

Worship Leader Ron Kenoly to Launch New 'Academy of Praise'

He instructs leaders to perform 'for an audience of one'

Worship seminars may be an effective tool for improving corporate praise in local churches, but well-known worship leader Ron Kenoly likes to teach worship teams how to lead the individual congregant into a more personal worship experience.

How? Kenoly takes the emphasis off of music for the masses and places it on a message for an audience of one.

"I've been to so many seminars where people leave with head knowledge, but their heart hasn't been ministered to," said Kenoly, a renowned songwriter and recording artist. "They go away with notebooks of information but are broken inside."

His firsthand knowledge of the shortcomings of such seminars led him to start the Academy of Praise, a mentoring program for worship leaders and others in Christian music. Through one-week seminars held yearly in his hometown of Orlando, Fla., Kenoly attempts to impart the musical style that he has demonstrated since the mid-1980s.

With two conferences under his belt, Kenoly is planning the third for May 19-23. The February 2002 conference brought 100 people from 12 countries.

Kenoly, who enlisted help in earlier seminars from fellow worship leader Don Moen, pastor Sharon Daugherty and pianist

Adlan Cruz, will again be joined by his personal mentor, Bahamian pastor and author Myles Munroe, for the upcoming seminar. The small number of attendees allows Kenoly to engage in one-on-one sessions crucial to the program's success.

"I make myself available to 100 people to sit down and counsel them on whatever issues they might be going through," Kenoly said. "There are some leaders with questions that they can't ask publicly. Out of personal integrity they can't stand up and say, 'My pastor does this, and I hate it.'"

Kenoly believes people look to mirror someone who has done what they're trying to do.

"It's not like they're putting something on me that I've never dealt with. I'm 57 years old, and I've dealt with health issues, family issues, financial issues and relationship issues, and God has given me victory over them. I can give them a solution that works—praying, fasting, forgiving and submitting to authority," the singer said.

In addition to the individual sessions, the academy includes nighttime worship services and day sessions on topics such as principles of worship, patterns of worship, power of worship and practicals of worship.

The academy ends with personal prayer, laying on of hands and the presentation of certificates of completion. "So many have never been endorsed by their pastor," Kenoly said. "Worship leaders need validation and affirmation."

According to Kenoly, worship leaders often are hired because they have a good voice, but they may not be qualified to deal

with the equally important areas of administration, human interaction, music arrangement and Bible knowledge.

“It’s good to know all about the tabernacle of Moses and how the positions of the tribes were located, but when John is not getting along with Karen, you’ve got to step in and deal with that.”

Some pastors don’t understand the importance people place on worship, he noted. Many seekers select churches based solely on that element.

“Music has a way of breaking the heaviness that’s over people’s lives. When Moses brought the children of Israel across the Red Sea he didn’t preach to them, pray for them or prophesy over them. The first thing he did was write a song.”

Although the seminars currently are held once a year, Kenoly’s goal is to offer the courses in three-month terms. He also plans to take the academy to different countries starting with Brazil, England, the Philippines and South Africa in 2003.

The cost to attend the academy is approximately \$200, and a pastoral recommendation is required. For information call (888) PRAISES.

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