

24/7

Worship In Real Time

By Cathy Townley

THE WORSHIP LEADER IN YOU

I used to be a musician who led congregations weekly in song and liturgy. I felt I'd found my calling as a worship leader. I had, but not there. I no longer serve the church that way, yet I am more a worship leader now than when I stood in front of a congregation and led the band. Worship grew me. It also raised my awareness of the misunderstanding of worship and thus the lack of purpose from larger to smaller churches alike. Churches of every size talk incessantly about the struggle to get people involved. The two realities are conjoined.

Worship is our relationship with God, however superficial or deeply it goes. The more we trust, the more we grow as God stretches us so far beyond ourselves until it is no longer about us, but about others who don't know Christ. We reach out to them to encourage their worship journey. That makes us worship leaders because we're ushering them into Christ's presence, and worship defines that relationship. Church musicians do this by trade in the public gathering through song and liturgy, Christ followers as a way of life. The professional role is for a select few; the avocational role – relational evangelist – is for us all.



Finding good leaders for different ministries is strategic. When they thrive, so does the whole church. Worship is an example. A good music minister needs musical chops to lead the public gathering as well as networking ability to build the ministry behind the scenes. The role is so

important that I've developed a seminar on how to hire one. I've heard too many stories of churches that have put the wrong person for their context into that position. That drains the entire system.

But the search for the right leader for any given ministry and simultaneously the ability to build a leadership DNA into your church goes far beyond strategy to the deeply embedded value of worship. The right leaders are always worship leaders first who raise up worship leaders who raise up worship leaders, from the center to the fringes of your church and beyond. We all were created for such a time as this. We have found our purpose when we allow God to stretch us beyond ourselves and into relationship with others who don't know God and who mistrust the church – which is the majority of persons in America these days.

Alas, most of us are too shy about our faith to give God that kind of leeway. No worries; God can change that through worship. Pursuing God through disciplined prayer, fasting, study, solitude, and other spiritual practices breaks down walls. We're working on our relationship with God as God readies us to reach out.

Too many churches see worship as a synonym for the worship service rather than modeling worship as a life-


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style. For them, church work is about keeping even dead ministries alive instead of about reaching new people. A few saints do everything and they're worn out. Congregations everywhere are in varying stages of grief and depression. Even larger churches and brand new ones have hit roadblocks.

It would be very different if everyone that is connected to your church saw themselves as worship leaders. Imagine the energy that would release.

For more insight into worship as a way of life, read Cathy's book, *Missional Worship*. Visit Cathy's website www.townleycoaching.com to find out about seminars Cathy leads. 

Missional Worship...

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