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# The Theology and Practice of Worship



**PT 601**

*Fall Semester, 2003*  
*Wed., Fri., 11:15 – 12:30*

# *The Theology and Practice of Worship*

## **Course Description**

This course is designed to guide the student into a deeper understanding of and appreciation for some of the biblical, theological, historical and philosophical elements of Christian worship. The student will be exposed to different approaches to worship within various Traditions. Attention will also be given to the development of the practical skills of planning and leading worship events.

## **Course Objectives**

Assuming a dependence on the Holy Spirit and a commitment to some hard work on the part of the instructor and student alike, by the end of this course, the student should be able enjoy the following benefits from this course:

### ***Cognitively ... what the student should know/understand***

- You should gain a basic knowledge of biblical, theological, historical and philosophical elements of Christian worship
- You should understand how worship relates to the overall mission and ministry of the Church

### ***Attitudinally ... what the student should appreciate***

- You should gain a basic understanding and appreciation for worship styles that represent traditions and/or preferences that are different from his/her own
- You should appreciate the impact that context or venue has on the worship experience

### ***Experientially ... what the student should do***

- You should demonstrate skills in planning and participating in the leadership of a worship service.
- You should be able to articulate a well-thought out philosophy of worship

## Course Textbooks

### *Required Texts*

- Forrester, Duncan and J. Ian McDonald and Gian Tellini *Encounter with God: An Introduction to Christian Worship and Practice.* Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999
- Liesch, Barry *The New Worship: Straight Talk on Music and the Church.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996
- Webber, Robert E. *Worship, Old and New.* Revised Edition, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.

### *Recommended Texts*

- Basden, Paul *The Worship Maze: Finding a Style to Fit Your Church.* Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999.
- Long, Thomas G. *Beyond the Worship Wars: Building Vital and Faithful Worship.* The Alban Institute, 2002.
- Morgenthaler, Sally *Worship Evangelism: Inviting Unbelievers into the Presence of God.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.
- Peterson, David *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992.
- Redman, Robb *The Great Worship Awakening: Singing a New Song in the Postmodern Church.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass A Wiley Imprint, 2002.
- Saliers, Don E. *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.
- Schmidt, Clayton J. *A Theology of Liturgical Expression.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Segler, Franklin M. *Christian Worship: Its Theology and Practice.* Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1967.
- Weil, Louis *A Theology of Worship.* Cambridge, Mass.: Cowley Publications, 2002.

## Course Requirements

### *Philosophy of Worship Document*

You are to prepare an eight to ten page position paper in which you articulate your personal convictions about Christian corporate worship. To give you some guidance regarding what is to be included in this statement, consider the following as basic:

#### ❖ *Foundational Statements*

- Definition of Worship – *What* is worship, really?
- Purpose of Worship – *Why* should we worship?
- Participants in Worship – *Who* can worship and why?

#### ❖ *Fundamental Issues*

- Underscore the Constants
  - What elements should be included in every corporate Christian worship gathering and why?
- Outcome of Worship
  - How do we know when and if genuine authentic worship has occurred?
- Basic Assumptions
  - What roles are fulfilled by each person in the godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit in a corporate worship experience?
  - How does personal, private worship relate to corporate worship?
  - What role does tradition play in corporate worship?
  - To what degree should local culture be allowed to inform worship within the local Church?
- A Matter of Priorities
  - What priority should worship have in the overall ‘big picture’ of the local church life? Explain why.
- Leadership

- Are there any roles within the worship event that should be limited to specific participants? Why or why not?
- What are the fundamental tasks of the worship leader?
- Change in Worship
  - Who would you suggest is responsible for introducing and effecting change in worship format within the local church?
  - How do you think such changes should be engaged?
- ❖ *Future Considerations*
  - Where do you see corporate worship going in the next decade?
  - What kinds of challenges and opportunities do you think the Church needs to be prepared to address in the next few years with respect to the worship ministry within the local fellowship?
  - How frequently do you think a philosophy of worship statement such as this one should be revisited and revised? Why?

**DUE DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2003**

***Mid-Term Examination – October 24, 2003***

- ❖ The exam will cover on material dealt with in class and will be primarily objective in nature.

***Worship Gathering Evaluation***

You are to visit two [2] church worship events representing traditions different from your own, and write a three to four [4-5] page report on each cite visited. The reports should include the following:

- ❖ General Information
  - Name and address of the Church
  - Date when visited
  - Time of the service (indicate the length of the service as well)
  - Any other significant information (e.g. special feast day or holy day or other special circumstances)

❖ **Worship Event**

- Describe, in detail the venue where the worship event took place (i.e. significant architectural features, furniture, visual aids, overall layout or design.)
- Describe the transition into worship (in other words, how were you ushered from your own personal world into the worship event.)
- List the elements of the worship event (would you say they were focused on God or on those gathered there?)
- Describe those who lead in the worship (Who were they? Number? Both genders represented?)
- Describe how the event was brought to a close: were you challenged, commissioned, blessed? Was there a benediction? a postlude? What did the congregation do after the service?
- Based on the service, what image of God were you left with? What of the Church? Was this the kind of service through which you would feel likely to meet God? Why or why not?

❖ **Personal Reflection**

- What were the most effective or significant features of this worship event for you personally and what made them so?
- What aspects, if any, did you find distracting? Why?
- Any other comments you feel would be important

❖ **In Addition**

- Include a bulletin or any handout received at the worship event
- Make every effort to be inconspicuous, that is avoid taking notes or writing a first draft of your assignment during the service. Try to be a genuine and active participant.
- Assessment of this assignment will be on the basis of depth and breadth of observation, thoroughness and form.

**DUE DATE: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2003**

***Worship Service Planning and Design***

You are to design and assemble a complete worship service that would be suitable for use in a local Church. You are free to be creative and may

include elements such as the Lord's Supper in the service. Your project should have the following three components:

- ❖ Description of the context in which the event would occur
  - What is the venue like? (seating capacity and arrangement, platform/stage arrangements, lighting, visuals etc.) Give as much detail as possible.
  - How large a group would be gathered and what kinds of demographics would be represented in it? (e.g. is this largely a boomer, buster, or other group?)
  - What is the cultural setting like in which the Church finds itself?
  - Any other information that would inform the choice of music and/or other aspects of the worship event
  
- ❖ The Order of Service

Prepare an order of service that could be used in a bulletin or other handout. Be as creative as you wish feeling free to use any kinds of visuals that you feel would enhance the worship experience of those gathered. Indicate who would be giving leadership or participating in each aspect of the service.
  
- ❖ Expanded Contents of the Worship Event – Include the following
  - The **full text** of all hymns/choruses or other songs used (NOTE: Do not simply include a photocopy of the printed page. Engage with each song by re-writing the words yourself)
  - The **full text** of all scriptures and any other readings used.
  - The **full text** of any spoken segments (excluding sermon, announcements etc.) including such elements as call to worship, invocation, benediction, blessings etc.
  - A brief description of your reason or rationale for including the various components of the worship event. This need not be lengthy, but it is important that you be able to explain why each aspect is included and how it relates to other aspects.
  - An indication of how long you envision necessary for each aspect.
  
- ❖ Assessment of this assignment will pay special attention to the logical flow and transition from one aspect to another, as well as the effectiveness of how the service is introduced and concluded.

**DUE DATE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2003**

**Reading Report** – All three required textbooks are to be read in their entirety and a review of each book is to be written according to the guidelines below.

- ❖ After reading all three books, write a review of each one in which you comment on the following:
  - What you would consider to be the purpose of the author(s) in writing the book
  - What proved to be the most helpful insights or sections of the book for you personally, citing specific passages from them
  - What contribution do you think the authors have made through their books both to the academic community and to the Church at large. If you are of the opinion that they failed in this respect, explain why.

**DUE DATE: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2003**

## **Course Assessment**

<b>Reading Report</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Mid-Term</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Worship Service Plan</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Church Gathering Observation</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Philosophy of Worship Document</b>	<b>30%</b>