
THE CHRISTIAN POST

CP CHURCH & MINISTRIES

Tuesday, Jun 03, 2014

Texas Pastor: Worship is About Christ, Not Impressing Crowds



(Photo: LifeWay via The Christian Post)

LifeWay Worship Director Mike Harland speaks to small church pastors on the purpose of worship during "The Exchange" conference, Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2010.

By [Lillian Kwon](#)

September 8, 2010 | 8:11 am

It's very easy for music to become the point during worship in the church, said a Southern Baptist.

But LifeWay Worship Director Mike Harland told pastors that it's not about better bands, advanced technology, newer copyright dates or newer models. Rather, it's about revealing the person of Jesus Christ and giving Him the adoration that is due.

"We don't want to gather trying to impress crowds with our technology, our innovation or creativity, but

to passionately worship the God who saves," he said Tuesday at a one-day conference on "Transformational Small Churches."

Harland cited research from the recently released book *Transformational Church*, which was based on a survey of more than 7,000 Protestant churches and interviews with more than 250 of the church pastors.

The book, written by LifeWay's Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer, identified transformational church principles and among them was a worship that actively embraces Jesus.

"God didn't call us to lead music or to perform worship services for the people's enjoyment," Harland said. "God called us to engage people in the experience of expressing their worship and praise to God."

After observing many churches, Harland has found that the church has stopped singing.

While the congregation is left in the dark under dim lights, stage lights place the focus on the gifted worship leader – or worship artist as Harland called it – who has in-ear monitors and who sings songs in a key that best fits him or her.

The worship leader can't hear the congregation or see the congregation and "they don't even know that the congregation is not even singing," Harland said.

The LifeWay director, who also serves as associate pastor of music in Carrollton, Texas, stressed Source URL : <http://www.christianpost.com/news/texas-pastor-worship-is-about-christ-not-impressing-crowds-46673/> to pastors that "worship starts where the people are, not where you want them to be."

"Transformational churches actively engage people in worship and are led by worship leaders who value participation over performance," he said, citing the new book.

Harland reminded worship leaders and pastors that it is a spiritual calling that God has placed on their lives and not a musical one.

"If musical excellence could accomplish spiritual objectives, then the Mormon Tabernacle Choir would be one of the most powerful spiritual choirs in the world," he noted. "It takes more than musical execution."

While debate over relevance versus reverence or music preferences and styles is common, transformational churches find a way to stay above the fray, he added.

"The answer to this issue is to raise the dialogue off the musical and get it on the spiritual objectives that can only be accomplished in spiritual means," he stated.

Believers worship, he explained, to tell the story of Jesus.

"It's not enough just to put the word of adoration in the mouths of God's people. We've got to tell the story about who Jesus is," Harland underscored.

A couple of years ago, a pastor of a church had contacted Harland asking for help as the worship at his church had grown cold. As a solution, the pastor wanted to start a contemporary worship service.

But when Harland visited the church, he found that the music style wasn't the issue. Rather, the people in the church just were not responding.

He told the pastor, "If your worship has grown cold, it's not because you selected the wrong music style or you're making some kind of technological misstep. If worship is a response to God's revelation and if your people are not worshipping then they're not seeing who He is."

The pastor soon realized that he had been preaching to the congregation about how to be better stewards, better parents, better citizens and so forth but he never told them who Jesus is.

"What do transformational churches do?" Harland posed to pastors at the conference. "They don't get a rock band, they don't get a projection system, they don't get a fog machine. They show people who Jesus is and then give people the opportunity to respond to Him in worship and adoration."

The conference on Tuesday was an extended edition of "The Exchange," which is a monthly webcast hosted by Stetzer.