

WORSHIP

GOAL:

To have the ability to plan and lead worship events, showing an understanding of the purpose and components of worship.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After completing this module, participants will be able to:

1. provide a definition of worship
 - a. describe the components that make up a worship event
 - b. illustrate a variety of ways of putting together a worship event
2. compare two worship events that they have participated in, explaining the similarities and differences and noting whether essential components were present.
3. design and lead two worship events that demonstrate an understanding of different styles of worship.

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WHAT TO DO

Step One	A Theology of Worship	2 hours
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- 1 Write a paragraph outlining your understanding of "worship".
- 2 Read through the resource material on pages 4-10
- 3 Imagine that you are approached by a young person who has no experience of church but wants to know what worship is. In light of your reading, prepare a response equivalent to one typed page. Include reference to aspects of relationship, God, community (koinonia), response, sacrament,

Step Two	Elements of Worship	3 hours
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- 4 Recall two experiences of worship that you remember as life giving, awesome, and moving.
 - a Being as creative as you wish, describe (illustrate) what took place.
 - b What did they have in common? Write down why you think they were so effective for you.
- 5 Read through the resource material, "Elements of Community Worship", on pages 11-16.
- 6 With your mentor:
 - a Discuss the elements of worship with which you were familiar.
 - b Discuss those elements that were new to you in this reading.
 - c Discuss the value of using a component checklist when preparing a worship event. What benefits might there be? What pitfalls / risks?

Step Three	Worship in Church Culture	3 hours
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- 7 Below twelve terms used in our churches in relation to worship are listed.
 - a Select two terms that are familiar to you and write a _ page explanation of each.
 - b Select two terms that are less familiar and find out their meaning before attempting a similar _ page explanation of each. Some ideas to help your research are provided below.

sacrament	service of worship	karakia
covenant service	prayer book	liturgy
reflection	offering / collection / offertory	praise and worship
preaching of the word	eucharist / communion	order of service

Where do these unfamiliar words come from? As you have probably recognised, some of these words are common to all of us as Christians while others are more "denomination-specific," ie. they are used more often in some Christian Churches than in others. Those that are unfamiliar to you are most likely quite common in a church just down the road and it is from these unfamiliar words that we encourage you to select your second pair of terms.

So how do I go about finding out what they mean? Firstly you might like to try the leaders of your own church. Jot down notes about what they think your chosen words mean. Ask them if you may borrow any reference books that provide a description or definition of the terms. Finally though, you will probably get the fullest understanding if you summon up the courage to go and ask the leaders of another church. If the word is in common use in their tradition then they will be best able to explain it! Your own minister can probably tell you which church uses which terms and it is to these that you should pay a visit. Do explain why you want to know (tell them it is for the Diploma

in Youth Ministry) and ask for a simple explanation of your terms in relation to Christian worship.

Step Four	Worship in Youth Culture	2 hours
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- 8 Read the resource material on pages 17-21.
- 9 Choose a particular group of young people in your context / locality.
 - a In what setting do young people feel most comfortable? (eg. At concerts? In cafes? At home? In nightclubs? At school? Where?)
 - b What are the accepted styles of clothing for people in these settings?
 - c How do people communicate with each other in these settings?
 - d What styles of music do young people listen to? You could ask some young people directly or ask at a local music shop.
- 10 Outline ways in which: (cf. p. 17)
 - a young people could help plan worship in your cultural setting
 - b young people and others from your church could work together to plan worship that acknowledges cultural variety.
 - c young people can learn to appreciate the existing church culture.

Step Five	Putting it All Together	3 hours
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- 11 Read the Resource Material on pages 22-25, entitled, "Roles in Worship," "Leadership in Worship" & "The Flow of Worship."
- 12 With the guidance of your mentor, find two people (laity or clergy) who regularly put together worship events. Arrange an informal interview with each of them seeking their response to the following questions:
 - a What roles do you see as integral to the worship event?
 - b In what ways is the role of leader different from other roles?
 - c If you were to offer three pointers to someone about to undertake such a leadership role for the first time, what would they be?
 - d What process do you use in preparing a worship event?
 - e What skills do you see as necessary in this task?

Step Six	Let's Do It!	7 hours
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- 13
 - a Working as part of a small planning team design and lead two worship events, one drawing on your church traditions & one exploring more innovative styles of worship.
 - b Using the evaluation checklist provided on page 26, have each member of your planning team personally evaluate the service in which they were involved. (Ask team members to return their evaluations to you.)
 - c Using the evaluations as a basis, summarise each worship event. Provide between one and two pages in total. (Please send in the team member evaluations with your summaries.)

NB: Discuss your ideas and intentions first with the leaders of your faith community and make sure that young people and other community members can participate in both services. Don't forget the team approach and the importance of a post-service debrief with those involved.

Resource Material

THE DYNAMICS OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

An Introduction

The core of worship is God acting to give God's life to humankind and to bring humankind to partake of that life. Christian worship involves God's self-revelation and human response enabled by God. At the centre of both is Jesus Christ who reveals God to us and through whom we make our response.

God's initiative and human response

- a) God discloses and communicates God's own being to humankind. In doing this God takes the initiative in creation and covenant, in nurturing and transforming, in calling to repentance and in offering forgiveness.
- b) God addresses people through Jesus Christ and stirs people to respond. In Jesus Christ, God entered fully into the human condition in an act of self-revelation, redemption, and forgiveness. Entering the brokenness of the world, God in Jesus Christ atoned for sin and restored human life. By so entering the created world God affirmed time and space, matter and human life as instruments for knowing and praising their Creator.
- c) The Spirit of God brings people to an awareness of God and God's grace and claim upon their lives. The Spirit moves them to respond by calling upon God, by remembering and proclaiming God's acts of self-revelation in word and deed, and by committing their lives to God's reign in the world.
- d) Christian worship joyfully ascribes all praise and honour, glory and power to the triune God. In worship the people of God acknowledge God present in the world and in their lives. As they respond to God's claim and redemptive action in Jesus Christ, people are transformed and renewed. In worship the faithful offer themselves to God and are equipped for God's service in the world.

Jesus Christ

1 *Complete human response*

Jesus of Nazareth offered the complete human response to God and revealed the form and purpose of life. Jesus' life discloses the character of authentic Christian worship.

2 *The living God in common life*

Jesus Christ is the living God present in common life, the One who is proclaimed in the witness of faith is:

- a the Word of God spoken in creation
- b the Word of God promising and commanding throughout covenant history,
- c the Word of God
 - i who became flesh and dwelt among us,
 - ii who was crucified and raised in power,
 - iii who will return in triumph to judge and reign

3 *Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament*

Scripture (the written witness to the Word), preaching (the spoken witness to the Word), and the Sacraments (the enacted and sealed witness to the Word), all bear testimony to Jesus Christ, the living Word. Through Scripture, proclamation, and Sacraments, God in Christ is present by the Holy Spirit acting to transform, empower, and sustain human lives. In Christian worship the people of God:

- a hear the Word proclaimed,
- b receive the Word enacted in Sacrament,
- c discover the Word in the world, and
- d are sent to follow the Word into the world

4 *Response*

a **Christian response to God in community**

From the beginning God created women and men for community and called a people into covenant. Jesus called, commissioned, and promised to be present to a people gathered in his name. The Holy Spirit calls, gathers, orders, and empowers the new community of the covenant. To each member, the Spirit gives gifts for building up the body of Christ and for equipping it for the work of ministry. A Christian's personal response to God is as part of the community of the people of God, the body of Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit.

b **Response in worship and service**

The people of God respond with words and deeds of praise and thanksgiving in acts of prayer, proclamation, remembrance, and offering. In the name of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Christian community worships and serves God

- i in shared experiences of life,
- ii in personal discipleship and devotion,
- iii in ministry to each other, and
- iv in common ministry in the world.

All these are celebrated and focussed in the act of common worship.

Source: Directory of Worship, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

A THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP

Introduction

Worship is a complex phenomenon that is difficult to capture within a definition. It has been described as a response of adoration evoked in one who has encountered the presence of God. It has also been depicted as the grateful rejoicing of those who have experienced God's action in their lives. At times it has been equated with the formal services or rites of a particular religion, and it has also been set out as a way of life.

Worship as Expression

The notion of worship as expression is basic to all of these descriptions. Worship expresses and mediates the divine-human relationship. Underlying any understanding of worship is a prior understanding of God and human subjectivity. The possibility of worship implies both human subjects who desire a relationship with God and a God who fulfils that desire. Ultimately, whatever particular expressions it may take, worship is the outcome of God's gracious self-gift.

Worship in Jesus Christ

Christian worship has its foundation in Jesus Christ, the one in whom we find both God's self-disclosure and a paradigm for a life of worship. Persons who are brought into relationship with God through Jesus Christ are also made participants in Christ's worship because they share in his life.

Koinonia

Koinonia is the term used in the New Testament to denote the shared life which is constitutive of

christian identity and which makes christian worship possible. It is a gift received by all those who are baptised into the christian community.

The gift of koinonia is one that calls forth a response. The koinonia received must become one, which is lived, one which is manifested in a variety of ways. From the earliest days of the church, participating in the Lord's Supper was recognised as a manifestation and intensification of the community's shared life in Christ (I Cor 10:16-17).

Paul made it clear to the Corinthians that participating in the life of their Lord and authentic remembering of his life and death in the Lord's Supper had to be accompanied by sharing in the attitude of self-giving which had dominated his life. He called upon various christian communities to express their koinonia by contributing to a common fund for the poor of Jerusalem (Rom 15:25-27). Christian worship is not to be self-serving or individualistic. The gifts of all are to be placed in the service of building up the church (I Cor 14:26-27).

Liturgy

Liturgy is the formal public worship of christian assemblies. It is a form of ecclesial ritual action in which Christians gather to remember, express, and re-appropriate their identity as co-worshippers with Christ. Christian liturgical worship emerged from within the traditions of Jewish worship but finds its particular identity from its rootedness in the paschal mystery. This mystery provides a focus for the rhythm of the church's feasts and seasons and has a central place in the celebration of the sacraments and the liturgy of the hours.

To say that liturgical worship is a form of ecclesial action is to emphasise the assembly's role as subject of the liturgy because of its union with Christ, the ultimate subject. As Sacrosanctum Concilium states: "In the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and his members" (#7). Although each worshipping assembly is bound in koinonia with all the other assemblies which constitute the church, liturgy is actually performed by local assemblies gathered in particular places. Therefore, the historical, social, and cultural context of each assembly will affect its worship.

Identifying liturgical worship as a form of ritual action calls attention to the fact that it is a symbolic process. Liturgical worship is a dynamic symbolic activity in which space, objects, actions, words, time, and relationships all play a significant role in the shaping of meaning. In liturgy, worship is symbolically expressed or mediated.

However, christian worship is not restricted to liturgy. The symbolic actions of liturgical worship are intended to mediate lives of worship, lives of remembrance and hope, of praise and thanksgiving, lives of service grounded in the shared life which is the experience of those who have communion in God's Spirit through Jesus Christ.

John E. Burkhardt, *Worship*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982. Ferdinand Hahn, *The Worship of the Early Church*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973. Frank C. Senn, *Christian Worship and its Cultural Setting*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983. W. Stahlin, "Koinonia and Worship," *Studia Liturgica* 1(1962): pp. 220-227. Evelyn Underhill *Worship*, New York: Crossroad, 1936, repr. 1982. Herman Wegman, *Christian Worship in East and West: A Study Guide to Liturgical History*. trans., G.W. Lathrop, New York: Pueblo, 1985. James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980.

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Source: Komonchak, J., Collins, M., & Lane, D., *The New Dictionary of Theology*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1987, pp. 1105-1106.

What Is Worship?

Summary

The leadership of worship is an awesome responsibility.

Worship is in a state of change. While it contains stable, ongoing, long-lasting elements, it is also in a state of flux. In fact it has become a major area of change, debate, experimentation in congregational life.

What is worship? Evelyn Underhill, in rather quaint, dated language says, "The response of the Creature to the Eternal." Keith Pearson in more modern terminology says, "Worship involves meeting with and enjoying God."

Some of the worship styles of an earlier generation are under question. Congregational expectations are different. So are contemporary leadership styles - so are some of our settings, the ways we meet, the degree of congregational involvement etc. This paper, while aiming to give a basic groundwork in understanding worship, also seeks to take us further in our thinking and practice. It is not all-comprehensive. But it tries to help with the basics. You may find yourself resisting some of the ideas or thoughts. At least take them seriously even if you cannot accept them all.

FORMAL DEFINITIONS

Worship

In Hebrew the word "worship" is a derivation from the root "Abad", which means, "to serve". In this sense it is the highest form of 'service' to God. In English the word "worship" can be understood as giving something or someone "worth". To give 'worth-ship' to God is to express in action, song, word, drama, dance, silence, art, the great worth we place upon relating to and experiencing God. We are giving God the highest worth. For Christians this means a 'worthy' act of love as a community towards God and in God; simultaneously receiving and responding to God's love for us.

Liturgy

Means (in Greek) literally "the work of the people"; 'laos' meaning people, and 'urgos' meaning work. It is the name given ever since the days of the Apostles to the act of taking part in the solemn corporate worship of God by the "priestly" community of Christians who are the Body of Christ, the Church. The "liturgy" is the term which covers generally all that worship which is officially organised by the Church, and which is open to, and offered by, or in the name of, all who are members of the Church. It distinguishes this from the personal prayers of the individual Christians who make up the Church, and even from the common prayer of selected or voluntary groups within the Church, eg. guilds or societies. Liturgy is a care-fully prepared service of the gathered people of God who respond to the freedom, the beauty and the harmony of God, with a freely offered service of beauty and harmony.

OTHER PERSPECTIVES

In *Worship in the Wide Red Land*, David Gill says: "At the top of my agenda for (my) Church is the urgent need to develop an approach to worship that includes:

- Ñ A profound sense of the mystery of the One to whom our praise is addressed,
- Ñ A creative mix of catholic substance and charismatic freedom,
- Ñ A revitalised sacramental spirituality,
- Ñ An enlarged appreciation of the liturgical riches to be found in other parts of the wider Christian community.

Ñ A more imaginative use of non-verbal symbols for the awe-filled celebration of what ultimately remains beyond words ."

Do you agree? What would you want to question? What would you want to add?

Worship has been described in different ways in this paper. Another says:

- a) Christian worship is the celebration of the Gospel. Its keynote is not its solemnity, nor the emotional state it can induce in the worshipper, nor the declamation it can produce upon our sin - but its exultation in the magnificent news that this is God's world, that God is the love made plain in Christ, and that we can live in and for God." (Richard Jones, *Worship for Today*)

Thomas and Sharon Neufar Emswiler express its meaning in these words:

"Wholeness in worship is expressed through the disciplined coming together of Christians to celebrate with their whole beings - body, mind and spirit - the God who brings meaning, unity, and fulfilment to their lives The person who worships wholistically understands the need for both private and public experiences of worship. Private worship is necessary for the sensitive development of the individual's inner life. Public worship is necessary for the sharing of diverse gifts of community, so that each person is enriched by the others. As Paul pointed out in 1 Cor. 12, separately we are but parts of the body; together we are the body". (*Wholeness in Worship*)

Worship may be described in a number of ways according to its basic characteristics.

- I. **Formal Worship** tends to be structured, and often centres on a printed liturgy, such as the Liturgy of the Eucharist, or many of the other forms within the new Prayer Book. However formal liturgy can also happen without books: it is the careful shaping of the worship activity of the community that gives liturgy its meaning.
- II. **Free Worship** tends to be less structured in its expression, more open to the spontaneous and the extempore.
- III. **Contemplative Worship** concentrates in the area of prayer, meditation and silence.
- IV. **Charismatic Worship** has a more exuberant feel about it, accenting praise, prayer, sharing the Word and spiritual gifts.
- V. **Experiential Worship** is centred in the feelings as well as the mind, in what is happening as well as what is said.

These above categories are somewhat arbitrary, as many services contain elements of a number of the above, or services differ in characteristic from Sunday to Sunday within the same congregation. Hoyt Hickman in his book *A Primer for Church Worship* claims that there are some basic principles that apply to all worship

1. **Worship needs to be biblical.**
Worship finds its source in and confirmation from the Biblical Writings. They form an important part of the Lessons and message, and their imagery and teachings underpin prayers, hymns, meditations etc.
1. **The congregation's part is crucial.**
Liturgical worship is "the work of the people". That is, it is not a solo performance but more analogous to the symphony orchestra where each is involved. It is the worship leader's responsibility to involve the members of the congregation to the greatest degree possible. The greater the involvement the greater the enrichment of gifts and sharing.
1. **Worship needs to be inclusive.**
It needs to help people feel included. There are words, phrases, attitudes that send out subtle

- and strong - messages of inclusiveness or non-inclusiveness. They go to children, youth, women, non-Pakeha, those with handicaps, the elderly, the non-singers, the occasional worshipper, the unorthodox, the casually clothed, the mentally retarded etc. Everyone asks the question, "Do I belong here? Am I accepted?" And the answers are given by the worship-leader, the stewards, the congregation, the minister(s).

1. **Spontaneity has a place.**

Coming as we do from within a Church which has placed emphasis on a balance between freedom and tradition, we lose something vital if the worship is so ordered, so stereotyped, so tight, that there is little room for the spontaneous, the unexpected, the free-flowing, the friendly inter-action between person and person.

1. **Order also has a place.**

The Spirit works in the preparation for worship as well as its actuality. God is present in the ordered as well as in the spontaneous. Because of the number of people involved, worship is a community gathering and celebration - and such gatherings need structure, guidance, and agreed ways of acting in order to operate in unison.

Source: *The Education for Liturgy Kit*, Theological Education by Extension Unit, Church of the Province of New Zealand, Te Haahi o te Porowini o Niu Tirenī (Anglican Church).

BUILDING A WORSHIP PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of worship is concerned with the way we approach worship and should include both a thorough analysis of and an explicit statement of our underlying presuppositions. Understanding our "worship worldview" (eg. cultural background and formal training) will help us understand why we worship the way we do: allowing certain practices, yet having much difficulty with others. It is therefore important to articulate these elements as clearly and precisely as possible (preferably in a written format). The examples given under each heading below are those of the Vineyard. You may wish to use them as they are, or to use them as a guide in order to create your own.

The Elements of a Worship Philosophy

Values

Although values are unseen, they are extremely influential. They are like the excavation within which the foundation of a building is placed. The foundation defines the location and the limits of the building. The deeper the foundation, the higher the building can rise.

Values affect what we think, and consequently, what we do. Our values are an intrinsic part of us, although we seldom think about them in a conscious fashion. They determine the ideas, principles and concepts a person or group can accept, assimilate, remember and transmit. They are fallible and must be constantly revised and reviewed in the light of Scripture.

The following are values that we hold at the Vineyard and seek to instil in those to whom we minister:

- Ñ Worship is given solely for God's glory and honour (Deut. 5:6-10, Romans 1:20-23)
- Ñ We are to be intimate and self-disclosing with God (Is. 49:15-16, Eph. 4:13, Phil. 3:10).
- Ñ Nothing is done for effect or to manipulate God or the people (cf. I Kings 18:26-29).
- Ñ We are committed to honesty and integrity (Eph. 4:15,25, Col. 3:9).
- Ñ Although our worship may be emotional, we do not want to work up emotions.
- Ñ We want to "dial down" in worship and let our emotional responses flow out of our

interaction with God (Rev. 1:17).

Ñ We welcome the ministry of the Holy Spirit in whatever way He chooses to work among us (I Thess. 5:19).

Priorities

Unlike values, priorities are seen.

Priorities are not what is said, but what is done. Priorities grow out of values and may be likened to the pillars that sit along the edge of the value boundary. That is, they rise out of the foundation and hold the building together.

Ñ Priorities are erected in order to give visible form to the values.

Ñ Priorities are the things that are most important in terms of action, visibility, and resources (time, energy, and money).

The following priorities control the philosophy of worship at the Vineyard:

Ñ Our worship is directed and focused upon God Himself. We do not sing about God, but to Him (Ps.100:1, Rev. 5:9-10,12,13).

Ñ Worship is a two-fold communication process. We worship God and He touches us. Remember that the term ~proskuneo~ (pronounced pros-q-nay-o) means to kiss.

Ñ Worship is practised as a lifestyle on both the corporate and individual level (Col. 3:15-17).

Ñ We set aside time to worship. Pliny the younger wrote to the emperor Trajan that the first century Christians would frequently worship far into the night singing chorus after chorus for hours at a time.

Ñ We invest money for musical instruments and sound equipment so that we will have quality in our worship (I Chronicles 25:1-6).

Ñ We expend energy to rehearse, set-up, and prepare for worship. Spontaneity is best when it is undergirded with thorough preparation.

Ñ We teach others how to worship so that they may experience intimacy with God (Col. 3:16).

Ñ We feel free to integrate change as our worship grows and expands. We are careful, though, to maintain consistency between our values and our priorities when we do initiate change.

Practices

Practices are sometimes seen and sometimes not seen. They hang upon priorities. Practices may be likened to the fittings in a building: the wiring, the plumbing, the air conditioning and heating systems, the furniture, etc. These functions are so common that they become almost invisible as they flow through the structure. They become visible only at the point at which they produce the intended effect. Remember that practices are symbols that communicate values and priorities even though they may never be articulated verbally. Therefore, it is vital to make a conscious effort to ensure that your practices do indeed communicate your values and priorities.

The following are practices that are found in the worship of the Vineyard.

Ñ We engage in practices that are biblically sanctioned, either implicitly or explicitly.

Ñ We encourage the whole person to enter into worship through the use of the body (raising hands, kneeling, bowing...), soul (reading of scripture, singing, shouting, recalling God's works...) and spirit (spirit to spirit, love, tongues...)

Ñ We worship whenever we gather in various groups and settings, even if they are spontaneous.

Ñ We encourage an uninterrupted flow of worship. Thus, we will sing many songs in succession without interjections from the worship leader.

Ñ We worship in a contemporary musical style. This helps people identify with what they are singing to God.

- Ñ We generally encourage moderate practices when we worship in corporate meetings so others are not distracted.
- Ñ We always seek to expand and deepen our present foundation. We seek new songs, new modes of expression, new experiences with God.

Programs

Like priorities, programs are also seen. Programs are structures that correspond with the particular rooms in a building: the living room, the dining room, the den....

Different programs allow the values and priorities to be further expressed in various ways. Programs must accurately express your values and be appropriate to the context of a particular meeting (eg. a full band or a worship leader on acoustic guitar).

The following programs are part of the life of the Anaheim Vineyard:

- Ñ Celebrations - These are often Sunday meetings but always include the different congregations from the church.
- Ñ Congregational meetings - These are gatherings of individuals who have shared interests or goals such as youth groups, singles activities, etc.
- Ñ Kinships - These are small groups or home fellowships.
- Ñ Seminars - These provide the opportunity for further training and/or in-depth teaching on topics of interest to those in the congregation.
- Ñ More spontaneous settings - These can range from spur of the moment activities to beach barbecues, etc.

Source: John Wimber, in *Vineyard Worship Leaders Training Manual*.

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY WORSHIP

Relating to Each Other

Worship is strongly connected with the experience of community. We experience God most deeply in an environment of openness, trust, and vulnerability. Our knowledge of God is enriched by the welcome of God's people, the sharing of stories, joys, concerns, and prayer needs. The gospel of Jesus Christ becomes good news when the people of Jesus Christ are living examples of good news.

Environment

Strongly linked with the community is the setting or atmosphere of worship. Setting can make all the difference for people seeking to sense the presence of God. If your worship experience is being held in a building, how do architecture and furnishings point to the transcendent nature of God, the sense that God who is beyond our world is yet able to be worshipped. Likewise, which elements remind you that God is present in the everyday setting of life, as the immanent.

Are there symbols that whet the appetite for a divine encounter? For a meeting with God's people? For example, the Gothic cathedrals of Europe were designed with high ceilings to enhance the sense that worshippers could reach beyond their everyday life to meet God the creator and judge.

Outdoor settings for worship can provide the same feeling of transcendence. Worship in a coffee bar or living room can provide the sense of meeting God of the everyday.

Leadership & Participation

Who is responsible for worship? Do worshippers have any input into how the worship develops? Do they have opportunities to take part? Or is it done for them?

Are young people able to be involved in the worship in meaningful ways? Are their life searches

and languages acknowledged and used during the worship experience?

Theology

Who is God? How do we approach God? Worship experiences can convey a large number of answers to these questions, either directly or indirectly.

For example, song lyrics that focus only on the individual's approach to worship can stifle the development of a sense of meeting God as a community.

Consider the messages about God being conveyed in the songs, the language, the use of imagery, and in the choice of leadership? Is God old fashioned or is God up to date with contemporary issues and concerns? Is God interested in our world (the environment), or is God only interested in the salvation of souls?

Links with those beyond the gathered community

When Christians gather for worship, they do so in the context of a worldwide community strongly linked to the people of God who have passed the Christian message on through the years. Our understanding of worship is rooted in tradition, from our own networks, through to the practices of the faith communities of the Hebrews and the early church as recorded in the Scriptures. Different Christian communities mark these links in different ways. All treasure God's Word, while many hold dear the memorial meal. Some will cherish familiar hymns and prayers, others gestures and rituals involving symbolic robes and imagery.

It can be healthy to periodically remind ourselves that we worship in the context of the whole world that God has created. In our prayers, for example, we remember the needy of our own local communities alongside those who are affected by events elsewhere on earth.

Scripture in communal worship

"The Church confesses the Scriptures to be the written witness to the Word of God, witnessing to God's self-revelation. Where that Word is read and proclaimed, Jesus Christ the Living Word is present by the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. For this reason the reading, hearing, preaching, and confessing of the Word are central to Christian worship."

Directory for Worship, 2.2.1, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

In most churches, there is an effort to provide a broad selection of Scripture from throughout the Bible. When choosing readings, people can be guided by the seasons of the Church year, pastoral concerns for a local congregation, events and conditions in the world, and specific programme emphases of the Church concerned. Lectionaries offered by the Church ensure a broad range of readings as well as consistency and connection with the universal Church.

There are lots of ways of reading Scripture. It can be read aloud by individuals or groups, presented visually in text, drama or video, or set to music. Overhead transparencies, banners, art. Scripture can be made accessible through careful choice of translations, the use of paraphrases, or by retelling stories in contemporary settings.

Making connections

The place traditionally reserved for the sermon or homily can be usefully seen as a time for making connections or links between Scripture and the people's experience of life, of God, and of community. Here is an opportunity to invite people to explore the gospel of Jesus Christ. This task is undertaken by people in partnership with the Holy Spirit who is already informing, instructing and inspiring people to respond to God.

Links between the scriptures and the community of today can be made with spoken addresses (sermons or homilies), drama, dance, art, simulation game, video, personal stories, group

discussion, dialogue or debate, and many kinds of congregational activity. Exploring the links requires diligence and discernment in the study of Scripture, the discipline of daily prayer, cultivated sensitivity to events and issues affecting the lives of the people, and a consistent and personal obedience to Jesus Christ.

One response to the Scriptures is the regular use of creeds, confessions, and affirmations of faith. These are carefully written statements used by the worshipping church to confess its faith and belief in relation to the Church universal, its particular historic heritage, and its local situation.

Prayer

Prayer is at the heart of worship. In Christian prayer, people meet God through the Holy Spirit, as God is revealed in Jesus Christ.

Prayer may be spoken, sung, offered in silence, or enacted.

In prayer we respond to God in many ways...

1. Adoration - we praise God for who God is.
2. Invocation - we approach God asking for God's help in worship
1. Confession - we affirm God's forgiveness, acknowledge that we are human and repent for what we as individuals and as a people have done or left undone.
2. Thanksgiving - we express gratitude for what God has done.
3. Supplication or petition - we plead for the gathered community and ourselves.
4. Intercession we seek God's help for other people, for situations, for the whole world.
5. Lament, we express our sorrow and anger in times of pain.
6. Self-dedication we offer ourselves to the purpose and glory of God.
7. Illumination - asking for God's help in responding to God's word.
8. Benediction the blessing and sending forth of the people.

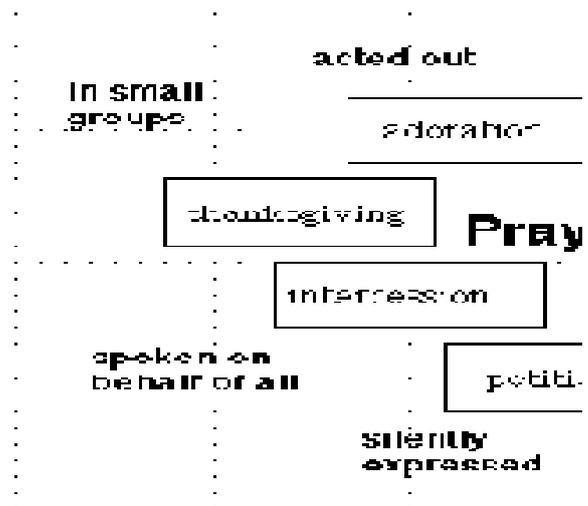
Prayers spoken and unspoken

If prayer is the conversation between God and God's people, then that conversation will be as varied as the people are varied. Prayer can be spoken by individuals on behalf of others, or alongside others, in small and large groups. Prayer can be spoken by groups, responsively, or together. Prayer can be read from a set text, prepared beforehand for a specific gathering or it can be formed on the spot. Prayer can be silent, accompanied by music, or expressed in music. People express themselves in prayer as they sit, kneel, bow, stand, lie down, close eyes, look around, hold hands, lift hands, dance, walk, clap, embrace in joy and praise, anoint and lay on hands... the possibilities are limited only by our creativity!

Music

Music can be used in worship to enhance other elements such as reading of scripture, prayer, offering, or sacrament. As creative human expression, music and song can be a response that engages the whole self in prayer and we all know the power of singing together in building a strong community.

Our desire to encourage people to participate fully coupled with the need to be responsive to the



situation at hand lead us to favour live music in worship and liturgy. This said, there are many occasions when recorded music is both appropriate and helpful. Singing provides an opportunity for people to share in worship, proclaiming together God's word, and enhancing their prayer responses. The choice of music is therefore one of the keys to incorporating the heart language of the people involved in the worship experience.

Self-Offering

In worship we are presented with the costly self-offering of Jesus Christ and are led to respond by offering to him our lives, our particular gifts and abilities, and our material goods. The challenge is to go beyond token gestures to a commitment to follow where God leads. Offering is for both individuals and communities.

Sacrament

A sacrament is an outward sign of an inner reality. To understand the place of sacraments is to understand the importance of symbol in our lives. For some churches (eg. Salvation Army and Society of Friends) sacramentality is not an issue of great importance and formal sacraments are not acknowledged. Most Christian churches however officially recognise the two acts of eucharist and baptism as sacraments. At the other end of the spectrum, the Catholic church recognises seven sacraments and has developed a rich sacramental theology that underpins much of what it is to be a Catholic Christian.

Elements of Worship: an Anglican Perspective

On a weekly basis, most Anglican churches around the country use a common form of liturgy as the order of service for morning worship or karakia. The Eucharist or communion is celebrated each week as the climax of the service, presided over by a priest. The Eucharistic liturgy is taken from the New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa, which provides the service leaders with a format for the service and in most cases the actual words that the leaders and the congregation will say. At other times, different forms of worship will be celebrated, some using prepared liturgies from the Prayer Book and others being entirely free form. There is a lot of flexibility. Common to most services are the elements of worship that we recognise as important for building community, for celebrating God's presence with us and for discovering more of Christ's way.

Worship begins with a gathering together in the Lord's Name. This may include prayers, singing, Psalms of praise, greeting each other and a time of confession, all done in any number of ways. The service then moves on to the proclamation and response to the Word of God. During this section there may be Bible readings, drama, dance, preaching etc to proclaim the Word. A reading from the Gospel is always included. People are then able to respond through silence, discussion, or prayer. Having heard what God has to say to us the service moves into a time where the people pray for others in the world and the church. They also give an offertory, or gift of money, for the work of the church in their community. If the service is an eucharistic one, the preparations will then be made for the communion and all those present, who have been baptised, are able to share the bread and wine together. The service concludes with prayers of thanks, songs of praise and a blessing to send people out into the world to carry out the gospel they have heard.

Further reading:

Celebrating Eucharist A guide and supplement to the Eucharistic Liturgies in a New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa. Bosco Peters, DEFT, 1995.

Education for Liturgy Kit (E.L. Kit) prepared by the Provincial Board of Christian Education. A copy of this kit was sent to every Anglican parish (and should still be there).

Elements of Worship: a Catholic Perspective

When Catholics describe the occasion of Christian gathering, we are more likely to speak of "celebrating liturgy" than "worship". Other common descriptions would include "going to Mass", "going to church", "going to reconciliation" (or one of the other sacraments) all of which provide familiar handles for those times when we gather as a community to "worship".

"Liturgy" can also describe the parts of this gathering. The Catholic Mass for example, is made up of four separate liturgies, each of which is a vital component of the celebration. We come together (Liturgy of Gathering), we reflect on God's Word (Liturgy of the Word), we break bread (Liturgy of the Eucharist) and we are sent out to make the good news real in our lives (Liturgy of Sending or Dismissal). The Mass, or better the Eucharist - which is the correct name for the entire event, is central to Catholic belief and worship. Re-enacting and participating in the Lord's Supper has come to be the focus of Catholic worship, so much so that many other celebrations are often incorporated into the celebration of Eucharist. Ideally, we baptise, marry, confirm, ordain, and farewell (bury) our people within the Eucharistic context.

Today, there is also a move for Catholics to rediscover liturgy or worship apart from eucharist. Many small groups now gather to prayer, to break open the Word, to sing, to share & discuss, to dance, to challenge each other, and to meet new people. These are elements of worship that combine to give life and meaning to our Christian gathering. For Catholics, these elements turn simple gathering into worship and our liturgy provides a framework within which the elements fit to create order. We understand the Eucharist to be our fullest expression of worship.

Further reading:

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum concilium), Vatican Council II
The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, Austin Flannery, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1984.

Heavy going but still the basic text for understanding Catholic worship.

Let Liturgy Live a liturgy planning tool for teenagers, Catholic Youth Ministry, Melbourne, 1996,
Dove (Pub.) Excellent Eucharist/Mass preparation resource.

Both available from your Catholic parish office, Catholic bookshop or by contacting the National Council for Young Catholics at cduthie-jung@clear.net.nz

Elements of Worship: a Methodist Perspective

Methodists gather weekly for worship during which they seek, as a community, to honour the worship of God. You may hear the phrase "Methodism was born in song" and indeed its founders were prolific hymn writers. When Methodists gather, singing is still an important part of that gathering. The hymnbook has been the common link in Methodist worship, but now congregations tend to use a variety of modern hymns and song.

Unlike the Anglican tradition, from which the Methodist movement began, Methodists do not have set orders of service. The exception to this is the Communion Service. Communion (or Eucharist) is usually celebrated once a month and in most congregations follows the printed order of service. Communion is always presided over by an ordained minister (presbyter) or in exceptional circumstances by a lay person who has been especially licensed to do so by the Conference. The invitation is to all present to take part. While there is no set or printed Order of Service, a number of elements would usually be included for other Sunday worship. These are: a call to worship to gather the people present hymns and prayers of praise and thanksgiving prayers of confession and forgiveness the reading of the Scriptures the sermon or proclamation of the word (the scriptures) prayers of intercession (for the world, the church, the people) an offering (collection) taken as a response to the call to serve God a blessing or sending out its Benediction.

From the beginning lay people have played an important part in the leading of worship and Methodism has had a strong tradition of Lay Preachers.

Elements of Worship: a Presbyterian Perspective

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand belongs to a family of churches with roots in the Reformed Tradition, with links to Calvin, Zwingli, Knox and other 16th century reformers. The Reformed approach to the shape of worship has its roots in the Catholic Church, but has particular emphases developed over the last 350 years. These include the thoughtful reading of the Scriptures, the preaching of the word, the celebration of communion as a meal of the people, and the sacraments celebrated as extensions of the Word.

Presbyterians emphasise active participation for all members in worship, which they see as the work of the people in praise of God. Over time, this has meant a move away from a reliance on clergy (minister of Word and sacrament) to involvement of many people who are gifted and trained to plan and lead worship. The session or parish council oversees all public worship in the life of the parish, determining occasions, days, times and places of worship. The minister is responsible for the actual conduct of services of worship but more often than not works with a worship committee.

Communion is generally seen as a meal to be shared around the table. The communion table. The minister of Word and Sacrament, or a specially licensed person, presides at the communion service. By custom elders represent the people at the table and serve them. Traditionally communion has been held only four times a year, though most Presbyterian churches are moving towards more frequent celebration.

Presbyterians have a freedom to use any material in worship, and so do not tend to publish books of prayer. The order of service will vary from congregation to congregation but is usually influenced by the Reformed approach of Approach, Word and Response. Another Reformed framework for a worship service is: gathering around the Word, proclaiming the Word, responding to the Word, demonstrating the Word, bearing and following the Word into the world.

For further reading:

Directory for Worship (1995), Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. Available from PCANZ, PO Box 9049, Wellington, Phone 801 6000, Fax 801 6001, hazels@pcanz.org.nz

YOUNG PEOPLE AND WORSHIP

How do we help young people understand what church worship is all about?

'Church is boring' is a typical comment from teenagers. While many young people appreciate the opportunity to worship with a congregation, they also may find the music dull, the language over their heads, and the message irrelevant. Is this true for your congregation?

In response to this, we need to:

- Ñ Educate young people to understand what worship is.
- Ñ Help them find meaningful ways of participating in worship.
- Ñ Encourage people planning worship to make sure that hymns, prayers and the sermon can be understood and enjoyed by all ages attending.
- Ñ Give young people opportunities for meaningful worship at other times (eg. youth group devotions).

So what is worship?

The Uniting Church in Australia policy statement, *Young People and Your Church*, states the following about worship:

A meaningful worship life is crucial to all Christians young and old. If young people are to develop this meaningful worship life then they need to be involved in the church's Sunday worship services. It is important that they discover the meaning and disciplines of worship and that those who plan worship should ensure that worship invites all people including the young to participate actively.

It is important when planning worship to remember that:

- Ñ 'Youth Services' can be important but are second best to services that involve people of all ages together.
- Ñ Worship services of the church should relate to young people's hopes and needs and lives.
- Ñ Young people should be encouraged to attend and participate in the planning on a regular basis.
- Ñ Young people as well as adults can contribute meaningful leadership in worship in Bible reading, prayers, music, singing, banner making, drama...
- Ñ Music is especially important to many young people and churches can plan with young people for some appropriate songs and music to be part of a congregation's worship.
- Ñ Young people should be encouraged to take worship beyond Sunday into their daily lives through the use of daily devotional material.

How to Work with Young People, Uniting Church Press, Melbourne, 1991; edited by Ken Anderson, Geraldine Anderson and Craig Mitchell.

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP & YOUTH CULTURE

Duncan Macleod

Contemporary - belonging to the same time, modern, high-tech, up-to-date, recent, novel, new, current, fresh.

I remember reading about the imposition of Norman language and music in church services in Anglo-Saxon England in the eleventh century. People resisted change until the new rulers placed archers in the back pews.

The story resounded with my experience of cultural conflict in the church, in which people struggled with each other for an experience of worship that was personally relevant, understandable, and attractive. The Anglo-Saxons had different ideas to the Normans about what was attractive in worship. Likewise, people of different generations and cultures today are likely to use different values and tastes as they form their expectations of worship.

This is an issue for young people, but not only young people.

Daniel Benedict and Craig Kennett Miller, in their book, "Contemporary Worship for the 21st Century" provide us with the following aspirations:

- Ñ Contemporary worship is not afraid of change.
- Ñ Contemporary worship focuses on discipleship and spiritual growth.
- Ñ Contemporary worship will operate in the heart-language and heart-music of those that participate.
- Ñ Contemporary worship will have practical application to the issues and struggles of the people.
- Ñ Contemporary worship will have flow and movement.
- Ñ Contemporary worship will invite and support experiences of the grace and power of Jesus Christ.
- Ñ Contemporary worship will also be hospitable and visitor-friendly.

Dominant Worship Formats

Benedict and Miller go on to identify three dominant worship formats found in the Western world today.

The first style they call, "Book of Common Worship," the style that is called 'Formal Worship' on page 10 of this module. It is characterised by its historical rootedness, using historic creeds, hymns, patterns and liturgies of the Church. Movement and participation happen largely through the use of poetry, either spoken or sung.

A good example of contemporary worship in this setting would be the use of resources such as the New Zealand Prayer Book (Anglican), or Terry Falla's "Be Our Freedom". "Alleluia Aotearoa" and the Iona Community are examples of contemporary sources of music for the historical format.

The second dominant format is called, "Book of Common Song," the style described as "Charismatic" or "Praise and Worship" here in New Zealand (see page 10). A liturgy of song is worked through, with the purpose of motivating, enlivening and drawing people into an intimate experience of God. This format uses a similar framework as the previous one, a structure of approach to God, listening to God, and response to God.

This format has become common in many Christian groups of young people in the last thirty years. We have seen a succession of suppliers of popular music for this from Scripture in Song, Vineyard, Kingsway (Kendrick), Integrity Music and Hillsong.

The third dominant format is called the "Seeker Service." Here the emphasis is on evangelism rather than worship. This starts with the culture of those outside the church. Secular songs, video, multimedia presentations, drama, dance and Bible-based teaching are used as key elements. This is what you have heard about through the Willow Creek Association. The Youth Alpha programme would be a good example of this in New Zealand.

If we were limited to these three dominant formats, keeping our worship contemporary would be a difficult task indeed. Miller and Benedict point out that creativity and skill can be used to blend formats together so that new styles are created such as the 'seeker-sensitive' worship service, or the informal 'youth mass'. We can add formats such as contemplative worship, experiential worship, and creative worship.

People bring with them the richness of their own cultural backgrounds to make possible fresh approaches to worship. And so we have influences from music sub cultures such as hip-hop, techno-pop, ethnic, country, rhythm and blues, jazz, rave and grunge. We have churches adapting social settings such as the cafe, the nightclub, the concert chamber, the pub, and the movie theatre.

Generational Values Change

Over the last fifty years we have seen the emergence of new values that have affected the way we approach worship. Depending on your perspective, you could describe this as the breakdown of traditional values, or the development of new values.

In New Zealand, we have seen a move from formality to informality. People are less likely to wear suits or hats when going out. There is more acceptance of variety. People in positions of responsibility are less likely to be addressed by their titles. We use first names more.

There have been major changes in the ways in which we communicate with one another. The ongoing development of communication tools, technological and low-tech, has led to higher expectations of effective expression. We are less likely to experience hour-long lectures, and are more likely to respond to the use of a chunky series of one-liners, personal stories, graphic illustrations, and video presentations. Everyday language is likely to be used in formal settings. The public expression of feelings is generally looked on with approval among those under the age of 50.

Contextualise or Resist

The response of churches to all this change has varied from denomination to denomination, from congregation to congregation. There has been a range of responses from contextualisation through to resistance. Networks of churches have been formed partly on the basis of being contemporary for new generations. It is no coincidence that most Pentecostal churches have a high percentage of people under the age of 55. Mainline churches, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Catholic, Lutheran, and to some extent Baptist churches, have taken a moderate approach to contextualisation, and have as a result a higher proportion of people over the age of 55 than the general population has.

Warning to Would-be Young People

Steve Gerali, in his article "Paradigms in the Contemporary Church", warns that young people are still being alienated in the worship experiences of "contemporary churches". A 'contemporary' approach for Baby Boomers, people born in the 1940s and 50s, may well be different to the contemporary approach for Generation X, people born in the 1960s and 70s. Likewise, young people presently in their teenage years will not necessarily relate to the tastes and values of people in their twenties and thirties. Youth culture itself has within it an incredible diversity that cannot be covered with a blanket approach to worship.

Pete Ward, in his book *Worship and Youth Culture*, suggests that we explore the world of youth culture by attending youth events outside the life of the church. He suggests that alternative worship experiences be developed in which young people express their faith in their own cultural terms.

Symbols and Youth Culture

Pete Ward points out that young people regularly use symbols in the way that they create their sense of group identity. When young people plan worship they are likely to bring together symbols of their own culture with already established symbols of the church. He gives the example of receiving bread and wine while listening to a rock band playing. Development of effective worship for young people will involve learning from the riches of church tradition while making strong connections with the everyday world of youth culture.

Some Options for Mainline and 'Contemporary' Churches

1. Develop alternative approaches to worship outside our regular worship experiences. This may be in small groups, or large groups. Some churches with few musicians, work together to provide regional worship experiences for young people. It may be weekly, monthly, or sporadic.
2. Build variety into regular worship services so that youth culture is included, acknowledged and cherished alongside other age-related cultures.
3. Introduce young people to the existing church culture so that young people learn to appreciate and adopt the preferences of others for themselves.

Go a bit deeper! Consider:

- Ñ How is the body of Christ expressed if different age and cultural groups worship separately?
- Ñ In your opinion, what elements of our current worship are age related?
- Ñ Is it then appropriate to always seek to inculturate young people into present forms of worship?
- Ñ What should a young person do as they grow out of youth worship?

ROLES IN WORSHIP

Listed here are a wide variety of roles that can make up worship. Some you will recognise as always present in worship while others are readily seen to be less necessary.

Participant everyone present is invited to participate in the primary role of worship.

Worship Leader the person charged with general oversight of the worship event. They may be lay or ordained. Also called a licensed lay reader, officiant, priest, kai karakia or licensed lay minister.

Presider/Celebrant leads or oversees Eucharist / Holy Communion. In the Anglican and Catholic settings this person is always a priest or bishop.

Reader proclaims the Word / Scriptures by reading in the assembly. Sometimes called a lector.

Preacher proclaims the Word / Scripture by elaborating on and "breaking open" the biblical reading. Also known as a homilist or speaker. **Musician** may be an instrumentalist (organist, pianist, guitarist, percussionist etc.) or a singer (choir / singing group member, soloist). **Technical Person** this person provides the technical know-how to make things run smoothly in the audio-visual department. May be involved with sound system, video, slide projection, lighting etc. An increasingly specialised role in contemporary worship.

Overhead Projector Operator where this equipment is used instead of song / hymn books this role emerges.

Music Leader leads instrumentalists, singers, and/or the congregation.

Music Coordinator deals with the practical arrangements of musicians and music / words.

Collector collects the monetary gifts from the congregation. Also known as a steward, sidesperson or usher.

Welcomer/Hospitality Person an essential role in any worship environment.

Cross Bearer/Crucifer carries the cross in procession.

Altar Server assistant at the altar. Also known as a cross bearer, candle bearer or acolyte.

Communion Server assists in serving the eucharistic bread and wine. Also known as a eucharistic assistant, ministrant or eucharistic minister.

Environment Creator or scene setter deals with flowers, banners, seating, art, equipment, lighting to create the desired environmental effect.

Intercessor leads the congregation in prayer of thanksgiving, petition and intercession. Sometimes called prayers of the people or prayer leader.

Vestry Assistant prays with worship leaders before the worship service commences. Also called the minister's steward.

Deacon an ordained minister / worship leader but with more restricted leadership (sacramental) roles.

Sacristan or sacramental steward prepares the communion table / altar.

Can you name any other worship roles?

LEADERSHIP IN WORSHIP

Leadership Roles

There are many qualities of Leadership that can enhance worship. The person preparing and conducting worship has an important leadership role. Without leadership worship cannot be structured nor experienced, at least in a communal/community setting. This session stresses four important aspects of leadership within the worship setting.

1. *The worship leader as Communicator.*

The aim of the worship leader is to communicate – to get messages across, to transfer ideas, to stimulate thoughts, feelings and actions; to help people leave worship thinking some new thoughts, see life a little more clearly, more open to struggles and possibilities of the future etc. If communication is bad the message comes muddled, is not heard, or is heard inaccurately.

What are some aids to good communication?

- a. **Language** Keep the language clear, simple and close to the experience of the congregation. There's a 'pulpit' jargon' which is unhelpful because it tunes people out. It's not understood. This is true for every part of the service: prayers, sermon, talks, hymns. The language needs to be real.
- b. **Deportment** You say important things by the way you use your body. If you are alert, alive, active, enthusiastic, that conveys a message. If you are sluggish, slow, off hand, obviously unprepared, indifferent, going through a role without much involvement that also communicates.
- c. **Clear instructions and introductions** In leading worship you are seeking to take a group of people together along a path you are already travelling. In one sense you are ahead of them because you have a clear idea of what is coming. Even if the Order is printed you still have clues up your sleeve that it would be helpful to share. So be clear in what you say. Don't assume that people have understood or listened to your instructions even if you have said them once. They may need them twice, in different words of course, especially if you are attempting something new or encouraging participation. Introductions of hymns, lessons etc. can help to alert people's interest. If in a hymn you ask them to note the ways the writer describes God, you have them actively involved in singing the hymn right from the start.
- d. **Speaking clearly and distinctly.** Sometimes you will need to speak loudly to be heard or for effect – not always. But you will always need to speak clearly. There is little that frustrates a congregation more than mumbled or unheard words. Modern equipment comes to our aid in some churches, but not most. It is the worship leader's responsibility to get the message across whatever the size of the building or the congregation, or whatever the cries of babies or chatter of others that will sometimes be present.

2. *The Worship Leader as Team Facilitator*

Increasingly the leadership of worship is a team event with Worship Committees assisting with preparation, and other people leading in prayers, lessons, meditations, dramas and mimes, music, dance etc. Leadership in this setting is very different to the predominantly "one-person, up-front" leadership which has been traditional. Such a diversity of leadership is particularly present in all-age or intergenerational style worship where children are also encouraged to take a leading part. The worship leaders task now changes from “What can I communicate?” to “What can we communicate?” from “How do I undertake the leadership?” to “How do we undertake the leadership?” Responsibility is broadened and shared. The task has changed. While you obviously will still have input, you will now do this along with others. Now your responsibility is Are people

well prepared? Do they know when they are leading? Have they all the aids they need? Do they know where to stand, how to use microphones etc.? Now you are working with other people encouraging them, hearing their hesitations and concerns, giving them a pat on the back for their efforts.

1. *The Worship Leader as Worship Evoker*

Here you are recognising that while you have an important role within worship, yet worship is the work of the whole people. Therefore your task becomes finding ways of so involving them that the worship becomes theirs and they feel fully committed to what is happening. In operating this way, the basic question changes from "Am I getting my message across" to "Am I getting people personally involved in the worship of God?"

Sometimes this involvement will be active – hymn singing, responsive prayers, congregational intercessions, passing the peace, notices and comments from members of the congregation, talking in small groups, miming, moving about for Holy Communion and other activities etc.

At other times the involvement will be silent – guided meditation; asking people to imagine certain concepts, relationships etc.; asking rhetorical questions that require silent assent or dissent; working out silently an action-commitment to be lived out during the following week; etc. This kind of involvement is as real and necessary as the more active variety.

In getting people involved in worship – mentally, emotionally, bodily – the worship leader is evoking responsiveness and helping people move from passivity to action.

In all this the worship leader needs to be aware of two things in particular:

a. Your attitude shows

There is a saying "Your attitude speaks so loudly I cannot hear your words." There are helpful attitudes and unhelpful attitudes. What do you think of the following?

"Listen to me tell you what to do."

"There's only one truth, and I'm going to tell you about it!"

"If everyone did as I say, the Kingdom of God would come!"

"Listen you sinners !"

People do not say these things out loud, but you can hear them in the tone of voice, the words that are used, the warmth (or lack thereof) between leader and people.

b. Personal responsiveness

Though the worship leader spent much time in preparation, the reality of the service is a different thing. The mood is not always as anticipated; there is an air of puzzlement with something that appeared to be quite obvious; there's shuffling and disturbance at a point in the service which is calling for quiet and silence. This means the worship leader must be constantly looking and listening for the clues that will show where the congregation is, and then be responsive and adaptable in making the changes that pick up the current mood, or in making the suggestions which move the congregation to where you had hoped to be. In other words, don't become so bound by what you have prepared, that you cannot respond to the needs of the moment.

Adapted from, *Preparing for Worship*, Frank Hanson (see bibliography)

THE FLOW OF WORSHIP

On any Sunday morning at the beginning of a service, the major difference between the worship leader and a member of the congregation is this – the worship leader knows what's going to happen and where the service is heading – the congregation does not. The worship leader has been living with the service for days, even weeks. A great deal of thought, feeling and energy has gone into the preparation. Even before a word is uttered in the service the leader has already gained a great deal. The participant in the congregation may come personally prepared for worship, or may not. But as far as the content of the service is concerned the participant comes cold, unknowing, expectant. In each case the dynamics are different.

And so an important part of the worship-leader's task is to help the congregation enter into the thinking, planning and intentions that have gone into bringing the service together.

If, for instance, the worship-leader decides that a prayer of forgiveness comes at a certain point, or takes a certain line of thought, it is helpful for these reasons to be shared. In this way, the congregation can enter into the intentions of the leader instead of finding these out for themselves.

It is therefore important to find ways of helping people enter meaningfully into what is happening. Why are certain lessons being read? What should people be looking for? Why has a particular hymn or tune been selected? What is it contributing to the service or its theme?

Richard Jones divides the service into a 3-fold structure:

- a) The approach to God (or 'preparation')
- b) The message from God (or 'ministry of the word')
- c) The people's response

There is a certain logical pattern about this, and it is a helpful outline to bear in mind. But there are other aspects too that will help create a sense of movement.

1. **The basic one is the selection of a theme.**

This may or may not be indicated to the congregation. There seem to be good, even overwhelming, reasons for sharing this information. Too often a congregation has to wait until the sermon has commenced before any semblance of a theme begins to appear. And by that stage the relevance of the earlier lessons, prayers, hymns, to the theme has been lost. If it is clearly announced early in worship or in the bulletin (though not everyone is present in time to read the bulletin beforehand!), that the theme is, say, "The Joy of Christian Living", or "Our Faith and our Work", then people know clearly what to have their eyes and ears attuned for.

2. **The importance of the opening.**

If you go to a swimming pool you will discover that some people walk straight from the dressing room and dive in. Others take longer. They want to sit at the poolside for a while, sun themselves, even get in gradually. It probably depends on temperament. When people come to worship they are not always ready to dive straight in. In fact they may not be ready for worship at all. They may still be dealing with the hassles of getting to Church, the pressing agenda of what has been left, the personal greetings which have been exchanged, the last-minute arrangements that need to be attended to, and planning for the rest of the day.

Going straight into a Call to Worship may be like diving straight into the pool. It helps some, but it leaves others with the feelings and thoughts with which they arrived. The first few minutes of a service can be among the most important. That is where rapport is established, where people are made welcome (in how many services is the welcoming left until half way through?), and where

they are helped to tune into God and God thoughts. An acknowledgment of the mixed thoughts and emotions that people have on arriving is also a way of taking them seriously. A service needs to start where the people are not where the worship-leader is. They can be two very different places.

3. **The Linkages.**

Reference has already been made to ways parts of the service can be linked to each other by sharing information. A sense of unity, of strong and clear links between one part of worship and the next, adds to the sense of flow. The intrusion of some element which has no apparent relevance or linkage with the rest can act as a barrier, tuning people out from the sense of direction that had taken hold of them. In a structured liturgical service such as Holy Communion, the sense of movement is already present though not necessarily understood or appreciated. In a self-prepared service the task needs to be recognised and taken into account both in planning and delivery.

4. **Emotional highs and lows, and movement.**

■ Usually we concentrate on words and the linkages between them, and on the logical development of thoughts. To sustain such a logical progression for an hour requires a stupendous probably an impossible effort. As other Sessions in this Course stress, worship is not only about thoughts, ideas and words, but also about feelings, pictures, symbols, warmth, fellowship, togetherness, mystery. An important question to keep asking is "Is the congregation understanding what I say?" But an even more important one is "Is the congregation emotionally involved? Is the service touching them? Is it getting through to them in the depths of their personality? Are they alert, interested, responsive? Is it getting through to them in the depths of their personality? Are they alert, interested, responsive?" Sometimes you get your answer by the way they respond to questions. The effort they put into their singing may tell whether the singing is coming from the head or from the stomach and the heart as well.

When leading a service listen and look carefully for emotional shifts that are taking place within the congregation because you may have to work hard at getting them on board again. Also be aware that touching people emotionally can be a stronger motivating force than helping them with understandings and insights only.

5. **God is present in worship.**

Therefore it is not solely, nor even mainly, dependent upon your own contribution, input and leadership.

So much also depends on what is happening within people and to people quite independently of what you are doing and saying. Worship has been called "The Hour of the Unexpected." You cannot predict what may happen in people's lives when there is a real meeting between themselves and God. You can do all you can to play your part usefully and well, but in the end so many results are dependent upon God's presence and reality, and God's meetings with us can be strange and mysterious beyond human reckoning or organisation.

CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING WORSHIP EVENTS

- Was the worship event consistent with Scripture?
 - Links with youth culture - was it relevant?
 - Links with church culture - was the worship event continuous with the experience of the people of God?
 - Links with God - did people experience God? Did the experience fit with the character of God?
 - Community - did the experience help people to develop intimacy with others?
 - Flow - did the various elements of the worship event fit together in a way that made sense?
 - Learning styles - were sound, sight and action all catered for in the event?
 - Were young people involved in the planning of the worship event?
 - Was the environment well prepared for the worship event?
 - Were there links with the everyday life of people outside the worshipping community?
 - Was the leadership of the worship event shared?
 - Did the leadership of the event help people worship rather than distract?
 - Did someone thank the people who took on a role linked to the worship event?
- Did the planning team debrief after the worship event?

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