

Notes on the Worship Summit 2009

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“What Is Real Worship?”

(BD) *It's so easy to focus on “our performance” rather than on “God's provision.” Dial down the anxiety.* We have God's approval apart from performance. We want to skip the agony and go right to the ecstasy. We want the euphoria. (Psalm 101) David, a man after God's own heart, talks about worship.

As leaders, we need to spend *less time on practice and more in monthly Scripture.* We need to ask the question, “Why do people sing?” The underground church in China is a good example. If our lives don't match our songs, God isn't interested. *Worship is living a life of love, of integrity - and singing!* We can try to be so hip that we lose the basics. *This is NOT a concert!*

“I will sing...to You!” says the psalmist. Hunger drives David. “I will set before my eyes no vile thing.” *We need to be the same in public and in private.* Entertainment “enters” us. Eyes are the doors to our souls. A “yes” to God is a “no” to vile things. But how do we set before our eyes - God? (Psalm 27:4) “...that I may dwell in the house of the Lord ... to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple.”

We spend too much time in man-made buildings. Get out into God's creation! (Psalm 101:6) He sees God in the “faithful” - his friends. *Seek the company of the faithful.* Don't be like the exuberant dancer I once saw in a church who was just putting on a show. And remember that part of our calling is to pass it along!

(KS) After “Hungry” was published, she had many opportunities present themselves. Though she knew she was “meant” to do these things, she was not “called” at that time to do so. She was needed at home. Saying “no” is sometimes as much worship as saying “yes.” *We need to learn to discern.* When she first started to lead worship, she said, “I'll never do this again.” but God had other plans. The only way to go forward is to give it away!

(BD) Then there's *the “if only”* - if only we had better equipment, if only we had better musicians, if only I was better at... *What drives me is God. Life complicates; my job is to simplify.* (Ps. 122) “I was glad ... (to) go into the house of God.”

(PB) We need to learn to discern God's voice. (Col 3:16) Be rooted and grounded. Spend time in His presence. *Read (and sing) the psalms out loud!* Read through 1 + 2 Chronicles about the first worship teams. We need authentic worship.

(BD) *“Operation Handoff” means that part of your calling is giving it away! Don't pull back and criticize others, step back and bless and encourage them!* If you are leading every single week, something is wrong. (Loosen your grip!) Be aware of the tendency to feel threatened. “Lord, I'd love to work myself out of a job, ...while still keeping my job!”

Sometimes we work a guy onto the team without turning his mic on. “Paul, you're going live today! They're gonna hear you!” Do you feel unqualified? *Give people (including yourself) a chance to fail. Don't set unrealistic expectations with pressure to be perfect. TIME OUT!* Conversation (talking to God) and community ((together with friends) are the key. Keep it real! “Good morning Church!” Try starting with a medium song into a fast one.

Video

(DZ) Never hesitate to bring a new song. Songs express our deepest prayers, *Worship God in spirit and by the Spirit.* Get out of the way as soon as possible. Ask God to work in your heart to love people. Point them to Christ. *Don't worry so much about the type of music.*

“God Songs - songwriting for today's church”

(LB) Writing songs is like introducing your best friend to a group of people.

What attracts people to a song?

There's this *“deep calling to deep” thing.* But there's also *a good singable melody with words that make you think, “That's my song - what I want to say to the Lord!”* Study songs that touch you and ask, “Why?” There are “God-moments” put into songs that make them “authentic.”

While writing (or picking) songs ask, “What will move people? What do they need? What words do I want to put into people's mouths to give back to the Lord?”

(KS) There are two basic elements to songwriting - *craft and inspiration.* It's *like surfing.* If there are no waves, there's no surfing. If you have no idea how

to surf, there's no surfing. Keep lyrics simple. And ask the Lord to "bring the waves!"

(BD) *A farmer* scatters seed - God sends inspiration. Our job is to nurture our soil to grow God's seeds. He makes appointments with God and writes several drafts of a song. Don't rush a song. Refine it. Let it simmer."

(PB) If you didn't have *a satellite dish*, you wouldn't hear this. Be aware and stay open to hear from God. Collect inspired ideas that you hear.

(BD) *Be private, and be a fool!*" Not every idea is going to work.

(KS) "*Eat chocolate*. That also helps!"

(LB) Get ideas down and recorded as soon as possible.

How do you hone your craft?

(BD) Get into a **support group** and don't tell anyone you've written it when it's sung because you'll get more honest feedback.

(LB) *Be a lifelong learner. Be able to take criticism.* I write way more bad songs than good ones. *Seek honesty.* They're doing you (and the body of Christ) a favor when they tell you it's not that good. Don't ever start with "God gave me this song!" if you want an honest opinion. Who's going to tell God He's mistaken?

(PB) Ask yourself "*What feels good? What feels funny?*" Be positive, but be honest with input. In our songs we "work out the stuff of life," and we "share it with the church."

(KS) Lyrics are the flow of words. *A good melody catches your ear. Good lyrics catch your heart (which is harder).* Dig deep and ask yourself, "Is this the best way I can say this?"

(LB) Partner with someone and shelf some ideas for another day.

(PB) GO WRITE! "If you like this, check this box."

"Maximizing Your Ministry Potential"

(LB) "Anonymous Worship Complaints" - Relational issues - Q & A

I'm outcome oriented - which can be a problem.

We need to set up boundaries (like one between the platform and the tech booth). We need to talk about issues and *define roles clearly*.

What about new songs?

The average person goes to church once every three weeks. Surprised? So, we play a new song three weeks in a row.

Irritating team member?

Part of leadership is having difficult discussions. *Do the hard thing* and don't disappoint God. Don't be reactive, be proactive. *But wait for wisdom* also! Let good will lead, not anger. And know your team! **DISC** tangent: (Driven, Impractical(fun?), S, Correct).

Pastor/Director vs team?

Have you run it by your pastor(s)? Look to your leaders (director to pastor, team member to worship director) to lead. What the pastor says, goes. Not - "OK, guys, guess what the pastor's making us do?" *Walk hand-in-hand even if you don't see eye-to-eye*. We are doing what we do to serve!

Right team members?

Have auditions. I use video auditions. And 80% are "nos." My team votes on each new member, but *my job is to protect the team. NO distractions*. Check references. New believers should not join a team for 6-12 months. Not everyone makes the team!

Do a better job developing community. Seek feedback. Don't be indifferent. Team should have integrity! (Tithe!)

"A Call To Excellence"

(DZ) *Excellence does not equal performance!* WHAT is your goal? WHY are you doing this? For the world's goals or for God's? If your goal is to take Jesus to the world, if that's what drives you, then focus on truth, *while* you improve your skills.

Be a person of the Word. Love God. Love His people.

(RP) A "family man" keeps asking, "How do we make things work better?" We have a performance driven mentality. We feel good when people like what we do - bad, when they don't. The Bible tells us to do things well, that the "first and the best" is the Lord's. *We are "appointed" to sing, play, etc.*

Some people are consumed to produce professional recordings instead of truly worshipping. I call it “songless satisfaction.” It’s perfect but truly missing something.

(Eph. 4:15) We need truth in love. The church should be a family not a business. (Ps 78:70) David says we need *integrity of heart and skillful hands*. But don’t focus on the skill. Remember that God may show up and do it “bigger.”

Traditional Focus:

- 1- skill
- 2- tradition
- 3- personality
- 4- musical style
- 5- authority structure
- 6- ministry philosophy
- 7- Biblical principles

Problem is that the last one gets left out and it’s the most important!
We need to switch this order around!

Change in Focus:

- 1- Biblical principles
- 2- ministry philosophy
- 3- authority structure
- 4- musical style
- 5- personality
- 6- tradition
- 7- skill

We need to do worship so well that no one is distracted. *Excellence is an attitude - perfection is bondage. Position is nothing - direction is everything.* I am the steward of what God gave me. *The key is stewardship* (Mt. 25:14) He gave to “each according to his ability.” And that’s OK! Don’t compare yourself to others! He’s just as pleased with each of us if we are good stewards of what He’s given to us!

Excellence is not a skill. Excellence is not a sum. *Excellence is stewardship of the resources God has given to us!* Excellence is not at the expense of people. Excellence is best practiced in a relational atmosphere where priorities are clearly set and pastoral care is present. Excellence is not gained by practice alone but by ----- (2 Cor. 3:18) We must be transformed into His likeness. (2 Cor. 4:7) We have this treasure in jars of clay to show it’s from God and not of ourselves. I want something “beyond” myself.

“Making It Work In The Local Church” - Q & A

How do we go from tradition to freedom in worship?

(BD) *Intergenerational worship is key!* Find ways to bring them together. People need to understand the needs and the desires of other generations!

(RP) *The church is a family - not an organization or an event! (PS 45) Older people need to yield to what comes next and younger people need to appreciate their heritage! NO NICHE SERVICES!*

(PB) *Think blended!* Learn your songs well. *Blended multi-generational is the best!* The pendulum has swung back to center!

(LB) *Move slowly and build relationships.* Paint the sanctuary pink one brick at a time and people will accept the new color. Take time to explain why you're doing what you're doing to your church.

What about women as worship leaders?

(KS) In Jesus “inner circle” were women and the “controversial.” In Jesus, there's no Greek or Jew, no male or female, no... *Serve the Lord and submit to your leaders.*

(BD) Some of the most amazing things in Christian ministry have been accomplished by women who “go for it!”

(RP) Both men and women must submit, and women who lead do not have to be like a man to do it! Don't try to be like anyone but who you are!

What about a big guitar solo in the middle of worship?

(LB) I use the “sniff test” You can tell if someone is just showing off or is really worshipping. Singing is hard for me, so the guitar is my voice. (I prayed for the courage to sing, not for a good voice!) *Be constantly aware of your motives!* Does God want us to use our gifts to the fullest or to hold back?

(PB) But don't do Van Halen to “As The Deer.” Make the call as a leader.

(RP) Each of these questions degrades into “style” but we need to constantly go back to Scripture and ask these questions. We may have the wrong idea of what worship really is.

(PB) (Ro 12:1-2) Worship is an overflow of our lives. It's holding hands and loving God. It's helping our neighbors. *The music is a tool, not the goal!*

(RP) Let's demonstrate "worship" outside the church.

(LB) We want tech, etc. so that we can -----

What do you do when you feel you are too flawed to lead?

We are working out our salvation. Leading worship makes you confront you "stuff." Be grateful.

(LB) I was stabbed in the back and asked pastor what to do. He said to first decide what I would do before I saw this person again.

Sometimes, we get up out of sheer faithfulness.

Should non-Christians be used on the platform?

(KS) No.

(BD) No.

(RP) No. (Hell: without faith...)

Afterthoughts:

Things we are already doing pretty well:

We have team members who love the Lord and show it in their lives.
We have two teams and four leaders who each lead once a month (pass it on).
Leadership is in constant healthy contact with the pastors.
We have clear definitions of roles (just need to read them once in a while).
We have a philosophy of ministry that clearly states our mission.
We have decent communication to the team.
We have a good relationship with the tech team.
We have put together about 25 folders of over 300 awesome songs with keys singable for our congregation and with Bible references for lead-ins if needed.
We have put together a set of sheet music to back up the above folders.
We have this in a "master music" file on the worship computer and backed up.

Things we have started to do:

We are trying to have blended services with *at least* one traditional hymn, a couple of older songs from the past 20 years, but with an emphasis on the newer contemporary songs to reach out to this generation.
We are planning at least three fellowship events a year for the entire team.
We are planning more learning opportunities.
We are planning to meet 4-6 times a year as team leaders.

Things we need to think about doing (or doing better):

We need to get into Scripture more (on and off team time).

Tho we do appreciate each other, we could encourage each other more often!

We could worry less about doing it perfectly and what “type” of song it is.

We need to better encourage the older to open up to new ideas, and the younger to more fully appreciate their heritage.

We need to be able to get to a place where leaders can be candid with each other and neither be the least bit threatened or offended by it!

We need to emphasize a change in the “order” of focus and be good stewards of what God has given to each one of us.

Some ideas for implementation of the above ideas!

Short devotional before each Saturday practice - each member take a turn.

Leaders need to take the extra step to encourage one another/team members!

Encourage the older to accept the newer and the younger to appreciate the traditional by what we say prior to some of these songs.

Schedule quarterly meetings with leadership and pastors.

Actively pursue a change in focus:

- 1- *Biblical principles*
- 2- *ministry philosophy*
- 3- *authority structure*
- 4- *musical style*
- 5- *personality*
- 6- *tradition*
- 7- *skill*

Remember:

Excellence is an attitude - perfection is bondage.

Position is nothing - direction is everything.

Intergenerational worship is key!

Move slowly and build relationships

We are “appointed” to sing, play, etc.