

Worship: Foundations and Practice

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My Premise...

Whether studied or not, whether clearly articulated or not, every church has an underlying set of beliefs about corporate worship. Those beliefs are inevitably manifested in each week's gathered worship.

My Goal...

To articulate IBC's core beliefs about worship (including their source) and demonstrate how those values take shape each week.

Worship: Foundations and Practice

Some underlying questions:

- What do we believe about worship? What are the underlying principles that give shape to our practice?
- What is the source of our beliefs? Why do we believe what we believe?
- Whose role is it to ensure that our practice aligns with our beliefs?

Worship: Foundations and Practice

Underlying questions (con't.)

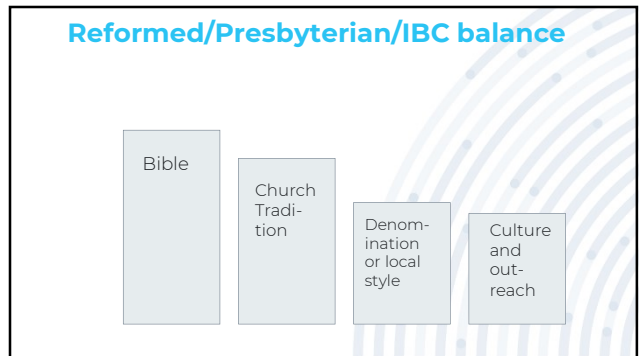
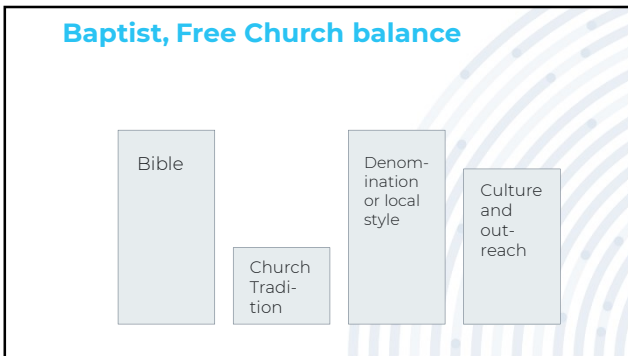
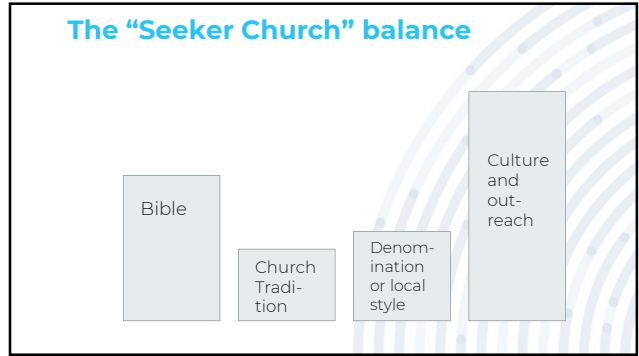
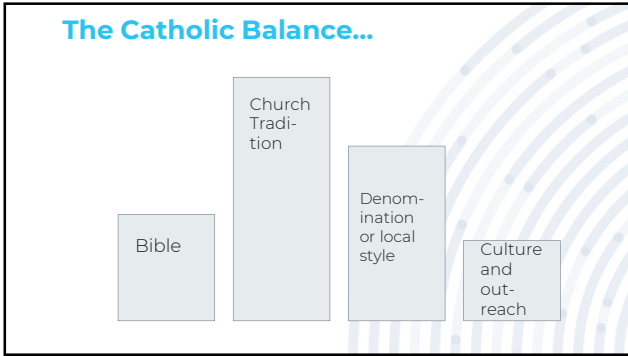
- How much influence should our personal style preferences have on worship design (and how do you determine that in a diverse congregation)? What is our musical "center of gravity"?
- How do we know what is allowed or not allowed in worship (or is that even a valid question)?

Other Important Influences That Every Church Must Consider

1. "The push of culture and the pull of tradition."
2. The relative influences of
 - The Bible
 - Church Tradition
 - Denomination or local history/preferences
 - Culture and outreach

How Much Relative "Weight" Is Given To...





Discerning Our Foundations

Essential questions we must answer to determine our guiding principles of worship:

- Who is worship for?
- How should worship be designed?
- What is worship's content?
- What are worship's affects?

Let's make this a dialog instead of a lecture; please ask questions.

1. Who Is Worship For?

Principle: Reformed worship is founded on the Reformation sola, "Soli Deo Gloria" (To God alone be glory).

Practice:

- The purpose of the service is to give glory to God for his unique character of holiness and for his saving acts.
- The service is characterized by a joyful reverence because of this belief.

Speaking of the “Solas”...

What would you expect to see in the worship of a church that embraced...

- Sola Scriptura? (Through scripture alone)
- Solus Christus? (In Christ alone)
- Sola Gratia? (By grace alone)
- Sola Fide? (By faith alone)

1. Who Is Worship For?

Principle: We believe that worship is primarily to God, for God and about God.

Practice:

- We spend more of our time talking about God than about ourselves.
- The “spiritual songs” Paul commands us to use include songs of lament, surrender and aspiration, but those expressions are a *response* to and a *result* of a primary focus on God. [Note to self: Don't get into “7/11 songs” discussion here.]

1. Who Is Worship For?

Principle: We believe that worship is primarily to God, for God and about God.

Practice:

- Few churches would come out and say it this way, but the practice of their worship indicates their belief that worship is for them (which leads to division) or for the unbeliever.
- During which part of the worship service do you most sense God's presence and feel the inclination to adore, praise and worship?

In Two Weeks...

- How should worship be structured?
- What is the content of God-honoring worship?
- What are the effects of worship on the unbeliever and the believer.
- Next week: Jesus- What does the tragic story of Uzzah tell us about God's holiness and God's commands about *how* he will be worshiped?

2. How Should Worship Be Designed?

Principle: Worship should follow the guidelines and principles articulated in the Bible.

Practice:

Like many churches we *generally* follow the “Regulative Principle” which states that we are only free to embrace those practices that are prescribed or modeled by scripture.

Some churches believe that we are free to embrace any action that is not expressly forbidden in scripture.

2. How Should Worship Be Designed?

Principle: We view worship as a spiritually formative event.

Practice: The Bible teaches that we inevitably become and live out both who and how we worship.

See Psalm 135:15-18; 1 John 2:1-2

It matters how God is presented in worship because the act of worship forms us into its object.

2. How Should Worship Be Designed?

Principle: We view worship as a spiritually formative event.

Practice: So if God is presented as...

An angry judge, the people cower rather than love.

A cosmic bank account, the people expect to be wealthy, prosperous and trouble-free.

A well-meaning but powerless bystander, the people become prayerless and hopeless.

Scriptures that describe spiritual formation through worship.

Psalm 135:15-18

1 John 2:1-2

2. How Should Worship Be Designed?

Principle: We believe that worship is spiritual nutrition for God's people. Well-fed Christians grow in faith, love and service.

Practice:

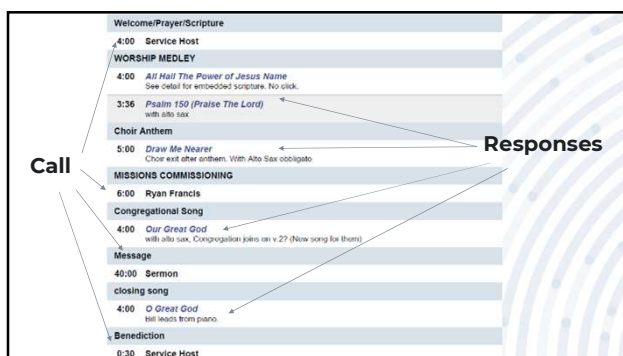
We hold song selection to a very high standard, only using lyrics that accurately reflect good theology.

2. How Should Worship Be Designed?

Principle: We believe that worship is a sacred conversation between God and his people.

Practice: The service design intentionally resembles a conversation and follows a "call and response" model. The word for this engaging form of worship is "liturgical."

Practice: The worship leader is not a musical showman. Our role is to craft and guide the people's conversation with God comprised of scripture, prayer and music.



2. How Should Worship Be Designed?

Principle: We believe that worship is a sacred conversation between God and his people.

Practice:

Note the intentional use of scripture in the Call To Worship and the Benediction. Worship is a sacred conversation that is initiated by God (call to worship) and where God gets the last word (benediction).

3. What Is Worship's Content

Principle: The content of worship is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The source of that content is the Bible.

Practice:

Worship design begins by studying the sermon text. We attempt to preview themes of the sermon.

We give preference to biblical songs and songs that are clearly comprised of gospel themes. So called "Gospel music" doesn't always contain the *gospel*, and not every Christian church has gospel-based worship.

What Is "Gospel Worship"?

sin cross atonement redemption
 holiness judgment blood
 substitution repentance forgiveness
 mercy grace confession
 sacrifice

4. What Are Worship's Affects?

Principle: While worship is primarily focused on God there are obvious benefits to the worshiper and (potentially) the unbeliever.

Practice: for the believer

- Worship forms Christ in the believer and teaches the believer what it means to be united with Christ.
- Worship prepares the believer for life in the world.
- Worship summons the believer to service.
- Worship prepares the believer for heaven.

4. What Are Worship's Affects?

Principle: While worship is primarily focused on God there are obvious benefits to the worshiper and (potentially) the unbeliever.

Practice: on the believer

- Worship joins the believer to the Body of Christ through fellowship and the ordinances.
- Worship teaches the believer the Word of God.
- Worship prepares the believer for eternal worship.

4. What Are Worship's Affects?

Principle: While worship is primarily focused on God there are obvious benefits to the worshiper and (potentially) the unbeliever.

Practice: on the unbeliever

- Worship discloses to the unbeliever his sin, God's love and Christ's atonement.
- This only happens when the content of worship is gospel truth. See 1 Cor 14:23-25

4. What Are Worship's Affects?

Principle: While worship is primarily focused on God there are obvious benefits to the worshiper and (potentially) the unbeliever.

Practice: on the unbeliever

- Worship does not exist for evangelism but worship done rightly is the best evangelism. Romans 1:16
- "Missions exists because worship doesn't." (John Piper)

Worship: Foundations and Practice

Questions we ask:

- Who is worship for?
- How should worship be designed?
- What is worship's content?
- What are worship's affects?

The way we answer these questions reveal our beliefs and guide our practice of worship.

Comments? Questions?

1. Who Is Worship For?

Principle: Reformed worship begins with the Reformation dictum, "Soli Deo Gloria."

Practice:

- The purpose of the service is to give glory to God for who he is (his unique character of holiness) and for what he has done (his saving acts).
- The service is characterized by a joyful reverence.