



# Spirit of Grace

## Herald

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## An Open Letter To Worship Leaders

Worship is such an important aspect of our churches. I appreciate good preaching, but without the singing, praising, and worship that goes on beforehand, the preaching would seem incomplete. Nearly every church has a “worship leader,” an individual whose job it is to oversee the worship service, to pick out the songs to be sung, to seek out backup singers, and oversee practice sessions for the musicians. And everybody has an opinion of what makes for a good worship experience, and what definitely does not! In light of all this I thought I would share a few thoughts of my own in this open letter to worship leaders:

**1. First, we appreciate you!** We know that your job is not an easy one, and that you are inevitably going to receive criticism. Some think the music is too loud; others too soft. Some want more traditional hymns and others don't ever want to sing a hymn again. People will find fault with the way you dress, the way you talk, the way you sing, your level of skill, the thoughts you share in between songs, and so much more. You will never please everybody, but most of you are doing the best you can, and we thank you for placing yourself in such a vulnerable position.

**2. Your musical skills are improving!** A couple of generations ago, the average church employed a single instrument, a piano, usually played by an elderly lady who led the members in the tried and true hymns. The piano was often out of tune. The pianist tried her best to lead out in the singing, but her efforts usually possessed more enthusiasm than skill. Things have changed!

Today even churches of one hundred people have several skilled musicians with fine voices. Worship services are no longer considered merely the preliminary to the preaching; they are rightfully recognized as a vital aspect of our church meetings. But with the increase in skill there is a danger. Too often I have been in worship services where the song melodies were so complex that they were essentially out of reach for the average Christian. The worship team, with their superior musical skills and having practiced for hours, can play and sing the songs beautifully. But the typical Christian in the congregation is overwhelmed and ends up listening rather than singing, much like one would do at



a concert. The experience is transformed from worship to performance. Worship must be worship! Just because you can sing a musically challenging song does mean that you should attempt to present that to the congregation. We need to be able to sing along with you!

**3. Nearly every church of any size has a projector and large screens to display the lyrics of the songs to be sung. To my thinking this is a great improvement over singing with your nose buried in a hymnal. But in some churches, behind the lyrics they show a constant video feed of the worship leaders as they sing. This is terribly distracting, and it so easily draws people's minds off the Lord.** If the video zooms in an attractive woman singing, most of the men are thinking, “Wow, she looks really good.” If they show a singer who is unattractive or dressed unfashionably, many may be thinking, “She (or he) really needs to spruce themselves up.” You might reply that these people need to get more spiritual and stop judging the singers. But when huge screens are showing closeups of the worship team, observation and analysis are nearly inevitable, unless you shut your eyes, which of course would mean that you could no longer see the lyrics. It would be far better to show a waterfall in the background or some artsy design. We don't need to be forced to look at closeups of the worship team when we're trying to focus on the Lord.

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**4. Please pray throughout the week for the Sunday worship service.** Ultimately the goal of a worship service is to bring men and women into the presence of the Lord. And nothing does that like skillful worship when it is prefaced by prayer. We cannot know who prays and who doesn't but in cases where worship services are regularly all about performance, and there is little depth of feeling or consciousness of God, we must assume that perhaps some more prayer is needed.

Thanks for listening to an old guy who appreciates all you do in leading us non-musically-gifted folks in worship!

## This Month: Uganda!



Dennis & Benedicta are scheduled to minister in Uganda this month (July). We praise God for yet another opportunity to travel to the great continent of Africa and teach and preach Jesus Christ to the beautiful African people. Uganda is a very poor nation, and for most of the people in the small villages where we minister, life is very hard.

Dennis and Benedicta go to this nation to encourage them that God has not forgotten them – and that through Jesus Christ they can experience forgiveness, salvation, freedom, and the shelter and provision of their loving Father in Heaven.

We need your help! Most evangelists are paid honorariums for their ministry, but we have to pay for the privilege of ministering to the African people. Please pray for us, and please considering making a generous donation toward this mission. Mark "Uganda Mission" in the memo line of your check, or note it when you donate through our website donation PayPal buttons ([www.spiritofgrace.org](http://www.spiritofgrace.org)). Thanks for caring!

