

Supplemental Material

Note about the supplemental material: This material is designed to serve as an aid to thinking about and reflecting on your own worship styles, practices, and focus in your assemblies in the context of both scripture and history, and then taking time to do a series of self assessments to get a more objective picture of your assembly practices in order to either affirm or improve them according to the scriptural purposes of the assembly.

Big Picture of Worship Styles

I. Introduction

- A. Worship, worship practice, and worship styles has had different shapes throughout history.
 - 1. This includes buildings, furniture, seating arrangement
 - 2. This also includes the type of songs, the amount of emphasis placed on each worship activity, and how it is carried out
 - 3. This includes the "atmosphere" of a worship gathering, style of music, nature of prayers, etc.
 - 4. Examples from area of singing:
 - a. Gregorian chants were once common in medieval times
 - 1) There were other styles of music available
 - 2) The rationale for singing in unison was theological
 - a) All the church is one body
 - b) Therefore, the church is to be unified with no one isolated or exalted
 - c) This was to be reflected in all things, including church music in worship
 - d) As a result, all were to sing the same words, same notes, with no one voice standing out
 - e) Anyone that sang so pretty that their voice stood out were viewed with suspicion of pride
 - b. Singing psalters became the accepted practice in 19th century
 - 1) The words of the Psalms were printed in meter
 - 2) The name of the tune(s) was listed at the top that would be singable to that Psalm
 - c. Gospel Songs became the norm in the early 20th century
 - 1) Song writers wrote lyrics, melodies, and harmonies
 - 2) Printed song books with musical notations became the norm
 - 3) Singing school popped up all over the country
 - 4) The invitation song was created during this time during the revivals
- B. It is helpful to examine these trends to see what we can learn about human nature, how to respond to cultural and historical influences, and weigh all of these in light of God's word
- C. Keep in mind that many of these are human cultural trends
- D. What follows will be a summation of major traditions

II. Various Worship Traditions

A. Traditional Liturgy

1. Liturgy: The word does not mean "high church" worship
 - a. Originally from Greek: Leiturgia - "Worship or service"
 - b. In the early church, there was a certain amount of liturgy
 - c. Simply refers to the way you do things, or the pattern and forms of worship
2. Sanctifying Time
 - a. May follow a liturgical calendar
 - 1) Every year, the church goes through a cycle
 - 2) Usually included the birth, life, teachings, death, resurrection, appearances, and ascension of Christ
 - 3) A lot of time and planning for the thematic emphasis
 - b. Thoughtful planning into every aspect of worship
 - 1) Prayers are usually thoughtfully worded, written down, and even memorized, to assure they are doctrinally sound and appropriate
 - 2) Songs are carefully selected for the occasion
 - 3) Communion, the homily, etc. are all carefully planned, nothing is left to chance
 - c. Even many churches today may have a loose liturgical calendar
 - 1) They may have special attention devoted on certain days of the year
 - 2) Examples include Mother's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, etc.
3. Honor for the word of God
 - a. Liturgist give honor to the reading of the word of God when they are gathered together
 - b. There are usually two or three extensive readings
 - c. The readings are usually balanced, with one being from the Old Testament, one from the Gospels, and one from the Epistles
 - d. In the course of three years, they cover the entire Bible
4. Congregational Participation
 - a. Participation is not limited to just singing and sitting
 - b. Sometimes the congregation will chant a psalm together
 - c. Worshippers usually kneel when praying
 - d. Worshippers will often respond in unison in worship
 - 1) Some examples: "Thanks be to God," "Lord hear our prayer,"

- 2) Sometimes, the congregation will recite a prayer together, such as the Lord's prayer
- e. Rather than have communion passed to them, they will walk forward to receive communion

5. Sense of mystery, holiness and awe
 - a. Relationship of husband and wife is a mystery representing Christ and the church
 - b. Greek for mystery: Musterion. Latin: Sacramentum
 - c. Whether mystery or sacrament, the early church saw earthly realities point to spiritual truths
 - d. There was symbol, mystery, and the arts
 - 1) Arts were seen as a window into Heaven
 - 2) The catacombs had many drawings of Jesus, worshippers praying, and symbols
 - e. The worship space makes use of light, color, incense, pageantry, processions, and reenactment
6. Some ironies and riddles:
 - a. Liturgical churches read large portions of scripture in their assemblies, yet either do not take it's message seriously or reason away its message, (theologically liberal), while others who take it seriously do not read large portions of it in their assemblies
 - b. Why do high churches kneel, low churches dance, and those in between just sit and sing to their shoes?
7. Questions:
 - a. What is good?
 - b. What is not good?
 - c. What can we learn from this?

B. Praise and Worship Tradition

1. It could be said that this began with charismatic groups
 - a. However, it is not limited to them
 - b. Many others have borrowed from this model
2. Characteristics
 - a. Simpler - Worship spaces are utilitarian
 - b. Not bound by a calendar or sermon topics
 - 1) Messages are usually informal
 - 2) Messages usually come from a strong, authoritative minister or minister figure
 - 3) There is often little long range planning

- c. Use of contemporary styles, language, music, etc.
 - 1) The music, seating, etc. are all modern
 - 2) Will use modern instruments, a "band"
- d. Very praise oriented, and very music driven
 - 1) The most prominent feature is the music
 - 2) The most emotional energy expended is often the music
- e. Progression usually begins with praise, celebrating what God has done, moving toward adoration, intimacy, and perhaps confession
- f. Heightened emotion, which often leads to raising of hands, jumping or dancing, or even prostrating oneself on the ground
- g. A great emphasis on future hope, especially of Heaven
- h. There is often no set ending time, being more event oriented than clock oriented
- i. The "altar call," a time to pray and tend needs, is a regular feature, and often extends outside the worship time to help those in need.

3. Some ironies

- a. Many biblically shallow and impoverished churches are much more in tuned to and respond to those in need in their community in various ministries.
- b. These churches typically tend to be more diverse in their social and ethnic make up

4. Questions

- a. What are some dangers, pitfalls, and things to avoid?
- b. What is good?
- c. What can we learn?

C. Seeker Event Model

1. Definition

- a. There are various levels, from seeker sensitive to seeker driven
- b. Usually involves crafting the assembly to reach the religious seeker

2. Features

- a. More presentational than participatory
- b. Use of technology and media, including video clips, mood lighting, etc.
- c. Messages avoid jargon, involve many contemporary stories, analogies, and applications
- d. Everything is very user friendly, especially for the unchurched

visitor

- e. There is an emphasis on being culturally relevant
- f. There is an outward focus on reaching people for Christ
- g. In some cases, members who desire and need deeper study, fellowship, and worship do so in non-public meetings, whereas the public meetings are designed for the outsider.
- h. Pragmatic

3. Irony: Seeker driven services, for all the effort to draw people in and make them welcome and comfortable, may inoculate them against feeling that uncomfortable feeling when you realize you need the Gospel
4. Questions:
 - a. What things are there to avoid?
 - b. What are some good things?
 - c. What can we learn?

III. Our worship tradition in Restoration Churches

- A. Restoration churches have tended to be very similar to each other even in the assemblies when it comes to music, language, building design, and order of worship
- B. Generalization: Restoration churches tend to be primitive, conservative, evangelical, low church, isolationist, pragmatic, and American
 1. Primitive
 - a. The churches consider themselves to be "New Testament Churches."
 - b. Practice determined by biblical command or precedent in the New Testament, whether expressly or implied
 2. Conservative
 - a. Bible oriented
 - b. Theologically conservative
 - c. Tend to be emotionally reserved
 - d. Not given to extremes
 3. Evangelical
 - a. The invitation is a strongly held tradition
 - b. Invitation songs
 4. Low Church
 - a. Heirs to 19th century frontier revivals

- b. Simplicity and informality
- c. Music style has been of the popular music of the era
 - 1) Camp meeting songs, Sunday School Song, and gospel songs,
 - 2) Not the artful music of choral works and other "disciplined" music
- d. Congregations tended not to require higher education for ministers, and even distrusted it

5. Isolationist

- a. Congregations have been autonomous
- b. Many congregations did not cooperate together
- c. Almost all avoided cooperation with any outside the brotherhood
- d. This caused them to look to each other for worship patterns

6. Pragmatic

- a. Smaller churches have tended to look to larger ones for ideas on how to do various things
- b. There have been many "how to" seminars that often feature what is working in churches. The questions of "is this right" were not as often dealt with
- c. Churches have become increasingly pragmatic over the last two or three decades

C. Questions:

- 1. What are pitfalls and things to avoid?
- 2. What is good?
- 3. What can we learn?

V. Reflection

- A. What are some things you learned?
- B. What surprised you?

VI. More reflection on our local worship in the next section

- A. This has been a broad generalization to identify actual worship practice, their possible strengths and weakness
- B. A more objective look at local practice comes in the next section