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**HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR FUTURE MUSIC DEPARTMENT**

Dr. Mike Wells

The music department in your church is a part of five crucial elements of a great church: The Man of God, the message, the method, the money, and the music are crucially interwoven to provide a form for the Holy Spirit to fill. Your future depends on these elements being in harmony.

1.     Does your church music ministry include the church or a group of select individuals?

2.     Does your music department rise or fall on one musician?

        A. The “sole” pianist

        B. The “sole” soloist

        C. The sound technician who starts the accompaniment tapes.

3.     Would this Sunday’s service be well prepared and bring honor and glory to Christ if one musician was unable to come due to sickness or emergency?

4.     Would it be terribly obvious if he or she were absent?

5.     Would you be upset or nervous if he or she were absent?

6.     Could the service go on as scheduled?

7.     Does each member of your musical team have a backup?

        A.  Pianist/organist

        B.  Special music

        C.  Preludes

        D.  Offertories

        E.  Choir specials - song leader

        F.  Choir section leaders

8.     Line up regular choir members before the service.

9.     Arrange for alternates if needed.

10.   Contact the choir director if there is a hair or dress code violation.

11.   The music director or music assistant passes out order of service cards.

12.   The music director or music assistant also types announcements for music department.

13.   The music director or music assistant contacts musicians with schedules and reminders.

14.   The music director or music assistant checks the platform.

15.   Back-up soloists are the pinch hitters for the special music groups.

16.   Schedule soloists sparingly. Use them primarily for back up. Then you will have a balance between solos, duets, and group specials.

17.   Regularly rehearse with soloists.

18.   Include church members in your future music ministry.

If you would graph the music ministry of the average church, it would look like an upside-down triangle. The point of this triangle would balance on one person, the pianist. This pianist plays for all of the groups, plays for all of the offertories, plays for the choir, and because of this overwhelming pressure, has become the best musician in the church. As a matter of fact, since all of the pressure is exerted on this one individual, everyone else’s ability has come to a standstill or has, with time, declined.

19.   Begin new music ministries under the main music ministry to get more people involved, thus improving musicianship skills.

        A.  Primary Department

        B.  Jr. Department

        C.  Teen Sunday school

        D.  College/Career Sunday school

        E.  Adult I Class

        F.  Adult II Class

        G.  New Converts Class

        H.  Spanish Class

        I.   Deaf Class

        J.  Jr. Choir Music Department

        K. Teen Choir Department

        L.  College Special Music Department

20.   Have a different music staff and different alternates for each ministry.

        A.  Song Leader

        B.  Pianist

        C.  Special music groups - these sing only in their department

21.   The music staff answers directly to the Music Director or Coordinator:

        A.  Approval of all musicians

        B.  Approval of all songs

        C.  Approval of special music and offertories

22.   Absolutely no one can play or sing any music that has not been chosen or approved from the top of the music department / pastor.

23.   Make music a part of everyone’s spiritual activities.

24.   Make the Music Ministry accessible.

25.   Use people involved in the soul-winning ministries.

26.   Use anyone who is willing, no matter what his talent may be.

27.   Be creative in finding an appropriate place for them to serve.

28.   Teach them and be patient with them.

29.   Find “hidden talent” in each person and help him develop that talent.

30.   Encourage instrumental music if they cannot sing, and vice versa.

31.   Help people grow spiritually.

32.   Teach the value of hard work and its rewards.

33.   Teach self-sacrifice by example.

34.   Teach teamwork.

35.   Place each musician in an area that they can help in and it will also help them grow spiritually.

36.   Teach musicianship skills.

        A.  Ear-training - hearing the pitch and repeating it, repeating phrases.

        B.  Note reading - workbooks and worksheets should be available.

        C.  Voice coaching - this should be done during rehearsals in 30-second “commercials.”

D.  Interpretation - teach them to stay together, get louder together, get softer together, interpret the text of the song in the presentation.

37.   Teach platform etiquette.

38.   Make it a teaching ministry.

39.   Have opportunities for every age group in your church to participate.

        A.  Very young beginners

        B.  Primary Department

C.Junior Department

        D.  Jr. High Department

        E.  Sr. High Department

        F.  College and Career

        G. Young Adults/Young Married

        H. Adults

        I.  Sr. Adults

40.   Have several groups that are “in-training” groups.

You should have several groups where you always start the new people. These would be “in-training” groups.

New members and new musicians have many areas to be trained in before putting them in smaller groups or as soloists.

The “in-training” groups should be large in number, at least three people to each voice part. They also work better if they are all ladies or all men groups.

The “in ­training” groups sing good arrangements that are not too difficult. They should be scheduled every six to eight weeks.