



# Master of Arts in Worship Leadership

*beginning fall 2005*



**A** long-term vision of Dr. Gary Cook, DBU President, and Dr. Bob Brooks, Dean of the College of Fine Arts, became a reality recently when a team of faculty members designed the new Master of Arts in Worship Leadership degree program. Believing that the worship of God is a believer's highest calling and that the study of holistic worship has often been overlooked in contemporary academic curricula, the Master of Arts in Worship Leadership steering committee formulated the degree in order to facilitate worship renewal in this 21st century.

Heading the program will be Dr. Larry Ashlock, who joined the DBU faculty as Associate Professor of Worship in January 2005. He brings to DBU 23 years of pastoral experience as well as several years of academic teaching experience at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he taught pastoral ministry and served as Associate Dean for the Doctor of Ministry program in the School of Theology.

This 42-hour degree program will be launched in the fall and will also include a pre-doctoral thesis track for those who are interested in post-graduate studies. Courses will be offered primarily in the early evening and at night so that students can work toward the degree without uprooting their families or changing their work schedules. According to Dr. Ashlock, "Both Dr. Cook and the DBU faculty recognized a growing need to provide a uniquely designed degree program to equip worship leaders with practical theological training in worship ministry. The program does not seek to reproduce what seminary or other graduate school degree programs offer. Instead, this program provides worship leaders with transformational and practical theological study for the practice of contemporary personal and corporate worship."



MASTER OF ARTS IN WORSHIP LEADERSHIP STEERING COMMITTEE: (from left to right) Dr. Bob Brooks (Dean of the College of Fine Arts), Wes Moore (Associate Dean of the College of Fine Arts), Dr. Karen Bullock (Academic Director of the newly established Ph.D. in Leadership Studies), Dr. Rick Gregory (Dean of the Gary Cook Graduate School of Leadership), and Dr. Larry Ashlock (Director of the Master of Arts in Worship Leadership).

DBU's planning team researched the various worship degree programs offered locally and throughout the nation and sought to design a distinctive degree plan that will train ministers to become effective in all phases of worship ministry in their respective ministry contexts. An exciting and beneficial ingredient in the planning process was the collective years of academic and ministry experience of the program steering committee. Dr. Bob Brooks, Prof. Wes Moore, Dr. Karen Bullock, and Dr. Rick Gregory worked along with Dr. Ashlock to create a careful blend of academic and practical educational instruction.

The program is designed so that all students will take 30 hours (10 classes) of core courses, plus 12 elective hours (4 classes) from either the Master of Arts in Worship Leadership or the Master of Arts in Christian Education degree program. The degree core will provide worship leaders with comprehensive instruction in spiritual formation, Christian theology, global missions, discipleship and ethics, the history of worship, as well as philosophical and practical guidance in planning a worship ministry that will thrive in the rapidly changing 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The degree will prepare worship leaders for pastoral, educational, college, student, and missions ministries, and for other Christian vocational and lay ministry roles. The Worship Leadership program does not provide specific instruction in music theory, composition, or performance, because many contemporary worship leaders already have the essential musical skills for leading in worship. The desire of these ministers is to receive theological and practical training to enhance the art of worship leadership.

According to Dr. Ashlock, the best worship leaders desire to be effective "worshiping leaders" and long to learn fresh and meaningful ways to invite others to join with them in true worship of the Lord, both privately and in community with other believers. "So many believers who attend worship services are frustrated with either the form or the fuzzies," explained Dr. Ashlock. "Either an over-emphasis on worship form and musical style or the endless repetition of often meaningless phrases in sermons, prayers, and music, has left them hungry for God's presence—even as they leave Sunday services. They want their worship leaders to guide them to a deeper daily awareness of the Lord and His will for their lives. They want to sense that God is present in power and receives their worship. DBU's degree program is designed to provide training for this sort of total life worship ministry."

More information about the Master of Arts in Worship Leadership program, including financial aid information and online applications, are available at [www.dbu.edu/leadership](http://www.dbu.edu/leadership), or you may call the Gary Cook Graduate School of Leadership office at 214.333.5454.