



## Leadership Letter *In His presence?*

Recently I was asked the question, “What is God saying to YWAM global?” My response was, “Two things – the first, flattening the organisation and establishing a shared leadership, and secondly, calling us to spend time ‘In His Presence.’ In this season as I have attended conferences or visited YWAM bases, leaders are giving over large amounts of time to worship and wait on God in order to love, listen and obey. How important it is, to give extended, focused attention to the Lord. Actually it isn’t an option, [Matthew 4:10](#) commands us; *“You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.”*

**Time In His Presence:** Moses was a busy man, sought after by the large community for wisdom and counsel, called upon by the elders and leaders of the tribes, and as a good High C (on DISC) was conscientious, responsible, and good on following through with his commitments. In the midst of his incredibly busy schedule, he gave a lot of time to be in the Lord’s presence.

*Ex 33: 7-11 “As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and hover at its entrance while the Lord spoke with him. ... Inside the Tent of Meeting, the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Afterward Moses would return to the camp, but the young man who assisted him, Joshua son of Nun, would remain behind in the Tent of Meeting.”*

YWAM is a very task oriented, vision driven mission that attracts those with an adventurist spirit and often with workaholic tendencies! YWAM staff are responsible to raise their financial support and so need to be seen to be producing fruit! This is a constant source of pressure. Yet in the midst of our challenging world encompassing vision, our motto encourages us that our first focus must be “to know God” before we seek to “make him known.” Worship leads to service but it doesn’t always work the other way around. We need “being worship” as well as “doing worship.”

Recently my wife ran a women’s retreat in our centre here in Malaga with 25 or so women from the local area and around Europe. Whenever we have people come to stay with us, there is a huge amount of work to do and many opportunities for me to serve as a husband. So I got to work with pick-ups from the airport, printing off schedules, welcome cards, doing shopping, preparing menus and cooking. It was a busy week but a privilege for me to serve her and the women who attended. She appreciated my help very much, but if that was all our relationship entailed, I wouldn’t be satisfied. I like working and serving her – the ‘doing love’, but I also look for the ‘being love’ – spending time in her company, listening, talking and enjoying intimacy together. So it is with God. We need full agenda times where we are working and fulfilling assignments but also the ‘no agenda times’ when we simply enjoy his presence.

I have often spoken about focusing on the “one thing” as I share on personal

development and setting goals. The Psalmist says, *"The one thing I ask of the Lord - the thing I seek most - is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord's perfections and meditating in his Temple... a single day in your courts is better than a thousand anywhere else! I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God than live the good life in the homes of the wicked."* (Psalm 27:4; 84:10)

**'No go' without his presence:** Moses complains to God in [Exodus 33:15](#) – *"If your presence will not go with us, do not bring us out from here"*. Moses, the great prophet, was not ready to lead the Israelites unless God's presence went with them. And in response to Moses' plea, God did go with them, in a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. God's presence is available for us too as we seek after him today.

The question is, are we aware of his presence or lack of it? Mary wasn't aware initially that the man who spoke to her in the garden of Gethsemane was in fact Jesus. The disciples on the road to Emmaus weren't aware that Jesus was walking with them. Samson wasn't aware that God's presence had left him when Delilah cut off his hair. After a great victory in Jericho, Joshua wasn't aware that God wasn't with him in his attack of Ai. Sometimes we are too busy, too focused on the task or too distracted to allow our spirits to tune in and be aware of God's presence being with us or absent from us.

I personally need extended time in order to still my soul and spirit before I can hear from God. When I come to pray, worship and seek to enter into God's presence, suddenly all the things I haven't had time to think about race into my mind. How annoying is that! Here I am setting time aside and the only thing my mind can dwell on is work. You may not have this difficulty but I have to deal with these unwelcome guests very often: things that need doing, emails to answer, projects to start or finish, people to spend time with, etc. My solution is to write those distractions down in my wunderlist app to come back to later and then I am free to focus on the one important thing right now – time with the Lord.

**Carriers of His presence:** The presence of God filled Solomon's temple in the Old Testament. [1Kings 8:10,11](#) says that *'the cloud filled the house of the Lord... the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord'*. Then in Acts 2, the disciples having waited for the Holy Spirit to come, were filled with his presence, spoke in tongues and prophesied and the glory of God poured out on them and into the crowds. The Bible declares in [1Corinthians 3:16](#), *'Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?'* The same presence that was in Solomon's temple and that was poured out on the apostles can fill our personal temple today.

God wants to transform us from a presence seeker to a presence carrier. When we are filled with His presence, we start carrying His presence wherever we go. This is what happened to Peter as he was walking the streets of Jerusalem: *"They brought sick people on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them...and they*

*were all healed” (Acts 5:15,16).* We too can carry the presence of God that will affect our environment and the people we come into contact with.

Each of us have a contribution area that can carry his presence. I was just in a meeting in England where an Evangelist, Connie Taylor, was sharing how it is a new day in evangelism on the streets of England. She carries His presence as she shares God’s love with people and they respond to Jesus as a result. A visionary leader, Carl Tinnion, carries His presence as he speaks to emerging leaders and encourages faith in their hearts to step out of their comfort zones and to risk everything for God. Others carry His presence in their heart for intercession and worship, in their anointing with people, in their ministry and in their day to day lives.

*Acts 4:13 “The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.”*

Our prayer as a retreat centre community is to create an atmosphere where there is freedom for the Holy Spirit to move in any way that he pleases. Our desire is for God’s presence to be manifested in a way where we are all aware of His presence, what he is saying, what he wants to do in our lives and experiencing his transforming power. Actually that’s my prayer for every YWAM base, church and community around the world.

**Conviction in His presence:** In our relationships with God, He is always encouraging, affirming and supporting us, and yet out of his love for us, he doesn’t want us to stay the same. So it’s in the place of worship, when he has our full attention, that he will often gently confront and speak into our lives. How often in times of revival do we see a conviction of sin as people worship. They are confronted with how far they have fallen short as they recognise the wonders of the God they are worshipping. This is why being personal worshippers is so vital. *John 4:23 “True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.”*

*Psalm 16:11* tells us that *“In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”* Lets take time like Mary to sit at the feet of Jesus, worship, listen and respond. Isn’t that what the great commandment is all about – loving the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. My prayer is that we as individuals will take time every week to be ‘In His presence’ and all of our communities will make it a priority to become ‘places of His presence’ by setting aside ample time to worship and to listen for what God has to say to us.

Until next month

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P.S. An appendix for leading in worship.

We are called to be spiritual leaders and that involves worship. Let's not leave it to 'the worship leader' or 'the musician.' Our job as leaders is to create an environment where people can feel safe, be relaxed, be real and connect with God in a deep way. Here are a few principles to remember:

1. **Personal worshipper:** The first job of a worship leader is to be a personal worshipper. You can't lead others into worshipping God out of a vacuum in your own spirit. It's out of your own relationship with God that you bring others in, draw insights and are able to be free in His presence.
2. **Preparing for worship:** As the team prepares ask questions like; what's the theme, the goal, the climax, the response, the involvement from the group you desire? The worship leader needs to have an idea of the time allocation but if the Spirit is really moving, who of us wants to cut it short! So we need to prepare for anything.
3. **Focus:** Many find it helpful to have stations or tables where we have specific focuses for our meditation and worship, symbols to look at, objects to pick up and opportunities to be interactive. These can sometimes be used to encourage response to God, apply our lives in certain ways and respond to specific challenges in our own time and in our own way. We leave with a specific take away.
4. **Spiritual leadership:** It's easy for leaders to abdicate their leadership role in worship. The worship leader needs the backing, support and help from the spiritual leaders of the ministry. Generally we have a point person who is able to facilitate those who have a word, prophecy or some input into the meeting. This facilitator then needs to establish a communication with the worship leader to enable a smooth flowing worship time.
5. **Praise:** As we start with praise, and our bodies begin to move, our spirit is loosened too. We begin to relax and can start to listen to the Spirit's whisper and see the spiritual realm where up to now we've been too uptight to be aware of or too laid back to focus in.
6. **Adoration:** As we progress we can move deeper into adoration or worship from our hearts and spirits. It's the language of love. Expressing our love, value, honour, appreciation, commitment, and sacrifice to God. It can be helpful to use a symbol, picture or application to bring life to the act of worship – kneeling at a cross, standing on a heart, taking communion, seeing the mountain of the Lord to ascend or the storm to go through or a thousand other metaphors.
7. **Flow:** There's not a formula or concrete process or schedule to worship. If we approach our friendships and marriages with a clinical step by step approach, it's going to miss the life, emotion and spontaneity of a real relationship. Relationships don't fit into a box. Worship doesn't either. If you are a control freak, time manager, highly scheduled concrete thinker, then worship leading will require a certain new flexibility.
8. **Responsive:** Relationships are responsive – as we enter God's presence, there's a need to respond with 'thanks', 'praise', 'celebration' and 'adoration'. A worship leader needs to lead into these activities

without a controlling attitude. We need to woo people into God's presence.

9. **Momentum** of the large group. When we are weary, disappointed, hurting or out of peace in some way, it's great to 'go with the flow' and be carried in the worship of others. Slowly the negative feelings can lift as we begin to gain new perspective and focus on the Lord. We begin to live from our spirit again and ascend above our pain, disappointment, or emotions and issues we are struggling with.
10. **Declaration:** Declaring who God is, is at the heart of worship. We don't come for what we can get but what we can give. God's character and holiness can be illuminated to us in the place of worship.
11. **Danger zone** is where the open mic is made available – prophetic words requiring response need creative, spiritual leadership. Sometimes the challenge of a number of words can be brought together by the worship leader that brings a corporate response leading to breakthrough. At other times, discernment is needed and words that are off at a tangent, kindly brought back into alignment.
12. **Heaviness:** Where there is a dark cloud over the group we need to ask the Lord for the way to break through. It can vary from continuing with praise, leading in prayer to stir hearts, opening up for prayers, proclaiming inspiring scriptures or simply bind the enemy. Whatever hindrance is there, press in to see it dealt with.
13. **Skill isn't everything** but develop to be the best you can: A tight band can make a huge difference in creating the right atmosphere. Through clear lead ins, playing creatively through singing in the spirit or singing new songs, continuing to play extemporaneously through ministry times, changing keys to bring climax, etc. etc. Practice is so important to develop the team so intuitively they know where the other musicians are going.