

Songwriting From The Church, For The Church

Contributed by Marc Pusch
Sunday, 23 November 2008

Marc Pusch calls worship songwriters to root their craft in local church experience.

We recorded an album a few years ago at Vineyard Music Canada entitled, All I Need. One song had an immediate and lasting impact on me from the first time I heard it. It is entitled "Into Your Presence", and was written by Kim McMechan. Here is how Kim describes the history of this song:

Our church was in a very dry time spiritually. There seemed to be a united cry going up in our intercession meetings that corporately said "We cannot be satisfied saying the same prayers, and singing the same songs, without touching something deeper of God." We felt united in a frustrated, desperate way, and yet there seemed to be a lack of words to express our hearts. I began to write a new song for our church in an attempt to give this aching a melody that we could all sing together, lifting it up to Heaven.

While this song was very much the cry of Kim's own heart, it came out of a shared experience with others in her local church. Local church communities need worship songs that release their corporate cry to God. Here are three thoughts to consider as you write worship songs from the Church, for the Church:

Know Your Church Through Your Participation

For songwriters to write out of community, they will have to be in community. In the story above, Kim knew what was going on in her church because she was in the intercession meetings. Because she was connected to the life of her community, she was able to find a worship expression and vocabulary that benefited everyone.

Build Your Church With Your Pastor

It is vital that worship songwriters be in good communication with their pastor. Writers should ask questions such as "What are the upcoming teaching themes?" or "What do you sense God is doing in the life of our church?" Most importantly, spend time in prayer, searching out God's heart for the life of your church.

Serve Your Church With Your Creativity

I am all for songwriters and musicians exploring their creativity and self-expression; it is essential to the Church. However, this must not be done at the expense of serving your local church worship experience. As a worshiper, I rely on the songwriting gifts of others to unlock what is in my heart so that I can express it back to God.

The next time you are looking for worship songwriting inspiration, try looking around your church on a Sunday morning. You may be surprised by the inspiration you find.