

Enriching Worship Regardless of Style

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Thank You

30 Year Ago

The Question of
Worship Style Arises

New Music Style...New Worship Style

- John Wimber, describing his California Vineyard congregation in 1982: “Because we are young, we are current. We speak the language of these [young] people. Our sermon and songs are familiar and acceptable. We find ourselves communicating eternal truths in a contemporary style.”



The Emergence of the term “Contemporary Worship”

- Began to be used widely in early 1990s
- Often used to contrast to “traditional worship”
- Became a way to promote a new style of worship

Sharply Conflicting Views

- Positive on contemporary worship: “It’s a God-given new Reformation, the most dramatic change since the 16th century.”
- Negative on contemporary worship: “It’s the result of ‘tasteless Philistines.’ Its proponents are ‘modern prophets of Baal’.”

Preoccupation with Style

Typical Questions:

- What style of worship should we have?
- Which style of worship is best?
- Which style of worship will attract the people we want?

Discussion Time

Please get in your groups for discussion. Is it true in your experience that there have been discussions and questions about the right style of worship? What is the situation like in Asia? Find the 2 most accurate words to describe the situation about worship styles in Asia. Be ready to report in 5 minutes.

Questions beyond Style

- What makes Christian worship “worship”?
- What makes Christian worship “Christian”?
- If our God is Triune (a Trinity, 3 Persons in one Godhead), what impact should that have on Christian worship?

Finding the Right Adjective

Our church has faithful, worship.

Christian,

trinitarian

When current style labels pass away,
where will your church be then?

Levels of Discussing Worship

- From John Witvliet, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship
 - Experiential: What did the worshiper experience?

Side Comment on Boring Music

Often the problem is not with the hymns or choruses themselves but is with how they were done (performance practice) or their placement in an order of worship.

Levels of Discussing Worship

- John Witvliet, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship
 - Experiential: What did the worshiper experience?
 - Technical: Did everyone do their task in the right way at the right time in the right place?

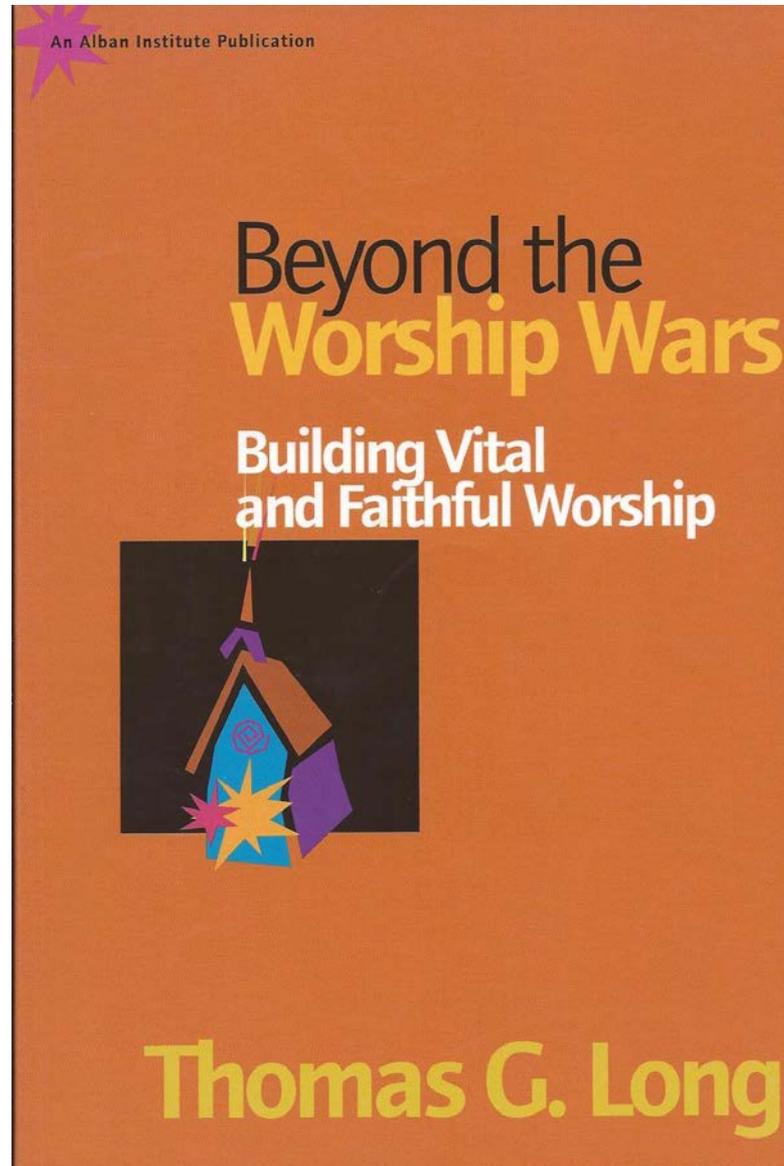
Levels of Discussing Worship

- John Witvliet, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship
 - Experiential: What did the worshiper experience?
 - Technical: Did everyone do their task in the right way at the right time in the right place?
 - Deep purposes: What is the essence of Christian worship? What should worship *really* do and be?

One Checklist for Worship

- A friendly and hospitable environment
- Engaging reading of Scripture
- Solid, interesting preaching
- Robust, strong congregational singing

Thomas Long Checklist



Thomas Long Checklist

- Make room, somewhere in worship, for the experience of mystery
- Recover and make visible the sense of drama inherent in Christian worship
- Make planned and concerted efforts to show hospitality to the stranger.
- Emphasize congregational music that is well-done and is also an interesting mix of various kinds of music.
- Creatively adapt the space and environment of worship.

Long Checklist Continued

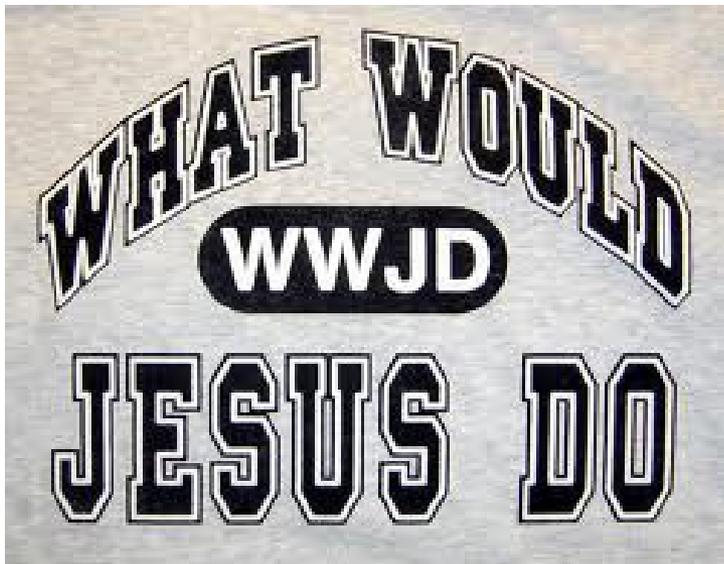
- Have a connection between worship and mission, a connection made evident in the worship service.
- Have a relatively stable order and a significant repertoire of responses that the congregation knows by heart.
- Move to a joyous, festive experience toward the end of the service.
- Let leaders be strong and attractive.

Previous Lists Useful

- But are mainly about experiential and technical levels of discussion.
- Many of the items could apply to other large scale events.
- What makes the items in these lists distinctly about making Christian worship faithful to a Triune God?

The WWPP Approach

Derived from the WWJD (What would Jesus do?) fad in the United States a few years ago.



T-shirt



Bracelets

The WWPP Approach

- What would Paul plan (if he was your church's worship leader)?
- What kind of worship services would the apostle Paul plan and lead in Christian churches today?

How Would Paul Answer These Questions?

- What should we talk about in worship? Worship's content
- How much should we pray and what kind of prayers? Prayer
- What's the role of Scripture in worship? Scripture
- Who get to go first? Should the initial stress in the order of worship be placed on divine activity or human activity? Primary and initial actor
- What should we expect to be happening between us and God? Worship's interaction
- What's the role of the people? Participation
- How should worshipers relate to each other? Worship's fellowship

WWPP?

- A question to get beyond style
- A question to enrich all styles of worship

WWPP?

- A different way to use Scripture to shape worship
- Beyond explicit commands to scriptural imagination
 - What does Paul model in manner of speech and behavior?
 - What is Paul's apostolic mind frame? In considering the Gospel of Jesus Christ, what is first priority?

Intersecting the Questions

Initial Questions

- What makes Christian worship “worship”?
- What makes Christian worship “Christian”?
- If our God is Triune (a Trinity, 3 Persons in one Godhead), what impact should that have on Christian worship?

WWPP?

- Worship’s content
- Prayer
- Scripture
- Primary and initial actor
- Worship’s interaction
- Participation
- Worship’s fellowship

Possible WWPP Answers

- Be Trinitarian and worship the Triune God
 - Name the three Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)
 - Interpret the history or story of salvation in a Trinitarian way, naming the cooperative activity of the three Persons.
 - Petition each Person appropriately and honor each Person appropriately.

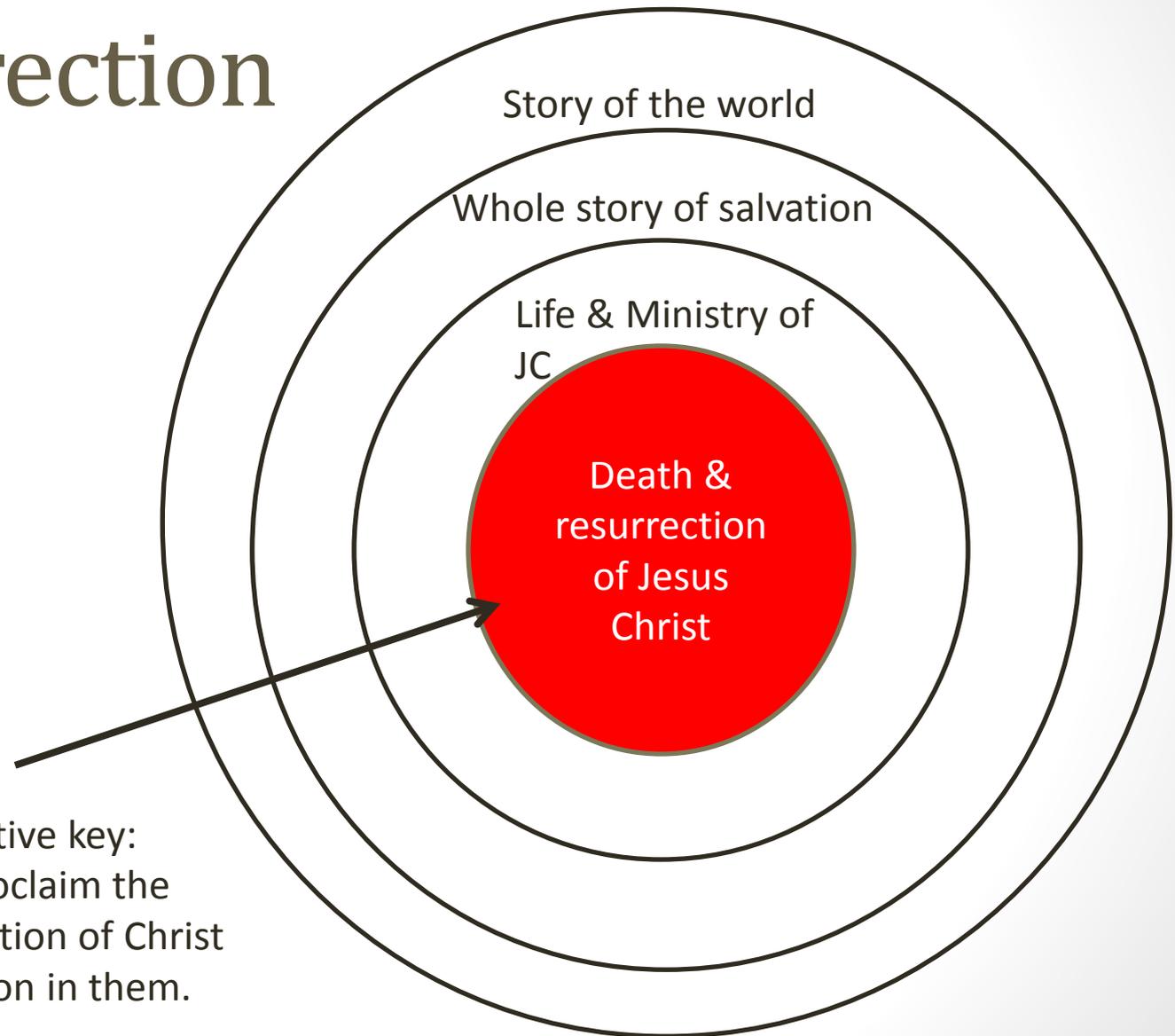
Possible WWPP Answers

- Worship should have remembrance of God's story and an opportunity for adequate response.
 - Enough Scripture to remember God's activity and to have the words to respond.
 - Scripture can be not only read but used in prayer, songs, sermons and other acts of worship
 - Opportunity to offer ourselves in a service, especially after the sermon.

Possible WWPP Answers

- The Scripture ought to be interpreted in a way so there is an emphasis upon God's gracious activity through Christ, especially in his death and resurrection.

The Key Role for Christ's Death & Resurrection



This is the interpretive key:
When in doubt, proclaim the
death and resurrection of Christ
and our participation in them.

Possible WWPP Answers

- Worship should contain lots of prayer and many different kinds of prayer.
- Most prayers should remember God's decisive activity through Jesus Christ. (See Ephesians 1:3ff as a model.)

Possible WWPP Answers

- Worship should have full congregational participation.

Possible WWPP Answers

- We should presume that God is present and rely upon that promise.

Possible WWPP Answers

- We should love one another in worship and beyond worship.

Possible WWPP Answers

- We should defer in worship to what edifies other Christians.

An Exercise to Apply WWPP

- Given how often Paul names two or three of the Persons in close proximity, what would he think of a service that began with the singing of these two hymns?



Discussion Time

Paul often names the three Persons (God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit) in close proximity and has them working with and through each other. In your discussion groups, talk about the following questions: Do these hymns name the three Persons in close proximity? How do the hymns portray God's saving activity? What questions arise if you are considering using these hymns in worship? Be prepared to report in 5 minutes.



Looking at the Hymns



WWPP?

- One way to provide a richer Trinitarian backdrop: read 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21 before singing the hymns.



And Then
Not Even a Thousand Tongues
Would be Enough

Resources to Get Beyond Style



Question and Answer Time