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# **BAND ON THE RUN: DEVELOPING ARRANGEMENTS QUICKLY**

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## **I. Why Address This Topic?**

- A. Good arranging in a band doesn't just "happen."
- B. Time is short, our lives are full.
- C. We can "over-arrange" elements that aren't that helpful.

## **II. Goals in Arranging**

- A. To serve the lyrics
- B. To serve the congregation
- C. To maximize the effect of the musical gifts God has given us

## **III. The Leader-Band Dynamic**

- A. Leader
  - 1. Ultimately responsible for musical decisions.
  - 2. Invite and receive ideas without taking offense or feeling threatened. A strong negative reaction can reveal pride.
  - 3. There's a time to try ideas out and a time to move on.
- B. Band
  - 1. A democratic process is appealing but has its weaknesses – slower, and the best ideas don't always come out on top
  - 2. Everyone should think about possible feels, instrumentation, dynamics, and melodic lines for each section.
  - 3. Suggest changes after trying out the leader's plan or when asked.
  - 4. Hold your ideas loosely.
  - 5. Fully support the leader's decisions.

## **IV. Arranging from a CD**

- A. Pre-made arrangements and parts can be a blessing or a curse
- B. Arrange to the skill level of your team, not studio musicians
- C. Don't have to use everything. Only replicate what you want to.

## V. Areas to Consider

### A. Context

1. What is the church used to?
2. What precedes the song?
3. What follows the song?
4. Any added elements?

### B. Feel

1. Usually kick drum and bass
2. Can also be main harmonic instrument, percussion, or sequenced loop
3. EVERYONE should be aware of and lock into the feel
4. Hymn-like and orchestral-type songs don't necessarily have a "feel"

### C. Instrumentation

1. What you have to work with can affect the arrangement
2. Seek to maximize the contribution of each instrument

### D. Structure

1. Intro (Who starts the song? Drums, full band, or single instrument?)
2. Verse (Main instrument plus what?)
3. Pre-chorus (Change in texture or feel?)
4. Chorus (Change in feel? Instrumentation?)
5. Turnaround (Similar or different from intro? How many measures?)
6. Bridge (Any changes in instrumentation? Volume? Does it build?)
7. End (Ritard or none? Loud or soft? Repeat lines or not?)

## VI. Five Keys to Remember

- A. Listen to others as much as yourself
- B. Content is king
- C. Less is more
- D. Play a part not the chart
- E. Ultimately trust God to work in people's hearts through his Spirit and the finished work of Christ — not your arrangement.