15 INGREDIENTS FOR DEVELOPING WORSHIP IN A CHURCH PLANT

"WHAT YOU HAVE IS ENOUGH."

| DAN WILT |

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MY BACKGROUND - BAKING FROM SCRATCH

Building a worship ministry in your church is more like baking a loaf of bread than a building a building. Ingredients shape the whole, and when the right ones are there, a particular fragrance and tasted fills the church and the community. People are looking for bread.

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THE INGREDIENTS- THE FLOUR AND THE YEAST

The flour makes up the bulk of the bread. It's the substance that people are eating. The yeast makes it rise, makes it chewy, makes it melt in your mouth. The flour is not the yeast. In worship, the flour is the "why" of worship. It is the reason we worship. It is the values and meaning of worship.

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THE INGREDIENTS- THE FLOUR AND THE YEAST

The music (and other languages of worship) are the yeast. They help it all rise, to be tasty, to draw us back. If the "why" of worship is the substance, then the "how" of worship is our experience of it. "How" we worship must reflect "why" we worship. We don't want the how without the why, or the why without the how.

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THE INGREDIENTS - THE FLOUR AND THE YEAST

We don't want a yeast-dominant church any more than we want a flour-dominant church. We want the whole experience of encountering God in worship to transform lives. To breed intimacy in all spheres of life. To shade the soul with a song in the heat of battle. To equip people to meet with God with/without music.

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15 INGREDIENTS FOR DEVELOPING WORSHIP

These 15 ingredients are both flour and yeast, both what will make the bread substantial and the bread rise.

The following list is not exhaustive, but it will get us started.

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1. DETERMINE YOUR DEFINITION OF WORSHIP.

This is where it all starts. If this definition is off (even by just a few degrees) from a biblical definition of worship, we will have worship bread that is heavy on yeast (light and fluffy) and low on substance. I start at Rom. 12:1-2, and reach back into the Old Testament and forward toward Revelation (the New Creation):

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1. DETERMINE YOUR DEFINITION OF WORSHIP.

"Worship is a response of loving allegiance (the reason)...
To God
(our Loving Father and Creator of Life),
The Lord Jesus Christ
(the Resurrected Son of God and Returning King),
and the Holy Spirit
(the Indwelling Comforter and Advocate)
By focusing all activities of the human spectrum (the action)
On His ultimate honor (the result)."

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1. DETERMINE YOUR DEFINITION OF WORSHIP.

From here emerges 4 ways of talking about worship that matter for your community.

1. Life Worship (the melody, Rom. 12:1)
2. Gathered Worship (the harmony, Eph. 5:19)
3. Family Worship (the harmony, Deut. 6:7)
4. Personal Worship (the harmony, Ps. 5:3)

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1. DETERMINE YOUR DEFINITION OF WORSHIP.

From this can emerge your "Worship Philosophy." This is an important iteration of your vision of what worship is all about, to which you can call people (in the church and in the worship team). This should be revisited each year, and edited as appropriate.

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2. LEADERS MUST SHARE THE WORSHIP PHILOSOPHY.

Here is where values come in. When we in the Vineyard talk about worship, words like "intimacy with God," "accessibility," "integrity," "cultural connection," and "kingdom expectation," come to the fore. Not all worship movements approach worship with all of these values before them.

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3. BUILD WORSHIP ON A HOLISTIC VALUE SET.

Phrases like "equipping the saints," and words like "simplicity," "healing," and "mission" are used when talking about worship. God is the subject of the worship sentence. We are the objects of his love (Jn. 4:19). Songs are a place we go to meet with God. But life is a place we go to partner with God.

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4. CHOOSE A WORSHIP LEADER WITH HEART + SKILL.

You are praying for someone who has a passion to grow in Christ, and the basic musical skills it takes to lead worship, attract musicians, and build arrangements and bands. Logistic skills are vital for scheduling, and pastoral skills for keeping the team on track.

Resource: 12 Questions We Must Ask About A Worship Leader

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5. GET YOUR WORSHIP LEADER VISITING CHURCHES.

By osmosis, values seep in. Name your worship values, then expose your worship leader to those values in other communities as often as possible. Immersion is best for a season, if possible. In the Vineyard, it's the way we do it. Bring in role models as well. It's worth it.

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6. GET YOUR WORSHIP LEADER STUDYING.

They need skill, values, ministry, and even theological input. We can't leave a worship leader just to the making of music and the creating of experiences. It's not enough. They are as visible as you in pastoring the community in worship. Care for them; lead them.

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7. WHAT YOU HAVE IS ENOUGH.

Worship music that sounds good can open people to God in beautiful ways. Don't be in a rush to gather a crowd of musicians. The music will just sound bad. Keep the bar high, work with the instruments you have, and help those sound great.

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9. AN ACOUSTIC BAND IS COOL TODAY.

Like the "what you have is en0ugh" line above, this tip reminds us that "acoustic" is always an "in" sound – leverage it to create an alternative vibe to the rockfest many churches try to recreate. Use pads and loops to fill out acoustic sounds. And buy a cajon. My goodness. A cajon.

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10. SPEND YEARS RECRUITING MUSICIANS.

It’s the rush to have a crowd up front that creates a monster we must dismantle later. If that's a value buzzing in your plant, then borrow musicians from other places, and get the sound strong. Piling everyone on because they like music will just damage things in the end.

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11. ASK FOR SHORT TERM COMMITMENTS.

Do the opposite of making promises. Call it an experiment, and welcome people into 4-6 month opportunities. Running auditions is a must, right from the gate. Playing with a band is different skillset than many grew up with.

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12. GET A GREAT SMALL SOUND SYSTEM.

Great sound brings in great (called) musicians. I'm a huge fan of the Bose L1 series. In my view every church, whether it be church plant or otherwise should have at least one. The sound is perfect for smaller venues. Other systems work as well.

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13. BORROW UNDER-UTILIZED MUSICIANS.

You're setting the tone for the dynamics of corporate worship that you want to become the environment of the church. Draw in solid musicians and make it fun. Some of them stay, but for the right reasons. If not, help them figure it out.

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14. COACH AND MENTOR YOUR WORSHIP LEADER.

As good friend Ted Kim says, don't set worship on autopilot. Sow into that leader; you're already coaching them by example, so do it intentionally. Coach values, not skills, unless you're a worship leader. Have them meet all your friends and heroes.

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15. CREATE A CULTURE OF WORSHIP MENTORING.

If you don't invest in this, the process will struggle from the start. Any church that wants to plant churches must prioritize this, so when the time comes to plant there is already a vibrant community of musicians, techs, and growing worship leaders from which to draw.

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OTHER INGREDIENTS

- Extended worship nights
- Worship circles are best teaching tool
- Good tech without extravagance
- Train visual techs
- Learn the art of optimizing environments
- Be prepared to start over
- Don’t get discouraged; get help

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