

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Why “contemporary worship” ?

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Many Denominations and churches of Christ today advertise at least one worship service of the week as a “contemporary worship” service. This is distinguished from a “traditional worship” service. Traditional worship is how worship has been done through the years, but what is involved in “contemporary worship”? Why is it here in our times? Should Christians who pattern their beliefs and practices by the New Testament embrace it?

Contemporary worship includes ways of identifying with the likes of a modern culture. Churches traditionally using choirs and instrumental music, may replace them in their contemporary worship services with a pop-singer and a 10-piece rock band. The music ranges from jazz to country to classical. Bill Hybels, the founder of the Willow Creek church where such music is presented, found in his survey that people who were not saved did not come to church because they “found church boring, predictable, and routine”. He therefore founded a church that would be different to attract such people. If you gauge the correctness of a church by number, you would say

he has been successful, for his church has grown from 125 in October of 1975 to an attendance on Sunday between 16,000 and 17,000 today.

Giving people what they want is the catalyst behind the great numerical growth at the Willow Creek church. They advertise their church as “a contemporary church in an atmosphere of glitz and entertainment, while preaching a feeling-oriented gospel of codependency/ recovery, self-love, and unconditional acceptance, where unbelievers could thereby be comfortable in God’s presence.”

The “atmosphere of glitz and entertainment” is what worship has become for the “contemporary church”. Some churches of Christ are moving in this direction, so they have special singing groups, and offer drama presentations in their worship services. They encourage hand clapping. Why? Dramas, listening to singing groups, and hand clapping is part of an entertainment driven society.

We need to be reminded today that we are to worship God (Revelation 22:9). Because He is Spirit, “they that worship him must

worship Him in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). Notice God is to be worshipped, not our likes or dislikes. Our worship is to come from our hearts (spirit) according to truth (God’s word) (John 17:17). *A-capella* singing (without mechanical instruments of music) is the music authorized by the word of truth for worshipping God (Ephesians 5:19).

Are you bored in singing “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with grace in your hearts unto God” (Colossians 3:16). Instead of changing how God has authorized us to worship Him, you need to change your attitude towards worship. You are not the audience of true worship, God is! I have learned to change my attitude towards certain vegetables. I changed my tastes because they were good for me. Worship according to the revealed truth of God’s word is good for you, for it pleases God.

God’s people must regard “how” God wants to be worshipped. Trying to initiate ways that are appealing to the world is not Scriptural. Paul says, “...if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10).