

Russ Ware

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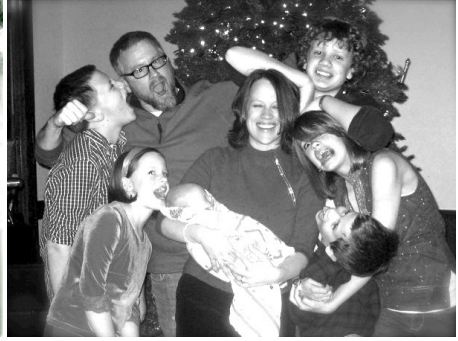
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Personal

- Date of Birth: April 12, 1968
- Married to Amanda since 1993
- 6 Children: Abby, Calvin, Schaeffer, Ellie, Marshall and Lily
- Ordained at Irving Bible Church in 2000

Family

They are awesome. My wife, Amanda is supermom and an excellent office administrator to boot. She is super-organized and really smart. Our kids are a challenge and a joy. We have one headed off to design/arts school soon, one developing as a musical genius, one budding technical wiz, and the rest are still figuring things out. We do have a 2 year old. Pray for us.

Ministry Direction

I love leadership and forming and communicating vision. My technical ministry “sweet spot” is leading worship, developing teams and pulling together all the elements (environmental, musical, artistic, technical, etc...) to create meaningful expressions of Christ-centered worship. My passion as a worship leader/pastor goes well beyond music to setting the entire tone and environment for experience and formation in the worship space and the entire church, including everything from physical esthetics to communications. I have long been a student and practitioner of contemporary/modern/postmodern worship, and consider that to be my “native tongue” musically and esthetically. I have extensive experience leading “modern” worship bands, and the organization, arrangement, and leading of these teams is a strength and passion. Organization and good, creative planning is a key to effective ministry for me.

Along the way, I have enjoyed a significant journey of seeking to better understand worship leadership and to develop approaches to worship that truly exalt Christ, connect with God, and inspire mission. While I am passionate about the need for worship to be uncompromisingly contextual (i.e. contemporary, “relevant,” etc...), I have developed the conviction that meaningful worship should also be faithfully “liturgical.” By liturgical I simply mean that the heart of our worship, regardless of style, must always be Christ and His work. And, that we can bring much

depth to our contextual, creative forms of worship with a proper connection to history and “liturgical sensibility.” If this raises a question, please ask me about it.

I see worship as fully integrated with the vision and mission of a church. *The way we worship informs the way we believe and act as individuals and as a community.* I am passionate about developing the type of worship in the Church that shapes devoted followers of Christ and inspires deep missionality.

You Should Also Know

I’m a creative. I am most alive creating and making things. I’m equally energized by creating a weekly worship service, an experiential worship station, visuals to create a unique worship environment, a new arrangement or song for worship, a website, a written piece, a talk, or a community or team. I just like to make things, especially in collaboration with others who bring appropriate skills and passion to the table.

One quirk about me is that while I am a creative, and I do have some of the typical traits of an artist, I am a big time strategic thinker and obsessively organized. I am a strong leader, in an ongoing journey to infuse my natural drive with more grace and compassion. I am also a morning person. Big time. I get my best work done between 7:00 and 11:00 am. Go figure.

I am at a stage in my life and ministry that I am comfortable still being the primary “face of worship” at a church (at least for a little while longer), or moving on to a role that is more developmental. In either case, it will be a high priority for me to develop leaders and create a sustainable creative community that does not rely on any one individual for its success.

As far as my “style,” it is always progressing. I’m not doing the same things now that I was doing 10 years ago, and I hope that I won’t be doing the same things 5 years from now that I am today. This is how I’m wired, and these are the times in which we live. I’m not about getting a church stylistically from point A to point B. I’m more about getting a church from stasis to movement.

A new expression or model for the role of the worship leader/pastor that has come on the scene recently is that of “worship curation.” I find myself very much in this vein. Mark Pierson’s book, *The Art of Curating Worship*, provides a nice overview of this idea.

I’m thankful to the Lord for leading me on a deep journey of seeking out what it means to know and follow Christ in these days. For me, as with many others, this has meant shedding some baggage and even “unlearning” some things. In the process I have grown a great deal, and I have formed a deep appreciation for some of the more ancient/historical practices and understandings of our faith. At the same time, I am convinced that God is doing new things as well, and that we live in a time of significant cultural shift, largely driven by communication technology. We ignore this to our peril. Along with that, I continue to hold to a certain appreciation of my conservative, Evangelical roots, though not without some shift in sensibilities.

I have a particular appreciation for the ideas and leadership of folks like Gabe Lyons (Q Ideas), Alan Hirsch, Lesslie Newbigin, David Fitch, Dan Kimball, Donald Miller and Scot McKnight,

among others. A perusal of my bookshelves will reflect this ongoing journey. The best ministry match for me would probably be a place that resonates at some level with this type of thought.

David Fitch's book, *The Great Giveaway*, is a favorite related to the discussion of how the Church might be most effective in ministry in these days.

Also...

Kent Carlson and Mike Lueken, *Renovation of the Church: What Happens When a Seeker Church Discovers Spiritual Formation*

Jim Belcher, *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional*

Ian Morgan Cron, *Chasing Francis*

Gabe Lyons, *The Next Christians: The Good News About the End of Christian America*

Experience

Calvary Baptist - Okemah, OK/Southside Baptist – Lebanon, TN

1987-1990

- Served at these churches as youth and music minister and interim pastor for a brief time at each.

Shepherd Ministries - Irving, TX

1990-1991

- Conference Promoter for nationwide youth conferences
- Creative design for promotional and ministry pieces
- Audio tech for conferences

Irving Bible Church – Irving, TX

1991-2008

- Associate Pastor, core team leader and vision caster. Occasional preaching/teaching.
- Worship leader and leader/developer of worship and creative team staff and volunteers: choir, band, tech., etc...
- Shaped the worship experience not just musically, but visually, environmentally and experientially, incorporating all the senses and including creative “stations” and other projects related to worship and mission.
- Developed, managed, and moderated a successful web based community forum.
- Created and managed multiple blogs and a podcast for daily prayer and meditation during the 2008 Lenten season.
- Developed and managed website for the online planning and management of various volunteer groups.
- Maintained email and web servers for various sites associated with the church both on-site and at remote hosting locations.
- Lead and organized volunteer teams for community service projects primarily in the Dallas inner city area.

Horn Creek Camp – Westcliffe, CO**2008-2011**

- Director of Family Ministries.
- Director of Internship Program (year-long leadership development program with 8 college/post-grad students).
- Camp Host
- Worship Leader for staff and campers.
- Developed and management website (ongoing as contracted).
- Marketing and development of Family Camp ministry.

Hope Lutheran Church – Westcliffe, CO (Lutheran Church Missouri Synod) 2008-Present

- Worship leader, occasional preaching/teaching.
- Choir Director
- Worship Service Design

Other**1991-Present**

- Volunteer Worship leader for various Horn Creek camps.
- Speaker at various churches and conferences including Dallas Seminary, primarily in the area of worship and the value of historical and liturgical worship forms in the post-modern context.
- Interim and fill-in worship leader for various churches including Irving Bible Church, in Irving Texas, and Pulpit Rock Church in Colorado Springs.
- Director of the Wet Mountain Valley Community Choir for 4 years.

Video

You can view some examples of my worship leadership at: <http://vimeo.com/user4642053/videos>

There are two videos from an event called “The Mezzanine Floor.” Though these videos are almost 10 years old (older songs and a younger me), they are still the best for an over-all view of my work with multiple musicians and leading from the guitar and the piano. There are two other guys who lead a few of the songs vocally. I am the one who is leading from the acoustic guitar and the piano in the middle of the stage, with the dark blue t-shirt.

All of the other videos are more recent, but limited in scope.

Education

Oklahoma Baptist University – Shawnee, OK 1985-1988

Began with 8 credit hours the summer before senior year of high school. Began degree in Music Theory and Composition in 1986, and left a handful of hours short of being a senior in 1988 to write music in Nashville for Starsong records.

Arlington High School – Arlington, TX 1983-1986

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Skills

Leadership - Team Building - Teaching - Design - Visionary - Creative Thinking - Musicianship - Guitar - Piano/Keyboard - Choir - Writing/Arranging - Web Design

Interests and Other

Reading - Church History - Christian Liturgy – Spiritual Disciplines – Spiritual Formation - Modern/Postmodern Worship - Pastoral Heart - Teaching - Hiking - Cycling - Camping – Old Volkswagens - Apple Computers - Podcasting - Blogging - Gardening - Environmental Care and Sustainability - Cooking - Detail Oriented