



Friends,

As promised, here is the script from the “Question Pool” worship and the notes from my session with you at the workshop in Nashville. It was my great pleasure to be with you there and I hope these notes will jog your memory of our time together and prove a useful tool as you continue in your ministry of worship and music. *These notes are for your personal use only and may not be further distributed beyond your ministry setting.* My prayers are with you for “M-M-Good” worship that transforms lives.

Peace & Passion, Dr. Marcia McFee

If you enjoyed our short time together, I want to remind you of the opportunity to come see me at Lake Tahoe for study, planning and spiritual renewal. In the last three years, over 300 people have made the sojourn to this beautiful part of the country I have the privilege to call home and the response has overwhelmingly been the same: “I want to come again and bring the rest of my worship team!”

Elevation!

May 16-20, 2010

[this event is sold out but look for next spring’s retreat announcement by signing up for my newsletter at: http://visitor.constantcontact.com/manage/optin/ea?v=001KZi1d-co_IjE8b8LdP8juA%3D%3D

This retreat is a focus on continuing education (an extension of what you experienced in my workshop) and spiritual renewal for worship leaders (that’s ANYONE who has worship responsibilities - from preachers to musicians to visuals artists and techies!!). There is plenty of free-time (spiritual renewal time) built into this week and many people bring their significant others to combine CEU’s and vacation!

Find out more at:

www.marciamcfee.com/elevation.htm

... or come to...

The Worship Design Studio Tahoe

October 23-26, 2011

This retreat is a worship planning retreat where we go through the whole liturgical year, exploring both lectionary and seasonal themes, learning and experiencing the musical, visual and liturgical possibilities for each season. You go home with broad brushstrokes to build on for the whole year!

And don’t forget... you can get worship inspiration ALL YEAR LONG in the Worship Design Studio Online! Check out the flyer below and go to

www.marciamcfee.com/studio.htm.

THE WORSHIP DESIGN STUDIO
 online worship planning help with Dr. Marcia McFee

Heading into its third year with hundreds of subscribers, the Worship Design Studio is a "virtual" worship team made up of over 20 liturgical artists and scholars on seven audio podcasts, each posted 2 months before each liturgical season begins. Downloadable documents for each season include "More Resources" (keeping churches up-to-date on the latest resources), "Marcia's Doorway" (one thematic idea fleshed out for your consideration), a video teaching session on worship, and MUCH MORE!

www.marciamcfee.com/studio.htm

Here is your coupon code to insert in the subscription form to get your \$100 discount!

www.marciamcfee.com/studio.htm

B04453CC97

compilation and original material © Marcia McFee
 These notes are for personal and church worship team use only
www.marciamcfee.com

the question pool

Rethinking Worship & Song

Nashville

Tuesday Night, March 1, 2011

Worship Script for leaders only

Gather

*People enter to upbeat instrumental jam from musicians, lights up...
At start time lights lower*

Invoke

*[Mark Miller organ improv building until lightening and thunder, rain sound effect...
Chuck Bell on keyboard comes in toward end of rain sound...
narration over keyboard...]*

The shore of the sea

The mouth of the well

The edge of the pool

The lip of the cup

The liminal places of transition

The point of chaos and all possibility

The place where disciple's questions are welcome

The Teacher simply says, "follow me..."

*[voices sing... "follow me... follow me... " (per Mark's composition)
segue to melody solo, freely, "Come to the Water" 3114
drums count off into song, lights up, Marcia gestures for people to stand]*

Praise

"Come to the Water" 3114

Greet

Marcia

Sing

"Loved Lifted Me" 3101

*[can we do something funky with this? like break into refrain of "Your Love Keeps Liftin Me
Higher and Higher" - tempo somewhere between
Jackie Wilson and Rita Coolidge?!!]*

Listen
Matthew 4:35-41

Reader: Late that day [after a full day of teaching the crowds at the shoreline], Jesus said to the disciples, “Let’s go across to the other side.” They took him in the boat as he was. Other boats came along. A huge storm came up. Waves poured into the boat, threatening to sink it. And Jesus was in the stern, head on a pillow, sleeping! They roused him, saying, “Teacher, is it nothing to you that we’re going down?”

[“Is it nothing to you that we are going down?...” *Several voices offer the question... lights lower as the voices continue*]

*“The Day is Near”
video proclamation*

http://www.theworkofthepeople.com/index.php?ct=store.details&pid=V00523&hittail_ok=1&fyi=secure_ssl_not_required

Note: here is a coupon code to get a discount on an unlimited download year subscription to www.theworkofthepeople.com (where the videos and stills I use come from)

Reader (when video is over): Awake now, he told the wind to pipe down [*music starts*] and said to the sea, “Quiet! Settle down!” The wind ran out of breath; the sea became smooth as glass. Jesus reprimanded the disciples: “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”

They were in absolute awe, staggered. “Who is this, anyway?” they asked. “Wind and sea at his beck and call!”

*“When the Waves Are Crashing” 3144
[Jackson and band start with Allman Brothers “Stormy Monday” licks]*

Soak

[Marcia invite people to a “visio-musica divina” and to move to anywhere in the sanctuary, any posture, for contemplation and prayer]

“Question Pool”

[Chuck solo with video:

<http://www.theworkofthepeople.com/index.php?ct=store.details&pid=V00115>]

Reflect

Silence

Open

“Hear My Prayer, O God” 3131

[led by SATB ensemble]

Pray

O God,

Whose love like rolling ocean waves is never ceasing, yet ever refreshing,
wash us in the clear, calm waters of your mercy and grace
so that we may be made new, clean, bathed in the tides of your forgiveness.
Through Christ, who taught us to pray...

Lord's Prayer

“Bidden, Unbidden” 3019

*[piano/congregational vocal improv to begin as they move back into the pews...
into full song with
immediate segue on “A-MEN” to intro “Your Grace is Enough” - lights fade up]*

Affirm

“Your Grace is Enough” 3106

Go

From where we are
to where you need us,

Jesus, now lead on!

From the security of what we know
to the adventure of what you will reveal,

Jesus, now lead on!

From shallow waters
to depths of mercy and justice,

Jesus, now lead on!

In the assurance that your grace is enough!

Jesus, now lead on!

[from W&S worship resource, adapted]

Reprise refrain

Postlude

[instrumental - upbeat]

[congregational music from Worship & Song]

“Out of the Music Box” and “Think Like a Filmmaker: The Art & Technique of Sensory-Rich Worship”

Notes from the Presentation by Dr. Marcia McFee
www.marciamcfee.com

Why do we need “sensory-rich worship?”
“Cells that fire together, wire together!”

We are “wired” (or “tuned in”) in different ways:

Multiple Intelligence Theory by Howard Gardner

- verbal-linguistic (words carry the message)
- musical-rhythmic (music carries the message)
- logical-mathematical (how things connect to each other)
 - visual-spatial (visuals carry messages)
- bodily-kinesthetic (ritual action carries messages)
- personal (inter = interactive, intra = introspective)

We need “The Three V’s” for Design

(see *The Worship Workshop* for more points on this)

Verbal

Visual

Visceral

Why?

Out of every 10 learners by the 6th grade there are:

2 primarily auditory learners

4 primarily visual learners

4 primarily tactile kinesthetic learners

[*Marlene LeFever from “Learning Styles”*]

Having “multi-sensory” worship is not a new conversation...

But “sensory-rich” communication is different than just having all the senses represented!

It is about:

“Layering”

so that all the “languages” of worship
work together (even at the same time) to tell the story.

Filmmakers do this!

What can we learn from filmmakers that will help us with our worship planning? [*Note: the film we watched was “Under the Tuscan Sun”*]

Think Like a Filmmaker: lessons from filmmakers for worship designers

© Marcia McFee

The camera pulls back to a wide shot and then sweeps over the landscape. Our own kinesthetic identification with this motion lifts us into the air like a bird in flight even though we are planted in our movie theater seats. The musical score expands into goose-bump intensity, notes lifting and soaring not just in our ears, but in our whole bodies. We have become part of the action—our own neurological Epcot Center-esque experience. Now let your imagination cut to another scene. The music swells as a colorful procession enters the space. Dove-kites fly overhead, calling your eyes to the upward regions of the sanctuary architecture. Bells begin to peel with surround-sound from ringers in the balcony and a single candle held aloft makes its entrance as the worship leader gestures for all to stand. In some ways it is a superfluous gesture—so ready are we to rise to new heights in this moment.

As you can see, there are similar sensations occurring in these two scenarios. Much has been written comparing worship to theater. But I believe it is the art of filmmaking where we “ritual artists” can learn valuable lessons. Yes, there are differences between a live event and a pre-recorded-edited-to-the-hilt movie. But I invite you to focus on perhaps a different set of observations that can give you new lenses through which to understand your art form as a worship designer.

Filmmaking deals in what I call the “layering” of the senses in order to tell a story. Verbal dialogue happens, but it is not the only—or at times even the primary—medium of communication. Music sets mood, tone and context. Visuals, including color palettes, lighting contrast, panoramic or close-up, create concise and often deeply symbolic contributions to the sequence of events. Actions become carefully thought out because of their immense impact. And dialogue is compact and rich. Ahhh... liturgy, eh? Well, at least the kind of liturgy that moves us on a spiritual journey from beginning to end rather than what I refer to as “plug-and-play” worship (you know, just plug in the scripture, the hymns and the sermon and *voila*, you have yet another paint-by-numbers unremarkable experience).

I call what we do in planning worship “design.” And as designers, we are ritual artists. We take some pretty incredible stories and transformational messages and we try again and again to bring them to life in deeply meaningful ways. And as the church begins to claim the power of the arts and to practice this in ever more complex ways (especially in the ways emerging generations are practicing it), worship designers need more tools for their artistry. So, let’s see what we can learn from filmmakers.

Jon Boorstin, in his book *Making Movies Work*, reminds us that **every detail can be important to meaning**. “A film is a universe where chance is never an excuse for anything, from the color of a dress to the creak of a door; it is a series of hundreds of very particular decisions, and every single one of them must be felt.” From the mood of the music that is playing as people enter the

room to the transitional movements from one thing to another, a worship experience is a series of decisions thought through—or “felt” through—during the design process, during the walk-through, and even in the moment (this is where we depart from film in that we get to improvise and edit even and especially in the presence of the whole body). In a recent worship gathering where I was leading a group in a symbolic experience of cleansing by washing hands, it occurred to me in the moment of inviting the congregation to this action that even the discarding of the paper towels we were using to dry our hands was a significant symbol of “leaving our trash behind.” My mention of this in that moment made even something I thought was incidental, important. Indeed, every detail can be important to meaning.

Filmmakers know that **we don’t want to just “watch it,” we want to be “in it.”** In his book, *Powerful Persuasion*, Tex Sample uses the terms “critical distance” and “critical immersion” to describe an important difference between modern and postmodern sensibilities in communication. Rather than “listening-from-afar” being a primary mode of taking in information, there has been a shift to the desire to be *immersed in an experience* of that which we are seeking to know. Boorstin says filmmakers know that “people don’t just want to watch a movie, they throw themselves into the experience... they want to lose themselves in what they’re seeing.”

Being immersed requires attention to every aspect of the environment of the space itself. The art director on a film is essential to the whole “feel” of the movie. Again Boorstin explains, “If the art director does the job well, his [or her] **environments are a metaphor for the actions and emotions of the story.**” When we enter a space, we get an immediate “hit”—a visceral snapshot of what we imagine will happen here. Worship designers in the 21st century are focusing more on creating environments in which to enter. This attention is deepening and enriching our entire worship experience.

Color and lighting contribute to the energy of the moment—whether that is a cool and calming energy or a bright, vibrant and celebratory effect. Have you ever wondered why it is difficult to get the congregation to participate energetically in a dimly lit room or why you can’t create intimacy and warmth under fluorescent lights? Ask a filmmaker why. The wrong lens on a camera or botched lighting on a set can call for an extra day of shooting just to correct it. It really is that important to the experience of the story.

Being immersed sometimes requires that listening happen not just with our ears, but with our hearts. Musical underscoring can create an emotional landscape for hearing a word rather than simply an intellectual one. As you watch movies or television for the next few days, begin to really focus on what the composers do with the mood, volume, pitch, and especially timing to enhance the words and action. **Sound—even the sound of silence—creates experience and mood**, says Boorstin. Literal vibratory difference in pitch and rhythm creates different energy and reactions. This is a full-on bodily experience—a key component of immersion in the moment and immersion in the story. As you are designing worship, think about how the previous or next musical piece might “weave” its way into the words of the worship leader or the liturgy that precedes or follows it. And remember, as important as musical underscoring may be, equally important is when *not* to use it. Silence is also a design element. Silence is a *sound*—which is different than “dead space.”

There are many more lessons to be learned from filmmaking that will be included in my book by the same title coming soon. But let me leave you with one more. **Editors are one of the most crucial members of a filmmaking team and editing is an essential skill to develop for worship designers and leaders.** “The art of editing is in large part sensing the difference—feeling that edge where we teeter into boredom,” Boorstin tells us. A worship service that *flows* is one where designers and leaders are intensely attuned to the right timing for both the parts of the service itself, and also the transitions. As leaders, we must synchronize our internal clocks with that of the whole body of worshipers or we are in danger of being oblivious to the fact that we’ve sung that song too many times or that we need to breathe into this moment just a while longer. A leader who can give a reader just the right cue to get to the microphone at just the right moment is one who is, in the moment, making timing decisions that will effect the ability of the body to stay “in the flow.”

We are ritual artists. Look through this lens as you watch the next movie you go to. Our goal is to tell the most amazing Story in the most compelling way. This takes technique, an artist’s eye, and being tuned into the movement of the Spirit and the spirit of the Body.

Note: in this session we experienced:

- *a baptism with heightened drama using handbells at the actual baptism, bringing the family into the center to be surrounded by the congregation for the liturgy of promises from the community, and use of the song, “I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry” (from The Faith We Sing Songbook)*