

## Music Can Work Magic for Your Ministry

by Reverend Richard Mekdeci

Music and worship have been inextricably tied for thousands of years and the love affair continues to this day. The role music plays in developing and growing your ministry cannot be overstated. This is because the worship experience is not only about hearing a message from the minister or learning a new interpretation of a scripture. A complete and fulfilling worship experience involves community building, bonding, and creating atmosphere through physical vibration as only music can.

Some of the essential role's music plays in any spiritual gathering include:

- **Gathering in**—Music signals the beginning of a ritual or gathering.
- **Unifying**—Singing together creates a sense of oneness and unity among the congregation. Vocalizing a single message through song sets the stage to receive the rest of the service experience.
- **Opening hearts**—Music prepares your congregation to allow new ideas to be accepted and to be open to new beliefs. Nothing prepares a congregation to receive a message better than music. It is the minister's best warm-up act!
- **Supporting the minister's message**—A good song can take a complex theological idea and simplify it so that it can be more easily digested and recalled. Reiterating the central theme of the service in song ensures that when a person thinks back on the service, they will not only remember the pearls from the talk but also have a song that will help them bring the message back to mind.
- **Providing segues**—Music provides transitions between segments of the service so the attention is held and directed forward for a seamless worship experience. This is especially relevant in our new age of live streaming where "dead time" in the broadcast can risk people clicking away.
- **Raw entertainment value**—Don't underestimate the power of a good song delivered well. In the same way a good joke in a talk entertains and builds anticipation, high quality professional music will bring people back again and again.

### Music as Its Own Ministry

Today, with the wide diversity of tastes and information overload around the world, music can provide a bridge that draws diverse groups of people together. **A vital music ministry will draw new people to your services in ways a spoken message cannot.** Allowing your music department to function as its own ministry releases it from the stigma of religious philosophy and widens the appeal of your message.

Urge your music director to create a mission and vision for your music ministry that is unique yet compatible with your church's mission and vision.

## **The Music and the Message**

Carefully choose your music to reflect our unique theology. You wouldn't walk into a Baptist church and hear Catholic hymns or pop songs. Evangelical churches draw 100% from their huge library of contemporary Christian music and artists. And this not only applies to Sunday services but to weddings, memorials and other events held at their churches.

Furthermore, if you attend a mainstream church anywhere in the U.S. you will hear the same music being used.

New Thought churches now have their own body of music to draw from and our own amazing artists and songwriters who write specifically for us. **Once we all begin using the same music, we become a united coherent and relevant denomination.** When people enter our churches from other cities or states, they will hear a common genre that brands our movement.

## **Shaping Your Demographic with Music**

Music can also be instrumental (pun intended) in creating the demographic you desire for your congregation. It is common to attempt to please those currently attending your church or to pander to the largest donors. But music can be used as a tool to attract the kind of congregation you desire.

- Decide on the cross section of age, race and gender you wish to see in your congregation; then consistently provide music that appeals to that demographic. Without any additional effort, you will see a slow turn of congregation toward your musical focus group. That is why most churches always offer musical variety.
- If you always do the “old standards” you will attract and keep the “old standards” in your congregation.
- If you wish to attract younger members, you must include contemporary, yes, even rap or hip-hop music on occasion.
- Fortunately, New Thought music comes in all styles and genres.

Encourage your music directors to incorporate a wide variety of styles of music into your services throughout the year. I believe in ministry it is better to please all of the people some of the time than some of the people all of the time.

## **Musicianship Plus Leadership**

The “three pillar” model for building and growing a ministry consists of the Minister, the Youth and Family Director and the Music Director. These three positions should be seen as partners in creating and growing a successful ministry and receive the most time and scrutiny when pioneering a church or growing a ministry.

About 80% of the success of your ministry hinges on what you do on Sunday mornings. Your Sunday service is what creates the buzz about your church. It's what brings people back - or not. It is the main venue for the minister to convey what the ministry is all about. And it is the primary source of income for your ministry. That hour or two once a week is your calling card to the community and to your congregation. The minister and music director should work together to create a smooth flowing cohesive presentation each Sunday.

## **Ongoing Education**

Money should be budgeted for ongoing education of your music director to attend conferences and classes that contribute to the expansion of the ministry. You would especially want to focus on classes that teach the Unity and New Thought theology.

Music can be a vital tool in creating a worship experience and in teaching spiritual principles, so empower your music director and music department *to minister*, not just provide music. Many of our music directors are hired for their skill but have no idea how we differ from other more traditional churches. Send them to Unity classes so they understand the theology, and make sure they attend at least one music conference per year to learn skills of the trade, network with other music directors, and become familiar with the latest new music available.

Allow music to work its magic through your ministry.

## **emPower Music and Arts can help**

The emPower **Posi Music Superstore** houses thousands of songs by the artists and songwriters who provide the soundtrack for our movement.

You can search by topic, single songs, sheet music, songbooks, and performance (karaoke) tracks.

You'll find music from hundreds of artists as well as classes from our new "**emPower U**" online school offering classes on copyright, songwriting, Unity basics, and church consulting on best practices for live streaming, creating a smooth, cohesive order of service and training in effective song-leading.

**emPower Music Rights** offers a blanket license for your church or center that gives you permission to use thousands of New Thought songs from our EMR catalog so you can easily stay copyright compliant.

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