Editorial
by Nicholas Zork

Liturical Lessons from the Decalogue: Coveting Your Neighbor’s Worship

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor." (Exodus 20:17 NASB)

I appreciate the title of this newsletter, "Best Practices for Adventist Worship." But I have always worried that we might be unintentionally implying something we do not, in fact, believe: that the "best practices for Adventist Worship" are being done by
someone else, somewhere else, and we should be imitating them. Of course, we all need to learn from one another's worship practices. Understanding the way that other communities encounter God can broaden our narrow horizons, revealing more fully the God in whose image we are all made and enriching our perception of how we - in our human diversity - can come before God in worship. But "best practices" in one community may not be best in another without significant adaptation.

Moreover, excessive focus on the worship practices of other communities can inadvertently feed the flames of a reality that needs no encouragement: liturgical coveting. We don't often think about the ninth commandment in the context of worship, but the tendency to covet our neighbor's worship is probably more prevalent than we'd like to admit. Read more

JOIN THE DISCUSSION ON FACEBOOK

Intergenerational Worship Ministry
by Kasper Haughton Jr.
Moving Out of The Nursing Home

Do our emerging generations of youth experience our churches as they would a nursing home or as they do their own home environments?

I recently had a conversation with a friend about the youth ministering on stage during our church service and this interesting observation arose. We've all seen it - an eager group of young adults and teens gathering in their local nursing home. They enter with smiles, songs, and hugs - and genuinely enjoy ministering there. At the end of the day, however, they are merely visitors on stage doing ministry meaningful for their elders. Very few young adults and teens choose to live at nursing homes, let alone stay longer than a couple hours.

How can our churches become more than nursing home ministries, where our emerging generations find
cultures that value true intergenerational community rather than just an invitation to curate culture meaningful for others? Read more

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Featured Media
by Sigve Tonstad

Rites or Rights: Sabbath and Justice in the Prophets

Sigve Tonstad presents at the 2013 Andrews University Music & Worship Conference. Considering the implications of Sabbath theology, Tonstad offers key insights on the important issue of how Christian worship relates to the biblical vision of justice.

Rites or Rights: Sabbath and Justice in the Prophets
Worship and Biblical Spirituality
by Zane Yi

Preparing for Resurrection

"Sir, give me some of this water."

The unnamed woman unexpectedly encounters Jesus at the well and is fascinated by him. But her response to his offer of giving her "living water" reveals that she doesn't really understand what Jesus is talking about. They are using the same words to talk about different things. Her request for water is motivated by a purely practical concern. She wants relief from a daily chore (John 4:15). Jesus wants to give her so much more.

The mismatch between what the woman wants and what Jesus offers represents the problem with human desire generally. What we want is not necessarily what God wants. And this frequently causes us to misunderstand what God is offering.
us. We hear and read what we want into God's invitation.

Often we gather to worship a god we hope will satisfy our desires, instead of questioning the desires themselves. Read more

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Worship Music
by Richard Hickham

They're applauding for me in church; should I take a bow?

"Praise the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of his faithful people."
(Psalm 149:1)

Growing up in an academic setting for most of my life, there were always excellent bands, orchestras, and choirs. I felt the joy of the Spirit in the Rutter choral anthems, the lively sacred Holsinger wind symphony works, and the majestic Handel, Beethoven, and Saint-Saens orchestral masterpieces. We were always chasing a nearly perfect
performance, with every accidental and minute phrasal ending individually practiced and then group rehearsed. We finished every service with a rousing exclamation point to enthusiastic applause, even from the smallest, most conservative churches. Somehow, everything was OK, as long as it was classical. Read more

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Worship Leadership
by Rick Anderson

Anthem Rising: Introduction To Worship

Rick Anderson introduces practical ideas that will help you in leading your church worship team.

Anthem Rising: Introduction To Worship (Ep. 1)
Worship and Relationships
by Erik Stenbakken

How I Got Over Church Music I Don't Like (and other style-elements)

I attend church that for over a decade has prided itself in its contemporary music - but I've never been a fan of it. I deal with it because we do have a very welcoming and evangelistic church base. I like the latter and shrug off the parts I don't like. Except one time. One time it was too much. So I wrote a letter to the pastor about it. He was not a fan of the music that week either and asked if he could forward it to a few key leaders, sans my name. Within an hour I had a call or two from folks who knew it was me, basically agreeing with me. Then a message from the music leader rolled in: Would I meet with him personally? You bet I would. I had a few things
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Fast forward six or seven years, and my wife was a music leader at the same church. And then it came full circle: we began getting complaints about her music, forwarded courtesy of the new pastor. Read more

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**Featured Interview**

**Speaking Beyond a Single Moment: An Interview with Keith Getty**

Keith Getty is widely recognized as one of the premier modern Christian hymn writers. His compositions are sung in Christian congregations
around the world. And one of his most well-known hymns, *In Christ Alone*, was featured at the enthronement of England's Archbishop of Canterbury. Keith recently released his first live album with his wife and cowriter, Kristyn Getty, Keith & Kristyn Getty - Live at The Gospel Coalition (Modern and Traditional Hymns).

Best Practices for Adventist Worship editor, Nicholas Zork, recently sat down with Keith Getty on behalf of *Curator Magazine*. You can read the interview by clicking here.
I appreciate the title of this newsletter, "Best Practices for Adventist Worship." But I have always worried that we might be unintentionally implying something we do not, in fact, believe: that the "best practices for Adventist Worship" are being done by someone else, somewhere else, and we should be imitating them. Of course, we all need to learn from one another's worship practices. Understanding the way that other communities encounter God can broaden our narrow horizons, revealing more fully the God in whose image we are all made and enriching our perception of how we - in our human diversity - can come before God in worship. But "best practices" in one community may not be best in another without significant adaptation.

Moreover, excessive focus on the worship practices of other communities can inadvertently feed the flames of a reality that needs no encouragement: liturgical coveting. We don't often think about the tenth commandment in the context of worship, but the tendency to covet our neighbor's worship is probably more prevalent than we'd like to admit. This reality is evident in the way that worship resources are often disseminated. For example, the worship songs of large, influential Christian churches are sometimes slavishly replicated in contexts quite dissimilar from the contexts in which they were written. Imitation can, of course, be a great way to learn and grow in our worship practices. And sharing liturgical resources has been central to the life of Christian communities since the earliest Christian churches gathered for worship - even the reception of the New Testament as Scripture began through the circulation of letters to be read in worship! But every community is unique; and the way we come before God in worship should authentically embody each community's particular characteristics and distinctive Divine-human relationship. Coveting our neighbor's worship - misdirected desire for a worship spaces, practices or relationships that are not ours - works against the development of this authentic, local worship.

I want to suggest that Jesus' teaching on lust - a related form of misdirected desire - can help us learn from one another without coveting. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you...If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you." (Matt. 5:29-30) Obviously, Jesus is not recommending literal bodily mutilation - nor am I! But his emphasis on embodied action is instructive. Namely, if you are struggling with misdirected desire, take concrete steps to remove opportunities for fostering it. Leaving your eyes and hands intact, consider these specific practices:

- Regularly "fast" from listening to your favorite worship music or watching popular worship videos - perhaps one day a week, one week a month or for an extended period of time. Use this time to call or visit members of your community that you don't know well. Listen to their stories and let them inform the way you plan worship.
- Write or encourage the musicians in your congregation to write one new congregational hymn or song per month. These songs may or may not always be sung on Sabbath morning. But the process of writing out of the community's own experience will enrich the congregation's perception of the particular ways God is moving in their midst.
- Occasionally remove prominent features of your congregation's worship gatherings (all songs, the sermon, public prayers) and work with a team to discern practices that might take their place and serve a similar liturgical function. Ask, how can we praise God without song? How can the Word be proclaimed without a sermon? How can we pray without using microphones? The space created by removing practices might enable a renewed focus on God's faithful presence to us, which is not contingent on what we do. And perhaps we can learn to be more present to God as our worship becomes less cluttered by some of the things that so often invite our attention and
desire.
Do our emerging generations of youth experience our churches as they would a nursing home or as they do their own home environments?

I recently had a conversation with a friend about the youth ministering on stage during our church service and this interesting observation arose. We've all seen it - an eager group of young adults and teens gathering in their local nursing home. They enter with smiles, songs, and hugs - and genuinely enjoy ministering there. At the end of the day, however, they are merely visitors on stage doing ministry meaningful for their elders. Very few young adults and teens choose to live at nursing homes, let alone stay longer than a couple hours.

How can our churches become more than nursing home ministries, where our emerging generations find cultures that value true intergenerational community rather than just an invitation to curate culture meaningful for others?

Intergenerational ministry...it's a phrase that gets thrown around a lot these days, as it depicts a utopian church community working in synergy across the age gaps. But far too often, the practical experience today's emerging young adults find in church is a world very similar to that of the young boy David as he faced King Saul before battling Goliath. Like Saul, it seems like we consistently recognize the eagerness of our youth to join the cause of lifting high the name of our God, by handing them our bulky armor. All the while, like David, our emerging generations have a completely different talent and skill set in "battle".

Our youth want more than platitudes and promises of an intergenerational church that feels more like the experience of leading worship for someone else's home and world. They want to belong to their church communities, where belonging means that they have an active & valued voice in shaping their home.

Intergenerational ministry is more than asking our emerging generations to join our ministries and worship culture. To a millennial, that experience - like their time ministering in a nursing home - is over in about an hour.

So as a discussion starter for our Best Practices Facebook group, I'd like to extend these 5 focus questions Barna Group resident, David Kinnaman challenged me as we spoke together at a recent event:

1. Cultivating meaningful relationships across generations?
2. Inspiring cultural discernment - showing how to pick from our culture with a heart of wisdom (cause...there's a lot of grey areas out there!)?
3. Promoting reverse mentoring: accepting the way our millenials reach out...to us?
4. Framing vocational discipleship - exemplifying how our calling intersects our daily 9-5 work lives?
5. Being tuned to God's voice, ourselves, as we authentically practice the presence of Christ daily?
“Sir, give me some of this water.”

The unnamed woman unexpectedly encounters Jesus at the well and is fascinated by him. But her response to his offer of giving her “living water” reveals that she doesn’t really understand what Jesus is talking about. They are using the same words to talk about different things. Her request for water is motivated by a purely practical concern. She wants relief from a daily chore (John 4:15). Jesus wants to give her so much more.

The mismatch between what the woman wants and what Jesus offers represents the problem with human desire generally. What we want is not necessarily what God wants. And this frequently causes us to misunderstand what God is offering us. We hear and read what we want into God’s invitation.

Often we gather to worship a god we hope will satisfy our desires, instead of questioning the desires themselves. God becomes a means, a way to get what we want. God, thus, becomes a captive to our desires, which are too often too small, disordered, and manipulated by external forces. (There’s a reason companies spend billions of dollars on advertising!)

This is one of the reasons many Christians around the world deliberately spend time preparing for the celebration of Jesus’ resurrection. They do so by thinking about and dealing with their desires. Different religions deal with desire differently. Some teach that the object of desire, i.e. the physical world, is the ultimately problem and must avoided or escaped. Others think that desire itself is the problem and must be extinguished.

The Christian understanding of fasting assumes nor attempts neither. Rather, by avoiding certain things that consume our attention, we are inviting God to expand, re-order, and transform our desires for God and God’s kingdom.

In ancient times, the primary concern was gathering food and water, which was needed for survival. Fasting for a given period of time, was a reminder and statement that there’s more to life than bread and drink. But today, we have these, as well as other concerns. And dealing with them will help us learn to desire the water Jesus is actually offering us.

What’s consuming your life at the moment and how might God want to transform your thirst this Easter?
"Praise the Lord. 
Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of his faithful people." (Psalm 149:1)

Growing up in an academic setting for most of my life, there were always excellent bands, orchestras, and choirs. I felt the joy of the Spirit in the Rutter choral anthems, the lively sacred Holsinger wind symphony works, and the majestic Handel, Beethoven, and Saint-Saens orchestral masterpieces. We were always chasing a nearly perfect performance, with every accidental and minute phrasal ending individually practiced and then group rehearsed. We finished every service with a rousing exclamation point to enthusiastic applause, even from the smallest, most conservative churches. Somehow, everything was OK, as long as it was classical.

But one day someone rang an alarm in my head that I have not yet been able to shake. I was serving in a worship meeting with Pastor John Nixon, and speaking to a dozen music professionals in the room. He said, "I could never finish a sermon to applause and take a bow for the work I had done on behalf of my master." That saying continues to challenge me everytime I step up on the platform.

Now, please don't misunderstand me. I love a good rousing postlude and sending the people out on an upbeat note after services. However, it is in the way that I accept applause or let it pass through me to its rightful place that makes the difference. It also sets a tone to the ensemble I am leading.

In recent years I have been more thoughtful of the "why" questions in worship. For most of my early career it was largely about the "how." When I reflect on singing a "new" song to the Lord in worship, I use this application. Of course, on the surface level, creating, finding, and singing new songs will forever re-energize the body as we discover new facets of our King and Redeemer and new musical means to do it. However, as with so much of Scripture, one of the double meanings is singing (playing) the song with a new heart. This is what the Master wants - my complete and total surrender and acknowledgement of him. This is what worship is about; I can no longer take the applause.

I hope today that you might sing a "new" song and reflect on who really deserves the credit!
I attend church that for over a decade has prided itself in its contemporary music - but I've never been a fan of it. I deal with it because we do have a very welcoming and evangelistic church base. I like the latter and shrug off the parts I don't like. Except one time. One time it was too much. So I wrote a letter to the pastor about it. He was not a fan of the music that week either and asked if he could forward it to a few key leaders, sans my name. Within an hour I had a call or two from folks who knew it was me, basically agreeing with me. Then a message from the music leader rolled in: Would I meet with him personally? You bet I would. I had a few things to say that didn't make it into the email! So we met, and I listened. And I didn't say any of those other things. In fact, as I listened, really heard him. I knew that no matter how "out of hand" the music had been in my mind, I had been out of line. He explained that even he didn't like the music that week. But most of all, why had I not come directly to him in the first place? I apologized both in person and in writing. About a year later, he left the church. I've never forgotten that.

Fast forward six or seven years, and my wife was a music leader at the same church. And then it came full circle: we began getting complaints about her music, forwarded courtesy of the new pastor. She didn't have enough instruments. No guitars. Why did she have to include a hymn? And the final thing that sent me over the other edge: one of her team members was criticized for not smiling enough while singing. Seriously? Fortunately, I was on the phone with the person who brought this up. I kindly but firmly stopped him and said simply: "Don't go there. Just do not." What he didn't know was that the singer leading worship was going through a divorce right then - not smiling indeed. My wife's team held together for another two years until she too felt it was time to move on.

We had been away from our home church for nearly three months and just returned this week. There was a new music team leading, singing songs I didn't know or particularly love. Just as I was about to roll my eyes, I caught two other folks in my same row: one had her hands up and eyes closed in praise. The other was crying gently, moved by something in the music. Bam. It hit home: this is not about me. This is not about my taste at all. This is about reaching people, other people. Folks who hear differently than I do are moved by things that don't move me. It's about praise and worship. When I remember that, elements of style that don't appeal me lose their rough edges because it's not all about me. And it never was.

Here are a few recommendations for pastors & other leaders that I have learned from my own experience:

- Don't be a conduit for criticism. It's unwise, and it's unbiblical. If someone has a gripe, encourage them to go right to the source and say it or offer to go with them. Chances are, the complaint will die right there. If it's serious, follow Matt. 18: 15-17 (although a difference in taste is seldom a sin).
- Take a few moments and talk to and listen to the worship leaders. What's going on with their lives? Where are they coming from when they plan the music? What kind of work goes into their preparation (hint: more than you may expect).
- Remember that our society is flooded with sights and sounds of professional musicians with massive marketing and show productions, and we think "that's who singers are." When we see the three lonely singers on stage without the lasers and smoke or staging, we feel a bit let down, even if only subconsciously. Those comparisons are not fair; especially as Heaven judges it.
- Thank your worship leaders often. The volume of criticism they get is depressing. Remember, they're not (usually) paid to do this; it's an offering of time and effort that is too frequently repaid with complaints and little else
- Remind your parishioners that there is a wide range of tastes in their church. We tend to move in circles that think
like we do so we begin assuming everyone thinks as we do. So why would anyone present a style so unpalatable? (hint: not everyone dislikes it).
Speaking Beyond a Single Moment: An Interview with Keith Getty

Nicholas Zork

Keith Getty is widely recognized as one of the premier modern Christian hymn writers. His compositions are sung in Christian congregations around the world. And one of his most well-known hymns, In Christ Alone, was featured at the enthronement of England's Archbishop of Canterbury. Keith recently released his first live album with his wife and cowriter, Kristyn Getty, Keith & Kristyn Getty – Live at The Gospel Coalition (Modern and Traditional Hymns).

Nicholas Zork: Thanks for sitting down to talk. You recently released an album, Live at The Gospel Coalition, which was recorded live at the 2013 National Conference of that organization. I really enjoyed listening to the recording. I thought it had great effervescence and energy. Congregational song is often recorded live, but this was your first live project. So what inspired you to take that leap?

Keith Getty: Well, I think we should have done it many years earlier. We wanted to be sure we had a good partner. And The Gospel Coalition, while it doesn’t claim to embrace everyone, represents a group of young leaders—70% of whom are under 45—who are orthodox Bible Christians and looking for depth. So at that level, we share more than enough commonality that we could grow old with them. I look at songs in the same way as I look at relationships—in the same way as I look at companies that we’ve started. And that is, “Can we do this for 30 years?” And if we can, we’ll start it; and if we can’t, we won’t.

NZ: So the partnership was primary rather than the idea of making a live album?

KG: We wanted to make a live album, but we wanted to put that in the context of something else. I mean, we’re doing a concert here in New York tonight. But far more important to us is introducing our hymns to the churches and leaders who are here, which is why we hosted a lunch earlier today for local church leaders. The concert is really to give people a taste and to build for the future.

NZ: The prospect of doing a live recording—was that intimidating? Exciting? Both?

KG: Honestly, I never even noticed. My wife and I just did our usual thing, and the guys captured it. Kristyn re-recorded a few of the vocals for clarity, but almost all of what you hear is what they caught live.

NZ: We talked about the song, In Christ Alone, a little earlier. And, of course, that’s on this recording as well. Recently, it was chosen to be sung at the enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury. When you heard that your hymn had been selected, what thoughts went through your mind?

KG: It was just a huge honor that it was used. But it is also an honor to know that the young church leaders we met in Detroit yesterday—who haven’t gotten their church to as many as 30 yet—are using it. That’s what it was written for. We’re thrilled that it’s used, wherever it’s used. I’m a classical musician by origin. So it was great to hear the pipe organist of the (Canterbury) Cathedral do his version, which actually was closer to how I would have arranged it. I’ve simplified my chords for contemporary band purposes. He actually played almost in the chords I would have written it. And, of course, it was a spectacular arrangement, and the acoustics were great. On the other hand, it also reminded me that the majority of people in the world who sing In Christ Alone sing it without music. The role of the song is to help people understand the Gospel. And to me that’s a greater privilege—that in China and India and South America people are singing it without any music and learning the Gospel through it.

NZ: When you write, what context do you have in mind? I suspect you’re not thinking about the enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury. But what context do you imagine? Or, do you just write out of your personal experience?
**KG:** In terms of melodies, I’m always imagining a large group wanting to sing. The soundtrack of my upbringing was a classical one, not a pop one. So when I try to write a pop song or a CCM [contemporary Christian music] song or a country song, it sometimes feels like I’m trying too hard. Whereas when I write congregationally—while I know it isn’t what’s “cool” today—it comes more naturally. It’s that thing Steve Jobs articulated about creativity being the combination of your experiences. Well, I’m an Irish Presbyterian classical musician, who grew up in a home where all we listened to was church music. So however my music comes out and however out of kilter it is with what is cool today, it does work in a congregational context. That’s the good and bad of my creative DNA. [laughs]

**NZ:** Have you always, since you began writing music, written hymns? Was there a time at which you shifted your focus toward hymnody?

**KG:** I’ve written music for most of my life. But I thought I was more of an orchestral writer because that’s what I did. I studied classical guitar and flute and piano and then conducting. So my heroes were the likes of Henry Mancini, conductors who wrote and arranged music. In my 20s, my living was earned as an orchestrator. But in my spare time, my hymns were my kind of protest music. In some ways, they were a protest against where church music was going. In other ways they represented a genuine desire for something that was a companion to modern worship music. And those hymns ended up becoming my most distinctive voice. As an arranger, I think I’ll always be a bad Henry Mancini. Do you know what I mean? Whereas as a hymn writer—writing the way I wanted to write, not expecting to ever see any grand returns—out of that came my sort of original voice. Does that make sense?

**NZ:** [nods in agreement]

**KG:** I got married to Kristyn at 29, and she helped me think about life. And at 30, I quit the music industry and said, “I’m gonna write hymns and be a steward of them from here on in.”

**NZ:** Would it be fair to say that there’s a tension you’ve experienced between writing music as an art form—as a liturgical art form—and creating it as a commodity for the marketplace?

**KG:** There’s always tension for anyone. There are broad level tensions. Music and business have always been uncomfortable companions. Business and religion have been uncomfortable companions. And religion and music have been, at times, uncomfortable companions. So trying to put the three together and expecting a happy result is not very realistic. But I’ve never tried to write a worship song as a commodity. I try to write a great song for a congregation and not what the industry wants. I’ve tried to write, asking, “How can I make everyone in this room stand taller, breathe deeper, and be excited to sing, and clench their fists, and raise their hands, and sing louder?” And that’s what we’re trying to achieve in our songs.

**NZ:** And I suspect that the realities of the music industry are challenging not only for those who write hymns but who want to create other types of music that may or may not meet the expectations of the corporate music business.

**KG:** I think, ultimately, business is the organization of our priorities. Each of us has to work at what our priorities are. I don’t think any artist should try and write something they don’t believe in. We have to be excited about the art we’re producing. And then we have to find the best way to fund the rest of it.

**NZ:** You mentioned carving out some time to write this year. With the busyness of life, touring, new additions to your family—congratulations, by the way—

**KG:** Thank you

**NZ:** —how to make time to create?

**KG:** Over the years we’ve made choices. We have a rule that we only tour a limited number of weeks a year. So that does create quite a lot of freedom. We live in Nashville, and we spend a few months in the summer in our house on the coast of Ireland. Becoming parents has changed every part of our lives in richer, fuller and more exhausting ways! We have had to become more organized and prioritize our time more effectively. We have enjoyed how these
new life experiences inspire fresh creativity as we continue our focus on writing hymns and stewarding them.

NZ: Two final questions. First, when you write, what is your starting point? Is it a biblical text, a melodic idea? Does it vary?

KG: We're the melodic way around. So we go melody first. I know the vast majority go lyrics first, don't they?

NZ: I'm not sure, but I know a lot do.

KG: Most of the time it seems to be that the proactive one goes first. Kristyn and Stuart [Townend]: I think they're the real geniuses in our partnership. What they bring is a much more unique contribution to our work. But their rule is that they won't start until I have a melody that's worth writing to. They torture me. So I have to go through months of just writing and writing and writing. I usually have pretty strong ideas about what I want the song to be about. All the songs are co-credited, you'll notice; they're not word-music splits. But effectively, it's my music and their words. I don't have the poetic arts that they do. I sometimes write the lyric myself, but they always change the entire thing.

NZ: And finally, you mention a revision process. How do you know when a hymn is finished?

KG: How do you know? [laughs]

NZ: [shrugs] That's why I'm asking you? [laughs]

KG: I'm asking you. I wanna know! [laughs] Well, at the end of the day, it's just a temporal art form, isn't it? The old joke is, "which came first, the music or the lyrics?" And the answer is, "the phone call." I think you have to create deadlines. Some of our songs have come easily. With *In Christ Alone*, Stuart heard the melody and said, "I want to write this." He wrote the lyrics and sent them to me. I thought they were OK, but they've worked! [laughs] With *The Power of the Cross*, Stuart took 15 months. He wrote 17 different verses. To my pastor friends, I say, "You're lucky because you've got the privilege that Sunday's coming. You've got a fixed deadline, and by lunchtime you're done! But their art form is, for the most part, a short-term art form. It is for this moment in space, time and history. A sermon's power is its power to speak at that moment. A song's power is its ability to speak beyond a single moment.

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