

Music Can Work Magic for Your Ministry

Richard Mekdeci, LUT, Sacred Music Resources

Recorded on cave walls thousands of years ago, images of primitive man are shown dancing and drumming around a tribal fire. These images, thought to represent rituals to bless a hunt or give thanks for a good harvest, depict an ancient yet timeless spiritual and religious tradition: praise and worship.

Music and worship have been inextricably tied for thousands of years and the love affair continues to this day. Imagining church without music is like imagining a rodeo without horses or an orchestra without a string section.

The role music plays in developing and growing your ministry cannot be overstated. This is because the worship experience is not only about hearing a message from a minister or learning a new interpretation of a scripture—a complete and fulfilling worship experience involves community building, bonding, and creating atmosphere through physical vibration as only music can.

Some of the essential roles music plays in any spiritual gathering include:

- **Gathering in**—Music signals the beginning of a ritual or gathering.
- **Unifying**—Singing together creates a sense of oneness and unity among the congregation. Vocalizing a single message through song creates a bond.
- **Opening hearts**—Music prepares your congregation to allow new ideas to be accepted and to be open to new beliefs.
- **Supporting the minister's message**—A good song can take a complex theological idea and simplify it so that it can be more easily digested. Reiterating the central theme of the service in song ensures that when a person thinks back on the service, they will easily be able to recall the message.
- **Providing segues**—Music provides transitions between segments of the service so the attention is held and directed forward for a seamless worship experience.
- **Raw entertainment value**—Don't underestimate the power of a good song delivered well. In the same way a good joke in a talk "entertains" and builds anticipation, high quality professional music will bring people back again and again.

Music as Its Own Ministry

Today, with the wide diversity of tastes and information overload around the world, music can provide a bridge that draws diverse groups of people together in worship. Allowing your music department to function as its own ministry releases it from the stigma of religious philosophy and widens the appeal of your message.



When ministers and church leaders begin to see their music departments as partners who contribute a second type of ministry, they will immediately double their reachable audience and widen their demographic.

Just as Fox has a Television Network and a Motion Picture division providing different services for different groups of people, your ministry can have its pulpit ministry and music ministry operating as separate entities, going after different markets, and providing different services to the community and congregation.

Shaping Your Demographic With Music

Music can also be instrumental (pun intended) in creating the demographic you desire for your congregation. It is common to attempt to please those currently attending your church or to pander to the largest donors. But music can be used as a tool to attract the kind of congregation you desire.

Decide on the cross section of age, race and gender you wish to see in your congregation; then consistently provide music that appeals to that demographic. Without any additional effort, you will see a slow turn of congregation toward your musical focus group. That is why most churches always offer musical variety. If you always do the “old standards” you will attract and keep the “old standards” in your congregation. If you wish to attract younger members, you must include contemporary, yes, even rap or hip hop music on occasion. Fortunately, New Thought music comes in all styles and genres.

Musicianship Plus Leadership

Many mainstream Christian churches use the “three pillar” model of leadership for their ministries. That is, the minister, the youth and family minister and the music director are the three main positions of leadership that should receive the most scrutiny when pioneering a church or entering into a ministry.

Why?

About 80% of the success of your ministry hinges on what you do on Sunday mornings. Your Sunday service is what creates the buzz about your church. It’s what brings people back or not. It is the main venue for the minister to convey what the ministry is all about. And it is the primary source of income for your ministry. That hour or two once a week is your calling card to the community and to your congregation, and the music you present (as well as the care and education you provide for the children) is a major make-or-break element of that time.

For this reason, your music director must be seen as a partner in creating and growing a successful ministry, not just a person that can provide the obligatory congregational song, Lord’s Prayer and Peace Song each week.



Music can be a vital tool in creating a worship experience and in teaching spiritual principles, so empower your music director and music department *to minister*, not just provide music. Send them to Unity classes so they understand the theology, and make sure they attend at least one music conference per year to learn skills of the trade and network with other music directors.

Allow music to work its magic through your ministry.

