



Northwest Conference Revitalization Gatherings for Pastors

April 10, 2013- noon

Purpose of Re-Connect:

1. Mutual Learning Opportunities
2. Sharing of Best Practices
3. Extend Connection and Support
4. Prayer Support
5. "Real Time" Peer Consultation and Support

Agenda

- **Welcome/Prayer for Lunch-**
- **Announcements**
- **Reflection-** Colossians 1:15-20- **The Focal Point**
- **Small Group Connecting/Prayer-** Reflections on Easter, the last few months of ministry- What is going well? What new challenge(s) are you facing? How are you doing personally?
 - Prayer for one another
- Reflections on Marker- **Heartfelt worship** (Psalm 138:1a; John 4:23)- Welcome Jo Anne Taylor & Tim Coyer

We exalt and celebrate God for who he is, what he has done, what he is doing and what he will do. Worship reflects careful preparation to help give voice to many dimensions of response to God such as adoration, praise, contrition, lament, and commitment. People leave worship knowing something more about the heart of God and about their own hearts.

Key Questions:

- How do you define worship?
- How is your church helping people understand worship?
- How is your church's worship ministry impacting your life together?
- **Resources:** Theology of Worship
 - Developing Worship in the Small Church
 - Planning the Worship Service in the Small Church
 - Worship- Beginning and End of Mission
- **Prayer/Dismiss**
- Confirm Next Meeting- **Wed, May 8, 2013- noon- 2pm**

Bring Your Own Lunch...Beverages Provided

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" ... Proverbs 27:17

Colossians 1:15-20

New Living Translation (NLT)

Christ Is Supreme

¹⁵ Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,^[a]

¹⁶ for through him God created everything

in the heavenly realms and on earth.

He made the things we can see

and the things we can't see—

such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world.

Everything was created through him and for him.

¹⁷ He existed before anything else,

and he holds all creation together.

¹⁸ Christ is also the head of the church,

which is his body.

He is the beginning,

supreme over all who rise from the dead.^[b]

So he is first in everything.

¹⁹ For God in all his fullness

was pleased to live in Christ,

²⁰ and through him God reconciled

everything to himself.

He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth

by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

Exalting Christ

Col 1:15-20

John Clonca

IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE IT'S EASY TO get caught up with personal ministry responsibilities. Whether leading, teaching or caring, we zero-in on how we can best help others. Nevertheless, while personal diligence and other-centeredness are commendable, they should not be our primary focus.

The bottom line for all ministry is the exaltation of Christ. We are not teaching a Bible class; we are helping people see the Divine. We are not working with students; we are helping the youth feel the love of God. We are not conducting business; we are praying and deciding how better to make Christ known. We are not running a food shelf; we are helping people sense the compassion of the Bread of Life. And we're not leading a music set; we are exalting God among His people.

This devotional passage of Scripture makes it clear that Jesus Christ is supreme over everything. Creation came into existence through Him, and the universe as we know it is sustained by Him. Both present rulers and unseen powers are under His authority. And by His death on the cross, those who trust Him can be reconciled to God.

Christians are remarkably gifted. This is God's design. All have natural abilities, acquired skills and spiritual gifts. Many, serving with great diligence, have seen fruitful harvests. Yet this, too, is for the glory of God.

Let's never slip into the attitude of Nebuchadnezzar who, while walking on the roof of his royal palace boasted: "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" These words barely came from his mouth when God brought him back down to the earth—literally (see Daniel 4).

When reading this account we may be tempted to think that this kind of self-exaltation, while typical of a pagan, could

not happen to a servant of God. But even a humble man like Moses, for example, was not immune to self-exaltation. On one occasion when God asked him to speak to a rock to produce water for the Israelites, he struck the rock and said angrily to the people: "Must we bring you water out of this rock?"

A careful study of the context (Numbers 20:10) reveals that Moses wasn't asking them if he and God should bring water from the rock (a bad enough attitude). He is inquiring if he and Aaron should produce water from the rock (a terrible misrepresentation). In reality, only Jehovah was Israel's Provider. Moses' impetuous act prevented Aaron and him from entering the Promised Land.

So A God-exalting attitude recognizes that the salvation we enjoy is at His initiative: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not of works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9). A God-exalting attitude further recognizes that whether we have "two, five or ten talents," all that we enjoy is from God's gracious hand.

Therefore, as leaders, always use ^{our} your giftedness with great diligence for Christ's pleasure. May ^{our} your service to others never be the end focus. Through ~~your teamwork~~ ^{our} helping others exalt Christ.

A Theology of Worship

Worship is the means by which we affirm the reality and sovereignty of God, confess our finitude and dependence upon God, and celebrate the dignity and worth God bestows on all people.¹

Prayer, according to Eugene Peterson, is “answering speech,” the response of the prayer to God’s words or deeds. Worship is not of human initiative. It is not the act of a pagan attempting to placate or attract the attention of a remote and disinterested deity (1 Kings 18:27). Both Jewish worship and Christian worship respond to the acts of God: the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Both Jewish and Christian worship anticipate divine action in the fulfillment of God’s promise of a new heaven and new earth where righteousness dwells. Worship is not about the worshippers, their mental or emotional state, but about God. God is both the object and the subject of the community’s worship, since, as both Jewish and Christian thinkers remind us, the Bible is not the story of the human search for God, but God’s search for humanity. In Paul’s words, “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

Nevertheless, although worship is a response to God and even initiated by God, there is nothing in human experience left out of the sphere of divine concern. In the Psalms, the “prayerbook of the Bible,” we see the whole range of Israel’s worship. God is praised for creation. God’s majesty is seen in creation: “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Psalm 19; see also Psalms 8 and 104). The whole earth is a canvas of God’s creative energy and providential stewardship. God is also praised for redemption. Psalm after psalm is a cry for deliverance, praise for anticipated

deliverance, or relief at actual deliverance (see Psalms 18, 27, 30, etc.). These psalms assume God is concerned about not only the community but also the individual. But they also assume that God's concern for the individual is rooted in concern for the community and that deliverance of an individual is the proper subject of the community's praise.

Sometimes the prayer is for deliverance not from an enemy, but in fact from the wrath or apparent indifference of God. In such cases the psalmists recognize that their own sin and disobedience have created the distance. They cry out in repentance and sorrow and beg for a restoration of fellowship and regard: "Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. . . . Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me" (Psalm 51:4, 11-12; see also Psalms 32 and 38).

At other times the reasons for the apparent absence of God are not so obvious, and the psalmists utter "cries of absence": "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?" (Psalm 22:1). "Why have you rejected us forever, O God? Why does your anger smolder against the sheep of your pasture?" (Psalm 74:1). Even these cries of absence are cries of faith, because they anticipate a divine response. But at times the confusion and pain are so profound, the absence of God so palpable, that only complaint will do, only lament will suffice: "I cry to you for help, O Lord; in the morning my prayer comes before you. Why, O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?" (Psalm 88:13-14).

The psalms of Israel show that the whole sweep of human experience, with its joys and sorrows, its hopes and fears, its celebrations and desolations, is proper subject for the presence of God. This worship is profoundly private and personal and at the same time rigorously and unsparingly public. The cries of loss, the bitter complaints, the repentant grief are present along with the praises and thanksgivings. All is brought before God and the community. Worship in the psalms, indeed in the Bible, assumes the presence both of God and of the community. Even the complainer of God's absence assumes that both God and the community are there to hear the complaint! The community at worship, in a sense, insists on the presence of God, however dangerous that at times may seem to be.

Christian worship is also worship in the presence of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Christians address the Father through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. Christian worship is always worship in the presence of the Crucified and Risen One: "Where two or three come together in my

name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20). Jesus made this reality clear when on the eve of his death he broke bread with his disciples and said, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). This was reaffirmed by the two on the road to Emmaus, who recognized him when he broke the bread (Luke 24:35). Christian worship, like Jewish worship, is "answering speech." Christians respond to the deliverance of "the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). In Christ there is a new Passover, a new Exodus, a new deliverance from Exile—indeed, as Paul said, a new Adam and a new creation.

The worship of the apostolic church is nowhere described in the New Testament. We know its elements, however, from Luke's brief description in Acts 2:42 of the Jerusalem church's activities: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Christian worship, this suggests, was founded on "the apostles' teaching." What did this entail? The letters of the New Testament suggest that a significant part of "the apostles' teaching" would have been the explication of the Jewish Scriptures. The prophets and sages of Israel prepared the way for the coming of Messiah Jesus. Surely the psalms of Israel provided both the substance and the models for their own song. The ethical thought of Israel was both foundational and problematic. In addition to the Jewish Scriptures, "the apostles' teaching" included the teachings of Jesus himself. His words and deeds were recited and discussed and formed the background for communal reflection and praise. The very existence of our four Gospels proves this point. For the believing community, the message and model of Jesus were foundational. They remain so for the worshipping and believing community today.

The word *fellowship* suggests many things. Especially it recognizes that worship in the apostolic church was communal. Christians did not come to worship to be alone with God, but to be with brothers and sisters. Worship was not, for the early church, a solitary endeavor. Whether it was a communal prayer, a communal song, or a communal meal, Christian worship was worship together. This implies both support and accountability. Christianity is not a mystery religion or New Age cult. It is not about "just me and God." Privatized, individualistic worship is unknown in the New Testament. This does not mean that followers of Jesus were not meant to pray in private. Jesus, in fact, recommends this (Matthew 6:6). But prayer in private is ultimately for the sake of the community, and individual worship is always in the presence of a "great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1).

"Breaking of bread" most likely refers to the Lord's Supper. Early Christian worship involved both word and table. To break bread in this manner was not

only to remember what Jesus had done, but also to bring the reality and results of Jesus' past death into the present. To do this cavalierly and thoughtlessly was for Paul a matter so serious that he warned the Corinthians that "whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:27). In fact, their abuses of the Lord's Table were so grave that "many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30). Whether one views the Lord's Supper as sacrament or ordinance, Paul's words suggest that something profoundly powerful and even dangerous is going on when we approach the table. To dishonor the table is to dishonor the very presence and power of God.

Finally, the apostolic church joined for prayer. There is no doubt that the full range of the engagement of God found in the psalms would be found in the early church also. Praise and adoration, confession and complaint, petition and lament were all present in the prayers of the community. Prayer may be mentioned last because in prayer the community responds to the acts of God in text and memory, to the joys and sorrows of human companionship, and to the saving work recalled at the table. To pray is to acknowledge the presence and power of God and God's stewardship over the life of the whole community in its personal and corporate realities.

This also suggests that Christian worship is incarnational. Not only does it recognize that "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14), but that the worship of God engages the whole body. All our senses are employed in worship. We hear the words of the preacher and the songs of the choir. We see the signs of God's presence in the bread and the wine, in the faces of our brothers and sisters, and perhaps in candles, crosses, banners, and windows. We feel the texture of the bread, the heaviness of a hymnbook or cup of wine, the warmth of an embrace. We smell the bread and the wine, the subtle aroma of candles or stronger odor of pine bows or Easter lilies, and even the honest sweat of a brother or sister. We taste the bread and wine or perhaps the more elaborate fare of the love feast (or potluck!). For Christians, worship is not merely cerebral or intellectual, but earthly—bodily, incarnationally realized.

In an essay first published in 1900 in a volume entitled *Guide to Christian Worship*, early Covenanters are told: "The innermost essence of all true worship is the heart's devotion to God. That is what the Savior means when he says, 'to worship in spirit and in truth' (John 4:24)."² The essay goes on to warn against a lifeless or merely "formal" worship. At the same time it insists that forms and structures are necessary: "Forms can be without life, but life can-

not be without forms."³ It insists that worship is a "united and public activity." This would suggest that the language of worship is "we" more than "I," but, perhaps even more importantly, "you." The God who is addressed is more important than the ones who make the address. And yet all are priests, all have the right and the responsibility to bring their offerings to God (1 Peter 2:5).

Worship partakes of both spirit and truth. One scholar calls this "ecstatic reason."⁴ Worship is ecstatic because it touches worshippers at the deepest core of their beings. It engages their need for and their joy in transcendence; it takes them out of themselves into the very presence of God. At the same time it is reason because its foundation is the word of God and what God has done in Christ. The 1900 essay wisely says that worship "must not be mechanical and rigid ceremonial function, but should be such that one perceives the presence and activity of the human spirit. The human spirit is reasonable. A rational spiritual worship is therefore also sensible (Romans 12:1). All that is perverse and unseemly, all superstitious practices and all meaningless clamor should be eliminated."⁵

Worship, the essay concludes, should be reverent, festive, and beautiful. Reverent because God is present and human beings should always stand in awe before the High and Holy One. Festive because the High and Holy One loves us and has redeemed us and claimed us, and this is something to celebrate! Beautiful because the Triune God deserves the most beautiful, the most lavish gifts human beings can bring (see Mark 14:1-9). May the "answering speech" of God's people result in praise for the Triune God, reflect and address human need, and lead the worshipping congregation to mission on behalf of the Crucified and Risen One who still calls to himself all who would hear.

DEVELOPING WORSHIP IN THE SMALL CHURCH

By Glenn C. Daman

In the age where quality is the buzzword in worship, how can the small church have an effective worship? The contemporary literature on worship stresses that the church, to have effective, dynamic worship, must have a worship team with guitars who lead the congregation in choruses sung with projection. Yet, for many small churches, such worship is not only impractical (it is hard to sing choruses with a guitar when no one knows how), but it can be destructive. Many a small church pastor would trade two Sunday School teachers, one building coordinator and three cows for a person who has musical abilities and a feel for worship. Although the small church has limited resources, it can have an authentic and powerful worship service. By developing a worship style that is sensitive to the people and community, and guided by the vision and purpose of the church, the congregation can have a service that glorifies God and draws people into fellowship with him.

THE NATURE OF WORSHIP

Worship begins, not with the selection of songs, but with the leader's and congregation's understanding of the nature of worship.

1. Worship exalts the person of God.

Worship centers the individual and congregation upon the person of God (Luke 4:8; John 4:23,24; Revelation 14:7). As such, the intent of worship is not to entertain, nor is it to provide people with an emotional experience. To make worship merely an emotional experience through moving entertainment shifts the focus from God to man. The paramount concern is not what man experiences, but what God expects and desires. Is he pleased? Is he exalted? Is he glorified? Is he served? Worship and praise is a sacrifice to be offered up to God (Hebrews 13:15).

2. Worship is personal.

No one can worship God on behalf of another. Worship is the inward response of the individual to the God he has been called to serve. In the Psalms, the psalmist continually expresses his desire to personally praise God in the community of God's people. It is not enough that others honor God, he himself must express praise and adoration (Psalms 27:4; 35:18; 42:4). Worship involves both the public declaration of praise as well as the private exaltation of God (Psalm 34:1; 2 Corinthians 12:3,4). For the congregation to be captured by the praise of God, people must first individually learn to stand in awe of him. Corporate worship is an outgrowth of individual worship.

3. Worship is corporate.

Worship is what the congregation is to do when it gathers together. Just as every individual was created to glorify God (Isaiah 43:7), so also the church exists for the purpose of exalting God (1 Corinthians 10:31; Revelations 1:6). All the activities the church performs, whether its worship services, programs, or extracurricular activities, are to be performed in such a way that God is exalted. If not, the church has failed to fulfill its mission.

4. Worship requires excellence.

The sacrificial system reveals that God does not accept second best. He desires only that which is perfect and without blemish. However, excellence and quality are not determined by how well people perform, but the degree that they utilize their ability, talents, and resources to the fullest. When people do their best, then their worship is acceptable and pleasing to God. The responsibility of the small church is not to try to emulate the large church in its quality of worship and music, but to utilize its abilities to the fullest.

THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP

Formulating a philosophy of worship requires that the congregation build upon a proper theology of worship.

1. Worship is the celebration of God's character.

For the psalmist, the character of God was the foundation for confidence in his redemptive acts on his behalf. Because God was loving and good, he could be called upon with assurance that he would answer (Psalms 86:5-7). At the heart of praise and worship was the awareness of God infinite character. Worship involves the affirmation and response to the nature and being of God. It is a jubilee, a joyous recounting of the being of God.

2. Worship is the celebration of God's activity.

The God of the Bible is a God who acts. He does not passively watch the affairs of man, but becomes actively involved, bringing salvation and deliverance to all who will call upon him. His redemptive works are so all-surpassing that there is nothing humanity can give back to repay the debt of love owed. The only appropriate response is the public declaration of God works. To be the beneficiary of God's work is to place oneself under the obligation to praise him publicly, so that his works done in secret are proclaimed openly to his people (Psalm 35:18).

3. Worship requires personal faith.

Worship, first and foremost, is an activity not only for the believer, but can only be truly perform by a genuine child of God (John 4:23-24). There cannot be genuine worship without submission and there cannot be submission without repentance. The term worship itself means to bow down in subjection. Worship, without genuine faith, becomes mere entertainment, moving the emotions, but not capturing the soul. Worship, while at times emotionally moving, should never be equated with mere feelings. It is not merely an emotional response to God, but a response of faith whereby one affirms one's belief in God and his redemptive work.

4. Worship relates to quality of the heart.

Quality is not defined by the outward performance rather it is determined by the inward condition of the heart; the attitudes and motives by which one approaches God. While one can perform the tasks well, it is unacceptable to God because it does not stem from the heart (Isaiah 29:13-16; Ezekiel 33:31; Matthew 15:3-9). Instead of accepting such worship, God condemns it as unauthentic and hypocritical. The reason the small church can have a great worship service is because it does not require a worship team, a musically talented song leader, a dynamic preacher, or a gifted pianist. All that is required is a sincere and pure heart before God. All too often the focus is upon the form rather than the heart. God's concern is for the heart of the worshipper, not the form by which he or she worships (John 4:24).

5. Worship is not related to size.

Size does not make worship more effective. Having a huge choir and a large auditorium does not provide a greater atmosphere for genuine praise. The five thousand in Acts manifested genuine worship, as well as the handful of people who met in a house church in Ephesus (see 2 John). In most cases, the small church does a reasonably good job of worship, for, in an unpretentious way, it celebrates who God is and what he is doing in the lives of everyone attending. A crowd is not required to fulfill the elements of genuine worship; praise, confession of sin, communion with God, and the response of submission to him. All that is required is a genuine heart of obedience before him.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SMALL CHURCH WORSHIP

The small church does not (nor can it or should it) try to duplicate the worship form of the larger church. It worships God differently than its larger counterpart. To lead the congregation in worship requires that the pastor understand and utilize these differences.

1. The small church worships relationally rather than emotionally.

Within the larger church, worship is conducted in context of celebration and emotional experiences. Within the small church, worship is conducted in the context of relationships and mutual interaction. Whereas, the larger church worships through the power and majesty of a pipe organ, resounding choir, and unison singing of hundreds of voices; the small church worships through the solidarity, familiarity and love of a close knit community.

2. The small church worships through participation rather than presentation.

Worship happens when everyone becomes involved. When the small church gathers, even if less professional and polished, they celebrate together with simplicity and self-acceptance that God does not just call the great, the powerful, the polished, the talented or the skilled. He also calls the ordinary, the mundane, the average (and below average), the unskilled, the untalented, the uncouth and the clumsy to enter into a relationship with him and worship him in the sincerity of their faith. In the small church, everyone has a place and finds avenues to participate in worship.

3. Place is more important than location.

Within the small church, the atmosphere that facilitates worship is not the beauty of the building or the aesthetics of the location, but the fact that each person has a place. People sit in the same pew Sunday after Sunday, not because it is assigned to them, but because in a chaotic and transitory world, they desire to have a place where security is found, where they belong, where they are accepted, and where they are reminded that God is present with them. Coming to church each week and sitting in the same place serves as a reminder that they are secure in God and that he is present with them in the common affairs of life. They worship God because they belong and they are a part of the church. They worship there because a crucial part of their own life story is written in the walls of the church. They have been married there and they have dedicated their children within those walls, and they have grieved as they buried their dead. The church is more than a building, it is a history book, reminding them of God's activity within their lives and their place in the people of God.

4. Singing the song of the heart.

Music is not an artistic performance, but the song of the people in response to God. It is not how well the church sings that determines the extent of its worship, but the attitude in which they sing. In the small church, one learns to measure the music by the spirit with which people sing rather than the sound that comes forth. The danger for any church (big or small) is that the music can be reduced to a performance or time filler, rather than a response to God. The purpose of musical expression is not to move the person. The object of the service is not to provide an enjoyable service (that may be the by-product). The focus of the music is to lead the people into a response to God. This happens when people stop listening to how their neighbor is sounding and when their focus is completely devoted to God, so that the person singing sings to God (Psalm 40:3).

5. Worship in the small church is authentic.

The small church does not need to focus upon worship that is grand; rather it must strive to have worship that is authentic. Authenticity is easily spotted in the small church, for it is achieved when one's life matches one's worship. The small church has an advantage for the close relationships continually challenge superficiality.

PLANNING THE WORSHIP SERVICE IN THE SMALL CHURCH

by Dr. Glenn C. Daman

Developing a dynamic worship service involves the careful interplay between spiritual sensitivity, biblical instruction, congregational understanding and careful planning. Following the prompting and guidance of the Holy Spirit enables the worship leader to move the congregation into the presence of God. However, this is not divorced from biblical truth (John 4:23). A proper theology of worship and a biblical understanding of the character of God are crucial lest the worship director leads the congregation to a misguided and misdirected experience. Developing a service that guides the people and the congregation to experience the reality of the being of God does not happen haphazardly, it involves careful planning and creative coordination. Yet, such planning is often difficult to achieve in the small church. Often the planning for the worship service falls upon either the pastor or a lay person, both of whom are already strapped for time because of their many other commitments within the church. Nevertheless, by following basic worship principles, the small church can maintain a vibrant and exciting worship service that not only incites people to worship, but draws others into the church as well.

THE ELEMENTS OF A WORSHIP SERVICE

Planning begins with an understanding of the elements that constitutes a worship service. Scripture reveal a minimum of four ingredients that is to mark the assembled body of Christ.

1. Praise and Adoration. David realized that it was when the people of God gather together that the individuals were to recount what God has done for them (Psalms 42:4; 43:4). One of the purposes of the gather together of God's people is so that they might testify to one another of the redemptive and gracious acts of God. Within the small church such declaration occurs naturally. Because the small church revolves around relationships, people are more open and free to share. In the worship service, opportunity should be given for people to publicly praise God, either through personal testimony or through hymns and choruses of praise.

2. Confession. The realization of the being of God always elicits the awareness of one's sinfulness, the need for confession of sin and the prayer for mercy and grace (see Isaiah 6:1-9). When the church assembles, they come together to corporately confess their sins and pray for forgiveness (Nehemiah 9:3; James 5:16). Songs and hymns that acknowledge our dependency on God and our need for the outpouring of his grace serve to bring us to the point where we open our wills to the reception of God's word.

3. Communion. Worship is what the congregation does in relationship with God. The goal of worship is to draw the people into communion with God, where God speaks and challenges the individual through the ministry of his Word and people respond to him in prayer and petition. Communing with God involves speaking and listening to God. Speaking with God manifests itself in prayer and petition so that when the church gathers, it comes together to pray with and for one another (Acts 2:14). The congregation listens to God as it responds to and interacts with the proclamation of the Bible (1 Timothy 4:13; Colossians 4:15; Acts 20:7).

4. Response. The response is more than just the closing hymn that allows the pastor to leave the platform. The time of response enables the individual to respond to the worship experience through commitment and submission to the will of God. This includes the closing period after the sermon, the giving of tithes and offerings, and the celebration of communion. Worship without a response is merely a diversion from daily life rather than a directive for everyday living. Therefore, the leader of the service needs to determine not only when people should offer a response, but the type of response desired.

7 PRINCIPLES FOR PLANNING A WORSHIP SERVICE

In commenting how the body of Christ gathers together, Paul writes that it is to be done orderly so that all might benefit and be strengthened (1 Corinthians 14:26-33). This necessitates careful planning.

1. Worship should be appropriate for the size. In planning, consideration needs to be given to what the small church does well rather than how it is weakened by its liabilities. Because it is small, the church can have more interaction and participation than its larger counterpart. Spontaneous testimonies, involvement of children, and interaction within the sermon can strengthen and highlight the benefits of being small.

2. Make the focus the character and activity of God. Ultimately the final test of all worship services is whether or not people's awareness of God is heightened. Before planning begins, the leader should ask, "What do we desire to communicate about God in this service?" While each individual part may not directly point to God, ultimately the whole should draw attention to specific attributes or activities that God performs.

3. Worship in a form people are comfortable with. A major mistake occurs when the worship leader tries to develop a form that is foreign to the congregation and community. To be an effective worship leader, the person needs to listen well. How do people want to worship and what are the taboos that the congregation has. However, this is not to say that people cannot be taught new forms. They can and should (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). People who enjoy hymns can broaden their worship experiences by learning to enjoy choruses. But they should not be forced to sacrifice their manner of worship in the process.

4. Plan around a unified theme. Every part of the service should have a purpose and a reason. By being intentional in planning, the leader can avoid disruptive distractions. When the parts are not supportive of the whole, the service becomes like a basketball game that suddenly changes into a football game. The rules suddenly change and no one is sure what is going on or what the objective is.

5. Seek participation rather than just observation. The strength of the small church worship service is that everyone can actively participate rather than merely observe others perform. The worship leader is not the player, rather he or she is the coach who orchestrates the movement of the congregation in the worship experience. This occurs when the leader intentionally plans how the people will be involved in the service. This is especially important with children. Since the small church worships as a family, the service should be sensitive and involve all members of the family. Having a children's sermon, singing choruses the children are familiar with, and having children sing specials are some of the ways to enable children to be and feel a part of the church family.

6. Don't overlook the details. Every element of the service should be viewed in the context of worship, from the announcements to the sermon. Worship does not just naturally happen within the congregation, it requires continuity of all the parts. Planned spontaneity and formalized informality can be effective means of facilitating an atmosphere of praise.

7. Alter the minors but maintain the majors. Some variety is helpful in worship, but too much can become a distraction at best, and a source of division and conflict at worst. Before making major changes in the form, prepare the people and obtain their approval. Surprises will usually cause a negative reaction by the congregation.

PLANNING THE SERVICE

While planning is essential for effective worship, there is not just one right way to formulate the program. Since each church is governed by different sociological frameworks, cultural norms and theological

perspectives, each one will approach the service differently. What works in one church will be ineffective in another. However, there are guidelines that can help the worship leader navigate the process.

1. Determine the overall purpose. The purpose is the goal and objective that the service has in the lives of the worshipers. This determines the mood and flow of the program. Some services are celebrative, while others are more solemn and reflective. Some are focus upon praise while others draw the individuals into repentance and self-abasement before God. A reading of the Psalms, for example, reveals a variety of moods, focal points, and objectives that characterized the worship of Israel. The objective serves to give the worship program continuity, coherence, and harmony. It answers the question, "What should the worshipers experience and realize in this service."

2. Develop the outline. Once the purpose is identified, the next step is to determine what will happen within the service. While the small church often follows an established pattern, some elements can be altered to enhance the service. Any significant change should be discussed by the board before it occurs. Developing an outline is determining what will occur and when. For example, how many songs will be sung? When will the special music be sung? When will the offering be taken? What will be the focal point of the prayer?

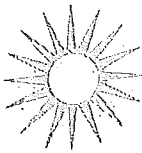
3. Utilize available resources. Often the small church has more resources at its disposal than it realizes. It may not have a choir, but it can have children sing. It may not have an orchestra, but it can utilize recorded music. Having just the men sing a song on Mother's Day can replace a choral number. Meeting outdoors on a hot summer day can not only be more comfortable, but add another dimension that enhances the awareness of God's creation or the church's obligation to reach beyond the walls of the building.

4. Identify the specifics. Once the purpose and outline is identified, then the worship leader is ready to fill in the details. There are a number of different areas that need to be addressed in developing the service. Some of the questions that need to be asked are: a. What choruses and hymns are to be sung and in what order? b. What is the sermon topic? c. What topic will be addressed by the children's sermon? d. How will the offering be introduced? e. What scripture will be read and when? f. What will be the focus of prayer? Will the pastor lead in prayer or will the congregation pray? g. What sins need to be confessed or behaviors need to be challenged? When will people have opportunity to address these issues? h. How are people being asked to respond to the message and what opportunity is given them to respond, whether it be in a hymn of affirmation, a time of confession or a physical response of dedication? The most critical question in addressing the service is not who will do what and when, but why they are doing it. Only by carefully planning can this question be answered.

CHAPTER 3

WORSHIP:

The Beginning and End of Mission



hotel room to try to understand what was troubling my spirit. In the silence I heard the prophet Amos thunder the word of the Lord, "Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:23-24). Hearing these words, I reflected on the fact that I was only a few months removed from almost a decade of mission work among the desperately poor in the Philippines. Consequently, the absence of any references to compassion, justice, and good news for the poor while we sought "the heart of God" at this conference was like partaking of dessert in super-size portions for several days without eating anything else. No wonder my spiritual stomach was upset! The sweet bitterness of worship without mission made me nauseous. I stayed in my room and quietly whispered with tears the famous pledge of World Vision founder Bob Pierce, "Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God."²

I attended another conference that same year, a gathering of about one hundred Asian mission theologians in Bangalore, India. My missionary self thrived there in the beginning, as I interacted with like-minded activists to address oppression, poverty, and religious pluralism in Asia. The problem was, except for occasional prayer, no serious effort was made by the organizers to ground mission in any kind of meaningful worship. As with the previous conference, I left feeling largely unfulfilled, as I remembered passages like, "On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy . . . cast out demons . . . and do many deeds of power in your name?' Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you . . .'" (Matt. 7:23).

Such practiced disunity between worship and mission reflects an ill-fated ignorance regarding the absolutely integral relationship between loving God (worship) and loving neighbor (mission). We who seek to be missional in our proclamation must address this ignorance, even as we strive to see more clearly the twin nature of worship and mission. What exactly is the relationship between them, and how should it inform the church's liturgy? More importantly for this study, why is this liturgical unity essential to missional preaching?

The Unity of Worship and Mission

The unity of worship and mission permeates the whole of Scripture, from the upward and outward nature of the Ten Commandments

We have established that the *missio Dei* provides the essential theological outlook for missional preaching, while a kingdom hermeneutic furnishes its essential biblical outlook. But one other essential remains: a liturgical perspective that affirms the unity of worship and mission. Sadly, worship activities and mission activities run on separate tracks in many churches, as if worship has little to do with mission, and vice versa. Many churches have committees devoted to worship and mission, demonstrating that they know the crucial nature of each. But little consultation happens between them. In a 1966 book titled *Worship & Mission*, J. G. Davies noted that the two "are placed in isolated compartments without the possibility of cross-fertilization and without the question of their unity being raised at all."¹ It should disturb us that something said as a prophetic charge nearly fifty years ago still largely applies today.

I took on a part-time worship pastor position at a church several years ago. To start off on the right foot, I flew to Dallas to attend a large worship conference. From morning to evening, the participants (over two thousand of us) feasted on music, keynote speakers, and an array of workshops par excellence. For the first few days, I thoroughly enjoyed myself. But around the third day, something began to gnaw at me, enough that I left the chandeliered ballroom before another service was about to begin and went up to the quiet of my

(Ex. 20:1-17) to the prophets' dual call to spiritual fidelity and social justice (Hos. 3:1-5; Isa. 1:12-17) to the apostles' acts of ecstatic praise and fervent missionary zeal throughout the known world (Acts 2). But we encounter this unity most clearly in Jesus himself who, when asked by a testy lawyer which commandment was the greatest, replied: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40).

Loving God lies at the core of the definition of *worship*. This truth is what allows New Testament scholar N. T. Wright to playfully substitute the word *love* with the word *worship* in the famous love chapter of 1 Corinthians 13. "Though we sing with the tongues of men and of angels, if we are not truly worshipping the living God, we are noisy gongs and clanging symbols," and so on, ending with, "So now our tasks are worship, mission, and management, these three; but the greatest of these is worship."³

Similarly, loving neighbor lies at the core of the definition of *mission*. If loving the lost and caring for the poor are driven by something less than love, then mission misses the mark entirely. "Love does not ask, 'Who is my neighbor?'" writes C. Rene Padilla, "but rather, 'Who needs me to be a good neighbor?' Who needs to hear the liberating news of the gospel? Who is in need of forgiveness? Who is suffering from the lack of food? Who is suffering the injustice of the system? Who needs our help? What can I do?"⁴ Such questions are driven by the power of love extended to the lost and the poor in the world.

Speaking of love for God and love for neighbor separately, as I just did, already treads on dangerous ground. Since Jesus expanded the *Shema* by placing Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 together in one breath, love for God and neighbor are inextricably linked. "To love God then," concludes Melba Maggay, "is to love our neighbor, and to love our neighbor is to love God."⁵ Each verifies and proves the other to be present in our lives and in our churches. That is, we know we truly love God when, out of love, we live out the gospel among the needy. And conversely, we know that when we love and serve the needy via works of compassion and mercy, we correspondingly love God in Jesus Christ (see Matt. 25:31-46).

Love God—Love Neighbor

The inseparability of loving God and neighbor correlates with the inseparability of worship and mission. There are at least two ways to describe the relationship between worship and mission.

Interdependent Unity

First, worship and mission enjoy an interdependent unity: Worship depends on mission, and mission depends on worship. If we try to love God (worship) while neglecting justice then God's words through the prophets Amos (5:21-23), Micah (6:6-8), and Isaiah (1:11-17) indict us. "We see in the language of the prophets," asserts Mark Laberton, "that faithful worship either does justice or [it] risks being neither faithful nor worship."⁶ In the words of Amos, we are to "let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream,"—and *then* come and worship!

If, on the other hand, we try to love our neighbor without being fueled and refueled by God in worship, then mission is rendered ineffectual. How can the church possibly address the overwhelming needs of the world without the input of God's wisdom, power, and love? Brenda Salter McNeil and Rick Richardson lament, "Far too often those who seek to be reconcilers and peacemakers have anemic worship—both individually and corporately." The authors go on to say that the "process of renewal and transformation takes place in worship and prepares us to be prophets who criticize the world's status quo, and it energizes the imagination for what is possible through God."⁷ Simply put, if the church does not engage in mission, then it cannot truly worship; conversely, if the church does not worship, then it cannot truly do mission.

Causal Unity

Second, worship and mission have a causal unity between them; that is, one causes the other. The order in which Jesus lists the two Great Commandments is significant, because love for God (worship) is the source of love for neighbor (mission). Jesus' language in speaking of the "first" and "second" Great Commandments does not speak to superiority so much as origin—which of the two loves causes the other. To be clear: Worship inspires, motivates, and empowers mission. The church's love for God propels it outward to demonstrate love for neighbor.

Furthermore, worship is also the goal of mission. So worship not only gives birth to mission; it also represents the final fulfillment of mission at the end of time. John Piper's thoughts on their relationship are helpful here:

Mission is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Mission exists because worship doesn't. . . . When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, mission will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of mission.⁸

The worship scenes described in Revelation 7:9-12 and 19:1-8 will come about because of the faithfulness of the church in mission. The worship scenes in these two passages imply the sacrificial activities of God's people toward racial reconciliation, social justice, and evangelization, each of which plays a role in determining the ultimate worship-to-be at the end of time—a redeemed, multicultural people praising the God who has eradicated the evils of injustice, oppression, falsehood, greed, and immorality.⁹ So worship causes mission; it simultaneously pushes it out and pulls it forward toward the end of time. Put succinctly, worship is both the beginning and the end of mission.

Missional Liturgy

This interdependent and causal unity of worship and mission should—must—inform the church's liturgy. Liturgy, conventionally understood, refers to the structure or order of worship when God's people gather together. Contrary to the notion that some churches are liturgical and others are not, all churches practice some form of liturgy (which is determined not only by tradition but also by culture).¹⁰ As Colin Buchanan notes, "Even those who often have appeared most distrustful of the alleged straitjacketing of worship . . . have their own settled (but often undeclared) orders of Sunday worship with recognized patterns of use for songs and hymnody, and familiar acclamatory and responsive words."¹¹ That said, the worship in some churches is obviously more formally ordered than in others. Nevertheless, from the "bells and smells" of high church worship to the holy rolling of a Pentecostal-style service, all Christian liturgies include some form of a) prayer; b) music and song; c) word; and d)

symbol (sacraments or ordinances), all of which are experienced in the context of *koinonia*.¹²

In light of the unity of worship and mission, "the liturgy of corporate worship will impact . . . the corporate mission of the people as they gather in order to be sent out."¹³ Liturgy, therefore, is ultimately the practice of missional worship. At its root, the word *liturgy* means "the work of the people," and this work does not end when the Sunday service is over. The work of the people—the liturgy—must be practiced, yes, in corporate gatherings, but also in our everyday lives as we engage the world in mission. Mission, according to the Eastern Orthodox statement "Go Forth in Peace," is the "liturgy after the liturgy."¹⁴

So how does this outlook inform the church's practice of worship? Prayers of the people would not be limited to the needs of the Body, but extended to include the community and world. Songs would inspire people to adore God for who God is, to give thanks for all God has done and will do, and to pledge allegiance to God's kingdom for the sake of the whole world. The ministry of the Word would recite Scriptures (which we established earlier as thoroughly missional) and preaching would lift up their missional dimensions (more on this aspect, of course, in a little while). And the experience of ritual symbols—i.e., the tactile and visual expressions of worship such as baptism and Communion—would invoke remembrance of Christ's loving sacrifice for the whole world and would, therefore, inspire loving sacrifice among worshippers as they follow him to the cross for the sake of the world.

I do not suggest these things formulaically and mechanically, as if we are required to force "mission" on each and every part of the service. In fact, I champion more creative license in the church's liturgy-making. However, a Creator-glorifying, Christ-centered, Spirit-empowered worship service necessarily progresses toward a call to participate in God's mission. For example, evangelism scholar Paul Chilcote offers a "sequence of devotion" based upon the well-known vision of Isaiah 6:1-8:

1. Adoration: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts," moves the worshiper to
2. Confession: "Woe is me!" to
3. Forgiveness: "Your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out," and through

4. Proclamation: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,"

to final

5. Dedication: "Here am I, send me!"¹⁵

The point is, whether every aspect of the liturgy speaks directly of mission or the whole service crescendos at mission, God's redemptive purposes and our participation in them are constitutive of authentic Christian worship.

In light of the missional vision of the practice of worship, it should be obvious that missional liturgy is not necessarily a call to design services in order to reach unbelievers. (I think critically of the seeker-friendly phenomenon of the 1980s and 90s, as well as some churches' need to have an altar call in every service.) "Worship must remain worship," cautions Roberta King. "Worship services should not serve as functional substitutes for evangelism. Rather, we must seek authenticity of interaction with God and developing relationship with him."¹⁶ But she goes on to say that, "Genuine worship of the Creator will attract and confront those who long to enter into the kingdom."¹⁷

The vision for missional liturgy is rather a call for all churches to practice worship's oneness with God's mission. The experience of corporate Christian worship should, in its totality, not only give glory to God; it should also clarify the *missio Dei* and our participation in it, even as the redeemed themselves are transformed by the worship experience. "Somehow," Llaberton pleads, "the God we name, the music we sing, the prayers we offer, and the Scriptures we hear read and preached [have] to call us deeper into God's heart and deeper into the world for which Christ died."¹⁸

Missional Preaching in the Practice of Worship

The importance of adopting such a liturgy for missional preaching lies in the truth that the *kerygma* by itself cannot reshape the church for mission. The Word part of the liturgy is exactly that—only a part of the whole experience of corporate worship. As Marva Dawn states, "A sermon finds its place in the midst of the community's entire worship."¹⁹ Therefore, the effectiveness of the missional sermon relies on a missionally framed service, each aspect working together to glorify God and to better understand God's purposes in and for the world.

Although preaching is but one part, it is a key part in the worship experience of God's people. In Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran,

and Eastern Orthodox traditions, the Eucharist (Communion or the Lord's Supper) is central to community worship; but in most Protestant traditions, it is the ministry of the Word that occupies the center. In fact, for many Protestants, if a sermon or homily or meditation is not part of the gathering, it is "worship lite" at best—perhaps not even worship at all! Few Christians would argue that preaching plays an indispensable role in the church's practice of worship.

Specifically, the role of preaching in missional liturgy entails the clear articulation of God and God's mission. An excellently preached word articulates—makes clear—God's intentions like no song, ritual, or prayer could. Missional preaching has the capacity to explain, define, exhort, inspire, and connect all other aspects of the service toward a greater understanding of the *missio Dei*.

As the unity of worship and mission informs the church's liturgy, some guiding principles for preaching emerge.

Personal Preparation

First, we prepare ourselves to lead worship missionally. This requires more than intellectual agreement with the theological unity of worship and mission. It requires our commitment to grow in this unity on our own with God. Llaberton shares his regular practice of reading the weekly email update from a missionary family serving at-risk children in Cambodia before Sunday service, because he writes, "I want . . . to lead our worship services . . . with my heart freshly re-minded of the realities of suffering in the world, the urgency of hearing and living out the hope of the gospel, and the joyous and costly call of sacrificial living in the name of Christ."²⁰ As we grow in this unity, we prepare ourselves to lead God's people accordingly.

Being Thoroughly Missional

Second, we see to it that the whole service reflects the awareness that the God who longs to redeem creation and everyone in it is present. Preaching alone will not suffice. But if every aspect of the service points in the same direction, when it is time to preach a word imbued with mission, the people will be poised to receive it, since everything else has been speaking the same language. Insofar as the order of service lies in the hands of the ministers—and in most churches, that is the case—those who seek to give a compelling missional word should seek to ensure that the rest of the service will support it:

Cultivating Disciples

Finally, we preach with the aim to make disciples. We preach to cultivate a church of missional worshipers and worshipping missionaries, people who understand that their experience of worship directly affects their practice of the faith in the world, and vice versa. We preach to build a church that understands that the work of compassion, justice, reconciliation, and evangelization requires a power that is derived only from a life connected to the living God.

To cultivate such disciples, however, entails, in Dawn's words, preaching that kills us. She writes, "Everything that we do in worship should kill us, but especially the part of the service in which we hear the Word—the Scripture lessons and the sermon."²¹ She means here that true worship, expressed most clearly in the ministry of the Word, results in the death of self and the resurrection to new life in Christ, a life that calls us to community and mission. Similarly, the truth that genuine worship leads to sacrificial mission for the sake of the lost and the poor in the world explains why Labberton can describe worship as a "dangerous act." He writes, "Nothing is as dangerous as encountering the living God. Why? Because meeting God redefines everything we call normal and commands us to seek first his kingdom."²² This kind of preaching in the context of a missional liturgy will indeed produce missional worshipers and worshipping missionaries—that is, genuine disciples. At that point, the positively dangerous power of the gospel through a faithful church is released into the world.

NOTES

1. J. G. Davies, *Worship & Mission* (London, UK: SCM, 1966), 9.
2. Bob Pierce, quoted in Marilee Pierce Dunker, *Man of Vision* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic; Federal Way, WA: World Vision, 2005), 1.
3. N. T. Wright, *For All God's Worth: True Worship and the Calling of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 8–9.
4. C. Rene Padilla, "Love," in *Dictionary of Mission Theology*, ed. John Corrie (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007), 213.
5. Melba Maggay, "To Respond to Human Need by Loving Service (i)," in *Mission in the 21st Century*, eds. Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008), 47.
6. Mark Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship: Living God's Call to Justice* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2007), 28.

7. Brenda Salter McNeil and Rick Richardson, *The Heart of Racial Justice: How Soul Change Leads to Social Change* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 61.
8. John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 11. I took the liberty here to replace "missions" with "mission." There has been bantering back and forth about the difference between these two words among missiologists through the years, but most people use them interchangeably.
9. For more on this idea, see Al Tizon, "A Spirituality of Holistic Ministry," in *Ministry* (Spring 2010), 15.
10. See Kathy Black, *Worship across Cultures: A Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998).
11. Colin O. Buchanan, "Liturgy," in *Dictionary of Mission Theology*, ed. John Corrie (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007), 211.
12. Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Vancouver, BC: Regent College, 1994), 492–95.
13. Buchanan, "Liturgy," 212. Emphasis mine.
14. "Go Forth in Peace," in *New Directions in Mission & Evangelization 1: Basic Statements 1974–1991*, eds. James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992), 226ff.
15. Paul W. Chilcote, "The Integral Nature of Worship and Evangelism," in *The Study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church*, eds. Paul W. Chilcote and Lacey C. Warner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 253–61.
16. Roberta R. King, "Worship," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker; Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Paternoster, 2000), 1035.
17. King, "Worship," 1035.
18. Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship*, 35.
19. Marva Dawn, *Reaching Out without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 233.
20. Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship*, 33–34.
21. Dawn, *Reaching Out without Dumbing Down*, 206.
22. Labberton, *The Dangerous Act of Worship*, 63.