

# GOD BLESS AFRICA - WORSHIP FOR A TIME LIKE THIS

Ekklesia Worship Conference: March 2015

## Reaching Into The Community

### The Role of Worship In Mission

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#### I. INTRODUCTION - BOTH/AND NOT EITHER/OR

##### A. How do worship and mission connect in your church/ministry?

1. Our practice and theology of worship and mission has created a great divide:
  - a) Worship books with no reference to mission. Mission books with no reference to worship.
  - b) Two camps have developed:
    - (1) Worship – Worship is our primary calling. Mission = “social gospel” = bad.
    - (2) Mission – Mission is our primary calling. Worship = entertainment, self-indulgence = bad.
2. But, perhaps this is a false divide. Perhaps worship and mission are two sides of one coin:
  - a) It has caused great pain in the world & the church:
    - (1) Amos 5:21-24 (*Read*) – *I hate your festivals & noise. Instead bring justice.*
    - (2) *UnChristian* – “Christianity has become bloated with blind followers who would rather repeat slogans than actually feel true compassion and care.” (p.15)
    - (3) Xenophobia/Crime/Rape in South Africa – where nearly 80% of people claim to be Christian.
  - b) Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*:
    - (1) “Service instead of worship is idolatry.” (p.202)
    - (2) “Holy obedience [service] saves worship from becoming an opiate...” (p.214)

##### B. We and our world need us to marry worship and mission:

1. The Wesleys built their ministry on this union:
  - a) Christian Perfection = A union of works of piety (worship) and works of mercy (mission).
2. We need *Missional Worship*.
  - a) *Worship* = “A personal and corporate engagement with the reality of God.”
  - b) *Mission* = “A personal and corporate engagement with the realities of our world.”
  - c) *Missional Worship* = “An engagement with the realities of God such that we are driven to engage with the realities of our world and vice versa”.
  - d) This means that all worship is (should be) Missional worship.
3. The challenge is to constantly be working to develop Missional worship in our churches.

#### II. INCARNATIONAL WORSHIP (Their Story)

##### A. The Heart of Worship and Mission:

1. Reflections:
  - a) What do you know of your community – outside of the church (age, gender, economic)?
  - b) What do they most need from the church?
2. **At the heart of our worship and our mission is this truth – God became flesh.**
  - a) Incarnation is about God changing us by allowing us to change God. God stepping into our humanity and taking our humanity into God's self.

- b) Incarnational Worship then, means allowing what we do **in Church** to be influenced by those outside.

**B. The Biblical Call to Incarnational Worship:**

- 1. Jesus: Matthew 1:23; John 1:14; John 3:16.
- 2. Paul: 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.
- 3. The worship of God's people has always changed to accommodate "outsiders":
  - a) Israel's worship included "the stranger": Numbers 15:14; Deuteronomy 26:10-11.
  - b) The early Church's worship included consideration for "visitors": 1 Corinthians 14:23-25.

**C. Issues in Incarnational Worship:**

- 1. Culture: Dress, language, music, forms, symbols - Embodying Christ within culture (Len Sweet).
- 2. Community: Belong -> Behave -> Believe NOT vice versa.
- 3. Content: Making worship a place of engagement with the world's issues, not an escape.

**D. Reflect:**

- 1. In what ways is your church different because of the people where you do ministry?

### III. ECCLESIAL WORSHIP (Our Story)

**A. Missional Worship and Church Identity:**

- 1. Reflections:
  - a) Who are we as Church in your society?
  - b) How does this impact our worship and our mission?
- 2. To do worship and mission effectively, we need to know who we are as Church.
  - a) And we need to protect and nurture this identity:
    - (1) **We are Church because the world needs Church.**
  - b) Ecclesial worship means allowing our identity **as Church** to influence the world outside.

**B. The Biblical Call to Ecclesial Worship:**

- 1. Worship proclaimed to the nations: Isaiah 66:19; Psalm 96:3,10; 2 Samuel 22:50 & Psalm 18:49.
- 2. The Great Commission: Matthew 28:18-20.
- 3. The Church of Acts: Acts 2:42-47; Acts 16:25, 26.

**C. Issues in Ecclesial Worship:**

- 1. Place: Taking the sanctuary to the street. (Hospitals, prisons, soup kitchens, public worship).
- 2. Proclamation: Releasing our story as a force for change (civil rights marches and sit-ins).
- 3. Purpose: Retaining our **identity as Church** in our work in the world – not changing to be a glorified social services organisation.

**D. Reflect:**

- 1. In what ways is your community different because you worship there?

### IV. ESCHATOLOGICAL WORSHIP (God's Story)

**A. The Vision for Missional Worship:**

- 1. Reflections:
  - a) How do you understand "The Kingdom of God"?
  - b) How does this understanding guide your worship and mission?
- 2. **Both mission and worship must flow from a sense of God's Purpose - Eschaton.**
  - a) Sol Jacob – God's mission is life-affirming (creation) and liberating (salvation).
  - b) Eschatological worship, then, means allowing our vision **of Church** to be built on God's life and liberation.

**B. The Biblical Call to Eschatological Worship:**

- 1. Old Testament: Psalmists & prophets lived between the "Exodus" and the "Day of the Lord".
- 2. Jesus: The Kingdom is near (Mark 1:15); Jesus' mission (Luke 4:18-21; Isaiah 61:1-3).
- 3. Paul: Colossians 1:13-20.

**C. Issues in Eschatological Worship:**

1. Celebration: Mbeki – “*Despondency never solved anything.*” Refusing cynicism & nurturing hope.
2. Creation: Allow beauty, creativity, passion and wonder to flow in and from the sanctuary.
3. Confrontation: Refuse to allow injustice, inequity or exploitation to live in the Church & stand against it in your community.

**D. Reflect:**

1. In what ways does the vision of God’s Kingdom inspire your worship and mission?

**V. Conclusion**

- A. Worship and mission cannot be divided or they both lose.
  1. The sanctuary must embrace the people we seek to reach & our worship may need to change to reach them.
  2. The whole world must be seen as a place of worship, and we must not be shy about being part of the big conversations - as Church.
  3. The vision of God’s Kingdom & Purpose must underpin all that we are and do.
- B. Let’s start a conversation that brings our worship and our mission together – for the sake of our world.