New Year's Resolutions for Your Worship Ministry

By Nicholas Zork

There is something about a new beginning -- on a calendar or otherwise -- that inspires us. We are invigorated by an opportunity to "do better this time around." We all know, of course, that January 1 rarely ends up being the watershed moment we had envisioned. But making New Year's resolutions continues to seem like a reasonable idea. We realize that there are at least two or three simple things we could do every day -- exercise, chip away at that long-term project, read the Scriptures -- that would drastically change our lives. So what happens between January 1 and our failure by the end of February (or, more likely, January 4)?

The reality is that even the most important and least time-consuming activities are impossible in a life that is already too full. Looking at your worship ministry, here are two things I suggest you resolve to remove. This intentional inaction will not only create needed space in your personal life but help you prioritize in your ministry as well:

1. Give yourself and your worship team several weeks of extravaganza-free worship gatherings. The Advent and Christmas Seasons are generally the busiest in the church year. Between special events and all the additional work that goes into seasonal worship services, December is
hardly a vacation month for church leaders and musicians. With little time for restful renewal, the human resources in your leadership team have likely been depleted. The ecology of a worship ministry cannot sustain the effort required in high liturgical seasons. Enjoy a few weeks of simplicity as a matter of ecological ethics and justice. In the process, you might just discover things you can permanently remove.

2. Set aside at least one Sabbath morning to simply participate in your community's worship gathering with no leadership responsibilities. If the intrinsic value of restorative rest is not reason enough to take a break, view it as an essential learning exercise as well. Those of us who are always leading from the platform need to be reminded of what worship is actually like for participants in the pew. And more importantly, we need to practice a truth that is obvious but sometimes overlooked: worship is an encounter with God, not with us. Worship ministry is important, but we are not necessary mediators of God's gracious presence. God wants to use all of us, but Jesus is the true worship leader who draws people to himself (John 12:32). As we take time to rest in the sufficiency of God's work, we can relearn the true, intrinsic value of what it means to be human -- to be beloved daughters and sons of God. Sometimes we have to set aside our "to do" lists to recognize the magnitude of what we already have.

Share your thoughts in our Facebook dialogue.

---

**Worship, Culture and Justice**

**Singing in a Strange Land**

By Pedrito Maynard-Reid

Traditional, Western worship is, for the most part, a monolithic, individualistic, cognitive, and spiritual exercise, that is purportedly unrelated to the rest of life. For the marginalized and the oppressed, worship is "singing in a strange land." Their worship is totally connected to their daily existence. Such worshipers have a cultural worldview that does not envision a universe that is compartmentalized. Life is wholistic. What happens in the week significantly impacts what happens in the worship setting. There is a connectedness and interrelatedness that involves the worshipper's total self and existence. Issues of justice and injustice, equality and inequality, life on the underside, pressures from the economic and social margins, all are brought to the worship setting. Collectively the worshiping community, rather than worshiping individually, weep together, and celebrate together. Together they sing in a strange land. Society may have treated them as "nobodies." But church and the weekly worship service transformed their "nobodiness" into "somebodiness." During the week their lives were plagued by trouble and suffering, difficulties and disappointments, trials and tribulations, cares

---

**To The Point**

"The word became flesh, said St. John, and the Church has turned the flesh back into words: words of good advice, words of comfort, words of wisdom and encouragement, yes, but what changes the world is flesh, words with skin on them, words that hug you and cry with you and play with you and love you and rebuke you and build houses with you and teach your children in school."

- N.T. Wright in *The Crown and the Fire*
and woes. For many, life was a daily physical, emotional, and economic grind. Sabbath morning worship is a “bridge over troubled waters,” it is a “shelter in the time of storm,” it is a time when the community “takes their burdens to the Lord and leaves them there.” The disenchantment, marginalization, dehumanization, is left in the worship space, and full acceptance and equality takes their place. Justice is preached, sung, and acted out in worship. Pressures from the frustrations and ailments of daily living and social injustice are released in a flood of emotion and joyful celebration. Worship thus is therapeutic. The worshiper then departs and goes into the world, into the strange land, to bring justice, equality, and salvation to a dying world.

[Editor’s note: Pedrito Maynard-Reid will be a featured presenter at the 2013 Andrews University Music & Worship Conference, continuing the conversation on worship, culture, and justice. For more information and to register: www.cye.org/mwc.]

**Visual Technology in Worship**

**Visual Technology and the Local Church**
Technology is rapidly shaping society. From iPhones to iPads to complicated lighting boards and powerful projectors, society is influenced by the best gadgets and electronics this age has to offer. But how are cellphones, computers, projectors-you name it-influencing your local church? Read more

**Older Folks Like Visuals Too**
As technology has worked its way into our sanctuaries over the last two decades, generation gaps have grown into chasms. Any church over 30 years old is having to traverse the balance between their young adult and senior members by finding relevant ways to teach their congregation while staying grounded in biblical principles and tradition. For many this balance has been the cause of frustration and conflict. Churches with largely older members have often decided that avoiding change is the best course of action, resulting in a loss of dynamic energy that can lead to decreased membership and effectiveness. However the gap can be bridged with good communication. Read more

**Downey Church uses SongShow**
Like many churches we started our media experience with PowerPoint. When we needed more features, we started by listing the features that we thought were important that were missing from PowerPoint. We read every review and article we...

Bill Aumac

could find. One of the great features of worship presentation software is they all allow some type of trial. We installed them all and evaluated them as well. This is an important step that everyone who is thinking about changing systems should do. Nothing says more about the software than actually trying it on your own system. There were some software packages that were highly rated, that just didn't feel right to us. That's an important item to consider as you will be using this software every week.

Read more

Prezi Can Be Stunning

If you're looking for a way to spice things up a bit from the same old PowerPoint slides, or if you'd like to present your worship graphics in a more linear way, you might give Prezi a try.

Prezi, much like PowerPoint and Apple's Keynote, is a computer-based presentation program that works on PC, Mac, iPhone and iPad. It differs from the other presentation software options because, instead of being slide-based, Prezi uses one large canvas where all of your text, graphics, and even videos are placed. This can be really helpful when you need your audience to grasp concepts and how they are connected in a more visually spatial method. Read more

Spartanburg Uses ProPresenter

ProPresenter is a very dynamic worship software application suitable for the simplest of needs to more complex integrations. There are many features you can read about on renewedvision.com, but I will cover some here that I find very appealing. We utilize the site license and find it very convenient to have it on multiple computers. The software is also cross-platform so we can all get along.

Read more...

Worship Leadership

Mentoring Worship Leaders

By Jason Decena

Nothing worth doing or achieving ever happens by accident. There is always a clear intention behind every grand accomplishment.

Great worship music doesn't happen by accident either, but our approach often denies that point. How can we, as leaders in our churches, help to achieve consistency and excellence? There are many solutions, but I'll offer
The Design of Worshipful Spaces (Part 2)

By Dannon Rampton

Last month I mentioned that the design of a worship space makes a statement about a community's values. It follows that each statement would be as unique as the community itself. There is no "right" way to design a worship space -- as some of you commented, design simply adds depth to the unique worship experience.

There are plenty of different expressions of community values in worship. Some groups choose a formal "high church" experience, emphasizing the grandness of the Creator. They often meet in spacious halls, with hard surfaces that create reverberant acoustics. Other groups prefer a more personal, community-focused experience, connecting with the intimacy of God. They might worship in a cozier space with lower ceilings, warmer colors, and softer finishes. There are groups that want their worship service to feel familiar to those who aren't "church" people, more like a contemporary concert venue. They would prioritize stage lighting and audio equipment, with softer finishes to absorb echoes. And some groups like a casual urban space that invites God into daily life. They might use sofas or tables and chairs, perhaps in a warehouse with concrete floors and exposed framing.

None of these ideas are wrong. Our Scripture makes no mention of sofas or pews, organs or video projectors. What we do find in the Bible is a call to authentic community -- loving strangers (Deuteronomy 10:19) and caring for others (Acts 4:34, James 1:27). And where decorations are mentioned, each item has a purpose in supporting the worship experience (Exodus 25-27).

What type of design best expresses your community and supports worship?

[Editor's note: Dannon Rampton is an interior designer in Los Angeles. He has agreed to lead a four-part discussion on interior design in worship. Get involved by offering your initial thoughts on this article in our Facebook dialogue.]
Technology is rapidly shaping society. From iPhones to iPads to complicated lighting boards and powerful projectors, society is influenced by the best gadgets and electronics this age has to offer. But how are cellphones, computers, projectors—you name it— influencing your local church?

At my church the use of projectors, visual art, lighting boards and computers play an important part of our worship experience every Sabbath. Every weekend, technology finds its place in bringing the Gospel Message to people’s hearts. As Matt Brown, one of our technical ministers, puts it, “The role of media is to provide an atmosphere that allows people to connect with God in a more powerful way.”

So how are you using technologies in your church? Is it telling the message of Jesus, or are you worried about getting the “cool effect” and missing the point?

Here are three things to keep in mind when working with technology:

**Keep your audience in mind.**
Jesus spoke in parables, stories and visual illustrations. His message was always the same, but He knew his audience, so He would use the best way to tell the message. The same thing can be said about the use of technology in the church. Some congregations are not equipped or ready to get into the technological age. That’s hard to believe, but it’s true. So before you invest in new equipment, ask yourself the following question: Will this best serve my congregation in understanding the story of Jesus?

**Have a plan “B.”** For the ones that use computers, projectors and all those gadgets, you understand the unwritten love/hate relationship between humans and technology . . . sometimes things don’t go according to plan. A light bulb might burn out, a cable could be missing or the battery would run out. If your service is dependent on technology, always have a plan “B.” Understanding your limitations and going over all the things that could go wrong is a good thing to do.

**Remember the purpose.** First Corinthians 10:31 says that whatever we do, we should do it all for the glory of God. When using technology in the church, don’t forget its purpose, which is to bring glory to God.
Don’t be afraid of letting technology into the church. Keep the purpose in mind and the Lord will bless. May God continue to guide you as you use the talents He’s given you for the advancement of His Kingdom.

Eddie Cornejo is the Associate Pastor
at Foster Church in Asheville, NC
As technology has worked its way into our sanctuaries over the last two decades, generation gaps have grown into chasms. Any church over 30 years old is having to traverse the balance between their young adult and senior members by finding relevant ways to teach their congregation while staying grounded in biblical principles and tradition. For many this balance has been the cause of frustration and conflict.

Churches with largely older members have often decided that avoiding change is the best course of action, resulting in a loss of dynamic energy that can lead to decreased membership and effectiveness. However the gap can be bridged with good communication.

The key to effective communication is to understand what you are trying to communicate. This may seem overly simplified, but this approach is one that many church leaders miss as they decide to purchase the latest gadget or—at the other extreme—choose to avoid innovative teaching styles and stick with the “tried and true.”

Our job is both simple and yet vastly complex. We are called to preach the Gospel, but we also need to preach with enough relevance that congregations will leave with the message on their minds and the Word on their lips. In the end it is the Spirit’s job to cultivate that message in the heart of each attendee, but we must be as effective as possible in planting the message.

With that in mind, here are some thoughts about adding visuals into more traditional churches.

1. Older folks like visuals too. Some churches believe that older congregations won’t change to a more visual style. But many preachers have been pleasantly surprised at the positive response that visuals receive from seniors in the church. Visuals aid the hearing impaired with easy to follow slides that incorporate both of text and pictures. If you have a lot of retirees attending your church, you might find success by using still images, focusing on one to two large traditional graphics per week.

2. Use traditional images from modern sources. Look for imagery that offers traditional biblical concepts that older generations can relate to, while maintaining a modern quality standard that younger audiences need to feel relevant. Images created before the mid-1990’s are scanned from fine art prints, which look great on a wall but may not have the desired effect within a slide presentation.

3. Keep it simple. If you lead a traditional or blended church with a mix of tastes, you’ll find that basic visuals will have the most impact. Stick with powerful iconic images that are relevant to the message. And try to avoid moderate to fast moving backgrounds for worship, since lots of people can find them distracting. Remember, when it comes to visual presentation, less is often more.

Do you have a tip or suggestion for effective church communication? Tell us how you are using visuals at your church. Email us at info@sermonview.com.

Copyright 2007, Sermonview. Reprinted with permission.
Like many churches we started our media experience with PowerPoint. When we needed more features, we started by listing the features that we thought were important that were missing from PowerPoint. We read every review and article we could find. One of the great features of worship presentation software is they all allow some type of trial. We installed them all and evaluated them as well. This is an important step that everyone who is thinking about changing systems should do. Nothing says more about the software than actually trying it on your own system. There were some software packages that were highly rated, that just didn’t feel right to us. That’s an important item to consider as you will be using this software every week.

One of the features that was important to us was to have one presentation system that could display announcements, songs and sermon points. We didn't want to use PowerPoint for half of the service and switch to another system for the other part of the system. This one feature greatly reduced the number of entries in our decision process in 2007 when we did our evaluation (that might have changed by now).

Eventually SongShow Plus was selected as the system that best met our needs. None of the packages we evaluated was perfect, including SongShow Plus, but it best met our requirements. Some of the features we like and regularly use in SongShow Plus are available in most presentation systems. We are using motion backgrounds and videos (the biggest single thing missing from PowerPoint). But we also run a slide show for announcements between the services, yet we can also show individual slides during the announcement time. This is very useful feature for us.

Additionally, you can create your slide shows in SongShow Plus or PowerPoint. You can import PowerPoints into SongShow or there is also an integration feature that allows you to show and control PowerPoint from within SongShow. Very useful if your pastor is giving you PowerPoint slides for his sermon notes.

Songs can be imported from PowerPoint, text files and imported from SongSelect. This is a great time saver for us. Songs and backgrounds can be fixed, meaning a specified order for verses with a set background or you can use Improv. Improv will easily let the person running the show set the backgrounds as they see fit.

There are features we haven’t even gotten to yet, but these maybe important to others. Some of the newer features are control by iPad or Andriod. You can also have stage monitor feed that shows text without the backgrounds for ease of viewing while on the platform. There are options for text over live video as well.

But the most important thing is to try out the software and see if it fits right for you. Download the trial software and give it a spin. Get on the forum for the product and see what people are saying.

It's made by R-Technics Inc.
http://www.songshowplus.com
$299.95 for basic
$449.95 for professional
additional licenses for a site are $95
Bill Aumack is a volunteer and Head Elder at Downey Seventh-day Adventist Church (www.downeychurch.com) in Downey, CA (Los Angeles area). In his spare time he is a Senior Engineer at Northrop Grumman. He is interested in helping his local church reach people for Jesus; sometimes that involves technology and computers, sometimes not.
Prezi Can Be Stunning

By Roy Ice

If you’re looking for a way to spice things up a bit from the same old PowerPoint slides, or if you’d like to present your worship graphics in a more linear way, you might give Prezi a try.

*Prezi*, much like PowerPoint and Apple’s Keynote, is a computer-based presentation program that works on PC, Mac, iPhone and iPad. It differs from the other presentation software options because, instead of being slide-based, Prezi uses one large canvas where all of your text, graphics, and even videos are placed. This can be really helpful when you need your audience to grasp concepts and how they are connected in a more visually spatial method.

For example, at the beginning of your sermon, the video screen displays the title of your sermon atop a photo or graphic background. Then, as you enter the topic, instead of changing slides, the “camera” zooms out, revealing three circles nestled around your title which contain the subheadings or major points to your talk. With the next click, the camera zooms over to your first circle until it fills the screen. As you continue talking, it zooms in even further, flying through the empty space of one of the subheading’s letters and reveals a block of text, Scripture, a photo, or a video clip. From there, it might zoom in, out, pan to the side, or even barrel roll to another part of the canvas and reveal more material. You decide.

One important word of advice: Unless you have some airsick bags tucked behind the tithe envelopes in the pew racks, don’t put too many barrel rolls back-to-back in your presentations. It really does have quite an affect on most people.

**PROS:** First of all, *Prezi* can be quite visually stunning and hold the attention of your congregation throughout your sermon. Yes, even the teens. Secondly, because *Prezi*’s file format works on both PC and Mac, you can save your file on a USB thumb drive and use it anywhere you speak, regardless of the computer programs each venue uses. Third, it is quite affordable. If you are a teacher or a student with an .edu email account, you can use the full program, including 500 MB of cloud storage, for free. There are two paid level accounts (“Enjoy” level $4.92/mo. and “Pro” level $13.25/mo.), but most people would do just fine with a free “Public” account that comes with 100 MB of cloud storage. Once you create your *Prezi* online and download it to your computer, you don’t really need to store it on their servers anyway. Lastly, because your information is built on one canvas, you can also click anywhere you wish to go on demand. This is great for discussion groups who wish to go to certain portions of your material during Q&A.

**CONS:** First, there’s a slight learning curve, but a few minutes with their online video tutorials will have you
building your first *Prezi* in no time. Secondly, unless you wish to give verbal cues to the person in the video booth, you will need to use an iPhone, iPad, or a Bluetooth keyboard to advance your Prezi, if you are not within reach of the computer connected to the video projector. In this setup you must use an app like *MobileMouse* which allows you to have access to the arrow keyboard keys and a track pad. Before you can present, you must sync this app with the computer you will be using.

All this said, *Prezi* still provides a great new way of creating memorable presentations that will help your congregation remember what you talked about.

Roy Ice is the Executive Pastor of the Napa Community SDA Church in Napa, CA.
ProPresenter is a very dynamic worship software application suitable for the simplest of needs to more complex integrations. There are many features you can read about on renewedvision.com, but I will cover some here that I find very appealing. We utilize the site license and find it very convenient to have it on multiple computers. The software is also cross-platform so we can all get along.

Playing DVDs can be a mixed bag because DVDs spin down and when you want a DVD to play, it has to spin up and therefore a small delay ensues. But with ProPresenter, you have the option to rip the DVD cues into the program if you have enough heads up time.

Have you ever searched online for lyrics to certain songs and found lyrics that were not completely accurate? Enter SongSelect. We use the SongSelect integration, by CCLI, and once the license is connected through the program, you immediately have access to the entire database of lyrics. Preset your slide template, import the lyrics directly into the template, and you have your lyrics right away. Even though the template is preset, you almost always have to make some adjustments to the words, given that different songs sets have different amounts of words for each verse and may not match your template exactly.

Hot Folders allow you to drop content into certain folders without having to “import” them into ProPresenter. If you have a network with shared access to certain folders, you can set certain folders up like “Video Files”, “Backgrounds”, “Sermon Images”, etc. All someone has to do is drop the content into the folders and they appear in the program browser almost immediately.

Bibles can be purchased through renewedvision.com for $15 each. I am disappointed that they do not apply to the ProPresenter cross-licensed to the Bibles. You have to purchase a Bible for each computer and that can add up really quick. But it may not be Renewed Vision’s fault as the licensing could be from higher up the chain.

I would love to see ProPresenter integrate Keynote presentations. Right now, you have to switch between programs to use both or export your Keynote presentation as jpegs and import them manually. But if you plan ahead of time, you should set up your slides playlist with your custom background images for each sermon. Our pastors email me their Bible texts, quotes, images and list them in the order that they will preach, so I am able to create the presentation within ProPresenter and have it ready for the sermon.
Another great feature is the mobile app, ProPresenter Remote ($5). You set an observer password and a controller password in the main application and as long as the mobile user has one of these, they can see and/or control the slide presentation. The Observer login allows someone to browse through the presentations. The Control login allows someone to take over the presentation. I have found the remote app to be great when you are short of hands and need to be up front on the church platform. The apps are iOS only.

Overall, ProPresenter is very intuitive. There are a lot of features that make this one of the best worship software products on the market. I find that most of the people I know that run worship software use ProPresenter and I think you will not be disappointed in it.

About Kevin Watson:
At the Spartanburg SDA Church, I volunteer as the Youth Director and organize the annual Alive Youth Rally (AliveSC.com). In addition to those responsibilities, I assist in church programming at the A/V booth. You can follow Kevin at www.Facebook.com/itskev or on Twitter - @itskev.
Mentoring Worship Leaders

By Jason Decena

Nothing worth doing or achieving ever happens by accident. There is always a clear intention behind every grand accomplishment.

Great worship music doesn't happen by accident either, but our approach often denies that point. How can we, as leaders in our churches, help to achieve consistency and excellence? There are many solutions, but I'll offer one in particular: mentorship.

Mentorship is discipleship, plainly and simply put. The process of mentorship is easy to understand, but sometimes can be quite difficult to implement. In the context of worship leading, however, the parameters for mentorship are more narrowly defined. A worship leader mentor needs to have the spiritual skill set as well as the musical skill set to be able to come alongside budding new worship leaders. These requirements are crucial for credibility.

A mentor serves the function of a producer, in the musical sense. There are musical elements that can add or detract from a worship experience. A mentor's job is to help coach a person or a group musically. Many times, a player will learn a part for a song apart from the band. Unfortunately, when they come together with the band to run over the song, they're not used to playing with others. This results in the all too common violation of the 100% rule. All of the band must equal 100% of sound; but not to exceed 100%. Someone has to tell the acoustic guitar player that even though he CAN play through the whole song, it doesn't mean he SHOULD play through the whole song. The same goes for every other instrument in the band. A mentor's job is to help the band add or subtract musical elements that will support the congregation in connecting with God.

In the realm of spirituality, a mentor must have the heart and life to model true, holistic worship leading through living. This doesn't mean perfection. It does, however, mean, authenticity. Many times we'll ask folks to lead music based on their musical skill alone, not taking into consideration whether or not a person is ready to be a public figure in church, modeling worship through living. If you're not asking someone to lead worship through their life when you ask them to lead worship through music, it's unfair for both them and the congregation they'll be serving.

Perhaps in your situation, you may need to divide the roles of the mentor between yourself and someone with musical prowess. Ideally, one person would be able to shoulder both aspects. Worship is a holistic endeavor, and should be approached as such.