The Values Of A Worship Leader

BY THE LATE JOHN WIMBER

Values affect what we think and, consequently, what we do. Our values are an intrinsic part of us, although we seldom think about them in a conscious fashion. They determine the ideas, principles and concepts a person or group can accept, assimilate, remember and transmit. They can be fallible and must be constantly revised and reviewed in the light of Scripture.

According to this definition, values play a critical role in the life of a church. Therefore, pastors need to articulate their congregation's values. This is an attempt to define the values that give our congregation its distinct mission and culture at this time.

This document is written for pastors and lay leaders with several goals:

- To help us understand and articulate our values.
- To provide a grid for evaluating the goals and effectiveness of our areas of ministry.
- To encourage us in pursuing ministries that conform to our values.

Values tend to cluster into several categories that determine our approach to and motivation for our priorities. Our values are best expressed by the following:

Pursuers Of God The depth of God's relationship with us is inexhaustible (Ps. 41:1; 1 Cor. 2:6ff; Phil. 3:8-10). Therefore, we seek Him and wait expectantly for His presence in all that we do (John 4:34; 5:19-20).

The Bible The Bible is our final authority over opinions, dreams, revelations, visions and any other authoritative source that we may look to for direction. At our core we are evangelical Christians. Our approach to life and ministry should be shaped by the counsel Scripture gives us (2Tim. 3:16-17).

Unity Our brothers and sisters are not our enemies. Therefore we relate to one another honorably, seeking to preserve the bond of peace. We will love what Jesus loves: the whole church. This means we will love those in our local congregation, those in the Association of Vineyard Churches and Christians across denominational lines (Eph. 4:3-6).

Compassion And Mercy We desire to accept into our fellowship any sincere believer who is attempting to walk in obedience to God, is repentant of his or her sins and is in submission to the authority of the church. God's mercy always triumphs over judgment (James 2:13; John 8:1-11).

Equipping God calls and enables believers to express the talents, gifts and ministries that He has set aside for them. The orientation of all ministry is toward the integration of biblical truth into everyday living that impacts out community and beyond—not limited to individual improvement or self-fulfillment (Eph. 4:11-13).

Relationship Caring for people is our highest priority after submission to God, because the purpose of the cross was the redemption of men and women. To the best of our ability we will treat each person with respect, dignity and loving patience—always seeking what is best for his or her life and growth (Rom. 12:9-13; 1 Cor. 13:4-9; Col. 3:12-14).

Family We deeply value the building up of families and believe in the priority of children, while at the same time embracing and valuing all adult believers who identify with out church family (Matt. 18:1-10; Col. 3:12-15).

Generosity We are stewards of God's gifts and resources (Matt. 10:8, 39; 13:45-46). This means that when God directs, we will be willing to give away what we have, to risk the security of current success in order to advance the kingdom on earth in greater ways. We do not own our ministries, so they are not ours to keep. We "give to get to give."

Simplicity We want to be "naturally supernatural," avoiding behavior that draws attention away from God and to ourselves. Simplicity affects our worship style, how we pray for the sick and minister to the poor, carry out discipleship, teach the Bible and so on (1 Cor. 2:2-5; James 3:13; 1 Thess. 4:11-12).

Risk-taking We are willing to let people make mistakes as they grow in their gifting. We know that gifting develops in an environment of trial-and-error, so we are willing to be patient with people's weaknesses and failures while they learn (John 21:15-19; Gal. 5:22-3).

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Playing The Keyboard In Worship

BY NIGEL HEMMING

In the heady world of rock'n'roll there seems little room for keyboard megastars. If a band has a keyboard player, they are usually destined for the sidelines, unable to dance around with the guitarists or pose like the drummers. Although they rarely make "superstar" status, they are usually an integral part of the band's overall sound, and therefore, in their own way, essential. The role of the keyboard player in a worship band can range from a rhythmic piano style to a more peripheral synth part and anything in between. Keeping up with these diverse styles can certainly be a challenge, and how you cope with it will probably depend on the way in which you learned your music technique.

Most piano players learned by the classical route and had music lessons from an early age. If that's you, then regardless of the level you reached, this basic grounding in technique and music theory will be a major help as you approach new songs and styles. You'll probably be able to sight-read a song to some measure, which can be really useful if you're called on to accompany at short notice. Most pianists find that their biggest problem is playing alongside drummers and guitarists who use a completely different musical language. Instead of bars and beats, they talk about groove and feel, and they seem to be playing rhythmic patterns which aren't written down anywhere. They use words and guitar chords which have little or no reference to printed music. It's easy to see how classically trained pianists can feel out of place in a worship band, but don't worry, all is not lost!

Here, hopefully are some suggestions to help you improve your general keyboard style, including tips on getting to grips with rhythmic playing:

Let The Music Be Your Servant If you're used to written music, practice using just the chord sheets, and try learning the songs off by heart. As you get used to forming the chords, try exploring different inversions so that your hands don't have to jump around. Make sure that your top notes never go above the melody line so as not to detract from it, and try experimenting with accompanying the melody in different ways.

Learn To Play Along With The Groove The easiest way I've discovered to learn to play with the groove is to practice with a drum machine. The sort you get on a home keyboard is ideal. Set up the groove then listen very carefully to what the bass drum and snare drum do. Try matching them on the keyboard with your left hand following the bass drum and your right hand following the snare. It's probably easier to start with a simple song that has minimal chord changes (e.g. "Come Now Is The Time To Worship" or "Blessed Be The Name Of The Lord"). As you become more confident with playing along with the drum machine, try varying the tempo or changing the groove. (The bass/snare pattern will be different for different grooves). As you progress you'll be able to get some rhythmic variation within each song. Don't take it too fast and don't expect miracles overnight. Having established your part in the music by following the drummer's rhythm, watch that you don't play too heavy on the left hand or you'll frustrate the bass player, and also be careful that your mid range parts don't clash with the rhythm of the acoustic guitar. It can be a minefield!

Get Some Lessons If you're more of a self taught player, you'll probably find it much easier to improvise and fit in with the rhythm section of the band. If anything, you will struggle with technique, timing and sight reading, and you may be the sort of person that needs plenty of time to get to grips with a new song before you can actually play it through with the band. Aim to improve your skills by finding someone who can teach you the basics of music theory without going into too much unnecessary detail. In addition, it might help to learn some scales and practice at different speeds using a metronome.

Spend Time With Your Equipment It's essential to get to know how your gear works and the kinds of sounds you can make. If you're mainly a piano player, invest in a digital piano with weighted keys, and don't be afraid to experiment with the electric piano sounds as well as acoustic ones. If you can afford it, a synth or sound module can add extra depth to your sound (connected via midi) with strings or pad sounds. Be careful to vary the sounds through a worship set so it's not all the same, and depending on your situation, try sometimes just holding long chords and letting the guitars or percussion take the rhythm. If you're more of a synth player, look for a good all round model with a range of organs, pads, accordions, strings and choir sounds, and find ways to use them sparingly for color and sparkle.

Lastly, Learn To Exercise Restraint Remember that the keyboard has a wide frequency range and the temptation to fill up all the musical space can be great. Remember that as a band, the goal is one and therefore in a band of five players, your part should make up one fifth. It helps to take plenty of time to practice together, listening carefully to the overall sound, even going so far as to tape the rehearsal for scrutiny later. It takes determination, as well as an investment of time and energy to get to grips with some of these techniques, but remember that improving your technical skill will allow you a much greater degree of spontaneity and freedom in your own worship. Go for it!



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