

getting it all together

When the “Sundays Don’t Stop!”



by kellian schneider

Worship at Fellowship often looks different from week to week. So how do you keep worship focused on the Main Thing? Rob Johnson, Worship Pastor at Fellowship Church, reminds us that “Your worship needs to drive your creativity, not your creativity driving your worship... it is all about glorifying God with what you do.”

Rob says the main objective of corporate worship at Fellowship is to “prepare the hearts of the people that are coming to hear the words that God has given...” We want them to be ready for life-change. That’s why Rob makes sure he knows what Ed is doing in the service so that the worship can be effectively planned to set the stage for the Message.

Rob emphasizes that “worship is a lifestyle.” It involves worship with your lives. It is important to help people on your



When we asked Rob what standards for corporate worship he had to meet for each weekend service at Fellowship, he said it really boiled down to three main things:

- 1. doing everything with excellence**
- 2. keep changing**
- 3. keep the focus off yourself and on the Message**

First, as in every aspect of ministry at Fellowship, doing everything with excellence is the standard. Rob

reminds us that you don't have to "settle" for status quo, but instead keep asking "How can this be done better?" Second, Rob says, worship at Fellowship intentionally keeps changing: **"The easiest way to get people to turn off is to keep everything the same."** Rob realizes that there are things you have to do every single week that

team understand this!

standard of worship

When Vision Magazine visited a weekend service at Fellowship Church, we were immediately tipped off from our encounter with the parking volunteers that we are about to experience something different. Walking into the sanctuary, it didn't really feel like your average auditorium. Actually, it felt more like we were entering a big event... and we were! Every part of the worship experience from lighting to music to video projection created an atmosphere... all of it was clearly done with high standards of excellence.

Fellowship's Annual C3 Conference

Fellowship's next annual C3 Conference will be held on January 22-24, 2004. The C3 Conference was started in 1997 and has grown to over 2,000 attendees by helping churches creatively communicate the life-changing Message of Christ. Although the Gospel never changes, creativity has no limits! The C3 Conference includes these and other topics:

- **Every person is creative**
- **Unleash your creativity**
- **Identify your creative identity**
- **Practical help for pastors and church leaders**
- **Talk about staffing, finances and leadership**
- **Relax and network with others doing the same thing you are**
- **Attend NEW Pre-Conference "Tech Day" (find out more on www.fellowshipchurch.com)**

Some Sources Fellowship Uses for Graphic Content

- TV
- Movies
- Pay attention to what's trendy & hot
- Gettyimages.com (stock photography)
- Digitaljuice.com (stock photography, graphics, music clips, video clips, etc.)
- Artbeats.com (royalty free video)
- Partingwaters.com
- Videography magazine



Sources taken from Curtis Cruson, Media Pastor at Fellowship Church

churches have to do all the time. This fact makes it even **more** crucial for church leaders to come up with creative, meaningful ways to do things in order to avoid becoming predictable and irrelevant. **You don't want people to go on auto-pilot when it comes to worship and hearing God's life-changing Word.**

Finally, in the midst of huge productions, cool equipment, and ever-improving services, it is imperative to take the focus off of yourself. It's easy to start doing things that will bring the focus on yourself, but stay humble! Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing starts with the leadership keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing.

As with most churches, Rob acknowledges that he often gets input from the congregation regarding their "preferences," he says he weights those "standards" a little differently. Of course everybody likes positive feedback; no one really likes negative feedback, but he reminds us that

"...you have to listen to everything and take it with a grain of salt... Are just a few saying it or are a lot of people saying it?"

Rob emphasizes his duty to help prepare people's hearts to hear the Word, so regardless of the style of that weekend's worship service, success is ultimately defined by that standard.

what does "behind the scenes" look like at fellowship church?

Rob and his team start every week with a "blank sheet of paper." Every week really is a new week at Fellowship Church! First, Rob meets with his creative team on Monday to brainstorm ideas that support Ed's sermon, and then ultimately choose which ideas will be used for that weekend's services. Then, the scavenging begins! Each team member starts looking to find resources such as drama, video, music and graphics that support the chosen theme. Later that day, they all come back together with their findings and Rob puts together a script including these elements in the service. All of this and it's still Monday!

Usually on Tuesday, Rob meets with the entire media team, which includes about 15 people between the creative and technical teams. They go through the script together, making a checklist of what will be required of each team member (ex. lighting, stage props, sound, etc.). The rest of Rob's week is spent carefully following up to make sure things are getting done and everything is coming together.

While all of this is going on, Rob is also meeting with Ed to make sure that all of their planning is still on the same page with the Message he is preparing. As with most churches, changes can often occur last-minute. Rob re-

members that sometimes they have significantly changed the service plans even as late as Thursday for services that started on Friday. It is typical, however, for them to keep making little changes all through the weekend in an effort to present the most effective Message possible.

One of the keys to Fellowship's success in doing great things is their ability to delegate and communicate.. It is crucial to make sure everyone is "in the loop and knowing what is going on." This intentional effort allows you to utilize everyone's talent more effectively. What can happen, Rob says, is that, "in a lot of situations, you don't tell the people in your service soon enough that they can actually let their creativity come through... if you tell people later in the week, then basically their hands are tied in what they can do for that weekend..." Remember, "Everything affects everything," so be sure to keep your team well-informed!

worship: unity, diversity & equality

When it comes to the nitty-gritty of actually making the weekend service happen with a team of people, Rob says three principles come to mind: unity, diversity and equality.

Unity is essential, Rob says, because you have different people with different perspectives and talents working on different pieces of the puzzle, but hopefully all towards one cohesive goal. For example, one visit to Fellowship will show you that every series theme is portrayed consistently whether it's on screen, signage, worship guides or even on the website. Although consistency is a major key to successful branding, it has taken time and intentional effort to get where Fellowship is today in that area. Rob says that, "In the past, everyone came up with their own idea and hoped it matched." Now, the video and graphic people continually meet together so that everything matches.

Point, Click... PLAY SING TEACH PRESENT EXPERIENCE

TRTechnics SongShow PLUS

Seamlessly program and display **songs, scripture, sermon notes, announcements, digital pictures, videos** and more!

www.songshowplus.com

Check Out **NEW** Features of Version 5.5!

NEW! Exclusive 3D Animated Motion Transitions!

NEW! Text Over Motion Backgrounds!

NEW! "Practice Mode" for Those Previewing or Working in Single-Monitor Mode!

To Request Your **FREE** Demo CD, Call **1.888.225.8054** or Visit www.songshowplus.com

Offer Code: **vision03**



getting it all together

Trust is essential to having unity, because it allows people to be more open to the necessary critiques and changes which make the finished product better. The teams come up with the design and then Rob looks at it. Ultimately, Rob makes the call on whether or not to use it, but rarely does he have to because they continually communicate throughout the process.

The principle of **diversity** involves using different people's creative talents so that the look does not get stuck in a rut. It's easy for many people to fall into the trap of insecurity and thus avoid exposure to other people's ideas and critiques, but that really limits the results to one person's perspective. It causes a bottleneck to your ministry's creative opportunities. So the idea behind diversity, Rob says, is to "constantly look for input from other people."

Finally, Rob says you must create an atmosphere of **equal-**

ity, meaning "everything is important" because everything has to work together. You don't want to fall into the trap of making some parts of your service more successful than others... after all, it's not about the individual aspects of the performance, but rather about how the cohesive effort opens people's hearts to a Word from God.

overcoming challenges

Every ministry attempting to effectively use creativity and multimedia experiences challenges, and Fellowship Church is no different! As a matter of fact, Rob says that **time** is probably their biggest challenge to creatively communicating God's Message with excellence. Interestingly, **26% of you, (our readers who responded to the Vision Magazine survey), said that time is one of your biggest challenges as well.**

continued on pg. 40

The Best AV Solution for your house of worship.

ALTINEX and Fowler are working closely together to provide the best AV solutions available for your House of Worship. Below are a few of our popular products. Call or see our websites for even more ideas.

VGA-UXGA 4-out DA
Two Equalized, Two Local



Versatile Microphone
or Line Level Converter

Selectable DA: 6 Composite
or 3 S-Video Outputs



ALTINEX

www.altinex.com

1-800-258-4639

F INC. OWLER

www.fowlerinc.com

1-800-729-0163

continued from "getting it all together: When the 'Sundays Don't Stop'" pg. 22

"To do the things you want to do, it takes time," Rob says. There are several steps to actual production such as setting up, shooting video, editing video, preparing music, etc.

One of the most time-efficient and effective things Rob recommends that you can do is to plan in **series**. This allows you to spend the bulk of your time up front brainstorming and designing the central theme and graphics. Once the themes and graphics are established, they can then be used throughout the entire series. Not only are you saving time, but you are making your Messages more effective and memorable by keeping them consistent. (For examples of several worship guides from Fellowship's recent series, see page 42.)

Rob says another strategy is to anticipate needs ahead of time and start collecting resources that you think you can use. You look for ideas and direction. Even if you can't use it now, save it for later! For example, Ed wanted to end one series with a church-wide baptism, so they've been shooting video of water in preparation for more of a water theme.

Another challenge to effectively using creativity and multimedia is to consistently have productive brainstorming meetings. While some cringe at pulling this off, Rob offers several tips on how to make brainstorming more productive. First, Rob says, "The biggest thing you have to do in a creative meeting is to let creativity flow." You have to get the ball rolling because many people's inclination is to only throw out an idea they think is good. "Usually the person who



has come up with the initial idea never gives you the entire idea," he says. Others will keep adding to the original idea to make it better, but creativity just has to get started.

"There's no limits to creativity," so sometimes it's best to let tangents go. Don't necessarily say NO right away, but rather ask, "What are we going to accomplish with that?" "Is it worth it?" On the other hand, Rob says, "If you think 'we can never do this,' then that idea never gets off the ground... (but) If you just sit there and hope it happens, it's never going to happen."




Service was Fellowship's "Shopping for a Savior" presentation last year.

To set the scene, the creative team brought in synthetic ice and set up a skating rink like the one in Central Park. After hearing about the initial idea, a church member volunteered to take them to New York to do "man-on-the-street" interviews on finding the "Ultimate Gift."

Their stage design for the season was based on the Rockefeller Center since that is what represents Christmas in New York to most people. The idea was implemented so well that Sony came to Fellowship and filmed it for the National Association of Broadcasters Convention. Fellowship saw about 32,000 people for just that event!

While the outside attention was a nice confirmation of the quality of their production, Rob and the staff feel that the most important thing is that they were able to emphasize the significance of Christ's birth over the madness associated with holiday shopping by tying the two seemingly conflicting themes together.

These Christmas and Easter examples highlight the keys to creativity at Fellowship on a weekly basis. The Message and the delivery go hand in hand. The delivery is used to draw people to the Message in ways that repetition never can. By channeling creativity to focus on the Message, Fellowship Church serves as an excellent example of how even the most elaborate development of ideas can achieve the goal of drawing people into a closer relationship with Christ. 

According to Rob, "Easter and Christmas are our two hardest things... because we're talking about the same subject every year. It's increasingly difficult to be creative because you want to be different than you were last year, but you're talking about the same thing." Last Easter, Fellowship did a series called "Trading Spaces" about how Christ traded spaces with us by taking our place on the cross. They illustrated this live by hanging twenty (20) people on crosses on stage. An actor portraying Jesus then came out and traded places with them. An example of thinking outside the box for a Christmas