

Philosophy of Music at Bethel Church – Fairbanks, AK

1. The songs that we sing have to reflect biblical truth. We don't follow cleverly invented stories, myths, or fairy tales. Our faith is grounded in the revelation God has given us and empowered by the Spirit of truth. That doesn't mean that there is not room for metaphor, allusion, and other types of language in a song, but they too have to be firmly connected to truth. If the worship leader is asked, "What does this line mean?" they should be able to answer it clearly.
2. Our music has to connect with the congregation. Currently Bethel is predominately young families. While some might prefer and have their car audio system tuned to the great hymns of the faith, the majority listen to contemporary music. Our style has to reflect that and engage them where they are. That doesn't mean that there is no place for the hymnody that has been in the church for centuries, we have to maintain continuity with our roots, but the "bulk" of Bethel's music will be contemporary.
3. Our music has to be singable. Tempo, timing, key, and groove all play into this aspect. The congregation has to be confident with where a phrase starts and stops, where the melody line is going, and comfortable with the key if they are to sing.
4. The sound level of the instruments should encourage people to participate with confidence. The sound should not be so soft that they feel exposed, nor so loud that their voice seems inconsequential. The music is the medium that carries the truth; it should assist us in our worship and not get in the way. The music portion of the worship service is not a concert that they attend.
5. Our songs should have a clear reference to divine names: God, Lord, Savior, Spirit, etc. There shouldn't be any confusion that this song could be about our relationship to our wife, husband, girl/boyfriend, etc. On the occasion that this doesn't happen there has to be a clear context provided that allows the church to see why we are singing this and how it relates to biblical truth or our experience as believers.