

Never Copy the CD Version

I love what Todd Henry says in his “The Accidental Creative” podcast: “It is the age of creativity. Cover bands don’t change the world. Don’t be a cover band, you need to find *your* unique voice.” There is no need whatsoever for making the songs that we do sound just like a recording.

However, there are two **really important** assumptions that statement makes:

1. One of the main roles of the band is to support the leader in where he/she feels God is wanting to take things for that service. Sometimes the leader will feel the most comfortable (and therefore be able to focus on what is most important) if the arrangement is familiar. I think it's fine for the leader to ask for a certain arrangement, which may be what Chris Tomlin's band did. So if the leader is asking for it, the team should do it.

2. And, more importantly, the statement assumes a certain level of musicianship in the players. Manheim BIC’s Worship Pastor, Ryan Shenk, described a church service as a “family dinner” because it speaks of uniqueness and intimacy, so every church has their own flavor. But, scrambled eggs...again?! Can we try poached or over medium? Mom...!

See, most church musicians are in ruts because they haven't invested enough in their own musical development to have solid musical foundations, good chops, proper technique, and the **ability to make musical choices in WHAT they play**. I'm not saying your band isn't good, doesn't have talent or potential, or isn't valuable! Seriously, I'm not. The value in learning music the way it is on the CD is that **it is like taking lessons from seasoned, accomplished musicians and learning from professional arrangers**. I'm ready to say “never listen to a CD again” once a band has such great instincts (read: habits) that they produce fantastic music naturally without it. So until a band (or a musician) gets to that point, they need lessons or to learn parts from CD's. It's a necessary step in **being a good steward of your musicianship**.

And while I’m on stewardship, I need to tell you that I just love the definition of stewardship: *managing for increase*. I used to think that stewarding something just meant managing it. But that's more like burying the talent out of fear. Managing without the “increase” part just leaves you with trying to protect, control, and maintain. (ew!) We're not called to that, we're called to double and triple the return on the talent God has given us. Musically, that requires investment.

It takes time to develop the leadership art of creating a culture of grace that, at the same time, pushes the development of people, and calls them out when they don’t feel prepared. And it's important enough to say that your musicianship and your stewardship of it is NOT tied to your identity or your worth, that you don't have to perform your way into acceptance or approval (which is such a common pitfall for musicians). You are accepted completely because you're a son or a daughter of a Father Who loves you with inalterable love. Now you have the responsibility as a son or daughter to steward the gift well.

We hope you’re encouraged by the Worship Fertilizer, a free resource from Ad Lib Music, “*in simple love and pure devotion to Jesus, we are eradicating isolation and burnout so that leaders bear much fruit!*”

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