

“THIS GUIDEBOOK CAN TRANSFORM YOUR WORSHIP...”
DAVID MANNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHURCH FORWARD

THE WORSHIP MINISTRY *guidebook*

**ENGAGING YOUR CONGREGATION
IN TRANSFORMATIONAL WORSHIP**



KENNY LAMM

PRAISE FOR *THE WORSHIP MINISTRY GUIDEBOOK*

I enthusiastically recommend Kenny Lamm's *The Worship Ministry Guidebook: Engaging Your Congregation in Transformational Worship*. As one of the most prolific and highly respected worship proponents today, Lamm draws from his extensive experience as a worship leader, mentor, teacher, and consultant to offer guidance that is both highly practical and biblically grounded. He's also thorough, ranging from foundations of worship and worship leadership to worship planning, from leading a worship service to worship evaluation. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned veteran, ***The Worship Ministry Guidebook will be an invaluable resource to you and your ministry for years to come.***

Scott Shepherd, Worship and Music Specialist, Tennessee Baptist Mission Board

The Worship Ministry Guidebook is a phenomenal resource for current worship leaders, and a special tool for the training of young worship leaders. I have always been impressed by the work and ministry of Kenny Lamm, but this is gold! It is a compilation of wisdom from many of the absolute best worship contributors compiled into one readable and memorable source, along with Kenny's experience and guidance. **I plan to use this for my students!** I believe that every worship pastor currently serving in leadership in any church, any style, any size, as well as those who are preparing for ministry, will be challenged and equipped with wisdom that will help each of us succeed in our God-called journey.

Larry Grayson, Chair, Department of Worship Studies,
Ouachita Baptist University

Where was this book when I was starting ministry?! Seriously – every Minister of Music, worship leader, and Pastor would benefit greatly from *The Worship Ministry Guidebook*. Kenny Lamm shares his journey and passion for ministry and gives sound and practical advice for those engaged in worship and music ministry – no matter what style or size of your church or ministry. Timely, engaging, and helpful in every way, this book should be on your desk – not your bookshelf.

Dr. Randy C. Lind, Worship and Music Ministry Partner, Oklahoma Baptists;
Director, Singing Churchmen and Singing Churchwomen of Oklahoma

As a young worship leader, I followed Kenny's blog posts for inspiration and advice that contributed greatly to my development. Having a comprehensive resource like this **is an invaluable tool for any worship leader** of any church, regardless of size or style.

Kevin Ferstl, Director of Worship and Communication, Church Forward

Practical, Practical, Practical. Kenny Lamm has spent a lifetime training the worship leaders, and now he has put into words what has made him so successful in doing so. I know **that any pastor, worship minister, or church leader would find great insights and advice in leading their congregation in worship.** Kenny's awareness and application of Scripture is what helps the most. I will use this as a resource for ALL Kentucky Baptist Churches.”

Jason Bubba Stewart, Worship and Music Consultant,
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Planning, preparing, and leading worship requires both skill and heart. This book provides invaluable insights, practical tips, and helpful tools to guide worship leaders in creating meaningful and transformative worship experiences. **Whether you're a seasoned worship leader or just starting out, this book will inspire and equip you to lead with excellence and authenticity.**

Rhon Carter, Worship and Music Catalyst, Georgia Baptist Mission Board

Like a well-trained, sure-handed surgeon, Kenny brilliantly walks through the intricacies of understanding biblical worship and the role of the worship leader. From styles of worship to introducing new songs, no stone is left unturned. **Reading this book will help every person in worship ministry learn how to engage their congregation in the type of worship that leads to life transformation.**

Matt Freeman, Director of Worship and Music,
South Carolina Baptist Convention

One of the most vital things in church life is congregational participation during worship. It's an instant snapshot into a church's health. My friend, Kenny Lamm, addresses the challenge of engaging the congregation for worship head-on in this book. *The Worship Ministry Guidebook* is a vital resource for all worship pastors. In our close-knit group of Baptist state denominational worship directors, we affectionately call Kenny, our 'President' ... with good reason. Kenny is a great resource for worship pastors and has many hands-on tips, including important foundations for selecting and teaching congregational songs. **I highly recommend this book for current and future worship leaders.**

Tom Tillman, Director of Music and Worship, Texas Baptists

Outstanding text, essential reading for today's worship ministries! Kenny Lamm writes with wisdom and clarity, and doesn't miss a detail. We need to listen to his heart for the Lord's church, a seasoned perspective of a respected leader who is missional and next-gen focused.

Dr. Slater Murphy, Director, Worship Ministries, Mississippi Baptist Convention

Very thoughtful, concise, practical, and easy to read!

Karen Gosselin, Coordinator, State Missionary, Worship Resources,
Alabama State Board of Missions

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KENNY LAMM

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
UNDERSTANDING WORSHIP	7
What is worship?	7
Our worship must be Trinitarian but Christ-centered	14
Personal worship and corporate (gathered) worship.....	17
Four contexts of worship	22
Worship spectators or participants?	29
The Audience of One analogy.....	30
Ways to encourage physical expression and freedom in worship.....	33
Styles of worship	36
Missionary mindset.....	41
Essence and expression of worship.....	43
Nonessentials and essentials of worship	44
Unified worship.....	48
Leading healthy change in worship.....	57
UNDERSTANDING WORSHIP LEADERSHIP	69
A calling to worship leading.....	69
Defining worship leading.....	83
Some disciplines of worship leaders	86
Creating an environment of unconditional love for your worship team	91
Gathered worship and discipleship	93
Building a disciple-making worship ministry.....	95
Mentoring worship leaders	97
Developing a missional DNA in your worship ministry	98
Developing a higher level of excellence in your worship teams	102
Volunteer or called?.....	102
Creating a culture for better rehearsals.....	104

CONTENTS

PLANNING WORSHIP	117
The formats of worship	117
Songs for worship	124
Modern songs for intergenerational worship	140
New songs: a worship enhancer or worship killer?	141
How many new songs should we sing?	142
Introducing new songs	143
Song lists for planning worship	147
Worship transitions	155
Linking worship songs: musical considerations	155
Linking worship songs: textual considerations	162
Non-musical elements of worship	164
Role of presentational/representational music	165
The worship planning team	167
Balancing spirit and truth	169
Planning the worship service	173
PREPARING FOR WORSHIP	183
Preparing the choir	184
Preparing the band and vocal team	193
Preparing the media	199
Preparing the congregation for worship	206
Preparing personally for worship	211
LEADING WORSHIP	217
Nine reasons people aren't singing in worship and what to do about it	218
Speaking between songs and other elements of worship	224
Platform presence	233
Removing barriers to connecting with the congregation	236
Planning a worship event for people from different churches and worship styles	238
EVALUATING WORSHIP	243
Worship evaluation checklist	245
More food for reflection and evaluation	252
FINAL WORDS	261
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	267
NOTES	271

Introduction

Are you frustrated with the lack of participation in your congregation's worship? Do you often feel people are just going through the motions without connecting to God in worship? You are not alone: congregations all over the world are experiencing a sense of spectatorship in worship. What can we as worship leaders do to counteract these trends? How can we lead our churches into passionate, wholehearted, participative worship? How do we truly engage our congregations in transformational worship—worship that makes disciples? In the pages of this book, I hope to take you on a journey that will answer these questions and many more.

I have had the wonderful opportunity of working with churches in the United States and internationally for over 20 years. Before I began traveling extensively connecting with the church worldwide, I had assumed that the worship issues of the American church were probably not global issues. Surely the churches in China, Malaysia, Cuba, Cambodia, Singapore, Argentina, Brunei, or other countries would not encounter conflict in worship or disparity between the generations. Surely there would not be conflict over the instrumentation used in worship. Surely there would not be a trend toward creating

spectators in the church.

As I encountered brothers and sisters around the U.S. and internationally, I found that we are remarkably the same in our worship issues. Personal preferences are pervasive in struggles over how churches go about their implementation of congregational worship.

I see churches that have not changed in decades. Many of these are dying because what used to be meaningful worship that engaged the people has now turned into a lifeless ritual.

In many modern churches, I've seen the breeding of a culture of spectators by providing a performance-based event, rather than true worship. People often stand and watch what is happening on stage without being actively involved in worship.

Some churches engage in what has become more of a playlist style of worship. The worship team chooses three popular songs and puts together incredible arrangements of them. In the service, they welcome the people, “turn on” the playlist to run the three songs, and then pass the service on to the pastor for the sermon. Too often, there is no intentional discipleship, no direction, no flow, and these services have become too trite, redundant, and mechanistic.

In many churches that are seeking to be unified across the generations, I see worship conflict over nonessential things in worship (like pulpits or attire) and quarreling about styles of music.

I believe a huge mission for worship leaders around the world is that of helping the church get back on track with God-honoring worship that sets an environment that helps people encounter the transforming power of God—an environment that changes worship spectators into worship participants. The

material you hold in your hands will tackle this problem head-on.

Worship and missions are the priorities of the church! They are the most important things we do. My two greatest passions in ministry are worship and missions. I was privileged to serve as a missions and worship pastor for many years—a great combination because the two areas work hand in hand. John Piper points out that “worship is the goal and the fuel of missions:”

Missions exists because worship doesn't. Missions is our way of saying: the joy of knowing Christ is not a private, or tribal, or national or ethnic privilege. It is for all. And that's why we go. Because we have tasted the joy of worshipping Jesus, and we want all the families of the earth included.

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. (Psalm 22:27)

Seeking the worship of the nations is fueled by the joy of our own worship. You can't commend what you don't cherish. You can't proclaim what you don't prize. Worship is the fuel and the goal of missions.¹

God created us for the ultimate priority of worshipping Him. *The Westminster Shorter Catechism* states, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” I believe vital worship is what fuels everything else the church does. Until we get our worship in a healthy place, we are just sounding gongs and clashing cymbals. When we get our worship right, the other functions of the church will have the fuel they need to fall into place.

Unfortunately, in many of our churches, What God intended for His glory and for our corporate and personal growth—worship—has been transformed from a soul-deep commitment to an ugly, carnal fight.²

The journey we will be taking together through this book, I believe, will help you as a worship leader to transform the worship in your church—moving worship from a spectator orientation to one where people are wholeheartedly engaged in worship that transforms disciples.

There are a lot of pieces to put together, beginning with the foundations of worship and worship leadership. Once those foundations are laid, we will build upon them an understanding of all that goes into planning worship services that truly engage the people, disciple the people, and bring to the forefront the glory of God. Then we will dive deeply into how we execute the worship plan with thorough preparation and leadership. We never improve if evaluation is not part of the plan, so we will discuss things we need to do to keep growing in our leadership, utilizing an important evaluative tool.

The book you have in your hands represents over two decades of refining a global curriculum for worship leaders to help them fulfill the calling God has placed on their lives. Throughout the pages of this book, you will see reflection questions pertaining to the material you just read. Be sure to stop and answer those questions. You may be tempted to skip over them to continue reading, but you will miss out on what God may want to show you. These questions will help you connect your life and ministry with the material.

I firmly believe many of the ills of the church's worship today can unknowingly be the fault of worship leaders who may have

great intentions but do not realize their practices are hurting worship. These pages will help identify those issues and propose a cure.

Today, some people just go to church out of habit without really offering their worship to God. So what is the difference in just going to church and in coming to offer worship to our God? In her book, *The Worship Architect*, Constance Cherry writes:

When all is said and done, worship is about experiencing the living God. To experience God is to participate in a conversation with God. It is very different than merely “going to church.” Going to church suggests passive worship; coming to offer worship suggests engagement with the God who awaits your presence. Authors Annie Dillard and James Magaw put it very well.³

If you ask me why I go to church, I could start with these reasons:

- *To feel better;*
- *To be with people whose company I enjoy;*
- *To learn about Jesus;*
- *To show which side I’m on;*
- *To keep people from asking why I missed;*
- *To sing my favorite old hymns;*
- *To be inspired, taught, and challenged by the sermon.*

But if you ask me why I worship, you raise the discussion to another plane. ... It calls to memory the words of Annie Dillard, as she writes about worship, ‘Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? ... The churches are children playing on the floor with their chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT to kill a Sunday morning. It is madness to wear ladies’ straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and

*signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping god may wake someday and take offense, or the waking god may draw us out to where we can never return.*⁴

Don't underestimate the power of worship to transform lives. Don't put worship in a box and try to control it—be flexible as God moves in your church's worship services. James Magaw says it this way:

*When I worship, I expose myself to the power of God without any personal control over the outcome. Sometimes it brings healing, peace, forgiveness, confrontation, or hope. Always it calls me to move beyond the farthest point I have yet reached, and pushes me into uncharted territories. Going to church is easy most days. Worship is another matter. It is an awesome thing to know oneself fallen into the hands of the living God.*⁵

BEFORE YOU DIVE IN

Take time to pray before you read each portion of the book; ask God to reveal ways that He would have you change or ways you need to adjust the worship ministry of your church. Highlight the pages. Take notes of everything that God places on your heart that needs addressing. Every time I teach this material, God shows me places I have failed or taken shortcuts rather than truly creating the best worship services to engage the church. We are all works in progress.

I have prayed and continue to pray that God will impact every life that encounters this book. Don't rush through this material. Fully digest each section and determine how that material can help you be the worship leader God has called you to be.

I thank God for you!

Congregations all over the world are experiencing a lack of congregational participation in worship. Often worship leaders can do things unknowingly to create such an environment. This book is not a scholarly book; it is a practical book of what we, as worship leaders, can do to engage our congregations in transformational worship. Whether you are a novice or a seasoned worship leader, the contents of this book will equip, challenge and encourage you to better lead your congregation into participatory worship that disciples them and gives them voice to their worship and praise.

This is a guidebook that walks you through every aspect of leading worship in the church-- understanding what worship is, what it means to be a worship leader, how to plan worship that truly engages your people, how to prepare everyone for leading worship, and finally, practical instruction in many areas of worship, such as speaking between songs, platform presence, musical transitions between songs, creating a worship service with flow and direction, and much more. Take a look at the table of contents to get a feel for the scope of the material.

In this timeless resource, Kenny Lamm helps those of us who lead congregational worship to discover principles of why we worship before offering some helpful practices of how we worship. Much like a GPS, a guidebook offers several routes to help you reach your destination. Our destination, or whom we worship, must always be the same. How we get there often varies depending on the uniqueness of our congregational contexts and cultures. The various practical applications Kenny offers are always based on firm theological foundations involving your congregation as participants instead of spectators. This guidebook can transform your worship if you'll return to it often, especially when you or your congregation gets stuck trying to discern another worship route or reconfirm your current one.

—**David Manner**, Executive Director, Church Forward
Author of *Better Sundays Begin on Monday*

KENNY LAMM, worship ministry strategist for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, leads worship conferences globally and serves frequently as a guest worship leader. The curriculum represented in this book is used extensively in equipping worship leaders in churches today around the world. Kenny received his bachelor's degree in music from the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, master's degree in church music from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and was awarded the Advanced Graduate Certificate in Worship Studies from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois. Kenny serves as an adjunct professor of worship at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. He is married to Sandy and has two grown children, Kevin and Katie.

