
- Search the Internet for free music, ideas, and resources for worship ministry in the smaller church.
- Teach the congregation about the importance of worship and the priority that must be placed on it.
- Keep instruments in tune. Keeping equipment in good shape and updated is a must. Out-of-tune and troublesome equipment is a hindrance and annoyance to church members.
- Make sure your worship leader is a worshiper.
- Do not be afraid to sing a cappella. There is something pure about voices in one accord worshipping the Lord.
- Use music that the congregation knows. Before introducing new music, find ways to familiarize your congregation with these new songs. One way could be to play new music before or after services. Keep it simple. Do not require your worship team to sound exactly like the recording.

—Jason Salazar

bouncing around with the latest musical craze. Create a vision for music ministry that fits within your church's structure, and make certain that all involved align themselves with that vision. Theodore Hesburgh says, "The very essence of leadership is that you have to have a vision. It's got to be a vision you articulate clearly and forcefully on every occasion. You can't blow an uncertain trumpet."

The vision for the music ministry in the smaller church is not about numbers or setting and accomplishing goals. Rather, it is about leading people to worship God. As greater priority is given to this ministry, more congregants will grasp why the music ministry exists. Constant reminders and regular vision casting will generate growth and encourage excitement for the music program.

PROMOTION

Music ministry requires participation. One singer cannot make an ensemble, no matter how hard he or she may try. While prayer is the best marketing strategy for the small-church music program, there are other steps to attract potential members. Promotion inside the church, outside the church, and visibility in the community are valid ways to recruit new musicians.

Promotion is key to the growth of the music program. Groups move forward by constantly involving new individuals. The danger of not moving forward is a stagnant group that is out of touch with the people they are trying to reach.

The foundation for music ministry promotion begins with publicity inside the church. How can one expect growth unless there is a willingness to demonstrate the needs of the music program? As the church attracts more visitors, it is vital that the music ministry be exposed to these new faces. The worst scenario is to assume that "if we build, they will come." Promotion requires initiation.

Promoting the music program inside the church can be done in various ways. Announcements in the church bulletin or newsletter are ways to publicize needs for musicians, special events, and activities. Recruiting posters hung in

TEN MUSIC RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES

MUSIC

- 1. Integrity Music** (www.integritymusic.com)
Worship music
- 2. Word Music** (www.wordmusic.com)
Accompaniment trax, music
- 3. Brentwood-Benson Publishing** (www.brentwood-benson.com)
Music resources for the smaller church
- 4. Lillenas Publishing** (www.lillenas.com)
Music and drama resources for the smaller church

TECHNOLOGY

- 5. Tempo Productions, Inc.** (www.tempomusic.com)
Music software for church use
- 6. Alpha Sound & Lighting Co.** (www.alphasoundandlighting.com)
Lights and sound equipment
- 7. Worship Resources** (www.worshippers.com)
Source for various music products
- 8. Christian Computer Concepts** (www.christiancomputerconcepts.com)
Keyboards, music software, and accessories

PRACTICAL HELP

- 9. National Music Department** (www.music.ag.org)
Music resources for the church of any size
- 10. CCLI** (www.ccli.com)
Church copyright permissions and issues

appropriate places within the building can also help. Another effective tool is a survey to find out people's musical abilities. Many people have belonged to musical groups and ensembles in the past. A survey helps uncover these hidden talents and abilities.

Promoting the music program outside the church can also be advantageous. If your church is involved in the community, the music program can benefit from this exposure. Spirit-filled singing at community festivals, shopping centers, and outreaches can attract people to your church. As new believers join the church, they may have musical talents that can enhance the music ministry.

One way to attract younger musicians is to open the church building for private music lessons. Partner with a local music store or music professional. When you let them use your church for music lessons, your visibility in the community will grow. Another benefit can come as a result of your developing

these younger musicians. With the steady decline of music training in schools, churches need to take the initiative to train future musicians.

PROCEDURE

You have prayed for God's leading and for people. You have made building the music ministry a high priority. You have promoted the new program in many different avenues. Hopefully, after applying these three principles, you have people who desire to be a part of the music ministry. Now we move from the discussion of philosophical ideas and principles to the application of these principles.

Start with what you have. The adage, "If life gives you lemons, make lemonade," is true in the smaller church. If you desire an orchestra, but none of your people play instruments, then adjust your thinking. Start where your people's abilities exist. By doing the easy things well, you instill confidence in the participants and the church body.

Perhaps you have a group of singers who need to sing in unison because they cannot harmonize. If instrumentalists are hard to find, you may need to use taped accompaniment for worship for a season. In other places, the children might need to be more involved in the music of the church. On the other hand, we want to always be excellent for the Lord. We want to play skillfully before Him. In a smaller-church setting, though, excellence may be unison singing or using taped accompaniment. Excellence is not about doing the big things poorly, but doing the simple things well.

Growing a music ministry

Once a starting point has been established, growth is still necessary. No person or ministry can afford to become stagnant and predictable. When the moss begins to grow, move. Cultivating progress will pay dividends for years to come. Every person, regardless of skill level, has room for improvement. As the music program develops, new leaders will be birthed, ready to take the baton and run with it when you have finished your portion of the race.

With this in mind, here are 10 ideas to help foster creativity for the worship service and music ministry in the smaller church.

1. Do simple things well.
2. Plan. Do not throw things together at the last minute.
3. Look for new ideas. Visit other churches, if possible.
4. Do not get caught up in the latest musical fads.
5. Plan music for all segments of the congregation. Do not alienate certain groups.
6. Try different groupings—ladies trios, instrumental duets, etc. There are many possible combinations of vocalists and instrumentalists.
7. Know the limitations of your instrumentalists. If your pianist can only play in the key of G, then do not sing songs in D^b. However, help your pianist grow. Look for ways to introduce new keys and techniques to your pianist.
8. Use a CD or tape to introduce new songs to the congregation. They can gain confidence by learning the song right the first time.
9. Communicate with the senior pastor regarding opinions and changes.
10. Be positive.

Many musical resources are available to churches. The national Music Department can help locate the right tool for developing your music ministry. Here are five ways we can help:

1. The latest book from the national Music Department, *Empowered Worship*:

Strategies for Senior Pastors and Music Leadership, is a collection of articles dealing with all facets of music ministry (see ad on page 31). Topics include worship leading, audio and media, drama, choirs, orchestras, and staff relationships. This is a must-read for anyone involved in church music.


2. Visit the national Music Department's Web site, www.music.ag.org, for helps and resources.

3. *Discovering Music* is an 8-week course teaching the basics of how to read music. The course is designed for a person with no musical background.

4. The national Music Department's bimonthly magazine, *Forte*, is filled with articles about the concerns of today's church musician. Along with the magazine, subscribers receive new worship music twice a year with lead sheets and recordings on CD. This new, original music is from Assemblies of God churches across the country. You will not find this music in any bookstore or catalog.

5. Join the national Music Department's e-mail discussion list. Over 400 music leaders from across the country communicate daily about issues of music ministry. Members come from all backgrounds and from small to large churches.

CONCLUSION

Effective smaller-church music ministry may seem overwhelming, but with God's help, you can accomplish great things. Deborah K. Cronin said, "The church with small membership prevails as an all-sufficient means of grace through which God's love flows. The size of the faith community is never a measure of faithfulness. Because of God's abundant grace, there is never anything inherently small about any church! The music of the smaller church, when performed with spiritual integrity and diligent preparation, is as acceptable to God as that of the largest cathedral choir." 

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Counseling was never easy for Pastor Dan. Now the Pruitts, a mime couple, seek help.

Jason Salazar is resource editor in the national Music Department, Springfield, Missouri.



WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH

The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir—

THE MUSIC OF A SPIRIT-LED CHOIR CAN BE A POWERFUL



BY CAROL CYMBALA

Changing Lives Through Music

TOOL IN GOD'S HAND TO LEAD PEOPLE TO CHRIST.



The story of *The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir* is a powerful example of how God can use a choir to reach its community with the gospel. From its humble beginnings, the choir's purpose has always been about ministry to the real world. Here is their story.

New York City is never at a loss for people. Day and night, crowds fill the streets. You wonder if anyone ever

auditorium that seated more people than our small church. There was nothing impressive about what we did in these early meetings. Some of the Teen Challenge guys couldn't even sing on key. But their hearts were sincere in wanting to reach the lost. People were saved, not because of how well we sang, but because God came in power.

As the years progressed, Jim and I

OPEN DOORS OF MINISTRY

Carnegie Hall

Since we knew that many people would never come to our concerts because doing so meant coming to church, we thought about renting a hall. Shortly thereafter, someone suggested a ridiculous idea. Perhaps we should rent Carnegie Hall. But could an inner-city choir draw a large crowd to a venue

**Though we were intimidated by
the thought of singing at
another famous venue, we didn't let fear
get in the way of reaching more people.**

sleeps. When God called my husband Jim and me to begin a church in Brooklyn, we asked, "Lord, how do we reach all these people with the gospel?"

In the early days, when our choir consisted of a handful of people, we worked with a local Teen Challenge to hold monthly outreaches. We rented an

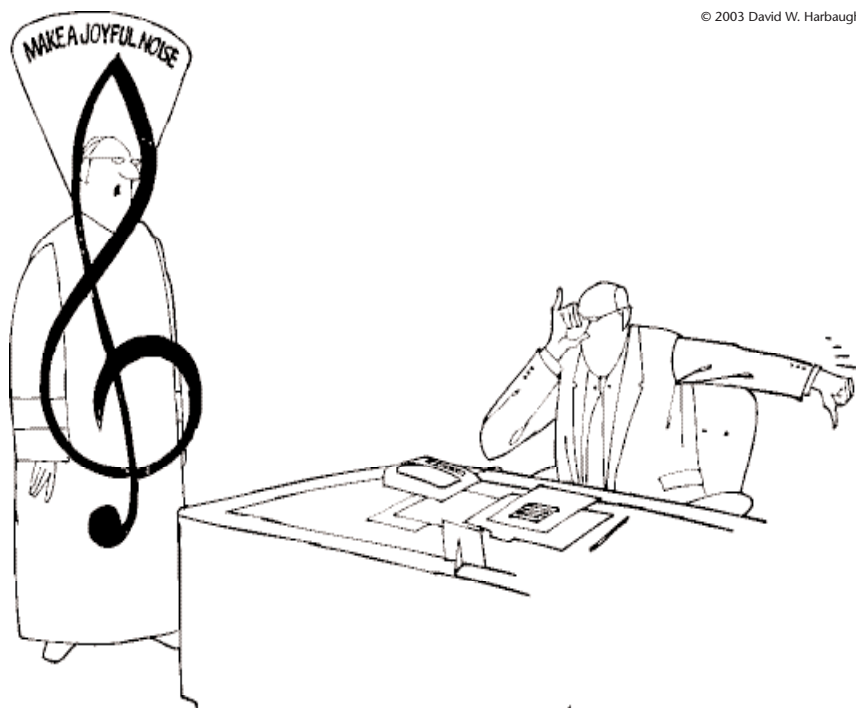
kept asking the Lord, "How else can we reach this city with the gospel?" We knew that music had a wonderful power to draw people. We had often held concerts in our own church. It wasn't difficult to fill the 1,200 seats, but we longed to do more. Meanwhile, God continued to bless the ministry of the choir as it gained recognition.

known for its world-class performances? We soon found out. The night of the concert we were shocked to see that the police had been called to manage the crowd. People had gathered outside the hall hoping for a seat. There were more people than seats, and unfortunately people had to be turned away.

That evening, aware that we had an incredible opportunity to share God's love, the choir sang with all its heart. No one was focused on entertaining. We simply wanted to minister to those who had come. It wasn't about the choir but about the people who needed to know Jesus Christ. After we sang, Jim gave an invitation and the response was overwhelming.

Radio City Music Hall

The experience at Carnegie Hall gave us faith to believe God for more. Soon we arranged for two consecutive concerts to be held at Radio City Music Hall. Though we were intimidated by the thought of singing at another famous venue, we didn't let fear get in the way of reaching more people. Members of our congregation, along with other believers, began inviting people from their families, workplaces, and



"The new choir robes; that bad, huh?"

neighborhoods to a concert at Radio City Music Hall. Both nights were completely sold out. A member of our church invited a man named Bob Adamo. This is how Bob remembers the events of that night.

"I developed a friendship with someone at work who talked to me about God. She invited me to visit Brooklyn Tabernacle more than once, but I always had an excuse. Finally she invited me to a concert at Radio City Music Hall, not a church. The one thing she failed to mention was that this wasn't your ordinary concert but one where somebody would stand up and preach. I wasn't prepared for that.

"I don't remember what Pastor Cymbala said that night, but after hearing his words, I knew I had a choice to make. So I stood up the minute he asked people who wanted to accept Christ to stand for prayer.

"I don't know exactly what happened except that Christ delivered me. And it's amazing to me that I'm now so close to people who are Puerto Rican, Jamaican, African-American, or whatever. After all, I'm an Italian who grew up in a neighborhood that had the usual kinds of prejudice toward minorities. But I don't have any of that poison in my heart since Christ changed me. Now I'm part of God's family, and I love it."

God truly helped us during those nights at Radio City. We didn't go there to perform. We didn't go there so we could say we had sung on its impressive stage. God sent us there to lift up the name of Jesus Christ and offer people the hope of His salvation. Bob Adamo is but one example of what the Lord is able to do. Today Bob is singing in our choir along with his new bride. We are overjoyed as we watch God continue to bless his life.

Madison Square Garden

Since those concerts at Radio City, we have had countless opportunities to minister to people in New York, throughout the country, and around the world. One of our greatest experiences happened when we debuted an

album at Madison Square Garden, a venue that seats around 17,000 people. Christians from all over began inviting unbelievers to come. This time, however, the Lord placed a particular burden on our hearts for a special group of people.

It is impossible to live in New York without being aware of thousands of homeless people who populate its shelters. Many live in roach- and rat-infested buildings. These buildings are sometimes so dangerous that many people prefer living on the streets. Since we believed God was calling us to reach New York's homeless, our staff began contacting shelters throughout the city,

inviting residents to a free concert at Madison Square Garden. When we were done, 3,000 homeless people had accepted our invitation. We rented dozens of buses to pick them up and drop them off. We gave each person a gift bag with personal hygiene products. Most of the homeless in New York had never stepped foot in Madison Square Garden, and most did not understand why they were being treated so special. After the concert, my husband spoke and asked those who wanted to receive salvation to stand. We watched as thousands of people rose to their feet.

One of the homeless who stood that

WORSHIP Q & A WITH CHÉRI WALTERS

Q: What can I do to encourage my choir, worship team, soloists, accompanists—who are all worship leaders—to truly worship and not just perform?

A: Don Moen, composer and arranger for Integrity's Hosanna Music offers this advice to worship leaders: "Don't lead—worship." He is focusing on a truth we need to communicate to our worship team. To lead worship, we must first be worshipers. Here are ways you can encourage your worship leaders to be worshipers:

1. Challenge them to be worshipers first, both privately and publicly.
2. Remind them that leading in worship is not a performance but an expression of the heart. The congregation is not their audience; God is.
3. Don't be super spiritual. Be transparent enough to admit that you don't always feel like worshipping, but you've learned that God's grace compensates.
4. Refer to your worship leaders in print, prayer, and rehearsals as ministers and worship leaders.
5. Set aside the music and look at the lyrics. Remind them they are conveying a message.
6. Encourage worship leaders to express worship in a way that directs other worshipers' attention to the Lord, not to themselves.
7. Pray together often for God's anointing on the pastor and worship team and for the Holy Spirit's direction during the services.
8. Minister to one another outside the worship services through prayer, fellowship, and in times of illness or crisis.

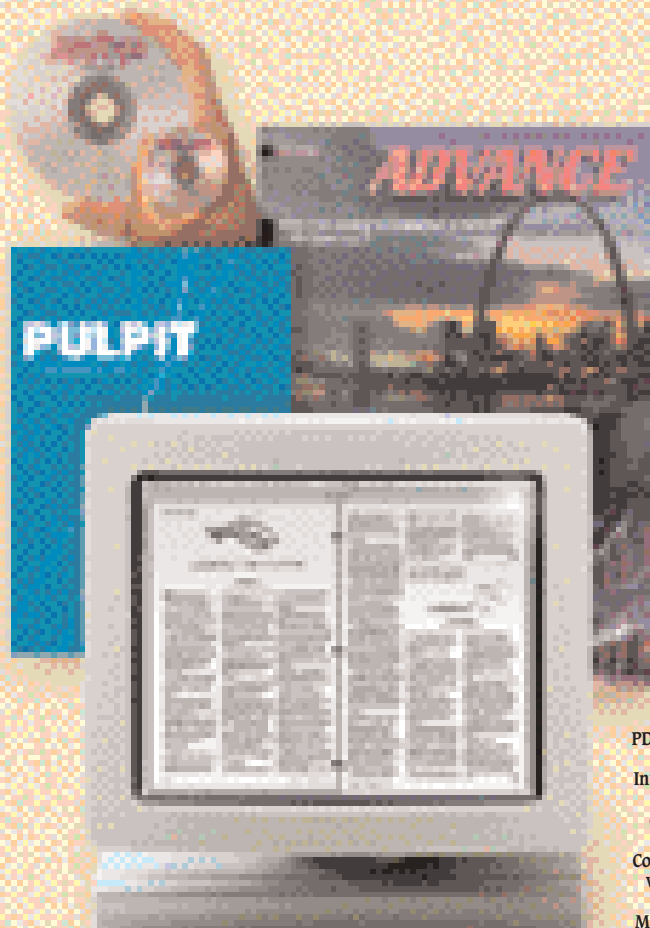
At the close of a long rehearsal, arranger and music minister O.D. Hall often encourages his choir to sing an anthem they've been practicing once more, with just the Lord as their audience. When the last note fades and there is that palpable sense that God has been listening, Hall says, "Even if this is the only time we ever sing that song, it's worth it."

(Walters' response was compiled with excerpts from her book *Advice to the Minister of Music: Get a Giant Hat Rack*, 1994, Chrism [Gospel Publishing House], Springfield, Mo.)

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day was Maria Negron—a mother with 14 children, ranging in age from 1 to 14. Maria, along with her children, gave their hearts to the Lord. After that, Delores Bonner, one of our church members, began to pick up the children and bring them to Sunday School. God began to move on the hearts of people in our church to reach out to Maria and her children even more. Oscar, the oldest, especially touched our hearts. As Maria's firstborn, he felt responsible for his 13 brothers and sisters. But how can a 14-year-old boy shoulder such responsibility? So the church took Oscar under its wing.

Because Oscar had grown up on the streets, he was still having bouts with gang violence and run-ins with the police. Still the people in the church stuck by him and today, at the age of 21, he loves God with all his heart. The church knows that God's hand is on his life. Recently, when Oscar was asked

is no standard methodology for evangelistic choir ministry that works the same for every church. The Brooklyn Tabernacle is an inner-city church, with an inner-city choir, reaching inner-city people. The venues available to us may not be available to you. Yet, if God has burdened you to go outside the walls of your church, keep the following spiritual principles in mind. They have worked for us, and I'm confident they will work for you as well.

REACHING YOUR COMMUNITY

Pray, pray, and pray again.

Prayer is the most important part of the ministry of the choir. Every week we gather as a choir to seek the Lord and bring our hearts before Him. We ask God to use us so people might be saved through His power. As we do this, He continues to open doors of opportunity.

Romans 8:26 reminds us that we do

hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.”* When you pray, God promises to lead you. Therefore, prayer is vital.

Listen for God's leading.

One benefit of being a child of God is being led by the Lord. The Bible says that “those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (Romans 8:14). Jesus clearly revealed himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:3,4). When you pray, you are seeking God's help, and God promises to help you (Isaiah 30:19,21). Listening to God makes you depend on Him to do what He has called you to do. Without Him you can do nothing.

Go by faith.

The Christian's faith overcomes the world. We believe by faith, work by faith, proclaim the gospel through faith, fight the good fight of faith, and

Since we believed God was calling us to reach New York's homeless, our staff began contacting shelters throughout the city, inviting residents to a free concert at Madison Square Garden.

what Jesus meant to him, he simply said, “Jesus is my Provider. He saved me from death and provided shelter for me and my family.” Like others who have accepted the gospel, Oscar has gone from a shelter to the sheltering arms of a loving God. The Lord gave us opportunity that night at Madison Square Garden to reveal His love to people who had only known pain and rejection.

Perhaps you are wondering how you can make choir evangelism part of your church's ministry. Unfortunately, there

not know how to pray as we ought, but God has given us His Holy Spirit to help us in our weakness. The privilege of inquiring of God, praying and seeking His face in every situation, should never be taken for granted. Prayer can lead you and your choir into the perfect will of God. We pray, not because God doesn't know about our needs, but because He does know and can lead us accordingly. First John 5:14,15 states, “This is the assurance we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he

lift high the shield of faith. We obtain every promise that God has given us by faith, and wherever God may send us, we go by faith. This faith is not a mental assent or reasoning of the mind. Our faith is rooted in a person, Jesus Christ, and in His sovereign power to do things beyond anything we can ever imagine. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that it is impossible to please God without faith.

CONCLUSION

Despite the incredible doors that have

WORSHIP Q & A WITH TOM MATRONE

Q: Many of our churches have done away with the ministry of the sanctuary choir and replaced it with small-group ensembles such as worship teams. Why is the ministry of the sanctuary choir still important to the local church?

A: The choir ministry makes a significant contribution to the local church. The church will begin to see a greater demand for choir ministry in years to come. Here are five reasons that validate the sanctuary choir in the local church:

1. Choirs assist in leading congregational singing. They create an atmosphere of encouragement that helps parishioners worship through song. Choirs are also helpful in teaching new music and reestablishing hymns.
2. Choirs can provide an unusual musical experience that helps worshipers apprehend the transcendent aspects of faith. Choral music holds a higher standard of singing than that of the congregation, which reveals a more transcendent sound proclaiming the presence of God.
3. Choir ministry provides an opportunity for its members to offer a unique expression of praise, an expression refined through prayer and practice.
4. Choirs can promote the church if their goal is soul-winning. A song can sometimes touch the heart of a sinner in a way nothing else can.
5. Choirs develop discipline that leads to other areas of a choir member's life.

—Adapted from Network News. Used with permission.

been opened for The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, the Lord has never let me forget what I learned at the beginning of our ministry. Those early Teen Challenge rallies remind me of what God can do when our hearts are sincere

and we are only concerned with bringing Him glory. The young men from Teen Challenge were anything but polished singers. If God's power had depended on the quality of their voices, I am quite sure nothing would have

happened in those meetings. But great things did happen. As a result, I know that unless our hearts are pure, unless we depend entirely on God, our labors will be in vain, even if we are invited to sing on the stages of the world's most famous concert halls.

The greatest pitfall any choir faces is giving in to the temptation to perform, to provide a good show rather than to minister. When entertainment becomes your choir's focal point, spiritual opportunities are lost. If you want to see God touch the lost through your singing and preaching, you must continually seek Him. Otherwise, you will simply be putting on another community event. People might be entertained, but their lives won't be changed.

Choirs can minister in a variety of venues outside the church—on street corners, in prisons, schools, or concert halls. The real question is not where to minister, but *who will go?* Those who say yes to God's invitation will find satisfaction in doing the Lord's will. "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest" (John 4:34,35).

Whether you are a choir director, a choir member, a pastor, or a layperson, your ministry will unfold as you allow yourself to be emptied of self-interest and filled with the love of Jesus Christ. My prayer is that God will continually help all of us see through His eyes rather than our own, because right now, the fields are truly ripe. May we never limit how He can use us to bring in that harvest. **E**

Carol Cymbala directs The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir and is married to Jim Cymbala, pastor of The Brooklyn Tabernacle, Brooklyn, New York.



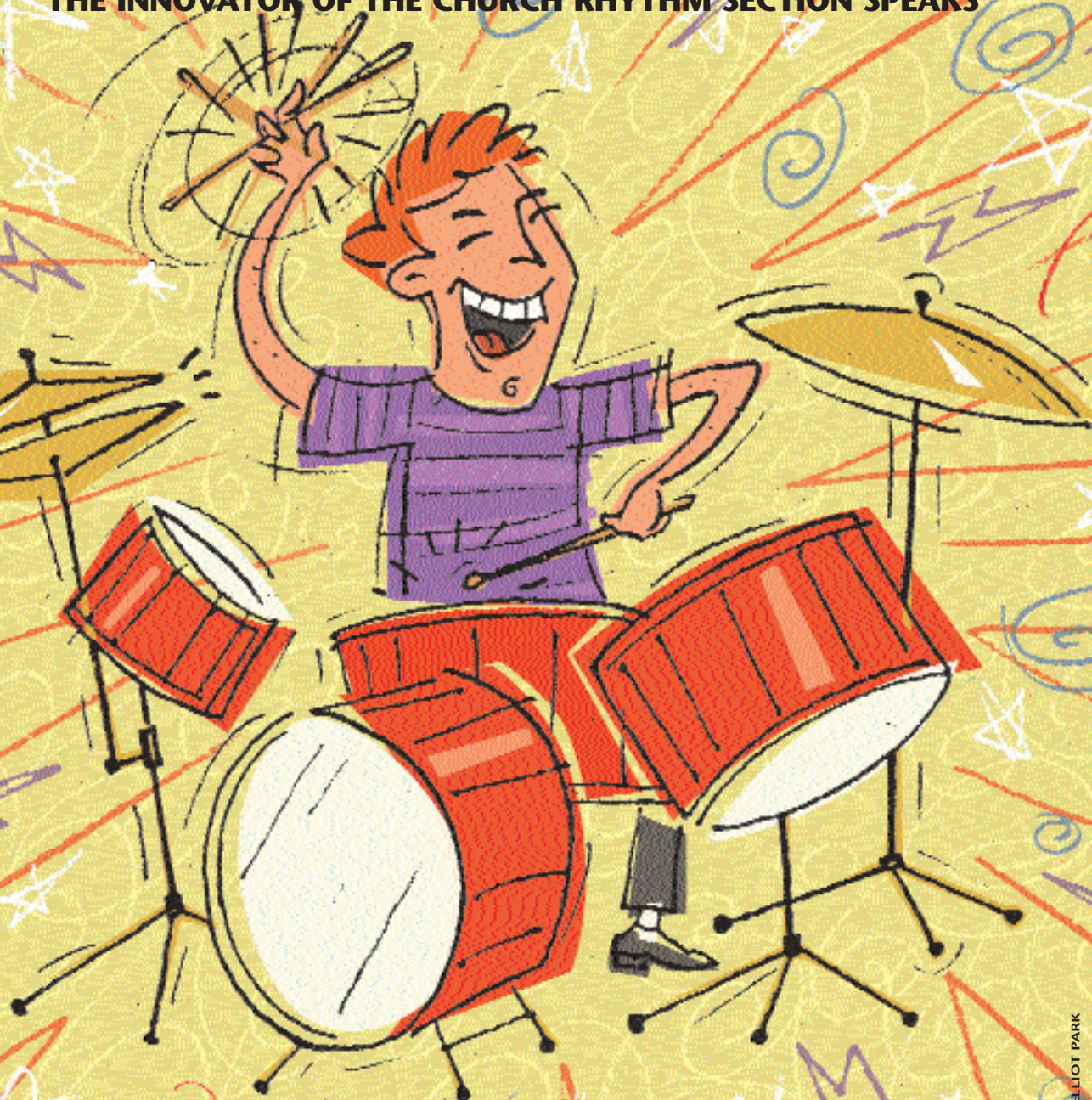
*Scripture references are from the New International Version.



"Don't say you're a shepherd. That means you'll treat us as sheep. Sheep get sheared. The next thing you know, you'll have us at the airport with bald heads and blank stares, passing out daisies."

WHY NOT DRUMS?

THE INNOVATOR OF THE CHURCH RHYTHM SECTION SPEAKS



BY RALPH CARMICHAEL

THERE IS HISTORICAL PRECEDENT; BEATING THE DRUM IS PART OF OUR MUSICAL HERITAGE.

HISTORICAL PRECEDENT

History provides a good reason to beat drums in celebration of thanksgiving to God. Contrary to what some think, the idea of using drums in a religious setting did not originate with me. In Exodus 15:20, God's people were safely assembled on the other side of the Red Sea. Pharaoh and his army had been swept away, and the Children of Israel were ready to celebrate. Miriam, Aaron's sister, played the timbrel, which is a small, handheld drum. She organized the women into a giant rhythm section. Each woman had a timbrel. She said, "Sing to the Lord!" and they sang, danced, and beat their drums.

In Psalm 81:1–3, King David laid out a musical plan for celebration. He said to pick a song, bring in the drums with strings and brass, and sing aloud unto God. In 1 Samuel 18:6, David returned victoriously from battling Goliath.

People came from all cities of Israel to celebrate with singing and dancing, accompanied by musical instruments and the beating of the drum.

In 2 Samuel 6, David moved the ark of the covenant. As the procession began, David and his group played before the Lord on all manner of instruments, including strings, brass, and drums. They also added cymbals for this special occasion. Incidentally, the 1 Chronicles 13 description of this same event adds that David and his group played with "all their might" (verse 8). Other Scripture references documenting the use of drums in worship are too numerous to list.

In 1973, I produced an album for my friend, Cliff Barrows. The title of the project was "Songs on the Way." Plans included a companion book published for youth choirs. As the album liner indicated, the songs were chosen "to lead the listener, a step at a time along the way, to a new and vital spiritual experience."

We were in Capitol Studio A with 16 of the best voices I could assemble for Cliff's album, plus a four-man rhythm section consisting of bass, guitar, keyboard, and a drummer stashed behind some baffles. I had never seen Cliff conduct and include a set of drums anywhere, so I wasn't sure how he would react to having a set of drums added to this instrumentation. I shouldn't have worried.

The session got under way and everyone had a good time. On the first break, while listening to playbacks, Cliff opened his Bible to Psalm 81:2 and read about singing accompanied by drums. There is historical precedent; beating the drum is part of our musical heritage.

ARTISTIC TRADITIONS

Music tradition calls for a serious look at how the masters made use of the percussion instruments. My personal experience in the field of music history is limited to conducting Handel's *Messiah*, but I do know this. As far back as the early 1700s, Baroque composers such as Vivaldi, Bach, and Handel used the timpani. Handel often incorporated

syncopation in his melodic lines. The Classic composers of the 1700s such as Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven used more percussion. Then came the Romantic composers of the 1800s such as Brahms, Chopin, Liszt, Mendelssohn, and Wagner, with even more percussion usage. Finally, the 20th century composers such as Bartok, Berg, Bernstein, Copland, Debussy, and Gershwin really put the timekeepers and noisemakers to work. Playing these composers' scores is probably what prompted the idea of double scale for drummers.

The average symphony today utilizes the full spectrum of percussion instruments: two or three kinds of snare drums, bass drum, piatti cymbals, tambourine, triangle, timpanis, bongos and congas, assorted mallets, including chimes, xylophone, marimba and bells, and noisemakers like whistles, boobams, cowbells, castanets, and on occasion, even a cannon.

Just because the masters used drums in creating their art doesn't mean we must do likewise. However, we have liberty to incorporate the techniques, sounds, rhythms, and instruments available to create the best music possible for the church today.

PRACTICAL ECONOMICS

A symphonic percussion team consists of four to six individuals. For the past few years I have been doing big band concerts in over 50 cities. The instrumentation of my band includes eight brass, five saxes, and a three-man rhythm section with one drummer. That's 16 men. You can see what would happen to my budget if I had to carry half a dozen guys just to supply my percussion needs. Thankfully, with inventive contributions, we now have what is referred to as a set of drums, a trap set, the sit-down drums, or a drum kit.

A cute ad for fried chicken boasted, "More cluck for your buck." A set of drums can offer a similar economic bonus: more crash for your cash, more boot for your loot, or more time for your dime. My drummer sits down to a bass drum, with a pedal for his right

AN ACCEPTABLE GIFT

One of my favorite Christmas songs is "The Little Drummer Boy." This little guy and his drum became an instrument of love and devotion. He heard the news about the newborn King and that everyone was to bring his finest gifts. He tells the baby Jesus that he is a poor boy too, with no fitting gift. Then he asks, "Shall I play for you?"

Would that gift be acceptable, he wondered? Mary nodded, and the drumbeat started: Pa rum pum pum pum. All at once, the ox and the lamb kept time to the beat.

The little drummer boy didn't notice. He just kept playing for baby Jesus. Then he said, "I played my best for Him." Pa rum pum pum pum. And finally, "Then he smiled at me, me and my drum."

I ask, "Why not drums?" Frankly, I could not record an album or do a concert without my drummer boy.

—Ralph Carmichael

foot, a snare drum on a stand between his knees, a rack with a set of tuned toms about chest high, the high hat or sock cymbal with a pedal for the left foot, plus an assortment of other cymbals with names like the ride, crash, and splash. This is economy in action; one man plays it all.

THE MUSICAL CONTRIBUTION

Most music has tempo or a beat. Even rubato and ad-lib music has motion, not just a pulse or beat. By setting and keeping a steady tempo, the drums bring cohesion to ensemble playing and singing. Without it there would be chaos. Consider the use of meter and pacing in communication. The spoken word has rhythm, motion, lilt, and even

syncopation. That's why a computerized voice delivering its message in quarter notes is annoying. To communicate effectively with lyrics and melody, it is necessary to heed the law of rhythm, tempo, time, and meter.

Various tempos or beats provide different settings, create different moods, and paint different sound pictures. Even with the spoken word, a fast, pompous, or hushed delivery will produce differing reactions. Think of all the musical moods a drum can underscore: a gentle ballad, a militant march, a happy swing, a majestic chorus, the beat of life, and even a hallowed refrain.

The most invalid objection to drums is that they are somehow intrinsically evil. Let us consider this: A drum is just

a thing, and things are neither good nor bad. Things become instruments of good or bad depending on how they are used. Here is a list of things that once caused a furor. The Bible allows for one reason only to set aside any item on this list—if it offends my brother.

Dancing. King David's wife said it was contemptible.

Meat offered to idols. Paul said don't let it destroy others.

Printing press. Gutenberg was run out of town.

Unison singing. The Puritans said it stifled the Spirit.

Part singing. Harmony was worldly. (Too bad, altos and baritones.)

Radio. That was the devil's little black box.

Television. It competed with church attendance. (Probably did.)

Films. Even missionary films were banned. (The lighting was probably bad.)

Jewelry, hairdos, and makeup. No comment.

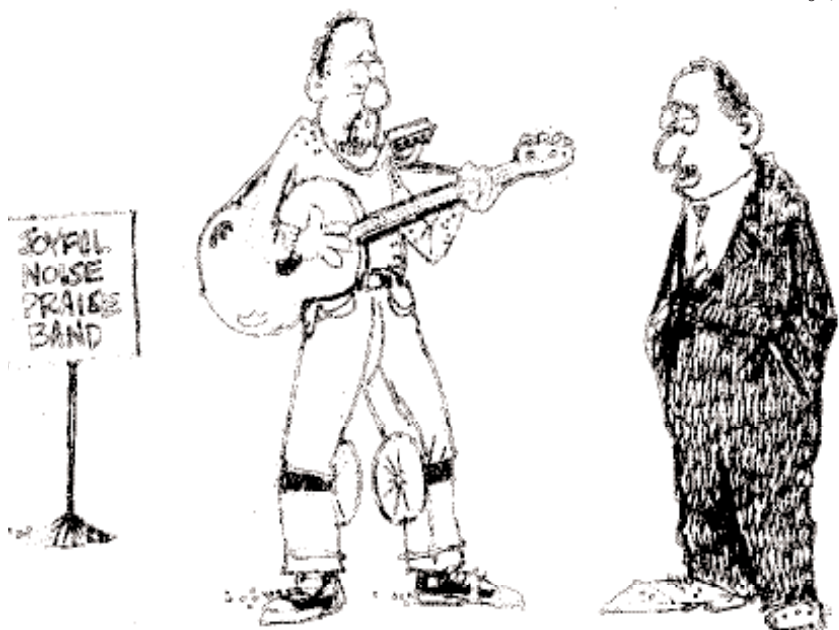
Baritone sax. It made the sax section sound sexy.

Drums. The pagans used them in their celebrations. (But so have God's people for a few thousand years.)

The above items can be used in a negative way, but they are not intrinsically evil. They also have been used for God's greater glory.

Over 50 years ago, my college band and choir were doing a recruiting tour on the West Coast. We were booked into a large church in the Bay area some 400 miles from campus. It was Sunday afternoon and we were unloading and setting up for the evening concert. I was in lockstep with the drummer as we wrestled the bass drum down the aisle. Suddenly, thudding feet and jangle keys alerted us to a portly gentleman who was approaching us with the authoritative air of the church custodian. "Hold it right there," he proclaimed. You guessed it. The drums were the problem.

We "held it right there," and after proper negotiations, he took me to a phone and called the pastor. More negotiations ended in a compromise.



"The leg cymbals may be too much joy."

We could set up the drums behind the drape that concealed the baptismal tank. Whatever it took, it worked. We had a great concert, and the people heard drums in church for the very first time.

You are saying, "But that was over 50 years ago. Times have changed." Yes, times have changed. However, common sense, good taste, sensitivity, and balance never go out of style. According to James Melton, head of the music department at Vanguard University, Costa Mesa, California: "The biggest objection to drums is that they are just too loud and too visually prominent."

Suppose you built a car with the driveshaft coming through the windshield between the driver and passenger, down the center of the interior and out the rear window. Besides getting splattered with oil, all you would see and hear would be grinding gears. Put the driveshaft where it belongs, with the rest of the moving parts, and the car will go purring down the road. Likewise, move the drums from front and center so they are not the visual focal point. Then blend them with the ensemble so they are not the audio focal point. Without being a distraction, they will keep your musical production purring down the road.

At the beginning I said there was only one reason not to use drums. Here it is: If you say, "I simply don't like drums," that's it. No more argument. It's a matter of personal taste, and I won't take that away from you.

According to my friend, O.D. Hall, 99 percent of the registrants at MUSI California use drums in their music programs today. To the 1 percent who do not, I defend your right to a differing view. To the 99 percent who are involved in musical productions where drums are incorporated, whether it's a worship and praise team or a full orchestra and chorus concert, I have some important considerations to share.

A few churches use a full orchestra on a regular basis. Worship and praise teams are used much more frequently. Such teams usually have keyboard(s), bass and other guitar(s), drums, and two

DO YOU REALLY WANT TO BE A STUDIO MUSICIAN?

For over 20 years I've worked with studio musicians. As a producer and arranger, I have discovered that instrumentalists of this caliber are unique. You may be a talented individual who wants to pursue studio work as a career. Here are some basic things you need to know before you move to a major recording city endeavoring to break into the business.

1. You must play your instrument amazingly well, with no real technical challenges.
2. Your sense of time and pitch must be impeccable.
3. You must perform well in a broad range of styles and do so in any key.
4. You must give producers what they are looking for, even when you don't personally care for the music, the style, or the interpretation called for.
5. You must function well within group dynamics. Being prompt and getting along well with others is essential.

For those who are willing to pay the price, session work is a respected and rewarding career. If you have that irrepressible passion for your instrument, this may very well be the path God has designed for you.

—J. Daniel Smith

or three vocalists to lead the congregation. Sometimes horns are also added.

I am often asked what I think of the worship and praise music I'm hearing today. I answer, "It can be good, but it can be bad."

Loud and soft, fast and slow, even appropriate and inappropriate are in the eye and ear of the beholder—a matter of taste. But right and wrong, truth and fallacy, are in a totally different category—not a matter of taste. Some of our contemporary music would fall—and fall hard—into this "totally different" category.

Just as there are theological absolutes, moral absolutes, and mathematical absolutes, there are also musical absolutes—absolutely right and absolutely wrong. Merely adding a drum to the mix will not automatically make it good. Without turning this into a music lesson, let me throw in a Scripture. Second Timothy 2:15 states, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." When you are leading people in worship, your preparation should include right bass lines, correct chords, and scriptural lyrics.

CONCLUSION

For me, music falls into three main categories. The first category is the


liberty we have to enjoy music as a precious gift of art, created and given by our Heavenly Father. Francis Schaeffer said that music doesn't need a reason to exist. It can be enjoyed as a gift of art.

Martin Luther said, "Music is a gift of God, not an invention of man."

In a letter I received from Billy Graham some years ago, he commented, "Besides poetry, music is the only art that seems to have been cultivated to any extent in ancient Israel."

This last category is what I call John 3:16 music. I have personally found great satisfaction in using this kind of music to communicate the gospel. I never tire of telling people through my songs that God loves them and gave His Son to die for them.

In the third category, music attains its most noble function and reaches its highest calling through the fervent act of praise. God himself can hardly contain His pleasure, for He has promised to inhabit our praises. Let's make them as beautiful as we know how.

As Saint Augustine prayed to be an instrument of peace, I pray that the drum will be used as an instrument of praise. 

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ON BECOMING A WOMAN OF WORSHIP

I have learned some principles about what a female worship leader is to be from studying the lives of women of worship.

Sing, O Daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away your punishment, He has turned back your enemy. The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm. On that day they will say to Jerusalem, 'Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing' " (Zephaniah 3:14–17*).

Not long after the release of Hosanna Integrity's "Shout to the Lord" album, I was interviewed for a Christian magazine. The interviewer asked, "What is it like being a female worship leader?"

I thought, *What a strange question.*

"Well," I replied, "I have never been a male worship leader so I have nothing to compare it to." It seemed that for God to use a woman (and a blonde at that) was too much for him to comprehend.

I have learned to be confident in the call of God on my life, and not to waste one moment of it in the unfruitful world of comparison. God has chosen, equipped, and anointed me for this role. As a result, I have developed a desire to

be a woman of worship. Here are some things I have learned in this process.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF WOMEN OF WORSHIP

The Bible is filled with examples of women who, through devotion to their King, brought change and had a great influence in their lifetimes. I call them worshipping women. For example:

- Hagar—After the Lord granted her a son, she praised God by saying, "You are the God who sees me" (Genesis 16:13). A woman of worship knows that God hears her cry.
- Miriam—She led the Israelite women in grateful worship after God destroyed the Egyptian army (Exodus 15:1–21). A woman of worship knows the power of praise and trusts the power of God.
- Deborah—She and Barak sang a song of praise to the Lord after He used them to deliver Israel from the Canaanites (Judges 4,5). A woman of worship is bold, courageous, diligent, and determined. She knows how to get a job done.
- Mary, mother of Jesus—She was chosen because God knew her desire was to please the Father. Mary praised

God for remembering His people and honoring her with this high calling (Luke 1:46–55). A woman of worship knows when God is speaking and knows how to say yes to the Father. (Be still and know that I am God.)

- Mary, Martha's sister—She anointed Jesus' feet with costly perfume, vividly displaying costly worship (John 12:1–3). A woman of worship is not afraid of what people think of her devotion.
- Tabitha—A worshiper who displayed her love of God through her acts of charity and good deeds (Acts 9:36–42). A woman of worship is generous to the core.
- Lydia—This radical worshiper and her family were the first believers in Philippi (Acts 16:11–15). A woman of worship knows how to be bold and birth a new day for the next generation.

BECOMING A WOMAN OF WORSHIP

Here are some principles I have learned about what a female worship leader (a woman of worship) is to be from studying the lives of these women of worship.

A woman of worship knows how to come before her Savior with genuine thankfulness and enthusiasm that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are

compelled to receive the song from her adoring heart. She knows how to approach the King with awe, reverence, and yet a pure and honest familiarity. This allows her to express the depths of praise erupting from her life.

As a result of her encounter with God, she is tender, yet strong. She has allowed the Lord to touch and heal the dark, broken places of her heart through sharing things with God that she'd never tell another person.

She understands God's grace, and stands confidently, not arrogantly, in the shadow of His wings. She has confidence in God's promises. She trusts in the Lord with her whole heart, knowing that a song in the night is far greater than no song at all. She fears no evil. Her extended hands invite those in her world to come and adore Him.

Though I understood what it meant to be a woman of worship, there was a time when I was confused about my role in ministry. I loved the Lord, but I wasn't sure how I fit in to the church life.

Out of fear, I did whatever I could possibly do to keep from becoming just a church singer. I thought that singing, or bringing one's gift inside the church, had a stigma attached to it, which I now find to be an incredible misgiving. The church is the reason gifts and talents are given to us in the first place. Our gifts are to be used for the glory of God.

I had no understanding of what it meant to know my purpose and pursue it with my creative being. I trusted God in other areas, but I was nervous about sowing my musical gift into my local church to further the kingdom of God.

But there was one defining moment, early in my Christian walk, which has kept clarity in my heart and mind about leading worship. I was praying that day to my new Best Friend, when I sensed that still, small voice whisper into the fabric of who I was. The Lord said to me, "You never need to perform for Me."

I stopped and thought, *What was that?* I knew it wasn't a thought I

generated myself; I'm not even wired to think like that. I didn't know what the voice of God sounded like. But somehow I knew it was the sweet, kind voice of the Holy Spirit, separating my past from my future, realigning my life with His, and pointing it in the direction that God had preplanned.

It was years later that I started leading worship, but that unmistakable voice whispered that truth into my life again and again. It freed me to lead people without being caught in the trap of being a worship artist. I was locked into a performance-based Christianity. But His words freed me from my continual effort to be a man pleaser into living a life that exists to be a God pleaser.

How do you become this woman of worship? It is a process, a journey I am still traveling. The only baggage allowed on this trip is a heart that is desperate to connect with the Father. Here are the steps I have taken on this journey.

Come to know Him.

Come to know Him, not just about Him and not just in your intellect, but in your heart. David declared, "I saw the Lord always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken" (Acts 2:25). "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the end he will stand upon the earth" (Job 19:25). A true relationship with God takes time and devotion.

Have faith.

Worship is more than ceremony. It starts with an act of faith and a decision of your will. Remember, without faith it is impossible to please God.

Adore Him.

The essence of worship is just being in love. "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as

long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you" (Psalm 63:1-5).

Learn the art of appreciation.

Learn to say thank you. True praise needs to be a vital part of every believer's life. "His praise will always be on my lips" (Psalm 34:1).

Bring a song.

"Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous" (Psalm 33:1). "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:6).

THE FEMALE WORSHIP LEADER AND HER PASTOR

As a worship leader, you are under authority. Your position is to serve God and your pastor. Live to see his or her dreams for the church come to pass.

To those who lead or serve on worship teams, find out what your pastor expects from you. I thank God I work with a pastor who knows what he wants from our worship team. He expects us to be full of faith for the service and to bring excellence to the sanctuary.

The hardest thing I encounter when visiting other churches is that the worship leader doesn't always know what the pastor wants from the worship time. I'm referring here to details such as whether or not to sing during altar calls and offerings. Altar calls are divine moments, and yet if a microphone is going to give feedback or if a baby is going to cry, it seems to happen at the most sensitive times of worship. A worship team must know how to support the pastor throughout the entire service.

Worshippers can't relax or sit down and dream through the altar call; this is a time when they must pray to God. The musicians might start to play, and then as the pastor indicates for the worship team to sing, they are to be ready to build faith in that meeting through their praise. Worshippers on the platform

and in the sanctuary are called to pray and be ready to support the pastor as he or she leads the church service.

Support your pastor. When the pastor calls the church to worship, come before the Holy Spirit in faith and with a sensitivity to what He wants to do in the service. Undergird what the pastor is doing and help him or her bring in the net. We cast out spiritual nets with our songs of praise, and then we stand in awe as God draws all men unto himself. Music that expresses what is happening spiritually has a powerful dynamic attached to it. This is when music is being used for its designed purpose.

Finally, women in leadership need to learn how to be strong without having a militant-like, controlling spirit. It's peaceful knowing that God is sovereign and in control. Don't fight for your rights. Yield, learn to let go and let God make a way for you.

FINDING FULFILLMENT

Fulfillment comes from worshiping Him, not from having others worship you. Pleasure comes from using your creative gifts to glorify His name, not your own. Gratification is not from making the Bestseller of the Week but by grasping the fact your creative gift is used for something that matters for eternity. If you understand this, you will learn to swallow hard, maintain a free spirit, and grow in faith, love, patience, and contentment.

Paul said, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances" (Philippians 4:11). We all need to learn how to be content where we are and continue to faithfully worship God. Long-term fulfillment is a life that is built on being faithful in and out of season. Commitment to building up others leads to true contentment.

The best place to use your gifts to encourage people is in the local church. This kind of service is a true act of worship. But I've seen people become quite unhappy after being on the worship team at church for only a short time,

WORSHIP Q & A WITH TIM LOAR

Q: Sometimes I feel my worship leading is shallow and has an overemphasis on the emotional. How can I explore the deeper realms of worshipping God—get past the milk and into the meat?

A: One of the most difficult tasks for worship leaders is to plan and lead a service that applies to the diverseness of the congregation. The outward response of the congregation during worship is going to differ among people of various ages, backgrounds, and religious preferences. In other words, you don't always go by what you see. The depth of a worship service is determined by analyzing the lyrics of the songs you lead.

The blended worship model is based on New Testament principles of worship and deserves consideration. Paul wrote of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in Colossians 3:16. The same directive is repeated in Ephesians 5:19. All three categories of worship must be utilized in our services. The biblical pattern Paul laid out for us is not about musical style but lyrical substance.

Psalms—today's choruses—talk about what God has done for us. They refer to the work of God in the life of the believer and contain personal pronouns. Hymns are addressed to Him, talk about His majesty and character, and teach us theology and truths about the Triune God. Spiritual songs—songs upon the breath—give the congregation opportunity to sing a new song or sing in the Spirit. A truly blended service contains all three elements.

Most important, worship is not about us; it is about God. Select scripturally sound songs, put them in appropriate keys, and lead without being a distraction. Matt Redman, in "The Heart of Worship," sums it up: "I'm coming back to the heart of worship, and it's all about You, it's all about You, Jesus. I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it, when it's all about You, it's all about You, Jesus."

—Adapted from Network News. Used with permission.

and then leave full of discontent and disappointment. Their emotions motivate them the wrong way, so they quit. They may be gone for a season, and then they come back and try again. When it gets too hard, they repeat their cycle of escape, and their unfulfilled dreams continue. They can't seem to break away from being discontented, feeling misunderstood, and feeling used by the church. They may have been praying, "God, use me," but then as soon as He does, they complain that they feel used.

Don't wince if God answers your prayer and uses you. Do all that you do as unto Him so that your pleasure is from knowing that He sees your act of service. This will help you deal with the disappointment of feeling overlooked by others. Surrender your desire to be

noticed, and give your creative gifts in service to the Lord. Once you let them go and die to the need to be "fulfilled," you will find contentment.

Allow the gift within you to compel you to come before the King. Let all that is within you bless His holy name. More than music and song, all designed to carry His presence, a true woman of worship will allow her entire life to adore her Lord. **E**

Darlene Zschech, Castle Hill, Australia. Portions of this article are excerpts from Zschech's book Extravagant Worship, © 2002, Bethany House. Used with permission.



** Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.*

MY 50-YEAR JOURNEY

Things have changed in music ministry since I first became involved with music.

Throughout my 50 years in music ministry I have learned many lessons.



It's Friday night, and like so many weekends, my wife, Marjorie, and I are at one of the many churches to which we've been invited for music ministry. This weekend we are hosting an old-fashioned hymn sing. Much of the evening is spent taking requests from the congregation and singing from the hymnal. Though the evening starts with many being strangers, by the end of the service we're bonded by that wonderful gift from God that has been my life's passion . . . sacred music. Things have changed in music ministry since I first became involved with music. Throughout my 50 years in music ministry I have learned many lessons. Hopefully some of them will benefit you.

I grew up in a Baptist pastor's home. My father served in smaller churches, so we never had a minister of music. Back then the word *ministry* usually meant preaching. Yet early on I felt drawn to music and wondered how the Lord might use this interest to serve Him.

The first minister of music I became aware of was Edwin Anderson, who oversaw the music program at Central Assembly of God in Denver, now known as Calvary Temple. He later became the first director of the national Music Department for the Assemblies of God. Inspired by his example, I decided to answer God's call and pursue my dream of full-time music ministry.

What follows is a recounting of significant events during my 50-year journey in music ministry and life's lessons I learned along the way.

STARTING SLOWLY

I began my first position as minister of music at First Assembly of God in Colorado Springs. After Marjorie and I were married, I found I couldn't make it on the small salary the church could afford to pay me. To help make ends meet, I added janitorial duties to my responsibilities at the church. After leaving Colorado Springs, I served as minister of music and youth pastor at churches in Grand Junction, Colorado, and Wichita, Kansas.

It is important for ministers of music just starting out to realize there is no shame in starting small. Many ministers of music are eager to make their mark and want to start at the top. This is usually a recipe for disaster and burnout. When you start at a more modest pace, your abilities can grow without the pressure of satisfying a large church with high demands.

Ministry without the pressure of large-church ministry demands can be times where you can sharpen your talents. This was the case in Wichita where I began to arrange music. At first I did this more out of necessity. But as I grew in music ministry and had more opportunities, I understood how this talent could be used by God to bless others. How I thank God for the opportunity to develop this talent in a less-busy environment.

Young music ministers can grow along with the music programs. They may not be ready for large-scale events. There will be plenty of time later for grand events and productions. Those who learn the basics first will be well prepared when bigger things come and will have the maturity to handle them with grace.

Certain things show maturity in music ministers. First, they must see ministry as a lifetime commitment. Ministry should always be a true calling, never just a career. Second, they must learn to delegate to survive the demands of music ministry. When I was starting out, I attended every choir rehearsal, supervised every soloist and ensemble, and handled all the music arranging. As I

Ministry without the pressure of large-church ministry demands can be times where you can sharpen your talents.

released others to help carry the load, they came through for me. Delegating allowed others to share more fully in ministry. It was a win-win situation.

BLENDING FAMILY, FELLOWSHIP, AND EVANGELISM

Later in my ministry I joined the staff at First Assembly in Memphis, Tennessee. Marjorie and I had three children, and our kids soon learned firsthand that music and ministry were part of the family. I have been blessed to have a wife who is a talented musician and has a willingness to work with me in every facet of ministry. Successful ministry requires such support.

Our choir rehearsals were on Friday nights, which worked surprisingly well. Husbands and wives were in choir together, and the time of rehearsals was one reason why. This also became a social time for many. After rehearsal, people would gather at a choir member's house for refreshments. Social activities increase closeness as a choir. Our children came with us everywhere. As a result of being included, our children learned to converse easily with anyone.

The music program at First Assembly

took off to new levels. Music has the power to draw people who may not come to church any other way. Hiring players to supplement the orchestra is a marvelous opportunity for outreach. During one of our musicals, I had opportunity to lead a hired musician to the Lord. Later, this talented man became a bass player with the contemporary Christian group DeGarmo & Key. I thank God I was able to be there at the moment he was ready to turn his life over to the Lord.

It's wise to be aware of the impact our musicians and choir members can have when we bring in others to assist with our productions. This may be the only time some musicians ever enter a

church, and we need to take advantage of any chance to reach them for the Lord.

EMBRACING ACCOUNTABILITY

Our next church assignment was in California. We spent 12 years at Bethel Church in San Jose. Pastor Charles Crabtree was the greatest pastoral influence in my life. He offered me tremendous support as a minister of music. To see him on the platform each week, attentive to and enthusiastic about the music ministry, was encouraging.

I learned an important lesson about the importance of support during our time at Bethel. Five ministers of music and our wives decided to get together for a barbeque, just to share our experiences and to encourage one another. You need to know that you are not alone, that there are others who know your hopes and understood your frustrations. That original group has now expanded to include 50 people, all as a result of that first barbeque.

We all need each other and must help each other. Seek out others in similar positions to exchange ideas, share a common bond, and hold

you up in prayer. Don't be an island.

HANDLING TRANSITIONS

God provided other wonderful ministry opportunities for us—local church ministry at Capital Christian Center in Sacramento in 1987, ministry to other ministers of music based out of Colorado Springs in 1991, and director of the Assemblies of God national Music Department in 1997. In August 2002, I resigned as director to pursue another exciting avenue of ministry—hosting old-fashioned hymn sings.

How should a minister of music handle ministry transitions? Stay open to where the Lord may be calling you. You may have the greatest experience in a place you never wanted to go. When restlessness grows in your heart, it may be a sign that God is preparing you for another place. But it's important to wait, seek the Scriptures, and pray for direction. When it's time to move, God will lift your burden from the current place and give you a burden for your new ministry. Only God can do that. Otherwise, you'll be overwhelmed by stress.

My wife has often remarked that she is grateful we left every position on good terms. We feel comfortable visiting the various churches we served and have never had to dodge a pastor. Those ties

KEEPING MINISTRY FRESH

Here are some ideas that will help keep our ministry strong and help us run the race.

- 1. Pray.** My strength as a leader is only as strong as my prayer life. To keep focused on Him, I must spend time in His presence.
- 2. Worship daily.** Too often I am so busy that I forget my entire existence is worship to God. Daily worship is a must. If I am to lead the congregation in worship, I must be a worshiper every day, not just on Sunday in front of the congregation.
- 3. Maintain integrity in every area of your life.** Continually do what is right in every situation and know that God sees and rewards. I must maintain the highest standards in my personal life and the ministry.
- 4. Stay as organized as possible.** I am a "list" guy, and am constantly making lists of short-, mid-, and long-range goals. Music ministry on Sunday is the culmination of many details addressed weekly. Don't take anything for granted. Make sure it happens.
- 5. Don't be afraid of change.** Church music has changed drastically over the years, and I enjoy the fresh creativity that each year brings.
- 6. Plan vacations.** I burn out if I don't take necessary breaks from the ministry. Rest and recuperation are important throughout the entire year and refresh ministry.

—David Thomas, Fort Myers, Florida. Adapted from Network News. Used with permission.

are important. Many contacts come as a result of deep friendships. It's not enough to have musical talent. Building relationships with people and being trustworthy are the keys to long-term, fruitful ministry.

DEALING WITH CHANGE

Changes in music ministry in the past 50 years have been incredible. There were few full-time ministers of music back then. The expansion into orchestras, drama,

and large-scale productions has been amazing. The music has improved greatly in quality. We're prepared and polished. We're rehearsed and ready. The downside is that sometimes we lack sincerity and spontaneity.

Calling a worship service *traditional* or *contemporary* brings unnecessary limitation. Why shouldn't a teenager be exposed to a hymnal? What's wrong with introducing newer styles to seniors in the congregation? If a church is a family, we should learn to understand that every week may not be tailored to our personal preferences, but that's all right. We gather together to worship God, and no particular generation should be favored at the expense of the others.

First Corinthians 7:20 contains an important truth: "Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called" (NKJV). Be faithful in your calling and withstand the winds of change. It's an honor to serve as a minister of music. It's a more rewarding life than you could have ever planned. **e**

Paul Ferrin is the former director of the national Music Department for the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri. He resides in Colorado Springs, Colorado.



A white dove is shown in flight, its wings spread wide, moving from the upper left towards the lower right. The background is a deep purple with vertical, flame-like streaks of lighter purple and white, creating a dramatic and spiritual atmosphere.

What Is Pentecost?

PAUL E. LOWENBERG

No treatise of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is complete unless the origins of this New Testament phenomenon are thoroughly studied. The Holy Spirit is more than just the Third Person of the Trinity. His unique place in the growth and development of the Church goes beyond the doctrinal relationship that is in the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is sent from the Father; He is obtained from the Father by the Son; He is poured out by the Son (Acts 2:33).

The Spirit that moved upon the face of the waters moved with such power and conviction at Pentecost that men were pricked in their hearts and cried out in inquiry, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Men and women were filled with this Spirit (Acts 2:4). He was to abide with the believer forever; He was to be the Comforter (John 14:16,17), the Teacher, the faithful Guide. He is the glorifier of Jesus (John 16:14) and the reprover of men (John 16:8). He was to empower men to be witnesses (martyrs) (Acts 1:8). Believers were to be sanctified by the Spirit (1 Peter 1:2). The Word of God was to be given through holy men as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21). And the Spirit was to affirm our relationship to God as His children (Romans 8:16).

Considering the tremendous and far-reaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, it is not difficult to understand Jesus' statement, "It is expedient [to your advantage] . . . that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7). As long as Jesus was with them, the Holy Spirit was not in them. Until that time came, they had been little more than spectators; but they were to become participants. They had been observers, but they would become leaders and witnesses. They had accompanied Him; they then would go for Him. They had heard Him; afterward they were to proclaim Him.

It was on the Day of Pentecost that this unique potential was released within the lives of those who were

baptized in the Spirit. They became the plenipotentiaries of the kingdom of God and the King. They were to continue what Jesus had begun. This brings us to the question posed in the title of this article: What is Pentecost? It is more than just the day when God initially poured out the Holy Spirit. It is more than just a gracious experience of the Spirit's baptism.

PENTECOST IS A PRAYER

In John 14:16, Jesus said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Jesus knew the deepest needs of the men who followed Him. He knew their weaknesses, their temperaments, and their misguided zeal. He had observed them closely for 3 years. He knew exactly what they needed. In His high priestly prayer He said, "I pray for them" (John 17:9). Only the abiding fullness of the Spirit could transform these men and make them fit representatives of a new passion, a new Kingdom; for this He prayed.

PENTECOST IS A PROMISE

While standing with His disciples on the Mount of Olives just before His ascension, Jesus declared, "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you" (Luke 24:49). Earlier He had said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13). The Father had promised this enrichment. Jesus further promised that He personally would fulfill this promise. They could depend on that.

The intrepid Baptist, preaching to the astonished crowd at the Jordan River, said, "One mightier than I cometh . . . he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Luke 3:16).

PENTECOST IS A PREDICTION

Israel's great prophet Isaiah prophesied of the coming Holy Ghost. "For I will

pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring" (Isaiah 44:3). The prophet Zechariah assured Israel that, though they were surrounded by destructive enemy forces, God would come to their aid. "And I will pour upon the house of David . . . the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced" (Zechariah 12:10). While this event may follow the Church Age that terminates with the rapture of the Church, nevertheless it is one of the major predictions of the Spirit's outpouring.

Joel added a great word in his lively prophecy, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28). At the great outpouring on the Day of Pentecost, Peter supported and substantiated the dramatic events of fire, wind, and other tongues, quoting Joel's words to the astonished crowd (Acts 2:16). "This is that," Peter announced.

PENTECOST IS POWER

One of Jesus' great promises was, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses" (Acts 1:8). The Greek word *martyres*, translated "witnesses," is used occasionally in the New Testament of those who have witnessed even unto death (Acts 22:20; Revelation 2:13; 17:6). To face the angry opposition as representatives of Jesus Christ, they would need an abundance of inner strength. To conquer their own fleshly temptations and control strong human passions, they would need a special endowment of divine power. The weak would need to be strong; the faltering, courageous. The foolish must now be wise; the bashful, bold. The double-minded must become persons of strong convictions. This, the fullness of the Spirit would impart to them.

They must have power to face a cunning and hostile enemy. They must have power to contend uncompromisingly

for the faith. They must have power to perform miracles and to preach the Word of God unflinchingly. Their own inner weaknesses and fears could become overwhelming obstacles that must be triumphed over. This power had been vouchsafed to them if they maintained a life filled with the Holy Ghost.

The Book of Acts is a reliable testimony of the power imparted to ordinary and unpredictable men whose lives were controlled and energized by the Holy Spirit.

PENTECOST IS PRAYING

Prayer is almost synonymous with the Holy Spirit. Paul exhorted the Ephesians to pray “always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:18). Jude likewise encourages his audience to build themselves in their faith, “praying in the Holy Ghost” (Jude 20).

Praying in the Spirit is the highest order of prayer possible. The preposition “in” indicates location. The

believer has moved into the area of the Spirit, he is surrounded by the Spirit, he is wrapped around by the Spirit, he has moved into the Spirit’s realm. This is not an in-and-out or off-and-on experience. Jesus uses the word “abide”: “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7). So many prayers are not answered because people have not learned to abide in Christ, to pray in the Spirit. They have not learned to abide in God’s Holy of Holies.

Paul adds a further enlightening word in Romans 8:26: “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

What a startling and humiliating discovery—we know not how to pray as we ought. Our own unspirituality overwhelms us. But we have a Helper, One who comes to our assistance. He puts

utterance to our sighs, words to our groanings, and prays out His will through us.

In 1951, I was leaving Japan. We had started a church in Osaka, a city leveled by American pinpoint bombing. My flight back to Shreveport, Louisiana, was scheduled. The closer the time came for my flight home, the more disturbed and restless I became about flying on this particular airline. I tried to secure an alternate flight but was told there were no vacancies on any airline out of Japan for 30 days. Feeling so sure I must not fly the first airline, I resigned myself to wait the 30 extra days. Yet 6 hours later, I had a seat on another airline.

Arriving in San Francisco, I learned the other flight had crashed on an island in the Aleutians. My father, who lived in Canada, was extremely disturbed about my safety, though he knew absolutely nothing about my dilemma. Moved by the Holy Spirit, he gave himself to prayer—prayer in the Spirit. He literally prayed me off one plane

onto another so I could come back to my family and ministry.

This is an example of prayer in the Spirit that the Holy Spirit would teach us and that should be sought by all Christians.

PENTECOST IS PURGING

The purpose of Christ coming to earth was to secure a bride out of the earth who would be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Ephesians 5:27). The Hebrews letter urges believers: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (12:14). The Holy Spirit is to make men holy. We are to partake of His holiness (Hebrews 12:10) and perfect holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Sin was judged severely in the Early Church. Both Ananias and Sapphira died for their duplicity. They had lied to God regarding the offering they brought to Peter (Acts 5:1–11). Elymas the sorcerer was struck blind for opposing Paul's testimony to Sergius Paulus, a Roman deputy (Acts 13:8–12). The record reads, "Then Saul, . . . filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said . . . now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season" (verses 9–11). John the Baptist had predicted earlier that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire (Luke 3:16). Fire purifies, cleanses, purges. We used to sing, "Thou Christ of burning cleansing flame, send the fire, send the fire."

PENTECOST IS PREACHING

One of the most outstanding features of Pentecost is that it produced instant preachers. The disciples preached with eloquence and authority, brilliantly using Old Testament truths to support the message of Christ's death and resurrection. A few days before, they had disappeared in the shadows and forsaken their Lord when He needed them most. Now they confronted those same authorities who crucified the Lord, telling them that with wicked hands they had crucified and slain this

God-approved man (Acts 2:22,23). They exhorted them, "Repent, and be baptized . . . in the name of Jesus Christ . . . and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (verse 38). The only answer to this radical transformation is the infilling of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Christ resurrected.

This was not a dramatic, isolated experience. In Acts 4, we read that the apostles were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost . . ." (verse 8). We must assume it was already a fresh infilling, subsequent to Pentecost. In the great prayer meeting that followed, it is again recorded, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). In each case, the filling of the Spirit was followed by inspired and convincing preaching. Preaching was the method God used to spread His Word.

In the Nazareth synagogue Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach" (Luke 4:18). In His post-resurrection meeting with His disciples He said, "Go ye into all

the world, and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15). In Paul's last charge to Timothy he said, "I charge thee therefore before God . . . preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:1,2).

Pentecost is preaching—anointed preaching, gracious preaching, inspired preaching, intelligent preaching, sincere preaching. It is preaching the grace of God, the love of God, the power and mercies of God, the judgments of God, and the blessed hope that God holds out to all men everywhere.

Pentecost is God's final answer to the last-day lukewarmness and the falling away. Pentecost is hearts aflame, lives totally dedicated, motivated by a burning passion to preach Christ and Him crucified to our world before He comes again to set up His great everlasting Kingdom. Go and preach. **e**

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The hats the pastor brought the board were appreciated, until they saw the color the pastor selected for himself.

Music Worship— A Sacrifice of Praise

There are principles that will enhance our music and therefore our worship.

B Y J O S E P H N I C H O L S O N

Christianity has been a musical religion throughout its history. In every corner of the globe and in every era, music has been an integral part of the Christian faith. This is not to say, though, that there have not been varying opinions about music. For centuries considerable controversy in the church has centered on music. Complaints about music were often based on concerns that nonchurch musical styles and idioms were infiltrating the church and corrupting godly worship. At other times, dissension had its roots in simple resistance to change—a reluctance to accept new instruments, new musical styles, or anything not already thoroughly rooted in tradition.

Disagreements, tensions, and divided opinions about church music continue.¹ Although a certain amount of diversity of viewpoint is advantageous, it is desirable to reach at least a general consensus concerning the basic purposes of music in our churches. But how are we to

our worship? If so, what principles are universal and which are based in culture? What is the theological basis for our philosophy of music?

The Bible has a great deal to say about music. It is mentioned in at least 44 of its 66 books. Musical terms such as *music*, *sing*, and *musical instruments* (many specifically identified) are mentioned hundreds of times. One entire book, the Psalms, is given over to music. In its original form, the Psalms was a book of songs. We do not know how many passages in the prophetic books were originally sung but many prophecies are written in poetic style, and some were sung.

Luke contains the best-known hymns of the New Testament: The Magnificat (1:46–55), The Benedictus (1:68–79), Gloria in Excelsis Deo (2:14), and Nunc Dimittis (2:29–32). All of these are related to the birth of Christ and may have been used by the Early Church in worship.

should sing, how they should sing, and even what they should sing.

SHOULD CHRISTIANS SING?

Someone said that God created music; the composer only arranges it. God is a great music lover. Job 38:7 refers to the time “when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (KJV*). Isaiah 55:12 speaks of the hills singing and trees clapping their hands. Jesus himself sang a hymn at the Last Supper (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26).

God desires our song. His Word urges us to worship with music. Psalm 100:2 says, “Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing” (KJV). Psalm 107:21,22 challenges the people of God: “Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men. Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.”

Joy and singing do not always come easily. During the Babylonian captivity the Jews missed an opportunity to use music to witness about their God. The captors wanted to hear them sing a song of Zion (Psalm 137). Instead, they wallowed in self-pity, hung their harps on the willow trees, and wept. Deep hurts and memories of better days took their song and their joy. We are better for it if we sing God’s praises, whether we feel like it or not.

Inspired writers of the New Testament often quoted from the Old Testament. In Romans 15:9–11, the apostle Paul, instructing both Jews and Gentiles, referred to several Old Testament songs (2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm

I do not suggest that good church music must be written by famous composers in recent times (or in ancient times), or in slow tempos.

know what music pleases God? Why does music for the church differ from country to country—even from congregation to congregation within the same country? Should there be more uniformity of music among our Christian brothers and sisters around the world? Are there guidelines or principles that will enhance our music and therefore

The Bible begins with what is sometimes called the hymn of creation in the poetry of Genesis 1 and climaxes in the great songs of worship in Revelation 5:9; 14:3; 15:3; and possibly 19:4–8.

The Word of God makes it clear that those who follow the Lord are a singing people; Christians naturally sing. Scripture explains why Christians

18:49; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 117:1). Scripture clearly shows that God wants His people to confess His name, rejoice, and sing praises to Him.

WHY SHOULD CHRISTIANS SING?

James 5:13 challenges us: “Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.” Music is the natural expression of joy. An old song has this testimony: “I sing because I’m happy, I sing because I’m free.” Yet we also sing to lament—express grief, woe, or concern. Or we may sing to testify or encourage others. What is the purpose of our song? Not to draw attention to ourselves, but to deliver a message.

Effective messages can be given without music, yet music adds a new dimension to the spoken word. Supplement a poem with a melody or harmony and the words take on added emotion, meaning, and power.

Two dimensions of church music illustrate its unique capacity in comparison with all forms of ministry. Music can affect the mind. Music can also add meaning to its message by affecting the hearer through the emotions. The result is that people can be challenged, inspired, and moved to action. This is one reason invitation hymns have been used in evangelism and during altar calls.² Music compels, enhances, and strengthens verbal appeals.

Why should we sing? Here are five basic reasons:

1. Christians should sing to express prayer and praise to God.

This is a vertical orientation—upward to the Lord, directed to God. In the early years of this new millennium, praise choruses seem to dominate evangelical worship. Included in this category are: “My Life Is in You, Lord”; “He Is Exalted, the King Is Exalted on High”; “Lord, I Lift Your Name on High”; “You Are Awesome in This Place, Mighty God”; “I Stand, I Stand in Awe of You”; and “Thou Art Worthy” (based on Revelation 4:11; 5:9). The familiar, old Italian hymn, “Come, Thou Almighty King,” is another example:

Come, Thou almighty King,
Help us Thy Name to sing, help us to
praise!

Father all glorious, over all victorious,
Come and reign over us, Ancient of
Days!

Come, Thou incarnate Word,
Gird on Thy mighty sword, our prayer
attend!

Come, and Thy people bless, and give
Thy Word success,
Spirit of holiness, on us descend!

Come, holy Comforter,
Thy sacred witness bear in this glad hour.
Thou Who almighty art, now rule in
every heart,
And never from us depart, Spirit of
power!

To Thee, great One in Three,
Eternal praises be, hence, evermore.
Thy sovereign majesty, may we in glory
see,
And to eternity love and adore!

2. Christians should sing to teach Scripture, church doctrine, and theological truth.

A large share of our understanding of Jesus, the nature of God, Scripture, and other important matters come from songs. Somewhat lengthy scriptural passages are often set to music, helping us memorize them. When my children were young, they learned songs naming the books of the Bible, the 12 disciples, and a variety of biblical facts they remember to this day.

Colossians 3:16 is frequently quoted by Christian musicians: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.” The unveiled emphasis that we can use music in teaching is often overlooked.

Experience shows that when learning occurs in association with music, we retain what we have learned much longer. Music is an efficient tool in the teaching-learning process. Every piece of

music teaches something. We must be discriminating in the choice of music for our homes, schools, and churches. Be sure it is meaningful, lasting, and biblical.

Our choices of music, especially for the young, can have a dynamic impact on them. Children can and do relate to music. They love to sing. Recently, several leaders of children’s church told me that of all the songs offered today, children still want to sing “Jesus Loves Me.”

The hymn, “Come, Thou Almighty King,” is not only a prayer song but also a good teaching hymn. It teaches about the Godhead—the Trinity. Stanza one is addressed to God the Father: the “almighty King,” “Father,” and “Ancient of Days.” The second stanza speaks to God the Son, the “incarnate Word.” Stanza three is addressed to God the Holy Spirit: the “holy Comforter,” the “sacred witness,” and the “Spirit of power.” The final stanza is to the Trinity, the “great One in Three.” The chorus “Lord, I Lift Your Name on High” also emphasizes Christ’s incarnation, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection.

There are many songs—new and old—that are filled with biblical truth and Scripture. Space will not allow a long listing. The few titles listed here are commonly sung by people of many denominations and in a variety of languages. The song, “Crown Him With Many Crowns,” has a great variety of Christological titles: “Lamb,” “Son of God,” “Lord of life.” The hymn “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” and the chorus, “The Steadfast Love of the Lord Never Ceases” (both based on Lamentations 3:23), speak to the unchanging faithfulness of God. “It Is Well With My Soul” has an excellent sequence that leads to worship: Peace like a river . . .
Sea billows roll . . .
Satan buffeting . . .
Christ shed His own blood . . .
It is well with my soul.

Songwriters demonstrate how music can be used to teach Scripture and church doctrine. Songs can give instruction about our Christian faith and hope. The right music can help children and adults learn about God

and His nature, about biblical truths, and eternal values.

3. Christians should sing to testify of God's greatness.

This is a horizontal consideration—not upward to God, but outward to people. Many people have been initially brought to Christ because of a Holy Spirit-anointed testimony of God's love and grace sung with sincerity. Music such as "Power in the Blood" has supported missions efforts and local-church evangelism.

Would you be free from the burden of sin?

There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in the blood;

Would you o'er evil a victory win?

There's wonderful pow'r in the blood.

The following, written by Wendell Loveless, is an example of a testimony song:

I was straying when Christ found me
in a night so dark and cold;

Tenderly His arm went round me and
He led me to His fold.

With His nail-scarred hands He bro't
me to the shelter of His love;

Of His grace and will He taught me,
and of heav'nly rest above.

Tho' the night be dark around me, I
am safe, for He is near;

Never shall my foes confound me,
while the Savior's voice I hear.

Another example is "Moment by Moment" by Daniel Whittle:

Moment by moment I'm kept in His
love;

Moment by moment I've life from
above;

Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine;

Moment by moment, O Lord, I am
Thine.

The chorus, "I Have a Hope," is a more recent example of a testimony song. Many other songs testify of God's faithfulness to His children.

4. Christians should sing to engage in corporate worship.

Singing is among the few ways the entire

church can worship together. Hebrews 2:12 declares that "in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises."

People joining together can mutually express praise, petition, or testimony as a unified body. How beautiful and strengthening it is when we can worship the Lord together and sing: "We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing"; or "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God"; or "We fall down, we lay our crowns at the feet of Jesus."

Some Christian songs are better suited for solos, small groups, or choirs than for congregational singing, but almost any praise song can be appropriately used for worship. One characteristic of songs especially fitting for corporate worship is the use of the pronouns *we*, *us*, and *our*. "When We All Get to Heaven"; "Grace Greater Than Our Sin"; "We Have an Anchor"; and "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us" are examples.

The central object of our worship is Christ, our Lord and Savior. There is, however, great value in personal expressions of worship—an individual, distinct, and unique expression of our love and praise to God. However, when too much of our hymnody focuses on *I*, *me*, and *my*, questions can be raised about the focus of a song's text. Use of the third person pronoun allows for a personal expression for a unified body of believers who are participating together in worship.

5. Christians should sing to motivate the Body to commitment.

Music sometimes is intended to inspire Christian singers and listeners, motivating them to action or commitment. Examples of this kind of music are "Take My Life and Let It Be"; "The Potter's Hand"; "Be Strong and Take Courage"; and "Win Them One by One."

Music has an important function for Christians. Who can measure what is being accomplished through Christian music played in homes and on the radio? And how much shaping of character is being done while songs play themselves over and over through people's minds as they drive to and from

their jobs or go about their work? How many times does the Spirit of God encourage and strengthen Christians by bringing the words of a song to them during a crisis? The songs we sing and the music we listen to have a deep influence on our character.

I am a strong supporter of praise and worship music, but it seems that in many churches today, the entire repertoire of church singing is limited to praise and worship songs. This is a mistake. If the musical diet served up regularly to the congregation fails to include, in addition to praise, the important concerns of teaching, testimony, corporate unity, and motivation, then it is time for a careful assessment of church worship repertoire.

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS SING?

In Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19,20, it is implied that our singing should involve using the deep down, inner self—the seat of our emotions. Christians should sing with all their heart, a heart filled with a thankful spirit.

How should we sing? Paul said, "I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also" (1 Corinthians 14:15, RSV). This verse is in the context of 1 Corinthians 14 where Paul is addressing the problem of unknown tongues, which are not understood. In this context, singing "with the Spirit" is singing in tongues. Singing with the mind or "the understanding" (KJV) is singing in the vernacular. How should we sing? With grace in our hearts, with the Spirit, and with the mind.

Finally, Christians should sing skillfully. This point seems most applicable to soloists or musicians with special responsibilities. Expertise comes only through planning and consistent practice. "Oh," but you say, "the Bible doesn't teach that." I believe it does, not just by implication, but rather explicitly.

David became a virtuoso harpist and singer through hours of practice as a young shepherd boy. His success as a musician (singer, player, and composer) was primarily the result of his musical skill (and his contrite spirit before God).

The Old Testament describes well-organized and highly trained programs of music used for the Lord's work. First Chronicles 25:5–7 describes the musicians as “trained and skilled in music for the Lord.” First Chronicles 15:22 tells us that the head Levite in charge of the singing was given that responsibility “because he was skillful at it.” In Psalm 33:3, simple and direct language promotes musicians who play skillfully.

The New Testament encourages excellence in music. That which lacks clarity, precision, and skill is referred to disparagingly. Paul writes about that in 1 Corinthians 14:7,8, in anticipation of his analogy of unintelligible words. God is pleased with music skillfully and artistically performed.

Does this mean that those who are not musically skilled should not worship? Not at all. We all have varying degrees of musical talent. The Lord is pleased with an attitude that desires to plan, prepare, and present the best to Him whether ministering the Word, singing, or giving a simple witness. The Bible makes it clear that everyone should be an active participant in worship (Psalm 100:1; 150:6). The Lord is more interested in the heart attitude than the art attitude.

WHAT SHOULD CHRISTIANS SING?

The texts and tunes of some songs are better than others. A common mistake people make in reference to church music is to judge it good if they find it enjoyable. If the tune is pleasant, it is easy to accept a superficial message without making a thoughtful evaluation. The best in church music is characterized not only by beauty, emotion, and originality, but by much more. It is a work of art with an inspiring Christian message.

The text should be one of the major considerations in evaluating a Christian song. Evaluation is appropriately based on three criteria:

1. The message must be Christian and biblical. Fables or legends having no foundation in Scripture should be avoided.³ Christmas and Easter songs

of a popular nature are often objectionable. The birth of Christ, and His death and resurrection are tremendous biblical events. Nothing is gained by associating them with fanciful tales of people, animals, or toys that proclaim religious messages or perform supernatural acts.

2. The thought must be expressed clearly and directly. The spiritual message should be obvious enough to be understood at first hearing and yet sufficiently profound for profitable reflection and meditation.

3. The language should be fresh, expressive, and eloquent. The ideal text makes a kind of music of its own. It is timeless without being archaic; it is relevant to the present generation; and it speaks for people at any level of society. A good text avoids excessive repetition, trivialities, and clichés.

Repetition within a poem or song can have significant value, not only for reinforcing a point but also for providing a mechanism for formal structure. Repetition can establish a theme, contribute to unity, and serve as the foundation for artistic form. The problem with repetition is that it can become too much of a good thing. Exaggerating the problem even further are songs with too much repetition repeated over and over. In Matthew 6:7, Jesus cautioned against using nonessential words when praying. Some popular worship songs unnecessarily repeat words and entire sentences multiple times. Songs excessively repeated are reminiscent of Hebrews 10:1, which teaches that “the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year” cannot “make perfect those who draw near to worship.” Can something similar be said about the needless repetition of worship choruses? Songs that are repeated endlessly cannot perfect those who come to God in worship. We cannot drum up God's presence through unnecessary repetition.

It can be somewhat difficult to weigh the relative values of song texts. An even greater challenge is to assess the quality of a text's musical counterpart objectively and accurately. Music

without words has abstract qualities, which make it far more subjective and less exact than its text. Yet, we must recognize that some songs are better musically than others—easier to sing, having melody, harmony, and rhythm that is fresh, appropriate to the mood and style of the text, and not replete with redundancies.

I do not suggest that good church music must be written by famous composers in recent times (or in ancient times), or in slow tempos. It is a mistake to stereotype music into such narrow categories. Inspiring, lasting church music can come from any country; it may be new or old, fast or slow. The important consideration is the song's message and how that message is communicated by the music and understood by the listeners.

Some widely sung Christian songs never mention God or Jesus. Pronouns like *he* or *you* have no identifying antecedent. The words of the text sound like a secular, romantic song that could be sung to a lover. Christians sometimes enjoy these songs because they mentally interject thoughts of God (even though there is no explicit focus on God). We need to sing songs that have a clear Christian message—those that are Jesus-centered, salvation-centered, and Holy Spirit-centered.

THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

The “sacrifice of praise” mentioned in Hebrews 13:15 is a phrase found in some contemporary songs such as “We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise.” Throughout the Bible we see that sacrifice, worship, and praise go together. These terms are often misunderstood or too narrowly defined.

A sacrifice is a personal offering to God that results in some cost, sometimes considerable cost. King David understood the importance of personal cost. When in repentance he prepared to build an altar and offer sacrifices to God, Araunah the Jebusite was willing to provide for his king all that was needed. He offered to give not only his threshing floor as a site for the sacrifice,

but he also volunteered his own oxen, wood, and wheat for the grain offering (1 Chronicles 21:18–24). But King David replied, “No, I insist on paying the full price” (verse 24). Our sacrifice is not a sacrifice unless it costs us something. Our sacrifice of praise must be backed up by a sacrifice of Christlike living.

The Old Testament required animal sacrifices. But the new covenant supersedes and transcends the old. Under the new covenant, Christ, our high priest, “offered one sacrifice for sins for ever” (Hebrews 10:12). Today we have direct access to the throne of grace. Romans 12:1 urges believers to offer to God our bodies as “living sacrifices.” A sacrifice of praise is a living sacrifice, a life lived for Christ. The Lord is pleased when we surrender all to Him (Psalm 40:6–8; 50:9,13–15,23; 96:9; Philippians 4:18; Hebrews 13:16; 1 Peter 2:5; 4:8–10).

In both the Old and New Testaments, worship and praise are more than lip service; more than standing in a congregation with hands upraised and uttering words of exaltation. Psalm 9:1 associates praise with telling others about the marvelous things God does. God despised burnt offerings and sacrifices offered by the

unfaithful. “I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings” (Hosea 6:6). In Micah 6, the question is posed: “With what shall I come before the Lord?” The clear answer follows. More than the choicest of burnt offerings, the Lord desires that we “act justly . . . love mercy and . . . walk humbly” with God (Micah 6:6–8).

Isaiah 1:11–17 presents a convincing case for righteous living over rituals, ceremonies, or meaningless offerings. The Lord hates hypocrisy, shallowness, and disobedience. He says, “Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow” (verses 16,17). Empty words or insincere rituals are repulsive in the eyes of God. He speaks through the prophet Amos: “Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps” (5:22,23).

David understood that “the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and

contrite heart” (Psalm 51:17). The sacrifice of praise passage in Hebrews 13 is immediately followed with “and do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (verse 16).

Singing and making music are indeed valid practices for all Christians everywhere. Certainly we should sing. There are reasons why we should sing, and the Bible provides direction as to why, how, and what we should sing. It is easy for us to offer God cheap worship—sacrifices that cost us nothing. Yet God wants our all. If we live in love and obedience to the Lord, our songs—the fruit of our lips—will be a pleasing sacrifice of praise. ❧

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** Scripture quotations are from the New International Version unless noted.*

E N D N O T E S

1. The November 12, 2000, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* contained an article by Dean Merrill entitled “Music Wars.” The writer draws an analogy between disagreements about music and guerilla skirmishes.
2. While it is not universally true, the general abandonment of the hymnbook and the current widespread practice of singing choruses only seems to have affected the choices of music for altar calls. Evangelistic meetings in decades past consistently employed invitation hymns: “Just as I Am, Without One Plea”; “Jesus, I Come”; “Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling”; “There’s Room at the Cross for You”; “Look to the Lamb of God”; and others. Contemporary worship practice all too often uses music in a somewhat generic fashion with praise songs utilized throughout the service, whether or not the focus is on congregational worship, divine healing, or invitation (altar calls).
3. One popular Christmas carol includes the line, “Man and beast before Him bow.” Others refer to animals speaking or performing supernatural feats in honor of the Christchild. Songs about Santa Claus, the Easter bunny, parades, or hats should not be considered Christian music.



“You know how I asked about using you as a sermon illustration? I wondered if you would mind signing this waiver.”

Literal and Figurative Illustrations—The Power of Synergy

Figurative and literal illustrations are a powerful pair for preaching.

BY CRAIG BRIAN LARSON

Sermon illustrations, like babies, come in two types.

Figurative illustrations are comparisons: metaphors, similes, analogies. To illustrate anger figuratively, I might compare it to gunpowder.

Literal illustrations are examples: To illustrate anger literally, I might tell about when I lost my temper and broke a glass.

Before this powerful pair took on meaning for me, I would ask, *How can I illustrate this point?* Now I ask: *How can I illustrate this literally?* and *How can I illustrate this figuratively?* I then select the best to suit my purposes or use them in pairs.

ADVANTAGES OF THE FIGURATIVE ILLUSTRATION

1. Insight. Comparisons bridge from what listeners know to what they don't know. Comparisons penetrate the essential nature of something. What listeners have personally experienced, they understand at a level that transcends words.

2. Association. If I illustrate from the game of basketball, I touch listeners' memories, attitudes, and emotions associated with the game. The mind of a listener is not a clean slate. I purposely use figurative illustrations with favorable or unfavorable associations in mind.

Like the smell of baby powder on infant skin, associations waft from figurative illustrations. My task is to ensure they match and serve truth. An adverse metaphor, such as likening moral authority to an assault rifle, is untrue in its effect because it stirs revulsion rather than receptiveness.

3. Indirection. Indirection breaks

down listeners' sophisticated defenses against the truth. Like a stealth fighter, an analogy carries its payload into a person's heart unawares. Jesus used metaphor for this purpose.

4. Imagination. Imagery energizes communication—in politics, marketing, Bible prophecy, and any sermon.

ADVANTAGES OF THE LITERAL ILLUSTRATION

1. How-to. The literal illustration often models what we want others to imitate or avoid. If I illustrate earnest prayer by telling when I fasted and prayed for

teen, was burned on his face and hand when a powerful firecracker blew up as he held it.

"If that boy's parents had tried to stop him from playing with firecrackers," I asked, "would they have been spoilsports? No, they would have been faithful parents. God is no different when He gives commands intended to protect us from harm."

Then I gave a literal illustration. I quoted from Mickey Mantle's story in *Sports Illustrated* about how alcoholism had nearly killed him: "I could be talking to you and just completely forget my

Like the smell of baby powder on infant skin, associations waft from figurative illustrations.

God's help with my finances, listeners see how to do it themselves.

2. Authority. Something about true stories carries extra weight.

3. Comprehension. Some listeners have trouble seeing comparisons; they just don't get it. Literal illustrations are readily perceived by all.

4. Directness. Literal illustrations come straight at you. They are to the point. Impatient listeners like that.

GOD'S CRUSADE OF JOY

By using both figurative and literal illustrations, I amplify a point without redundancy.

In a sermon on joy, I wanted to establish that God is not a wet blanket. I began indirectly with a figurative comparison. I told of a relative who, as a

train of thought," said Mantle. "I'd forget what day it was. What month it was. What city I was in."

I concluded, "When God warns us against drunkenness, He isn't a spoilsport; He's a lifesaver."

I was now on firm ground to make the point of my sermon—that contrary to myth, God is on a crusade to bring us joy.

Figurative and literal illustrations are a powerful pair for preaching. **e**

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The *Ruach*, the Jews, and the Pentecostal Experience

We need to be people of the Spirit to effectively communicate the gospel to the Jewish community.

B Y R A Y G A N N O N

Jesus' ministry to His own Jewish community bore signs of divine energy as He performed miracles to bless His Jewish kinfolk and to signal divine confirmation of His heaven-sent message. Jesus, like Paul, recognized that the Jew requires a sign.

The Torah was received on Sinai 50 days after the Passover exodus (on *Shavuot* or Pentecost) amid the thunderous noise and fiery presence of God. Jewish tradition holds that God spoke in 70 languages on that occasion to indicate the universal intent of His Word. On another Day of Pentecost in a different millennium, 120 Jews in Jerusalem were filled with the Spirit amid a rushing mighty wind and tongues of fire. Heaven's message was presented by a host of tongues to internationally gathered Jewish minds and hearts. Luke made clear the Jewish response was immensely positive.

The earliest Pentecostal Jews were expected to go out with boldness to proclaim the gospel with the assurance that

the gospel to Jewish people requires more than being socially nice, participating in official Jewish-Christian dialogue, financially supporting humanitarian projects of dubious benefit to the Jewish people, or going to the mat in Bible-thumping argumentation over messianic prophecy. Paul's methodology was clear: "My message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:4,5, NASB).

Along with our evangelistic need to analyze today's varied Jewish worldviews, we need to be people of the Spirit to effectively communicate the gospel to the Jewish community. Statistics prove Pentecostals have a tremendous evangelistic advantage since the Jewish world has been culturally conditioned to be more responsive to a Spirit-filled gospel. A professional study funded by a non-Pentecostal group to evaluate

not fully aware of the cultural conditioning that has prepared them to be so responsive to the demonstration of the *Shechinah*, the classical influences are clear. The Hebrew Bible, the rabbinical writings, and the emphasis in recent centuries on mystical experience alongside traditional Judaism have affected the widespread Jewish thirst for spiritual reality.

The Hebrew Bible taught the Jewish world that the *Ruach* (breath, wind, Spirit) of *Elohim* (God) infused one with life. The same power of the *Ruach-Elohim* could accomplish the supernatural through mortals, bring about ecstatic speech through the Spirit of prophecy, and raise up and divinely equip charismatic leadership. Later rabbinical literature advocated that the Spirit of God came to persons in special circumstances for divine infusion and revelation. The *Ruach* could speak to God's people with regard to the present and provide insight into their future. The *Shechinah* could manifest in external phenomena such as light and loud noise. Importantly, the *Ruach* would rest upon the Messiah as initiation to the spiritual renewal of Israel.

Medieval Jewish mysticism has continued to profoundly impact the Jewish world in overt and covert ways too extensive for our consideration here. Suffice it to note that Jewish mysticism, with its dependence on Gnosticism and occasional similarity to Hinduism, broke with standard Judaism to advocate spiritual experience beyond normal Jewish religious life. Through contact with the Eternal's spiritual emanations, Jewish mysticism taught one could hope to engage in spiritual quests in supernatural realms. Emphases were made on the

It has been clear throughout Pentecostal history that Jews will positively respond to the gospel when the Spirit is manifested.

signs, wonders, and miracles would supernaturally confirm their message. This Spirit-orchestrated strategy for Jewish missions has been ideologically accepted in the Assemblies of God throughout its history.

With 18 centuries of Christendom's persecution of Jews always fresh in the thinking of modern Jewry, communicating

American Jewish ministry demonstrated that, while Pentecostals were responsible for 10 percent of Jewish ministry, 80 percent of Jewish believers were Spirit-filled. This suggests that a much broader Pentecostal effort to evangelize Jewish society could yield staggering Kingdom results.

Although most Jewish people today are

eschaton, spiritual warfare, new illumination of Scripture, and the presence of the *Shechinah*. Mystical intensifications of earlier Jewish thought especially influenced western Jewry.

Unfortunately, such Jewish spiritual pursuits have yielded no contact with God, no personal salvation, no infilling of God's Spirit, no sense of the immediacy of the *Shechinah*, and no manifestation of God to His people. Through the spiritually disappointing centuries, Jews have sought to fill their deeply felt psychic vacuums with perceived good works hoping to find soul satisfaction. But in 2003, there is still no peace of mind for Jewish people of any variety apart from a faithful embrace of the Messiah Jesus and the sweet presence of the Holy Spirit.

The early Pentecostal movement expressed solid conviction concerning the pending spiritual regeneration of the Jewish people as witnessed in early publications. Pentecostals believed Paul's "all Israel" would share their Spirit baptism in the *eschaton*. Since the last days had arrived, abundant testimony supported Pentecostal restorationist ideology that it would now become normative for Jewish people to be profoundly impacted by the Pentecostal experience as prelude to the Second Coming. For example, in 1911, W.H. Cossum offered that unbelieving Israel would soon come to faith in Jesus, be spiritually restored, and share in the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism to be equipped to fulfill her glorious destiny of functioning as God's corporate agent in the world.¹ The Pentecostal experience would be poured out in greater measure on a fully redeemed and Spirit-inspired Israel than originally given in Acts 2. The Jews would flow in Pentecostal power and experience so rich that successful global redemption would be virtually assured.²

British Pentecostal editor, A.A. Boddy, eagerly recounted dramatic stories of Pentecostal Jewish conversions in *Confidence* to inspire his broad American readership that Jews would come to Pentecostal faith given the proper

demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power.³ In 1913, *Confidence* related the conversion of a young Jewish assistant to the local rabbi who visited a Pentecostal worship service and received a message from God through the Hebrew tongues-speaking of a Gentile. Well-known Pentecostals were named witnesses to the salvation and Spirit baptism of that young Jew that very night.⁴ E.N. Bell's *Word and Witness*,⁵ Boddy's

in a Beverly Hills home group, there was no mistaking the Spirit's mighty rushing into that living room. The three unsaved Jews who formed part of our prayer circle openly wept when they realized that the very God who spoke to Moses on Sinai was gloriously present. They melted before Him. Word soon spread as scores of Jews came to faith there as they witnessed the powerful operation of the Spirit's workings.


**Jews have sought to fill their deeply felt
psychic vacuums with perceived good works
hoping to find soul satisfaction.**

Confidence,⁶ and J.R. Flower's *The Pentecost*,⁷ all afforded ongoing witness to Jewish conversions through the Spirit's giftings and manifestations.

D.W. Kerr, pastor and educator, offered a report for the 1921 *Latter Rain Evangel* of a San Jose Pentecostal healing meeting. Upon witnessing the dramatic healings taking place before his eyes, a Jewish man was seized with conviction that the healings were signs that Jesus was the living Messiah. He later indicated that he could see salvation in Jesus had been his Jewish inheritance all along but that he had only then recognized Christ.⁸

In 1926, Stanley H. Frodsham, long-term editor of *Pentecostal Evangel*, wrote *With Signs Following: The Story of the Latter Day Pentecostal Revival*. He offered a series of Pentecostal episodes involving Jewish people impacted by confrontation with Hebrew tongues to illustrate the Jewish connection to the Pentecostal restoration. Frodsham called on Pentecostals to pray that just as God had given miraculous signs and wonders at the beginning of Israel's historical cycle, so now Israel should experience signs and wonders at the cycle's close.⁹

I remember my first experience with unsaved Jewish people in the midst of a powerful visitation of the Holy Spirit. As I led a dozen Jewish believers in worship

It has been clear throughout Pentecostal history that Jews will positively respond to the gospel when the Spirit is manifested. When Pentecostal pastors, congregants, evangelists, or missionaries present the gospel in demonstration of the Spirit, the conventional barricades against gospel penetration of the Jewish heart and mind quickly melt away. 

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Sociology and Culture of Rural Communities and Churches

Understanding the culture of rural communities is key to effective ministry.

B Y R A L P H A D C O C K

One of the most difficult areas of ministry can be dealing with culture. Since Christ walked in Galilee, Samaria, and Judea, cultural issues have played a major part in proclaiming the gospel. As pastors advance into this new millennium, the cultural aspects of ministry become increasingly important. For years foreign missionaries have been given special training for cross-cultural ministry. But in the United States, little attention has been given to helping pastors understand the culture of rural communities. This has resulted in a crisis for many ministers. Understanding the culture of a particular area is key to effective ministry.

The cultural problem has become especially prominent in small-church ministries. The culture of churches in rural communities is different from the small church in an urban setting.

Sociologists and anthropologists use the following concepts when discussing culture as it relates to rural communities.

MEANINGS

Meanings refer to language and the ways language assists people in comprehending their world. Words have different meanings in various parts of the country. Therefore, small-church pastors need an awareness of how various words are used in their communities.

Terminology and illustrations used in rural America may have little or no meaning to individuals from an urban culture and vice versa. Complicating this is the continual change that is taking place in slang phrases and words. When word meanings change as the

culture changes, good comprehension becomes more difficult.

An example of how words differ from culture to culture is the word *confrontation*. In one culture it means "a time of discussion for the purpose of discovering a resolution to the problem." In another culture, it can mean instant conflict or war. An awareness of meanings also helps pastors keep their sermon material applicable in the culture of the community.

VALUES OF WORLDVIEW AND/OR BELIEFS

A worldview is the way people understand and apply basic questions about life. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck in *Variations in Value Orientations*¹ identify the five areas about which societies or cultures provide understandings, beliefs, and values. These are: human nature, relationship to nature, time, activity, and relationships.

1. Human nature consists of the characteristics individuals develop over time through the understandings, beliefs, and values of a culture or society. Those who grow up in rural settings develop a totally different set of values compared to those from an urban setting. Based on the society one matures in, he or she may not understand the characteristics of another culture.

2. A relationship with nature comes naturally to those growing to adulthood in a rural setting because much of a person's time is spent outdoors. Those raised in an urban setting may not understand the importance of this relationship with nature that is a strong factor in rural cultures.

3. Time is also a strong factor in the development of culture. Rural society often arises before sunrise, but most farming and ranching activities end at night. In urban society, many jobs are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pastors need to understand these cultural differences when planning church activities.

Time management is a much-needed discipline in pastoral life. Pastors in rural communities who spend most of their time in the office will have difficulty relating to the farmers and ranchers in their communities. Also, pastors who are not diligent about getting out of bed fairly early in the morning may be perceived as lazy by their parishioners.

4. The activities of a community often indicate a close-knit society or one in which people go their own way. A rural community frequently has church dinners, community barbecues, and fairs that hold the community together. The urban community might be segmented into clubs, religious groups, and corporations. With such demands on time and energies, an urban society often has a rapid pace, and close relationships sometimes suffer.

5. Relationships sometimes suffer due to the time demands and activities people believe are essential for a good life. The key to family and church relationships is based on time spent in meaningful activities. To achieve such relationships requires us to establish priorities. The church is to help families establish priorities and relationships with each other.

Pastors would do well to reflect on their values and beliefs and compare them with the dominant values and

beliefs of their communities. Pastors who look to the future and plan ways for their church to grow may run counter to those in the church who are focusing on the church's history and are more interested in maintaining current relationships within the church. Unless pastors can relate the need for growth with some aspect of their church's history, the tension between them and their congregation may hinder effective ministry.

NORMS

Norms are those characteristics, activities, and behaviors considered appropriate or inappropriate among particular people groups. As people travel southward from North Dakota through South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, they will find a vast grassland where there are far more cattle than people. This territory is comprised of ranchers, farmers, and small rural churches. While there are many similarities, characteristics and behaviors may vary from community to community. With this in mind, norms are only norms in certain localities. Though many things may be the same, the changes in some characteristics and behaviors are immediately noticeable.

To illustrate: Two communities 25 miles apart are vastly different in their behavior regarding prayer in school. One community encourages the pastors and churches to be involved in school activities and is quick to allow Bible studies and prayers led by students. The other community is antagonistic toward anything having to do with religion or church in the schools. Understanding community and church norms will help pastors relate to their communities.

BEHAVIOR PATTERNS (FOLKWAYS) OR SOCIAL ROLES

The pastor has one of the most visible social roles in a community. The pastor's role carries with it tremendous expectations by the congregation, community, denomination, and the ministerial profession in general. The

Any attempt to change long-standing practices may not be readily accepted and can be detrimental to the pastor's ongoing relationship in the small church.

role expectations held by each of these audiences may be in conflict with each other and with what the pastor perceives as his or her role in the church and community. As a result, the pastor may experience stress and difficulty in trying to fulfill these various expectations at the same time.² Some church members may believe the pastor needs to spend time visiting church members, while the pastor believes it is important to spend time visiting those outside the church to build relationships within the community. Such role expectations can produce stress until adaptations can be made.

ARTIFACTS AND TECHNIQUES

Artifacts and techniques consist of long-standing methodologies, practices, and use of tools and equipment that are common to a particular church. In the small church, these may consist of hymnals, a particular version of the Bible, Sunday School quarterlies, an organ, etc. Artifacts and techniques may be different from church to church. Being familiar with the historical practices of a church can help a new pastor adapt more readily to the congregation. However, any attempt to change long-standing practices may not be readily accepted and can be detrimental to the pastor's ongoing relationship in the small church.


CONCLUSION

Each of these concepts are held by various groups of people and utilized in ways that best suit their locale. The variety of ways in which people of a particular locale implement these concepts constitutes a culture. They are passed from generation to generation through processes of education, often referred to as socialization or inculturation. Each concept is interrelated

and varies in relevance.³ Parts of one culture may coincide with those of another, but there will always be areas that will not interface in any way.

Every small church is distinguished by certain characteristics and practices, which encompasses the subculture of that church. While the name of the church may be First Assembly of God, its worship styles and cultural traditions will be distinct from every other First Assembly of God.

To accomplish an effective ministry in a small church, pastors must maintain a balanced, honest evaluation of the culture in which they are ministering. To move into a small church with the idea of making changes quickly could be a fatal mistake.

Develop the attitudes necessary to adapt your style and ministry to meet the needs of the church. After you have developed a trusting relationship with your church, you can then use your influence to make some necessary changes with much less distress and difficulty. 

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Jan Hus:* The Goose of Bohemia

Even his most strident enemies could find no blemish in his moral character.

BY WILLIAM P. FARLEY

On July 6, 1415, Jan Hus stepped from the wooden platform in the Cathedral of Constance. Thousands of anxious eyes followed him. He had just heard a sermon from Romans 6:6 “that the body of sin might be done away with.” Hus was the “body of sin.” It was the day of his condemnation and execution.

Seven bishops stepped forward and removed his filthy, lice-infested prison garments. They clothed him in clean priestly garments. They placed a chalice of wine in his right hand. Then, to symbolize his degradation from the priesthood, they stripped the priest’s robes from his back and the chalice from his hand. They chained his gaunt, withered hands behind his back and led him away to receive the dreaded punishment *du jour* for heresy—burning at the stake.

The authorities protected him with armed soldiers. They were nervous. Hus was popular with the vast crowd thronging the road he would walk to his execution. His simple sermons preached in the common dialect—not the Latin used by most priests—had stirred their peasant hearts. They knew holiness and purity when they saw it. Even his most strident enemies could find no blemish in his moral character.

To complicate matters, the morning of his trial (June 7) a lunar eclipse obscured the sun for several hours. This further convinced the people that God was unhappy with Hus’ brutal, unjust treatment by the Roman Catholic

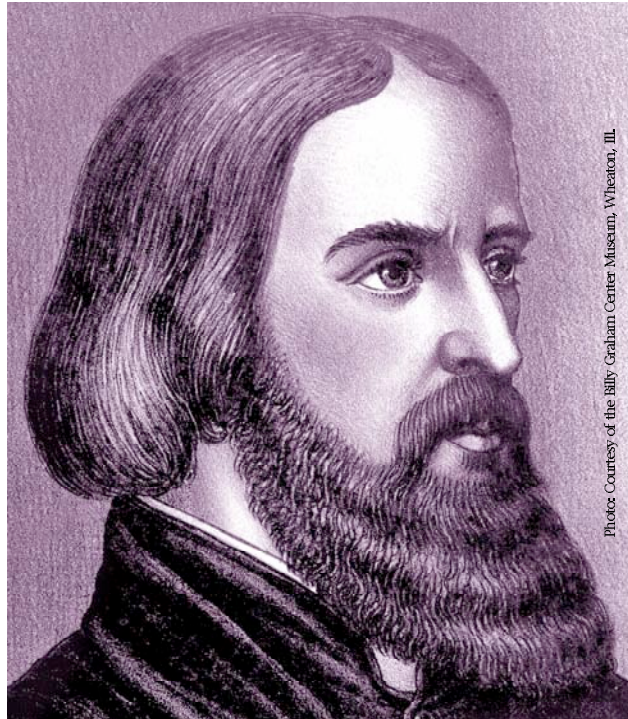


Photo Courtesy of the Billy Graham Center Museum, Wheaton, Ill.

authorities. All nerves were on edge as Hus walked toward his execution.

The summer of 1415 was filled with great confusion. Christendom was divided between three competitors for the papal throne. Each claimed infallibility, and each used his power to excommunicate and condemn his competitors. The emperor had called the Council of Constance to resolve the confusion. Hus, under a promise of safe conduct, had been invited to come and explain his controversial views about the teachings of the English reformer, John Wyclif.

WALKING THE TALK

How naive he had been to trust the emperor’s promise. Only 10 months before, he had confidently left Prague for Constance. His reputation for spiritual power, holiness, and eloquence had

preceded him. Great crowds lined the road cheering him on. He was wined and dined by the authorities and asked to speak in each town’s cathedral. And the people were not disappointed by Hus’ message. He stressed moral, spiritual, and doctrinal renewal, and protested the corruption of the clergy. The people, famished for the simplicity and power of God’s Word, listened enthusiastically.

Shortly after his arrival in Constance, the emperor maliciously broke his promise. On the day of his execution, Hus limped in a broken body emaciated by 7 months in a rat-infested, subterranean, medieval cell. By night the jailor chained him to the stony cell wall. Toothaches, gallstones, fevers, and bouts of vomiting had persistently tormented him. At one point he almost starved to death, but the emperor fed him so the authorities would not be deprived of his burning.

The disillusioned crowds watched him pass in silence. It seemed that whenever God raised up a leader of truth and integrity, the authorities broke him. Although they were used to it, there was nothing they could do, and they felt bitter and cynical. *Was he really guilty*, some wondered? Maybe the authorities were right.

The chains cut his wrists, and with his little remaining strength he struggled to carry his gaunt body. Burning at the stake was grisly business. The fortunate died quickly. But for

some, it took 45 minutes or longer. How would it be for him? Paul's words from 2 Corinthians 4:17,18, may have encouraged him: "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is

A MINISTRY OF POWER

Although he was an average student, he earned his bachelors and then his masters degree. He remembered the joy of his ordination and his first experience of preaching in the power of God. His gift made way for him. In 1402, when

They chained his gaunt, withered hands behind his back and led him away to receive the dreaded punishment *du jour* for heresy—burning at the stake.

seen, but on what is unseen" (NIV). He had written a friend that God would either douse the flames or fortify him with courage to endure the fiery ordeal. He would trust God, not himself.

YOUTH REMEMBERED

How ironic that he should die for the truths recovered by John Wyclif. Unlike Hus, his hero had died in bed.

Hus' first exposure to Wyclif's writings came as Hus was finishing his degree at the University of Prague. At first Wyclif offended him. *Too radical*, he thought. *So different from the traditions taught by others*. But when he went to the Bible, his arguments against Wyclif's reasoning dissolved. It was revolutionary material, for Wyclif taught liberty of conscience and the priesthood of every believer that follows the elevation of Scripture above the teachings of men.

Hus knew intuitively how costly these radical ideas would be. The cement that bound Christendom was the authority of the papacy. To put Scripture above the Pope was to threaten the very fabric of medieval life and culture.

He remembered his happy years at the University of Prague when he and his friends read Wyclif, then the Bible, to see if Wyclif was right. They met to discuss God's radical truths and pray. The University of Prague was on the cutting edge, and there was a sense of great exhilaration to be living in the middle of such radical change.

he was 30, Bethlehem Chapel, the great Prague preaching station, asked him to be its pastor. There he preached God's Word twice each day. An unusual anointing was upon him. Within a short time, the hungry crowds flowed over into the surrounding streets.

He remembered how his growing joy in God's Word at Bethlehem Chapel matched his growing detestation of the iniquities of his fellow priests. Celibacy was a joke. Many clergy blatantly lived with concubines. Some had children and grandchildren. How his anger had risen when Pope John XXIII had sold the forgiveness of sins to ignorant peasants to raise an army to wage war against the City of Naples.

Like John the Baptist, he was deeply grieved by the king, the nobles, the prelates, the clergy, and the citizens who together indulged in avarice, pride, drunkenness, lewdness, and every profligacy. In the midst of this he stood like an incarnate conscience. Who is equal to such a task? He was not. It had taken God's courage and strength.

He had enjoyed 12 good years at Bethlehem Chapel. They were the best of his life. With joy he watched God use his preaching to change the hearts and lives of thousands. The queen had even requested him as her confessor. The city of Prague, and the whole nation of Bohemia, had begun to turn to Christ. Inspired by the condemned writings of John Wyclif, he continued to preach God's Word.

He understood that his growing fame and popularity threatened the papacy's control of Bohemia. He remembered the interdict placed by the Pope on Prague. To protect Prague, he retreated into the country. And now here he was. He had always said, "It is better to die well than to live badly." He would need all of God's grace to die well.

The marshal buckled the rusty iron collar around his neck and fastened it to the metal stake. The silent crowd stared apprehensively. The soldiers

piled straw and wood to his chin.

Perhaps he thought, *Will I have a legacy? Has my life been in vain?* But God had promised: “They will silence the goose (Hus means goose in Czech), but in 100 years I will raise a swan from your ashes that no one will be able to silence.” “God, give me strength,” he prayed. “My hope is in You. I have no strength of my own.”

Louis of Bavaria, the marshal, approached and begged Hus to renounce his errors and preserve his life. “What errors shall I renounce?” asked Hus. “I know myself guilty of none. I call God to witness that all that I have written and preached has been with the view of rescuing souls from sin and perdition; and, therefore, most joyfully will I confirm with my blood that truth which I have written and preached.”

The marshal ordered the flames lit, and as they rose, Hus began to sing, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.” After three verses the flames scorched and muffled Hus’ voice.

Finally, the singing stopped. Fortified by God’s grace, Hus perished in the furnace of affliction for the glory of God. Of such men this world is not worthy.

POSTSCRIPT

When the news of John’s betrayal and burning reached Prague, civil unrest erupted. The people had tasted the truth of Hus’ preaching and there was no turning back.

The Pope raised an army of 150,000 and invaded Bohemia. Hopelessly outnumbered, Jan Zizka, a fiery one-eyed soldier, led the Hussite armies to 5 consecutive victories over a 15-year period. The Hussite triumphs, with Zizka at their head, are one of history’s too little told, but amazing stories. Using tactics 200 years ahead of his time—and sometimes outnumbered 10 to 1—Zizka mobilized a peasant army and repeatedly defeated Europe’s best professional armies. “A greater miracle has not been recorded in the annals of war,” wrote Lynn Montross.

God fulfilled His promise to Hus. One hundred and two years later, Martin Luther nailed 95 theses to the door of his Wittenberg church, and the Reformation began. Jan Hus did not die in vain. **e**

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**Jan Hus is also known as John Huss.*

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What Is Your Congregation's Stewardship IQ?

Consider these six factors to rate your congregation's stewardship IQ.

B Y R A N D A L L K . B A R T O N

The understanding and application of biblical stewardship principles by your congregation will impact the resources available for ministry and the blessings those who generously give will experience.

Consider these six factors to rate your congregation's stewardship IQ.

1. Stewardship Education

Do you have a stewardship-education program to reach every age level? Children are not taught stewardship in the home. Teenagers don't practice stewardship. Adults don't model stewardship. A systematic stewardship-education program is a critical component of discipleship in the local church.

One of the best programs available today is through a strategic partnership between Crown Financial Ministries and the Assemblies of God Financial Services Group. This program is a small-group study that incorporates the accountability needed to see results.

A recent survey of Crown Small-Group Biblical Financial Study program graduates shows that the program produces three major benefits: reduced family debt, increased savings, and a substantial increase in church giving.

2. Offering Time

Some offerings today are simply a disruption of the main event—the choir. What a travesty that we drown out worship through giving with worship.

Every offering should be preceded by a challenge. Once a month, include a testimony concerning what God has done financially in a person's life after learning to honor God in giving. Don't

pick the wealthiest member of your congregation. Do like Jesus and honor the widow who gave two mites. Some churches video a series of 30-second testimonies from various congregants to provide quality and time control.

Another week, precede the offering with a short Scripture on stewardship. There are 2,350 references related to money and stewardship, so you will never run out of relevant Scriptures.

Consider a bulletin insert that provides a stewardship challenge. Your goal should be to elevate the offering to a spiritual moment while providing diverse ways to challenge your people to give.

3. Stewardship Emphasis Through Preaching

Stewardship must be taught from the pulpit. An annual stewardship emphasis can challenge a congregation.

The emphasis could be part of a three- or four-sermon series by the pastor as part of a capital campaign. Another year, consider back-to-back Sundays with a guest speaker gifted in challenging people to give sacrificially.

Never limit stewardship teaching to a few Sundays a year. Any systematic teaching of Scripture will present many opportunities to weave stewardship principles into a sermon.

4. Annual Missions Emphasis

Every church that believes in the Great Commission should have an annual missions convention. It should last at least a week, encompass two Sundays, and culminate in faith promise pledges.

Children through Boys and Girls Missionary Crusade, youth through

Speed the Light, women's through the Touch the World Fund, and men through Light for the Lost should all participate in missions either during the convention or at periodic intervals during the year.


5. Designated Giving Opportunities

A large number of people in every congregation are underchallenged in their giving habits. At least once a month provide specific designated giving emphases. It might be for a particular compassion need, a project around the church, scholarships for youth camp, etc. Plan the appeal in advance and adequately communicate the need. It is usually more effective if taken as a separate offering.

6. Use of Donor Records and Direct Mail

Annual donor records sent in January provide little discipleship training. A few churches stay in touch with attendees by providing a monthly statement of giving. This effort not only helps congregants develop discipline in giving patterns, it also provides opportunities to raise funds for special projects away from the pulpit. Include a return envelope, and thank them for their faithfulness.

CONCLUSION

Incorporating these opportunities into a 52-week calendar will raise your congregation's stewardship IQ and result in an army of stewards who experience God's blessings as they express biblical stewardship patterns. 

Randall K. Barton is president and CEO of the Assemblies of God Financial Services Group, Springfield, Missouri.

The Nursery: Fairy Tale or Nightmare?

Have you ever wondered what it might be like to be new to your building, congregation, or worship service?

B Y J . D I A N E A W B R E Y

THE FAIRY TALE

Like Goldilocks in the Three Bears' house, visitors to your church are often looking for a good fit. They are trying out the facilities, services, special ministries, testing their softness, temperature, and size.

In the last year, my husband and I looked for a church home. In the process, we wandered across some surprising and sometimes amusing practices. Some churches have become too comfortable with their routines and forgotten what it's like to be a stranger. Our experience may be instructive for those who don't have opportunity to visit other churches or hear from visitors to their own church.

THE NIGHTMARE

One morning we visited a church of about 400. We had never been to the building before, so we knew nothing of its layout. Our first priority was to find childcare for our 2-year-old. Everyone seemed to be entering through the same double doors, so we did too. A lively crowd jammed the lobby, nearly blocking the entrance. Everyone was talking, obviously friendly, familiar, and happy to be there.

Since we didn't see any greeters, ushers, or signs for the nursery in the entrance, we followed a woman in front of us carrying a child comparable in age to ours. We hoped she was going to the nursery. We stumbled and pushed through the crowded lobby and hallway three-quarters of the way around the building. When we reached the other woman's destination at the end of a long hall, it was the baby nursery. Her daughter was a few months younger than ours. The attendant suggested we take our child to the 2- and 3-year-old room.

"Where is that?" we had to ask.

She stared back blankly. "Uh, let me ask." She called to a young woman in the hallway. "Do you know where the 2-year-olds are?"

She thought she did, so she led us back through the crowd to the very first classroom off the entrance. On the way she greeted friends, stopped to answer questions, but never once talked to us. At the door, our guide disappeared without a word, so we wandered into the room and waited for a greeting.

The attendants busied themselves with other children while we stood. Our daughter spotted a toy across the room, so in she went. Finally, I approached an attendant and called her attention to our daughter. "She'll be fine," she said, and started to turn away.

"We're new here. What should we do?"

"Just leave her here. We'll watch her."

Would you like to know her name? I thought. "Her name is Grace. We'll be in the sanctuary."

"Where in the sanctuary?"

"Well, since we're new here, I'm not sure. Probably on the right-hand side, halfway down" (our usual seat in any church). They exchanged no numbers, gave us no names, and made no response to the information that we were visitors.

We made our way to the sanctuary, sat halfway down on the right-hand side, and waited for the service.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

What can be learned from this experience? Let's start with signage. What is the first thing visitors see, hear, or feel when they walk into your church? Do different entrances send different messages? Have you walked around your building (or sent a stranger through) and followed the signs

to your restrooms, nursery facilities, or fellowship hall?

Imagine walking into your lobby or entryway with a 2-year-old in tow. What is the first thing you would be looking for? How can you alleviate the anxiety of visitors who don't know your facilities? Better signage? An information booth? Well-trained greeters?

The energy and enthusiasm we felt among the congregation in their greetings to each other spoke well of the fellowship and community among this group of believers. But the lack of attention to basic questions that visitors may have upon entering the building sent a message that outsiders were not welcome in this club.

TOO COLD

Second, let's talk about childcare. In the church we visited, it seemed the right hand didn't know (or care) what the left hand was doing. The nursery workers didn't know where the 2-year-olds were. To our guide, we were a detour on her normal Sunday morning routine of greeting friends and taking care of other business. The childcare itself was less than reassuring, offering no double checks about who would pick up the children, what their names were, or how parents would be called from the service if they were needed. Beyond this, every person we encountered on our way to drop off our daughter displayed indifference to our status as visitors.

TOO HOT

Although that church exhibited too little interest in childcare controls, we once visited a church that went too far the other way. In this large church, the childcare area was micromanaged by a

militant woman who clearly rebuffed for not having my bracelet. valued system over people. Children for This worker may simply annoy

In this large church, the childcare area was micromanaged by a militant woman who clearly valued system over people.

second service were not to be dropped off before children from first service were completely picked up. Never mind that the church only allowed 10 minutes between services, causing a traffic jam of people both coming and going.

Parents were not allowed into childcare rooms under any circumstances. Children could not be picked up without the numbered bracelet that corresponded to the numbered line on her chart where the child's name was registered. Somehow my husband, wearing the requisite bracelet, slipped into the room with Grace. When I came to collect them, I was severely

regulars, but to newcomers, she was a formidable gatekeeper.

JUST RIGHT

The best nursery facility I have encountered offered a check-in station that separated regulars from visitors with a clearly marked place at the counter for newcomers. This specially designated area told me that the worker on the other side already anticipated my unfamiliarity with the routine. She treated me with respect and taught me her church's childcare system. Nursery workers were trained to greet visitors, teach them the system, and make them

feel comfortable in their new environment. Their system was as complex as the second church's, but the workers displayed a genuine interest in people first, then controls. This difference alleviated much stress so we could concentrate on other aspects of the church.

CONCLUSION

Although signage and nursery systems have little bearing on a church's ultimate value to the kingdom of God, paying attention to these details can minimize visitors' frustrations. And visitors become attendees, attendees become members, and members keep the life of your particular limb of the body of Christ going. Think about being a visitor to your church. See what you can do to make it easier for visitors to determine more quickly whether it is too big, too small, too hot, too cold, or just right in their search for a good fit. **e**

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The Lust To Know and the Lust To Be Right

The Cross is the answer for two of these fleshly passions... that can damage a woman's testimony, hinder her ministry, and keep her from personal victory.

B Y M A R J O R I E C R E G O

For a long time, I softened some of the undesirable tendencies I could see in my life and called them personal weaknesses, faults, or shortcomings. But I was startled to discover that God's Word, at least in some versions, exposes the human inclinations to sin by unhesitatingly labeling them lust. That is a strong word, one we usually reserve for inappropriate sexual desire.

As Christian women, and perhaps especially as women in ministry, we take seriously the scriptural injunction to avoid such sin. Yet in our attention to this single aspect of purity, it is all too easy for us to overlook other places in our lives where we may have troublesome appetites. When not ruled by the Spirit, any of our human yearnings can become uncontrolled desires, depraved affections—lusts. If we expect to triumph over them, we must call these failures by their rightful name.

The Bible does not have much to say about handling what we insist on calling a weakness or shortcoming. It does tell us clearly, though, how to deal with lust. "Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (lusts)" (Galatians 5:24, NKJV). The Cross is the answer for two of these fleshly passions—the lust to know and the lust to be right—that can damage a woman's testimony, hinder her ministry, and keep her from personal victory.

THE LUST TO KNOW

The lust to know is nothing new to females. It is the trap into which Eve, the mother of us all, fell. She knew what God had said about the tree in the midst of the Garden: "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the *knowledge of good and evil*"

(Genesis 2:16,17, NIV, emphasis mine).

Why not? Knowledge is a good thing, isn't it? Yes, but knowledge is also a heavy thing. Determining what is good and what is evil, and then choosing between the two, is a burdensome task. God wanted to spare His friends in the Garden that troubling experience. But Eve had the lust to know. The serpent said to her, "You will not surely die . . . God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4,5, NIV).

How exciting to know what's going on, to be in the inner circle, perhaps even sought out by others who want to be in the know. I don't blame Eve for looking at the fruit and deciding that it was not only attractive and delicious, but also desired to make one wise.

There are many things that are good to know, and there is a great deal of satisfaction in learning new things. Many women are avid readers of a wide variety of books and magazines. Women attend classes, not merely to strengthen their work skills, but for enjoyment and personal development. The desire to know is strong and can lead us to growth and to happy, productive living.

But there is another kind of desire to know that is damaging to us and to those around us, especially in the church. That desire to know can be called an evil curiosity. It is the lust to know what is happening in the Smith's marriage, whether that girl in the youth group is pregnant, if John really told off the pastor in the board meeting, and what will be done about the janitor's sloppy work. But the chances are good that we do not need to know these things. Yes, the minister's wife does need to know certain things. Staff members need to know certain things.

Deacons and ministry leaders need to know certain things. But there are many things that only feed evil curiosity—that lust to know—even in ministry leaders.

Here is an example of how this works in my life. One of the pastors alluded in a staff meeting to a situation involving church members whom he named. Everyone else seemed to be aware of the facts, but I was not. "I guess I don't know anything about that," I had to admit.

"And you'll be happier if you don't," he replied.

Although he referred to this situation several times in later weeks, he never did give me the details, and I was not permitted by the Lord to ask. Did I want to know? Of course! My evil curiosity was excited, but God said, "Just lay that lust to know on the Cross."

Giving up knowing is hard sometimes. I could know. I know whom to ask, and you do too. We can readily identify the information sources in the office, Sunday School class, or even in the prayer group. The issue is not that we cannot be trusted, for we have all experienced being given sensitive information because we had a need to know. Giving up the lust to know for mere curiosity means trusting others to decide how much knowledge I need. I must not go out and scoop up those juicy little tidbits on my own by getting information from someone who is often more than willing to share it. Although I want to be in the information loop as much as anyone, if I want to keep a pure heart, sometimes I need to make it my business not to know.

THE LUST TO BE RIGHT

The second ungodly passion is the lust to be right and its twin, the lust to control. I had a strict religious upbringing, and I was

serious about doing right. Without realizing it, I developed the extreme view that it was of great importance for me to be right, that is, unarguably correct, about everything. Many years later, as I matured in the Lord, I saw that what I am really seeking is full control of my life and circumstances. I want to have a plan and make it work. I want to know what is going to happen and get prepared for it. I never want to be caught off guard. Preparation is good until the desire to have order puts the Spirit of God in a box and restricts the liberty God wishes to give. Then the desire to be right and in control is an expression of the carnal mind, which is always at enmity with God.

This is a humbling road for me. One day a friend and I were discussing a local property. He said, "That's a Frank Lloyd Wright home, you know—the famous architect." I just knew it was not. *Didn't I work in the library for almost 19 years and look up this information any number of times?* I thought.

"No, I don't think so," I said. "There's

only one private residence in the city designed by Wright."

He insisted. "Oh yes, this is a Wright design."

I could not let that go. I went down to the library and looked it up, and of course, I was right. The property in question is not a Frank Lloyd Wright home—so there.

And then the Lord whispered in my heart, "But you can't go back and tell him."

"But Lord, he thinks that property is worth a mint, and it's just ordinary, and what if . . ."

And the Lord said, "You can't go back and tell him. Let me take care of it. You don't have to be right."

Being right or in control is a burden. I was a single mom, raising my daughter alone. When she decided to marry at an immature 19, I wept tears of frustration and fear. "Lord, I don't think she's ready for this, but there's nothing I can do to convince her. I guess I need to realize I am finished."

The Lord replied softly, "But I'm not finished."

I watched that young couple go through some terrible times. I knew some things that could have helped them, if only they would listen. But God kept reminding me, "You cannot control that situation, even by your desperate prayers. You'll have to trust Me. Remember, I'm not finished yet." To this day, I see Him working in ways that I never could.

CONCLUSION

The Scripture tells us to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us" and to "run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1, NKJV). Having to know and having to be right are great weights. Constantly proving something is a wearisome task. What a relief to yield to God those unruly desires—the lust to know and the lust to be right. Let God be God. Let Him be the One who knows everything, the One who is always right, the One who is in control. **e**

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Teachers on Divine Assignment

The investment of a life in preparing others is the special privilege of a teacher with a divine appointment.

B Y R O B E R T H . S P E N C E

Teaching ministries have always had a special place in God's plans for His people. The Old and New Testaments include numerous accounts of how anointed instruction of God's Word had a tremendous impact on the spiritual development of His people.

Revivals and spiritual restoration that occurred after times of apostasy always resulted from passionate proclamation of the Word of God. The men and women who became instruments in God's hands by calling for repentance were often teachers on divine assignment.

OLD TESTAMENT

Abraham

When God was about to engage Abraham in a ministry of intercession for his nephew Lot, a resident of Sodom, He asked, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?" (Genesis 18:17*). Scripture provides the Lord's immediate answer: Abraham would be apprised of the precarious position of his relatives.

Significantly, the basis for God sharing these glimpses into the future was not a reward for Abraham's past spiritual accomplishments, but rather because of what the Lord foresaw. Genesis 18:18,19 states succinctly: "Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."

Of great importance is God's foreknowledge of Abraham's faithfulness to direct his children and his household to keep the way of the Lord. The Hebrew

word translated "direct" in verse 19 comes from a word meaning "to give a charge." The King James Version renders this phrase, "He will command his children and his household."

Who can doubt the value the Lord places on correct and consistent teaching when the Lord himself identified faithfulness to that responsibility as a distinguishing attribute of Abraham that would lead to future blessing. The patriarch would become known as "God's friend" (James 2:23) and a man of great faith. But in this case, he is a teacher on divine assignment.

Moses

In time, the prophecy was fulfilled regarding Abraham's descendants becoming a nation. When freed from Egyptian bondage, the Children of Israel began their journey toward a promised land. Release from oppression led to unprecedented opportunities for worship and spiritual exercises, but also unprecedented challenges.

Survival as a nation would require obedience to God's standard of living. Centuries had passed since the Lord had declared His confidence in Abraham's ability to teach the truth to his family. Now there were hundreds of thousands of families. It was an opportune time for teachers on divine assignment. A clear articulation of God's expectations was needed. Everyone needed to read from the same page.

In the fullness of time, God gave the Law to Moses. With specificity, the commandments provided guidelines for behavior, spelling out man's relationship to God and his fellow man. Additionally, ordinances prescribed patterns for

appropriate worship and principles of harmonious community life.

Throughout his tenure as God's ordained leader for Israel, Moses faithfully taught these precepts—these divine requirements—to the people. Repeatedly, he admonished those who served with him to emphasize these truths that, if obeyed, would assure God's favor and blessing.

Nearing the end of his life, Moses reviewed the law of God with the people. His concern is detected as he admonished Israel to "be careful to do what the Lord your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess" (Deuteronomy 5:32,33).

In explaining his role of spiritual leadership, Moses declared, "These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess" (Deuteronomy 6:1).

Recognizing the necessity of continued teaching of God's Word to coming generations, Moses, a teacher on a divine assignment, said: "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, John began his book in a most profound way: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). The ministry of Jesus was frequently described in terms of His teaching the Word. So notable was His instruction that many referred to Him as the Teacher, and the fact He did not teach like the scribes.

Obviously, Jesus intended teaching to be a part of His overall commission. As He prepared to return to the Father following His death and resurrection, He charged His disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19,20). He was commissioning teachers for divine assignments.

Early Church

Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost included numerous Scripture passages from the Psalms and the Prophets. Someone's faithful teaching in years past bore fruit that day as the Holy Spirit brought those words to his mind and anointed him to proclaim with authority: "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

Following the birth of the Church, the need for exposition and explanation of the Word of God was obvious. Many of the first believers had a rich heritage of scriptural knowledge, but they needed teachers who could help them understand how those Scriptures had been fulfilled with the coming of the Righteous One.

As the Church grew and evangelistic efforts were multiplied, there continued to be evidence of teachers on divine assignments. Philip, one of the seven men "known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3) and chosen to wait on tables, became a teacher on a divine assignment. After being used of the Lord in a great evangelistic endeavor in a city

in Samaria, he was directed to travel south to the desert road connecting Jerusalem and Gaza. In the sovereignty of God, he met an Ethiopian ranking government official who needed teaching. Only eternity will reveal the results of his teaching from Isaiah that day.

Paul shared with the Ephesians the revelation the Lord gave him regarding gifts of ministry that had been invested in the church and the purpose of those gifts: "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:11,12). Healthy, vibrant churches develop as these ministry gifts are exercised. Each is unique and necessary for spiritual vitality. Competition among ministry gifts is not sponsored by the Holy Spirit.

Some interpret Ephesians 4:11 to suggest that the pastor and teacher gifts should be linked and offered by one individual, while others believe that they are distinctive gifts that function harmoniously with others listed by Paul.

TODAY

The Lord has used Bible institutes, Bible colleges, universities, and a seminary to help fulfill our Fellowship's mission. The Lord chose and appointed dedicated people, Assemblies of God faculty

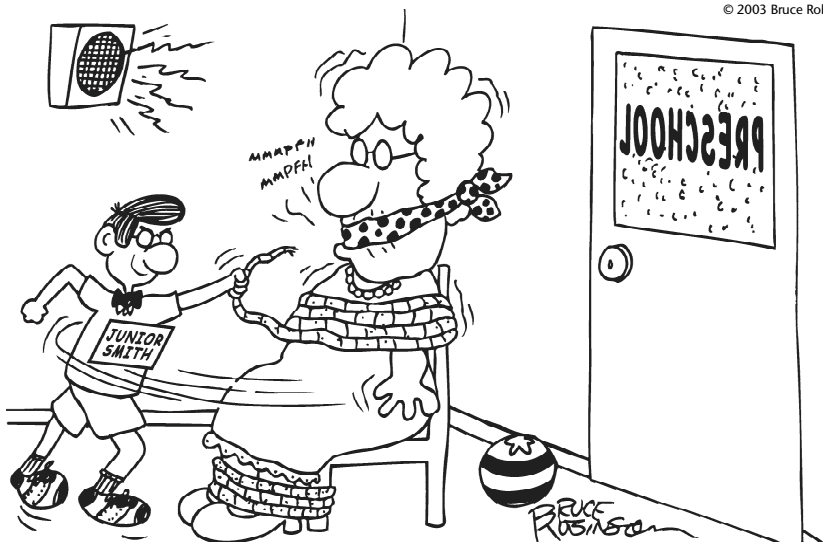
members, to become teachers on divine assignment. These teachers recognize a commission from the Lord to help build the church.

With the growth and expansion of Assemblies of God higher education, especially during the past decade, there is an increasing need for qualified faculty. Some among us may have been prepared for a teaching ministry in one of our schools and may not have been aware of the need that they could help meet. Those who feel God's call to invest their lives in a teaching ministry and who have the academic and practical experience are encouraged to make contact with the Commission on Christian Higher Education, 1445 Boonville, Springfield, MO 65802.

Teaching in an Assemblies of God school provides the privilege of engaging students spiritually and helping them become all that God would have them be. The investment of a life in preparing others is the special privilege of a teacher with a divine appointment. **e**

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**Scripture references, unless noted, are from the New International Version.*



"And I, Pastor Smith, preaching to you today from the pulpit of this church speak to you from experience about the strong-willed child. Believe me!"

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S E R M O N S E E D S



WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE?

Micah 6:6-8

INTRODUCTION:

What is our role in worship? Is it to sing, play instruments, raise our hands, clap our hands, or stand? Is it these things that make our worship to God meaningful?

What is needed in our lives that will make our worship (private and corporate) acceptable to God, that will fill our lives with His glory? We must be willing to do what the Lord requires. How we treat others during the week will affect our worship.

What is acceptable to the Lord? The implied answer is that nothing is acceptable unless we are in a proper relationship with God and others. This is what the Lord requires.

MESSAGE:

1. Do justly.

- a. Justice specifies what is right, not only by law, but also by right relationships and harmony.

- b. Justice has a strong legal flavor. But the concept of justice in the Bible goes beyond the law courts to everyday life.

- (1) The Bible speaks of doing justice.
- (2) We speak of getting justice.

- c. Justice is done when honorable relationships are maintained between husbands and wives, parents and children, employers and employees, government and citizens, and man and God.

- d. Justice refers to brotherliness in spirit and action.

2. Love mercy.

- a. Mercy is kindness, unfailing love, tenderness, and faithfulness.

- b. God's example to us of mercy.

- (1) God shows mercy to those who have broken His law (Daniel 9:9; 1 Timothy 1:13,16).

- (2) God shows mercy by actively helping those who are miserable due to circumstances beyond their

control. He healed the blind and the lepers (Matthew 9:27-31; 20:29-34; Luke 17:11-19).

- c. God is merciful, and He expects His children to be merciful (Matthew 5:7; James 1:27).

3. Walk humbly with your God.

- a. Humility avoids pride and arrogance and has a spirit of submission.

- b. Jesus is the supreme example of humility (Matthew 11:29; Mark 10:45; John 13:4-17; Philippians 2:5-8).

- c. Biblical humility is free from arrogance and grows from recognizing that all we have and are comes from God.

CONCLUSION:

Micah 6:6-8 instructs us to:

1. Remain honest in all we do.
2. Cherish compassionate faithfulness.
3. Live in submission to God.

—Kevin Drake
Bly, Oregon

A BLACK TIE AFFAIR

Matthew 22:1-14

INTRODUCTION:

From beginning to end, weddings are formal occasions. As young couples prepare for their big day, they refer to bridal magazines and consultants. This ensures they are preparing everything with a clear understanding of proper protocol and etiquette. If you have ever received a wedding invitation, you probably understand something about wedding protocol.

A wedding invitation uses formal wording to say, "We want you to be an honored guest on this special occasion."

The proper way to respond to a wedding invitation is to promptly return the enclosed card with your response: "Yes, I will attend," or "No, I regret I am unable to attend."

If you accept this invitation, you will be expected to fulfill certain responsibilities as a way of showing respect for the couple. This is not just an invitation to a free meal.

MESSAGE:

1. An invitation rejected (verses 2,3).

- a. The Jews ignored and rejected God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ.
- b. Many people today ignore and reject God's plan of salvation.

2. A feast prepared (verse 4).

- a. God has prepared the finest meal possible for his guests to enjoy. The entrees are forgiveness and eternal life.
- b. You must accept the invitation to come to the wedding banquet.

3. An invitation ignored (verses 5,6).

- a. People are easily distracted. Our priorities are mixed up because we put other things ahead of God (careers, money, achievements, possessions, entertainment).
- b. Others are distracted by bad attitudes that lead to bad actions (jealousy and bitterness).

4. A judgment delivered (verse 7).

It is a dangerous thing to reject God's plan.

5. An invitation broadened (verses 8-10).

The kingdom of God and its power are given to those who respond to the gospel (Colossians 3:11).

6. An etiquette required (verses 11-13).

- a. When you accept a wedding invitation, it implies that you will dress appropriately and bring a gift. This is your way of showing respect to the couple.
- b. The wedding clothes symbolize readiness.

CONCLUSION:

The people of God will be honored guests at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. However, that does not excuse us from the responsibility to show honor and respect to the host of the banquet. Thus, we must carefully examine ourselves as we prepare to attend this great celebration.

—Mark A. Clark
Newburg, Pennsylvania

S E R M O N S E E D S



IF ANY MAN THIRST

John 7:37-39

INTRODUCTION:

These words were spoken on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. On this day was a special ceremony called “the pouring out of the water.” White-robed priests went to the Pool of Siloam. After they filled their jars with water they came back to the temple and poured the water on the altar as a type of sacrifice. It was a memorial of the water that flowed from the rock in the wilderness.

Moses’ smiting the rock in the wilderness was a type of the smiting of Christ at Calvary. Jesus Christ is the Rock of our salvation. During this ceremony at the Feast of Tabernacles, “Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (John 7:37).

The invitation is still going forth today. Notice, first of all, that this is . . .

MESSAGE:

1. A universal invitation.

- a. “If”—the conjunction. This little conjunction is significant, for it begs the question: Are you thirsty for God?
 - (1) Not for the things of God.
 - (2) Not for the work of God.
 - (3) Not for the blessings of God.

Appl: Do you have a dying thirst for the Lord? This message is for you. It’s only the self-righteous and self-satisfied to whom the Lord has nothing to say.

- b. “Any man”—the candidate. God is no respecter of persons. The invitation is addressed to everyone.
- c. “Thirst”—the condition. Everyone is thirsty. Just as the body thirsts for water, the soul thirsts for God. Many people try to satisfy their thirst with the things of this world:
 - (1) Wealth and prosperity.
 - (2) Fame and fortune.

- (3) Houses and lands.
- (4) Position and power.

Thirst is the only condition Jesus gives. And to all who thirst, He issues an invitation.

- d. “Let him come”—the call. If you are thirsty, you are included in the call. It’s not enough just to be thirsty; the Lord wants a response. We need to respond, but where do we go?
- e. “Unto me”—the Christ. Jesus calls us to himself because the thirst inside is for Him. Only Jesus can satisfy the thirsting of the human soul.
- f. “And drink”—the cure. This is where many fall short. Everything leads to this point. Jesus didn’t just say, “Let him come to Me.” He added the words, “and drink.” Drinking signifies making Christ your own—having a personal encounter with the Son of the living God.

This is not a single act, but a continual act of drinking. No one else can drink for you.

The Lord’s promise to all who respond is that “out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” That speaks of . . .

2. An unlimited infilling.

- a. The precondition—“He that believeth on me.” In verse 37, Jesus called all that thirst to himself. Why? Because Jesus is the Baptizer.

Jesus not only said “come,” but “believe.” Belief in Jesus Christ is necessary. The Holy Spirit is only given to those who believe (verse 39).
- b. The prophecy—“As the Scripture hath said.” The doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit belongs to the entire Bible. Jesus referred to a host of Old Testament Scriptures that speak of an outpouring of the Spirit.

- (1) Isaiah 41:17,18.
- (2) Isaiah 43:19,20.
- (3) Isaiah 44:3.
- (4) Joel 2:28,29.

- c. The promise—“Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” This is the promise of the infilling of the Holy Spirit that Peter spoke of in Acts 2:16-18.

In some churches, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the exception rather than the rule. But in the New Testament, it was the rule.

- (1) Acts 2:4.
- (2) Acts 4:31.
- (3) Acts 10:44.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is God’s gift to every believer. It should be the normative experience for all believers.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not likened to a well of water, but to “rivers of living water.” The Spirit-filled life is not a self-centered life, but a serving life. The believer is to be like a spring—a continual flow of blessing touching others.

To touch others, I must first receive from God. I cannot give what I do not possess. After you have received, then “shall flow rivers of living water.”

CONCLUSION:

This is the Lord’s invitation to us today. It’s a universal invitation to an unlimited infilling.

May our response be:

- Lord, I thirst.
- Lord, I come.
- Lord, I drink.
- Lord, I believe.
- Lord, I receive, so there may flow from my life “rivers of living water.”

—Todd Weston
Manhattan, Kansas

S E R M O N S E E D S



LIVING FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

INTRODUCTION:

The meaning of the "glory of God."

1. Giving Him His proper place, honor, and respect.
2. Doing everything with His glory in mind.
3. A practical way to live (1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17,23).

MESSAGE:

1. The Christian's Body.

- a. Paul's example (Philippians 1:20).
- b. It belongs to God by right of creation and purchase (1 Corinthians 6:13–20).
- c. It is a temple—a place set aside for worship and sacrifice (1 Corinthians 6:19).
- d. It must be used to glorify God.
 - (1) Romans 6:12,13; 8:13; 12:1.
 - (2) Hands, feet, lips, eyes, and ears.

2. The Christian's Mind.

- a. The importance of it.
 - (1) Determines the actions of the body.
 - (2) Determines the destiny in this life and eternity.
- b. The unregenerate mind is:
 - (1) The source of all evil (Genesis 6:5; Matthew 15:19; Ephesians 2:3).
 - (2) Opposed to God (Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21).
 - (3) A barrier to keep people from coming to God (2 Corinthians 4:4).
- c. The mind of Christ:
 - (1) Is a renewed mind (Matthew 22:37; Romans 12:2).
 - (2) Becomes what it should be (2 Timothy 1:7).
 - (3) Brings peace (Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 4:7).
- d. The controlled mind.
 - (1) In relation to ourselves (2 Corinthians 11:3; Titus 2:6).
 - (2) In relation to others—unity (Philippians 1:27; 1 Peter 3:8).
 - (3) In relation to God (Philippians 2:5).
- e. Some final principles of the mind.
 - (1) Bring every thought into captivity (2 Corinthians 10:5).
 - (2) Think proper thoughts (Philippians 4:8).
 - (3) Submit your thought life to God's scrutiny (Psalm 139:2,23,24).

3. The Christian's Will.

- a. The will defined.
 - (1) "The faculty of mind that determines choices; directs energies in carrying out decisions."
 - (2) In the Bible it can mean our spirit, the real person.
- b. A decision-making faculty.
 - (1) Power to make our own choices.
 - (2) Happiness determined by making right choices.
 - (3) A Christian attitude demonstrated (James 4:13–15).
 - (4) Opposition to God brings problems and perhaps tragedy.
- c. Principles of right choices.
 - (1) God has a plan for each person.
 - (2) Avoid choosing on the basis of what seems best.
 - (a) A career—money or position.
 - (b) Marriage—good looks.
 - Illus.:** Lot's failure (Genesis 13:10,11).
 - (3) Keep a long-range view in mind (Moses; Hebrews 11:24–27).
 - (4) Count the cost.
 - (5) Let principle, not expediency, decide (Daniel and Esther).
 - (6) Put God's will first.
 - (a) Jesus is our example in Gethsemane (Luke 22:42).
 - (b) Yielding to the will of God brings the highest happiness.

4. The Christian's Conscience.

- a. Definitions.
 - (1) God's umpire.
 - (2) A faculty capable of knowing several things at the same time.
 - (a) A knowledge of one's self.
 - (b) A knowledge of a standard, rules to follow.
 - (c) A sense if thoughts, words, and actions conform to a standard.
 - (3) A faculty capable of receiving light from the Holy Spirit.
 - (4) "The eye of the soul." With no light of its own, it must have an object to gaze upon.
- b. Nature of conscience.
 - (1) Not infallible; only as valuable as the standard it follows.
 - (2) Sincerity is not enough; it can be sincerely wrong.
 - (3) Not a safe guide unless based on the Word of God.

c. Kinds of conscience.

- (1) Good (Acts 23:1; 1 Timothy 1:19).
- (2) Bad (1 John 3:20,21).
- (3) Tender—one in which the light of the Spirit shines undimmed.
- (4) Hardened—darkened, on which little or no light shines.
- (5) Seared—unable to respond to God's Spirit (1 Timothy 4:2).

d. The way conscience operates.

- (1) Helped bring salvation on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37).
- (2) Helped restore believers to fellowship after failure (Luke 22:59–62).
- (3) Reminds of responsibilities (2 Kings 7:9).
- (4) Assists the Holy Spirit by reminding of past events, promises, vows, and deeds.
- (5) How conscience works as believers mature.
 - (a) Convicts unbelievers of sin.
 - (b) Deals with new converts about their actions and words.
 - (c) Deals with more mature concerning their thought life.
 - (d) Deepest work about motivation—for self, as a duty, or for God.

CONCLUSION:

Our lives are like a house.

- a. Our mind is the door. Everything that shapes our character or personality comes through it.
- b. Our will is the key. It decides what is allowed to enter.
- c. The senses are the windows. The Holy Spirit can use our sight, hearing, and other senses as means by which His light can shine.
- d. The conscience is your watchdog to keep evil away.
- e. Caring for the house.
 - (1) Keep it clean; it needs a general housecleaning at times.
 - (2) Don't pull down the blinds of self-will so the light can't shine in.
 - (3) Get rid of the cobwebs of inactivity; keep busy for God.

—Ralph W. Harris
Springfield, Missouri

S E R M O N S E E D S



LACKING ONE THING

Mark 10:17–31, NIV

INTRODUCTION:

All of us want to live forever. But salvation is only made possible by the death of Christ (10:32–34). Is eternal life found in . . .

MESSAGE:

1. Outward conformity to the moral law? (verses 17–22).

- a. “What must I *do* to inherit eternal life?” (verse 17, emphasis added).
- b. Everyone claims to keep most of the commandments (verse 20).
 - (1) Jesus was not denying His deity (10:18).
 - (2) Jesus was clarifying the young man’s motives. Did the man recognize Jesus as God?
 - (3) Jesus doesn’t mention the tenth commandment regarding covetousness. He said, “Do not defraud.” There is a double emphasis on not stealing and not defrauding, which might be a strong temptation for a rich person.
 - (4) Jesus only mentioned the commandments that can be visibly verified. Our love for God can only be shown by our love for people.
- b. Everyone fails to keep some commandments (10:21,22).
 - (1) The young man had made

possessions his god.

- (2) Jesus loves rich people as well as the poor—He isn’t biased.
- (3) Jesus doesn’t change His message to suit the man or woman.

Or, is eternal life found in . . .

2. Inward conformity to the merciful Lord? (verses 23–31).

- a. Discipleship is problematical (10:23–26).
 - (1) The archaeological solution suggests a small gate where camels crawled through on their knees, but this was built many years later.
 - (2) The textual solution suggests reading a “cable” instead of a “camel.”
 - (3) The grammatical solution suggests considering this a hyperbole (Matthew 23:24).
 - (4) The spiritual solution suggests not mistaking prosperity for spirituality (10:24). The Jews often equated riches with righteousness.
- b. Discipleship is possible (10:27).
 - (1) This is not possible by works. Becoming a child is not considered a work.
 - (2) This requires the new birth (John 3:7).
 - (3) This coincides with the teaching of the apostle Paul (Romans 5:1).
- c. Discipleship is profitable (10:28–31).
 - (1) This implies that the disciples had not been poor. Several were fisher-

men and one was a tax collector.

- (2) This refers to the provision of spiritual family/fellowship (Romans 16:13).
- (3) This insinuates that suffering is advantageous (10:30). Persecution purifies us of worldliness. Jesus wanted them to count the cost.
- (4) This indicates that the heavenly perspective differs from the earthly perception. The rewards outweigh the sacrifices.

CONCLUSION:

When we are confronted with the problem of finding eternal life, we should give heed to God’s provision in Mark 10:17–31.

1. We are justified by God (10:23–26). “Who then can be saved?”
 2. We are regenerated by God (10:27). “All things are possible with God.”
 3. We are sanctified by God (10:28). “We have left everything to follow you!” He gives us the desire to pursue Him.
 4. We are glorified by God (10:29–31). We will receive eternal life in the age to come.
- Ask Jesus what you must do to inherit eternal life (repent, believe, receive). The benefit to receive: You discover the joys of obedience; you will overcome the power of possessions.

—Steve D. Eutsler
Springfield, Missouri

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE PENTECOSTAL?

INTRODUCTION:

If someone walked into our church, would they know we are Pentecostal? Four characteristics from the Book of Acts help us understand what it means to be Pentecostal.

MESSAGE:

1. It means we are open to the Spirit’s work in our lives (Acts 1:4; 2:4).

- a. The initial physical evidence of being filled with the Spirit is speaking in tongues, but the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23) and love (1 Corinthians 13) are also evidences of the Spirit’s work in our lives.
- b. Accounts of speaking in tongues are rare in church history because the Church became caught up in doctrinal battles—reasoning about God—rather than experiencing Him.

c. The Holy Spirit comes from the Father to teach us all things (John 14:26–28).

2. It means we believe that the power of God needs to be active in our lives (Acts 1:8; 4:32,33).

- a. Many have a form of godliness, but deny its power (2 Timothy 3:5).
- b. This power is open to all believers. Stephen and Philip were men full of God’s power. It wasn’t just for the 12 disciples.
- c. This power is for salvation (Romans 1:16), godly living (2 Peter 1:3), demolishing strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4), and preaching (Mark 16:15–18).

3. It means we take the Great Commission seriously (Acts 3:11,12; 9:15).

- a. The Assemblies of God began with missions as a priority.
- b. We have all been commissioned. The

Holy Spirit is the means of accomplishing the mission.

4. It means we believe the gospel is for everyone (Acts 2:4–12; 11:15–18).

- a. There was an ethnic mix at the Azusa Street revival.
- b. Jesus is the King of all peoples. In Revelation 7, the great multitude in white robes is made up of people from every nation, tribe, people, and language.

CONCLUSION:

These four characteristics match the four cardinal doctrines of the Assemblies of God: salvation, baptism in the Holy Spirit, divine healing, and the Second Coming. These characteristics will be present in a truly Pentecostal church.

—Steven Schofstoll, Ritzville, Washington



PUTTING TOGETHER A SONG SERVICE ORDER

Theme. Select songs that deal with the same subject such as holiness, the Blood, Communion, glory, or that fit the message of the day.

Think flow. Medley two or three songs together without a break.

Keep it simple. If you're going to make a change of key, feel, style, or tempo, change one thing at a time. If you're going to change multiple elements, make sure the songs have the same groove or style.

Think forward. When changing keys, the best direction to change is up. This helps create an emotional lift to the service and moves it forward. Don't try to transition too far. The key of D to A-flat is quite a task, and the awkward transition may break the flow of worship.

Think consistent. It's best to choose songs that match in style, theme, key, and tempo.

—Adapted from Network News. Used with permission.

USING DRAMA EFFECTIVELY IN THE CHURCH

Drama is not just for the youth group. More and more churches are utilizing drama in their Sunday morning services. Adding drama to a service gets people's attention and gets the point across. Consider keeping the service theme-oriented. Have the skit, monologue, or human video reflect the theme of the sermon. You don't need professional actors, just willing volunteers who can make it to rehearsals. Remember, variety keeps people's attention. While it is not necessary to have a skit or human video every week, regularly using drama can bring people back. They'll wonder, *What will I see this week?* And the visual helps them remember the lesson. Here are a few suggestions for using drama effectively:

Service opener. Start the service with a human video or a humorous skit.

Sermon starter. Introduce the sermon with a skit or human video that complements the sermon. It does not have to point out the complete sermon, but it should get people thinking.

Mid-message thought. Add a skit or human video to the message. This adds variety and refocuses people's attention.

Closing thought. Finish the sermon with a skit or human video that brings the message home.

—Adapted from Network News. Used with permission.

CHILDREN IN WORSHIP EVANGELISM

At Mechanicsville Christian Center, we have an evangelistic

team composed of 50 children, ages 6 through 18. Because we want to build bridges between God and those who don't know Him, we call our team Bridge Builders. Our main means of outreach is worshiping God through contemporary songs set to interpretive movements. The goal of Bridge Builders is to discipline children to hear God's voice and obey Him. The desire of the children is to bring joy to God's heart through worship and to lead others to Christ.

The outreach consists of an hour of interpretive songs, testimonies, and prayer. The innocent heart of a child breaks down barriers to the gospel. Children and adults are open to a child praying for them.

Bridge Builders has conducted outreaches in shopping malls, housing projects, nursing homes, hospices, rehabilitation centers, homeless shelters, city parks, churches, and the beach. When Bridge Builders minister in churches, our goal is to encourage and mobilize other children to share their faith.

We have a weeklong training camp every summer to teach children songs, movements, how to share their faith, and how to give testimonies. Each day begins with worship, a quiet time, and teaching. The afternoons are devoted to rehearsal. After the training camp, the team conducts a 2-week outreach, ministering twice daily. They also have bimonthly outreaches throughout the year.

Bridge Builders gives children opportunities to share their faith. What greater purpose can we give them than to make Christ's name known?

—Peter Hohmann, Mechanicsville, Virginia

OUTREACH VISITATION

Outreach is an important aspect of a church's ministry. People who visit a church are looking for a place where they can experience the warmth of God through God's people. Cards and phone calls are nice, but face-to-face visitation means much more. It takes time and effort, but visitation can be rewarding. Consider these methods to enhance your visitation.

Inform

Inform members well in advance when visitation will take place. Usually Saturday mornings or early Monday evenings work best. I take Sunday School teachers, deacons, or elders visiting with me. We visit inactive members, prospective members, and first-time visitors. Train those who are visiting how to introduce themselves: "Hello, my name is _____, and I am from _____ church. We would like to visit with you for



a few minutes to let you know about some upcoming activities in our church.”

Leave some baked goods and/or information about the church. Giving something to those you visit sometimes opens doors for further conversation. It also serves as a gesture of goodwill.

Inquire

When making a visit, inquire about their interests and needs. Remember, you are there to learn about them, not to talk about yourself. Ask about their family, jobs, and hobbies. Find out how your church can minister to them.

Impact

Make an impact by your genuine concern and desire to help them. Be creative and leave brochures, magazines, and anything else that might help them remember your visit.

Inspire

As you prepare to leave, ask if you can pray with them. Ask for specific prayer requests. If they prefer you not pray, reassure them that you will be praying for them. Remind them that the church cares and that God loves them. Read a Bible verse if you feel led.

Have two people go visiting together, one of whom is comfortable praying and leading conversation. Target your people correctly. For example, have young people visit other young people. If you are visiting families with young children, have a parent of a young child accompany you. Pray before you go, and ask God to prepare the hearts of those you will be visiting.

—Malinda Fillingim, Rome, Georgia

DEALING WITH POOR SINGERS IN THE CHOIR

If someone has recently joined my choir and has a hard time staying on pitch, my section leaders let me know. At the next rehearsal, I ask for all new people to meet with me after rehearsal to double-check voice parts. I will play intervals to check their range and have them try to match the pitch. After all singers have auditioned, I privately say to the monotone, “You are having trouble hearing intervals and pitch when I play the notes. If you feel God has put it in your heart to sing, let me give you some advice. Take voice lessons or enroll in a beginning music class one of our music teachers offers. After that, come back, and we’ll see where you stand. I don’t want you to be discouraged. We do 4 songs every Sunday and occasional praise specials where we do 10 songs. I’m afraid it

will be overwhelming for you, and the last thing I want is for you to be discouraged.”

Every time the response has been something like, “Well, I was praying the Lord would show me what ministry to join, and I wasn’t sure if I should be in choir or help with Royal Rangers or Missionettes.”

Having this kind of policy helps people find the ministry that God wants for them, plus helps them leave the choir with their self-esteem in tact.

—David Ritter. Adapted from Network News.

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MORE WAYS TO HAVE SPECIAL MUSIC EVERY SUNDAY

Many churches do not have a choir. Other congregations have a choir only during special seasons and for special events. Yet, in most of these cases, the pastor as well as the parishioners would appreciate having special music every Sunday. Spiritual songs and hymns help people grow in their understanding of God, self, and others. Use the following ideas as springboards for providing special music every week:

1. Have a deaf choir interpret music through sign language.
2. Act out the message of a hymn through drama.
3. Use a bell choir.
4. Learn choir chimes.
5. Assign each Sunday School class to sing on a different Sunday.
6. Schedule a choir from another church.
7. Play a recording from an oratorio, such as Handel’s *Messiah*.
8. Organize a quartet.
9. Perform a children’s musical.
10. Invite a community choir.
11. Project slides while hymns are being played or sung to interpret the message of the music.
12. Request people to form a sextet or octet.
13. Read some of the music in the Bible, such as Mary’s Magnificat.

—Phyllis Wezeman, Michawaka, Indiana

SEND US YOUR IDEAS

Enrichment will pay up to \$50 for each published account of a program idea. Send your ideas, along with a detailed description, to: Ministry Ideas, *Enrichment* journal, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

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THE PRISON OF SIN

In the early 1930s, the U.S. had a problem. Crime had run amok. The prohibition of alcohol in the 1920s had given rise to pervasive organized crime. A frightened public demanded a response, and the government wanted to send a message to criminals. Their message was Alcatraz, a tiny island in San Francisco Bay that had previously been used as a military prison.

From 1934 to 1963, Alcatraz housed some of our nation's most notorious criminals including Al Capone. Thirty-six prisoners were involved in escape attempts: 23 were caught, 6 were shot and killed, and 2 drowned. The remaining five are listed as "missing and presumed drowned." As for the June 1962, escape made famous in a feature film, Morris and the Anglin brothers were successful in escaping both the institution and the island, but their survival is questionable.

"The Rock" was one of the most successful examples ever of an escape-proof prison. But there is one prison even more inescapable—sin. And the only way of escape from the prison of sin is Jesus Christ. "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1, NIV).

—Chaplain Guy Caley, Heidelberg, Germany

LESSONS FROM THE BRISTLECONE PINE

It is called the Methuselah Tree. It stands somewhere in California's White Mountains. Only forest rangers know its true location and identity.

Experts believe it was a seedling before the Egyptian pyramids were built nearly 5,000 years ago. How can such a thing be in this environmentally challenged area where precipitation is meager? There may be warm summer weather only 6 weeks a year. What keeps it going? Its soil is not really dirt but rather a substance called dolomite—a limestone substrate with few nutrients.

Experts believe one of the reasons this tree and other bristlecone pines live so long is because there is little surrounding competition. Another reason could be that their root systems are rather amazing, spreading underground in huge sections. In a dry year, the tree has the ability to "shut up shop" almost everywhere throughout its system, going dormant.

The tree has a dense, highly resinous wood that is a formidable barrier to insects, bacteria, and fungi. Further, such trees do not necessarily get big; rather, they get by. They have a survival mode rather than the need for grandeur.

This tree that appears almost dead—and has appeared that way for centuries—can still produce life. It generates cones with viable seeds. It is astounding that this truncated tree can still generate life though it was just a seedling itself when King Tutankhamun was a lad.

Age is no factor in producing life. It ought to be that way spiritually with those of us who have grown a bit long in the tooth. Rather than just idling away our hours playing shuffleboard and checkers, there are unlimited ways we can share our Lord with those around us. A good motto would be, "Be a bristlecone pine for Christ." Old, yes, maybe—but still able to produce life in Christ.

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GOD'S ANTITOXIN

The dictionary defines antitoxin as "a substance that can counteract poison." In 1974, the U.S. Army sent a group of soldiers into the outback of Australia for 6 weeks of war games. The 10 deadliest snakes in the world live in Australia. Five of these snakes lived in the same area in which the soldiers would be walking, sitting, sleeping, and crawling. One of the snakes to be avoided was the inland taipan, whose toxin is 50 times deadlier than that of an Indian cobra. Wise soldiers made sure their supply of antitoxins was always within reach.

Today, you and I live in a world that is full of deadly poisons: pornography, drugs, alcohol, illicit sex, and false religions. It may surprise you that living with deadly snakes is far safer than living in our society; only one soldier in that U.S. Army unit was bitten during the entire 6-week training camp.

Our only hope for survival is to fill our hearts, minds, and spirits with God's antitoxin—the Bible. God's Word counteracts all the sin poisons of this world and helps Christians maintain a sanctified life in the Holy Spirit.

—Bill Woods, Sisseton, South Dakota

REACHING PEOPLE FOR CHRIST

A large, prestigious congregation desired to evangelize college students at the university across the street. Although their intentions were good, they did not know how to reach out to the students. Their discussions always led them to the same conclusion—not knowing what to do.

One Sunday morning a young college student entered the



sanctuary. Every pew was filled; there was no place to sit. The entire service came to a halt and everyone seemed frozen in time as this young man with long, brown stringy hair, wearing an earring, college T-shirt, blue jeans, and sandals walked slowly down the long aisle toward the front of the church. You could hear a pin drop as the young man, stopping to look at the shocked pastor, sat on the floor in the altar area. No one spoke because of the surprise and awe of the moment.

An elder of the church rose from his pew at the back of the church. He slowly and painfully shuffled down the main aisle toward the young man, leaning heavily on his cane, wobbling as he moved. Old age and arthritis had damaged the joints of his legs.

The people didn't know what to expect. Would this respected elder and leader of this well-established congregation shoo the young man out of church with his cane? Or would he strike him as he forced him out of the door? Suspense mounted as the elder reached the student, who sat quietly, seemingly enjoying the silence of church. The elder looked down at the young man as he gazed up at him. Then in pain and with deliberation, the old man bent down and sat next to the college student. When the elder was seated, he smiled at the young man, shook his hand, put his arm around his shoulder, and welcomed him to church.

Everyone in church began to cry. They were touched by the elder's demonstration of love for the young man. For many years the elders and congregation had spoken about reaching college students. Now they realized how to reach them. They needed to identify with them, invite them to church, demonstrate their love through action, and accept them.

—Jerry Newswander, Platte City, Missouri

Source unknown.

SAFELY SURROUNDED

One of the highlights of a hike in the Gila Wilderness is the trail that follows the ice runoff called the Gila River. At times hikers cross over the river on a series of narrow bridges high above the water. The highlight of the trip is at the top of the trail where hikers cross the catwalk, a swinging bridge that is totally enclosed. Even the most apprehensive hikers venture out on the suspension bridge, jumping and swaying up and down, side to side. While those on the bridge are 30 feet above the rocky river, the protective bridge safely surrounds them. Occasionally, smaller hikers might stumble because of the motion on the bridge, but they are never in danger of

falling into the raging waters.

Psalm 37:23,24, states, "If the Lord delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand" (NIV).

Although we may stumble at times, it is comforting to know that God is always able to make our steps firm and uphold us.

—Ben Hodge III, El Paso, Texas

SOCIAL CONFLICTS AND PREJUDICES

When Jesus lived in Israel, He was surrounded by bigotry, prejudices, and social conflicts. He was slandered by others. Often when a Jew in this biblical setting heard the word *Gentile*, an ugly feeling bubbled up within. The word *Samaritan* could make the blood of a self-respecting Judean boil. It's very likely that when Caiaphas, the high priest, heard the name Jesus, his heart probably raced from the adrenaline of hatred.

It is important to understand the prejudices that controlled people's emotions in Jesus' day. Prejudices often indicate how a person feels and acts if completely free to do so. We will never know the emotions and feelings stirring in the souls of the Jews in Jesus' day, but we can attempt to understand some of those thoughts. It also gives us a bit more of an insight as to many of the happenings recorded in the Bible.

The Old Testament prophet Jonah is a prime example of a man who acted on his bigotry and prejudice. When God called him to preach to the city of Nineveh, he refused because he didn't want to see God's grace given to his bitter enemies.

So what has changed from Christ's day to ours in regards to this subject? We hope lots. But the world is still trapped by social conflicts, prejudices, and bigotry . . . from which Jesus came to free us.

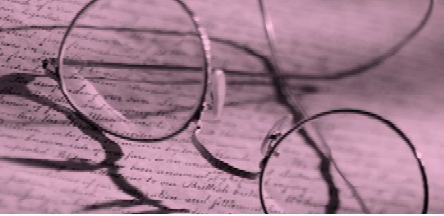
—Robert Strand, Springfield, Missouri,

adapted from 365 Fascinating Facts About Jesus (New Leaf Press, Springfield, Missouri). Used with permission.

SEND US YOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

Enrichment will pay up to \$25 for each illustration we use. If the material has previously been published, please indicate the original source. Send your contribution to: Illustrate It, *Enrichment* journal, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

E-mail: You may send your illustrations to: enrichmentjournal@ag.org.



book reviews



EXTRAVAGANT WORSHIP

Darlene Zschech (Bethany House, 224 pp., hardcover)

I began this book wondering if Darlene Zschech would have something new to say on worship, but she writes with passion and a voice of experience. *Extravagant Worship* will challenge you to become more passionate, not just in worship, but also in your relationship with the Lord. This book contains Zschech's personal stories of how she learned the lessons she shares in *Extravagant Worship*.

In part one, the author encourages readers to be extravagant worshippers, to be obedient, and to offer sacrificial worship—in lifestyle and in corporate worship. Her passion and excitement bring urgency to these teachings. The second part of the book gives practical insights and suggestions for worship leaders and their teams, ranging from “don’t talk too much” to “expect the unexpected.” The author stresses the importance of discipline, determination, unity, and a desire to serve throughout the book. The concluding chapter gives a list of practical advice for those who write praise and worship choruses.

Anyone who is or wants to be

involved in leading worship would benefit from reading *Extravagant Worship*.

—Reviewed by Melanie Larson, administrative coordinator, Single Adult Ministries Agency, Springfield, Missouri.

MINISTERS GOOD NEWS FILING SYSTEM

Owen Wilkie (Raymond House Publishers, 50 pp., 3-ring notebook)

Have you ever been overwhelmed by the need to create a working file system? Are you baffled about how to do it and what it will take to begin? Have you given it up? Owen Wilkie has done the



hard work and makes his experience and know-how available to you.

In the *Ministers Good News Filing System*, you will find answers of what to do and how to do in a practical, working file system. This is an easy-to-follow, step-by-step manual that allows pastors to file their books, magazines, periodicals, newspaper articles, thoughts, ideas, sermon notes, Bible study notes, and illustrations, as well as their delivered sermons and Bible studies. Of practical use is the ability to cross-file. Pastors can also create their own “Bible commentary notebook.”

I regret that I didn’t have this easy-to-use system when I began my ministry. I advise pastors, staff ministers, church secretaries, and educators to try it. *Ministers Good News Filing System* provides all they need to know and more to set up a file system that works for a study, church office, and home. For more information, see ad on page ____.

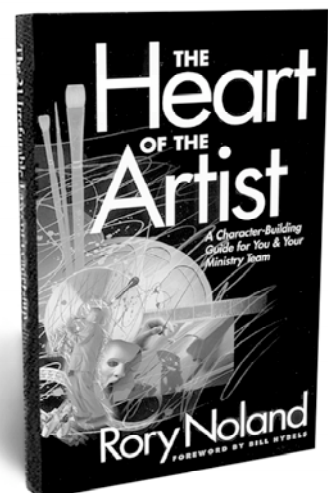
—Reviewed by Robert J. Strand, author, speaker, and former pastor, Springfield, Missouri.

THE HEART OF THE ARTIST

Rory Norland (Zondervan, 352 pp., paperback)

Rory Norland, long-time music director at Willow Creek Community Church, writes a uniquely challenging volume about the inner life of the church artist. Norland pulls the reader into a high level of transparency and honesty by sharing his own personal struggles.

The author expertly addresses those involved in the fine arts of the church—musicians and visual artists. His topics include character, servanthood versus stardom, excellence versus perfectionism, criticism, jealousy and envy,



emotions, how to be a leader of artists, and the spiritual discipline of the artist.

Norland begins each chapter by reciting a scenario that could happen to artists in a church. He then examines the spiritual and carnal motives of each person involved. Finally, he presents a section where the reader performs some healthy self-evaluation.

This book is a must read for those involved in fine arts ministry. Vocal soloists, worship teams, and instrumentalists would all benefit from reading *The Heart of the Artist*.

—Reviewed by Kenton Lee, minister of music, Life Center, Tacoma, Washington.

ON MISSION WITH GOD: LIVING GOD'S PURPOSE FOR HIS GLORY

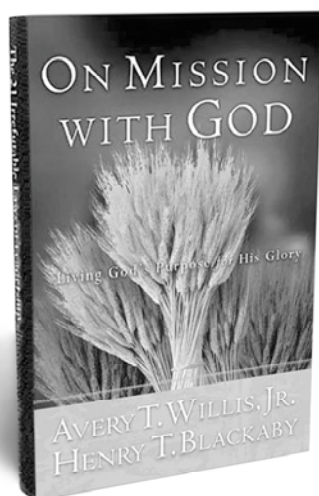
Avery T. Willis, Jr., and Henry T. Blackaby (Broadman and Holman Publishers, 256 pp., hardcover)

The authors have produced a text rich for Christian-life studies. This book can be used for understanding God's leading in individual lives and its relationship to the larger and eternal plan for the world through the ages. The text could also be used for group-discipleship studies, especially with men.

Blackaby and Willis use the scriptural reports of several heroes to demonstrate the work of God. The core of each chapter is an explanation of four perspectives of God's use of humans and His desired results: (1) the close-up perspective, (2) the wide-angle perspective, (3) the 180-degree extra-wide perspective, and (4) the 360-degree eternal perspective. Each Bible character is inspected through these four angles and then applied to modern Christian living.

The authors write clearly and interpret familiar Scriptures through a consistent scholarly template. They present guides helpful to average Christians or advanced disciples. *On Mission With God* has appeal for all seekers of spiritual help and development.

The final and most important element of the text is the revelation that God on



His mission earnestly desires for us to live our lives on mission with Him.

—Reviewed by Terry Raburn, superintendent, Peninsular Florida District of the Assemblies of God, Lakeland, Florida.

PENTECOSTAL PREACHING

Charles T. Crabtree (Gospel Publishing House, 208 pp., paperback)

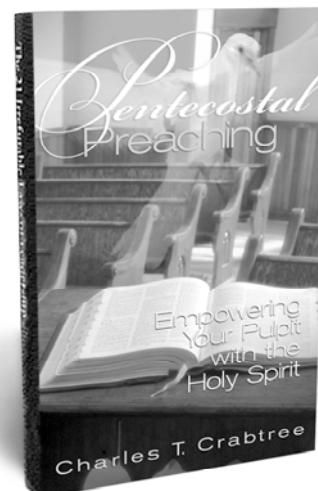
Of the many books about preaching, few specifically address the Pentecostal pulpit. Dispensing with artificial divisions in Pentecostal ranks, Charles Crabtree has written this volume with the intent of returning "an unquestionably biblical Pentecost in preaching and practice."

In so doing, Crabtree addresses numerous relevant aspects of the preaching ministry while focusing squarely on the distinctives of Pentecostal presentation. Packed with practical pointers that will positively impact any pulpit, the book is not about technique. Its underlying premise is that authority in the pulpit comes from the Spirit of God, not from oratorical mastery.

Two strengths of the book are its balance and forthrightness. The author, whose noted pulpit ministry qualifies him to address the topic, does not allow for laxity in preparation. Instead of needing less preparation, the Pentecostal preacher will find greater anointing when combining sound

scholarly preparation with spiritual readiness. The message is clear: When a Pentecostal preacher who has spent much time in God's presence follows sound study principles, the result will be a dynamic message that results in changed lives.

A special focus of the book is preaching on the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. The book culminates in helpful step-by-step recommendations for the sermon-building process. Pentecostal Preaching will challenge, encourage, and direct those called to step behind the pulpit. A wealth of devotional



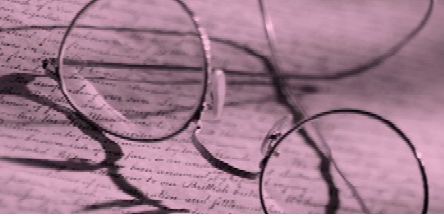
thought, logistical instruction, and Spirit-powered principles makes this book an invaluable resource for every Pentecostal preacher.

—Reviewed by Ken Horn, managing editor, Today's Pentecostal Evangel, Springfield, Missouri.

SHARE THE DREAM, BUILD THE TEAM: TEN KEYS FOR REVITALIZING YOUR CHURCH

Donald W. Morgan (Baker Book House, 160 pp., hardcover)

This book provides hope for the pastor struggling in a stagnant or declining church. Donald Morgan weaves his personal story of revitalizing a local church with leadership- and church-health principles in a balanced and



book reviews

readable manner. He does not convey a simplistic formula but provides 10 keys or principles that can transform any church. They are not new and



glitzy, but are timeless and proven in a tough environment. He proved these while leading a small, declining church to the fourth largest in his denomination.

Morgan encourages readers to expect great things: "Too many churches, and too many pastors and church leaders surrender to despair, accepting their less-than-flourishing situation. They see no hope for improvement or for the church to be a lively, dynamic, effective outpost for the Kingdom." This is not God's will; it is not what Christ wants. Morgan's passion is for the local church to be a transforming force in the 21st century as it was in the 1st century.

The abundant wealth of the author's ministry experience and his mentoring tone will benefit any pastor. Readers will be encouraged and will gain personal and organizational skills.

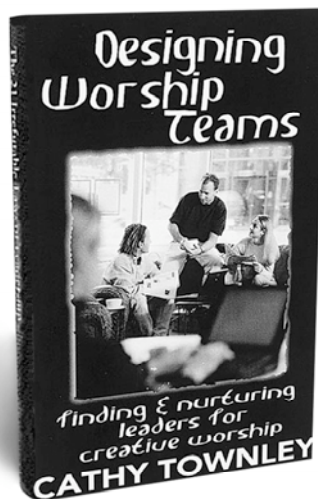
—Reviewed by Gary R. Allen, national coordinator of the Ministerial Enrichment Office and executive editor of *Enrichment journal*, Springfield, Missouri.

DESIGNING WORSHIP TEAMS

Cathy Townley (*Abingdon Press*, 192 pp., paperback)

Choosing members of the congregation to assist in leading worship can be a difficult task. Cathy Townley provides insight for pastors who are seeking to provide the musical expression of worship through the worship team.

Townley begins by stating that worship involves many diverse forms of expression, and every one of them—no matter what the form—presents the potential for witnessing a life changed by the love of God. She insists that "worship is drama," the rich story of lives connected to God.



The opening chapters deal with worship teams evolving out of both need and vision for the future. The first half of the book asks, "Why teams?" Townley's response is "because to not use them is to miss an incredible opportunity to reveal God."

The chapter entitled "The Plot" states six characteristics of great worship teams with a firm definition of the word *team*. Townley deals with the aspect of change in church music and how the worship team may be an

effective catalyst in the local community of worshippers.

The second half of the book deals with the mechanics of the worship team. A short but helpful glossary assists the reader with modern terms and phrases.

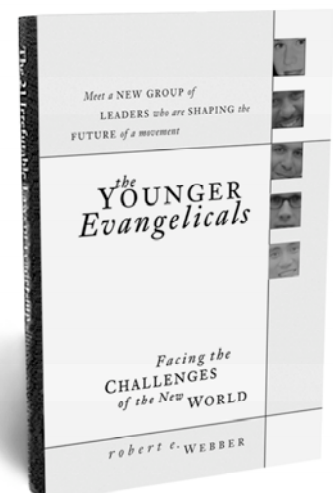
This thought-provoking book brings validity to a ministry that is sometimes misinterpreted. It is an easy read with creative material helpful to the minister of music and the senior pastor.

—Reviewed by Tom Matrone, music minister, Central Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri.

THE YOUNGER EVANGELICALS: FACING THE CHALLENGES OF THE NEW WORLD

Robert E. Webber (*Baker Book House*, 283 pp., paperback)

Robert Webber gets right to the point when he explains that "this is a book about an emerging generation of leaders, the younger evangelicals." The main benefit of this book is to translate the story of the emerging church into terms that anyone can understand by drawing on the lives and ideas of those for whom the book is entitled. A second positive



feature is the use of informative charts. These are helpful in drawing together the strands of Webber's argument.

As a lifetime evangelical, the author writes with considerable authority on the struggles, faults, and triumphs of the younger members of his tribe. The benefit of this insider perspective is the empathy and insight Webber brings to the task.

Webber organizes his description by discussing the shifts in worship, apologetics, pastoral leadership, and other important ministry constructs. This is a clear way of thinking through the evolution of this faith community. Pentecostal readers, however, may be surprised at the scant reference to the role of our own Movement. Webber discusses evangelical culture in somewhat of a vacuum in this regard. Nonetheless, *The Younger Evangelicals* remains a wise and well-written book.

—Reviewed by Earl Creps, director of the D.Min. program, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.

AUTHENTIC WORSHIP: SCRIPTURE'S VOICE, APPLYING ITS TRUTH

Herbert W. Bateman IV, ed. (Kregel Publications, 304 pp., paperback)

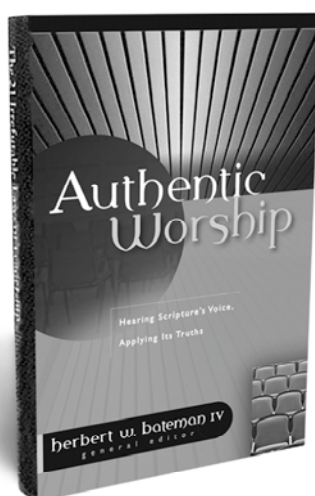
Herbert W. Bateman IV provides the student and practitioner of worship a useful tool in his collection of essays, *Authentic Worship*. Drawing from the recent debate surrounding worship within the evangelical church, he makes this collection of essays suitable for a textbook in the academy and a manual for the church worship leader.

In his introduction, Bateman sets forth a clear understanding of the purpose and nature of worship from a biblical perspective. What should be a point of unity among Christians has become cause for division.

Divided into three parts, the book addresses components that form a theological understanding of church worship and the variety of worship forms. The first set of essays lays a

theological foundation. The second set addresses the current struggle to find common ground in worship music. The third group provides a challenge to maintain the historic aspects of Word, baptism, and Communion in worship.

Above all, Bateman drives home the reality that worship is about God, not man. The consumer-driven church in postmodern America seeks to attract worshipers, but sometimes obscures the God it seeks to adore. Readers will find



stimulus for thought and a resource for teaching, preaching, and practicing biblical worship.

—Reviewed by Charles B. Nestor, pastor emeritus, Manassas Assembly of God, Manassas, Virginia.

THE EQUIPPING CHURCH

Sue Mallory (Zondervan, 208 pp., hardcover)

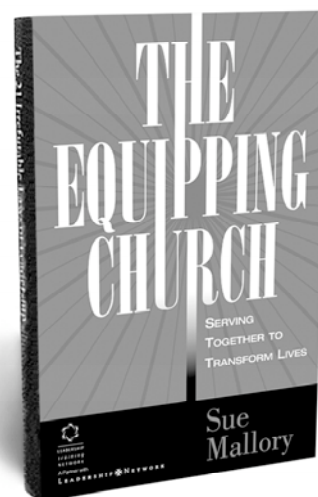
Tired of announcements framed around the appeal for help? Weary of trying once more to recruit volunteers to sustain ministry, or watching some of your best people burn out and pull back? This book provides a road map to a new place of strength in total team ministry. What is described is not a new quick-fix program. It is a map to a new place in ministry, one that is framed in the biblical directive to pastors to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11–13).

The book is brimming with practical insights. Each chapter concludes with effective current and thriving church models. Stimulating questions for reflection and discussion are included, making this a book to utilize well in the context of leadership discussions.

The author, a pioneer in developing equipping-ministry strategies, is executive director of the Leadership Training Network. With candor, she details her own leadership journey taking a congregation from the “help” stage to discovering how to equip and train the church for ministry.

The book is not mechanical or overwhelming. Mallory's gift of energizing for ministry shines through in the very style with which she writes. Here is a treasure of encouragement that will help you move with purpose to equip the people you pastor for ministry.

A companion book, *The Equipping Church Guidebook*, is a great resource, full



of charts, illustrations, and working strategies to assist in developing an equipping church.

—Reviewed by David Argue, senior pastor, Christ's Place, Lincoln, Nebraska.

A SERVICE

Enrichment reviews books we feel our readers would like to know about. These books are not always in accord with our point of view, and the reviews do not constitute a recommendation of the books. As a service to readers the Gospel Publishing House will supply any of these books, but books cannot be returned for credit.



news & resources

SENIOR ADULT MINISTRIES TOUR

The Senior Adult Ministries department is sponsoring a Paths of Paul land and sea tour on Oct. 21–31, 2003. The Paths of Paul tour will include visits to Greece and the Greek Isles, Athens, Corinth, Crete, Ephesus, the Isle of Patmos, Philippi, Thessaloniki, as well as a 4-day cruise of the Mediterranean Sea. This trip will take participants to nearly all of the places Paul visited en route to Rome. The New Testament will come to life as participants experience historic ports of call, breathtaking landscapes, and the lifelong memories of having walked the paths of Paul. For further information, call 1-800-780-7801, or visit the Senior Adult Ministries Web site: www.sam.ag.org.

YOUNG ADULT/SINGLE ADULT SAIL-A-BRATION

The Single Adult Ministries Department is sponsoring its second Young Adult/Single Adult Sail-A-Bratton. This 5-night trip on the Carnival Cruise Line is scheduled for June 30 through July 5, 2003, and will depart from Galveston, Tex. It is designed for all ages and will include special group events. For more information contact Lisa Chrisman at 1-800-641-4365, or lisa@springfieldtravel.com.

SINGLE ADULT LEADERS LUNCHEON

Single Adult and Young Adult Ministries will sponsor a luncheon at noon, Sat., Aug. 2, 2003, at General Council in Washington, D.C. Attendees will have opportunity to network with other single-adult leaders, hear about new resources, and ask questions of Dennis Franck, director of Single Adult Ministries. There will be a free gift for all who attend. For more information, contact the Single Adult Ministries Department, 1-417-862-2781, ext. 4125.

LEADERSHIP RESOURCE PACK

The Single Adult Ministries Department now has resources available on an interactive CD that will assist leaders in better understanding the growing trends and needs in single adult and young adult ministries. On this CD, leaders will find material to help them impact and educate the singles and young adults in their community, and to help them train leaders who work with these ministries. It includes 16 PowerPoint presentations as well as video clips. For more information, visit the Single Adult Ministries Web site: www.singles.ag.org, or contact the Single Adult Ministries office at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 4125.

TODAY'S PENTECOSTAL EVANGEL REACHES 90-YEAR MILESTONE

J. Roswell Flower published the premiere edition of *The Christian Evangel* for Saturday, July 19, 1913. When issue 4,654 of Flower's creation, now *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*, is produced for Sunday, July 20, 2003, it will officially mark the periodical's 90th anniversary.

Flower could not have known his publication would serve as a foundation for a worldwide Movement that would grow to approximately 40 million believers. In fact, Flower's intention was to provide a communiqué among Pentecostals in his home state of Indiana and the surrounding central states.

What began as a simple 8-page, black-and-white newspaper is now a full-color weekly magazine containing at least 32 pages read in dozens of countries by hundreds of thousands. It is also published in Spanish on a quarterly basis.

Today's Pentecostal Evangel has a Web site frequented by 40,000 visitors

monthly, its own PE Books imprint in cooperation with Gospel Publishing House, a thriving outreach to the incarcerated, and two quarterly newsletters highlighting its mission to encourage believers and win the lost for Jesus Christ.

In January 1997, the magazine began regularly carrying a salvation response coupon. Earlier this year the 10,000th coupon was received from a reader who had decided to follow Jesus Christ after reading the *Evangel*.

To honor this summer's anniversary, the July 20 *Evangel* is scheduled to highlight 90 years of print ministry. During the Washington, D.C., General Council, any pastor who visits the *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* booth in Hall A on the convention center's lower level will receive a commemorative gift when he or she either begins or increases a bundle subscription for his or her church.

CHURCHES CAN EXPAND KEY BEARERS MINISTRY

The Key Bearers program cosponsored by Light for the Lost and *Today's Pentecostal Evangel* is a growing ministry to the incarcerated across the U.S. Since its 1996 founding, the outreach has provided more than 3.5 million copies of the *Evangel* and its Spanish counterpart, *Evangelio Pentecostal Hoy*.

Donations to the Key Bearers ministry, which is administered by the Assemblies of God Home Missions Chaplaincy Department, have increased by an average of 20 percent annually. As a result, the approximate number of sponsored *Evangel*s has grown from 257,881 in 1996 to a record 626,129 last year.

During the past 6 years, more than 5,000 inmates have notified the *Evangel* in writing of their decision to follow

Jesus Christ after reading a copy of the magazine.

The vast majority of Key Bearers are individuals concerned about the eternal well-being of those behind bars. But for the Key Bearers ministry to expand its reach to the nation's 4,200-plus prisons, assistance is needed from caring churches.

If each church within the U.S. Fellowship committed a dollar per week to the Key Bearers ministry, the number of *Evangel's* provided on a weekly basis to the incarcerated would increase from 13,000 to more than 60,000 copies.

Churches interested in supporting the Key Bearers ministry can call Light for the Lost at 1-800-988-0292 or visit the *Evangel's* secured Web site at www.pe.ag.org. Free copies of *The Key Bearers Report* newsletter are available from the *Evangel* office by calling Ron Kopczick at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 4107.

LET YOUR HAND BE WITH ME

The Commission on Church Worship will sponsor an all-day conference for pastors and worship leaders on Tues., July 29, 2003, at the 50th General Council in Washington, D.C.

This event is designed to enhance abilities as worshipping musicians, as well as enhance the ongoing dialogue between pastors and worship leaders. Key speakers will include Mark Rutland, Tom McDonald, Jonathan Faggart, and Tom Matrone. Following a time of worship from the choir and orchestra of Faith Assembly of God, Orlando, Fla., Mark Rutland will speak on a theology of the hand of God. Six sessions relative to leading worship and ministry will also be presented. Pastors and worship leaders are encouraged to attend together.

To register, check the appropriate box on your General Council registration form or visit www.ag.org to register online. Cost is \$30. Registration includes: seminar notebook, box lunch, and a complimentary copy of a new

book from the national Music Department.

BYLINE TV REACHES 197 MILLION HOMES

Since its inception in January 2000, *ByLine* for television is now telecast to over 197 million homes around the world. Both networks and stations have found the TV spots a popular, effective tool in communicating the gospel to their communities.

ByLine is the Assemblies of God's television commentary hosted by Dan Betzer. The 1-minute commentary is telecast each weekday by 12 networks and 13 local stations—the largest network being Trinity Broadcasting Network.

ByLine for radio has been aired on over 240 stations since 1993, with nearly 2,500 original programs written and recorded by Betzer. Betzer has also written nearly 500 *ByLines* for television. *ByLine* is filmed at the Cardone Media Center at the Assemblies of God Headquarters in Springfield, Mo. *ByLine* has also been taped in Israel, India, Africa, South America, Russia, and locations in the United States.

"We have just 1 minute on each program to deliver a lasting message," notes Betzer. Responses we receive from viewers around the world indicate we are succeeding."

For information on broadcast points and times, view the Media Ministries Web page: www.byline.org. To receive information on how to air *ByLine* on your local television station, e-mail Media Ministries at: mediaministries@ag.org; or phone: 1-417-869-8829.

50 TOUGH QUESTIONS: RELEVANT ANSWERS FOR TODAY'S CONCERNS

Have you ever wondered why God created humans if He knew some would go to hell? Does it concern you when you hear of people who aren't healed or about bad things happening to good people? What is the unpardonable sin? How do you know you have committed it?

We all have questions. Some are

harder than others. But be assured, there are answers. Relying on the most authoritative resource of all time—the Bible—this diverse collection of candid articles tackles the troubling questions today's believers ask concerning faith, the world, and themselves. Learn what Christians can do to reverse America's spiritual decline. Recognize how to overcome fear. Discover how television can be viewed responsibly. See who wrote the Bible. Know if Christians should pursue wealth. From abortion to witnessing, you'll find provoking discussion and insightful solutions. All questions are alphabetically organized for your easy reference. Theological, practical, and personal, your questions end here. *50 Tough Questions* is compiled and edited by Hal Donaldson and Ken Horn. To order a copy, call 1-800-641-4310 and ask for item number 02-3033. The price is \$7.99.

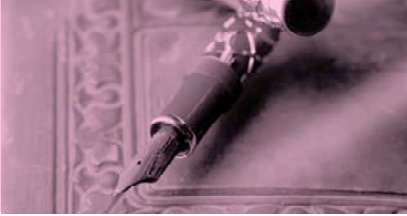
MILITARY CHAPLAINS

Since the beginning of World War II, many Assemblies of God ministers have taken the oath of office as commissioned officers to serve their country as chaplains. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard personnel and their families deserve to have their spiritual needs met while providing Americans the umbrella of national defense. Chaplains go where these forces go—on land, sea, and in the air; combat zones and training camps; secret deployments and high-profile ceremonial affairs in our nation's Capitol. Challenging and fulfilling? Yes.

If you are interested in becoming a military chaplain, call the Chaplaincy Department at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 3281, to see if you qualify to serve on the military mission field.

CHI ALPHA

How can your church reach the postmodern world? By learning about the world's future leaders at Reach the U, an intensive training program for those interested in reaching their local college or university campus.



news & resources

This training will take place June 16–20, 2002. For more information, contact the national Chi Alpha office at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 1425.

NEW CONVENTION MATERIALS NOW AVAILABLE

Are you in search of information, ideas, or resources to help with your missions convention? Home Missions can help enhance the effectiveness of your event with our new coordinating promotional materials, **PORTRAIT OF AMERICA—We Build Hope**.

This new collection of products has a compelling message that will educate and inspire congregations to reach the vast mission field around us. The new design is also compatible with World Missions convention materials.

Theme promotional materials include: visitor-friendly posters, professional preprinted bulletins, high-quality vinyl banners, and other eye-catching products.

For a complete list of convention materials, visit our Web site: www.HomeMissions.ag.org, or call 1-417-862-2781, ext. 3266.

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN HEALTH CARE

Hospital chaplains offer spiritual care to patients, family members, and hospital staff. With 38 million Americans projected to be admitted to hospitals this year, the health care setting is a fertile field for ministry. Patients and family members are generally open to the pastoral intervention of chaplains and spiritual resources and care that chaplains provide.

In addition to patient visitation, chaplains discuss patient care as members of interdisciplinary teams, conduct weekly worship services and other religious ceremonies, participate

in the institution's health-care ethics program, help staff members cope with personal problems, and serve as links with the local religious community. Assemblies of God chaplains are also qualified to serve as pastoral care resources for local churches and districts. If you are interested in becoming a hospital chaplain, call the Chaplaincy Department at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 3273.

SEMINARIANS CONFERENCE

The third Seminarians Conference will be held in Springfield, Mo., July 6–18, 2003. Assemblies of God seminarians studying at non-Assemblies of God seminaries will be invited to attend. Students will receive complimentary tuition, books, and room and board. They will take two seminary-level classes taught by professors from AGTS and receive six hours credit that will transfer back to their seminary. During the time they are in Springfield, the students will also spend a day in dialogue with the executive officers of the Assemblies of God. The conference is sponsored by the Executive Presbytery and the Commission on Christian Higher Education, and held on the campus of Assemblies of God Theological Seminary.

HILLCREST BACK-TO-SCHOOL DAY, AUGUST 10

Hillcrest Children's Home is a residence for boys and girls who cannot live in their own homes due to abuse, neglect, or other reasons.

These children's sense of rejection is high and their self-esteem is low. As they return to school this fall, your Hillcrest back-to-school offering will help buy up-to-date clothes and adequate school supplies to boost

their self-esteem and let them know someone cares.

Send your designated Hillcrest back-to-school offering to the Benevolences Department, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894. You may also look up the Hillcrest Back-to-School needs lists or donate through our Web site: www.hillcrest.ag.org.

SENIOR MINISTERS LUNCHEON

A senior ministers luncheon will be held at noon, Thurs., July 31, 2003, at the General Council in Washington, D.C. Ministers and spouses age 65 and older are invited to attend at no charge. The cost for those under 65 is \$15. This banquet will provide opportunity to reminisce with fellow ministers and classmates and to rejoice in what God is doing today.

Preregistration is required. Sign up for this event on the General Council Registration Form, or call the Benevolences Department at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 2182.

BENEVOLENCE INTERACTIVE CD

What is the national Benevolences Department? What are its ministries? Who is eligible to receive assistance? These and many more questions are answered on the Benevolences interactive CD.

Order your free Benevolence CD at: www.benevolences.ag.org, by clicking on Free Resources; or by calling 1-417-862-2781, ext. 2182.

VISIT THE OFFICE OF A/G CHARITIES IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Office of A/G Charities, formed by the Executive Presbytery to connect our Fellowship to faith-based initiatives in Washington, D.C., will be hosting an open house for visitors during the 2003 General Council on

Friday, Aug. 1, from 3:30 until 6:30 p.m. Important information on government funding and grant writing for faith-based initiatives will be provided as well as refreshments and fellowship.

John Bongiorno, vice president of Assemblies of God Financial Services Group, who provides oversight for the A/G Charities office, looks forward to your visit.

The office is located next to Union Station at 10 G Street NE in Washington, D.C. For further information, call 1-202-667-2347, or e-mail A/G Charities at crisner@agfsg.ag.org.

FREE PRESCRIPTION DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE FOR SENIORS

Stop by the Assemblies of God Financial Services Group booth at the 2003 General Council in Washington, D.C., to pick up information on the Pfizer for Living Share Card. Ministers Benefit Association is partnering with Pfizer to make our members aware of this program. More than 200,000 Americans have already enrolled. Eligibility is based on the person being a Medicare enrollee with no other prescription insurance coverage and having an individual annual income below \$18,000, or married income below \$24,000. Through

this program, any Pfizer drug will cost just \$15. On average, this represents a savings of about \$50 per prescription.

TRAINING AVAILABLE FOR STEWARDSHIP REPRESENTATIVES

Families today face tremendous financial pressures. The world's way of handling money is leading to bankruptcy and divorce in record numbers. People feel trapped with no way out and no hope. But there is hope.

The Unified Stewardship Program of the Assemblies of God Foundation is providing church leadership personal financial training for pastors, church staff members, lay leaders, and college and ministry leaders across the country. This training equips leaders with proven methods to teach life-changing biblical principles of stewardship to their people and provide effective stewardship tools to enable them get their financial house in order.

Graduates become a certified stewardship director, serving churches at the district level; a certified ministry representative, serving a local church or ministry; or a certified CROWN financial ministries small-group leader,

equipped to lead the CROWN Biblical Financial Principles Small Group Study in their church.

For training dates and locations, visit the Web site: www.agfsg.org, and click on special events, or call the Assemblies of God Foundation toll free at 1-866-621-1786.

SUDAN RECEIVES CARDIAC ICU FROM A/G

At the request of an Assemblies of God missionary serving in Sudan, a cardiac intensive care unit was donated to the Juba University School of Medicine at the Omdurman teaching hospital located in Khartoum. Included in the high-tech medical donation was a state-of-the-art 12-bed cardiac care monitoring system equipped with ventilators valued at approximately 1 million U.S. dollars.

"Medical outreaches such as these are crucial to the success of reaching Arab-Muslims with a message of hope the African believers long to impart to them," says our A/G Sudan missionary. Some practical platform is needed to boost the credibility of Christians in the community, thus providing an audible voice for the gospel.

In addition to treating life-threatening heart failure and various post-operative procedures, the cardiac ICU will enable doctors to save the lives of countless children. In Sudan, 70 of 1,000 infants die before age 2.

This modern cup of cold water wins favor with government officials for our missionaries operating in countries closed to traditional means of evangelism.

This high-tech medical equipment was made possible through a partnership with James River Assembly of God, Ozark, Mo., Bob Pagett and Assist International, and John Bongiorno and WorldServe International.

Similar medical missions projects are being planned for Djibouti, Myanmar, Afghanistan, and Cuba. If you are interested in participating, call John Bongiorno at 1-417-520-2692.



news & resources

AGFSG LAUNCHES PARTNERS IN CONSTRUCTION

The Assemblies of God Financial Services Group has announced a new consultation service to assist churches in planning, design, construction, and funding of new or remodeled facilities. Available through A/G Loan and Capital Services, Partners in Construction provides church leaders a menu of value-added services to help reduce the financial risk inherent in construction projects.

A/G Loan and Capital Services funds over \$75 million in construction loans to A/G churches each year—almost one third of all closed loans. While a majority of these construction loans are serviced without difficulty, a growing number of churches are unable to complete their projects on budget. “Although cost overruns are always a concern to us as a lender, we are equally concerned with the resultant financial burden to our churches,” Vice President Kert Parsley explained. “We find that church leaders often require additional expertise in two critical areas—project planning and project monitoring.”

For a modest fee, Partners in Construction makes available to each church an experienced construction consultant who assesses the cost of planned construction through value engineering of the component materials and processes. Once a project budget is established, the consultant provides ongoing project monitoring throughout the construction period, including oversight of fund disbursements, change orders, and lien control. Churches are also provided general consultation regarding use of materials, construction techniques, architect and builder selection,

bidding procedures, and construction management options.

“Our goal is to help churches count the cost as Jesus instructed in Luke 14:28,” Parsley added. “Partners in Construction will enable AGFSG and our churches to effectively build God’s kingdom while remaining good stewards of His financial resources.”

For more information on church loans or the Partners in Construction program, call A/G Loan and Capital Services at 1-800-449-5626.

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

Administrators, teachers, pastors, and school board members in Christian schools are invited to attend the National Christian School Leadership Symposium on July 29, 2003, in room 203A of the Washington, D.C., Convention Center. The symposium begins at 10 a.m. and ends at 3:15 p.m. Deborah Gill, national director of the Division of Christian Education, is the keynote seminar leader. Each of the three sessions will include active roundtable discussions concerning current topics related to education. The preregistration fee, which includes lunch, is \$50. To register, contact the Christian School Services office at: 1-417-862-2781, ext. 4025; e-mail: acts@ag.org/acts; or mail: Christian School Services, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802.

FULL LIFE STUDY BIBLE 10TH ANNIVERSARY REVISION EDITION

The 10th anniversary edition of the *Full Life Study Bible* will soon appear in bookstores. Those who buy a copy of the new edition will find it has the same Christ-centered, Spirit-filled message, and it addresses the same contemporary issues. Its contributing

editors, William Menzies, Stanley M. Horton, and J. Wesley Adams, initiated the content changes to strengthen, update, and expand the original work. Changes in the new edition include the following areas:

Name change. Zondervan, who publishes the FLSB in English, has chosen a new name for the revised edition—*Life in the Spirit Study Bible* (with the original editors’ agreement). The publisher believes that this new title will be more easily recognized as a Spirit-filled study Bible in the American market. The words “formerly the *Full Life Study Bible*” will appear on the front hard cover and in all promotional advertisement. This name change will initially apply only to the English language edition.

Word Studies. This new feature will shed light on the meaning of important words in each book of the Bible at places where they occur in Scripture.

Mission focus more visible. Many American readers of the FLSB are unaware it is one of the most widely distributed study Bibles in the world. It is translated for and circulated in every country in Central and South America. It is also translated into Mandarin and affectionately known in China as the Fire Bible with 500,000 copies already in print. Published in nine languages, the FLSB is being translated into 26 additional languages, and is waiting for approval and finances for other languages. Promotion of the new revised edition emphasizes the international scope of the FLSB. All persons who buy a copy of the 10th anniversary edition will be informed that they are investing in foreign missions with their purchase in that the authors’ royalties in their entirety will go for translating it into other languages. **e**



in closing

BY TOM McDONALD



Would You Really Rather Fight Than Switch?

Someone has said, “If Christians aren’t fishing, they’re fighting.” I caution pastors and congregations as we contemplate our role in stemming the tide of the worship wars prevalent today.

Worship connects us to God and protects us from the adversary. Worship is marrow to the bone. As we worship, we enthrone the presence of Jesus. When our song establishes His throne, our King enters with all His healing gifts, facilitating a breakthrough. Singing is therapy.

T.E. Zimmerman once said, “Tom, don’t ever let the couch replace the altar in your ministry.” When I sing, I build an altar. On it, God alters my thoughts, purifies my motives, and forgives my sins. He imparts vision and reframes my perspective. After worship I feel clean. No psychiatrist’s couch brings such wholeness as an anointed worship encounter.

The poet of another generation wrote, “He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own.” Reaffirming that I belong to Jesus in worship quells my fears and the tendency I have toward spiritual amnesia. A worship encounter reminds me that He is faithful.

We need to sing unobstructed by the worship-war hostility. I do not think our pastors will create World War III out of the worship-war phenomenon currently plaguing our historic congregations. I believe we will avoid the enemy’s trap to foil church worship. Fighting over generational music preferences is useless. Allowing tempers to froth between pastor and worship leader is counterproductive.

Replacing seasoned worship leaders with inexperienced ones to appease a certain cohort of the congregation is precarious. While we are choosing up sides and stiffening our necks, our worship is rendered impotent.

This is too high a price to pay. At the end of the day, substance will prevail over style. Older believers can be encouraged to be gracious about new repertoire, and younger adherents can be entreated to appreciate hymns and gospel songs.

The key to achieving a worship-war truce is prayer. Prayer will put the various points of view into perspective. A posture of prayer will ignite forgiveness, discourage divisiveness, and foster peace.

When selecting songs for worship, we need peace amid the generations because music is preference-driven. God intended that our song bring us into the realm of the Kingdom. We long for the supernatural, especially our youth.

If the enemy thwarts our worship by hardening our hearts—generation against generation—we may clang cymbals, but we will not enter the presence of the Lord. Fighting over hymns or loud rhythm sections cheapens worship. We must rise above this fog and communicate intergenerationally. Holding congregational forums and prayer meetings will outwit the dark, dank strategy of war and reestablish the priority of worship. Then, we can return to what we historically have been known for—enthusiastic singing.

As you dialogue about worship, remember these things:

1. Staff and congregations must pray. Pray for grace to welcome multiple generations’ musical preferences. Pray for a reestablishing of love where diversity is valued, not despised.

2. Staff and congregations must plan. Plan a congregational gathering to dialogue about contemporary worship. Be honest and vulnerable with an eye toward balance and peacemaking.

3. Staff and congregations must present eclectic repertoire. The worship leader, in conjunction with the pastor and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, needs to fish in many ponds searching for valid hymns and new worship choruses that edify believers and glorify Jesus.

4. Staff and congregations must practice the art of listening. If we will listen to our congregants, we will be sensitized to their stylistic concerns. If we will listen to the Master, He will inform our choices and guide our planning.

5. Staff and congregations must prioritize worship as a corporate value. Worship is sacred. Leaders need to nurture the spirit of praise in our sanctuary by monitoring distractions and encouraging avid participation.

Dialogue is the diplomatic solution to the threat of war. In that vein, “blessed are the peacemakers.” I will not fight about worship. And neither should you. **E**

Tom McDonald, Ph.D., is director of the national Music Department and commissioner of the Commission on Worship for the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri.

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