

Grace Lutheran Brethren Church

Worship

BASIC TENETS OF WORSHIP:

1. What is Christian worship?

Worship is our response of faith, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, to God's revelation of truth, which is himself, and centered in the cross of Christ.

Romans 12:1, 2 - Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Personal Worship:

2. Must we worship?

Yes. We are created as worshipping beings. Everyone worships continuously something or someone that they consider to be of supreme value. Since the Fall, man has misdirected his worship, which is idolatry.

Isaiah 44:15-18 - It is man's fuel for burning; some of it he takes and warms himself he kindles a fire and bakes bread But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it. Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm; I see the fire." From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, "Save me; you are my god" They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds-closed so they cannot understand.

Romans 1:18-23 - The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds, and animals and reptiles.

"Worship is fundamental to humankind itself, so much so, that we must assume that it goes on all the time, all around us, inside of us, and, in a paradoxical way, in spite of us. So before we talk about the specificities of worship, we must first of all understand that there is no one in this world who is not, at this moment, at worship in one way or another: consciously or unconsciously, formally or informally, passively or passionately. For in a most comprehensive way, we are always giving our lives over to something or

someone that we consider to be worth the most." (Best: paragraph 12)

"...Somehow in the mystery and chaos of our fall, the urge to worship was kept alive and active. We can thus be dead to God but kept alive as worshipers. We simply exchange gods, but persist in our bowing down before them, and it is God alone who can take this ponderous contradiction, sort it out, and, through His own grace and renewing, turn us back again to the continuous, therefore authentic, worship of Himself." (Best: paragraph 15)

3. What should be the object of worship? Why should we worship?

God is the object of true worship. In worship we give ourselves over to the One who has given Himself to us. It is never about self-satisfaction, but to glorify God. True worship results in soul satisfaction.

Deuteronomy 5:6-15 - "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day."

Psalms 103 - Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits who forgives your sins and heals your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The Lord works righteousness and justice for the oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children - with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts. The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who

do his will. Praise the Lord, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the Lord, O my soul.

John 4:13,14 - Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

"...the attention is, first and last, to be on the Lord, so much so that worship ceases to be the primary subject, the focus, the action in itself. But when we keep ourselves steadied upon the Lord, worship gains its rightful place as the full articulation, but not the substance, of this steadiness. Left to itself, worship is a dangerous thing, for it needs an object, a preposition. For it is not how or when or with what degree of quality, variety, and imagination that we worship. It is whom we worship." (Best: paragraph 10)

4. When do we worship?

We worship all the time. Though we gather for corporate worship weekly, authentic worship is far more than that. Worship is the totality of our daily living.

Romans 12:1 - Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship.

"I wish there were but one indivisible word that would at once include both living and worshipping as synergies of each other, because that's what God always intended. This is certainly what any number of Old Testament passages imply and this is certainly how Jesus lived - thirty three years a living sacrifice - no moment spent not worshipping." (Best: paragraph 14)

5. How do we worship?

Jesus teaches in John 4:23,24 that we are to worship God in spirit and in truth.

SPIRIT: The essence of worship is in our heart response to God rather than external things that are incidentals to worship. While externals such as location, place, time, traditions, style, etc., serve worship, preoccupation with them is detrimental to the true worship of God.

Psalms 45:1 - My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.

Psalms 51:15-17 - O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Psalms 103:1 - Praise the Lord, O my soul., all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

Ephesians 5:18-21 - Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:3 - *For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh--.*

Our corporate worship is acceptable and effective only to the extent that we are moment-by-moment living sacrifices, doing everything in the Spirit and according to truth, seeking out the beauty of holiness as our only path and our only walk, holding fast to God, who alone is our praise and our worship. (Best: paragraph 25)

TRUTH: Jesus also teaches that the inspiration for worship is not in human experiences or man's ideas and feelings about God, but God's truth, revealed definitively in God's Word.

Psalms 86:11 - *Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.*

Psalms 145:18 - *The Lord is near to all who call on him; to all who call on him in truth.*

John 17:17 - *Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*

Acts 17:11 - *Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.*

"How to worship God in Spirit and Truth:"

There are three things in this question to which it is necessary to reply.

First: To worship God in spirit and truth means to worship God as we ought to worship Him. God is Spirit, so we must worship Him in spirit and truth, that is, by a humble and true adoration of spirit in the depth and center of our souls. God alone can see this worship; we can repeat it so often that in the end it becomes as if it were natural to us, and as if God were one with our souls, and our souls one with Him

Second: To worship God in truth is to recognize Him for being who He is, and to recognize ourselves for what we are. To worship God in truth is to recognize as a very present reality in our spirit that God is infinitely perfect, infinitely worthy of worship, and infinitely distant from evil, even beyond His divine attributes. Who will be the man who, lacking in wisdom though he may be, will refuse to employ all his strength to render his respect and worship to this great and infinitely worthy God.

Third: To worship God in truth is further to admit that we are entirely contrary to Him, and that He is willing to make us like Himself if we desire it. Who will be so imprudent as to turn himself away, even for a moment, from the reverence, love, service and continual adoration which we justly owe Him? (Lawrence)

6. With what spiritual attitude ought we to come to God in worship?

We come to God in humility and brokenness of spirit, recognizing that we are utterly separate from and contrary to God and in desperate need of his forgiveness and salvation.

Psalm 51:15-17 - *O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

Isaiah 6:1-5 - *In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. "Woe to me!" I cried "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."*

Romans 5:8-10 - *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled; shall we be saved through his life!*

"...to be in adoring submission, serving the One whom we cannot help but adore and being adored by the One to whom we cannot help but submit." (Best: paragraph 13)

7. What part does faith play in worship?

The apostle Paul tells us that "the righteous shall live by faith".

Romans 1:17 - *For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*

Galatians 5:6b - *The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*

"The righteous one shall live (therefore worship) by their faith. Let's put this another way: Faith is the only thing the righteous man shall live (therefore worship) by. Not worship times, not music, not liturgy, but faith." (Best: paragraph 18)

8. What is the fruit of authentic worship?

Through the worship of Christ we are transformed by the working of the Holy Spirit into the image of Christ. Such authentic worship results in individual soul satisfaction and unity within the body of Christ.

Romans 8:29 - *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

Romans 12:1, 2 - *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Corinthians 11:17-34 - *In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not! For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world. So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment. And when I come I will give further directions.*

Corporate Worship:

9. Is private individual worship sufficient to fulfill God's design for us?

No. The God we worship calls us into community and we are in disobedience when we neglect corporate worship.

Acts 2:42 - They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Hebrews 10:24,25 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

10. What is corporate worship?

Corporate worship is the gathering together of worshipers around Christ.

Matthew 18:20- For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

11. What are the essential elements of corporate worship?

God, revealed through the Holy Spirit, is present with us in the Word of God and the Sacraments. Our response is to glorify God through our participation in these means of grace. The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness, enabling us to bring our offerings,

prayer, and praise to God as acts of worship, made acceptable by the redemptive work of Christ.

Mark 14:22 - *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."*

John 3:3,5 - *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. ... I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."*

John 17:17 - *Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*

Acts 2:38,39 - *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-for all whom the Lord our God will call."*

Romans 8:26 - *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness, we do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.*

I Corinthians 10:16,17 - *Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.*

Galatians 3:26-29 - *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Colossians 2:10,12 - *and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. ... having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.*

11 Timothy 3:16,17 - *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

12. Are personal and corporate worship two separate things?

It is a gross misunderstanding to think that worship is limited to one hour per week. It is one part of an entire life given over to worship. Corporate worship is a natural response of a worshiper. The worship that is our life is fulfilled in corporate worship. It is multiplied individual worship yet it is much more than that. The total becomes much more than the sum of its parts. God's full purposes on earth can only be accomplished as we gather in communion with him.

Romans 12:3-8 -*For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one*

body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

I Corinthians 12:12,27 - The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is apart of it.

Ephesians 4:4-16 - There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to the apostles, some to the prophets, some to the evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Men we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

"Now what about corporate worship? Does being a living sacrifice excuse us from Sunday's rounds? Not at all. Corporate worship is the necessary and sacramental widening of the everyday, all-the-day moment-by-moment walk of faith, of belief and of stewardship. Put as simply as possible, we do not go to synagogue, temple, cathedral, basilica, or church to worship. We go to these good places to continue our worship, but now corporately (that is, as a body, in a doubled communion with the Lord and with each other). We go to these places to give synergized expression to what we should have been doing all week long: praying, singing, listening, offering to the Lord, speaking, being silent, confessing, growing, and being broken. To think of church time as worship time without connecting it to the seven-day-a-week liturgy of being living sacrifices is to miss the entire biblical point of worship and to concoct an artificial parenthesis for an hour or so once a week or so. Corporate worship is irrelevant, however beautiful its protocols may be and however nourishing its sacraments are, unless it participates in the seamless life of continuous worship, and unless it is seen as a symptom of how we live and act all week long." (Best: paragraph 21)

At this point, many readers may be thinking, "But don't we basically go to church to worship God, and isn't this what Sunday supplies that the midweek parachurch activity cannot?"

That this view is so common among evangelicals today is testimony both to our lack of serious engagement with what the Bible actually says about church and to our short historical memories. We write as Anglican evangelicals whose denomination has basically been destroyed by this view of church and worship over the past 150 years. When we hear evangelicals talking about church being worship, and our buildings being sanctuaries, with the Lord's table as an altar, it is greatly disturbing, not least because it is so biblically wrong. All the language of temple, altar, sanctuary, service, priest, and offerings is taken up and fulfilled in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest. He is our temple, our tabernacle, our offering, our sacrifice, and thus our whole lives are our spiritual worship as we obey him and do his will. We do still worship in church - but only in the sense that we breathe in church. We don't go to church to worship any more than to go to church to breathe.

The purpose of church is fellowship with God's people around God's Word. We worship in every aspect of our lives day by day as we offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God. To confuse the two, as most evangelicals seem to today, is a drastic error. You certainly won't find the two confused in the New Testament... These ideas no doubt go somewhat against the grain. We have sat, Sunday after Sunday, for years on end, hearing our pastor say, "We welcome you today to our hour of worship." Yet study the Scriptures and see. (Jensen and Payne: pp. 202 - 203)

13. What is the special fruit of authentic corporate worship?

Through corporate worship, the Holy Spirit enables the Church to function as the Body of Christ. In the unity of the Body that the Spirit creates in Christ, there is possible then the bearing of burdens, encouragement, exhortation, empowerment, education, edification, and equipping enabling the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

I Corinthians 10:16,17 - Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf we who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf

Ephesians 4:4-16 - There is one body and one Spirit -just as you were called to one hope when you were called- one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

14. Is form (style/ritual) necessary in corporate worship?

Yes. God is orderly and the content of worship can only be expressed through these forms.

I Corinthians 14:40 - *But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.*

Form of Worship:

15. Is there a "correct" form for corporate worship?

There are many forms that are acceptable. The form of worship must be consistent with the nature and character of God and be built around the essentials of the Word of God and the Sacraments. The form of worship must be subservient to the content of worship. (Form follows function.)

16. How do we determine which form to employ?

Form of worship is the primary way for communities of faith to express their faith in Christ to the world around them. Remembering that we are to worship God in spirit and truth, there are several considerations. We are to worship God in spirit and truth. Our theology of worship and our theological heritage will be reflected in worshiping God in truth. Our spiritual gifts will be reflected in worshiping God in spirit. (1 Corinthians 12 & 14) Culture and heritage can also have a great influence. Whatever form is chosen must point to Christ and not to self (Christocentric vs. egocentric) Change may occur. Tradition must be our servant and never our master. Change should come from within the worshiping community, not imposed by human authorities or the surrounding culture, secular or sacred.

John 4:23-24 - *Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is a spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.*

Colossians 3:17 - *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Implications of Worship:

"Worship and evangelism" implications:

1. Worship, which most clearly defines a faith community, must announce what is central to the community. Even or maybe especially, what is most challenging and offensive to the dominant culture must be made visible. For Christian worship this means Jesus, the crucified Savior, must stand at the center of what we do together. Evangelists seek to minimize all that diverts attention from the focus on the crucified and risen Jesus Christ.
2. Unmediated relationships inhibit evangelical witness. When friendliness and personal connectedness become the highest value, people are forced back on themselves and drawn away from what gives life. Evangelists seek to foster relationships through Jesus Christ.

3. Primary symbols and rituals provide the means for structuring, mediated relationships. Symbolic actions evoke a reality beyond the known and experienced, while presenting the ordinary stuff of life as transfigured by grace. Rituals structure what otherwise has too much power and overwhelms us. (For example Weddings ritualize the overwhelming aspects of the marriage promise. Funerals ritualize the powerful depth of loss and grief) Rituals also are the most effective means of unfolding communal character The ritual life of a community shapes its practice Evangelists carefully attend to the primary symbols and rituals of a community But the primary symbols of the Christian -community are these. the book, the water, the bread, the cup, celebrated in an inclusive and diverse community to show forth Jesus Christ.
4. The invitation to relinquish ourselves to a community is most effective when there is a common communal character. Common ritual life provides a primary way for a community of faith to unfold its character. When the "ritual of the day" or the "target-marketed" alternative worship service is designed to meet the needs of a particular group of people, the community fails to be a community. It becomes an affiliation of individuals seeking to be serviced in one way or another. A congregation with defined character both finds and expresses that character in a common ritual life. Evangelists unfold congregational character through common ritual life. But the central service, the primary ritual of the Christian community is this: we meet on Sunday, in the presence of the risen Christ, to be gathered into the life of the triune God through word and sacrament.
5. Worship continually offers the invitation to enter more deeply into Jesus Christ and the community that bears his name. Embracing the invitation means entering a covenant. Covenants lead to transformation for both parties involved. Thus, worship itself will be continually transformed through the encounter with those who gather. Static, unchanging, and entrenched worship is not evangelical. Similarly, worship styles will vary from one context to another. While no single correct "style" of worship exists, the central shape and elements of worship cannot be viewed as one more option. Evangelists constantly listen, imagine, and risk, always with a sense of awe and respect, opening the symbolic and ritual life of the community to newness." (Olson: pages 12-13)

"Now, here's the clincher. Here's where cake meets icing, and here's where we have our cake and can eat it, too. Once we understand the underlying principles of authentic worship, then we are free to come back to the plethora, the richness, the beauty, and variegated delight of the works of worship. Now we are completely free; free of them, now free to offer them; free to see them disappear as incense, immediately lost in the overwhelming presence of the Lord himself; now free to study and draw from them, and, I hope, free to thin them out, be more quiet, more at rest, less hurried, worried, and liturgically hyper-active. Only then can we declare ourselves free of the technologically steroided and often manipulative systems which substitute for, or attempt to enhance the power and quietly loving presence of, the Lord. Only then are we free - this will sound strange, I know free to become small, powerless, and weak again, knowing that the strength and power of the Lord are made perfect in our weakness. Only then are we free to understand that true worship generates and welcomes true diversity, not because diversity is so trendy and with it, but because our worship is so cosmically boundless, so fundamentally simple, and so God-intoxicated that we have no choice but to reach for

the thousand tongues, knowing that no single tongue, no single style, no single order of worship, no single anything, can begin to capture the glory and the grace.

And I respectfully insist that this magnificent diversity should be practiced in all corporate worship instead of being divided up into alternative "experiences" for those who want it just one way, for those who are simply too lazy and too self seeking, too provincial, to enter into the disciplined joy of seeking out God and wrestling in worship, newly, diversely, and strangely. "Not in my style" or "Not in my language" or "It doesn't meet my felt needs" is fallen worship through and through." (Best: paragraphs 28, 29)

List of works consulted:

1. Scripture text is taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version, Copyright 1973, 1978, International Bible Society, Zondervan Bible Publishers.
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3. "The Practice of the Presence of God", Brother Lawrence (circa 1611-1691), translated by Robert J. Edmonson, Paraclete Living Library, 1984.
4. "Church/Campus Connections", Phillip Jensen and Tony Payne, taken from "Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns", D.A. Carson, general editor, Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, 2000, pp. 202, 203. ISBN: 0-310-23432-8.
5. "What is Evangelism?", Mark A. Olson, taken from "How does Worship Evangelize?", Gordon Lathrop, general editor, Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, 1995, pp. 12, 13. ISBN: 0-8066-2800-6

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