

NO STONE UNTURNED: THE BEHIND-THE-SCENES ROLE OF A WORSHIP
ASSISTANT

By

Brittany McGilberry

A MASTER'S THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
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APPROVED BY:

Dr. Cassandra Hibbard B.M., M.M., D.M.A., Committee Chair

Dr. Samantha Miller M.M. D.M.A., Committee Member

Dr. Kathrine Morehouse B.A., M.A., Ph.D., Committee Member

Abstract

The paper thoroughly demonstrates the need of a worship assistant in church ministry. Although the role of a worship leader in church ministry is also vital in ministry, the information gathered and presented in this thesis defends the need for worship assistants in larger church ministries. The data and evidence gathered for this topic was taken from a collaboration of resource materials from the Bible, various texts, internet resources, and interviews. This paper encompasses material in regarding the philosophy of the role of a worship assistant in ministry relating to the vision of the church, the use of appropriate equipment, and effective rehearsal strategies.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Philosophy

Introduction

“Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Ephesians 5: 1-2). Christians are imitators of Christ; therefore, the desire is to become more like Christ. The process of being transformed into the likeness of Christ is a separation or sanctification from the earthly desires of the world. God desires that everyone will follow Him and to live their lives according to His plan. When a person makes the decision to follow Christ, the journey does not stop, but instead, it is the beginning of abundant life with Christ.

Part of the process of Christianity includes personal growth in the works that are done for the Kingdom. The bible encourages Christians in Colossians 3:23, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.” God is pleased when Christians complete the work of Christ in Him, not with the intent of impressing others. Galatians 1:10 says, “Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.” This is especially true in ministry because God is the center of focus in ministry. Some roles in ministry may require more work or time than other positions in ministry. However, ultimately, those fulfilling the various roles in ministry are to work together in love and respect, which is ultimately following the example of Christ. Unity brings accomplishment in the work of the Lord for the kingdom, which will eliminate discord and defeat the plans of Satan. Matthew 12:28 “But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.”

One of the most humbling and Christ-like positions in ministry is serving as a worship assistant. Worship assistants like other roles in ministry, are presented as an opportunity for service and leadership. This role is quite essential especially in larger church ministries because it provides a chance for the worship assistant serve those in authority in ministry. This paper will encompass information and the philosophy of the role of a worship assistant in ministry regarding the vision of the church, the use of appropriate equipment, and effective rehearsal strategies.

Philosophy of the Worship Assistant

Although for some church ministries the role of a worship assistant is still new and emerging, there are still some clearly defined tasks created for the role of the worship assistant in large churches. This role may vary from church to church depending on the size of the church and the need of the worship assistant in specific aspects of the ministry. One aspect that remains throughout this role or in any role of ministry is that the worship assistant should always spend time in prayer by themselves and with the worship leader.

The worship assistant needs to collaborate frequently and consistently with the worship pastor to uphold the vision of the ministry to ultimately partake in leading the lost souls to Christ. The worship assistant also needs to collaborate with the ministry technician and the sound technician regularly to provide feedback and suggestions to make the best choices artistically. Worship assistants can also educate themselves about the necessary tools and equipment needed for the worship service. The more the worship assistant knows about everything from lights, to the sound system to music resources, the more versatile they are in the ministry. Having fluency in music resources is insightful for the worship assistants because the more they know, the more helpful they will be to the worship leader and the other musicians. It is important for the worship

assistant to keep up with current resources and to have versatility in using the resources to best suit the music ministry. In large church settings, having a worship assistant who is capable of managing these main tasks, will create better efficiency in the overall ministry. Finally, worship assistants often have to lead and assist in rehearsals. For leading rehearsals, having knowledge of the music prior to the rehearsal and being prepared will allow the rehearsal to flow smoothly. For observing rehearsals, this gives the worship assistant the opportunity to focus on more intricate details, while also providing support to the leader and musicians.

Other tasks of the worship assistant may vary in different ministries. In discussing the role of worship assistant from Angie Godsey from Blue Ridge Community church in Virginia, much knowledge was gained about this role from her own personal experience.¹ In addition to upholding the vision of the ministry with the worship pastor, collaborating with the technicians, becoming educated about technology and music resources and leading or observing music rehearsals consistently, there are other tasks, which Godsey is involved in with the ministry. She does the scheduling for the music ministry groups. Blue Ridge Community church has two locations and different worship teams, which sing and play each week. She schedules everyone so that they will know when and where they are singing and playing that week. She also coordinates volunteers, contacts the team members regularly, and she is the worship leader for the women's ministry. Additionally, she oversees administration, mediation, and chooses songs with creative elements each week for the worship set. She is also a vocal coach who assists the teams in learn their parts. During rehearsals and meetings when she is not leading the rehearsals, she takes notes to keep everything organized and to keep track of any changes that are happening. She is also there for support by passing out water to the musicians, and conveying

¹ McGilberry, Brittany *Worship Ministry Interview Questions*. Applicant: Angie Godsey. April, 2017.

messages from someone on one side of the sanctuary to the other side of the sanctuary during rehearsals. Godsey is also in charge of auditions every six months so that the worship teams can rotate members. Finally, she works in conjunction with the worship pastor as support for worship set up during special occasions that are not planned throughout the year such as funerals.

The role of a worship assistant is a role of flexibility and creativity because it encompasses so many various tasks, which differ in each church. This role is needed because it focuses on the more intricate details of the ministry, which are otherwise overlooked.

Chapter Two: The Worship Assistant and Vision

Introduction

Mark 10:45 (NIV) says, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”² The role of a worship assistant is easily compared to the example of Jesus Christ on earth. Although Jesus is the King of Kings, he did not live on earth as a typical king with wealth and riches. Jesus lived on earth because he had a mission to fulfill and his service was to glorify God in heaven. “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” (John 18:37) The role worship assistant in church ministry is to serve the worship leader and pastor of the ministry to worship God.

Leaders of large ministries are often dependent on assistants to help accomplish the smaller tasks necessary for their ministry to run smoothly on a daily basis. This is demonstrated frequently in the Word of the Lord, specifically in the Old Testament. When Moses was called to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, he became overwhelmed at times. In Exodus 18, Moses’ father-in-law Jethro encouraged Moses of the importance of delegating tasks to others to fully complete God’s work:

¹⁴ When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, “What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone while everyone stands around you from morning till evening?” ¹⁵ Moses replied, “Because the people come to me to get a ruling from God. ¹⁶ When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform the people of God’s decrees and give them his instructions.” ¹⁷ “This is not good!” Moses’ father-in-law exclaimed. ¹⁸ “You’re

² Zondervan. *New International Version Study Bible*.

going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself. ¹⁹ Now listen to me, and let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with you. You should continue to be the people's representative before God, bringing their disputes to him. ²⁰ Teach them God's decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives. ²¹ But select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten.³

Worship assistants in ministry help leaders by working to ensure that the planning happens and the actions are complete. If the journey is incomplete, the vision becomes overlooked. The bigger the job or ministry, the more people are needed to perform tasks. The reason is because larger churches usually have more church services and also a larger congregation.

Worship assistants are not always the workers in ministry who are in the center of the stage leading the ensemble. However, they may organize the ensemble, the rehearsals, and ultimately assists the leaders in accomplishing the completion of the vision with Christ as the focus. Without this role in ministry, there would be many leaders, and not enough people to complete delegated tasks. In addition, the vision of the ministry or the worship set will not come into fruition without someone paying attention to the minor and major details and organizing them. Worship assistants provide support to their leaders and the ministry as servant leaders to execute the vision of leadership, and by staying focused on the vision of the ministry.

Servant Leadership

The role of the worship assistant in ministry means that this person will most likely work behind-the-scenes in the ministry. Essentially, the worship assistant serves the pastor and the worship leader in a church setting. The weight of this role carries validity because without the worship assistant, the music and organization of the worship set will not happen as effectively as

³ <https://www.biblegateway.com>

it could with the role of the worship assistant. The character of the worship assistant is important since they are serving in ministry. Service to Christ is also a sign of worshiping Him. 1

Corinthians 10:31 “So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

Although worship assistants work and serve mostly behind-the-scenes in ministry, they are still leaders in certain aspects of their job. Worship assistants are not the primary persons who lead songs on the pulpit each week; however, they are still leaders of organization and collaboration. This important part of leadership is crucial and even encouraged throughout the bible. Those who enter the kingdom of God are the ones who believe in Him and serve Him with the correct motives even if the task is seemingly unnoticeable to the eyes of man. In the New Testament, Paul encourages readers that Christians should not flee from leadership but that they simply needed “encouragement and incentive to lead.”⁴ Paul describes leadership as an “honorable ambition.”⁵ Servant leadership is honorable because it glorifies God.

In leadership for ministry and ambition, Christ is the central focus. When serving Christ in any capacity especially in leadership, trials are expected to happen. Trials do not come to doubt God’s presence in the situation. Trials occur to increase faith, endurance and strength in Him. Also, true leadership is found in service to other people. It is not about drawing attention to oneself.⁶

⁴ Sanders, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007. p 14.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

The life of a Christian reflects the life of a servant according to the Bible. Serving in ministry is not only about obedience and submitting to authority, but it is also a role of humility that continues outside of church ministry. Much of the current society perceives the word “servant” with a somewhat negative connotation regarding “low prestige, low respect and low honor.”⁷ However, the Bible perceives servanthood differently. The greatest example in the Bible was Jesus. Jesus was not only a leader, but also a servant. God expects Christians to follow the example of servant leadership, which Jesus displayed.

Other characteristics of leadership are, wisdom, decisiveness, patience and creativity. When worship assistants become lax or disorganized, it is possible that they will not rise to true leadership in Christ because the tasks could undergo neglect.⁸ Vision is also important as a leader because it allows the leader to visualize the end results before it happens.⁹ Wisdom is provided from God. Worship leaders and assistants often make decisions; however, these decisions must not be made rashly. Worship assistants are to have patience and the qualities of a servant leader like Jesus to properly execute the vision of the ministry.

Maintaining the Vision

Everyone has muscles in their bodies that need to be exercised. If the muscles are not used, they become weak. The same works with vision. If the vision of the ministry is not a constant reminder or is continually executed, it is easy to become distracted which then allows the focus of the vision to be shifted from God to man. If this happens, it is imperative to refocus

⁷ Ibid. p 22.

⁸ Ibid. p 52.

⁹ Ibid.

the vision again. The vision of ministry is not something to be taken lightly or treated lackadaisically. Instead, it should be a constant reminder of where and who the focus is in ministry.

For a ministry or an organization to achieve success, the key is having a vision; however, it is not enough to only have a vision. Once that vision is established, it is an ongoing process to maintain the focus of the vision. A vision is imperative for organization and success because it is a constant reminder of the One who is worshiped and served. Without the vision as a constant reminder, it is possible to get sidetrack by the thoughts and desires of man instead of focusing on what God wants and desires. With an impactful vision, lives will change and be transformed in the church of Christ, which will create consolidation and unity in the ministry. Proverbs 29: 18 says, “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”

As a spiritual leader and in Christianity, suffering and temptation is bound to happen because Satan is working hard to block God’s plan. John 10:10 says, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” Even when circumstances come, it is important for the spiritual leader to remain strong in Christ because others are watching and lives are impacted. One example the Bible was Stephen who remained strong in his faith. Although he was martyred, his death held an impact in the conversion of Paul who was one of the major apostles in the New Testament.¹⁰

In conducting a series of interviews of worship leaders, some questions were asked to various worship leaders: What is the vision of your worship ensemble? and, What are some ways to fulfill the vision of the ensemble? One worship leader responded, “Currently, our vision is set

¹⁰ Sanders, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007. p 90.

upon building more personal relationships with God, so we must choose songs that align with this vision. The goal is to send out the same message that The Lord has sent through the pastor. To do this effectively, all members of the ensemble must attend all services regularly.”¹¹ Another worship leader’s response was,

“The vision of the worship ensembles that I am over is simple: each one reach one (James 5:20) let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. Also (Proverbs 11:30): The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise. As we stand up to minister we must be wise and understand that we are called to share and spread the gospel, and people are looking at our lives on and off the platform and we must be a light that people want to follow.”¹²

The role of the worship assistant is defined in the surveys from the worship leaders because when the worship assistant has a clear understanding of the vision of the worship leader, they can act accordingly. Once the vision is made clear of the music ministry, it is important for the worship assistant to first seek God whole-heartedly and daily to allow the Holy Spirit to bring transformation and guidance. Next, the attitude of the worship assistant must be in sync with the word of God for efficiency in the work of ministry. Ultimately, a worship assistant is there to assist those in authority to fulfill the work of the vision.

If the vision becomes altered or if the worship leader or worship assistant’s relationship with God is exposed to hardships or Satan comes in, it is very important for the person to look to Jesus for repentance. The guilt of sin is painful. But instead of letting the sin consume one’s life choices and ultimately turn away from God, such as King Saul, the most important objective is to stay connected with Christ even during difficult moments of serving in Christian ministry. Acts

¹¹ McGilberry, Brittany *Worship Ministry Interview Questions*. Applicant: Phillip Stewart. February 2017.

¹² McGilberry, Brittany *Worship Ministry Interview Questions*. Applicant: Winslow Ratliff. February 2017.

8:22 says, “Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you.” There are leaders who overcame their sin and they were still able to serve God and lead others. One example from the Bible is David. Unlike King Saul from the Old Testament, David, was aware of his dark side and decided to deal with his sin first hand with God.¹³ David recognized his sin and repented: “Now David’s heart troubled him after he had numbered the people. So, David said to the Lord, ‘I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Lord, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly’” (2 Samuel 24:10).¹⁴ The same humility and heart of surrendering that David had is the same heart that God wants for His people who are serving in ministry.

In a lecture video by Doug Randlett,¹⁵ he provides eight critical requirements for the “middle of the pack” leader that can help any worship assistant refocus their vision in ministry.

1. Understand the vision and purpose the ministry.
2. Lead your team according to Biblical purposes and not pre-determined programs.
3. People are more important than procedures.
4. Relationship leadership vs. Talk-down leadership.
5. Subordinates must communicate effectively with your leader.
6. Loyalty is not based upon ignorance.
7. Be a “knock down barriers” leader.
8. Never stop growing.¹⁶

These points are insightful because with any vision, there are people involved. Sometimes it is one single person, other times, it is an entire congregation of people. If a worship leader or worship assistant is purposely not following the vision, it could ultimately damage their relationship with God and with other people. James 3:1, “Not many of you should

¹³McIntosh, Gary. *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: How to Become an Effective Leader by Confronting*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007. p 65.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Randlett, Doug. Video Notes. *Principles of Leadership for the Worship Leader*. September 24, 2015.

¹⁶ Ibid.

become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” Many times, those serving in ministry end up doing the right thing but for the wrong reason. If the vision is not clear, this is prone to happen. While fulfilling the vision, it is important to be led by the Holy Spirit.

If worship assistants become so consumed or selfish with fulfilling the vision while damaging and ignoring the quality relationships with others, they are not fulfilling the vision effectively. Instead, worship assistants can look to Jesus as the example in leadership. Jesus was perfect, blameless and sinless in every way. He was completely selfless in his action of dying on the cross for others. He sacrificed his perfect life for the filthy sins of the world. Although God may not have called His sons and daughters to die for someone, Christians can still have the same mindset and vision of humility towards others. Philippians 2 reminds readers, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”¹⁷

Executing the Vision

Worship assistants are to lead and execute the process of accomplishing the vision of ministry by the pastors of the church. Leaders must be inspired to execute the vision. As an executive, it is a leader’s duty which reflects the orderliness of God in everything that is done for Him.¹⁸ One way to execute the vision is by listening to the worship leader, the pastor and even members of the ensemble. Listening is the only way to get to the root of certain situations.¹⁹

¹⁷ Zondervan. *New International Version Study Bible*.

¹⁸ Sanders, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007. p 74.

¹⁹ Ibid.

“Sympathetic listening is inefficient...but genuine listening seeks to understand another without prejudice.”²⁰ Also, writing is important to leadership because in spiritual leadership, relationships are important. Spiritual leadership is not one-sided. Following up with writing or other forms of communication are important for healthy relationships.²¹

Another way that the worship leader contributes to enacting the vision of the church is through his/her work with the music ensembles, which means they must exhibit spiritual leadership in their relationships with ensemble members. The vision can only be fully executed when the Holy Spirit is involved. All leaders of ministry should be Spirit led and Spirit filled.²² Spiritual leaders are not influenced by “worldly wisdom, wealth, or social status” but they are influenced by the Holy Spirit to carry out the vision.²³ Nonspiritual leadership occurs when leadership selection happens apart from spiritual qualifications.²⁴ Spiritual leaders are to be filled with the Holy Spirit to fulfill the vision. It means that a Christian voluntarily surrenders their life and will entirely to the Holy Spirit.²⁵ Being filled with the Holy Spirit is necessary for spiritual leadership.²⁶ One of the duties of a spiritual leader is to help those with spiritual gifts bring them into the kingdom so that their gifts will become developed.²⁷ Spiritual gifts do not eliminate

²⁰ Ibid. p 75.

²¹ Ibid. p 76.

²² Ibid. p 80.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Sanders, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007. p 80.

²⁵ Ibid. p 81.

²⁶ Ibid. p 82.

²⁷ Ibid.

natural gifts but enhances them.²⁸ Worship assistants can also work with those who have specific spiritual gifts to develop what God has given them to use for ministry.

Fulfilling the vision in ministry is an ongoing process. It is not something that is achieved once and then it is forgotten about. If necessary, with the guidance from the Holy Spirit, the vision can be altered if it somehow loses its fervency. Along with being consistent in work as a worship assistant, being consistent in prayer is even more important. Here are three reasons why people in ministry and Christians should pray. 1. God is consistent with Himself always. When God makes a promise to answer a prayer, He will answer it.²⁹ 2. Intercessory prayer is a divine ordinance. God has ordained prayer so that people will have the opportunity to communicate with Him.³⁰ 3. Revelation is revealed in prayer. The Holy Spirit is there for guidance.³¹ Worship assistants are to alleviate some of the delegated tasks from the worship leader and the pastor such as focusing on the technology or sound system, organizing and distributing music, coaching the musicians and leading rehearsals. The Holy Spirit is there to guide the entire process so that God is glorified. The vision comes from God. The worship leader, the pastor and the worship assistant should all work together in ministry to execute the vision.

In a lecture presentation, Matt Wilmington provides different levels of leadership for a ministry. The first level is God leadership.³² God must first lead us before others can be lead.

²⁸ Ibid. p 83.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid. p 90.

³¹ Sanders, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007. p 90.

³² Wilmington, Matt. Video Notes. *Principles of Leadership for the Worship Leader*. October 1, 2015.

The second level is Self-leadership.³³ First God leads us then we lead ourselves through God. When preparing for leadership, this step is ongoing for frequent self-evaluation can eliminate long-term issues. Anyone who serves in ministry can even pray for their own vision for themselves first, to guide them in the vision of leading others. This reminds those serving in ministry that they will be held accountable as an effective leader. The final level of leadership is simple: I Lead Others.³⁴ This is the step where the leading happens. However, as leading for God's ministry, Wilmington reiterates that leaders not only lead but also serve others. Wilmington and Sanders alike, coins this as servant leadership.³⁵ Leading is following the example of Jesus Christ who also had a vision to execute. Jesus' vision was to ultimately give God's people an opportunity to have everlasting life with God through his sacrifice on earth. Just as Jesus had a vision which was fulfilled, worship leaders and worship assistants are also charged to execute the vision of ministry in consistency, seeking the Holy Spirit and looking to Jesus as the example.

Conclusion

Anyone who is serving in a position in ministry must be aware that sacrifices will be made in serving. The Christian journey does stop once a person professes they are a Christian. The process continues to gain endurance in Christ. 2 Timothy 2:12 notes "if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us;"³⁶ Serving as a worship assistant

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Zondervan. *New International Version Study Bible*.

is showing humility and reverence to Christ. Christ came to earth as a servant, not as a boastful king with elaborate material things. The heart of Christ is on the eternal, not the temporal or the natural. In the same manner, a worship assistant in music ministry is to fully understand their role and the vision of ministry as a servant leader to execute the vision and maintain the vision of assisting the leaders in ministry through humility.

The aspect of the vision is representative in the role of the worship assistant because part of the task is to uphold the vision of the ministry. This is done in collaborating with the worship pastor and also spending time in prayer individually and corporately to know the needs of the ministry and how to best suit the needs within the assisting role.

Chapter Three: The Worship Assistant with Tools and Equipment

Introduction

Technology is important in many churches locally and globally, however, it does not take the place of worship rather it serves to enhance the worship service. The use of technology is more effective when it is organized and rehearsed. In some ways, working with technology can be easily compared to the preparation experience in the Old Testament of the Bible, when appointed people spent so much time repeatedly preparing for rituals. These rituals were for the preparation of worship to God. Preparing the technological aspects for a worship service may also use a vast amount of time, however, the preparation of the tools is needed to enhance the worship experience. At times, the process may become tedious and cumbersome, however the work is not for the people, but for Christ.

As the times change and elapse, so does technology; including the technology in the church. This current generation needs technology to assist with the worship set since technology has become so presently central. If a church ministry does not keep the technology aspect updated, it could potentially dull the worship experience. The music can possibly lack a sense of fervency without the use of technology to propel and assist the music in a specific direction in the worship set. When the worship assistant has knowledge of using certain technology in a worship set, they can inform those who are in the delegated positions of working with the technology to become refreshed by learning new information about the available technology. As technology evolves, the worship assistant can continue to implement new ideas as needed when the church budget permits. Not everything is meant for every church service or for every church ministry.

Worship assistant are to focus on God and the vision of the ministry. It does not matter if one serves in a ministry where there is only one microphone or where one serves in a ministry as large and as technologically advanced as an Imax movie theater. The most important aspect of worship is that it takes place in the hearts. Christians are to worship God in spirit and in truth.³⁷ *Got Questions Ministries*³⁸ states, “True worship must be ‘in spirit,’ that is, engaging the whole heart. Unless there’s a real passion for God, there is no worship in spirit.” Worship is a dialogue between God and man that takes place in the hearts of man.³⁹

The behind-the-scenes role of a worship assistant in regards to the tools and equipment in ministry is to delegate someone or a team of people who are knowledgeable or who are willing to learn about technology in ministry. Sometimes, usually in smaller ministries, part of the role of the worship assistant is to also take part of the obligations of the technician. The use various tools and equipment in ministry are contingent upon the acoustic setup of the church and the ministry budget. Some of the most effective tools and equipment in music ministry are, lights, sound/video, settings and use of lights matching the set/graphics, and music resources.

Lights

In an educational lecture presentation on lighting by Paul Green, he provides five useful suggestions and the resources on how to use lights and where to locate lights for church ministry.⁴⁰ Lights are important in any church ministry whether big or small because they

³⁷ John 4:24

³⁸ What does it mean to worship the Lord in spirit and truth? *Got Questions Ministries*. <http://www.gotquestions.org/worship-spirit-truth.html>. 2015.

³⁹ Henderson, Daniel. *Fresh Encounters: Experiencing Transformation Through United Worship-Based Prayer*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2008.

⁴⁰ Green, Paul. *Lighting Resources Presentation*. Liberty University. 2016.

accentuate a dynamic level to specific themes of the service. Additionally, lights can also set a certain mood in the church service. The five kinds of lights suggested by Paul Green are: used lighting, static conventional lights with dimmers, LED fixtures, conventional lighting desk and moving lights.

Purchasing used lights is an excellent option especially for churches that have a specific budget for lights. Some resources for locating used lights are: gear source, ELSdirect.com, and castlestudios.com.⁴¹ The main precaution when purchasing used lights is to save money while also not buying lights that are so discounted that they are not in good quality to use in the ministry. As Green noted, if the technician or worship assistant in the ministry is spending more time and money on repairing the lights instead of using them, the used lights are obviously not a worthwhile investment. Sometimes the best decision is to invest more to receive better quality but not so much that the church ministry is overcharged for the lights.

Static conventional lights are useful in church ministry because these lights have dimmer switches, which can provide various effects⁴² (See figure 1). LED fixtures are also a worthwhile investment because they produce a grand amount of light and require little electricity to do so⁴³ (See figure 2). A conventional lighting desk is also recommended because these are stationary lights (See figure 3). However, it is preferred that the conventional lighting desk is covered with a towel or a desk cover while not in use to prevent dust and possible damages. Finally, moving lights are also a good resource to have in ministry (See figures 4 and 5). These can be found

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Green, Paul. *Lighting Resources Presentation*. Liberty University. 2016.

⁴³ Ibid.

through MA Lighting and Hawk Lighting.⁴⁴ With anything new purchased or used in ministry, it is recommended that it is tested or rehearsed properly prior to the worship service.

Sound/Video

The type of sound technology used in church ministry is contingent upon the size of the church sanctuary and the acoustics. The sound system should adapt and adjust to the size accordingly. Having a sound system is very effective however; ideally it should not overpower the church. There needs to be a balance of sound to ensure that every part and instrument is heard because all parts are significant. The most effective way to guarantee that the sound is balanced properly is to have sound rehearsals. Rehearsals are especially needed when a new or different sound system is purchased for the worship ministry.

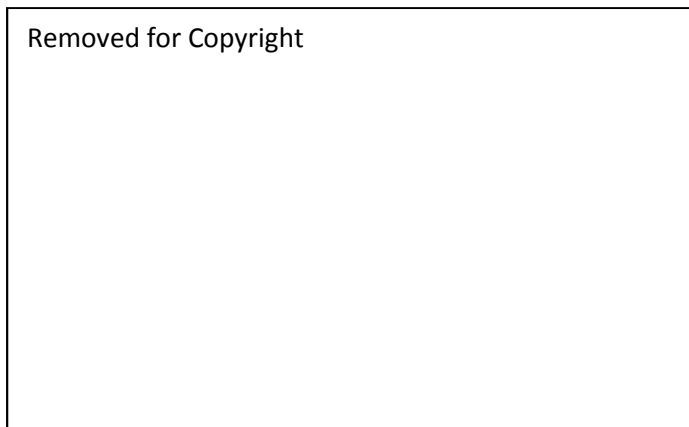


Figure 1 ⁴⁵

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ <https://www.southwestav.com/equipment-sales/led-conventional-stage-lighting/>



Figure 2 ⁴⁶



Figure 3 ⁴⁷

⁴⁶ McGilberry, Brittany. *Liberty University School of Music Auditorium*. LED Fixtures. May 2017.

⁴⁷ McGilberry, Brittany. *Liberty University School of Music Auditorium*. Conventional Lighting Desk. May 2017.



Figure 4⁴⁸



Figure 5⁴⁹

⁴⁸ McGillberry, Brittany. *Liberty University School of Music Auditorium*. Moving Lights. May 2017.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

In addition to effective sound in the ministry, it is also refreshing to incorporate new and different mixes to the worship set. The worship assistant is the person who determines what methods are effective and which ones are not as effective to the worship. Ultimately, it is important for the congregation to encounter a personal worship experience with God and not become distracted away from God. One method that a worship assistant may decide to incorporate in the worship set is with the use of visuals and videos. Videos are useful tools to accentuate the worship set because they can provide visual demonstrations without solely relying on the musicians. The videos shown and the media used in church services can relate to an overarching theme of the service or worship set. Indicatively, videos can be used to tell a story which would aid in a song services. Also, videos are beneficial in making church announcements especially when there is only an allotted time for announcements in the service or during the worship set.

In his lecture on video tools for church ministry, Brandon Pickett also offers some places that a worship coordinator can look to in searching for videos that are appropriate for church viewing before the worship set, during an intermission or after the worship set.⁵⁰ Some of these resources include: worshiphousemedia.com, ingnitermedia.com, GodTube.com, essential.TV, tangle.com, bluefishtv.com, sermonspice, onemission.tv, SPCV.org, let'stextnow.com, vineo, lifechurch.TV, surveymonkey.com, polleverywhere.com, and hootsuite. These resources are commendable and professional because all display reputable messages without portraying negative connotation or the possibility of vulgar advertisements. Some of these resources require a low cost while others are free which is remarkable for the consideration of the church budget.

⁵⁰ Pickett, Brandon. *Video Resources Lecture Presentation*. Liberty University. 2016.

Set/Graphics

When the worship assistant or technician is in the process of choosing graphics that are the most appropriate for the church, graphics and moving technology are usually used effectively in moderation. Graphics should not appear so bright that they overpower the musicians on stage but instead should accent the worship set. If a worship assistant or technician is not aware of what graphics to use or how to use them, doing research is highly encouraged and efficient to become aware of what is used in other church ministries.

One church ministry observed is Church on the Move from Tulsa Oklahoma⁵¹ (See figure 6). After observing several of their worship sets online from the perspective of a worship assistant, much is concluded about their choice of lights and graphics used for the worship set. The choice of lights and graphics used by Church on the Move are effective because they directly correlate to the specific mood or theme of the service at a given time. For example, at the beginning of the service, the lights are usually more bright and florescent especially during the first song of the worship set.⁵² This is relatable because the first song of their worship set is always an animated and upbeat song and so are the lights on stage during this moment.

Throughout the remainder of the worship set, the lights are still present but they appear darker and possibly dimmer than at the beginning of the worship set. As the music gets slower the lights illuminate a softer appearance which aligns with the worship set. Overall, the appearance of the lights collaborates with the setup of the stage. The colors of the lights are also used effectively with hues that are mainly shades of blues and yellows most the time. This

⁵¹ *Church on the Move*. Tulsa Oklahoma. <http://store.churchonthemove.com/pages/about-us>. 2016.

⁵² *Church on the Move*. Tulsa Oklahoma. <http://store.churchonthemove.com/pages/about-us>. 2016

illuminates a nighttime, candlelight setting. The lights upon the congregation are very dim or nonexistent; the lights mainly appear on the stage. The lights also appear to get brighter during highlights and climatic points of the music and resolve during the quieter parts of the worship set.⁵³ The most obvious lights on the set are the dangling lanterns, which emit the candle-like effect. This is one of many ways to use lights and graphics for an effective worship set.

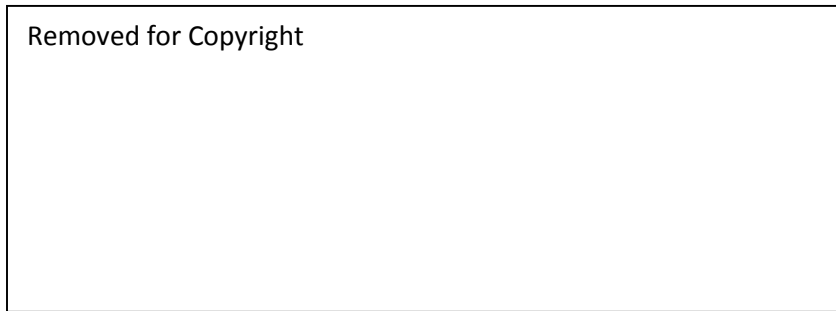


Figure 6⁵⁴

The choices of lights are decisions that could be made by the worship assistant in collaboration with the technician.

The use of words and lyrics on a projector screen is effective for the congregation to know what the singers are saying in their songs. It also allows the audience to sing along to the songs. The same principle can apply to words on the screen along with the lights and the use of other graphics, which is, less is more. When creating lyrics for projection, the slides should not contain several lines or paragraphs of words (See an example in figure 7). In the provided visual example, there are many words on the screen, which can cause difficulty congregational singing.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴https://www.google.com/search?q=pictures+of+church+on+the+move&tbm=isch&imgil=9uh95Nb3KLt0QM%253A%253BJOg5NXQB-pqSRM%253Bhttp%25253A%25252F%25252FandyChrisman.net%25252Fabout-andy-chrisman%25252Fchurch-on-the-move%25252F&source=iu&pf=m&fir=9uh95Nb3KLt0QM%253A%252CJOg5NXQB-pqSRM%252C_&usg=__s1xCibWy7LJ8wyDaRz42x8V-dd4%3D&biw=1366&bih=659&ved=0ahUKEwjgWkujp8_SAhWlz4MKHX3DA7cQyjcIMw&ei=K2DEWKD_CqWfjwT9ho-4Cw#imgre=Uj0mI-rnaqX1XM:

There is also not a wide variety of color (mainly black and white). For the viewers, it is much more effective when there are approximately two to four lines of words on the screen. It is advisable that the words on the screen are in a very large and clear font that is not distracting to the viewers or will cause the viewers to have trouble reading the words. Regarding the background, a stagnant background or a simple moving background with images is great to allow the words to appear more prominent on the screen (See figure 8). What is not as effective are selected color schemes where the words on the screen clash with the color or image on the background. This will only permit difficulty of viewing and reading for the congregation. The more simplistic, yet creative, the more effective. The choices of lyric projection is another detail of the worship set that is arranged by the worship assistant.

Lord, I lift Your name on high
Lord, I love to sing Your praises
I'm so glad You're in my life
I'm so glad You came to save us

You came from Heaven to earth to show the way
From the earth to the cross my debt to pay
From the cross to the grave
From the grave to the sky
Lord, I lift Your name on high

Lord, I lift Your name on high
Lord, I love to sing Your praises
I'm so glad You're in my life
I'm so glad You came to save us

You came from Heaven to earth to show the way
From the earth to the cross my debt to pay
From the cross to the grave
From the grave to the sky

Figure 7 ⁵⁵

⁵⁵ McGilberry, Brittany. *Insert Textbox: Original Created Example*. Liberty University. May 2017.

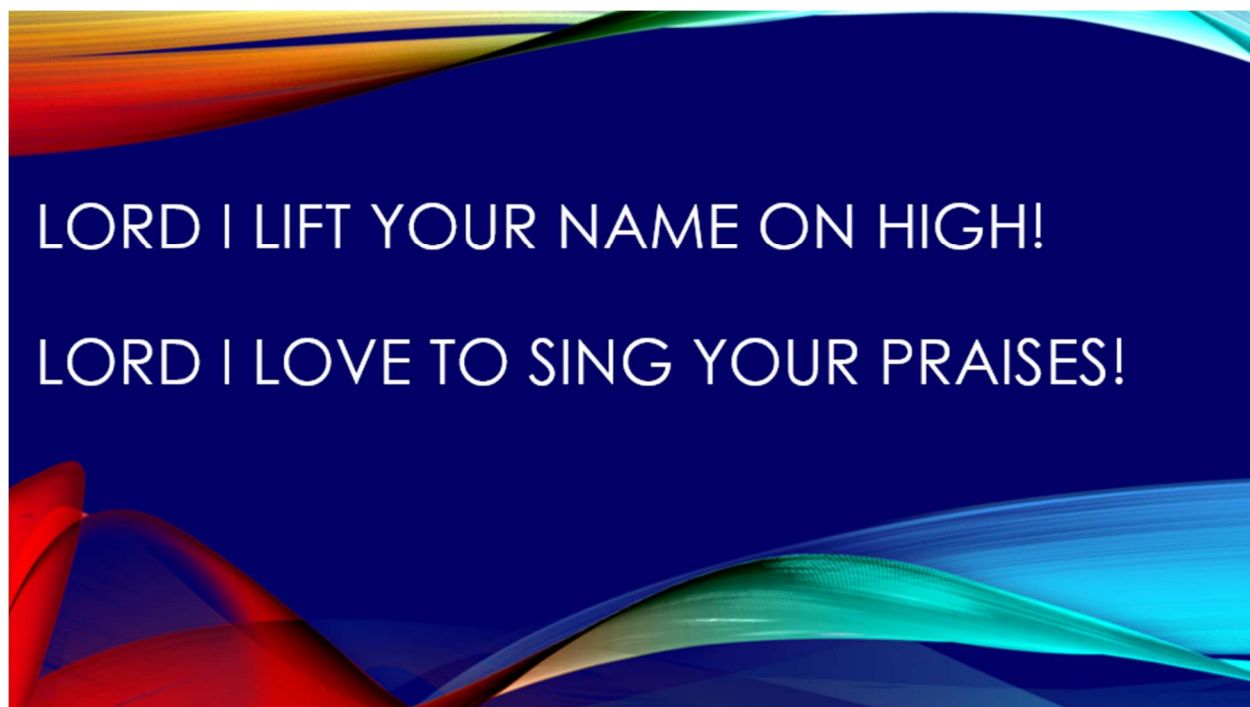


Figure 8 ⁵⁶

Music Resources

Prior to rehearsals, the worship assistant reviews the music and music resources that are used or available. After carefully reviewing and copying the music, the pieces can then be distributed to the musicians and the worship leader. One way distribute the music is through email. The style of music and the song selections are usually decided in collaboration with the pastor and the worship leader. The worship assistant is there to execute the process of receiving and distributing the music. For some large church ministries, having sheet music or access to lead sheets and praise charts online or in the form of hard copy is imperative for the musicians and singers. Some churches even use sheet music during the worship set if the music is more choral or classical style. Other churches however, teach songs by rote, which is also effective if

⁵⁶ McGilberry, Brittany. *Original PowerPoint Presentation Software Example*. Liberty University 2017.

the musicians and singers do not read sheet music. An advantage of teaching and singing songs by rote in the worship set is that it creates an aspect of flexibility in the music.

After conducting a series of interviews with various churches, the conclusion of two specific interview questions were unanimous amongst the charismatic church worship leader applicants. One of the questions asked to the worship leaders was: “Do you only use sheet music/praise charts in your rehearsals or do you also teach music by rote?” The answer to this question for some of the worship leaders is that they teach music by rote.⁵⁷ However, this does not necessarily determine that all church large church ministries teach music by rote. Regardless, although this question from the interview is geared towards worship leaders, worship assistants still has a valuable role in distributing music even in churches where the songs are learned by rote. The worship assistant can essentially assist the worship leader by ensuring that everyone in the ensemble has an audio copy of the song before rehearsals.

Furthermore, it is still suggestive that worship leaders or worship assistants who teach songs by rote, can still use music resources and have them available to use even if it is only for the instrumentalists. In gospel music style worship setting, improvisation and embellishments are often used in the music. The music is not played exactly as written or recorded. Even in these situations, it is still helpful to have the resources available for the musicians to see for any possible chord changes, key changes or to even put new ideas on paper made possible by the worship assistant.

⁵⁷ McGilberry, Brittany *Worship Ministry Interview Questions*. Applicant: Bruce Johnson. February 2017.

McGilberry, Brittany *Worship Ministry Interview Questions*. Applicant: Phillip Stewart. February 2017.

McGilberry, Brittany *Worship Ministry Interview Questions*. Applicant: Winslow Ratliff. February 2017.

There are many resources that worship assistants can use in large church ministries. Some beneficial music resources for the worship leader and the worship assistant include: Word Music, Brentwood Benson Music, LifeWay Music, CCLI, Red Tie Music, Richard Kingsmore, Prism Music, Hymcharts.com and Finale.

An online resource is wordmusic.com⁵⁸ which offers choral music pertaining to specific themes which relate to popular holidays such as: Christmas, Easter and Patriotic songs. It also contains new releases, non-seasonal and downloadable songs. It offers songs for children based on themes also and instrumental music. By joining the Word Choral Club, the worship assistant is provided a full copy of every new choral book and anthem, a full-length recording of all new choral music, an exclusive club membership to benefits and discounts and a product voucher. This resource is ideal for worship assistants that are possibly looking for songs for the choir or ensemble that needs holiday-themed pieces.

Brentwood Benson Music and LifeWay music are other ministry resources. Brentwood Benson Music provides new releases, worship charts, videos, hymnals, instrumental music parts and songbooks for more traditional choir parts (SATB).⁵⁹ In addition to choral music and music for children's ministry, LifeWay music contains a variety of solos from classical to jazz.⁶⁰

CCLI (also known as Christian Copyright Licensing International) is a resource that provides information for churches and copyright owners around the world, relating to copyright and to worship.⁶¹ It covers the copying activities that assist with congregational singing for over

⁵⁸ <https://wordmusic.com/choral.html>

⁵⁹ <http://brentwoodbenson.com/>

⁶⁰ <http://www.lifeway.com/n/Music-for-worship>

⁶¹ <https://us.ccli.com/>

300,000 worship songs. It provides transposable chord sheets, lead sheets and vocal sheets plus lyrics and audio samples. CCLI permits worship leaders to legally copy and share commercial audio recordings and to customize recordings for rehearsals. By offering accessibility to live-recorded music over the internet through podcast or stream, CCLI allows worship leaders to legally show movies for service, sermon/teaching illustrations and educational purposes.⁶² CCLI is useful for any church ministry that uses copyrighted music in their services regularly to ensure that the songs are being reproduced legally.

Richard Kingsmore's website provides music for orchestra, power praise for worship band, choral, piano/vocal, CD's, and holiday themed songs.⁶³ Richard Kingsmore has personally arranged many of these songs. He has gained much experience in arranging with other companies over the past thirty years.

Red Tie Music is affiliated with Thomas Road Baptist Church.⁶⁴ Red Tie music contains songs with relatable themes to specific events and holidays such as: worship, Christmas, Easter, and Patriotic pieces. It also contains printable downloads for: chord charts, pdf orchestration, lead sheets, rhythm charts, parts for piano/vocal, SATB (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and choral anthems. Red Tie music also has audio products such as: stereo accompaniment tracks, multi-track stems, split-click accompaniments, split-click track accompaniments and mp3 audio.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Kingsmore, Richard. <http://www.richardkingsmore.com/>

⁶⁴ <https://redtiemusic.com/shop/>

Prism music contains a variety of choral music for the church/worship setting. It commonly promotes featured products and new items for the local church ministries.⁶⁵

Hymncharts.com was created by Don Chapman.⁶⁶ This resource provides musicians with access to revised arrangements of traditional hymns. The hymns on hymncharts.com have been rearranged in such a way because hymns are still very popular for congregational singing. The difference with the hymns on hymncharts.com and regular hymns is that most of the new hymns have new key signatures with closer intervallic relationships than traditional hymns because the intervals in original hymns are often very spread out which may be problematic for congregational singing. Chordal changes and substitutions were also made in these hymns for variety and interest. Ultimately, the purpose of hymncharts.com is not to replace hymns, but to give the hymns variety to engage all ages in worship.

Finale is a downloadable music software program used for music compositions, arrangements, and educational purposes.⁶⁷ There are several reasons why a worship assistant in the church ministry can benefit from using finale, but here are just ten reasons. 1. Finale is useful to assist vocalists who do not have a firm knowledge of music in the ministry. While it is usually not compulsory that members of a specific ensemble know how to read music, Finale is helpful for those who are more visual learners rather than audio learners. 2. Finale is an asset to the children's music ministry not only to create music compositions for children's ministry but to teach children how to read music and what a basic praise chart looks like. 3. Finale is advantageous to the instrumental musicians. Although many church musicians play by ear or

⁶⁵ <http://www.prismmusic.com/>

⁶⁶ Chapman, Don. <http://www.hymncharts.com/>

⁶⁷ <http://www.finalemusic.com/>

rote, it is important to also have visualization for the instrumentalists who are not so skilled in improvisation. 4. Finale is beneficial for original songwriting. If someone in an ensemble has a songwriting gift or talent, that person can put their song on paper for the ensemble with Finale. 5. It can be used for the worship leaders for song alterations. Referring to a Finale file to make the changes ensures precision. 6. Finale is useful for the technicians. Sometimes having printed music can become somewhat cumbersome for not only the worship leader but also for the lighting technicians and sound technicians. Some might prefer to load a Finale file of a song and type in the desired lighting, sound and technology features they need for a worship set. 7. Finale is an aid for sound. Unlike simply listening to a YouTube recording of a song, Finale has useful playback features to play single parts. If a certain member or members of the ensemble need to hear their part, there are playback selections that can be used in Finale to allow them to hear their specific part more accurately in Finale by playing back their part alone rather than listening to all the parts at once (See Figure 9). 8. Using Finale allots smoother transitions in key changes. If a song is originally written in a difficult key, it can easily be re adapted to the appropriate key signature in Finale. 9. It is useful for embellishments and song alterations. If the ensemble wants to get creative and perform a song differently by adding new features that were not in the original song, the song can easily be edited to adapt in Finale without purchasing a different praise chart/chord chart. 10. Finale keeps everything organized and assessable. It is a great tool for convenience because the worship assistant can take screenshots of portions of the music as needed (See figure 10). Instead of the members of the ensemble or the technicians only having hard copies of music, it is simpler sometimes to keep all music for a church ministry in Finale files. This keeps music from getting lost in the coming years and readily accessible whenever needed.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ McGillberry, Brittany. *Notes on Finale*. WMUS 630: Principles of Worship Technology. Liberty

In larger music ministries, and in music ministries that are developing, the noted resources are just some of the very helpful resources for musicians to view and practice their music individually before rehearsals. Most of these resources are also available at a discounted price or free through membership.



Figure 9 ⁶⁹

Moderato (♩ = 102-104) **Wind Chimes**

Vocals

Featured Instrument

Alto Sax

pet 1 & 2

Chords: Cm⁹, F⁷_{sus}, F⁷, B^bmaj⁷, E^bmaj⁹

Figure 10 ⁷⁰

University. 2017.

⁶⁹ <http://www.edugains.ca/newsite/digitalResources/Finale.html>

Conclusion

The purpose of having tools and equipment in regards to the worship assistant is to create ease in the preparation for the musicians in the music ministry. When the worship assistant is knowledgeable of the information about technology, it ultimately creates less stress on the musicians so they can focus more on learning the music and the worship aspect of ministry. These tools are not to take the place of the worship but to instead to aid the worship experience. Tools and equipment provide organization as well as a relatable sense of style to the theme of the worship service that day. Even with a strict budget, worship assistants can be creative in learning to enhance what is already provided. Many churches globally have adapted to improve their tools and equipment to portray the message of Christ in a more efficient, effective and visual way using lights, sound, graphics and music resources. These tools and equipment noted are just some of the suggested resources that a church ministry can use to create a more vibrant and refreshing worship experience. The worship assistant is more versatile in their role when they know more about the use of tools and equipment used in the ministry.

⁷⁰ McGilberry, Brittany. *Finale Screenshoot*. Liberty University. March 2017.

Chapter Four: The Worship Assistant in Rehearsals

Introduction

An example of a spiritual leader in the Bible is Paul. Paul is noted for his humility. At first, Paul persecuted Christians before he became to know Christ for himself. Then he gained a heart of humility and started preaching the gospel. What makes Paul so significant is that he was not only humble during the times he was preaching, but his heart for Christ continued even after he was in prison for preaching the gospel. “For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” (1 Corinthians 15:9) While in prison, Paul continued his ministry and continued to write to letters to the churches.

Paul’s behind-the-scenes ministry happened while he was in prison. Yet his obedience to God impacted many. Worship assistants in ministry today also have a mission to execute the vision of Christ with fervency. They often fulfill their tasks by providing support during rehearsals, leading the musicians in rehearsals, sending and makes copies of music, and offering musical advice to the musicians in the ensemble who may have difficulty learning their part. As a director of rehearsal, the worship assistant conducts the rehearsals with an understanding of the importance of prayer, having a plan for rehearsal, knowing how to bring changes into the rehearsals and how prepare for spontaneous worship.

Prayer

Before the worship assistant enters the room to lead rehearsal, it is important for them to pray so that the rehearsal will flow efficiently. Rehearsals are meant to make progress in the music however, in ministry, it can also be a time of giving thanks to God, coming closer to Him through the music and a time of worship with other believers. Prayer is not just for the worship

assistant; it is also for the entire ensemble. Starting the rehearsal with prayer is a way to invite the Holy Spirit in to take control of the rehearsal. In addition to praying with the ensemble, it is also important that the worship assistant spends time in prayer with the leaders in the ministry and also collaborating with the leaders on a regular basis.

Guidance comes from the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:14 says, “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” When the worship assistant takes the time to pray before and during the rehearsals, they are trusting and ensuring that the Holy Spirit will take charge lead the rehearsals. The music created will the glorify God and not glorify man. Also, by praying for the Holy Spirit to lead the rehearsals, this will ultimately produce a garment of praise to drive out the spirit of heaviness. The Holy Spirit lives and dwells inside each of every Christian and thus, the Holy Spirit gives the capability of self-control. The Holy Spirit enables to “rule our spirits.”⁷¹

In his book, *Fresh Encounters*, Henderson depicts the importance of prayer in ministry. “Worship-based prayer is fueled by God and His character, not our needs.”⁷² The more that prayers are offered to the Lord, the closer the Lord is in ministry thus allowing the ministry to be transformed through Him. These are not just typical everyday dinner prayers, but prayers that go deeper to connect to the spiritual realm to gain confirmation about what God requires of the ministry.

One of the ways to eliminate the plans of Satan is with prayer. Prayers are very powerful and essential especially in church ministry. If prayer meetings in ministry lack fervency they

⁷¹ Edwards, David M. *Worship Three Sixty Five*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006. p 53.

⁷² Henderson, Daniel. *Fresh Encounters: Experiencing Transformation Through United Worship-Based Prayer*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2008. p 31.

become less effective. As a worship assistant, for the members of the ensemble, prayer before and after rehearsals may become monotonous at times. It is not because the ensemble does not care about prayer, but sometimes prayer can possibly turn into more a careless routine especially since it is done so often. However, Henderson gives some advice for any part of ministry in the church to invigorate the prayer time in the ministry: Power prayer meetings, early watch, affinity group gatherings, concerts of prayer, all-night prayer meetings, prayer chains, all-church weekly prayer meetings, home prayer calls, twenty-four-hour prayer center/call-in line, prayer partners, prayer visitation teams, prayer retreats, prayer summits, prayer walking, prayer driving, leadership prayer support, and prayer chat rooms.⁷³ Some or all of these methods can be implemented during and outside of the rehearsal time to keep the focus on the God to eliminate the plans of Satan.

Plan for Rehearsals

One of the best ways to learn is by observing and asking questions. Once knowledge is gained about a subject, then it makes the execution process somewhat easier after gaining knowledge about the topic. In addition to prayer, another way to gain understanding about the role in rehearsals for worship assistants is to talk with other worship leaders and worship assistants. Worship assistants are often the ones who lead rehearsals for an ensemble, or they are their role is to provide support to the worship leader in the full ensemble rehearsal.

In conducting a series of interviews with various worship leaders and assistants, the question was asked: What is the most important thing that a worship leader/assistant must do to prepare for rehearsals/performance? One worship leader answered, “Communicate with the Pastor, for song requests. Receive the song, pray over the songs. Then send the music to the

⁷³ Ibid. p. 117-124.

choir directors and musicians. Also, distribute the lyrics to the songs on Facebook or a YouTube link before the rehearsals.”⁷⁴ Another worship leader noted, “To be properly prepared for rehearsals and performances, worship leaders need to be in a mindset to worship. To do this, the worship leader should ensure that he/she is free from any unclean thing that might vex the flow of the anointing. It is important to read the Word, pray, and come before The Lord with a pure heart.”⁷⁵ Taking note of these things as a worship assistant is imperative because the hearts and mind must have the total focus of Christ even in the preparation phase of rehearsals.

Another interview question was asked is: What are some difficulties that you have faced in the rehearsal/preparation phase? One response was, “At times it may be difficult to get everyone with whom you are working to be on the same page. It is one thing to prepare yourself for worship leading, but it is another when you are working with a team of people.”⁷⁶

Additionally, a different applicant responded, “The difficulties I have faced as a worship leader/minister of music I would say is the band or even the singers not coming in prepared with their music learned. I feel as if when you come into the rehearsal, it should be to perfect the songs not to literally learn the songs from scratch like you have just been handed the material.”⁷⁷ Based on this information gathered, it appears that the difficulties faced in the rehearsal stages are related to the people involved. However, instead of allowing such difficulties affect the rehearsal or the relationships with the ensemble, the Bible encourages Christians to speak in love. A lasting

⁷⁴ McGilberry, Brittany *Worship Ministry Interview Questions*. Applicant: Bruce Johnson. February 2017.

⁷⁵ McGilberry, Brittany *Worship Ministry Interview Questions*. Applicant: Phillip Stewart. February 2017.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ McGilberry, Brittany *Worship Ministry Interview Questions*. Applicant: Winslow Ratliff. February 2017.

impact is created when words are spoken from the Holy Spirit out of love and not from a place of impulse or anger. Ephesians 4:15 says: “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.”⁷⁸

Some fundamental logistics for the worship assistant to remember when leading rehearsals are, prayer, warm ups, time management and efficiency in the teaching and conducting of the music. In *Tips for Tight Teams*, Hoffman gives some suggestions to prevent the typical mainstream sound of worship music. To “think out of the garage,” the worship leader can apply different worship chords and vocal harmonies to add interest.⁷⁹ Another important aspect to consider are “comfortable worship keys for vocal range.”⁸⁰ It is good to know and understand the range of the leader and the ranges of the singers. To add interest to worship music, Hoffman suggests adding modulations and free worship chord progressions in the worship music. Instead of always performing a song as originally written, an exciting aspect of being a worship assistant or musician is that they can rearrange a piece of music differently. These are a few criteria that can be implemented to the worship rehearsals. In regards to assisting rehearsals, worship leaders are there to support the worship team and their needs for that time.

Changes in Rehearsals

As the times change, so do many of the strategies. In regards to a worship assistant, strategies can change in leading the rehearsal, and in also observing rehearsals. Regardless of what changes may happen in rehearsals, the spiritual component remains. “Mentally, a spiritual

⁷⁸ Zondervan. *New International Version Study Bible*.

⁷⁹ Hoffman, Sandy. *Tips for Tight Teams*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2012.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

leader must rely on sound judgment from God.”⁸¹ To have stability in the mind, the worship assistant should focus on leading based on what God desires, and not selfish temporal desires. As far as personality, a spiritual leader must be generous and genuine. They must also “hate controversy” because it only brings discord in the church.⁸² If the new change in rehearsals are not effective or causes potential problems, the worship assistant can reevaluate the recent changes prayerfully.

One particular area of rehearsals where different methods are commonly used by worship assistants is dealing with a member or members of the ensemble who may not exhibit strong musical strengths or skills some of the others in the ensemble. In the process of conducting interviews of worship leaders and worship assistants, it was shown and learned that there are a few different ways to approach this situation. The question was asked: What do you normally do when you have a person or people in the ensemble that may not be as skilled or strong musically as the other members of the ensemble? One worship leader answered, “I do not discourage the person from singing. I usually place them next to a stronger musician or singer for about three to four months so that they are able to develop.”⁸³ Another worship leader responded, “I take the time to do one on one lessons with this group [or person], and I have done this in the past with others because I want them to be able to use their gifts effectively.”⁸⁴ Regardless of the person, the most important quality as a worship assistant is to show love to them and to encourage them

⁸¹ Sanders, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007. p 31.

⁸² Ibid. p 42.

⁸³ McGilberry, Brittany *Worship Ministry Interview Questions*. Applicant: Bruce Johnson. February 2017.

⁸⁴ McGilberry, Brittany *Worship Ministry Interview Questions*. Applicant: Winslow Ratliff. February 2017.

often. This will remind them that they are still important to the ensemble. Their voice matters to the ensemble and their voice is important to God. Patience is a character quality that God desires in spiritual leaders. Patience is key for accuracy and building relationships.⁸⁵

When certain methods of rehearsal do not particularly work as well as it could, the rehearsals lose efficiency. It is important for the worship assistant to keep their focus on God and to act in the character and likeness of Christ so that the rehearsals will happen smoothly. It is more important that the members of the ensemble become unified in Christ rather than arguing about a new rehearsal strategy. Tactfulness and persistence are other essential characteristics of leadership. Being able to reconcile disputes is important to be able to settle on a compromising solution instead of letting an argument linger on.⁸⁶ The job of a worship assistant does not stop after the rehearsal or the church service ends. Sometimes the work continues afterwards in assisting and teaching others musically, or praying and mentoring with them.

To ease the tension or monotony of music rehearsals, worship assistants can try an exciting approach sometimes. Instead of the rehearsals becoming long, serious and potentially draining, it is more than acceptable to encourage a light-hearted tone in rehearsal. Some ways to make rehearsals more amusing is by starting the rehearsals with an icebreaker game, or a humorous joke. Doing this can redirect a tired ensemble to an eager ensemble. Clean humor can actually relieve difficult situations.⁸⁷ Rehearsals are not designed as added labor, but rehearsals are useful tools in preparation of the worship service. However, when the music is rehearsed, it creates more efficiency to flow to the anointing of worship when the musicians are fully aware of

⁸⁵ Ibid. p 71.

⁸⁶ Sanders, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007. p 73.

⁸⁷ Ibid. p 67.

what they are doing and playing. Rehearsals flow better and more is accomplished in the rehearsal when they are enjoyable.

Spontaneous Worship

In most worship services where the Holy Spirit has been invited in, spontaneous worship is bound to happen. Even when a worship service is planned, the schedule is still subject to change. The worship service may not go exactly as planned depending on the Holy Spirit. Bob Kauflin notes rehearsal planning as such, “Planning can’t replace dependence on the Holy Spirit.”⁸⁸ Also, “There’s nothing sacred about our plans. We shouldn’t give them divine authority.”⁸⁹ Planning is meant to serve us not rule us.⁹⁰ The goal should be to plan prayerfully knowing that the plans could change according to the Holy Spirit’s leading. Since spontaneity is still a part of worship, it also means that music is needed during spontaneous worship. However, spontaneous worship is not something that is usually rehearsed during music rehearsals. Therefore, one might ask, “What do the musicians sing or play during spontaneous worship?”

In some worship settings, musicians who are acclimated to spontaneous worship usually have developed their ear musically to play songs that are appropriate to the worship at that time. If the music stops, it can possibly hinder the flow of worship. But if the music continues, it sets an atmosphere of worship in the church. Having knowledge of how to play songs without a chord chart or sheet music is very helpful during times of spontaneous worship simply. The musicians may not always have time to find or look up the sheet music of a specific song for that

⁸⁸ Kauflin, Bob. *Worship Matters: Leading others to Encounter the Greatness of God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossroad Books, 2008. p 182.

⁸⁹ Ibid. p 183.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

time of worship. During rehearsals, the worship assistants can encourage the musicians to play some songs that are not part of the regular worship set so that they become more comfortable playing the songs by ear or if possible, they can gain access to the song easily in the instance of spontaneous worship.

A question was asked while interviewing worship leaders: What is your perspective on spontaneous worship during the worship service? Are you open to it? The applicants all agreed that they were open to spontaneous worship in the worship service because they believe it is important to allow the Spirit of God to take precedence in the service.⁹¹ God is the focus of the service, not time constraints. When God is the focus, the music played by the musicians will even flow better with the worship; thus the musicians can also enter the presence of worship while their music is impacting others and reaching God in heaven.

To continue the flow of the Holy Spirit in spontaneous worship, for the musicians this usually means to keep the music flowing. This is also a time for the vocalists to really engage in God in worship. This is a time of continuous worship. As a worship assistant, prior to the church service it is important for them to know which musicians are comfortable playing during spontaneous worship and which ones are not. Sometimes, less is more; meaning during spontaneous worship, every musician does not necessarily have to play. In rehearsals, spontaneous worship vamps can be rehearsed. The worship assistant can write several vamps and have the musicians learn them in all key signatures. Whether the musicians play or do not play during the spontaneous worship, the goal is to focus on God and to worship Him. It is important to be led by the Holy Spirit and to also listen to what the worship leader is doing during the church service and to play or sing accordingly. Also, before any major decisions are made

⁹¹ McGillberry, Brittany. *Worship Ministry Interview Questions*. February 2017.

regarding spontaneous worship, the worship assistant must collaborate with the worship pastor to gain insight on how to facilitate this process in rehearsals and in the worship service. It is important that this connection is made so that the worship assistant can fulfill their supporting role. Each church may have varying views and actions on spontaneous worship.

Conclusion

Before worship assistants lead others in rehearsals, they should prepare themselves to lead first. Prior to the rehearsals, it is imperative that the worship assistants spend time in prayer first. Spending time in prayer with God will prepare the heart and the mindset of the worship assistant to be a servant leader like Christ. Also, if there are other leaders or pastors in the ministry that the worship assistant works closely with, the worship assistant can also meet with those officials for prayer also so that everyone in ministry can work together to fulfill the vision of the ministry. Afterward, prayer with the ensemble is needed next to get all the members unified in the same mindset of Christ before the rehearsal even begins.

Whether leading a rehearsal or observing a rehearsal, it is the task of the worship assistant to ensure that rehearsals flow and go as planned. Practice and planning during the rehearsals will alleviate possible apprehension or abrupt transitions during the worship service. If a strategy in the rehearsals does not work efficiently, the worship assistant can make note and change that part of the rehearsal to create more productively and less tension. The rehearsals and the overall worship experiences can be very enjoyable for the members of the ensemble when the worship assistant implements new tactics. Finally, with spontaneous worship, the worship assistant will need to know which musicians are the most comfortable to play during this part of the service. The goal is to keep the flow of worship going while receiving guidance from the Holy Spirit and the Pastor.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusion

The role of a worship assistant in ministry is to lead and assist others behind-the-scenes in ministry. God honors those who do His work diligently regardless if the person is seen doing their work by others or not. As noted in Luke 8:17, “For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open.”⁹² God rewards those who desire to work for Him instead of the desires of man. Worship assistants are to fulfill the desires of God by working towards the vision of ministry with the most effective tools and equipment, while conducting proactive rehearsals with the members of the music ensemble. Preparation and working towards the vision of the ministry will create more efficiency when during the worship services. When worship assistants allow the Holy Spirit to guide them, they can work for Christ in sincerity.

⁹² Zondervan. *New International Version Study Bible*.

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