

Worship

A character history of The Holy Way

or

Why we are, who we are

Introduction

I am staring at the screen asking myself, what can I say about worship that has not already been said many times, preached many times, written about, acted out, and what has been part of our lives for so long? After all, The Holy Way has such a rich heritage when it comes to worship.

First of all, for teaching on The Holy Way style of worship the main texts have to be, "In The Beauty of Holiness," "Worship and Ministry," and some sections in other Holy Way books. I see no reason at this time to repeat or try to add to this excellent teaching. When we try to such things we often end up diluting the strength of what already exists

A Fire is Burning, According to the Pattern, and the Newsletters provide a description of the early history. This is inspiring stuff and sheds some light on the events as they happened, and the struggle to understand the theology behind this work of God. But for the future generations I believe there is a real need to understand more about this journey, and how we arrived at our position.

So it is my intention to leave the teaching on worship as it is for the present, and concentrate on the **why** and **how** of Holy Way history. I think this will prove to be helpful at this hour. For it seems to me that the only way to move ahead (apart from ignoring the past), is to understand where we have been, and move importantly, why things happened as they did. If we can figure out some of this, we may find some answers for what is

ahead.

A Broad Approach

I'm sure all who know The Holy Way, are aware that there are at least three equally important areas of focus. Traditionally the three that stood out were Worship, Teaching, and Evangelism. Each of these areas are serious areas of ministry, and of course they all depend on each other to be truly complete. There are others like communal life, apostolic ministries, spiritual gifts, and others, but all these others are really the vehicle through which we develop the main three to serve God with all out heart mind and soul.

Usually an organisation will have only one or two areas of focus, and one of these will always stand out from the rest. However, with the Holy Way it's not possible to say which one of these stands out because they are all seamlessly linked, and essential elements of the way we operate.

Have you ever asked yourself why the Holy Way is unique in this regard? This difference is partly Scriptural, due to the way meetings are organised. It is expected that anything can and will happen, that anyone may teach, sing, prophesy, etc. (1Cor 14:26), but historically this can not be the only reason. I mean, let's face it, if it is so Scriptural and straight forward, why are we the only ones willing to do it?

This difference is particularly noticeable when it comes to worship and music in general. All denominations rely heavily on the music department but no denomination that I have been part of (I've worked with at least 5 so far) places such a high worth on music/worship as the Holy Way, even though some individual churches do promote a standard of excellence. This is a very significant factor, and one that is worth exploring. There are a few churches that have a well known music ministry and even sell music. However these churches only illustrate the difference, because not many of these churches have a pastor that is a primarily a musician. As I think of all the examples of music

orientated churches I know, I can only think of a few pastors that are also good musicians, and only one of is in charge of the church. This is an interesting observation.

The music side of these specialist music churches may stand out more than anything else, but it becomes obvious that at a subconscious level another value system continues to operate. This must be the case; otherwise musicians would be well represented at a pastoral level. It is not simply a matter of available limited time, energy and willingness to study.

Without even knowing it, church organisations and leaders tend to perpetuate the established principles that caused those leaders to be selected in the first place. These things can take decades to adjust, and long before that can happen, most of those willing to make changes have moved on. This is a principle of life, and a simple truth.

Ed Stube and “A new and living Way”

Ed Stube was well aware of the 'three way' uniqueness of his Worship, Teaching, and Evangelism approach. His early book “In the Beauty of Holiness” is excellent teaching that explores the link between worship, teaching and ministry. He made the classic statement that our ministry can not rise above the level of our worship. This statement was repeated thousands of times, in countless ways throughout his lifetime. Where others would emphasise one or two important things and move on to others next week, he instead emphasised the way things linked together.

These days people talk about the need to 'raise the bar' but the Holy Way's reply is that we can talk all we like about raising the bar, talk talk talk, it is impossible to raise the bar of our ministry in any sustainable way unless we raise the level of all the other things that are holding us down – that is; our worship, teaching, evangelism, holiness, effective prayer, etc.

The Centrality of Worship (for a musician)

As a musician it is easy for me to say that worship is the glue that puts real meaning/expression into everyday Christianity. It energises everything and allows all the other aspects to work together. It's easy to say; because it's the way I am wired. This is not the case with everyone. Let me illustrate this with a true story. A certain group (some of them musicians) attended a Pentecostal church in the next town. Some of the musicians from that church astonished me one day when they said the leadership had informed them that, "from now on, they had to teach the congregation to sing every song from the music book they were using" before they the church would buy the next one.

Wow – I was very glad I did not go to that church! That sort of ridiculous regulation is guaranteed to drive the best musicians out the door, and stop others in their tracks. The odd thing is that I know the people who made those decisions. They were all sincere, dedicated, spiritual, long term Christians. However, it was also blatantly obvious that anyone making a statement like that does not have the heart of a musician. I'm sure they enjoyed worship, but clearly it is not the same. For where our heart is, there will our treasure be also. This disconnect, is common place in churches.

I only have to ask one question – would anyone treat their precious treasure like that? Yet all across Australia I find or hear about countless churches making choices that guarantee a mediocre level of worship. The politics that creates these decisions is a real factor, an important one, but mediocrity alone, is often enough to drive quality musicians away from church. There is only so much discordant, off key, singing and playing I can put up with, how about you?

Ed Stube was a true worshipper. It is easy to distinguish a true worshipper, they are the people that don't want to stop. Most of the times I have handed a service over to whoever was on next, (for notices or whatever), I've felt like I was short changing everybody. Of course it's possible to over do anything, but for me worship in the average church is always under done these days.

I want God to keep talking to us through worship, Holy Way style!

The reason I am pressing this point, is because Edwin Stube is with us in spirit only. He could sometimes generate this atmosphere of worship without doing anything at all – not bad at all for a guy that had trouble singing in tune – but since he is no longer here to do this, we need to appreciate what it was about the man that enabled this emphasis, how it was instilled in the tradition of the Holy Way.

Ed was a musician, he loved to play the organ, he composed music, he just loved to worship God in everything – I have vivid memories of him bursting out in tongues in the middle of what I thought was dry as dust spoken liturgy. He also loved to teach and was in fact a school teacher at one time. He wasn't a natural evangelist but he loved to tell people about "his friend Jesus" and used his enthusiasm for worship and teaching to good advantage when evangelising, so God managed to use him mightily to spread the Gospel.

When we combine these things together, it should not be a surprise that the three main focuses of The Holy Way were also three of the main focuses in Edwin Stube's life – the passions he had, flowed through him, the same as it did through the organisation, through the books he wrote, the people he trained, and through the Training Centers.

If you knew Ed, and it's the first time you have noticed this, you may want to pause reading here and take some time to meditate on the implications of this revelation. If you are a more recent convert to the Holy Way ministry approach, then this revelation will help provide much needed understanding about the core foundational values of the Holy Way.

A man after His own heart

Ok – All of us that knew Edwin Stube have smiled at our own fond memories and realised that this last statement is quite accurate – and we now understand more of how God used our founder's personal giftings, energy and vision to birth something

that was drastically needed – so where does this lead us?

As we all know, no matter what church you go to, the service is separated into different sections, and apart from the brief change over moments (the 'segway' between these sections), there is often limited effort made to integrate everything. No, that was too generous, in fact apart from the change over moment, there is generally little to no effort made to truly integrate anything at all, apart from using Bible readings or a sermon as a general theme. However, anyone that has experienced a Holy Way style meeting knows that there is a huge amount of integration, and it is all quite deliberate.

When given the freedom (by us), God chooses people for tasks according to their heart. God knows that we can learn whatever needs to be done, if we have the heart for His work. Normally people tend to choose from a bewildering mixture of internal and external influences (then call it God's idea). This approach can often end up with a second best or even, a very bad choice, but God knows what we are really like on the inside. **When God is allowed to make the choice it will match the intended plan.**

Whether we make our own plans, or just get it wrong, it can be equally disastrous. I am reminded of a couple that came to the small town where I was pasturing, and announced at a meeting of the town ministers that for many years (about ten) they had a vision for starting a church in the area. They had finally been sponsored by a larger Pentecostal church in another town. We kept in touch with them and helped support them, but after only four months they disappeared never to be seen again. Even though they had held this 'vision' close to their heart for many years, it was obvious to us that this vision was not God's vision at all. It was certainly not part of God's plan, just a huge distraction.

The story of Samuel, Saul and David is appropriate here. There is much more to this story than the usual simple sermon version. The people came to Samuel, to ask for a King, and Samuel was miffed because he thought they were rejecting him. God had another opinion, God said they were rejecting Him. At this point I'm sure you can imagine the standard sermon that would follow,

and I'm sure you have heard a few already.

The bit we tend to overlook is that God gave the people exactly what they wanted. I mean, God gave them an oppressive, manipulating (and taxing) King they would not like (just like in the nations around them). God gave them someone that would wage war on their behalf, and have all the standard faults that kings have.

But, God was not completely against the idea of a King; we know this because God was preparing an ideal King, a King after his own heart. You see, God knows that you cannot produce an instant king, and that given the choice, people will not be able to discern between, a good leader and a bad one. If it come to a vote, personality speaks loud, true virtue lags behind. This brings us back to the concept of, 'after his own heart.' Normally it is taken to mean that someone has a heart for God and for the people, a nice idea, but there is so much more to it.

Hold these thoughts, and let me add some more. We could also approach this from another direction. Ed Stube was a creative person, and it is the nature of creative people to be able to work on a number of fronts at the same time. The creative spirit is not just the habit of having a dozen unfinished things hanging around, because let's face it, everyone is capable of that! Many creative people are also able to think of many things at the same time. To be specific, this can mean three or four conversations (or creative thoughts) interweaving through your brain at the same time. Speaking from experience, this does not always feel like a blessing, it can also be extremely confusing. In fact it can result in regular bouts of brain freeze.

Everyone that heard Edwin Stube speak would recognise that he regularly experienced brain freeze, when ideas clashed with each other, or when a seemingly unrelated thought took over from another one. The audible result of this was the way he would stop mid sentence, or slur a couple of words and then take off in another direction. For someone that has experienced many similar moments, these are all classic signs of someone that is trying to sift through the thoughts that are appearing

simultaneously in the mind, and trying to identify the main thought that God wants (God's still small voice, rather than our own interesting distractions).

Ok – Following this through, we would do well to meditate on the fact that King David was a musician, a very creative person. I would like to stop here, and repeat that God's choice was a creative person. God chose "a person after His own heart." Surely a more complete interpretation of this phrase would be, that our creative God, that loved His creation, and who is able to do countless things at the same time, in this instance, chose a creative person after his own heart, that would love God, genuinely care for the people and want to do the right thing; someone that was capable of working on many fronts and thinking of many things at the same time, and was motivated by a heart of worship.

This is not to say that God could not have chosen another someone with another temperament. Yes, of course it could have been another temperament, but it wasn't. I emphasise this mainly because although David is often used as an example of an ideal leader, creative people are rarely chosen today, or identified as 'ideal' leaders. It seems to me that the church is out of step with God's wisdom. God did not just choose an organised person, a facilitator, a warrior, or a wise person. We would do well to meditate on the fact that for His ideal King, God chose a completely different type of person – the type that is rarely chosen by leaders today, when others are available.

We also need to recognise, God chose someone that people may not have chosen, if there had been an election; someone with a creative spirit. Yes, he was also a warrior but he was not physically impressive. He was someone that hated dirty tactics, hated false advertising, hated division, did not want to take unfair advantage of their opponent, was not a controller or manipulator at heart, and wanted to honour true Godly authority. We should face the fact that people would not have voted for a thin musician/shepherd boy called David even if he did kill Goliath. Only much later in life when there did not seem to be many other

candidates, did people select David to be King.

I note that this process was not to change his character! His character did not change. Human character rarely does. We could even speculate that God chose him because his character would not be changed. As a shepherd boy David displayed all the characteristics God required. God knew David's heart. Even though he was a weedy looking youth, and Samuel was not impressed by him, he was bold and would not back down, he loved God and had compassion for others, was creative, etc. as discussed above.

Apart for some useful hard survival lessons (that could be gathered in other ways) the main reason for this lengthy preparation period, was to knit the hearts of the people to David. Otherwise they would have considered him too quiet, inexperienced, not suited for the job, and basically a bit of a 'nerd'. Before he would be accepted by the people, God had to take a very long round about rout over many years, to prove David's worth to all people, over and over again.

In like fashion, Edwin Stube was not a natural leader of people. By his own admission, he had a fear of telephones, and had to fight against this most of his life. He also had other personality issues that he had to overcome. Given a field of 10 candidates he would not have been the one you would vote for. No, you would not have voted for him, but he was the one God chose (It makes me wonder, how often churches vote for the wrong person? Going by the general state of the church – the answer to that question is a very embarrassing one).

The Way Ahead

I hope you forgive me labouring over the previous section, but I feel this is a little understood area. The Holy Way's history has been shaped by creative person that qualifies as, a person after God's own heart.

Traditionally, the way ahead is always easier to understand if you know where you have been, and how you got there.

In the traditional church structure;

- Many churches and denominations change their focus over time. This is not always a bad thing, but some changes are a little strange. For example, there has been a recent tendency for Pentecostal churches to train and appoint people with a strong gift of administration. This makes for sensible financial decisions, but it provides little way to achieve growth in small assemblies that make up the bulk of congregations.
- The phrase '**Vision for the way ahead**' has come to mean little more than a collection of human ideas based on what we see happening in the world around us. This gives precious little hope for the future, though occasionally it works.
- Many changes made by church leaders appear have more to do with bums on seats and money in the bag rather than the kingdom of God. Like changing the church name to fit in with the latest fad.
- Ministry – is basically what happens on the church platform (but obviously this is both, not correct, and not good enough).

These options are not for the Holy Way. A group based on freedom in worship, teaching, and evangelism that operates by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, cannot be administrated to success (though good administration is required).

The Holy Way through Edwin Stube was operated on a totally different plane – a spiritual plane – some would even think it was another planet, because Ed was happy to:

- Change the plans at the last minute.
- Do nothing, if there was no unity in the spirit.
- Make unpopular decisions, if that's what God was saying.
- Go without any financial reward if that was appropriate.
- Allow to Holy Spirit to do anything at all, no matter how scary it may seem.
- Go into his room and pray, leaving others to take the service.

- Sit down, and allow the congregation to do all the ministry if that was what God wanted.

These were some of the things that set him apart as a highly versatile and usable person to God. We need to recognise such people in our congregations. These quiet reserved people of strong character (not strong will) need to be promoted. They do not lead by subduing others in the congregation, and making them feel unwanted. Indeed, even within a congregation, they are able to work with one another to achieve God's purposes because most of their strength rests in their trust in God.

A Quote from the August 1978, Holy Way Newsletter

Divisions occur when Christians try to figure out God's truth their own ways. The Bible can actually be understood only when read prayerfully and in communion with the Lord. To understand what the Lord wanted to teach us in Bible Camp we would have to stay in His Presence. This teaching turned out to be an important guide line for all that happened after that.

In bringing us into His Presence, the Lord insisted more and more that we not do natural things. We rarely sang any songs we knew. Most singing was singing in the Spirit. Even our singing in the Spirit got purified as time went on. Some people had a tendency to sing loudly and raucously with natural enthusiasm, so that their voices stuck out. (It's surprising how much of the flesh can be mixed even into singing in the spirit). Those whose voices stuck out had to be toned down, until all the voices blended together in one harmonious whole, and were truly obedient to the Holy Spirit.

We had many times of all singing together in the spirit. We also had times of one or two people singing in the spirit with new psalms. As the Lord had promised on the mountain top, much revelation came forth in these new psalms which He gave in the midst of the worship.

The Lord brought us into many extended periods of silence in His Presence, in which there was no word, or even thought any more, but just He, and the beauty of the heavenly vision. The first

time we became silent before Him, we could feel that many of our members were still very uneasy and restless inside. The Lord said: "You are restless because there are still things in your lives which need to be dealt with and released. As you continue in the silence, I will show each of you what these things are. As you release them to Me, you will experience My peace." In the extended silence that followed, the Lord did deal with us, and we did experience the glorious and beautiful peace of just being present with Him.

Again from 1978-August

All true ministry begins in the Presence of the Lord. All revelation and all authority is given before the Throne in the Most Holy Place.

What Next?

The above quote that "***all true ministry begins in the presence of the Lord***" is the ultimate statement of a true worshipper. It reflects the central precept of the Holy Way, and should forever be one of the main quotes we put on our fridge and refer back to when we find ourselves in difficult places, or are in need of direction.

I have used these quotes to remind us of our heritage. This heritage is just as dynamic and relevant today as it was 50 years ago. We should not be like those that like to adopt "*how to please everyone*" policies. The truth is that these policies rarely work. Those advocating the use of these policies will point to a few success stories, and there are indeed quite a few, but (in Australia) for every One success story, there have been numerous (at least 19) churches that have failed to improve in any measurable way. In most industries this would be considered a catastrophic failure rate. Clearly, this indicates that the '*new methods*' are not the key to achieve anything.

The Holy Way does not need any of these so called popular alternatives. In fact some elements of these methods have been used by the Holy Way for many decades. We do not need to pray

and hope for the best. We have a tried and tested history. Since the late 1960's, The Holy Way has achieved all it has, in the face of major opposition from most churches.

We need to recognise that at least half the opposition we have faced, has risen from other church organisations (and sometimes even ourselves!). Some of these churches have adopted 'controlled' elements from the Charismatic renewal, and from Pentecostal practices. TV evangelists especially.

The future, must reflect the past. The secret of Holy Way success is not a secret! It has always revolved around a number of main themes:

- 1. Discovering what God is doing in the nation today** (not last month, year, or decade).
- 2. Discovering what God wants to do in this place** (not somewhere else).
- 3. Maintaining the mixed focus of Worship, Teaching, and Evangelism.**
- 4. Following the rule – “*All true ministry begins in the presence of the Lord*”**

The future, must reflect the past. Technology does not replace the past, technology is a bunch of ever increasing tools. We need to incorporate them, to help drive our future. The secret of Holy Way success is not a secret!

Yours Sincerely
Ps. Spencer Scrutton

For Teaching on Worship and The Holy Way, I recommend:

- *In The Beauty of Holiness* – E.B. Stube
- *Fellowship in the Spirit* – E.B. Stube
- Parts of, “*According to the Pattern*” – E.B. Stube
- Parts of, *A Fires Burning* – E.B. Stube

All available from the English Book section of
www.jalansuci.com

Some Extra Notes:

On “Sheep” and the Role of the “Worship Leader” Today.

“We all like sheep...”

Have you ever watched sheep on a large farm? We had sheep at time, so I have observed their habits. It is interesting how they have definite social habits. Many Pastors like to paint pretty pictures about sheep, but this Pastor, prefers to speak the real and amusing truth about sheep.

1. They don't need a shepherd to form into flocks, they do this of their own accord.
2. I note that a small number of sheep don't like to follow (or don't know how to), so by default these sheep become leaders, because others follow them. Daily observation says, they don't know how to follow, they appear to lack some inner ability. (This is both ironical and amusing, but once I realised it must be true, it was a real laugh).
3. There are also other sheep that lead occasionally, but the rest of the sheep appear happy to move around in flocks.
4. Within the flock some sheep seem to form friendships and generally hang out together wandering around their fenced area.
5. Head sheep don't really look after the other sheep. I know this is startling, but it seems true. They don't appear to

provide in any way for other sheep. They are only providing for themselves – finding the grass, water and shade.

6. If the head sheep is bit brainless, then they may all end up doing stupid things, like resting in the sun, rather than the shade.
7. These leading sheep do provide some protection from foxes and dogs, because they hate being pushed around and told what to do. They stamp their feet and will even charge at stray dogs. We see this as protective behaviour, but we should face the facts, they are really protecting themselves.
8. There are other sheep with special abilities, like jumping fences, but this doesn't really help them in the long run, they are the ones you eat first (the tall poppy syndrome!).

The Role of the “Worship Department Leader” Today

(Some General Observations – on the general role of the overall Worship Leader in a progressive church today).

Because I have been involved in Pentecostal fellowships for over 20 years, the following comments will apply particularly to Pentecostal type churches, but of course they have some application to all progressive churches.

If you will bear with me here, I would like to talk shop for a while. That is, talk shop as a musician and worship leader. There are so many **“assumptions”** placed upon the music team, and in particular the overall leader. Most of these are **never** spelt out because the person appointing the music leader is usually not a musician. There is a lot of irony in that, and the fact that these decisions are normally made by pastors that are not muso's, tends to mean there are far too many bad decisions (*I should add one comment here – In most cases or at least in large churches, it would be more appropriate for the music team to recommend to the pastor 2 people who are musically capable of being a good leader – of course this is not done! Most churches are not very good at discussing important matters*).

The assumptions (as stated below) are of limited value if the person appointed is too inexperienced, does not have the heart of a worshipper, or is not sensitive enough to figure these assumptions out, or not capable of implementing them. Pastors will talk about being responsible to the pastor, doing your preparation, being sensitive etc., but other equally important things are normally left unsaid.

I imagine the average pastor is a little unsure how creative people achieve anything! Consequently the music department of most churches is normally under resourced in most areas, including money for music, ideas, vision, and gifted people. When you add in the need to work under the pressure of bad policy and bad personnel decisions, it is not surprising that many musicians leave or decide to keep looking. Many just give the church up as a bad joke, so initial appointments are critical.

A few of the unwritten assumptions about the main worship leader, or the leaders job.

For example:

- The overall worship leader needs to be able to attract other musicians (Unless of course it is a very big church, then other dynamics also apply).
- This process of attracting can be a slow process, but if it can be achieved without resorting to advertising, you are doing your job, and your church may grow. Conversely, despite what the pastor or any of the other leaders are capable of, if you can not attract other musicians, the church will probably struggle.
- Unfortunately, experience has proved time and time again that it is very difficult to attract musicians if you do not play an instrument yourself. To attract people using your voice as an instrument is possible, but it would have to be a quality voice (Most churches only have people with average to good voices, and that is not good enough to attract others). Singing out of time or off key, sends the best musicians out the door!
- It is very hard to attract musicians if the music is bad (I've

been to a few of those places and I do not want to go back, neither does the average pew sitter). It's worth pointing out that some people can not tell the difference between good and average music, but for these people, worship is not high on their list of needs.

- Quality attracts quality. In other words, numerous churches have proved that it's also difficult for a worship leader to attract people that are more proficient than they are. This is one of the reasons why the choice of overall leader is extremely important.
- Type attracts type. Same explanation as above really, and of course it makes a lot of sense. This may refer to a type of instrument (i.e. guitar), but it also refers to the type or style of worship and music used. It also holds true for the depth of worship that the church offers.

There are a few odd anomalies (nice word!) to these generalisations:

- If you are good at something, then sometimes you attract people that do other things, not what you do (this is unusual, but a blessing – who needs 10 good guitar players!)
- Some people just never seem to attract anyone (I know 2 good worship leaders like this).
- There are some other factors that need to be nurtured, like a heart of worship, some personality or approachability, a flexible approach, and a little charisma or worship anointing, and learning to care for and protect your other musicians is important.

I have done time as worship leader at a Pentecostal and a Traditional Church, and over a period of many years I considered myself fortunate to attract numbers of musically inclined young people. It is humbling to realise that people come because you are there.

On the other hand I have known many other churches with good pastors that have struggled for many years. The one thing they

all had in common was a problem in the music area.

I have also attended other churches where the pastors failed to realise that the quality of worship was very important. In three of these places I found myself being asked to play a minor part while others of much less ability were doing the lion's share of the work. I mention this because it is a very common problem in churches. If it was simply a result of pride or some personal problem, then of course you should sit by for a time and do nothing. However, for most places I hear about, the church suffers endlessly for no good reason at all.

I have been a musician in churches for over 35 years now and I still see and hear of many churches closing their doors because of bad or ignorant choices. Normally this involves the wrong people being appointed as pastors, or because of the wrong leadership mix. We all worry about big problems, and personality clashes, however, it seems to me that many churches slide slowly down hill. Ordinary choices do that, if we choose the second or third best option too often, the church starts to decline. Why should the bride of Christ suffer out of blindness?

If the musically blind are appointed there is no telling who they will choose. The blind, should allow themselves to be guided by those with wisdom that can see. Is there any reason why the church in any city or nation should not go from strength to strength? Christ has won a great victory for us, so if we are not winning, we have to ask ourselves what are **we** doing wrong?

We must first look at ourselves, not say, "It's the lord;s will brother", or, "This is a hard city."

I hope you enjoyed this, 'real' explanation of unwritten church musical laws.

Ps. Spencer Scrutton