

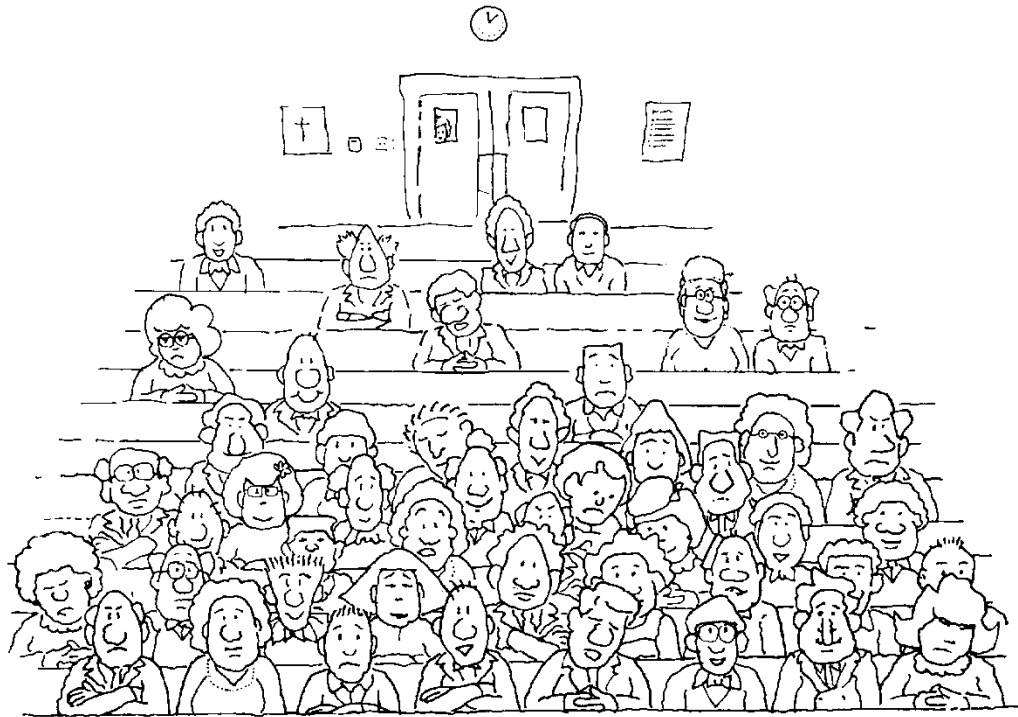
Philosophy of Worship for Caledon Hills Fellowship Baptist Church



Getting back to the heart of worship
Getting back to the heart of worship

July 15, 2013

WORSHIP



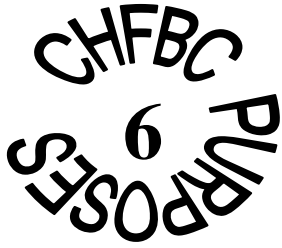
All of history is moving toward one great goal,
the white-hot worship of God and his Son
among all the peoples of the earth.

Missions exists because worship doesn't.
Worship is ultimate, not missions, because
God is ultimate, not man.

When this age is over, and the countless millions
of the redeemed fall on their faces before the
throne of God, missions will be no more.
It is a temporary necessity.
But worship abides forever.

John Piper,

Let the Nations be Glad!: The Supremacy of God in Missions (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993).



Our Purpose-Driven Church

Efficiency is doing things right.
Effectiveness is doing the right things.

Glorifying God in worship is one of our core values here at CHFBC

Balancing 6 New Testament Objectives	Our Core Values	Our 6 Point Vision	The Outcome
Ministry	Serving	Every Member Ministry	Breadth
Edification	Growing	Edifying Preaching and Teaching Ministry	Depth
Fellowship	Belonging	Caring and Sharing Fellowship	Warmth
Worship	Glorifying	Reverent and Relevant Worship	Strength
Evangelism	Witnessing	Friendship Evangelism	New Birth
Prayer	Submitting	Prevailing Corporate Prayer	Health

Philosophy of Worship For Caledon Hills Fellowship Baptist Church

Our Purpose Statement: At CHFBC we believe in the planning and practice of reverent and relevant worship for the vertical purpose of magnifying and exulting in the person and cross work of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the horizontal purpose of spiritual renewal and mutual edification.

Introduction: As a purpose-driven church, one of our six objectives embodied in our CHFBC six-point vision is reverent and relevant worship. By relevant we mean worship that in its *form* (i.e. style) fits the context of our congregational makeup. However, the controlling virtue is reverence by which we mean that worship in its *function* assists us to engage God with authentic awe, adoration, and love. These two qualities of reverence and relevance apply to everything we do in the planning, administration, participation and leading of our corporate worship services.

“Worship takes place when God reveals Himself to us through His Word, the work of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit to initiate positive response involving body, emotions, intellect and will” (adapted from Don Hustad).

Worship, in the broadest sense, applies to all of the Christian life from Monday to Sunday. It is a direct expression of our ultimate purpose for living (Isaiah 43:6, 7; Ephesians 1:12). Worship, in a more specific sense, applies to the music and words that Christians direct to God in praise, together with the heart attitudes that accompany that praise, especially when Christians assemble together (Exodus 7:16b; Colossians 3:16). It is in this latter sense that we employ the word worship in this small statement of worship philosophy.



1. Reverence *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews. 12:28, 29).¹*

A. Our worship will ascribe to God His supreme worth for he *alone* is worthy (Exodus 20:5; Isaiah 48:11).

When worship becomes something primarily for our benefit it becomes idolatrous. God-centered worship celebrates His character, His word, His works and His ways so that He is glorified in our affections and expressions of faith.

Therefore knowing that we live in a post-modern, man-centered culture that is felt-needs and performance oriented and saturated in triviality we will strive to forget about ourselves and fall fresh in love with our God. We will forsake spectatorship, change for the sake of change, entertainment, and any other misguided innovation in order to minimize distraction from the revealed glory of God.

¹All Scripture quotations are taken from *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984).

And therefore, let us strive for excellence in ministry for God deserves our best (Ecclesiastes 9:10). But at the same time let us be wise and understanding in this pursuit so that neither lazy shoddiness nor excessive finesse and refinement will divert attention away from the beauty of our Lord in all His splendor.

Also, our worship leadership will seek to nullify self-glory in deference to God's supremacy in its use of talents and gifts, demeanor and personal appearance. "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5).

B. Our worship is primarily a state of the heart, not a state of art (Genesis 4:3-5 → Hebrews 11:4; John 4:19-24).

Although, in the Old Testament, Cain offered vegetables and Abel offered livestock, the New Testament reveals that the real difference between their worship was attitudinal. The woman at the well asked a question of *form* (Where is the right place for worship?) but Jesus responded with an answer of *function* (Worship in spirit and truth). Art forms change but biblical functions don't. Orders of Service, instruments, vocalists, building location and aesthetics do not generate God-centered worship. They simply provide a complementary means of expression that must first originate in the heart and mind of a believer.

Therefore, we will accept the seeking call of God to worship Him in both spirit and in truth (John 4:23, 24), in spirit and in mind (1 Corinthians 14:15-16), in sacrifice (Hebrews 13:15), in holiness (Romans 12:1) and by faith (Hebrews 11:4).

And therefore, we will distinguish between church tradition and traditionalism. Let us use our church traditions or customs without ritualism or apathy but with religious devotion adorning the grandeur of God's truth. Whether in message, prayer, reading, confession, song, symbolic act, drama *etc.*, let us offer our worship with thanksgiving and a sincere heart.

C. Our worship will place a high value on biblically sound and defensible practices (John 4:24).

While our church has many purposeful practices (e.g. handshakes, Greeters and ushers, Sunday School, Sunday morning announcements, multi-media projection, Parent-Child dedications, etc.) we remain *most* sensitive to the following, which are examples specifically prescribed by the New Testament:

- a) Meeting weekly for spiritual exercise (1 Cor. 16:2; Heb. 10:25)
- b) Music and songs of both praise and indoctrination (Heb. 13:15; Eph. 5:18-19)
- c) Confessions of faith (e.g. Eph. 4:4-6; Phil. 2:6-11; 1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 22:11-13)
- d) Confession of sin (Ps. 51:15-17)
- e) Scripture reading (Neh. 8:5-6; 1 Tim. 4:13)
- f) Sacrificial giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8,9)
- g) Benevolence to those within and without (Gal. 6:10)
- h) Public prayers (1 Chron. 29:11-20; 1 Tim. 3:14-15 → 2:1-2)
- i) The exposition of God's word (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:26)
- j) The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:42)



2. Relevance *These are the numbers of the men armed for battle who came to David... men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do... (1 Chronicles 12:23a, 32a).*

A. Our worship will be sensitive to the multigenerational nature of our church family (1 Timothy 5:1-17; Titus 2:1-8).

The body life of the church celebrates variety (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). We recognize that God designed the local church to be a unity in diversity not a unity in uniformity (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

Therefore in our corporate worship and its leadership, let us celebrate a diversity of expression that will generally reflect the heterogeneous makeup of our congregation. Let us strive to appreciate and learn from one another blending the best tastes and desires of all generations in our song selection. We'll use music and lyrics spanning the centuries and the globe, yet we will incorporate new tunes and texts, which are excellent in quality and substance. These new songs will augment rather than supplant traditional hymnody.

B. Our worship's expectation is nothing less than an authentic encounter with the powerful presence of God (Psalm 22:3; Hebrews 4:16; 10:19, 22).

In our coming and invocation, we anticipate God drawing near to us in renewing and reviving power. James 4:8a says: "Come near to God and He will come near to you." The greatest expression of relevance for any worshipper is a personal encounter with the living God. The benefits derived by worshippers are gracious gifts, but they are secondary. In our corporate worship, our primary audience is not the congregation or angels but our triune God who intensifies our awareness of His presence, refreshes us in our spirits and transforms us into Christ's image.

Therefore, our worship leaders will envision themselves as servant leaders to encourage and support the church at large to treasure Christ and be filled with all the fullness of God. We must wholeheartedly pray for this because God is sovereign and we are powerless to generate this spiritual meeting between God and worshipper.

C. Our church worship has a secondary calculated purpose (reverence of God being primary), namely, to teach and transmit the faith entrusted to its care (Ephesians 5:18, 19).

While the primary aim of worship is a vertical celebration we embrace a horizontal dimension of responsibility (Colossians 3:16). In order of biblical importance, worship is 1) Celebration, 2) Edification, and 3) Preservation. We even imagine the possibility of evangelism being a by-product of our church worship (1 Corinthians 14:24-25, Acts 2:11).

Therefore, let our worship leadership be self-conscious about this dimension of discipleship as they encourage our church family in the singing of doctrine. In our preparations, when we select and sing sacred songs, let us consider the instruction of those young (in years and in faith) and the preservation of our precious faith in generations to come.

And therefore, though our worship services are not seeker-driven, let us be unashamed to welcome and invite non-Christian praying that they may be presented with the real God in all His fullness and get saved to join their voices with us in God's praise.

D. Our church worship will be flexible but orderly (1 Corinthians 14:26, 40).

In the New Testament, it is highly instructive that detailed guidelines for the form or style of corporate worship are lacking. The lack of specifics reminds us of the glorious liberty and freedom into which we have been brought (Galatians 5:1, 13). In contrast to the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit permanently indwells God's people in this New Testament era. So operating in the energy and power of the Spirit, within the boundaries of biblical principles, we may enjoy creative freedom and flexibility in our worship leadership choices as we seek to be lovingly sensitive to our own local church context.

Therefore, we'll be careful not to standardize ceremonial laws pertaining to worship from the Old Testament into our New Testament era (e.g. various requirements for singers and musicians). We'll be careful not to confuse biblically descriptive material with prescriptive material in our practice of worship. Instead, we'll be like the householder who is trained to "bring out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (Matthew 13:52). We will seek to be prayerfully wise, culturally-alert, imaginative and Christ exalting.

Consequently, on the one hand, we will be creative in our design of services, our selection of songs, *etc.*, in order to invoke fresh thinking regarding God's nature. Yet, on the other hand, some familiarity will allow us to focus on God instead of the newness and novelty of the material. Let us strive for balance being planned and orderly yet expectant and inspired to magnify our God.

C. Our worship will be practiced with love-limited freedom in all areas of Christian liberty that pertain to it (Romans 14; Galatians 5:13-14).

In matters that Scripture neither commands nor forbids there is liberty of conscience for the Christian (Romans 14:5). But everything permissible is not necessarily edifying or constructive (1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23). Thus Christian liberty in non-moral areas should always be exercised with loving restraint towards other Christians with weak consciences (1 Corinthians 8:9-13; 10:24-31; Romans 14:13-22).

Therefore, recognizing that our church worship involves stylistic ideas, decisions, and practices for which people may differ, our worship leadership must proactively gauge these differences to discern when love's restraint is required. Let us be willing to relinquish our rights of conscience for the love of weaker brothers and sisters who have hypersensitive feelings. This may apply to everything from what we wear to what we say or sing.

Furthermore, let us not become frustrated or judgmental towards those who differ in areas of liberty. May we be "both/and" worshippers. For example, let one brother say, "Amen" in his heart and let another declare it publicly. Let one sister raise her hands in prayer and let another refrain. Whether one instrument or a band, whether old hymn or new chorus, whether worship team or single worship leader, whether clapping or not, let us adorn our freedom in Christ and our love for one another as we appreciate every expression of devotion preferring one another ahead of ourselves.

Soli Deo Gloria.

Pastor Bill

Appendix

Some Suggested Reading Material on Biblical Worship

(see Pastor Bill to borrow any of these resources)

Allen, Ronald and Gordon Borrer. Worship: Rediscovering the Missing Jewel. Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1982.

Carson, D. A. "Worship Under the Word" in Worship by the Book. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002: 11-63.

Carson, Herbert M. Hallelujah! Hertfordshire, EN: Evangelical Press, 1980.

Chapell, Bryan. Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009.

Cymbala, Carol. He's Been Faithful. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

Frame, John M. Systematic Theology. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2013: 1037-1040.

Grudem, Wayne. Systematic Theology. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994: 1003-1015.

Kauflin, Bob. Worship Matters. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008.

MacArthur, John. The Ultimate Priority. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1983.

Noland, Rory. The Heart of the Artist: A Character building Guide for You and Your Ministry Team. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999.

Peterson, David. Engaged with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1992.

Pinson, Matthew. Perspectives on Christian Worship: 5 Views. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009.

Segler, Franklin M. Christian Worship: Its Theology and Practice. Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1967.

Tozer, A.W. Worship: The Missing Jewel of the Evangelical Church. Harrisburg, PA: Christian Pub. [n.d.].

Webber, Robert E. Worship is a Verb: Eight Principles for Transforming Worship. Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, 1996.

Whitney, Donald S. Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church: Participating Fully in the Body of Christ. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1996: 75-87.