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# Practical Tools

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## Creator Leadership Network

### Bits and Pieces...

Every so often I make an attempt to clean out my garage. Part of this need comes from being part of a family that has the packrat gene. In fact, one of my friends used to have notepaper that said "I could clean out my closets if I had another garage" and I thought that was about as close to scriptural truth as any human observation about my family. Inevitably, in the process, I come across at least one accumulation of pieces of paper containing "bits of wisdom." There are articles torn out of magazines, printed pages of email responses, cartoons, and other flotsam and jetsam. The trouble is, of course, that often, when I come across this stuff months or years later ("I know I'll have use for this someday"), the original source is murky at best. This month I'm giving you a peek at what I thought was important, and, upon further reflection, still do. I hope it helps. If you see something that you thought up originally, please let me know and I'll give you full credit.

- [The 3-minute rule](#)

We love the fellowship we experience here at Davisville. It's one of the things we look forward to the most each week. As soon as the service is over, we gather with our friends and chat about anything and everything. That's wonderful...but our guests are making their way to the door, wondering if anyone noticed there were here. The 3-minute rule is this: Take the first three minutes after a service is over to speak only with people you don't know. Then go to your friends; they will still be there. Your taking the time to meet a guest could determine if they ever come back again, and that could make an eternal difference. <from a 1997 email>

- **Set Me as a Seal by Rene Clausen**

I thought I might respond directly [regarding the inspiration for this piece]. Some time ago my wife suffered 4 consecutive miscarriages. She finally carried a child into the fifth month, all was well, and the doctor suggested she undergo an amneosis, as she was past 35. During the procedure the doctor inserted the needle accidentally into the umbilical cord, and killed the baby in her womb. As she was so far along, she had to deliver the dead baby normally. For some reason I will never understand, the hospital placed her in a birthing room on the maternity floor, directly next to the nursery. As she underwent the labor through the night, we heard the crying babies next door in the nursery. I wrote Set Me as a Seal the next evening. Normally, when I am asked about the "inspiration" process, I laugh and deny inspiration in favor of work and effort. In this case, however, I just sat down and wrote the piece. I don't know what is wrapped up inside these few simple notes. I can say actually very little about the piece. Whenever I return to it, however, I am struck by the phrase "for love is strong as death," because when I wrote it my actual feeling was "for love is stronger than death;" abiding, all-encompassing love absorbs even the pain of death. If the piece is about anything it is about the simple but powerful conviction of permanent love that seeks to overflow the boundary between life and death. I can't imagine a choir singing it without open hearts. <from a 2004 email response by the composer to a request by "Scott">

- **Master List of Classical Composers**

A useful and quick list; easy to use, just choose the country and approximate birth year. <from the December, 1998, issue of The American Organist <http://voyager.physics.unlv.edu/webpages2/websyt/archive.html>>

- **Signature Hymns by Denomination**

Here is a summary of responses to my question: "What one or two hymns are the signature hymns of your denomination?" By signature hymns, I mean hymns which have great historical or theological connection and significance; or hymns which have found almost universal acceptance within your denomination as favorites. It is my position that to be a denominational signature hymn, a hymn must have a singularly unique association with that denomination, most likely theological, historical, and/or biographical. For example, a number of persons responded with "Amazing Grace." There is no doubt that this hymn is a favorite of many, many Christians in many denominations, but in admitting that, we have removed from it any status of "signature;" it cannot be applied to one denomination if it can be applied to many.

**Baptist:** All hail the power (CORONATION)/Crown Him with many crowns/It is well with my soul/The old rugged Cross

**Southern Baptist:** Victory in Jesus/There is power in the blood/How great Thou art/I shall not be moved/Blest be the tie that binds/To God be the glory/All hail the power (CORONATION)/All hail the power (DIADEM)

**Christian Reformed:** By the sea of crystal

**Church of Christ:** Be with me Lord

**Church of God** (Anderson, Indiana): The family of God/I am a child of God/I'm redeemed

**Church of God in Christ:** Yes, Lord

**Episcopal/Anglican:** Alleluia, sing to Jesus (HYFRYDOL)/For all the saints (SINE NOMINE)/Hail, Thee, festival day (SALVE FESTE DIES)/All glory, laud, and honor (ST THEODOLPUS)/All hail the power (CORONATION)/O master, let me walk with Thee/Breathe on me breath of God (NOVA VITA)/Just as I am/Beneath the Cross of Jesus/Christ is made the sure foundation/O day of peace that dimly shines/St Patrick's Breastplate

**Episcopal** (black): Lift every voice and sing

**Evangelical Covenant Church of America:** How great Thou art/Children of the Heavenly Father

**Free Methodist:** And can it be

**Lutheran:** A mighty fortress is our God/Beautiful Savior/Lift High the Cross (CRUCIFER)/Children of the Heavenly Father/Build on the Rock, the Church doth stand/God's Word is our strong heritage and shall be ours forever/Let all things now dwelling (ASH GROVE)/Earth and all stars/Thy strong Word

**Mennonite:** In the rifted rock I'm resting/Praise God from whom all blessings flow (Boston Handel tune)

**Methodist:** O for a thousand tongues to sing/Love divine, all loves excelling/And can it be/Here I am, Lord

**Metropolitan Community:** We are the church alive/Whosoever, surely meaneth me

**Moravian:** Sing hallelujah, praise the Lord (BECHLER)/Jesus makes my heart rejoice/The Savior's blood and righteousness

**Mormon:** Come, come ye saints/We thank Thee, o God, for a prophet/I am a child of God/I stand all amazed/God be with you till we meet again/I know that my redeemer lives/The Spirit of God/Now let us rejoice

**Nazarene:** Called unto holiness/Holiness unto the Lord/Glorious freedom

**Pentecostal:** I'll fly away

**Presbyterian:** All creatures that on earth do dwell (OLD HUNDREDTH)/The Lord's my Shepherd (CRIMOND, EVAN, or BROTHER JAMES' AIR)

**Roman Catholic:** Pange lingua gloriosi/Salve regina/Ubi caritas/Come, Holy Ghost/Faith of our fathers/Holy God, we praise Thy name/On eagle's wings/Magnificat (Talbot)/Immaculate Mary/O bone Jesu

**Salvation Army:** O boundless salvation/Praise God, I'm saved

**Seventh Day Adventist:** Jesus is coming again/We have this hope

**Unitarian Universalist:** Faith of the larger liberty/Spirit of life

**United Church of Christ:** We gather together/Part of the family <from a 2001 email post by Dean McIntyre>

- **Help with Blend**

I attended a workshop where the director (can't remember their name) spoke of having students "aim" their voices in the front of them, to the left of them, behind, then to the right, without moving their head. This was supposed to bring focus and space to the sound. It made sense to me but it flopped with my choirs. So instead I asked them to "aim" their voices at the blackboard. I asked them to describe the sound. They said all the keywords to bad tone: "Thin, nasal, shallow, etc." Then I asked them to follow my hand and point their voice to the blackboard, then moving toward the ceiling, then right above them, then behind them. It was incredible. The tone above them was the tone that we all strive for. I have never heard my choir sing such a beautiful "ah," which is quite a feat for my generally non-music educated students. I tried an experiment the next day. I still had some singing with a bright tone. I asked for listening volunteers, making sure that my bright singers were chosen at one point or another. Using the same experiment with the choir, I asked them to stop at the ceiling. Then I had just three or four students move to "aiming" toward the blackboard on my queue while the rest were singing a spacious "ah." I could see the comprehension on their faces. I have noticed a transformation in their sound as a result. <from a 1998 email thread by Garrett W. Lathe>

- **Save Your Ears**

My daughter was the first one to alert me to the dangers to our ears of a number of everyday activities. Since for musicians, ears, or rather the ability to use them to maximum advantage, are of significant benefit, I now present my completely unscientifically substantiated (well...not completely...check out this link

[http://adsoftheworld.com/media/print/national\\_foundation\\_for\\_the\\_deaf\\_awareness\\_week\\_train?size=original](http://adsoftheworld.com/media/print/national_foundation_for_the_deaf_awareness_week_train?size=original)

) list of how to "save" your ears. Never use a blow dryer (see the link above), or, if you do, use ear plugs or keep it away from your ears. Don't use the earbuds that come standard with an ipod and many "sports" cassette/cd players/radios. Instead get some "over the ear" buds (not the big clunky earphones), and put the bud outside the ear canal. You'll hear

just as well (the skull is a great sonic tool) and save your ears. For those of you who are Deadheads, or under the age of 25, don't immediately rush to the speaker array at a concert and stick your head right up next to the tower. And, finally, for those who use a church sound system that is more powerful than a karaoke machine, impress upon your sound engineer that the point is sound reinforcement, not ear-bleeding, bone-rattling sound amplification. As an aside, my personal belief is that audio engineers, particularly ones who work rock venues, eventually blow out their ears, and can't be trusted to set reasonable levels after a while. Check back often (and by "back" I mean the other end of the room than the platform). <from personal experience>

## Final Thoughts

Those of you who are reading this and who are not registered as a member of the Creator Leadership Network on Creator's website are actually missing one very important part of Monday Morning Email--my weekly MME newsletter with other helpful tips, hints, and other important information. The simplest way to get this newsletter is to find the log in box on any page of Creator's website (go to the home page if you can't find it anywhere else), and register. But if you just DON'T want to do that (I can't imagine any reason why you wouldn't, but OK), then, starting this week, you can also choose to subscribe to the MMEBlog, which contains most of the information from the MME newsletter. Just click on "Blogs" under the "Creator Leadership Network" tab on any page, and look for the MMEBlog. Click on the XML orange button to subscribe to the MMEBlog.

Blessings.



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Vern is the publisher of Creator Magazine. He has served in some form of church music and worship leadership for 40 years in a variety of denominations both in the US and in Canada. He is currently Director of Worship at First Presbyterian Church, Grover Beach, California. Vern regularly consults with churches and church leaders. Click on his name above to email him.