

Hi there,
I have just read a fantastic article from an amazing young man with a great heart and brilliant mind. I reckon he is really touching on something that I think is on the heart of God and is really relevant to where the church is. I apparently met this man a number of years ago at a church in Sydney. Be blessed by his letter as I was.



Kevin

Confessions of a Worship Leader

by Matt Anslow



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For years I have been involved in playing music to help lead Christians in worship.

Music leader, song leader, worship leader, call it whatever you want. Without wanting to sound in anyway conceited (I assure you I'm not), I earned a fair amount of praise and encouragement from people who claimed my leading helped them in some way. In my late teenage years (I have now just turned 26) so-called 'worship; and music was central to my faith journey. My identity was largely derived from my music leading, and there was a lot of pressure to conform to the image of other well-known worship leaders. I truly believed about my calling, that my purpose was to be found in leading people in worship by way of music.

I sang a lot of songs. A lot of words. But eventually something dawned on me—all that music, all that so-called 'worship', wasn't necessarily changing me or anyone else I was leading. Don't get me wrong, I think music is powerful and worship is central to Christian faith. Sometimes the two intersect well; Sometimes they do not.

I realised about six years ago, and have been on a long and often painful journey since, that the songs are not enough. In fact, they are not even close to enough. When the songs are sung as an end in themselves, as I was largely doing, we completely miss the point.

A conversation on Sunday with an old friend about a passage in Isaiah refreshed this sense of the incompleteness and relative unimportance of singing songs. Isaiah 58:1 details God's calling Israel to account for her hypocrisy in claiming to be righteous by fasting, while at the same time allowing injustice to run rampant and refusing to meet the needs of the poor.

This passage is not talking about contemporary 'worship'. There is however a connection between the two, since fasting was, like modern worship music, a kind of 'devotional' act of humility before God. They may not be exactly the same, but they do not need to be. The question is, what kind of devotion, what kind of worship, does God accept?

When the songs we sing, indeed the songs I was singing, are disconnected from the more important acts God requires from us, they become meaningless. More than that, they are indicative of hypocrisy.

In Isaiah 58 God calls Israel to exercise *true* fasting—to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke, to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the homeless poor into your house, to cover the naked (58:6-7). Israel was meant to be a light to the world (42:6; 49:6), being a society of justice and mercy. If they would become that society, then they would, according to Isaiah, be the light they were always intended to be (58:8). True worship is apparently not so much about fasting (or singing) but rather about being the people of love and justice God seeks.

To sing songs to God can be beautiful, and I encourage it. It can be a life-changing and Christ-conforming experience. However many communities have developed a culture of shallowness around 'worship', where playing songs on a stage has become the meat and potatoes, and where many young people are caught in a cycle of imitating the latest church, leader or album whilst foregoing the more important aspects of worship outlined by Isaiah. This is quite simply, a horrific perversion of the worship of the God of all creation, and no amount of constipated looks by misled worship leaders, no matter how sincere, can make it otherwise.

I have come to believe that any kind of worship that is not accompanied by actively engaging God's heart, hands and feet for the lowliest in society is ignored by God. It is passages like Isaiah 58, and Amos 5:21-24, that have led me to this conclusion. The question is, will we take these sections of Scripture as seriously as we do other, more encouraging portions?

I realise this could all sound very arrogant and self-righteous, and some would say I am inaccurately or unfairly

portraying the current state of things. But I do not believe that I am either arrogant or unfair when I say this, since I have been there; I've been in the middle of it, and I've embodied it. I know it first hand, and I have shared in the perversion. By God's grace though I have come out the other side, learning to serve God in the poor and hurting; I hope others do the same.

A question that has been thrown my way when I have previously expressed such thoughts is what my alternative might be regarding our *forms* of worship. It is expected that those like me who criticize the current state of music in many Evangelical churches should come up with an alternative. I myself fell for this assumption for a long time, that I needed to re-imagine worship, especially music.

While I think there is a place for this, and indeed I try to come up with new ways of experiencing God and worshipping Him, the truth is that I do not have to. The current mediums are not necessarily bad, for certainly they help people to worship God, whether it be Charles Wesley or Hillsong. What needs to change is not the mediums, but the priorities—singing songs without worshipping in the way prescribed by Isaiah in terms of love and justice for the needy is meaningless. No, worse, it is perverse and detested by God.

Please worship leader, I implore you, put down the guitar and follow Jesus in His Kingdom mission of setting free the oppressed and sharing your bread. You will see worship from a completely different perspective, and things will never be the same again.

Then take up the guitar again and sing about what God has done.

Matt Anslow

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stumbler on the way of His Kingdom.
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Follow Matt on Facebook or Twitter



I want to introduce you to someone who has become a great friend and a great source of encouragement to me and to our church. Rick Prosser has got a great passion to see Revival across our city and region. He and his family are based at C3 Charlestown but have a kingdom heart for the city. I encourage you if you are local to consider supporting this man half a day or a day a week or like me at the moment by getting him into your church, let him minister and bless him with a good love offering. His wife Sue is also an awesome minister with an incredible heart for lost people and can preach up a storm. Kevin

I Love the City



Rick & Sue Prosser

Hi, we trust this finds you well!

We are greatly encouraged as we see many encouraged, stirred and coming alive with the message we are bringing in the churches we visit. John 17, the last desperate prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane, "...May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them..." is one of the churches greatest challenges today. That we live out the prayer of Jesus and in doing so let those around us know that the father sent Jesus and loves them!

The Last Couple of Months:

May, June and July have been outstanding months for us and the opportunity to minister is truly an honour and absolute privilege. The places we visit we see life and hunger for the things of God! Places we visited recently have been,

The Grainery
New Vine Baptist
Thrive Church
Toowoomba City Church
Lake Macquarie Christian Mission
Rangeville Community Church

And the oldest church in the city, St. Johns Anglican Church! As well I had the opportunity to be with Pastor Ian Shelton and the One Heart for the Nation group in Sydney; these are stirring times with ministers and leaders from around the nation!

As well we had a super visit to Toowoomba for Sue's mums 80th!



The Annual Lord Mayors Prayer Breakfast

Without a doubt the **Regional Day of Prayer**, **Regional Radio Linked Prayer Meeting** and the **Lord Mayor's Prayer Breakfast** on June 8 and 9 were outstanding! Following this newsletter I will send out a brief report from these events www.lmpb.org.au

I am pleased to let you know that the **Kingdomworks Radio Program** is live! You can listen to this on Rhema 99.7 FM Friday 9:30am and Sunday 6pm, if you miss it you can log onto www.rhemafm.com.au 'catch up' to listen. This has been a tremendous blessing and extremely complimentary to what we are believing for! Our hope is to elevate Kingdom initiatives, partnerships and outreaches that help to bring personal and city transformation, stirring our listeners in ALL that's happening! I would love to hear your feedback, shoot me an email rick@kingdomworks.org.au or perhaps you know of a story that could fit the program!

Ahead:

- As I write this we are expecting a visit from a member of the Palau Association, Colin. Throughout the few days Colin is with us we will be meeting with people and dreaming up the idea of a 2 day Christian Festival on the Foreshore in the heart of the city.
- I am stoked that after many years of work towards getting another property for our church at last it looks as though one has been found, Hilltop Plaza Charlestown. I am working with the leadership and some other key guys to ensure this becomes a reality and relocation goes smoothly.
- We have a few speaking engagements coming up, a possible Luis Palau visit to the city this November and looking at a number of things for 2012 including an Easter outreach at Civic Theatre.



Peter, Grant, Rick & Tim—Maitland Ministers

Rick and Sue's Newsletter, Winter edition.
Address: 6 Forfar Street, Stockton.

Our Family:

SUE keeps busy! She is often speaking at churches about her role with scripture and recently ministered at the Hunter Christian Church's youth camp. Many great opportunities continue to open up in high schools through the welfare and scripture work. Sue was instrumental in arranging many school seminars for RUSH which included around 2,000 students.

RICK is enjoying a season of indoor cricket with Josh and our neighbor, Mick.

JOSH is between sport (soccer and cricket) and work there isn't much time left, oh enough for the odd rumble with his brothers!

VANESSA is saving madly for her trip to KL and Indonesia as well as taking her hand to photography!

LUKE is the Star Struck King and loving life, reunited with the farm animals one wouldn't be surprised if he turns his hand to mustering one day.

JACK with his footy season over, has just received a Principal's award at school!

THE DOG... Billy has learnt how to excavate the yard and strip plants to the ground...without being taught!

Our Prayer for you:

That our God would bless you with health, favour, friendships, provision and continual open doors of opportunity. That in our partnership it will be credited to your account in heaven you will be richly rewarded here on earth. We are thankful day in and day out for your continually asking the Lord to pour out of His abundance every good thing that will cause you to be ever joyful.

Praise Points:

- For His continual favour, blessings & provision
- Ministry opportunities opening up
- Supportive friends and family and health

Prayer Points:

- Effective ministry and connections
- Protection and health for the family
- Festival meetings

Our thanks:

For so many great friends, supporters and a wonderful family! We are constantly giving thanks to the Lord for everyone he has placed in our lives, his goodness, his provision in meeting all our needs!

Rick Prosser

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OzReach

P.O. Box 2021, Dangar NSW 2309

www.ozreach.org

We are simply a kingdom of God based ministry that wants to provide fellowship, connection and influence for ministers, leaders of ministries and business owners and managers. Anyone wanting to know more about connecting to Ozreach as a group of churches, contact: **Kevin Wilcock on 0407 467 798**
Email: info@lifechurch.org.au

KEVIN'S TRAVEL

SEPTEMBER

3-5 Tasmania
9 Wollongong
18 Tuggerah
22 Bonny Hills

OCTOBER

1-7 Coral Sea Fishing
21-22 Conference
28-30 Campbelltown

NOVEMBER

13 Mittagong
27 Nowra

DECEMBER

3 Tuggerah
11 Shellharbour

INCARNATE



Billy Kennedy

Billy Kennedy is the leader of New Community, Southampton, UK. Billy chairs the Southampton Christian Network, serves as chair of his local secondary school, sits on the board of 24-7prayer and the Fusion student movement. Together with his wife, Caroline, they lead the Pioneer network of churches across the UK. Billy is committed to the church, to mission, his city and nation. Billy and Caroline have three grown up children.



Building local missional churches

21st to 22nd October 2011

Venue to be confirmed next week

To register for this conference, print off the attached brochure and either email your details to:
info@lifechurch.org.au
or fax to: **4961 0212**
www.lifechurch.org.au

Apologies

It is with great regret that I have realized that we would be unable to support two international speakers at our up and coming conference. As much as I would have like to have John Robinson come and share with us regarding his amazing ministry, we will have to save him for another time in 2012.

Kevin has pioneered and pastored a number of growing churches. Kevin's realness and ability to relate to the Australian culture has allowed him to travel extensively across the nation and beyond.



Kevin Wilcock

Nikki has an amazing story, one of transformation from a life of drug addiction to a life of serving Jesus through what is probably one of



Nikki Correia

Australia's most Incarnational expressions of the local church. Her past has given her the understanding of others and her connection to God gives her the power to influence them. Look for 'Soul Café' on Facebook.

Uncluttered Christianity

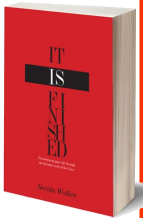
Lets simply
be real,
relational
and
restorative

If you would like a copy of this CD pack of sermons on:-

- Love in Action
- Spiritually Real and Passionate
- Uncluttered Christianity
- Acceptance

Email us your details at info@lifechurch.org.au
To order your copy for \$25.00 includes postage

Do you need a breakthrough? Are you tired of being broke, sick, depressed or oppressed? Have you been struggling to see the promises of God come to pass in your life? Well I have good news for you! When you know who you are in Christ and what you have already inherited in Him as a believer, then you will realise that you can receive your breakthrough NOW!



Through Jesus we have been given God's power, authority and ability to walk in victory in every area of life. But, for many Christians, somewhere along the line this truth has been lost. So unfortunately the things of God's Kingdom are foreign to many believers, but this needs to change! We are called to walk by faith not by sight or appearance, so it is time for the body of Christ to rise up and start walking by the truth of who they are in Christ and by what they have already inherited in Him. It is time to stop asking God to do what He has already done and start seeing that provision released in our lives.

Nerida Walker's

New book is available at

www.lifestore.co.za/store/products.aspx?pid=6233&cid

GlobeReach Some of the works we support overseas

FIJI—Peter Schultz

Creating Beauty

Recently there was great excitement in the Women's prison as Karen & Sue arrived to begin a full week of craft activities with the women inmates.

Throughout the week an incredible range of beautiful items were produced to the delight of the inmates and officers. This will ultimately become an income-generation project for the women and the items will be available for sale both locally in Fiji and also overseas. Creating something beautiful has a powerful effect on the soul and we could see the evidence of that throughout the week. Karen and Sue did these women an outstanding service.



Reconciliation

5 years ago Lepani's crime had caused a massive rift in his small community. At the request of the victim's family the landowners had prohibited him from ever returning. Lepani's change and good behaviour in prison now meant that he was getting out early, but couldn't return to his family.



Naca was invited to be part of the team from Nasinu Prison that went seeking reconciliation between Lepani's family and the victim's family. In Naca's words "It was one of the most powerful events and one of the highlights of my work with Operation Foundation because of its significance and ripple effect for our work in the years ahead." Lepani now has a home to return to, the families have reconciled and the

community has the unmistakable witnesses of the power of reconciliation and forgiveness.

Thinking Out

Josefa is now a teacher, Ritova a graphic designer, Sunlokh and Kirsopher both have laboring jobs. Josevata and Meli are farming. Roneel is a mechanic, Joeli is working on getting a licence to start a road-side BBQ stand, George is attending Bible College, Filimoni is volunteering at his church and the list goes on. As we work with these men, and now also women, our thoughts are always to what a successful future is going to be for each one. This week I spent time with Vili discussing his plans. Vili has been out for some 6 months and has shown himself to be committed to making right choices. We are about to assist Vili in furthering his qualifications in carpentry at the local trade college. His goal is to work with his hands in being a carpenter.

Each inmate's dream is valuable—together we make investment's that have impact!

Peter & Jill

peter@operationfoundation.org.fj

THAILAND—John Robinson (a great ministry to support)

Place of Grace & community work update

Wow what a fortnight it has been! First we signed a six month contract agreement for the Place of Grace, our new building in the heart of one of the many slum community's here in Bangkok. We have no furniture but we as a team are so grateful we have a building.



Then had the joy of meeting with many children and young people in the local park near our building. This is where every Wednesday we meet with the local community, wash hands, clip nails and have fun and games as well as a Gospel message.

A local police man brought his young daughter and said I know you're Christian and I want my daughter to know God and I want the young men who live near the police

flats to come to the Place of Grace because we trust you. Wow what a privilege!



Sadly one of the teenagers in the slum community died from dengy fever. Three families live in the space you would part two cars, and the sewage under their hut is very dangerous. They really do have nothing but are so welcoming to the team.

Mondays is a full day in one of Thailand's biggest prisons, with over 5000 English speaking prisoners and Thai political prisoners. We go in and share testimony, Bible study and worship. To hear 100 male prisoners singing amazing grace really does bring a tear to your eyes, fantastic!

Then we as a family were invited to the Thailand cultural centre for a prison choir concern in front of a Thai royal family

member. It was amazing seeing all these young men and women who have given their lives to God sing with passion and be out of prison for the day.

We now many people booked into the Place of Grace who want prayer ministry and a safe place to come on an evening and day time, so please will you stand with us and pray for:

- Peace and God's love to the family who have lost a daughter.
- Health food & jobs for the slum communities.
- Furniture, office equipment, chairs & toys for Place of Grace.
- Relationships (which are so important in Thai culture) with police and other community officials.
- Gillian Joel Natts and Leah as we are all involved in this ministry.
- God to change lives and set people free.

God bless you and thank you for standing with us.

John Robinson

Email: jrsomebodyschild@hotmail.com