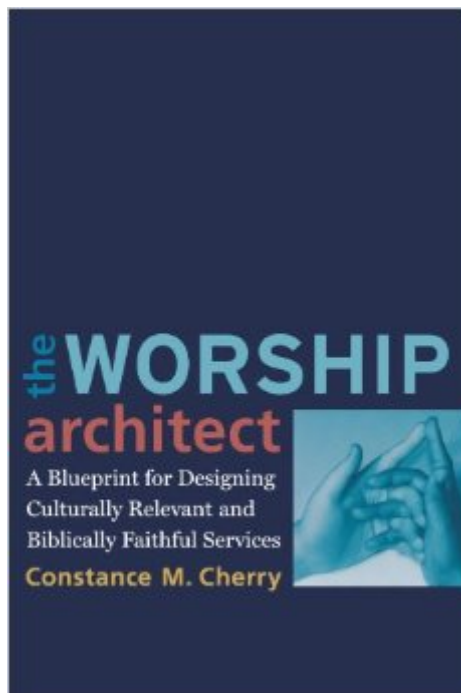


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The Worship Architect: A Blueprint For Designing Culturally Relevant And Biblically Faithful Services



Synopsis

There are many books available on the topic of worship today, but few provide a comprehensive, practical method for worship design. Constance M. Cherry, a worship professor and practitioner, provides worship leaders with credible blueprint plans for successfully designing worship services that foster meaningful conversation with God and the gathered community. Readers will learn how to create services that are faithful to Scripture, historically conscious, relevant to God, Christ-centered, and engaging for worshipers of all ages in the twenty-first century. The book sets forth basic principles concerning worship design and demonstrates how these principles are conducive to virtually any style of worship practiced today in a myriad of Christian communities. It will also work well as a guide for worship-planning teams in local churches and provide insight for worship students, pastors, and church leaders involved in congregational worship.

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Customer Reviews

I've been teaching a Theology and Worship course for four years now and have struggled to find the right readings because, as Paul Westermeyer and Charlotte Kroeker both agree, the study of Church music is vastly interdisciplinary. While I delight in the theoretical questions that surround the church and its musical culture, when we get down to the rubber hitting the road applications like the order of service, song selection, and congregational participation, *The Worship Architect* serves us well. Honestly, I typically have an 'allergic reaction' to prescriptive ministry texts. While the book is filled with lists and lists of practical questions and ideas, it avoids being pedantically heavy handed.

Cherry's intent is to direct our attention to the important issues that must be addressed in order to plan our services well and she does this efficiently. The exhaustive content may be dizzying for my students but it is a valuable reference to have on hand for leaders. The book is worth its price if only for the concise list of questions for evaluating a worship song. I had groups of my student leaders use this in a training retreat last week and there was much fruit from their discussions and discernment. The theological content in the first half of the text (Cherry's "four load bearing walls") may be relatively cursory, it serves as a good primer for opening the discussion of liturgical theology for novices--for the college student. This will be an important book for training worship leaders from both traditional and contemporary churches but especially the contemporary. With the boom of contemporary worship in the last 20-30 years we need to expect more from our contemporary leaders than to be talented, winsome and spirit-filled. Many of the books with this kind of liturgical content are written in a tone and vocabulary that will only preach to their respective choirs. But Cherry's approach is accessible and ecumenical and will help contemporary leaders conceive a substantial approach to worship planning, a weighty respect for each part of a service and an appropriate discernment essential to leading well.

This is one of the books the professor assigned for a class I TA'ed this past spring. It is well organized, clearly written, and has accessible language. I would recommend this for both M.Div student and those who are already in ministry.

Excellent book. I am amazed at the authors wisdom in diversity and her ability to communicate it. I am enjoying this book. This is relevant for today and I recommend it often to worship leaders and Pastors.

Very insightful. An in-depth book that can be appreciated by any Christian who desires a better understanding of what 'worship is all about'. Beneficial for "everyday Christians" and worship leaders alike.

As a pastor I've been reevaluating what we do in our worship gatherings and trying to determine how we can make them more Biblical. This book was extremely helpful in that process. The author begins by laying out a structure that can be supported with Biblical examples of how the four elements of worship are present in both Old Testament and New Testament worship. She then does an excellent job of providing examples to demonstrate the flexibility of how churches can

incorporate those building blocks in a manner that is culturally relevant to each specific congregation. This book really transcends any specific denominational distinctives or worship styles and would be useful in any church setting. The only real disagreement I had with the content is how the author broke church music into nine "families" of songs - after all Paul only found it necessary to describe three types - psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. And then she emphasized how all nine types should be integrated into worship, which really seems to contradict the entire premise of her book - "culturally relevant" worship. While I agree with the need to include a variety of music types in worship, trying to "force" certain types of songs into a congregation where they are not culturally relevant actually seems to me like it would tend to take away from the message of the gospel rather than enhance it. But this is a pretty minor gripe compared to how helpful the book is overall. This book will remain on my desk as a tool to use in developing our worship gatherings each week.

Excellent book and very informative! I originally had checked it out from the library, but as I read it, I decided I needed it as a resource in my books. The author does a good job of explaining what and how to worship as well as why we need to worship. She explains how worship has evolved over the centuries, and she makes suggestions how worship leaders can improve worship in their churches. Very detailed. A must have for all worship leaders.

She raises some good points. There is a lot of backup information that basically reiterates what the Bible says about worship, and I felt these sections could have easily been abridged as they felt more like filler than useful additions. Overall it seems it took a lot of writing to say only a few things. Her biases in worship definitely seep into her writing, but I would expect most books with similar goals to be written in similar ways. Overall I would recommend pastors and music directors at least skim through or focus on select chapters to help improve the worship experience at their church.

This book is a fantastic read for any pastor or worship leader desiring to make their services more biblical and meaningful. Cherry enhances our understanding of worship, provides a sound structure for planning and considering the elements of worship and gives tons of practical ideas. The beauty of this publication is that it is not limited in style, but instead cuts through a lot of the surface discussions and worship trends to get to the heart of matters. I wish I had read this book years ago!

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