

25 Ways


to Become a

More Successful

Church Musician



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Selah helps successful church musicians

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Introduction

Imagine having all the people writing in this book over for dinner (you'll also have to imagine a big dining room). Ask them what makes a great church musician or how to do your work better, and you'll have a spirited discussion, but many common themes.

Some of that advice is distilled here in the contributions from leaders in church music. We asked these experts to share with you the most important advice they would offer to other church musicians, or even those new to the field. Their collective wisdom is based on hundreds of years of experience, and they have good advice. It might not be the advice you'd expect to find, but it might change your perspective and get you thinking about your work in a new way.

We have arranged the contributions basically in the order they were received, since each one can stand on its own. Because of this, read them slowly. Read each one assuming you could do what is suggested: imagine how your work would change or how much more effective you would be. And then decide how you're going to implement this advice.



You can come back to any of these contributions at any time: review one a day, one a week, or whenever you sit down to do your planning. We need reminders such as this to keep going in the right direction.

May your work as a leader of church music become more rewarding and help your congregation understand God's grace even more clearly.



David Schaap, president
Selah Publishing Co., Inc.




1

Advice from Ken Lowenberg

Say Thank You

To become a successful (or better) church musician, thorough knowledge of your field (organ, voice, sacred music literature) is of course a given. In addition, I think a personal faith is virtually essential to help one over the tough times and keep one centered and grounded. Some knowledge of psychology is also helpful, as church musicians are always dealing with people. Along these lines, I have found, through more than 30 years of working with volunteers and a few professionals, that the church musician can never say thank you too often.

Stressing the positive and praising people for their giving of their time and talent to their church and to God is the reward that keeps volunteers coming back. The old-fashioned art of writing thank you notes (preferably hand written, but also acceptable typed) adds that personal touch, and is an invaluable tool in building a group of happy, satisfied, dedicated volunteers. People like and need to feel that when they expend extra time and energy on a project (whether it is learning a flute descant to a choir anthem, or coming to choir rehearsal regularly throughout an entire season, or being coached to try their first solo stint being cantor for a responsorial Psalm), it is truly noticed and appreciated. A warm and sincere note of thanks from their director can mean more to them than any amount of money. It can make the experience so rewarding to them that they will want to try even harder and volunteer even more time the next time they



are asked to do something similar or something even more challenging. The personalized Thank You note is one of your most efficient and effective tools among your array of techniques to succeed as a church musician.



Kenneth Lowenberg (b. 1939) was born and raised in the Chicago area. He attended Northwestern University, and graduated with a B. Mus. Ed. (with organ as primary instrument). He later earned a M. Mus., with a major in Composition, from the Univ. of Southern California. After teaching high school in Gary, Indiana and in the Quad Cities, Illinois, he accepted a full scholarship to attend the College of Church Musicians at Washington Cathedral, where he lived, studied, and worked on the cathedral close for a year, earning the FCCM (Fellow, College of Church Musicians). From there, he accepted the position of Minister of Music (Organist/Choirmaster) at Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., where he heads a music program which includes four graded singing choirs, four handbell choirs, a Gospel Choir, an All Church Orchestra, the Guitar Group, and a concert series—Chevy Chase Concerts.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Lowenberg.html>

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Advice from Austin C. Lovelace

Becoming Five Different People

If you would be a successful church musician you must be five different people: First, you must be an athlete—take care of your health and your body. A good nap before Thursday night rehearsal is a must, and regular exercise and proper eating each day. If you are an organist, it means regular practicing to keep fingers, feet, and mind functioning well. Second, you must be an actor—you must know your “lines and material,” and know how to present them effectively so that the choir and congregation will respond. Third, you must be a psychologist—know how to work with the minister, the staff, the congregation, and all of the choirs of all ages. You must be a “people person.” Fourth, be a musician and student. Never be satisfied to stay where you are—keep moving, learning, and growing. Fifth, above all, be a minister and pastor to the individuals in your choirs, and to the congregation, teach and admonishing them in love.



Austin C. Lovelace (b. 1919) is Minister of Music, Emeritus, at Wellshire Presbyterian Church in Denver. Over many years he worked at a number of Methodist and Presbyterian churches in Colorado, North Carolina, Illinois, and Nebraska. He also worked at Union Theological Seminary in N.Y.C. and Garrett Theological Seminary in Evanston, Ill. He has over 700 compositions for church in print, as well as numerous articles and books on hymnody. He received his M.S.M. (1941) and D.S.M. (1950) from the School of Sacred Music, Union Theological Seminary. Lovelace is a Fellow of the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Lovelace.html>

Advice from V. Earle Copes

Four Ideas


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I—Strive to be a good churchgoer. Make positive but flexible contributions to the leadership team of whatever church you serve. Good staff relations are a must for a successful ministry in music. In addition, try to participate in non-musical activities as your time permits: attend church dinners and other social events, so that you will become better acquainted with the tastes and needs of the persons you serve. Music is but one vehicle for service; perhaps you will discover others by which you can also minister to your people.

II—Continue your education as a musician, not necessarily in the strictly formal sense, but by attending concerts, such as chamber music, solo recitals, orchestral concerts, opera, etc. I see too few of my church music colleagues at such events. One's exposure to various kinds of music broadens the foundation for our own music-making efforts. In addition, continue to study harmony, counterpoint, composition, and improvisation. These essential tools can get rusty without continuous polishing.

III—Work at becoming a better person. Most truly great artists are also top quality individuals with strong positive character traits. Try to overcome any shortcomings you are aware of. Smile often and try to show a genuine interest in others. Be a good listener!

IV—Plan events that will motivate you to expand your abilities. One's reach should always exceed one's grasp. But be realistic in your expectations of yourself and those



with whom you make music. Challenge yourself and your choirs to excel in whatever you attempt. Strive for perfection, realizing that you will never achieve it; but if we strive for anything less, the results will be only mediocrity!



V. Earle Copes is a lifetime career musician and ordained United Methodist Minister, now retired. His career has involved a number of full-time church positions in several of United Methodism's largest churches; faculty positions at several colleges and a seminary; the editorship of a professional journal for church musicians; and consultant to the revision committee for the 1966 *United Methodist Hymnal*. While in Dayton, Ohio, he was instrumental in establishing the Dayton Organ Academy, a scholarship program for gifted high school students.

Copes has composed over 200 anthems, organ pieces, and original hymn tunes, and has had an active career as an organ recitalist and consultant, as well. Copes was born in Norfolk, Va. in 1921. He received his B.A from Davidson College in North Carolina and his Master of Sacred Music and Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He has received awards from the Carnegie Foundation and the Federal Republic of Germany.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Copes.html>

Advice from Rae E. Whitney

Choosing Hymns

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When you are deciding what hymns will be used in Sunday Worship, read all the texts under consideration, preferably aloud! Be aware of what message the service should project, but avoid repeating the theme tediously. Make sure the stanzas are appropriate to the day, the theme, and the experience of the congregation. This seems obvious, but I was once present at a Morning Prayer (non-Eucharist) service, when we sang “I come with joy to meet my Lord.” Since we had no priest that Sunday, it felt wrong to sing “As Christ breaks bread...” when we could not break bread together. Another time, when the service was indeed a Eucharist, a post-communion hymn was sung before we had received communion. I now forget what it was, but it might well have been “Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands That holy things have taken..” I was also present when a congregation sang “Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing” right in the middle of the service! Such carelessness jars the worship. Then, as you read the words, take note of the hymn's meter and the length of the stanzas. The service is likely to drag if you place two hymns of the same meter close together, or two eight-liners one after the other. So avoid doing it!



Rae E. Whitney was born May 21, 1927 at Chippenham, Wilts, England. She received a B.A. (honors) in English from the University of Bristol in 1948, and a Certificate of Education in 1949. On December 31, 1960, Rae married Rev. Clyde E. Whitney, Rector of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Scottsbluff, Nebraska and then moved to

Western Nebraska. She assisted her husband in many areas of his ministry until his death in 1992.

In the last 15 years Rae has focused on her hymn text writing. Her hymn texts have been included in denominational hymnals such as *The Hymnal 1982* (Episcopal), *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (1990), and *The Baptist Hymnal*. Eight of Rae's texts were published in Selah Publishing Co.'s *Songs of Rejoicing* (1989), 26 were published in Selah's *New Songs of Rejoicing* (1994), and 17 in Selah's *Sing to Our God New Songs of Rejoicing* (2000). Selah has also published a collection of Rae's texts entitled *With Joy our Spirits Sing* (1995).

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Whitney.html>



Advice from Carl P. Daw, Jr.


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Work with What You Have

One of the most important ways for church musicians to make their work rewarding is to learn to work with what they have instead of wishing they could work with different (usually larger and better-funded) forces. If you don't have tenors in your choir, do SAB; if you can't manage that, try two-part; and when all else fails, there's unison. If you don't have sopranos who can handle a descant reliably, use an instrument instead. If you don't have a children's choir, ask for time to teach the Sunday School children a hymn that they can teach to the adults. In short, celebrate and develop what you have instead of pining for what you don't have. Along the way, don't overlook the congregation as a significant feature of your musical resources and a means of exercising real musical leadership. Enlarging the hymnic (and service music) repertoire of a congregation can be both challenging and gratifying, especially if it involves adding new ways of singing—rounds and canons, a cappella, or in parts. Above all, keep in mind that your work as a church musician will gain energy and purpose if you can free yourself from a performance mentality and understand what you do as an offering to God.



The Reverend Dr. Carl P. Daw, Jr., is a hymn writer and is Executive Director of The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada. He has served successively as Secretary and Chair of the Standing Commission on Church Music of the Episcopal Church and was a consultant member of the Text Committee for *The Hymnal 1982*, to which he contributed a number of translations, metrical paraphrases, and original hymns. His hymns have subse-



quently appeared in numerous hymnals in the U.S. and England, including *Songs of Rejoicing*, and *New Songs of Rejoicing*, as well as in a number of smaller collections and over two dozen anthem settings. A collected edition of his texts, *A Year of Grace: Hymns for the Church Year*, was published by Hope Publishing Company in 1990; a collection of metrical canticles, *To Sing God's Praise*, in 1992, and *New Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs* in 1996. A member of the Advisory Committee for *The Hymnal 1982 Companion*, he wrote the book's essay on "The Spirituality of Anglican Hymnody" as well as numerous text commentaries. The Church Hymnal Corporation has published a volume he edited called *Breaking the Word: Essays on the Liturgical Dimensions of Preaching*. He has written numerous articles and reviews for *The St. Luke's Journal of Theology*, *The Anglican Theological Review*, and *The Hymn*, and has spoken at many conferences and seminaries across the country.

Born in Louisville, Kentucky, Daw grew up in a succession of towns in Tennessee where his father was a Baptist pastor. He received his undergraduate education at Rice University and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Virginia. He taught for eight years in the English Department of the College of William and Mary before entering seminary at the School of Theology of the University of the South, from which he received his M.Div. After three years as assistant rector of a parish in Petersburg, Virginia, he served for nine years as Vicar-Chaplain of St. Mark's Episcopal Chapel at the University of Connecticut at Storrs. He is married to the former May Joan Bates, and they are parents of a daughter, Elizabeth Marion.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Daw.html>

Advice from Jane Marshall



See the Big Picture


For me the most important requirement for a church musician is the ability to see the big picture and to respond to it effectively.

This does not diminish one whit the characteristics that define any musician: talent and a knowledge of theory, history, style, quality, conducting, pedagogy, ability to communicate, and all the other techniques required to make music beautifully.

For a musician whose vocation lies in the church or temple, however, seeing the big picture—that is, being pastoral—is not an alternative but an additional necessity. A pastoral musician is a shepherd that sees everyone in the sheepfold—congregation, staff, and musicmakers—as his or her flock, a flock whose members all need nourishment for their faith. The musician/shepherd sees the music and how it's shared as a significant portion of that food. Since diversity requires a varied, healthy diet, discerning ways to present it so that every adult and child can be enriched is what it means to be pastoral.

The church musician, then, will value the quality of music offered and the quality of the community, seen as a family, as being of equal importance, an ability that requires both patience and flexibility. A church musician will be a people-person and will see music's role as one that not only praises God but also serves both the liturgy and all the people.

Such a shepherd will encourage more and more congregational participation in musical acts of prayer and praise



(global music and Taizé responses come to mind) and be able to teach them quickly and pleasantly without upsetting the drama of the liturgy; will select the best quality music available of all styles and periods and keep these in balance; will encourage some *a cappella* singing, even improvisation, when the song is familiar and appropriate; will make room for a silence that suggests awe and gives time for reflection on what has been sung or played; and will know how to reflect both warmth and dignity in attitude and repertoire selection. There is room for all these within the single traditional framework of gathering, proclamation, and response which nearly all services celebrate, whether they are spelled out visually or not.

Thirty years ago congregations were not as diverse, we did not feel the need for a more rounded diet, and we did not have the wealth of new hymns and global songs that we have now. Nor did we think of the service as belonging to all the people. But the church and the culture have changed drastically since then. I see one basic service as a need now, one that can be repeated at other hours without change. That service can contain such a varied diet of both old and new that no one need leave feeling like an exile in a strange land. Music and its leaders are a great force for education, healing, and reflecting a sense of the transcendent. The possibilities in that force present a big, and challenging, picture to see.



Jane Marshall is an author as well as a composer whose published works cover a 50-year span. She was a consultant for the *United Methodist Hymnal*, 1989, and many of her hymns appear in hymnals of various denominations. She teaches at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, Texas.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Marshall.html>

Advice from Ronald A. Nelson

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Plan and Listen


Since my retirement from full-time church music, I have had many opportunities to observe other choir directors. My first advice to all of them would be these two related suggestions:

1 Make better use of your singers' rehearsal time. Volunteers deserve this from you. Talk less, sing more. Don't waste time telling them verbally what you can train them to grasp from your conducting. It is simply amazing how much can be accomplished in one rehearsal—and how much *fun* it can be—if the director is well prepared, knows the music inside out and keeps the rehearsal moving.

2 Keep training your ear! Getting to that wrong tenor note immediately, without singing through the piece many times wondering what is wrong, can save so much time. I have observed otherwise fine directors who simply don't hear mistakes in the inner voice and don't correct them. Team up with a colleague. Let each of you play a hymn with just one wrong note in an inner or lower voice part for the other to catch. (To be really tricky, it may *sound* perfectly o.k.) Practice listening to the inner voices in recordings of choral music while following a score. Try following more than one voice at a time. Learn *each* voice part of *all* the music being rehearsed by your choir(s) and get the *total* sound into your ears. Then at rehearsals, be sure to listen, *listen*, *LISTEN!*



Ronald A. Nelson served for 37 years as Director of Music at Westwood Lutheran Church in suburban Minneapolis, known for the children's Choir School he



founded, as well as its 100-voice adult choir. Since 1992 he has been a full time composer and festival/workshop clinician. He has many choral compositions in print, including several children's anthems published by Selah.

Nelson was born in Rockford, Ill., in 1927. He received a B. Mus. from St. Olaf College in Minnesota, and a M. Mus. from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from St. Olaf College and the F. Melius Christiansen Award from Minnesota ACDA.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Nelson.html>

Advice from Robert J. Powell



Care for People

Care for people. Listen to not only members of the choir, but to the clergy, program and maintenance staff, and congregation. make relationships your highest priority.

Be open to all styles of church music, even as you perfect your own. Realize that the ministry of the Word and the ministry of music are equal partners in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ.



Robert J. Powell is retired as organist and choirmaster at Christ Church in Greenville, S.C., a position he held from 1968–2002. Previously he served as director of music at St. Paul’s School in Concord, N.H.; organist and choir director at St. Paul’s Church in Meridian, Miss.; and associate organist at Cathedral of St. John the Divine in N.Y.C. His music was first published in 1959, and he has written over 200 works for chorus, solo voice, organ and brass.

Powell was born in Benoit, Miss., in 1932. He received a BMus. in organ and composition from Louisiana State University and a MSM from Union Seminary School of Sacred Music in NYC. He is a member of ASCAP and has received their standard music award. He is a Fellow of the American Guild of Organists and has received the AGO ChM certificate.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Powell.html>


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Advice from Alice Parker

Improve Your Congregation's Singing

My heartfelt suggestion is for the improvement of congregational singing. Most congregations have had their melodic senses dulled by too much overpowering organ accompaniment. They need to hear their own voices, and they need to be needed. (If the organ is always playing, they can drop out without anyone noticing.) They also need instruction, which used to be provided by singing at home, group singing at church functions, and at Bible schools, etc. These are almost non-existent now, so many folks (especially children) don't know even the traditional tunes.

I advocate the return of the old-fashioned song leader, who teaches a song by lining-out: singing one phrase not loudly but well, and having the congregation echo it back. The leader is modeling tempo, articulation, text, mood—many things that are inherently musical and vocal, and cannot be notated. People are learning by ear, which is the way we are designed to learn. The page then serves to remind us of idiomatic, memorable singing. “Oh, I love that one” is a comment heard even after just one exposure to a new tune by this method. Errors or hesitations can be quickly corrected just by singing the phrase again. After only one verse of lining-out, go back to the beginning of verse one and sing all the verses without further comment. As the leader, you want to keep providing a good example in your face and body (your voice should not be dominating), keeping the tempo moving, and preserving the mood of the whole.



A congregation which learns a tune this way will remember it, and the next time it is used, you may add the organ if you wish. But I recommend that at least one hymn each service be sung without accompaniment. Let the congregation become acquainted with their own sound, in their own building, in their own service. Teach them many different kinds of melodies, including folk tunes from around the world. Your service will be wonderfully enriched.



As the founder and artistic director of Melodious Accord, Inc., Alice Parker supervises a busy schedule of educational activities, recording and concerts. She is well-known for her musical arrangements for the Robert Shaw Chorale, and has composed a wide variety of musical compositions. Her music is frequently heard, and well-received, at conferences and conventions.

Parker was honored at the 2000 American Guild of Organists Convention in Seattle as a Distinguished Composer, an honor bestowed to a different composer every two years to increase awareness of outstanding composers in the U.S. writing for the organ and choral fields.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Parker.html>



10 Advice from Brian Wren

How to Become a Better Church Musician

Reconsider your distaste for music other than classical (if perchance you acquired such distaste somewhere along the way). Maybe you weren't taught how to play or direct non-classical styles like black gospel, latin, and contemporary. Maybe you were taught that only "good music" is worth using in church. And maybe your own ear finds the simple chords, basic melodies, and strong repetitive beat of popular music boring and trite. If so, give thanks for the ear you've been given, or more likely trained to use, and don't despise others if they can't hear beauty in your favored complexities. Start looking for criteria of excellence in each genre of music, rather than a class-conscious fence of "worthiness" separating classical from the rest. And, if you can't play in black gospel, latin, and contemporary styles, stop being defensive about it, find someone who expertly plays one or more of those styles every Sunday, and be humble enough to say, "teach me." Printed conversation partners include Robert Buckley Farlee, ed., *Leading the Church's Song* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998—a compendium of articles on how to lead Chant, Northern European, North American, African American, Contemporary, Latino, African and Asian types of congregational song) and chapters 2 and 4 of my book, *Praying Twice* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000).



Brian Wren is the Conant Professor of Worship at Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia, and a Minister of the United Reformed Church (Great Britain). His hymn-lyrics are published internationally in hymnals of all Christian traditions. Brian's other publications

include *What Language Shall I Borrow?—God-Talk in Worship: A Male Response to Feminist Theology* (Crossroad Books, New York, 1989); *Piece Together Praise – A Theological Journey: Poems and Collected Hymns Thematically Arranged* (Hope Publishing Co., 1996), *Praying Twice: The Music and Words of Congregational Song* (Westminster John Knox, 2000) and two collections of worship songs in a more informal style, with his marriage partner, Rev. Susan Heafield (“Hayfield”). Titled: *We Can Be Messengers and Tell the Good News!*, they total 40 worship songs for intergenerational worship through most of the Christian year (book or CD) and are obtainable through Cokesbury or Hope Publishing Company.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Wren.html>




11 Advice from C. Michael Hawn

Care for the Congregation's Song

Many church musicians see the choral program as the primary focus of their efforts. While choral music may make a significant contribution to a congregation's worship life, the song of the people should receive the highest priority for the church musician. Erik Routley noted that the congregation was the first and most important choir for worship and that the first role of the established choir was to help the congregation sing better, and then to sing songs in praise to God on behalf of the congregation (anthems, cantatas, etc.). Imagine a choir rehearsal or a worship planning session that took this mandate seriously.

Keep in mind that the congregation's song should be diverse, containing the songs of the saints that have shaped our faith, the richness of the particular confessional tradition in which our congregation resides, and the breadth of the fresh movements of the Spirit that come to us literally from around the world. To this end, plan regular congregational as well as choral rehearsals. These may be as brief as five minutes before worship begins. Choose some choral music that has a role for the congregation or may even be taken over by the congregation eventually. In his perceptive book, *Beyond the Worship Wars*, Tom Long notes that vital and faithful congregations are singing congregations. There is a lyrical quality to worship as the people's voice is heard throughout the liturgy. Sing fully. Sing well. Sing often.





C. Michael Hawn is Associate Professor of Church Music at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, Texas. Hawn holds the DMA and Master of Church Music degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky and his undergraduate degree from Wheaton College.

Dr. Hawn leads conferences in children's music and worship throughout the United States and is a frequent contributor to many journals including *The Hymn*, *The Chorister*, *Reformed Liturgy & Music*, *Reformed Worship*, and *Creator*, having published over seventy articles.

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12 Advice from William P. Rowan

A Potpourri of Advice

Be organized.
Be supportive of your pastor; both to him/her and to others.

Don't neglect your health or your family.

Learn as much repertoire as you can while you're young; it gets harder and harder to find preparation time.

Learn to improvise.

Practice a little each day; make it a lifelong habit.

Be organized.

Worship with other traditions whenever possible to learn what and how they do better than your tradition.

Participate in parish events, but don't let them run your life.

Always attend coffee and donuts; your work is fresh on everyone's mind, and they'll tell you how you're doing.

Study arranging in college; you will use that knowledge many times.

Be organized.

Send notes of appreciation to your choir members occasionally.

Study voice in college.

Study group vocal technique.

Your choir librarian is indispensable; treat him or her accordingly.

Consider calling your choir librarian the "choir administrator." That's what they usually are.



Teach your choir to read music. Why pound notes for the rest of your life?

Give your choir good music, otherwise the best choral singers will just sit in the pews on Sunday.

Plan ahead; schedule the choir repertoire a year in advance.

Manage the congregational singing repertoire; that which is not used will be lost in one decade.

Teach your congregation 3-4 new hymns every year.

Be organized.

Keep your membership in the AGO current, and support your local chapter.


Be a member of at least one other professional organization, such as the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada, or the Chorister's Guild.

Learn to love congregational singing.

Learn how to foster and develop congregational singing.

Put as much effort into leading congregational song as you do your solo repertoire.

Be organized.



Reach out to the community; perhaps an annual hymn festival or a concert series?

Get a contract with a termination clause of at least 6 months. A contract with a two week termination clause is a two week contract.

Never forget that the beautiful music of every age before you is passed on through you.

Bloom where you're planted.

Plant yourself somewhere else if you find yourself in rocky soil.

Thank God every day for the opportunity to serve as a church musician.

Be organized.



William P. Rowan was born in San Diego, California on November 30, 1951. He is a graduate of Southern Illinois University (B.A. and M.M.) and the University of Michigan (M.M.). He serves as director of music ministries at St. Mary Cathedral in Lansing and is the liturgical consultant for the diocese of Lansing. Rowan is the composer of many published hymn tunes, anthems, and organ works. His hymn settings have been sung at hymn festivals throughout the United States, Great Britain, and Europe, and are included in in most recent hymnals. Rowan is the author of *Together Met, Together Bound*, 1993. He is a founding member of the Huron Valley Chapter of The Hymn Society, has a wife, Juanita, and two children.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Rowan.html>

Advice from John Wesley

Sing Lustily (submitted posthumously)

B

Sing all. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find it a blessing.

Sing lustily and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan.

Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.

Sing in time. Whatever time is sung be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; but attend close to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can; and take care not to sing too slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.

Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward you when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

14 Advice from Bruce Neswick


Keep Things in Perspective

If I could recommend one approach to an aspiring church musician it would be: keep things in perspective. We church musicians take our craft and art very seriously, and we expect that everyone else will accord it an equal measure of respect. This, alas, is not the case, and it behooves us to remember that our world will not crumble because of it! Indeed, being aware of others' relative disregard of what we do can often be a springboard to greater creativity. Having the humility to realize that our loftiest goals may only inspire a passive acceptance in our parishioners can help us to dig deeper, to find those components in our work that have truly lasting value.

Of course, all this is easier said than done, and anyone proposing it is sure to sound self-righteous. But I stick to my notion that letting go of some of our professional pride can often be the opening in the door for our parishioners. Before we can expect them to appreciate our work, we have to appreciate theirs! And when we come to enter their lives, we see things in perspective. None of which is to say that we shouldn't strive for the highest standards in instrumental and choral performance and in ritual observance: it simply suggests that those standards will have greater depth when they are shared, truly shared, with those with whom we share the journey.



Bruce Neswick is the organist/choirmaster of the Episcopal Cathedral in Atlanta, Georgia. He has been organist at the National Cathedral, and before that was organist/choirmaster of Christ Church Cathedral in Lexington,



Kentucky. A graduate of Pacific Lutheran University and the Yale University School of Music, his teachers have included David Dahl, Margaret Irwin-Brandon, Robert Baker, and Gerre Hancock. Neswick studied with Lionel Rogg at the Conservatoire de Musique in Geneva, Switzerland, where he also served as the organist and choir-master of Holy Trinity Anglican Church. For eight years prior to Geneva, Neswick was the organist and choir-master of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, Buffalo, New York, where he was also appointed Canon Precentor near the end of his tenure.

Neswick holds the Fellowship degree from the American Guild of Organists and was the first-place winner in that organization's national improvisation competition in 1990. He has also won improvisation competitions in California and Geneva. Neswick has directed and assisted at several summer courses sponsored by the Royal School of Church Music for boy and girl choristers and is in frequent demand as a recitalist and workshop presenter. He has composed on commission for several churches and performers in the U.S. and served as a continuing consultant to the committee that prepared the Episcopal Church's *Hymnal 1982*.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Neswick.html>

15 Advice from Ann Labounsky

Four Ideas

1 Keep learning new music, even music that is difficult and that you won't use for preludes and postludes. Daily practice grounds you in the discipline of your art.

2. Work toward short-term and long-term goals. The AGO and NPM Certification Programs provide excellent sources for both of these.

3. Read. Read all kinds of books that stretch your mind and others that are for pure relaxation. My favorites are novels and biographies.

4. Remember that music ministry is first about ministering to people and caring deeply about them. Find ways of showing your care even through short telephone calls to those with special needs or a short note of thanks for even the most mundane service. Wait for the people with whom you come in contact to speak and share their concerns with you before asking for their services.



Ann Labounsky, Ph.D., FAGO, serves as Chair of Organ and Sacred Music at the Mary Pappert School of Music, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pa.; director of the AGO National Improvisation Competition, and director of Certification for the National Pastoral Musicians.

<http://www.music.duq.edu/faculty/facultybios2.html#anchor1440978>

Advice from Peter Cutts

16

Accept Each Other

What has helped me most of all, in some fifty years of being a church musician, is to remember that the folk I am dealing with, in choir and congregation, are for the most part not professional musicians, and are giving their time and talent (such as it is) out of the goodness of their hearts. So the more we can all, professional and amateur alike, accept each other as we are, the more we shall achieve together, and the more fun we'll have together. I think it's important to show choirs your sense of humor: I even reserve precious time in choir practice for passing on choice examples of humor (intentional or otherwise) received as emails.



Peter Cutts is Director of Music at Andover-Newton Theological School, Newton, Mass., and at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Newton Highlands. British-born, he moved to the United States in 1989. He has over 50 tunes in hymnals around the world.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Cutts.html>

17 Advice from Florence Jowers


Keep Learning

I have gotten in the habit of watching “All in the Family” reruns this summer and find that there is much to be learned from Archie Bunker. Last night Archie was treating a mentally challenged young man in his usual bigoted manner when that man told Archie, “Everyone is my superior in that I can learn from each person.” I need to put this on my wall to remind me and others to keep learning. This is the biggest hint I can offer to church musicians or anyone at all, for that matter. Nothing is stagnant; we don’t learn everything we need to know in college or graduate school. We can always learn more.

My favorite professor in college was one who, by his example, showed us how exciting new things are. He actually learned from us, his students. We could bring any idea to him, no matter how far out, and he would seriously listen to us and give us creative feedback. Sometimes it sparked something in him that would lead to more discussion or research.

Workshops are offered in areas of worship, conducting, organ playing, personal relations, theology, and on and on. There is no lack of opportunity; we just need to remember that even if we have the most prestigious church or college position in town, we still have much to learn—and not just from those people who make their living teaching on the workshop circuit! Some of my best learning in graduate school was done in the dining hall! So, keep reading, attending workshops, keep an open ear and mind, and ask questions! You'll never know too much!





Florence Jowers is Assistant Professor of Music at Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory, N.C. She serves as college organist, music instructor in the Sacred Music Program, and director of the Lenoir-Rhyne Youth Chorus, a professional chorus for young singers between eight and eighteen. Prior to coming to Hickory, Ms. Jowers was an Adjunct Instructor at Thiel College, Greenville, Pa.

She is a charter member of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, presently serving as president of Region 2, and has served as a conference organist at the national conferences in Seattle, Wash. (1987), and Valparaiso, Ind. (1997), and was a presenter and organist at the regional conference at Lenoir-Rhyne College in 1998. She is active as a recitalist and clinician, and has been recitalist and clinician at the Montreat Summer Worship and Music Conference, recitalist for The Hymn Society, and for the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts.

<http://www.lrc.edu/mus/Pages/Faculty/jowers.htm>

18 Advice from Wayne L. Wold

The Job of *Church Musician*

My advice is to strive to fulfill both halves of the title “church musician.”

To be a church **musician** means that we have had good training, that we continue to sharpen our skills and gain new ones, and that we can’t imagine a time when we’ll be completely satisfied that we have learned and experienced all we need. Take advantage of all that you can. Take courses, pursue degrees, attend conferences and day-long events, read books and journals, join organizations, go to concerts, listen to recordings of music which you know and like and that which you don’t. Be a musical pluralist who is acquainted with popular and art music, folk and ethnic music, secular and sacred music. Learn to integrate all your musical knowledge, skill, and discernment. Then, take it with you into your church work – it **need** not and **should** not be checked at the church door!

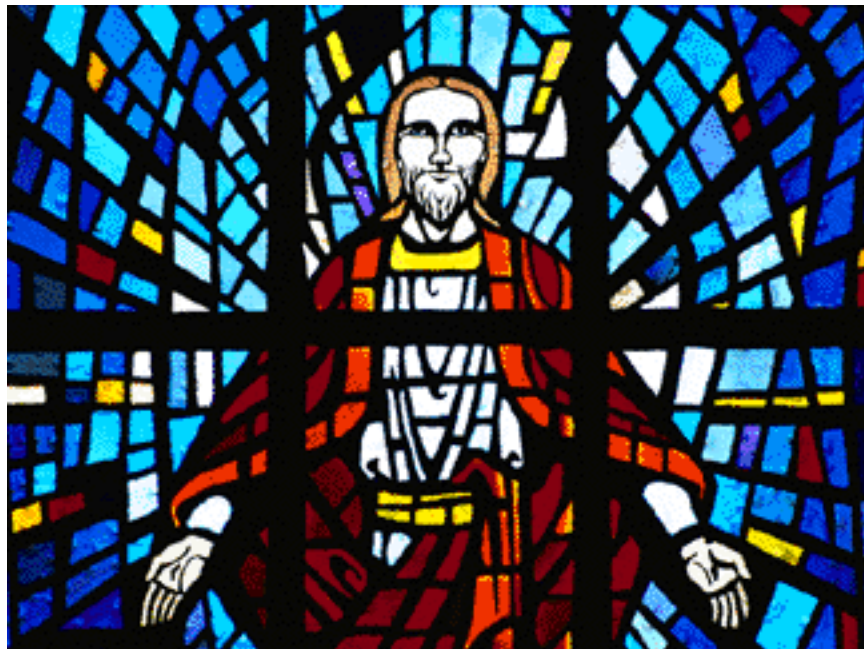
To be a **church** musician means that we have a special use, purpose, and focus for our musicianship. The distinction between performers and listeners is not as clear in the worship space as it is in the concert hall. Congregational song, in spite of all its musical “imperfections,” is of primary importance. Everyone in the room – and in the world outside – is royalty. We choose our repertoire not to highlight virtuosity or for good programming but to fulfill roles in the liturgy, to communicate, to minister. We want to be involved enough in other, non-musical aspects of parish life so that it is not “their church” but “our church.”

Putting “church” in front of “musician” does not dilute it, weaken it, or negate it. But it does water it down – it baptizes it for a special purpose and places upon it a divine blessing. Keep pondering, studying, and experiencing both halves – and the powerful combination – of the title **Church Musician**.



Wayne L. Wold is Assistant Professor of Music/College Organist at Hood College, Frederick Maryland and Director of Chapel Music at Camp David, the Presidential Retreat Campus.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Wold.html>



19 Advice from Philip Brunelle

On Staff Relationships

When I am at a workshop and am asked what the most important thing is for having a successful church music program my response is always the same—your relationship with the ministerial staff. I remember when I was interviewed by the senior minister of Plymouth Congregational Church for my position here as Organist-Choirmaster and he asked me what I needed for the job: I said I needed two things—money and support from the ministers, and that the ministers’ support was the more important.

I don’t think of the relationship as a 50-50 proposition, but more a 90-10 one. You as the musician must do all you can to be sure the clergy understand your vision and your desires for what you feel the music can and must be in worship. when you have ministerial support (as I have had during all of my years at Plymouth with three different senior ministers) it is most exciting and fulfilling and much can be accomplished!



Philip Brunelle, artistic director of VocalEssence (founded as the Plymouth Music Series), is an internationally renowned conductor, choral scholar, and performer. Believing that listeners and musicians alike must experience music of many genres and styles, he has worked enthusiastically—and tirelessly—to expand audiences for rarely heard works of the past and new vocal, choral, operatic, and orchestral music.

Philip Brunelle attended the University of Minnesota for undergraduate and graduate work in music. At the age of 24, he received a Rockefeller grant to study in New York at the Metropolitan Opera. He has since re-




ceived honorary degrees from St. Olaf College, Gustavus Adolphus College, United Theological Seminary, and Saint John's University.

Brunelle's conducting engagements span the globe. He has appeared with countless major orchestras and opera companies including the Chicago Symphony, Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Symphony, Berkshire Choral Festival, Washington Opera, England's Aldeburgh Festival, Swedish Royal Opera and Semper Oper in Dresden. He was the music director of the Minnesota Opera for seventeen years.

Brunelle has served on the choral music faculties of Westminster Choir College, the University of Minnesota, United Theological Seminary, and the University of Maine. His choral editions and opera orchestrations are published by Boosey & Hawkes, G. Schirmer, Theodore Presser, Walton, and Editions Salabert (Paris, France). He writes a monthly column on choral repertoire for *The American Organist*.

He has also been active in arts public policy and professional service endeavors, having served on the board of directors of Chorus America, the Minnesota State Arts Board, and the National Council on the Arts, which oversees the activities of the National Endowment for the Arts. He now serves on the Board of Regents of St. Olaf College and the Board of Directors of the Greater Minneapolis Convention and Visitors Association.

Among Brunelle's many awards are the Kodály Medal from the government of Hungary, the Stig Andersson Award for contributions to Swedish music, and the Royal Order of the Polar Star from the King of Sweden. In 1998, Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton presented him with the Minneapolis Award for "going the extra



mile” to enrich the community; he also received the F. Melius Christiansen Award, the highest honor of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association. In 2001, he was inducted into the Minnesota Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association. In 2001, he was inducted into the Minnesota Music Hall of Fame; he also was honored with the U.S. Bank Sally Ordway Irvine Award for Commitment, recognizing lifetime achievement, contribution and leadership in culture and the arts. In April 2002, the GMCVA acknowledged his work in bringing the World Choral Symposium to the Twin Cities with the “Copper Top” award.

In June 2002, Brunelle will make his debut at Opera Theatre of St. Louis, conducting the world premiere of Cary John Franklin’s *Loss of Eden*. National audiences recognize him through frequent appearances on Garrison Keillor’s *A Prairie Home Companion*, beginning with the very first show in 1974. In late 2002 he will continue to work with Garrison Keillor, appearing with him for concerts with the Cincinnati Pops, the Salt Lake Symphony, and the San Luis Obispo Festival. Philip Brunelle is the President of the Sixth World Symposium on Choral Music, which will be held for the first time in the United States the summer of 2002, bringing together thousands of choral singers and conductors from around the world.

Since 1969 Philip has been the organist and choir-master of Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis, often returning to the Twin Cities on an overnight flight to play organ and conduct the choir for Sunday morning services. He is married to studio artist Carolyn Brunelle. They are the parents of three grown children.

<http://www.plymouth.org>


Advice from Alfred V. Fedak

20

To Organists and Choir Directors

My first piece of advice is for organists: practice your hymns! Hymn-playing is the most important part of a church organist's job; beside it everything else is secondary. Musically speaking, most hymns appear quite simple, but this is deceptive: well-written hymns contain substantial musical and textual content, and their successful rendition requires great sensitivity and subtlety on the part of the organist. Even if one's playing technique is sufficiently formidable to allow one to easily master the most difficult organ works, one must still invest considerable time and energy in the preparation and practicing of hymns. A congregation will forgive a player's other shortcomings if his or her hymn-playing is solid, secure, and creative. But when hymns are played poorly, or in a careless or slapdash manner, an otherwise kindly congregation can become quite critical, and rightly so. There is just no substitute for good hymn-playing.

My second piece of advice is for choral directors who hire professional instrumentalists from time to time: treat your players well! Be well-prepared at rehearsals, be well-organized and clear in your instructions, start rehearsals promptly, be pleasant, and end rehearsals on time (a few minutes earlier is even better!). And be generous. Pay your players well—pay them more than union scale whenever possible. This will cost a few dollars more in the short term, but it's a goodwill gesture which can reap big musical and professional dividends in the long run. By paying well you'll be more likely to engage the best professional players around, and they will want to work with



you again and again. To secure the best players, it's often helpful to rely on the services of a contractor—typically the contractor is paid the equivalent of one rehearsal or service. This, too, is money well spent. And remember that the funds you spend on musical personnel are actually going toward putting food on the tables of our fellow musicians—we're all in this together, so don't be stingy!



Alfred V. Fedak, noted organist and composer, is Minister of Music and the Arts at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Albany, New York, having held previous church positions in New Jersey and Michigan. He is active in the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada and in the American Guild of Organists, having served from 1995–2000 as Director of the National Certification Committee. To date he has published nearly 100 individual compositions including anthems, mass settings, vocal solos, and organ music. He has also composed over 100 hymn tunes which appear in various collections and denominational hymnals, including *The Alfred V. Fedak Hymnary*, published in 1990, and *Sing to the Lord No Threadbare Song: New Hymntunes of Alfred V. Fedak*, published in 2001.

Fedak was born July 4, 1953 in Elizabeth, New Jersey. He earned B.A. and B.M. degrees from Hope College, and an M.A. from Montclair State University. A Fellow of the American Guild of Organists he also holds the Guild's Choirmaster Certificate. He is the recipient of numerous prizes in organ performance and composition, including the A.G.O.'s S. Lewis Elmer Award for national high score on Guild exams.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Fedak.html>


Advice from Ruth Duck

21

O for a Thousand Styles to Sing

One of the most important abilities for church musicians is facility in moving between styles of congregational song, which often involves learning new skills. (There is much to be said to pastors and church committees about treating you with respect and honoring your abilities and gifts, as well, but this e-book is directed to you musicians.) It is good to develop this capacity, not just to secure employment, but also to give diverse people a richer opportunity to sing their faith and to learn the musical languages of our Christian brothers and sisters around the world. I'm hoping that some of today's rapid change will settle into openness to a great diversity of musical styles, without leaving behind the melodies, harmonies, and words that Christians have sung in the past, especially Bach chorales and hymn texts by Charles Wesley!


I am writing this particularly to those of you who are classically trained and under pressure to be less dependent on written notes. Obviously, we are all gifted in different areas. (My parents probably undermined my musical gifts by insisting I play the notes in the piano book, not realizing that I had strong "by ear" gifts that I was exploring when I seemed just to be fooling around). The good news is that there are excellent people around the country who are gifted to communicate to classically trained musicians skills such as playing African American gospel music. Although many gospel musicians learn by ear, teachers who bridge traditions can explain gospel sounds in terms of chord progressions and other standard notation. See Horace Clarence Boyer's article in *Lift Every Voice and Sing II* (an Episcopal hymnal) for a sample.



In the mid-West, ethnomusicologist and church musician Abe Cáceres is an excellent resource—see his website, worldhousemusic.com.

A related knowledge base concerns performance styles for various cultures. Some music is meant to be sung with guitar or another instrument, some unaccompanied or with the drum. Sometimes, in order to keep the musical flavor, it is important not to improvise on the notes published in hymnals; for example, musicians such as I-to Loh of Taiwan have transcribed compositions in Western notation but with the harmony on offbeats or with parallel fifths. If you omit these characteristics, you will lose the intended sound. See *Sound the Bamboo*, the hymnal collection edited by I-to Loh for more about Asian instrumentation and performance styles. Also, see Michael Hawn's book, *Halle! Halle!*, published by Chorister's Guild, for performance styles and background on several popular songs we in the U.S. are learning these days from around the world. Hawn also makes the point that understanding the peoples and cultures from which the songs come, as well as their performance, is an important cross-cultural learning for musicians.

Engaging “contemporary Christian music” is a cultural issue, too, bridging across generational cultures. As time goes by, some gems are beginning to stand out among this huge musical output—see, for instance, the collection of such songs in the United Methodist supplement, *The Faith We Sing*. As with any kind of church music, not all is excellent or suitable for every congregation, but some of these new songs have musical and textual integrity and some are gender-inclusive.



Given the diversity of skills needed today, no one person can do it all. I would urge you (if you do not already do so) to think of your work as a ministry and to consider that your ministry is not only to be a superb musician yourself but to call forth the musical gifts of others. What about that shy teenager who is a fine guitarist and would be thrilled to accompany “Somos Uno en Cristo”? Or that elder who has traveled abroad, bringing back instruments, who is a closet drummer? At times pastors, musicians, and others in Christian ministry harbor secret jealousy—afraid that if they share the pulpit or the musical leadership, someone will outshine them. I guess that’s a risk, but if you give your best to the glory of God and encourage others to do the same, in most cases the radiance of your colleagues will reflect back on you!

All this takes time and work...not to be accomplished overnight, no matter what that church committee demands. But it has its rewards in developing enthusiastic, heartfelt congregational song, not to mention the joy of learning new sounds! Perhaps if Charles Wesley were writing today, he would say, “O for a thousand styles to sing my Great Redeemer’s praise!”



Most of the resources mentioned above are available from The Hymn Society, 745 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, MA 02215-1401 • (800) THE-HYMN www.hymnsociety.org or hymnsoc@bu.edu

Ruth Duck is Professor of Worship at Garrett-Evangelical Seminary in Evanston, Ill., and author of several books about worship. Her hymn texts are published in Baptist, United Methodist, United Church of Christ, and United Church of Canada hymnals.


<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Duck.html>

22 Advice from Walter L. Pelz

Pay Attention to Details

The familiar motto of the Boy Scouts, “Be Prepared” has a lot of relevance to the role of the church musician. If I were to offer one single bit of advice to a church musician, it would be to *pay attention to details*. For choir directors who will read this article, I offer the following guidelines:

- 1 Plan rehearsals on paper well in advance.
- 2 After determining the difficulty of the piece, decide how many sectional and full rehearsals it will take for your choir to learn this piece.
- 3 Be aware that some choir members will miss rehearsals for one reason or another. (Take this into account in item 2)
- 4 When giving a new piece to your choir, be sure that you know the piece from “A to Z” before handing it to them. Too many directors “learn” the piece along with the choir. This is like the blind leading the blind and many choir members will detect this.
- 5 Develop a “point of view” or interpretative concept of each piece your choir learns.
- 6 In each piece look for and solve in advance:
 - pronunciation problems
 - rhythmic problems
 - difficult leaps; (any augmented or diminished intervals)
 - proper tempo
 - outline of phrasing
 - breathing places
 - dynamic levels



7 When dealing with no. 6, be sure that your choir understands your goals in each item and strive for a consistent accurate response from your singers.

8 Try to stress to your singers that each one is responsible for his/her part. A choir is a team and requires team effort. If half the group doesn't contribute a full share of effort, there won't be much success.

9 Lastly, beware of the phrase "We're just a church choir," implying that we don't sing very well. There is no higher calling than to sing praises to our Lord. We should offer no less than the "first fruits" of our musical gifts.

Soli Deo Gloria.



Walter Pelz presently plays recitals, hymn festivals and composes for the church after retiring as the Billue-Burnett Distinguished Professor of Music at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas. He was born in 1926 in Chicago, and studied at Concordia University in River Forest, Illinois; Northwestern University; and the University of Minnesota.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Pelz.html>

23 Advice from Paul Weber

Called to Be a Church Musician


Church musicians, in order to survive and thrive, must continually reflect on their sense of vocation or call, and live out that call in the experience of God's grace. If a church musician has a strong sense of purpose in making music for the church, then he/she will be better able to cope with the responsibilities and pressures that inevitably come along. The turbulence that is engulfing the church's worship can actually help church musicians to identify their call and to delineate their gifts for ministry. In the stretch and pull of worship dynamics, church musicians must be willing to grow in their musical experience and still remain faithful to their unique gifts. It is probably best in these days of change to remember that the church is not now, nor ever has been a perfect organization, and yet it is still led by the Spirit to help people. Keep the focus on the call. Every musical experience will not be a mountaintop one. But over the course of a music ministry, you will prosper and grow when you allow yourself to be a vehicle of God's forgiveness and love.



The Rev. Dr. Paul D. Weber is Associate Professor of Church Music, Director of the Sacred Music Program, and conductor of *The A Cappella Choir* at Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory, N.C. He may be reached at Lenoir-Rhyne College, Campus Box 7355, Hickory, NC 28603

<http://www.lrc.edu/mus/Pages/Faculty/weber.htm>





23 Advice from Curt Oliver

Look at Your Work in a New Way


Possibly the worst fate that can befall a church musician is to be doing the same music in the same way for an entire lifetime...in fact, a mischievous God may conjure up a hell wherein we would be hearing ourselves or others doing just that!

It's an easy trap to fall into, since we are glued to our own benches Sunday after Sunday, and lack the freedom to see and hear what our colleagues are doing in their regular services. So this sermonette offers three quick bits of advice:

1. Have some coffee
2. Play around
3. Watch television

1. *Have some coffee.* Get together for coffee or a Saturday breakfast with organist colleagues (not necessarily your best friends!) once a month or so. You could gather with organists in your zip code, or musicians in your denomination. Share what you're doing and planning, and talk about the nuts and bolts of your jobs. What works and what doesn't?

2. *Play around.* Whenever possible, play for a service in another church. Weddings and funerals are the most obvious possibilities, but consider swapping benches for a Sunday with a neighboring colleague. Playing for churches with worship styles and traditions very different from your own is especially valuable. What works and what doesn't?



3. *Watch television.* Watching nationally broadcast services from the nation's larger churches can be both illuminating and maddening, but it's definitely worthwhile to see and hear what's happening. Even more valuable is watching local services on your local cable channel. What works and what doesn't?


The goal is to bring fresh eyes and ears to our everyday music-making, and to bring new energies and perspectives to our service playing.



Curt Oliver has been the Director of Music and Organist at Macalester-Plymouth United Church, in St. Paul, Minnesota, since 1971. He is also the Director of the Prospect Park Community Choir. He has written numerous pieces for choirs, organ, and piano. From 1970–1993 he was the Music Director of KUOM Radio at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

Oliver was born in 1943 in St. Paul. He earned a B.A. in Music Theory and Composition at the University of Minnesota, and has done further studies at the University of Minnesota, and Westminster Choir College, in Princeton, where he studied with Alice Parker, Joan Lippincott, James Litton, and Eric Routley. He is an Associate of the AGO, and Life Member of The Hymn Society. He is actively involved with the American Theatre Organ Society and the Minnesota Orchestra.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Oliver.html>




25 Advice from Lloyd Pfautsch

For Choral Conductors

When conductors are caught in a long line of traffic, frustration increases with the repeated starts and stops. Singers can also become frustrated in choral rehearsals when conductors stop the singers after they have sung only a few measures and then repeat this process with such frequency that singers become frustrated, especially if there seems to be no reason for stopping.

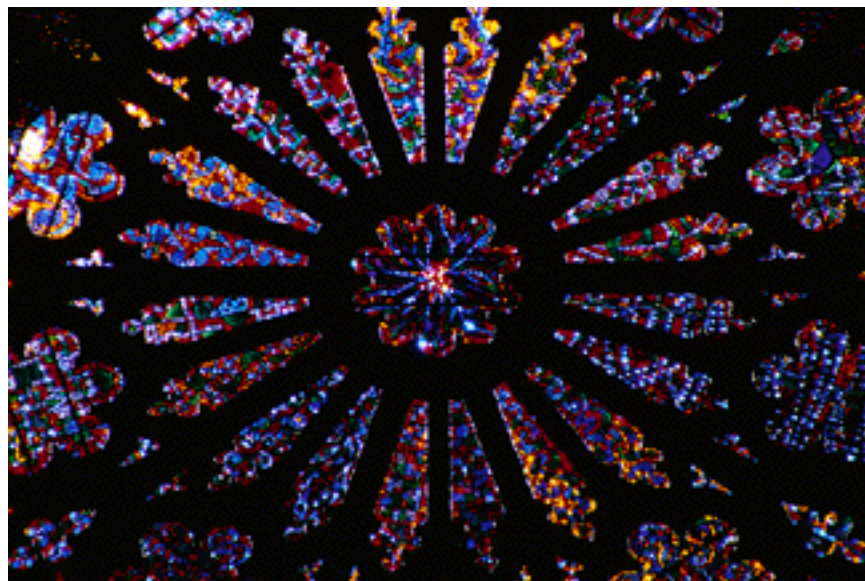
Choral rehearsal time is precious! Do not waste time just repeating a number of measures without explaining and/or demonstrating what you want changed or corrected and why!

When uniformity of vowel sounds is a problem, brief demonstrations usually achieve the desired result faster than explanations. The conductor does not need to be an excellent singer to provide the correct demonstration. Every conductor should know how the various positions of the jaw, tongue, and lips produce all vowel sounds. The conductor can speak and/or sing to provide the correct model.



Lloyd Pfautsch retired in 1992 as professor of sacred music and director of choral activities from the faculty of the Meadows School of the Arts at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, where he had taught since 1958. Pfautsch served as associate dean of the Meadows School for three years and was director of the Meadows Chorale, the Mustang Chorale, and the Choral Union. He organized and conducted for 25 years the Dallas Civic Chorus. Pfautsch studied at Elmhurst College (in Elmhurst, Ill.) and at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

<http://www.selahpub.com/SelahPeople/Pfautsch.html>



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