

VCBC's Philosophy of Corporate Worship for the 21st Century

4/29/98- Revised 2/3/03, 9/20/05, 10/11/05

Our church's vision for ministry is built squarely upon the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. In order for us to fulfill these, we have determined to identify Worship, Equipping, Bringing and Serving as a fourfold expression of who we are as a church. This will mean that everything we do must have two primary sensitivities, one toward God and one towards people.

Worship for us at Valley, then, must be both biblical and relevant. Our goal for each person who comes to Valley for worship will be that they will **engage with God**. To engage is to "involve, entangle, to interlock with, to mesh." Our goal is not simply to introduce people to God. We intend that each person will become purposefully entangled, interlocked with God and his message of grace and mercy in Christ. As Robert Webber has so succinctly defined worship:

Worship celebrates God's saving deed in Jesus Christ.[\[1\]](#)

Today there are many viewpoints, styles and opinions about just HOW we should go about this celebration. The following is a description of how we will celebrate this truth at Valley. Though this may be expressed through multiple styles from week to week or even from service to service on a given week, the philosophy behind each worship service remains the same. This is our definition of what it will mean for us to ENGAGE with God.

VCBC'S WORSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY WILL:

E - EXALT THE LORD. God deserves our highest praise and honor (Is.6:3, 5). Our worship must be filled with a sense of respect and honor to be in His presence. This respect and honor may express itself differently from service to service. It will travel the spectrum of emotions from gladness, joy and exuberance to repentance, fear and awe. We will be empowered to do this by the Holy Spirit. Ps.30:1-34:3, 118:28, 100:4

N - NOURISH PEOPLE FROM HIS WORD. The Word will always keep us centered on Christ. The Holy Spirit will teach us, heal us, encourage us and renew us as he illumines our minds to understand the Word. We will bring Scripture to bear on people's lives so that it can mend their nets, lift their spirits, renew their minds and sharpen their focus. The Scriptural text will be the theme of worship. It will determine the atmosphere and tone of each service. Dt. 8:3; Ps. 119:9, 11,105; Ps.30:5, Phil. 2:16; Col.3:16; Heb.4:12; Jas.1:22

G - GRACE CENTERED. Anyone who enters our worship service must get the impression that both God and the people around them care and are approachable. We are

all equal before God. We are sinners saved only by his grace, not our works. Our worship must always proclaim this grace and offer it to others. We must clearly communicate that this is a place of healing and hope. People must have a chance before, after or during worship to meet, greet and interact with one another in authentic relationships that define our commitment to live in community. Eph. 2:5-8; Rom. 6:14; Phil. 1:7; Heb. 4:16

A - ATMOSPHERE OF CELEBRATION AND PARTICIPATION. Christian worship must be a real celebration. Christ has risen! A celebrative service will have a sense of flow and variety. To celebrate Christ's resurrection does not mean that every service will be upbeat and fast paced, but it does mean that each service must proclaim the hope that we are no longer dead in our sins but alive through Christ.

High concern must be given to the flow, the movement from one element of worship to another. Where does the service begin and where does it end? How will we journey from one end to the other? Great creativity and sensitivity will be used to take this journey each week.

Worship is not passive, it is active. God is the audience, we are the actors. Believers will be challenged and given opportunity to use their gifts and resources liberally for God's glory. Worship will be designed to involve people in levels of adoration, praise, confession, etc. The use of our gifts must be done with excellence and with a true heart. This participation must include both men and women and reflect our intergenerational demographic. Since prayer is by definition communication with God, special emphasis and effort will be given to promoting it in our worship in a variety of forms. Ps.100:2, 16:11, 30:11, 65:13, 98:4-8, 4:1-3, 120:1; I Cor. 14:26, 27

G - GRAPHIC. Worship in heaven is incredibly visual (Rev.4:2-6). Shouldn't ours be as well? Visuals will be used to lead, teach, inform and guide worshipers. Puppets, drama, banners, videos, PowerPoint and other appropriate art forms will be invaluable in our worship. These will never be objects of worship, but rather prompters to direct us to ascribe worth to the one, true God. Ex.26, 28, 31:1-11,* 32; Rev. 4:2-6; John 4:23, 24

E - EVANGELISTIC. We will be not merely seeker sensitive in our worship but sinner friendly.[2] As Christians celebrate Christ in worship, we will remember that we are all sinners and all need to lament, repent and get real with God. So, we will worship in a way which makes non-Christians feel welcome and at ease with the prayer that one day they will join us in the celebration. Acts 2:42-47

Pastor J. Abramson

[1] Robert Webber, *The Worship Phenomenon* (Nashville: Abbott Martyn, 1994), p.33

[2] Sally Morgenthaler, *Worship Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), p.112