

house and searched diligently, though without success! It was a large diamond but it was also a family heirloom, a gift from her mother and had belonged to a great-aunt. Her sense of value was based on these subjective concepts. However, the insurance company was only interested in the size, quality and monetary value! They looked at the diamond objectively - for what it was in itself. How do we value God? For what he means to us, or for what he is in himself? Of course the two are not exclusive of each other. The danger in our relationship with God, and in our worship, is that we dwell only on the subjective element and fail to encounter God in the reality of his being objectively. (By the way, the errant stone turned up weeks later in an inexplicable place, before the insurance company had paid out, and is now safely reset.)

What is shaping the form and character of our worship? Is it the biblical revelation of the objective value of God in his own being and character, or is it the subjective response coming out of our own experience and ideas?

The place of the Bible is clearly to act as the objective counter balance to our own ideas of value. Worship is more to do with 'You' than with 'I'. The Bible focuses us on the 'You' - on God himself. The centre of worship is God not me. True worship - in Spirit and Truth - is based on the spiritual reality of God as revealed in the Bible. It is not based on the style and content of the newest worship CD!

## The Bible in Worship

Obedience to the Word, as his will is expressed through the words of Scripture, in a lifestyle of worship, is the essential backdrop to any participation in worship in the limited sense of singing and praying - the semi-liturgical 'time of worship' which characterises many charismatic church gatherings.

In this context the Bible has an essential place as well. The Bible encourages us to worship: "Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God." Notice how the Psalmist (Ps. 100:1) reminds the people to remember who it is they worship in their joy and gladness.

The Bible helps us with the expression of worship: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were

created and have their being." (Rev. 4:11). Using biblical phrases in our worship enriches our understanding and provides us with a more adequate language of reverence and adoration.

The Bible enlarges our concepts of God: "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal? Says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing." (Isaiah 40:25-26). As we allow such prophetic awareness to saturate our thinking, so our own vision of God will be expanded.

The Bible enables us to focus our worship on God himself, as he is, rather than on the God of our own imagination. It reminds us to let God be God - and remember who we are!

## A last word

Let me give the last word to C. S. Lewis. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* the children are in the house of the Beavers and for the first time, hear of Aslan the great Lion who is the King: "Ooh!" said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he - quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion." "That you will, dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver: "If there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or just silly." "Then isn't he safe?" said Lucy. "Safe?" said Mr. Beaver: "Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."

The God of the Bible isn't safe, he is a consuming fire. But he is good - he is our Father. Let us worship him acceptably with reverence and awe - according to the Scriptures.



*Tony and Doreen Gray are currently based with Emmanuel Fellowship, Eaglescliffe, in North-East England. They travel extensively teaching and sharing in the churches of our Salt & Light family. They have four children and six grandchildren. Contrary to some rumours they have not retired!*

# are you responding?

by gary bastin



Worship is a response to God. It's our response to what God has done, is doing and is going to do. As we look back over history, live in the present and reach out into the future, we see God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit unchanging and involved in this glorious universe. If God had not said 'Let there be...' thousands of years ago, this planet we live on and the surrounding starry hosts would not even be here!

God went first. He initiated, thought it up, planned it, designed it, and by just speaking, created all we see. We don't go first. We reply, react, retort, and answer. It's like a baby learning to communicate in response to its parents' overemphasised gestures! What a joy it is to hear 'mama' or 'dada' for the first time after repeatedly saying it to a baby first! What must it be like for our heavenly Father when he hears us responding to him?

The Bible is full of famous characters responding to God in worship. After Jacob's vivid dream of the 'stairway to heaven' he responds by saying, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven' (Genesis 28:17 NIV). Moses removes his shoes as God speaks to him from the burning bush (Exodus 3:5). Later, Miriam responds with a song of praise after the Israelites had walked through the waters of the Red Sea which had been separated by God (Exodus 15:1-21). In 2 Samuel 12:20 (NIV) we read that David, '...went into the house of the Lord and worshipped' after his love child with Bathsheba had been put to death by God. The great Old Testament prophets, Isaiah (Isaiah 6), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1) and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1) each encountered God in powerful visions. They responded by humbling themselves in the presence of their creator! The Psalmists respond in beautiful poetry at the wonder of creation (Psalm 19, Psalm 8) and the complexity of an unborn human being (Psalm 139) knowing too that God can see us everywhere! When God eventually speaks to Job from a storm (Job 38-41) Job responds by repenting (Job 42:6). In the New Testament, Simon Peter (Luke 5) also responds by recognising his sin after the miraculous catch of fish; he confesses he is 'unclean' before the Messiah. The crowds

couldn't help but openly responded in praising God when they witnessed the mighty acts of Jesus in the gospels (Matthew 9:8, Luke 18:43). When these Biblical characters saw God at work their response was to worship him, but God is still at work today.

His creation is living, vibrant, multiplying, expanding. His Kingdom is advancing, taking new ground, breaking out into new horizons. People all around the world are being forgiven, redeemed, renewed and transformed by the power of the gospel! It's wonderful and sometimes staggering to think that God allows us to join him in his work! It's humbling to see our prayers, often weak and feeble, being answered and people's lives and situations changed! Surely it is God at work - and when we see that we need to respond by worshipping him.

We must not box God in, but allow him to open our eyes more to see him at work in all areas of life:

- In something read in the Bible in a private time with God.
- In a walk in the country, by the sea, or the mountains.
- In seeing a close friend or relative coming to Christ after years of secret praying.
- In surviving a fatal accident or witnessing the birth of a child.
- In forgiving someone and having a relationship restored.
- In reading a poem, looking at a picture or seeing a film.
- In hearing someone say 'thank you' of 'I love you'.
- In an endless variety of situations!

How do you respond when you see God at work? It's truly awesome to recognise God working before us, in front of us, all around us and sometimes without us! This 'divine' intervention demands a response, in private and in public meetings!

Let's continue to ask God to open our eyes to see what he is doing. God is at work, let's see it and respond correctly by worshipping him...



*Gary lives in Basingstoke with his wife Marianne and their three young children, Joseph, Abigail and Joshua. He works for Basingstoke Community Churches and leads the Worship Development Team. He has been playing music for many years, including a (nearly) famous performance onstage at the London Palladium. In his youth he dyed his hair jet black!*



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# The Bible in Worship

by Tony Gray

"Yet a time is coming, and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship him in Spirit and in Truth."

John 4:23-24

*"Worship rises or falls with our concept of God."*

A.W.Tozer: Worship: the Missing Jewel

## In the beginning...

In the beginning was the Father God, the Source. The Father God breathed and his breath was the Breath of Life; the Father God spoke and his word was the Word of Life. The Father, the Breath and the Word were One. The One was all-Being. There was no other being.

The Father thought Creation; the Word spoke Creation; the Breath breathed Creation and Creation became - Angelic orders, far-flung galaxies, Sun and Moon, Planet Earth, Seas and Mountains, marine life, plants and animals and finally Humankind. And the Story began.

the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." (Psalm 84:2). "My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you." (Isaiah 26:9).

But God too, yearned for the mirror to be repaired; in Jeremiah 31:20 God speaks of Ephraim (or Israel) but his heart is such for all peoples - "Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him." "For God so loved the world..." (John 3:16); "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us..." (1 John 4:10).

## God's initiative

In the New Testament the Story climaxes in the Word made flesh - in a stoop of unbelievable grace the Son clothes himself in our Humanity in the ultimate expression of the Father's love. He is the "image of the invisible God" as Paul puts it (Colossians 1:15), yet he "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness." (Philippians 2:7). This he did in order to mediate a reconciliation between Humankind and the Father - to restore the relationship and repair the mirror: God initiated this - providing the ultimate sacrifice himself to satisfy his own justice!

We, the redeemed, are called to reflect God's own being and character back to him and out into the rest of creation. The only proper response to the grace in which we stand is one of worship - "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen. Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God - this is your spiritual act of worship." (Romans 11:36 - 12:1)

## Fellowship with the Trinity

The Trinity is a self-sufficient community. Father, Son and Spirit need nothing and no one, but in a wonderful act of self-limitation and grace they agreed to extend their fellowship to another being - to Humankind; "Then God said, 'Let us make Mankind in our image, in our likeness...'" (Genesis 1:26). God and Man

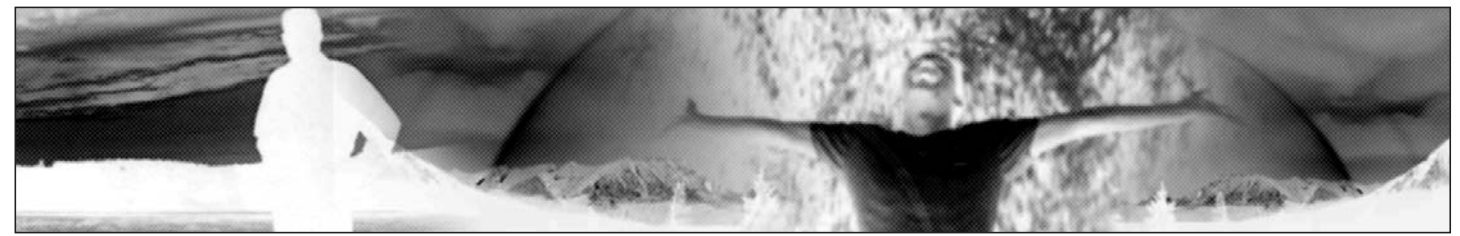
fellowshipped in the garden: "Then the Man and his Wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the Garden..." (Genesis 3:8).

The man and the woman were created to mirror God. But the mirror was cracked by the wiles of Satan.

The friendship of God and man was broken - a gulf that could be bridged only by costly blood sacrifice. So the story of redemption began.

## Yearning for a lost relationship

Throughout the Old Testament we read of men and women who yearned for the lost relationship - "My soul yearns, even faints, for



Holy Spirit, hear his voice and practise being obedient to his promptings. Ask the Creator how you should bring what He has given you, as well as when and where.

Yesterday Dave was in the Tate Gallery, London and wandered round the exhibitions whilst Chris was in a Trustees meeting for Care For The Family.

Now which was the more creative setting, do you think? The answer is neither, for both require the Spirit of God's help. Chris was specifically praying for insight to help her serve the ministries of CARE, which have such a major effect in our nation. Afterwards, she was as excited to tell of how God had been with her in the trustees meeting as Dave was to recount the wonderful Turner and William Blake paintings he had drunk in, which would help him gain a greater understanding of his Creator.

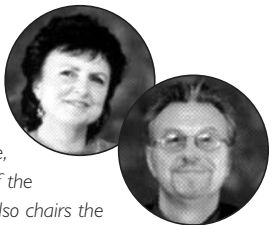
In fact, Dave saw an amazing piece of art called "Thirty pieces of silver", which was 30 large coins suspended about one foot from the ground on thread hanging from a gantry. Each large coin was made up of over thirty individual pieces of domestic silverware, which we would all instantly recognise from candelabra to cutlery. Each piece had been flattened by a steam roller and the artist said it spoke of the betrayal of society by consumerism. Dave stood and gazed for ages at this incredible prophetic statement, pondering on how God sees betrayal. The price of it.....the pain of it.....the disfigurement it brings to precious lives.....the transience of life which can be flattened in a moment.

Now that's multifaceted prophecy!

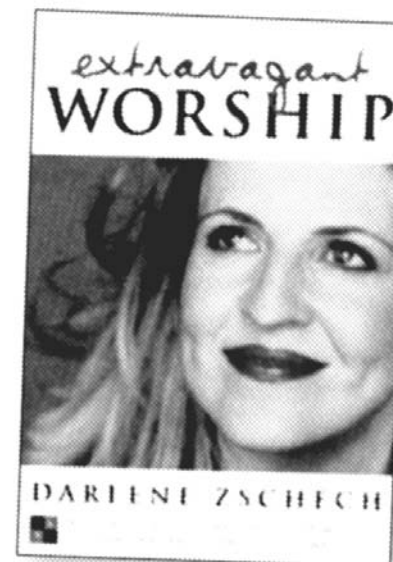
Why are we so limited? And where are our Spirit-filled craftsmen of Exodus 35:30-35?

At the time of writing we are really looking forward to Days of Destiny, Harrogate, where there will be artists, dancers, flag wavers, preachers, healers, musicians, worship leaders, creative children's workers, thought-provoking youth leaders and rampaging prophets! We will see a kaleidoscope of the colours and varieties of our great God and His splendid Holy Spirit, all declaring "Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of the Father!!!"

But we also believe that we can also see that kind of variety, (albeit in a smaller setting) that we can see just that in our home bases, and we are sure we will, if only we ask the Master how He wants us to go about living by his lovely Holy Spirit!



Dave and Chris Richards are well known amongst the Salt and Light family. They make their home in Basingstoke but have a wider sphere, both in the UK and beyond. Dave is a member of the International and European Apostolic Teams and also chairs the Apostolic team which serves Basingstoke Community Churches'.



## Book review >>>

EXTRAVAGANT WORSHIP BY DARLENE ZSCHECH

Darlene Zschech is Worship Pastor at Australia's largest church - Hillsongs. She has written and performed many famous worship songs, the most well known being My Jesus, My Saviour.

I have read many books on worship over the years, but this one is near the top of my list! I found Extravagant Worship a very easy-to-read book, written in a very relaxed style. I found it a very different book as well, in that it contains lots of testimonies, many being Darlene's own personal ones. Consequently the book has real life.

Darlene challenges the reader on such aspects of worship as: lifestyle, commitment, paying the price, teamwork, pursuing excellence, how to behave "on stage" and many others. She brings everything back to the heart of worship - obedience to God in all things.

The book is packed with scripture references and Darlene also includes the lyrics to 9 of her songs as well as other songs, hymns and prayers. There are even some pictures!

I recommend this book wholeheartedly to everyone involved in worship ministry.

Yvette Britton, Worship Team co-leader, City Church, Worcester.

# TEN WORSHIP TOP SONGS

Here at Days of Destiny it's wonderful to join with others and worship God together! But as we meet it's important to sing songs which focus the worshipper on the Father, and the Son fuelled by the Holy Spirit. We in the WDT are often asked about songs that 'work' in 'corporate' worship. Here's this issue's recommended 'songlist' (including details of the CD and where you can get the music), It's not a "Top Ten" of what to sing, like a 'chart', rather ten songs we encourage you to look into using. Hopefully we will be singing these here:

- (🎵 **All creation cries to you** (God is great) - Marty Sampson  
📄 You are my world songbook (Hillsongs)  
🎧 You are my world
- (🎵 **Even when we turned our backs** - Brenton Brown  
📄 Holy songbook (Vineyard UK)  
🎧 Holy
- (🎵 **Light of the world** (Here I am to worship) - Tim Hughes  
📄 The event songbook 2001/02 (Kingsway)  
🎧 Here I am to worship - Tim Hughes
- (🎵 **Lord you've been good to me** - Graham Kendrick  
📄 What Grace songbook (Make Way Music)  
🎧 What Grace - Graham Kendrick
- (🎵 **There is a day** - Nathan Fellingham  
📄 The event songbook 2001/02 (Kingsway)  
🎧 In Christ Alone

- (🎵 **There is a King** - Gary Bastin  
📄 WDT new songs resource issue three  
🎧 WDT new songs resource issue three
- (🎵 **What a love** (Redeemer) - Nigel Briggs  
📄 Holy songbook (Vineyard UK)  
🎧 Holy
- (🎵 **When I was lost** - Kate & Miles Simmonds  
📄 The event songbook 2001/02 (Kingsway)  
🎧 In Christ Alone
- (🎵 **You are the Stone** (No one like you Lord) - Robin Mark  
📄 Spring Harvest praise 2002 (Spring Harvest)  
🎧 Come heal this land (Hosanna! Music)
- (🎵 **You shaped the heavens** (Maker of all things) - Tim Hughes  
📄 The event songbook 2001/02 (Kingsway)  
🎧 Here I am to worship - Tim Hughes

🎵 Song title  
 📄 Sheet music book  
 🎧 Audio cd

## If this is the first time you have picked up a copy of **di** magazine, welcome!

Normally **di** goes out to those who are involved in local church worship teams (musicians, singers, worship leaders and so on) within the Salt and Light family in Europe, but this is a special 'Days of Destiny 2002' issue and will reach a wider audience.

The reality is that we are all part of our local church worship team; the local church you belong to is really one big worship team, (or at least it should be), and the worship that ascends to God doesn't just ascend on a Sunday morning. Worship is a 24/7 reality. In terms of our corporate gatherings, it just so happens that certain individuals such as musicians, backing vocalists and worship leaders (lead worshippers might be a better term!) help to lead us, but the biblical reality is that we are all part of the royal priesthood, not just those who are at the 'front' of the meeting or on stage.

The reformation that took place in 16th century Europe saw the rediscovery of the 'priesthood of all believers' and you and I are part of that priesthood, which is both global and local. If we don't buy into that truth then individually we are missing out on God's purpose and corporately we will land up with a spectator-participator divide, with the church watching the 'worship team' worshipping Sunday by Sunday. Corporate worship was never intended to be spectator only. It is participatory or it is less than what God is after.

In terms of corporate worship, it is extremely easy to fall into a worship rut, where we continually fall back onto auto-pilot, but the truth is that the Holy Spirit wants to fill our sails with his wind, his inspiration, his creativity and his frontier-less imagination. Why settle for auto pilot when we can explore the oceans of God's immeasurable majesty?

Why settle for a rut when mountaintops are on offer? Why build a tabernacle and settle when we can move on like the pilgrims 'going up' to Zion (see the songs of ascent in the book of Psalms), enjoying the 'journey' of worship; it's a journey not an event. Against that background we invite you to read through this special edition of **di** and see yourself as a worship team member. Our contributors have been commissioned to address fundamental issues which are worthy of our attention and hopefully you'll be inspired, encouraged and challenged.

Enjoy this special issue of **di**!



five: summer 2002

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issue six due out autumn 2002

# Building Worshipping Churches

Interview:  
Mark Mumford

di recently interviewed Mark Mumford on the question of 'how do we build worshipping churches?' Here's an excerpt . . .

**Why do you think it's important that our churches become 'worshipping communities', and do you think it goes beyond what happens on a Sunday meeting?**

'In my view, worship is our starting point and our finishing point. We are created beings who, at the very deepest level, are designed to respond to our Creator.

It is very easy for us to fall into thinking that we have "times of worship", rather than being a worshipping church! We are often reminded that worship is to do with our lifestyle as much as a collection of songs in a meeting. However, when we gather together our collective worship should be a corporate expression of our worshipping lifestyles!

**What do you think are the key factors in us becoming 'worshipping communities'?**

'I think that we all have slightly differing expectations of what we expect in our worship due to our temperament, experience and understanding.

I would suggest 3 keys in becoming "worshipping communities":

- [a] teaching - thorough teaching about worship and our participation in it can be very effective.
- [b] training - people to respond; musicians to be skilful and sensitive and those who lead our meetings to be open and creative
- [c] modelling - genuine, wholehearted worshippers reproduce worshippers!

**What are some of the trends you would like to see being developed in the whole arena of worship-specifically in terms of our corporate worship?**

'I would love to see more variety in musical expression, style and approach. There seems to be a consistent and predictable sound as songs become more and more standardised. Varieties of instruments can help to bring different dimensions to corporate worship times.

I would also like to see more depth. I think that praise and thanksgiving should be lively and inclusive; declaration should be substantial and strong; devotional times should be deep and meaningful; silence should be reflective and rich! To be able to move in and out of these differing expressions takes skill, sensitivity and an openness to the Holy Spirit.'

**If you could say a couple of things to worship leaders across the Salt and Light family of churches, what would they be?**

'I like the term "lead worshipper" rather than "worship leader", as it expresses something of the expectations of the role.

Firstly, I would say to continue to learn about "flow". One prominent church leader said, "The difference between a good meeting and a great one is flow".

I agree. Sometimes too much attention is given to intros and "big finishes".

I believe music practices should be as much about learning to flow together by practising what happens between songs and hymns, as about concentrating on the intros and finishes! I sometimes hear musicians talking about "light and shade". I like that-it means there will be softness and crescendos, peaks and troughs, "full on" and unaccompanied. How it all weaves together comes out of the Holy Spirit's leading and flow!

Secondly, I would want to encourage "lead worshippers" to be skilful in finding the level of the people they are serving. It is all too easy to start at the wrong level. Are there a lot of new Christians? They will need to be gently led.

Are there a lot of children? They should be included. Is there excitement and expectation? Don't start with down beat reflective songs.

One tip to help at the beginning of a meeting is to choose songs or hymns with good words that focus everyone firmly on Christ. This causes them to respond to Him, not just the music.....and this is the heart of worship!

Mark and Nesta Mumford make their home in Derby and serve Derby Community Church as well as other local churches throughout the UK. Mark is part of the European Apostolic Team, a strategic thinker, a good communicator and supports Spurs!



# worship?

by Mary MacLean

We were all removed from our comfort zones and nicely carved-out niches. Hence, one bass player re-invented himself as a banjo player, a lead guitarist picked up his mandolin and classical guitar, others discovered a new career in percussion, and others found themselves actually worshipping with their voices alone (something many musicians avoid!!).

Our basic premise was this- lay down what you have, and what you so strongly identify and 'shine' with. Lose yourself in the whole, and worship God whether you get to play or not. The first Sunday we did this, none of us were prepared for the impact it would have. The joy and freedom that erupted in the church as they witnessed this display of unity and humility was amazing.

The Holy Spirit poured out his favour on this step we'd taken to 'step on' our individual pride. That was the first Sunday and since then, we've been discovering more of what's in our hearts. A few have dropped off because they are no longer motivated if they don't get to play when they want. Other musicians have struggled with envy and inferiority if someone else is chosen to play over them. I got irritated with the other worship leader because I didn't like 'his style' of leading! (Being on separate teams was infinitely easier - I didn't have to deal with my own arrogance!). All manner of ugliness has emerged to the surface of our hearts. What a blessing!

Now we are really dealing with the dross, and the repentance is life-giving. As we are allowing God to strip us of the externals and come back to what it really means to be a worshipper, our worship is being deepened. What began as a month long trial has continued on into March. We don't know yet where this will end and when the teams will re-structure, but we do know that our hearts are being re-structured, and that is what matters most to God. We are grateful for His power to change us into the kind of worshippers he truly seeks. "To Him be the glory in the church..." (Eph. 3:21)

Mary is married to Ron MacLean who is pastor of Gateway Christian Community in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. They have been pastoring there for 22 years and have 4 daughters: Rebecca, Elyse, Lydia and Bethany. Mary is a worship leader/song-writer, and has been involved in worship ministry for over 20 years.



by simon and gaynor shaw

Focussing on a theme for an extended period helped us to link what we do in meetings with our everyday life. Blending old and new and using a variety of different media also helped us to draw in both the old and young of the wider KBCTC family. Whilst making room for the spontaneous, a co-ordinated and planned team approach took the pressure off the worship leader having to make it all happen.

If you want to find out more, you are welcome to visit the College for one of the Thursday lunchtime 'Community Gatherings'.

Simon and Gaynor met whilst studying in Oxford. They have recently completed a course in Theology and Biblical Studies at King's Bible College and Training Centre. They are part of the Oxford Community Church and the Worship Development Team.



# Where are we going in worship?

by Steve Thomas

When Isaiah had his great vision of God in the temple, he heard angelic beings, the seraphs, singing and calling to one another 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory'.

Isaiah was immediately overwhelmed with a sense of his own inadequacy. "Woe is me" he cried. "For I am a man of unclean lips, and live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." Why does he focus on the uncleanness of his lips when surely his heart, his hands, his thoughts and everything else about him was equally unclean?

I have a feeling that he was comparing his own feeble response to God with that of the angels! The angels were absorbed with the holy majesty of God, his awesome "otherness", while Isaiah's own praise was paltry by comparison. He and the people around him spent more time moaning about their troubles than exulting in a majestic God! There are unclean lips for you!

This tells me very simply where we need to go in worship. It's all about God's great power, God's great love, God's great mercy, God's great faithfulness. Worship takes us there, right into the throne room. Worship leaders, take me there!

There is another vision of heavenly worship in Revelation chapters four and five. I would like to be there with John in his vision. Yes, worship leaders, take me there! The main features of this vision are:

- God on the Throne
- The ceaseless song of heaven - "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come"
- The Lamb on the Throne
- Prophetic vision- the Lamb unlocks the world's destiny
- The new song about the Lamb
- All creation, all heaven and earth, sings praise to the Lamb

That's where I want to go in worship. Actually, I suspect it is where I will be in worship one day. Worship itself is a foretaste of heaven.

Oh yes, worship leaders, take me there!

For this to happen we don't need gimmicks, performers or people trying to impress us with their skills. Worship leaders need to usher us into the presence of God and then get out of the way. What we do need are God-glorifying, Christ-exalting hymns and songs with sing-able melodies which will release the people of God to be a people of clean lips, filled with the praise and glory of God. That's where I want to go in worship!

Steve and Lorraine Thomas are known, loved and respected both within and out of the Salt and Light family of churches. They make their home in Oxford along with their children Miriam, Esther and Ben. Steve leads the Salt and Light Ministries European Apostolic Team and the Oxfordshire Community Churches.



# Does your church suffer from **anaemic**

We asked Mary MacLean for some worship headlines from her own situation, and here is her report. This is a must-read for all worship leaders and their teams!

A number of years ago, a new church community was planted in our city, whose pastor happened to be a well-known recording artist. Not long after, one of the members of our worship ministry approached me saying she was leaving our church to go to this new church. When asked why, her response was, "You and Ron will always be my pastors, but this is a step 'up' for me musically".

That conversation heightened my awareness of some of the 'attitude' that can be found at the core of any worship ministry; pride, selfish ambition, and a wrong understanding of a true heart of worship, a mentality that says, "Really, I'm in this for me." The words to Matt Redman's song "I'm coming back to the heart of worship" reflect this growing realisation that there needs to be a change in our hearts towards God in worship, and that we've made it something it's not!

Our church family, located in the centre of Canada, has come under God's dealings in the area of worship. Our times of corporate worship had sadly become predictable, anaemic and even laboured. The sense of awe and transcendence had become lost and the wonder of the presence of God had gone. In seeking the Lord, he challenged us in two areas which I'll call the "content" of our worship and the "heart" of worship.

## The content of our worship

First, we took a long hard look at what we were singing. We went through every song in our vast repertoire, and discovered that actually a very small percentage were 'to God, for God and about God'. The majority were about our own experience of God - how God relates to me, what he does for me, how I feel about him, how he makes me feel, and what I want him to do for me.

Clue number 1 to our anaemic worship. We were more self-absorbed than Christ-absorbed. No wonder we rarely felt our faith lift! We were earth bound. The cure? Radical surgery. We entered into a season when we stripped our entire repertoire down to about 25 - 30 songs that contained

a sense of eternity and adoration (tragic isn't it, to discover there were so few...). We sang nothing else but songs to God and about God. Only 25 songs, you say? Talk about boring and predictable!

On the contrary, faith and life began to rise as people were lifted up out of their own small orbits and lost themselves in the wonder of who God is.

We continued this for about a year. Since then, we have begun to again sing other songs which include 'our experience', but we have tasted something in worship that has spoiled us forever from enjoying the unhealthy imbalanced diet we'd grown accustomed to.

## The heart of worship

The Lord began to speak to us about the heart attitudes of those of us involved in worship ministry. He challenged us with the true meaning of worship-surrender, servant-hood and submission, the foundations upon which all our musical expertise must stand.

We recognised that within all of our hearts there was pride, self-centredness, and independence. Of course we're all terrific people who love serving the Lord in this ministry, but just bump us the wrong way and you could get a potential over-spill of arrogance, envy, over-sensitivity, ambition and self-glorification.

Clue number 2 to our anaemic worship. People leading who have not settled issues of surrender and whose service to God has become more self-seeking than self-sacrificing. Ouch! The cure? We gathered all 3 worship teams together to talk through these areas, and then entered into yet another season. This time, we amalgamated all three teams under the leadership of two worship leaders. For every Sunday in January 2002, we had the whole mob on the stage, complete with their diverse ages, tastes, styles and 'bents'. Whoever was not playing their instruments that day was asked to stand on the risers and be part of the choir, or pick up an entirely different instrument they were not accustomed to playing.



## the passion of easter at king's bible college and training centre



Easter arrived at KBCTC a little early and looking a little different. Rather than leaping straight to the joy of the resurrection on Easter Sunday, as part of Lent (a season of reflection, soul-searching and rededication) we focussed on Jesus' life and death in the passion week leading up to his resurrection. This helped give us a greater appreciation of Christ's humanity and the pain and suffering he bore on our behalf.

Our 30-minute devotional time at the beginning of each day was given a theme as we moved through the week. Starting with the 'Triumphal Entry', we moved through the 'Cleansing of the Temple', 'Passover and First Communion', 'Crucifixion' and 'Resurrection' - which took on greater meaning in the context of the events leading up to it.

We sought to exercise all of our senses through use of colour, dance, hot cross buns, readings from Mark's Gospel, singing, praying, film, having breakfast together, poetry, preaching and Easter eggs! This was not being creative for creative sake, but rather seeking to reflect the creativity of our creator God in the way we worship. The Holy Spirit is active, creative and life-giving, and one of the hallmarks of worship in the Spirit is creativity, seeing the church expressing all the 'God-colours'. Drawing from the scriptures and a wealth of church tradition brought a depth to our worship - our journey of discovery led us from raucous celebration to reflective silence.

# sound:advice

## helpful websites

### www.worshiptogether.com

This 'worship resource for a new generation' features numerous current and archived articles, insights for worship leaders, a 'New Song Cafe', free sheet music and details of worship conferences (by the way, the next Worship Together conference in the UK is in Eastbourne, 15-17th November - how about taking your worship team away for a weekend by the sea!). This website is quite commercial in feel and a selective approach is required with regard to some of the articles posted. However, there are some great articles from worship leaders like Graham Kendrick and Darlene Zschech from whom we can learn a great deal.

Linked with this site is [www.worshipexperience.com](http://www.worshipexperience.com) which previews new worship CDs enabling you to listen to 30 second clips of songs (although the sound quality is poor, it gives you an idea of the musical style of a CD before you spend your hard earned cash!).

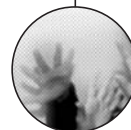
## WORSHIP TOGETHER MAGAZINE

Tired of looking at the screen?

The bi-monthly Worship Together Magazine aims to equip worship leaders, musicians and pastors for leading their church in worship. In many ways the magazine is better than the website, including wide-ranging practical and biblical articles from worship leaders and theologians together with reviews of new CD's. The cost is £14.75 for a 1 year subscription. All these resources serve to expand our view of worship and remind us that we are part of something much bigger than our local congregation.

## TEN TOP WORSHIP TIPS FOR THE CONGREGATION

1. See yourself as a new covenant priest and a holy nation citizen - you belong in God's presence.
2. See yourself as part of the worship team - an active participator not a passive spectator.
3. Don't come before God on the basis of your own performance or your own righteousness-they are filthy rags. Come before him on the basis that Jesus is your righteousness and justifier.
4. Draw close to God with your heart, not just your hands and voice.
5. Don't compare your worship and devotion with anyone else's worship and devotion-that's God's business not yours.
6. Don't allow your song or style preferences to determine your worship and be careful that your preferences don't become prejudices.
7. Don't just sing - sing to God. There is a difference between the two.
8. Come with an openness to the Holy Spirit and don't use the first few songs to sort your life out. Sort it out beforehand if at all possible.
9. Don't base your worship on how you feel. The phrase 'I will' is a good, biblical starting place for worship. An engine starts with a 'mechanical' act-the turning of the key in the ignition.
10. View your whole body as your worship instrument.



# Monochrome or technicolour? the Holy Spirit in worship

by Dave & Chris Richards

Dave was just about to preach on the subject of 'Jesus on the cross' in the Big Top Circus Tent at Minehead, Spring Harvest. Andy Au and a young girl dancer began to move all around a rough wooden cross on the huge stage and as the Holy Spirit moved upon them they enacted the crucifixion in a powerful array of movements which encapsulated all the horrors of Jesus' final suffering and yet at the same time revealing his tremendous sacrifice to set us free from our wretched sin.

Dave found it easy to preach and as he concluded, the people were invited to wait before responding. It was very quiet in the tent as 4,500 people watched two artists, Bill and his wife Rachel, climb on to the stage. All week, on either side of the platform there had been two huge sheets on which people came and put their red thumb prints before writing a prayer; prayers of hope for children, thanksgiving for a saved marriage, petition for a sick loved one, and many more.

Now with gentle music in the background we all sat in silence, as the artists painted, for about five minutes. A huge heart appeared and then Jesus began to emerge, hanging from a cross, with outpoured blood freely signifying his poured out love for us.

The Bishop of Willesden, a great friend of ours, then made a simple request for people to respond as the Holy Spirit led them. In quietness people began leaving their seats to kneel at the foot of five large rough wooden crosses. Some wrote things down, others surrendered afresh to the lordship of Christ. Others settled the issue of not trying to escape from difficulties but asking God to glorify His name! People were saved, hearts were warmed and Robin Mark began to softly sing "Jesus, all for Jesus" and we were, as always, left amazed at the wonderful and varied workings of God's precious Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had spoken to so many people and through so many people in many different ways! We love those verses in 1 Corinthians 12:4-7. "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of service but the same Lord: and there are varieties of working but the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

And just today in our local church meeting in Town Centre we experienced varieties of gifts and workings which left us so encouraged as we joined with young and old to worship the Lord. We were led by the youth band on their second outing, there were flags, creative prophecy, dance and quiet reflection over communion, anointing with oil and the casting out of a demon. We experienced a rich tapestry of the Holy Spirit's loving presence as he was honoured and invited.

Recently we have been asking the question are we still a charismatic people or are we now charismatic?

We believe that worship, whether in word, song, drama, painting, dance, poetry, flags, banners, fragrance, flowers, noise, silence, candles....., whatever medium is chosen, should always be in the Holy Spirit. Worship should be Christ-centred, Christ-honouring and full of the creative genes of our marvellous creator Father God! We should be awash with creative response to a God who knows no limits in his rich extravagance!

Is our worship monochrome or does it contain the life of the covenant keeping . . .

- God of the rainbow?
- Where are the modern day dreams and visions that portray his splendour and purpose?
- Where is the kind of poetry that flowed from King David and the kind of wisdom which was dispensed from heaven and distilled by Solomon?
- Do our leaders and worship leaders expect these kind of things to happen in worship or are we running through the doors marked "Safe Routine?"

Psalms of praise breaking out in our midst do happen and light up a grey world, unbounded joy in dance breaks shackles of apathy and indifference. (Maybe we have become respectable, rather than exuberant?). The word of consoling prophecy that makes the broken-hearted hope again or stops the wayward from their foolish ways.....oh for that release of the Spirit that Watchman Nee wrote so longingly about.

And what a big part the worship leaders have to play; learning to listen to the voice of the Spirit whispering.... "Now", " Wait", encouraging the flow of Life, rather than painstakingly running through today's list of songs.

Look around you and start to discover the gifts and graces which God has placed in your church. Ask the Lord how to mine the gold, silver and precious stones that are in your brothers and sisters. Pray from Ephesians 1:17-19.

"...That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power in us who believe, according to the working of His great might.

"Let's provoke one another to get into the presence of God and let's ask the Holy Spirit how we can contribute to any gathering whether it is 3 or 3,000. Let's learn to walk in the

## The measure of true worship

In the widest sense then, the offering of our whole lives to God, as a priestly service, is the measure of our worship - as we live in obedience to the words of the Bible. For these words are the channel chosen by the living Word to reveal Himself to us. Living in obedience to the words with the empowerment of the Spirit is offering worship to the Father through the Word. "God is Spirit and his worshippers must worship in Spirit and in Truth" (John 4: 24); "...sanctify them by the truth: your word is truth" (John 17:17).

The word of God, the Bible, stands at the very heart of worship. True worship is expressed in a Spirit-led life of obedience and in a relationship with God as He is - not as we imagine him to be. We are to image Him - not the other way round!

Donald McCullough, in his thoughtful book *The Trivialisation of God*, refers to our tendency to worship a God created by our own imagination and desires, rather than the God who is revealed in the pages of the Bible. He observes that "we will be tempted...to create for ourselves gods who will not threaten us with transcendence."

The God of the Bible constantly threatens us with his complete 'otherness' - his holiness and sovereign power. He is not a comfortable God to live with and he has invited us into his household, not the other way round! To quote A.W.Tozer once more; "Worship is pure or base as the worshipper entertains high or low thoughts of God. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God." (The Knowledge of the Holy).

## Let the Bible shape our concept of God

It is the Bible which should shape our concept of God, not our own imagination and desires. Donald McCullough speaks of what he calls "the dangerous illusion of a manageable deity". To worship the God of our imagination is to worship a small and limited God whose nature and character are modelled on the observable and tangible pattern of humanity. Such a God we can manage. The Israelites continually fell into this trap - from the golden calf in the wilderness to the bull calves in Dan and Bethel. This tendency to reduce God to one who fits into our culture and thoughts would be repeated throughout Church history too.

Today the temptation to worship a post-modern God of cosy proportions, warm and intimate, an undemanding 'daddy', is strong. The Biblical presentation of a holy God of fire who dwells in unapproachable light and whose throne is surrounded by terrifying angelic beings is a startling contrast with much contemporary thinking. To have a biblical view of God is to allow the Bible to shape our mental concept of God, it is to see God as he sees himself. "What we know of God, we must receive from God," says Donald McCullough.

## Grace is not a ground for complacency

The fact that we can approach such a deity at all is a result of his marvellous grace, but not grounds for complacency. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews reminds us that we should "be thankful and so worship God with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire." (12:28-29).

None the less the same writer encourages us to "approach the throne of grace with confidence" (4:16)! It is the manner of that approach which is so important. And that is what worship is about - approaching the throne of grace with a right sense of awe and reverential love. Tozer defines worship in this

way: "to feel in the heart and express in some appropriate manner a humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder." (Worship: the Missing Jewel). Such awe and wonder will arise only when our concept of the God whom we are worshipping is shaped by the Bible. For the Israelites there was a constant tension in worshipping the God who had identified himself with them in salvation but who constantly demanded their identification with him in holiness and purity. The coming of Christ has not changed the reality of God's nature and character. He is still God - holy and sovereign, hating sin and pride. For us the same tension exists - how to celebrate the nearness of God as our Father, without compromising his apartness and otherness?

## Subjective and objective values

Some months ago my wife Doreen lost the diamond from a ring. She was very upset and like the lady in the parable she swept the

