

♪ Worship Notes ♪

Volume 1, Number 4 ♪ April 2006

Theme: FOR AN AUDIENCE OF ONE

My dear Woodworm,

In today's world there are some delicious tendencies which make it particularly easy to confuse, distract and divert the Enemy's people from the things on which they should be focused. Some of our unwitting agents among the philosophers and academics have paved the way for the current wonderful situation, whereby the pathetic creatures seem to each go around in their own little bubble, unaware of forces and values which extend beyond the boundaries of their own consciousness and concern.

While there are some isolated voices crying out things like "It's all about Him!" these cries are, as it were, cries in the wilderness, and largely fall on deaf ears, thank Badness. There are blissfully few who are able to crack the barrier of their own self-absorption and truly focus even on other humans, much less on divine priorities and demands. That makes our work so much easier! The worms bounce around inside the shell of self-centeredness which is about all they know; and then they wonder why they feel that they are without a meaning or a purpose which extends beyond themselves! They do the work for us, in many respects, as they so successfully fill their lives with a multitude of sweetly irrelevant pursuits, leaving little time or energy for the Enemy's worrisome projects and plans.

In their churches, this kind of rampant individualism gets carried to hilarious extremes. In a delightfully blind way, these beings can recite creeds and sing songs and pray prayers which speak of the Enemy's sovereign (and, we would say, dictatorial) rule over all things, and then they turn around and *act* as though *they themselves* are the center of the universe! It is in their churches,

those annoying places intended by the Enemy for corporate brainwashing and mutual encouragement in the perverse ways of holiness and godliness, that we find the most exciting displays of selfishness and narrowmindedness. The smaller the issue, it seems, the more overwrought their emotions become in their stubborn campaign to get their own way! I tell you, we hardly need to whisper a corrupting suggestion into their ears before they are off fighting over the color of the carpet, the brand of coffee served, or even—most thrilling of all—over their worship! And each one with a self-righteous conviction that his or her own convictions or preferences on the matter just happen to exactly coincide with the Enemy's point of view!

I tell you, it warms our devilish hearts when we are able to use *worship*, of all things, as a way to divide the Enemy's people! The one activity which should unite them the

most has become a wonderful seedbed for strife and disagreement. And it's all made possible when they begin to look out for themselves and their interests rather than the Enemy's. And that perspective, I'm happy to report, is everywhere. It's embarrassingly easy to promote among those creatures, and truly is one of our greatest successes!

Affectionately yours,
your uncle Tapescrew

(with apologies to C. S. Lewis)

* Twelve "Biblical Principles of Worship" (of which the second is dealt with here) may be downloaded [here](#).

Biblical Principles of Worship*

#2 Worship is first and foremost for God.

QUOTABLES

God's glory: the goal of our worship

"I don't have any problem with consumer-oriented worship as long as we remember Who the Consumer is."

(Eric Alexander, sermon tape)

"Acceptable worship is by definition theocentric worship. Only the Creator is worthy to be revered and praised by His creatures. It is corporate worship which calls men to women to throw off the engulfing self-absorption which is not only the father of sin, but also the fleshly tendency even of the redeemed; and it is corporate worship which calls believers to refocus on Him who is the Giver and Sustainer of life and of life eternal. Our worship must be relentlessly theocentric. God deserves and demands our reverent attention; and our often frantic existence needs to be regularly and formally drawn back to its reason for being: to honor and bring glory to God. Hymns and choruses which emphasize our human pilgrimage and reactions can be perfectly appropriate responses, but only after God has been lifted up and magnified in our midst. Worship thus infused with the wonder of God is also uniquely appropriate to prepare people's heart to hear and receive the preaching of the Word of God."

(Ron Man, "Worship for All of God's People," 2)

"An emphasis on what we 'get out' of a worship service--above all, that we feel good about ourselves--displaces the theocentric praise of God with anthropocentric utilitarianism. Since the worship of God is an end in itself, 'making worship useful' destroys it, because this introduces an ulterior motive for praise. And ulterior motives mean manipulation, taking charge of the relationship, thereby turning the relation between Creator and creature upside down."

(Marva Dawn, *Reaching Out without Dumbing Down*, 88)

"Above all, sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself or any other creature."

(John Wesley, *Rules for Methodist Singers*)

"In the theater, the play is staged before an audience who are called theatergoers; but at the devotional address, God himself is present. In the most earnest sense, God is the critical theatergoer, who looks on to see how the lines are spoken and how they are listened to: hence here the customary audience is wanting. The speaker is then the prompter, and the listener stands openly before God. The listener, if I may say so, is the actor, who in all truth acts before God."

(Sören Kierkegaard, *Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing*, Chap. 12)

"Because worship is a ritual drama in which God is the audience and we are the performers, it is only proper that we should ask, 'How did I do?' A good performer does not ask, 'What did I get out of that?' Instead, he or she wants to know whether the performance measured up to its maximum potential and whether the audience was pleased."

(Ben Patterson, *Serving God: The Grand Essentials of Work and Worship*, 107-8)

"If we honestly compared the amount of time in church spent thinking about what others think or might think with the amount of time thinking about what God is thinking, we would probably be shocked. Those of us in congregational leadership need to think deeply about this.

"Often the eyeservice that occurs in present-day church services comes in the form of trying to move people. Wasn't that a great service? we often say. But what do we mean? Are we really thinking about how God felt about the service? What is the correlation between God's view of a great service and the human view? We need to be very careful about this, or the rule, Truly, they have their reward, may apply to us." (Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*, 202)

[Worship is] "man's own act of self-dethronement in God's presence in order that God, not man, may reign."

(Richard de Bary, *The Gospel of Worship*, 37)

“Worship--in the sense of telling God his worth by speech and song and celebrating his worth in his presence by proclamation and meditation--has been largely replaced, at least in the West, by a form of entertainment calculated to give worshippers the equivalent of a sauna or Jacuzzi experience and send them away feeling relaxed and tuned up at the same time. Certainly true worship invigorates, but to plan invigoration is not necessarily to order worship. As all that glitters is not gold, so all that makes us feel happy and strong is not worship. The question is not whether a particular liturgical form is used, but whether a God-centered as distinct from man-centered perspective is maintained--whether, in other words, the sense that man exists for God rather than God for man is cherished or lost.” (J. I. Packer, “What about Jacuzzi Worship,” in *Celebrating the Saving Work of God: The Collected Shorter Writings of J. I. Packer*, vol. 1, 207)

“To pretend homage to God and intend only the advantage to myself is rather to mock God than to worship Him. When we believe we ought to be satisfied rather than God glorified, we set God below ourselves and imagine that He should submit His own honor to our advantages.” (Stephen Charnock [1628-1680], *The Existence And Attributes Of God*)

“Worship is the occupation of the heart, not with its needs, or even with its blessings, but with God Himself.” (A.P. Gibbs, *Worship: The Christian's Highest Occupation*, 14)

“Only one thing really matters at a wedding: two people getting married. How sad it would be for someone to sit in wedding after wedding, critiquing the form, the style, and the appearance of the couples, yet never rejoicing in, never celebrating the mystery of a man and woman becoming husband and wife through the miracle of marriage.

“We endlessly debate the secondary points of worship, and miss what really matters: The Almighty Creator, God of the Universe, has called us to enjoy an intimate relationship with Himself.” (Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters* 12/9/03)

“We are willing to be God-centered, it seems, as long as God is man-centered.” (John Piper, “Glad about Glory?” *World* Jan./Feb. 2002, 81)

“There is no contradiction between the vertical and the horizontal, between the God-centeredness of worship and the benefits available to the worshippers. For it is that very God-centeredness that blesses us. Meditating on God's greatness and his saving work in Christ is what enables us to grow in our devotion and obedience and thus to experience more and more the blessing of God in our lives.” (John Frame, *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense*, 15-16)

“The chief aim of worship is to please God--whether by adoration and praise, prayer and proclamation, confession and offerings, thanksgivings and commitment, or by all of these actions combined. The point of worship is to recognize that ‘God alone matters’. Many battles over worship styles would be eliminated if this answer were kept in mind as the foundational criterion for planning what we do, no matter what forms we use.” (Marva Dawn, *Reaching Out without Dumbing Down*, 80)

“The primary purpose of worship is the glory of God, not the edification of man; ‘God must come first, or man's edification will not follow.’” (Raymond Abba, *Principles of Christian Worship*, 13)

“We've made worship self-centred instead of God-centred. We lobby for what we want: ‘I don't like the songs’, ‘I don't like the volume’. It's as if we're worshipping worship instead of worshipping God.” (Geoff Bullock, “Beyond Self-Centred Worship”)

“Self-forgetfulness is the goal for the service of worship.” (Ben Patterson, *Serving God: The Grand Essentials of Work and Worship*, 108)

“Worship, embracing both adoration and action, is nothing but the outworking of God-centeredness in the individual and corporate life of God's people.” (D. A. Carson, *Worship: Adoration and Action*, 18)

Implications for Music in Worship from Colossians 3:16

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
with all wisdom
teaching and admonishing one another
with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs;
with grace
singing to God
in your hearts.*

1. Music in worship has a horizontal as well as a vertical dimension.

Paul makes it clear that we are to sing wholeheartedly to God and we are to teach and admonish one another with a variety of songs. This primarily applies to our attitude and understanding during times of corporate worship. As we gather, we are not merely individuals who are expressing our personal worship to the Lord; we are also members of one body who have the privilege and responsibility of encouraging one another through music and song.

2. Music in worship is an important means of instructing each other in the faith.

Paul's great desire in Colossians 3:16 is that the word of Christ would dwell richly in the community of Believers. Music is indeed a powerful tool that can strengthen and encourage us in our understanding of and obedience to "the word of Christ." We would do well to remember this, and to approach our times of singing with undivided hearts and minds that are ready to learn, eager to serve, and longing to glorify the Lord (cf. Ps. 86:11-13).

3. Music in worship should be primarily verbal in character.

While the emotional impact of the melody can (and should) greatly enhance the message being sung, it is this message--the word of Christ--that is of utmost importance (cf. Rom. 10:17). We must make sure that our song lyrics accurately reflect biblical truth and are understandable if they are to serve to teach and admonish the community of disciples.

4. Music in worship should be largely Christological in content.

Our worship should specifically highlight the truth concerning Christ. According to Paul, there was nothing more important to the life and ministry of the church at Colossae (or anywhere, for that matter) than an ever-deepening Christology. As for music in worship today, we must maintain this Christological focus in our singing.

5. Music in worship should be characterized by active participation.

Paul clearly stated that the Colossians were to teach and admonish one another with singing. In fact nowhere does the apostle ever suggest that the primary role of those gathered for worship is that of an audience. As Robert Webber has memorably and emphatically put it, "WORSHIP IS A VERB. It is not something done to us or for us, but by us."

6. Music in worship should include a rich variety of songs.

The diversity implicit in the phrase "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" suggests that all kinds of songs should be utilized in our worship. The Psalms are instructive here. Some are joyful expressions of praise and thanksgiving, while others provide us with profound statements of biblical doctrine. Further, some give wings to troubled emotions, while others provide words of challenge and encouragement to God's people. Balance is the key concerning the variety that should characterize our times of worship.

7. Music in worship must be expressed with sincerity and devotion.

According to the phrase "in your hearts," singing is to come from the heart, and therefore we, as worshipers, must do everything we can to ensure that we are not merely paying lip service to God (and to one another) when we sing together. May Isaiah's words never be fulfilled among us: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men" (Isa. 29:13; cf. Matt. 15:8-9).

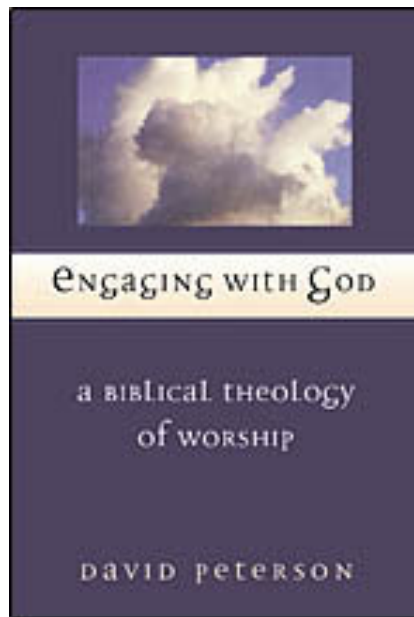
8. Music in worship is encouraged by a proper understanding of God's grace.

The phrase "with grace" or "in the grace [of God]" suggests that Christian singing will be greatly enhanced as believers grow in their understanding of God's wonderful grace (cf. Zeph. 3:14-17). Paul himself frequently burst into expressions of praise as he contemplated the grace and mercy of God toward us (see, for example, Rom 11:33-36; 2 Cor. 1:3ff.; Eph 1:3ff.). Worship leaders would do well to constantly emphasize God's grace, for this will lead not only to powerful, heartfelt worship, but also to joyful obedience where the word of Christ indeed dwells richly in the Christian community.

The above is a condensation of the concluding section of an extensive biblical study by David Detwiler, Pastor of Teaching & Ceremonies at BranchCreek Community Church, Harleysville PA.

His article is entitled, "Church Music and Colossians 3:16", and may be accessed at <http://www.encounteronline.org/resources.htm>.

BOOK NOOK



ENGAGING WITH GOD: A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP

by David Peterson (InterVarsity Press, 2002)
(originally published by Eerdmans, 1992)

InterVarsity Press is to be commended for not allowing this important book to stay out of print. Harold Best, former dean of the Conservatory at Wheaton college, said in the Introduction to his book *Unceasing Worship* (InterVarsity Press, 2003), "Every thoughtful Christian should read *Engaging with God* by David Peterson. . . . I cannot begin to say how much Peterson's work has meant to me. . . . My hope is that I will quietly and humbly walk alongside him, not so much to add to what he has done as perhaps to say the same things another way." High praise indeed! And if "every thoughtful

Christian" should read this book, how much more every pastor and worship leader!

David Peterson, formerly of Moore Theological College in Sydney, Australia, is now the Principal of Oak Hill Theological College in London, England. A careful and insightful exegete and theologian, he has provided the most thorough treatment available of the biblical material on worship. As a "biblical theology," the book takes the approach of examining the subject of worship as it is revealed and practiced in each successive period of biblical history and each major section of Scripture—hence the Old Testament, the Gospels, the letters of Paul, the epistle to the Hebrews, and Revelation are all dealt with separately, though shown to be complementary and consistent in their development of the theme of worship: "Throughout the Bible, acceptable worship means approaching or engaging with God on the terms that he proposes and in the manner that he makes possible" (p. 283).

This is not light reading, but well repays careful study and digesting. The author has written this book, in his own words, because "we have enough how-to-do-it books and not enough reflection on worship as a total biblical idea" (p. 21). Amen! Peterson expresses something of the depth and breadth of worship, in its biblical understanding, in the Introduction:

"The theme of worship is far more central and significant in Scripture than many Christians imagine, it is intimately linked with all the major emphases of biblical theology such as creation, sin, covenant, redemption, the people of God and the future hope. Far from being a peripheral subject, it has to do with the fundamental question of how we can be in a right relationship with God and please him in all that we do. One way or another, most of the books from Genesis to Revelation are concerned with this issue.

"Although there is a preoccupation with what may be termed specifically 'religious' activities in various Old Testament contexts, ritual provisions are set within the broader framework of teaching about life under the rule of God. In fact, worship theology expresses the dimensions of a life relationship with the true and living God. This becomes even more obvious when the theme of worship in the New Testament is examined, Contemporary Christians obscure the breadth and depth of the Bible's teaching on this subject when they persist in using the word 'worship' in the usual, limited fashion, applying it mainly to what goes on in Sunday services." (pp. 17-18)

Engaging with God has been translated into French, Spanish, Russian and Romanian; and additional translations, including Bulgarian, are underway.

THE LIGHTER SIDE

A MUSICAL PRIMER (PT. 1)

(author unknown)

Adagio formaggio: To play in a slow and cheesy manner.

Angus Dei: A divine, beefy tone.

Antiphonal: Referring to the prohibition of cell phones in the sanctuary.

A patella: Unaccompanied knee-slapping.

Appoggiatura: An ornament you regret after playing it.

Approximatura: A series of notes played by a performer and not intended by the composer, especially when disguised with an air of "I meant to do that."

Approximento: A musical entrance that is somewhat close to the correct pitch.

Brake drum: The instrument most used to slow the tempo in an orchestra.

Choral conductor: a musician who is particularly adept at following a large group of singers.

D.C. al capone: You betta go back to the beginning, capiche?

Dill piccolo: A wind instrument that plays only sour notes.

Diminuendo: The process of quieting a rumor in the orchestra pit.

Eardrum: A teeny, tiny tympani.

Fer mantra: A note that is held over and over and over and...

Fiddler crabs: Grumpy string players.

TRAINING

MASTER'S PROGRAMS IN WORSHIP

Azusa Pacific University (M.A. in Worship Leadership) (www.apu.edu)

Calvin Theological Seminary (M.A. in Worship) (www.calvinseminary.edu)

Dallas Baptist University (M.A. in Worship Leadership) (www.dbu.edu)

Dallas Theological Seminary (M.A. in Media and Communication) (www.dts.edu)

Fuller Theological Seminary (M.A. in Worship, Theology and the Arts) (www.fuller.edu)

Liberty University (M.A. in Worship Studies) (www.liberty.edu)

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div., Worship Leadership concentration)
(www.mbts.edu)

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (M.A. in Worship Ministries) (www.nobts.edu)

Northern Seminary (M.A. in Worship & Spirituality) (www.seminary.edu)

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.A. in Worship; M.Div. with emphasis in Worship)
(www.sbts.edu)

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div. with Worship Leadership) (www.sebts.edu)

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.M. with Worship Concentration)
(www.swbts.edu)

(Worship Notes will gladly list others brought to its attention.)

EVENTS



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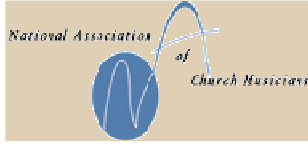
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cally-based worship.” To subscribe or unsubscribe, and to find more information and resources, please go to www.worr.org.