



On The Anvil

The Worship Foundry Newsletter



JUNE 2009 – IN THIS EDITION:

Spread The Word, Silently– Worship Foundry t-shirts now available

Worship Foundry Banner Donations – R100.00 of R800.00 raised.

SongForge – it's not too late to join the new worship songwriters group...

In The Studio – ho hum, should I even write something?

NeoPsalmist – the pen is mightier than the keyboard, occasionally.

Worship Leader Profile – a chat with Colleen Thomas.

Now Playing – a worship CD with a big difference.

The Written Word – you'll laugh, you'll cringe, you'll write better songs. Get this book.

Spread The Word, Silently



Would you like to help promote the Worship Foundry? Well you can! You can tell others about it, forward the email newsletters to them, or send them a link to the website. BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE! Now you can do that without saying a single word!

Cheesy infomercial jokes aside, this week I've designed and printed a t-shirt with the logo and website address on the front. On the back it says "Do not worship me, I'm just the worship leader".

That was a joke. It doesn't say anything on the back. And you don't have to be a worship leader or even a musician to wear one. You just have to be able to wear a t-shirt.

It's a great way to direct people to the website, and let others know about the project. I restrained myself from putting "ASK ME ABOUT" in massive letters above the coat of arms.

If you'd like one of your own, you'll need:

- A blank t-shirt of your choice (any color*)
- Your name and contact number (pinned to the t-shirt)
- R50.00 for printing (price may increase in future)

*the current design has a black border, so will look slightly different against a black t-shirt, but is still readable without the border.

You can drop your order off at reception in Christ Church Centre (16 Summerley Road, Kenilworth), or find me at a service on Sundays. Depending on the demand, I may choose to take the t-shirts in for printing once a month rather than every time I get an order. The t-shirt in the photo cost me R30.00 at Mr Price clothing store, so it's possible to get a Worship Foundry t-shirt for R80.00,

although you may wish to use something of a higher quality. In case you're curious, no profit is generated from the orders.

Worship Foundry Banner Donations

On the subject of profit, or in fact the lack of it, I'd like to invite you to consider making a voluntary donation towards a portable roll-up banner. Currently, a 1.5 meter vertical banner with its own stand will cost R800.00 and I'd love to have one made for use at all future Worship Foundry events. The little fund is currently sitting at R100.00, and needs a further R700.00 to reach its target.

If you'd like to contribute towards this, you can contact me on 082 994 9023 / 021 797 6332 / tim@christ-church.org.za

SongForge

18 people arrived last Monday night at church to hear about the Songforge worship songwriters group. The majority of people who attended have joined the group, and there are several others who could not attend the introduction but will be joining soon.



The membership form is now available for download in pdf format at www.christ-church.org.za/worship-foundry/songforge so download and fill in a copy if you haven't done so yet. As a member you'll be expected to follow the group guidelines (see the form for details) and to commit to bringing something new to each monthly meeting – musical, lyrical, or a combination of both.

The current group is a great mix of ages and musical styles, and I'm excited to hear the songs and lyrics that will begin to develop from month to month. Pray for us as we navigate the sensitive process of helping each other craft our work into the best we can achieve.

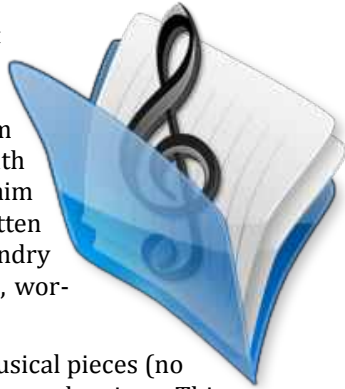
The writers will be meeting for their **first session** next month on **Monday 6th July at 8pm at Christ Church Kenilworth.**

Please note that **you need to have completed a membership form** to attend Songforge meetings. This is simply to facilitate the best possible feedback system for songs and lyrics brought to the meetings. For the same reason, we also ask every member to inform us if they are not coming to a monthly meeting.

In The Studio

I'd love to write about the great progress made in the last month on the Worship Foundry studio projects, but alas, the past few weeks have been very busy for those involved in current studio work. Mat is in his final year of high school, Jono is working in a full time IT position, and I've had to focus my energies elsewhere recently.

My hope is to release the first Worship Foundry CD in December, a compilation of some of the worship artists I'm able to produce and record with in the next 5 or 6 months. The aim will be to make the songs written from within the Worship Foundry available for others to listen to, worship through, and learn.



I've begun work on two new musical pieces (no lyrics at this stage), both written on the piano. This is a departure from my usual approach of guitar-based songwriting, and I'm looking forward to developing the ideas further. With Songforge now launched, and the first meeting coming up in a few weeks, there is added motivation to keep working on my own songs. Oh yes, I'm putting my own work on the Songforge table as well.

NeoPsalmist

I realised on Sunday, after a passing conversation with someone who read *On The Anvil* for the first time, that newer readers wouldn't necessarily know what NeoPsalmist is, so I'll add this little paragraph before all future updates:

NeoPsalmist is a computer software application I am writing that will store the music for worship songs, and enable users to plan worship services, events, and song lists.

And now on to this month's work. I'm still immersed in the Event Editor, in particular the grid that displays the contents of an event. I say 'immersed', although 'wading through the miry clay' is probably a better description, albeit a longer one.

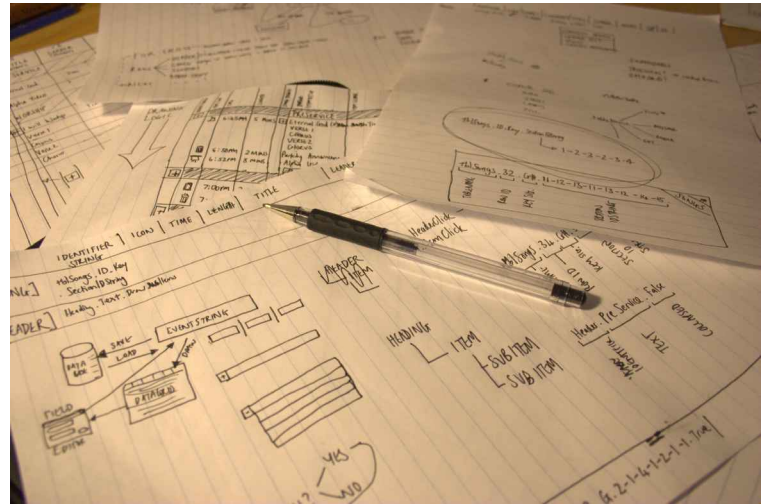


Adding a series of items into a rows-and-columns type control called a 'datagrid' is fairly easy - I've done that for several features already. Adding a datagrid with expandable/collapsible rows isn't nearly as easy. I want to be able to group certain items under different headings, for example the items that happen before a service would appear under the heading 'Pre Service'. In

addition, I want any songs entered to be able to display their arrangements, i.e. intro, verse 1, chorus, verse 2, etc, and hide them as well. The basic principle is that the user can control the level of detail displayed. If you're struggling to understand, take a look at the adjacent screenshot of what I've managed so far.

You can see the heading with a black background, and a song with its current arrangements displayed. Once I've got this right, clicking the plus and minus signs will expand or collapse the items that fall under that particular heading or song.

After hours on Google it became apparent that I wasn't going to find something already designed for the above purpose that was free, compatible with VB 2008 (the computer language I write in), and that didn't look awful. I realised I was going to have to customise the existing datagrid control in some way.



I spent a surprisingly long time working my approach out on paper, as opposed to hacking away at my keyboard. It reminded me that there are still some activities for which you can't beat good old handwriting and drawing. At least until I can afford one of those incredible touch-screen wall-size digital surfaces you see at MI6 headquarters in the latest James Bond film. A quick look on the internet just now revealed that Microsoft have a coffee-table size one called 'Surface' going for about \$10,000.00 or thereabouts. I may be waiting quite a while then.

So that's where I've moved to - hours and hours of conceptual work, with a little bit of visible progress thrown in. As my senior pastor would say: 'Pressing on...'

Worship Leader Profile

Colleen Thomas has been a regular 10am Service worship leader at Christ Church for many years, and has a deep and joyful relationship with God which defines and energises her worship leading. This month we asked her to answer some questions about life as a worship leader.



OTA: What's happening / happened in your day today?

CT: I warmed my hottie six times today and put it on my head in an effort to keep out the winter chill.

OTA: I'm assuming a 'hottie' is some kind of heated beanbag thing? Are you a TV watcher? Any favourite series?

CT: Don't have much time for the TV, but if I so much as sniff Grey's Anatomy on you, I will kill to get it! My doctor friends tell me it's a load of rubbish.

OTA: Thanks for the warning. What's on your bookshelf that you're reading right now?

CT: I am reading Zakes Mda's "Madonna of Exelsior" – nasty apartheid protest literature. Talk about tension and release, there is no letting up in this book.

Another very inspiring book is Greg Mortenson's "Three Cups of Tea" – don't miss it!!

OTA: What do you like to do to relax or unwind?

CT: I don't read Zakes. Play the piano, go watch the sea, head out to Hermanus, have a meal and laugh with my family.

OTA: Let's talk about your music tastes. Name five songs that you really love, worship or otherwise.

CT: "Lux Arumque" – Eric Whitacre, "Fragile" - Sting, "Mighty To Save" – Ben Fielding, Reuben Morgan, "Imagine" and "I Love You Yeah Yeah Yeah" – The Beatles, "River Of Lost Dreams" – Jimmy Dlugdu, "Faraway Voice" – Katy Mehlua, "Promises" – Basia, "No Frontiers" – The Corrs, Claude Bolling – "Flute and Piano Suite". Oh, ok so that's not a song but very inspiring.

OTA: Hey, anything goes. In fact "Anything Goes" is a song too. Okay, what instruments do you play?

CT: Piano, flute, voice, recorder, my shaker eggs, drum of sorts, five chords on the guitar

OTA: Less kind musicians might say that five chords is all you need to play worship songs on guitar.

Any particular Scripture passages or verses that are really meaningful to you right now?

CT: Isaiah 30:15 "In Repentance and rest is your salvation, In quietness and trust is your strength"

OTA: Great scripture for a busy generation. What do you see as the ultimate goal of the sung worship that you lead?

CT: To shepherd all of us into the presence of God. Psalm 27:8 "My heart says of you, 'Seek His face!' Your face, LORD I will seek"

In worship I seek to give glory to Him and to enjoy Him.

OTA: When did you first learn to play an instrument. What motivated you to do that?

CT: Age seven. My parents. It was part of my basic unquestioned education, but I quickly realised it was my closet, my place to express myself and a place to hide from five noisy siblings!

OTA: It's amazing how many musicians had a 'compulsory' musical education. I thank my own parents for that to this day.

How about the first time you led people through a worship song? What was that like?

CT: Terrifying, but you know, once the Spirit takes over, I get into another zone altogether, growing bold, taking risks, feeling safe in His arms.

OTA: I remember the first time I led worship, all I could think was "don't mess up, don't mess up". In many ways I wasn't really engaged in the spiritual element of what I was doing!

On your journey, can you remember any funny experiences or cringe-worthy moments?

CT: Yes, there was this terrible moment when I had got to the end

of the worship set and I had said the first part of the confession. I looked across to the minister for him to "grant absolution" for our sins, but he was lost in deep meditation. I waited a bit more, then took the bull by the horns and completed it by myself. I got into trouble for doing a bit of the service that was meant for ordained people only.

Oh, there was this hilarious moment, during the Toronto blessing time. I had just finished leading worship and someone stood up to give a testimony about a visit to St Michael's Edgemoor. When he got to the part of explaining how everyone was struck by Holy Spirit laughter, I got struck by laughter at the keyboard, and I fell face down with my folded forearms crashing onto the live keyboard. Not once but three times before I slid to the floor and was attended to by my fellows in the worship group.

OTA: Ah, the Toronto Blessing days. Those were wonderful and humbling times. I heard about one guitarist who fell forward onto his prized acoustic instrument and completely wrecked it.

How about your preparation – describe the process you generally follow when preparing to lead worship.

CT: I find out what's going on with the service. I usually make a call to the service leader, then to the church office to find out if there are any special happenings in the service.

Next I pray and I may do that for a few days.

I then go to my music chord charts and ask God, "How do you want to be worshiped this week?" I scan my eye over my chord charts and the obvious songs pop out at me. Its as if I recognise them in the Spirit. I save them in a new doc, obviously in two columns for easy reading and to save paper. Often I will email the service leader, and the person doing prayers etc for clarification before sending the document out to the worship team.

OTA: Glad to see your relationship with God intersects with His creation.

Let's move on to one of the harder aspects. Leading worship is a very personal thing, involving much more than just skill. How do you deal with criticism when it comes your way?

CT: Shucks, it's difficult. I go back to my verse from Isaiah. "In repentance and rest, etc." Usually, I ask myself questions:

"Is this criticism coming from a reliable source?"

"Is this statement true or false?" – I check this out with my family

If it is true – "What can I do to rectify my mistake, unhelpful ways? Do I need to apologise?"

If it is false – "Can I forgive the person enough to engage with them to find out where the rub is? Are they in pain?"

"Are my motives clear, pure, holy? Is there any wicked way in me? – see Psalm 139:23

"Am I taking offense?"



"Am I speaking the truth in love?"

"GET OVER IT!!"

AS to when criticism should be given...

Criticism is tough, but its better on the Wednesday after the Sunday Service. Not good on Monday! I have a really tough day on the day after leading. I usually experience attack of some kind – emotional, psychological, and often physical. Often, my computer has a glitch on a Monday that drives me scatty.

OTA: Valuable self reflections there. And MY computer has all-week glitches. I can relate to the "GET OVER IT!" part. I've caught myself reacting from a wounded pride before.

Tell us about some of the challenges or pressures of leading worship.

CT: Time is always a pressure. As much as I want to spend more time on it, I have to motivate myself to move along and complete the task, not indulge into much introspection.

BEING a worshiper in one's private life is a challenge – you can only lead people to a place you have been to yourself.

I think I get boring from time to time. Getting refreshed takes time and commitment which, for me, is often pushed out by family needs and by my "other life" (which I DO have!)

OTA: Absolutely, and it's vital that worship leaders give adequate energy and time to the "other life" aspects like family, health, friendships, etc.

Most churchgoers immediately think of music when the word 'worship' is mentioned. What do you think the role of music in worship is?

CT: I would like to see music interspersed with scripture, prayers and testimony (telling 'God stories') and to use music to highlight a truth that has been raised by scripture or testimony and prayers. I feel music, because of the slowness of the pace at which you say the words, should be used to meditate, to "chew over" certain truths. I think that the way we do it at the moment is a bit boring. I don't think we should sing six songs in a row, but spend time together in God's presence to have a "creative, corporate quiet time", if you like.

OTA: An excellent strategy for leading worship in the kind of diverse congregation you're a part of.

How about passing on some wisdom? What advice would you give to a worship leader starting out in their ministry?

CT: Pray until your teeth hurt! Bathe your ministry in prayer and get others to pray for you. You are out on the battlefield, because Satan hates worship. Protect your spirit and soul by learning truths about your identity in Christ – don't believe lies about yourself.

Cleanse out and repent often – get rid of ego-related issues – remember you are there to serve!

Stay fit – Get enough sleep, eat foods that don't clog up your sinuses, exercise your body and stick to your goal weight. Practice your instrument and commit to being "worship-fit" in the privacy of your home.

Have lots of fun – rejoice, hang out with friends and nature, feed your mind/emotions with positive stuff and don't watch trash/horror/porn on TV – lead a balance life.

Be on the look out for new songs – listen to the worship genre and lots of other types of music too, in order to broaden your musical taste.

Get counseling/ mentoring for gremlins in your character – the congregation can pick up sadness in your soul if you bring it to worship leading.

LOVE IT! LOVE GOD! LOVE PEOPLE!

OTA: Col, that is fantastic advice for both new and veteran worship leaders alike.

Thanks so much for sharing your experiences, heart, and insights with On The Anvil.

Now Playing



"CompassionArt"

Paul Baloche, Steven Curtis Chapman, Stu Garrard, Israel Houghton, Tim Hughes, Graham Kendrick, Andy Park, Matt Redman, Martin Smith, Michael W. Smith, Chris Tomlin, Darlene Zschech.

I've been inspired to see worship songwriters reminding us lately that

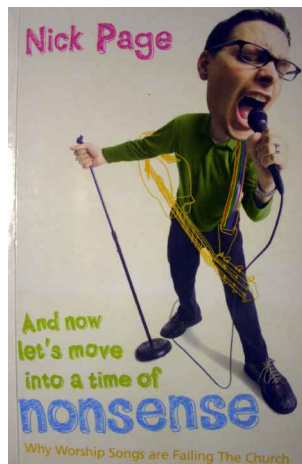
worship is not simply about us receiving. Matt Redman's song "Mission's Flame" makes the point that worship should fuel mission. Tim Hughes' song "God Of Justice" keeps the worshiping church aware that they are filled to be sent out, not to feel good. Many other worship songwriters are working this challenge into their songs, lest we think that a great worship service was just so that we could have our own needs met.

The CompassionArt CD is the pilot album in a groundbreaking music project by Martin Smith (front man for the long standing Christian band 'Delirious') and some of the leading Christian artists of today. The concept is powerful: Everyone involved in the songs, from writers to publishers, managers to the team at CCLI, have waived all their rights and allowed CompassionArt to own the copyrights. CompassionArt in turn channels all proceeds, and it really is ALL proceeds, to 12 charities and 4 headline projects chosen by the artists themselves. Simply put, every single cent of profit goes directly to feeding the starving, freeing the oppressed, and healing the broken.

Worship songwriters around the world are encouraged to start similar projects, combining compassion with art. Find out more at www.compassionart.tv

If for no reason other than to support the charities who benefit from the sale, go and pick up this album at your nearest Christian music store.

The Written Word



"And Now Let's Move Into A Time Of Nonsense"

Nick Page

It's not often that a Christian book merits a warning prior to reading, but this may just need one. Let me put it this way: don't read this book if you aren't ready to ask some uncomfortable questions about the worship songs which we write and sing in churches today.

A passionate, controversial, and laugh-out-loud funny look at how the 'pop song' model has infiltrated wor-

ship music, it challenges worship writers to really think about the lyrics of their songs and whether they are communicating truth about God – truth which should lead to worship.

Graham Kendrick, sometimes referred to as the father of modern worship music, describes the book this way:

“Every worship leader, worship planner, and Christian songwriter ought to read this book. It’ll make you laugh and wince, but most importantly inspire you to think intelligently and creatively about our worship culture”

Andy Flanagan of British Youth For Christ also has high praise for the book:

“This is exactly what we needed: a book on worship by someone outside the ‘worship bubble’. Nick’s book provides historical perspective, wisdom, and intelligent critique, in an age where the immediate, trendy, and fluffy hold sway.”

Being someone who loves to see the lighter side of life and (dare I say it) the occasional strangeness of church culture, I would recommend this book on Nick’s hilarious parodies alone. But there is much more to it, and I’ve been given great direction and instruction by reading it. Rather than producing some kind of knee-jerk reaction that sees me culling everything in our church’s worship repertoire that has been written after 1980, it has shaped the way I evaluate potential new songs and guided me as I select songs for congregational worship each week.

My copy was a gift from the UK. If you can’t find it locally, order it online by searching: ISBN 1-85078-584-8, published in 2004 by Authentic Media

ONE LAST THING...



Wow, it’s surprising to think we’re five issues into On The Anvil. When I pause to think about it, I’m really pleased with the interest, support, and response I’ve had from people who have encountered the Worship Foundry project so far.

On a personal level it’s been a really fun month. I play keyboard in an acoustic comedy band with four other good friends, and we did quite a lot of recording and practice work this month in preparation for a show last Saturday night where we launched our new website. If you’re in the mood for something akin to Monty Python meeting acoustic rock, check out www.brothersstreep.com for free music, videos, and information about the band.

Moving back to the Worship Foundry, continue to pray for me, and the other musicians involved in taking new ground each month. Pray particularly for the new Songforge members, some of whom are writing their very first worship songs at the moment. What a privilege to be able to work with them.

Right, I’m off on an evening run. Since we’ve been married, Nikki has bought me some fantastic presents, and this evening I’m trying out an early Father’s Day present – a sports watch that measures my heart rate, distance covered, current speed, calories burned, steps taken, and time spent exercising. It’s a replacement for my old watch that finally broke after years of faithful service, and I’m getting it early because I couldn’t stand taking out my cellphone to tell the time any more. Tonight I am going to be confusing the neighborhood by prancing up and down the road outside at various speeds to calibrate the watch against my average strides. If you live around Kenilworth you may even see me in full spring.

Tim