Glorious Praise

Raising The Bar In Congregational Worship
Worship Leader Training, Session II
Glorious Praise: Raising the Bar in Congregational Worship

Schedule

*Opening Message*
The Treasury of Worship Wisdom: Insights from the Psalms
Dave Eastman, Central Ministry Center

**Workshop: Building Excellence in your Worship Team**

**Discussion #1: How To Build A Great Worship Team**
Here we will talk about the elements of a team, building family, reasonable rehearsal expectations, how to run a rehearsal, etc.
(Dave, Tina Crawley)

**Discussion #2: Great Expectations** (Dave, Tina, Jaime Turish)

**Discussion #3: Preparing our Mind & Attitude For Worship** (Tina)

**Discussion #4: The Science of Sound** (Jaime)

**Discussion #5: Blended Worship - A discussion of Song & Style selection** (Dave & Tina)

**Specialized Discussion #1:** Excellence in the Visual Arts

**Specialized Discussion #2:** Excellence in Sound Engineering

**Guest Speakers**

*Tina Crawley:* Tina is a professional recording artist and worship leader who has produced worship albums, music videos and more.

*Jaime Turish:* Jaime is a former El Salvadoran recording artist and record producer. Currently he is the president of Proyecto Alabanza and video producer for “Life-Changing Worship”.

*Gino Pack:* Gino is our Media Guy Extraordinaire, who serves on our audio / visual team, and is fluent in ProPresenter, MediaShout, and other software applications.

*Brandon Sitzberger:* Brandon is an expert in sound engineering. He serves with the worship team in the North Suburban Ministry Center.
Lesson: Six Hebrew Words / Read Ephesians 5:19

- Enjoined to Sing
- Directed to the Psalms – “Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs” all are terms used to describe what we have in the book of Psalms. There is a branch of the Presbyterian Church that believes this is all we should sing. Biblically, you can’t really make a case for exclusiveness, but there is no doubt that all three of these phrases are used to refer to the 150 Psalms of the Old Testament.
- For a worship leader, the Psalms is your book. It is the handbook of Hallelujahs, the Wikipedia of Worship, your personal Ark of Adoration. We need to love it, read it, ruminate on it, memorize it, know it, examine it, live it, teach it, and exemplify it in every session of praise!
- Challenge: Seek to dig out the SPIRIT of the Psalms. What do the Psalmists feel? How do they act in worship? How do they express themselves? In what ‘attitude’ do they approach the throne?

1st Word: Exalt / Read Psalm 145:1-2

Rûm, room. A primitive root; to rise or raise (in various applications, literally or figuratively).

This thought is about intentionality in Worship. What the Biblical Worshipper seeks to do is to lift his eyes upward, to direct attention to the fact that God is God, and we are not.

2nd Word: Shout / Read Psalm 47:1

Rûa': to shout, raise a sound, cry out, give a blast, sound a signal for war, to shout in triumph, to shout in applause, to shout with religious impulse

3rd Word: Shout OR Acclaim / Read Psalm 47:5

Terû’âh. This word shares the same root. (Rua/ Teruah). It’s a rowdy word, an energetic word. When is the last time you gave a joyful shout in your service? There is an expectation here. Those who learn to make some noise in worship will witness God ascending! Read Psalm 89:15-16

This is a not-well-kept secret to walking with God. When we learn to give the joyful shout, when we learn to ‘acclaim’ his praise, then we will walk in the light of his presence. Think about the power of that! If you and I can master this practice, think of the power that we will have in our lives — over temptation, over fear, over anxiety.
4th & 5th Words: Give Thanks / Read Psalm 63:4
Yadah & Todah — both of these words mean to stretch out the hand in praise and thanksgiving. What is this all about?

- A soldier, surrendering
- A child, appealing to his or her parents
- A student, getting the teacher’s attention

6th Word: Be Still / Read Psalm 46:10
Shâbar - to break (down, off, in pieces, up), broken ([hearted]), bring to the birth, crush. 13 Hebrew Verbs - ponder, be silent, watch, gaze, wait, stand in awe, delight, be still, meditate, find rest, remember, think, consider. We need to learn what it means to meditate. Discussion of “Ruminate”.

Every one of these worship words has to do with specific actions that each worshipper should take when worshipping. That brings me to the question of the worship band. What is the purpose of a band... or of a backing track? Coming from a 250-year tradition of a cappella, four-part harmony, we always want to highlight the lyrical component of each song we sing. The band exists to provide a melody and tasteful, volume-appropriate backing music so that the lyrical message is clearly enunciated. Songs have a didactic and inspirational purpose. Both of these purposes are served when the entire church enjoys and participates in worship.

From time to time, you may do a special song featuring a soloist or small group, but the band is not there to entertain; its purpose is to facilitate participation by the entire congregation.

Concluding Thoughts & Questions

The question we ought to often ask ourselves... To what degree has our team restored the Spirit of Biblical Worship in our congregation? What are some areas I should work on? What are the questions I should ask?

- Are we Intentional? Do we set out to plan services that provide a “connecting point” for each disciple? Do we enter his gates with thanksgiving?
- Are we Energetic? Do we expend energy in worship? Are calories being burned in the audience?
- Are We Expressive?
- Are we appropriately Emotional? Do we allow for enthusiasm, or do we squelch it?
- Are we Meditative? Do we ever enjoy periods of silent meditation, or do we feel the need to fill every minute with sound?
**Workshop: How to Build A Great Worship Team**  
Guest Speakers – Tina Crawley, Jaime Turish

**Discussion #1: How To Build A Great Worship Team**  
Here we will talk about the elements of a team, building family, reasonable rehearsal expectations, how to run a rehearsal, etc.

**The Elements of a Great Worship Team** (Intro, Dave)
- **The Singers** – you want to always have the S-A-T-B parts represented. We recommend that you set up interchangeable teams of people, and pepper your best talent around so that each team can be consistently called higher.
- **The Band** – You have to have here a group of committed people who really love to serve in this way, and if you are blessed with a bunch of musicians, you can interchange people as needed. For example, our main bass player is a professional cellist, one of our song leaders plays keyboard, bass & guitar, one of our keyboard guys also plays guitar, and our acoustic guitarist is a gifted bassist. Mix and Match. Have some fun.
- **The Audio Crew** (includes technicians and transportation guys) – we have three teams, and they generally go one month on, two months off. Each team has at least one technician and one transportation guy.
- **The Media Crew** – we have two media people, so they go month on, month off.
- **The Artistic Crew** – if you own a building, you are blessed, and in this area you really have no limitations beyond your budget and the preferences of your leadership team. You can use banners, plants, flowers and more to make things special.
- **The Dramatic Crew** – our primary crew is the Spoken Word Team. We have had great actors in the past, but they have moved to different congregations.

**Sharing: How to Build Family with your Worship Team (Tina)**
- Meet on Sunday after church in your building and bring your lunch
- Bring potluck items once monthly after church during your meeting
- Do a service activity together (sing at a retirement center or for the sick in your ministry center)
- Send out regular thank you notes after great services or just because
- Coordinated apparel for the stage
- Sharing the load (assign something for everyone to do)
Discussion #2  Great Expectations
What does it take to be great? What is the expectation of each musician? Each vocalist?

- The answer to this question is as individual as each musician. If you spent 3 hours per day practicing as a kid, then you’ve developed a kind of intimacy with your instrument. Applying your skills to our newer music, which does not tend to be particularly complex, may not take you a lot of time.
- Most of us did not do that, and we really have to work at it.

Example: Metro Worship Team

- Meets on Sundays after church, 2x per month
- Songs are determined, lyrics printed, and mp3s & lyrics are sent to the choir & praise team prior to rehearsal
- Thursdays (twice monthly) - meeting to build a set list, including songs for that month and a review of previously done songs.

Personal Expectations for Excellence- For the Individual

- 5 P’s: Proper - Preparation - Prevents - Poor - Performance
- Schedule personal rehearsal time weekly
- Rent a rehearsal space occasionally (if you don’t have access to one)
- RECORD YOURSELF OFTEN (Listen too it, critique it and make improvements)
- Get mentors
- Use free online youtube resources — (vocalcoach.com) (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCM61zUkZ6dpzJHE1sUeSJ0Q)
- Get a vocal or instrumental teacher
- Use your gifts to serve as often as possible

Discussion #3: Preparing our Mind & Attitude For Worship (Tina C)
- Video / Psalm 109:30
- Worshippers will praise Him
- Worshippers will worship according to Scripture. It starts with our relationship with God, and it’s ALL about God... and Him alone!
- Psalm 29:2
  - Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name
  - Worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness
- Matthew 25:14-18 - Use your talents to serve the Church!

Discussion #4: The Science of Sound (Jaime)
See appendices 1 & 2 for more information
Discussion #5: Blended Worship - Song & Style selection.  
(Dave & Tina) If we are truly evangelizing our areas, the church will of necessity become multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-generational. Our worship should reflect the ‘native tongue’ of all the gathered worshippers.

- A cappella songs & Accompanied Songs
- Gospel, Contemporary, Traditional & Latino

Some Thoughts Regarding Group Singing (Tina)

- Listen carefully
- Endeavor to NOT stand out
- Imitate: breathing & intonation, vibrato or no vibrato.
- Listen to successful a cappella music (Take 6, The Martins, Selah, Kirk Franklin, Civil Wars, 4 Him, Keith Lancaster & A Cappella, etc)

Specialized Discussion: The Importance of Imagery and Lyrical Accuracy - working toward an effective A/V Team. Comparing Available technologies and applications. (Gino: 11 pm – 12 pm). See appendix 3 below for detailed information regarding different software options for church use.

Specialized Discussion: Effective Sound Engineering – What are the keys to making each individual instrument sound as good as possible? How loud is too loud? (Brandon: 12 pm – 1 pm) See appendix 2 below for a scientific explanation of sound levels.
Appendix 1: Tips For Improving Your Team

Ralph’s Tips

These thoughts come from Ralph Beerhorst, who is a professional musician by trade and an outstanding worship leader in the Chicago Church.

GROOVE: The fundamental/foundational aspect of every contemporary song is groove. The spine of the music, around which all of the other elements hang on is the drums and bass. If the rhythm section isn’t made up of working professionals, simplify every groove to its simplest form until it feels good. That means stripping back any more difficult to play “extra” notes until the drummer’s kick drum and bass player lock in.

GUITARS: Other than for some very particular, specific layered effects, guitarists should not play the same type of part at the same time. The concept of lead guitarist and rhythm guitarist is fundamentally one of separating the roles of two guitarists—unless they are trading licks, two guitarists shouldn’t be playing lead at the same time. One should be playing rhythm/chordal parts while the other is playing a lead part (i.e. a solo or soloistic/key melodic licks). One guitarist on acoustic and one on electric is an easy way to avoid sonic spectrum collisions. If one guitar is playing a “busier” chordal strumming part, the other guitar could play a “chick’n pick’n’” kind of part—a single note rhythmic pattern. As another option, if one electric is on a distorted tone, having the other one with a clean sound also breaks up the wall of sound pleasingly. Listening to worship tunes and pop songs and paying attention to how guitars are placed sonically in a mix and how each part intertwines with each other is a key component of developing the skills to effectively reproduce and come up with musical guitar parts live.

KEYBOARDS: One wonderful thing that keyboards can bring to the sonic table is the “pad.” This is a warm chordal bed that may sound like strings, a warm synth-type sound, or a sustained Hammond organ, to name a few options. The nice thing about pads is that they provide a beautiful backdrop to any other sound—lead vocal, guitars etc—because they are static/un-busy. They are a quick way to make a tune sound more “produced.” Adding a tasteful, soft pad to a piano sound adds richness to often somewhat stark sounding piano keyboard patches. The keyboardist’s role, like that of the guitarist, will vary from tune to tune. On one song the keyboardist might be the centerpiece of the entire song, and on the next it could have a totally supporting role. The key is that the keyboardist and guitarist listen closely to one another so that their parts aren’t colliding in an unmusical way. It’s easy for them to occupy the same sonic space so care should be taken that the parts are carefully considered to compliment/lock with one another.
Tips To Improve Your Worship Team
(from http://www.musicademy.com)

Note: Ralph has gathered these thoughts, which he whole-heartedly endorses, from the above-mentioned web page. The ideas were generated by the musicacademy.com team

Playing Together As A Team

1. **Know your place in the sonic spectrum.** Look at any really good band. Every instrument is there for a reason, and each occupies its own space in the sound. Part of the problem for many teams is too many instruments basically playing the same thing. Just because there are 3 guitarists in the team doesn’t mean they all have to play at the same time. Even worse, many musicians use their instrument to play a role that it’s not designed to play. So very often we have drums playing all the fills, basses playing like a lead guitarist, keyboard players cutting across bass parts (or worse still covering everything), electric guitar or orchestral instrument lines cutting across the melody and backing vocals upstaging the lead vocal. So what is your instrument’s role?

2. **Every instrument’s job is only to support the melody.** In song-based music where, to be frank, most of an average audience or congregation can only pick out the melody or drums, every instrument needs to play their part to support the lead vocal. So wrap your grooves, chords and harmonies around the rhythm, volume, pitch and emphasis of the lead vocal line.

3. **Lock into the groove.** The rhythm instrument’s main role is provide a clear, solid and in time base for all the other parts to lock to. Randomly changing strumming patterns, drum grooves and fills, and bass licks that don’t lock in to the consistent groove of the song can unpace the congregation. Though consistency can seem boring, our job is to serve the song, the band, the congregation and the Lord through music that is easy to grasp

4. **Very often the source of the groove is in beat 3.** If you are having trouble finding the right groove, what is happening with the kick drum or even the rhythm of the melody line around beat 3? Are the inflections before, on or after that beat? Is everyone instrument picking up on that or even leaving space to bring out the accent of that groove?

5. **The rule of One.** If you are the only instrument, you cover everything bar the melody (unless it’s an instrument section), so chords, harmony groove etc. As you add more instruments you should play less to give each
other a space for their part. So if there are 5 people in the band then you should play a fifth of the sound.

6. **Enter and exit the music at the junctions.** You don’t have to play all the time, but can come in and out at distinct sections or junctions of the song. For example, you can come in and out at the verse, chorus, or bridge rather than randomly drift in and out. This sounds tidy, planned and adds to the overall dynamic feel of the song.

7. **Not playing is an option.** Think ahead about which junctions or parts of the song your instrument will best lift it. It may be the whole song or just a small section. Let music breath and make a statement with your contribution, don’t just waffle on!

8. **Mean what you play.** Does your sound match up with the lyric and theme of the song? So when you play to the lyric “I’m desperate for you” do your music sound desperate or just bored?

9. **Make the theme and the music match.** Think about the song, “Blessed Be Your Name.” Most bands just rock it up, but there are some pretty sobering lyrics in there and a big, confident-driven vibe my not always be the most helpful interpretation for the worshiper.

10. **Cultivate feel.** What is the sound of joy, reverence, intercession, freedom, repentance? Rather than playing licks, can you play emotions? Pick an emotion, does it sound high or low, long or short, loud, soft, clean, dirty, gentle or aggressive?

### Stage Placement Tips

Before we even start to play, it’s worth thinking about where each of the instruments are placed. Most rock bands set up with the drummer at the back, lead singer in the middle and other players flanking each side. The looks great visually and is fine if you are well rehearsed but most worship bands are really based on making community music. The interactive involvement of the congregation actually changes the order, volume, tempo, sound etc of the songs used. This means the musicians primarily need to be able to see and hear each other to run with those changes on the fly. So here are some thoughts that might help:

1. Arrange yourselves where you can see each other’s eyes. You can communicate a lot just by eye and body movements. It’s no good for a drummer if the primary view they get of the worship leader is the back of his head!
2. Try placing the drum kit at the front and side of stage and rotate it 90 degrees so it faces inward to the rest of the musicians.
3. Experiment with arranging the other musicians in a semi circle so they can see each other too.

4. Split up instruments that produce sound in the same frequency range e.g. guitar and keys. It's much easier to hear yourself if you are not competing with another sounds that plays in the same octave range.

5. Work on hearing each other acoustically.

6. Place amps only towards the musicians that need to hear them, like drummers.

7. Try to position the whole band in the area in the building that best connects with the congregation. It can be anywhere, on a stage, in the round, whatever works best - just try to build a physical sense of all of us worshipping God communally together rather than a separated congregation and band.

8. Do you need to be on a stage at all? If so, too high or too low a platform can hinder communication.

9. The whole band doesn’t have to face the congregation. As in tip 1 the priority is being able to gain eye contact with each other.

10. Don’t put equipment in positions that block sight lines between you and the congregation – e.g. mic and music stands at head and even chest level can seem like a barrier and can hinder visual communication.

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**Rehearsal Tips**

By [Andy@Musicademy](mailto:Andy@Musicademy) | August 24, 2009

Rehearsals can be creative, productive and succinct, but often they can end up as long winded, stressful, and unproductive. So here are some simple ideas to make them more beneficial for everyone. These are just a starter for 10 so do let us know your comments, experiences and ideas that have worked in your setting.

1. **Create a ‘ready to play by’ timing culture.** Rehearsals often drag on way longer than anyone wants. Part of the problem is not starting on time. If a rehearsal starts at 8pm try to create a culture that means musicians are set-up and ready to play but that time.

2. **Good rehearsals are for honing songs, not learning them.** If you are rehearsing a set of songs then it really is the musicians’ job to know the song before the rehearsal and then spend the time making it work for your group. This also means that if you are the one organizing a new song you need to be responsible for giving them all the tools they need (chords, charts, MP3) to learn it a good number of days before the rehearsal.

3. **Use mp3 and tools like Spotify.** Most stuff is on Spotify and YouTube these days so even just sending a link to the song should be enough. Just make sure everyone learns the same version of the song!
4. **Have a plan, carve up rehearsal time and don’t spend too long on one song.** If you have 5 songs and 2 hours, carve up the time according. Don’t get carried away and spend too long on one song and neglect the others. If necessary set a timer and stick to it.

5. **Start rehearsal with a big easy song to let everyone warm up.** Quality is unimportant at the outset! – Very often musicians need just to let off steam at the start of a practice, so pick something familiar and high energy. Let everyone make as much noise as they want. Hopefully everyone will calm down and focus when the serious work begins.

6. **Pray before you begin.** It doesn’t need to be long; just make it mean something without being a token gesture. This should also help everyone focus and take the practice time seriously.

7. **Don’t noodle between songs!** This is one of the most irritating things especially if the person running the rehearsal is trying to talk though a song or give instructions. If you can’t resist noodling on your instrument when you are not playing then literally put it down or step away from it between music.

8. **Try to rehearse facing each other at low volume** - It’s so much easier to walk through a song if the whole band can see each other and call out song structures as we play without masses of amplification. My band often rehearses seated, in a circle, with practice amps and a cut down drum kit (kick, snare, hats and brushes) to reduce the volume.

9. **Practice junctions.** If you’ve only got limited time, don’t practice the whole song as most people are ok when they are playing; it’s just stops, starts and changes between song sections that go wrong. So just practice those, but try them more times than you think you need to just so everyone commits them to memory.

10. **Encourage the band to write notes.** If necessary bring pens and paper to help create this culture. Notes don’t have to be detailed or in any form of proper music notation; we just want musicians to remember arrangements, cues, keys, tempos, and the like.

11. **Don’t practice complex arrangements; practice reading and following each other.** I’ve seen so many worship leaders try to create overly complex arrangements that most musicians forget by the time it comes to play them live. So it’s much better to spend time on learning to ‘feel’ the song as a band and teaching your musicians to follow you through spontaneous changes. That way if the congregation doesn’t respond to your set arrangement you can change it up on the fly.
Communications Skills for Worship Teams

In the last set of tips we looked at some tips to help you play together more skillfully. Musical communication skills are really just an extension of those. How many times have you seen a band (worship band or otherwise) staring at their own shoes or or just completely lost in their own part when they play? A band is a team and like any great team they need to be concerned with the whole effort and not just their own role... A great worship band constantly communicates, listens and re-adjusts - to each other, to the congregation and to the Lord.

1. **Use eyes and body language.** Don’t worry about complex signals for chorus, verse, bridge etc. Dynamic change can be communicated simply by eye and body movements. Think about how you would direct the sound to get bigger or smaller, start, stop or change direction just in body movements.

2. **Instrument dynamics to communicate changes.** The same thing can be reinforced by how you play too. As an exercise play around a song or chord sequence and get the other musicians to match your intensity and changes just by following the dynamics of your instrument. You’ll soon find out who doesn’t listen.

3. **Try to communicate changes well ahead of a junction.** If you are taking a song in a direction that’s not part of the obvious form e.g. a double verse or quiet chorus, communicate that change WELL ahead of that junction point. maybe 3-4 bars ahead is good to help everyone clue in.

4. **Practice getting to know each others signals.** The more you play together and get to know each other, the easier it becomes to ‘read’ your movements and communication becomes very natural. So don’t spend loads of time talking through complex arrangements, practice learning to lead and follow on your instrument, on the fly. This is particularly relevant to larger churches with multiple worship leaders, musicians and a rotating system.

5. **Communicate changes verbally.** If you can’t sing it, say it. Lastly there’s absolutely nothing wrong calling out changes so the congregation can hear. You don’t have to be a great singer to be a great worship leader, but you do have to be skillful at helping people to follow you so if you can’t sing, there’s nothing wrong with cueing them with “verse 1” or say the words to the beginning of the next section. Obviously it can get fatiguing if it’s all the time but remember we are making community worship music, not a live album (unless you are actually making a live album, in which case you should be better rehearsed!).
Big Church / Small Worship
Five ways a schedule helps develop your worship team

A few months back I wrote the Top Ten Signs You Lead Worship in a Smaller Church. Sadly, the list contains a little too much truth for many worship leaders and musicians. One in particular was #8:

*My musician schedule contains only three words: PLEASE SHOW UP.*

One of the mistakes that smaller church worship leaders make is not creating a schedule. It might seem silly—maybe even a waste of time—to craft a schedule that contains the same people week after week. If they don’t show, that spot is open. So why bother scheduling?

Fair question. I recently wrote a post on my blog entitled “8 Things to Think About When Scheduling Musicians.” It contains some philosophical and strategic thoughts about scheduling musicians. It’s applicable for leaders of any size ministry. But in this post, I want zero in on why scheduling is important for small church worship teams.

1. **A schedule reinforces commitment.** It’s a visual reminder for the musician that he’s part of a team. And seeing his name next to others on the schedule should remind him that other people are counting on his commitment.

2. **A schedule prepares you for growth. It’s part of creating a bigger bucket.** Many small church worship ministries are like one-gallon buckets. I’m not sure if you knew this, but one gallon buckets can only hold, well, one gallon. If you try to put two gallons of, say, some Starbucks latte into a one gallon bucket, you’ll find a gallon of latte on the floor. Not good, considering that a Starbucks latte costs about $26 a gallon.

The systems, policies and practices of a worship ministry create the bucket size. If you want to grow, begin creating a larger bucket. Raise the bar for preparation. Begin a qualification process for potential musicians. Require rehearsal attendance. And create a musician schedule.

Creating a bigger bucket doesn’t guarantee you’ll grow. But keeping your bucket too small is a great way to ensure that you won’t.
3. **A schedule can help avoid burnout.** How? By intentionally giving people time off. Musicians need a week off at least every two months, if not more. And not just when they’ll be out of town or home with a sick kid.

You and your musicians need to enjoy coming to church with your families. I call my wife a Sunday-morning-single-mom. She needs me to have a week off as much as I need a week off.

Also the “view from the pew” can be a refreshing experience AND a much needed dose of perspective.

4. **A schedule can help you combat the MEs.** A small worship band is a ripe environment to grow the virus that causes the “MEs.” If I stand in the same spot on the same stage and play the same instrument week after week, who owns that spot? Me.

I’ve now got a case of the **MEs: Musician Entitlement Syndrome.** Forget about being open to new members. They can take my spot, but only when I’m on vacation. So what does giving them a week off do to combat entitlement? It says, “You don’t own this spot.” It also says, “It may not sound the same, but we can worship without you.”

5. **A musician’s schedule is a great prayer tool.** Pray for your team members, individually and as a group. AND...here’s where numeric growth comes in – pray for your gaps.
   - Pray for musicians to come in, to be raised up. Don’t pray for warm bodies who can play an instrument.
   - Pray for truth and Spirit worshipers.
   - Pray for musicians who are stewards of their talent.
   - Pray for the person God wants to fill that spot.
Appendix Two
Some Thoughts About Intensity & Volume

Intensity of sound is measured in decibels (dB). The scale runs from the faintest sound the human ear can detect, which is labeled 0 dB, to over 180 dB, the noise at a rocket pad during launch. Decibels are measured logarithmically, being 20 times the log of the ratio of a particular sound pressure to a reference sound pressure. This means that as decibel intensity increases by units of 20, each increase is 10 times the lower figure. Thus, 20 decibels is 10 times the intensity of 0 decibels, and 40 decibels is 100 times as intense as 20 decibels. Sound intensity may be given in two different units. Persons interested in the actual physical quantification of sound use units of sound pressure level (SPL). SPL is calibrated to a constant sound pressure level that does not vary with frequency. On audiograms, however, sound intensity is calibrated in hearing level (HL), meaning that the reference sound is one that just barely heard by a normal population. Thus HL units are relative ones and do not generally correspond to SPL units. Higher intensity (db) of sound causes more damage. Many experts agree that continual exposure to more than 85 decibels may become dangerous.

The table below illustrates some common sounds and their intensity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate Decibel Level</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Maximum Exposure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 dB</td>
<td>the quietest sound you can hear</td>
<td>Indefinitely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 dB</td>
<td>Whisper, Quiet Library</td>
<td>Indefinitely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 dB</td>
<td>conversation, sewing machine, typewriter</td>
<td>indefinitely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 dB</td>
<td>lawnmower, shop tools, truck traffic</td>
<td>8 hours per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 dB</td>
<td>Chainsaw, Snowmobile</td>
<td>2 hours per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115 dB</td>
<td>Sandblasting, Auto Horn, Loud Concert</td>
<td>15 minutes uninterrupted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140 dB</td>
<td>Gun Blast, Jet Engine</td>
<td>0 minutes without protection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We recommend that you keep your band & singers (amplified) to no more than **85-95 dB** for the duration of the worship time. From time to time, someone might come up and complain about the band being too loud, and try to convince you that you will damage people’s ears. If you have a decibel meter, you can monitor this and competently answer this complaint. Even if you had a “chainsaw-loud” Sunday (which we do not recommend), your worship set would have to last over 2 hours on 7 consecutive days for it to cause any lasting damage.
Appendix 3
The Worship Software Guide:
Options for Every Church From Small to Mega

[Editor's Note: These are the opinions of Jeremy Smith alone. Please direct all comments to him below in the comment section. Thanks! -CTT]

My experience with software presentation has run the gambit from churches that live and die by PowerPoint because they do not want to take the time to learn anything else, to working directly with MediaShout developers, to finding myself today in a plethora of options for churches of any size and budget. As we are now living in a time with so many different options, many church techies find themselves excited by the possibilities while pastors or elders may be overwhelmed. If they need to trim the budget, they may make choices that will not necessarily improve Sunday morning worship.

So we have taken the time to sift through all of the options out there you might consider, taking into account budgets, sizes of churches, training for volunteers and staff, ease of use, and a couple of special needs that you might encounter. What this guide is not meant to be is the final word in what your church has to use. Weight your options carefully in light of your needs.

Also note that a lot of other complexities come into play when we are talking about worship software, including CCLI licenses. None of the options address licensing - we recommend everyone get a CCLI license.

Finally, it may be easy for you to lie about details to save yourself some money and get the nice and fancy stuff. Don’t. EVER. If you have to sin as a church to get something better, you are cheating yourselves, the company, and the One whom you represent. Either be willing to fork over the money or not upgrade.

Now that the warnings have been shared, let’s look at the different options out there for churches with different budgets.

Small Churches

There are a couple of assumptions that I am making here within the budget structures. Smaller budgets I assume have not made the full investment into worship software overall and so I am being simplistic in what is available. For churches that do have larger budgets, I do not expect tens of thousands of dollars each year, but you want to get the most for what you are spending. I offer what I believe to be great products that will do what you want.
Small Budgets

- **OpenSong** (Free, PC/Mac) – You are getting what you pay for here. Free means that not all of the controls are intuitive and if it breaks, you will have to wait for an update, if it ever comes. But the software does work and has several little features that no other free software has like Chord Sheets. Linux lovers will swarm this option for sure, just know that not all of your volunteers may like this model.
- **OpenLP** (Free, PC/Mac) – For those who use this software, they swear by it. My own personal experience is that OpenLP crashes more often than I care to like and should be considered an option only if you are okay with your worship experience potentially getting disrupted.
- **Harmony** ($79, Mac Only) – I put this here only at request of some avid users. It is too simplistic for a program that costs as much as I pay for Office Word. And if you do not have a Mac, you might as well move on. It’s here, but I’d rather you just use OpenLP or PowerPoint if you are trying to trim your budget.
- **PowerPoint** (PC/Mac) – I did not include the cost here because I assume your church already has Office for documents and so PowerPoint is already on your machines. This should not be the final goal of worship software as it is not designed for worship, but instead designed for classrooms and business presentations.

Large Budgets

- **EasyWorship** ($399, PC/Mac) – While I am personally not a fan of this software, there is one aspect that is simply undeniable. If you purchase this software, you are given $500 in free media for your church’s use. It’s all preselected, so you get what you get, but this is a good deal for a church that cannot purchase software and the media to go with it.
- **ProPresenter** ($399 single license, PC, Mac) – This is honestly the software that I live and die by. Does not matter if it is a church of 100 or 5,000, this is what you want to strive for. There are other options to be considered, but I put all my investment personally into this platform where it is now.
- **MediaShout** ($399 license + $99 PowerPoint add-on, PC/Mac) – My past was to dive into how this software works and make our worship service thrive. What it might lack in user-friendliness, it makes up for in the pixel perfect design details. Definitely a good choice.

Medium-sized Churches

We are in awkward territory here as I start to describe small budgets for medium size churches. This can range from no budget (this does actually exist, unfortunately) to budgets that rival mega churches. I am going to sit somewhere in the middle and ignore the extremes. If you want those, go up to the small size churches or down to the mega churches for those possible choices. Otherwise, these options are great choices for you.
Small Budgets

- **EasyWorship** ($399, PC/Mac) – I only recommend this again because of the freebies that come with it.
- **ProPresenter** ($399 single license, PC, Mac) – As I said before, this is still my default option and highly recommend it.
- **MediaShout** ($399 license + $99 PowerPoint add-on, PC/Mac) – This continues to be a good choice.

Large Budgets

- **Planning Center Online** (Varying Monthly Rates, PC/Mac/iOS) – This software does things differently. Long term, this option may actually cost more than any of the other options available. But it also gives you something that none of the others can, Projector and Music Stand (though know that these also are each an extra monthly fee). People that have bought into this simply cannot go back.
- **Proclaim** (Varying Monthly Rates, PC/Mac) – For churches with pastors that love the Logos Bible Software, you probably already know about Proclaim. It easily integrates and is well worth your time to consider as a companion software to Logos.
- **ProPresenter** ($799 site license, PC, Mac) – This price changes when you begin to look at churches with multiple sites. This would include if you simply stream your service but use the software to stream. Yet, I still highly recommend it.

Megachurches

It is assumed at this point that you are putting the needs of your worship experience up front. If you do not have a healthy budget for your worship team, you are doing a different kind of church service than I can speak into. I do not say this flippantly either, as I know many churches that would be put into the mega church status that have small amounts compared to the amount of money they invest in elsewhere. But because of the size of your church, you will need to put the necessary money into your software that is appropriate.

Large Budgets

- **Planning Center Online** (Varying Monthly Rates, PC/Mac/iOS) – I refer to this one again because it is worth it. But note that because you are with a larger church, your budget is still going to have to be large because the monthly cost goes up. I also anticipate you will buy some of their other features too that go up in cost as church size rises.
- **ProPresenter** ($399, $799 site license, PC, Mac) – Some mega churches only do one sanctuary, others have multiple. Make sure you do the right license for the right use case.
- **Proclaim** (Varying Monthly Rates, PC/Mac) – For churches with pastors that love the Logos Bible Software, you probably already know about Proclaim. It easily
integrates and is well worth your time to consider as a companion software to Logos.

Other Software Options

Here are the other software options that might be available but I could not ethically recommend them as I believe there are better options out there for you. They are not inherently bad options, but maybe the cost is too high, other software options provide more, or they simply cannot fit in the structure we have created above.

- **SongShowPlus.com** (PC Only) – They try to get around the site licensing fee by charging for individual projection fees, yet hurt many smaller churches that use more than one projector in a single sanctuary.
- **Easyslides.com** (PC) – I have been frustrated by its limited use and functionality that I spent too long figuring out how to use it and moving on to a different option all together.
- **Prezi.com** (PC/Mac) – While the cost of this presentation is small compared to everything else out there, it is a fad at best and extremely cumbersome to create and use. I discourage anyone that is solely relying on this program to use in churches every week.
- **PresentationManager** (PC Only) – For the cost of the software, I would expect a MUCH better quality product. I have only seen use of it in churches who were wanting to switch away from it and it really is not a good product for churches at the price they offer.
For video instruction, song tutorials, web links, articles, quotations, music files, lead sheets and more, see...

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