

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Statement of Problem

In the last quarter century, Reformed churches have and continuing to experience decline. Most congregations are clear in recognizing the need for renewal in the life of the church. However, to identify a clear solution for such this issue has been a confounding dilemma. Much of the discussion in regards to how the church might reform itself has been divisive. Many may attempt to emulate large, contemporary evangelical churches as a model of success. Yet, others will turn inwardly by hunkering down to maintain and preserve the traditions because, in part, they are familiar. The issue of renewal is much more than a conflict in the preservation of tradition or the conformation to modernization. It is an issue of worship.

So what is worship? According to Oxford Dictionary, worship is defined as “the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity.”¹ As people of faith, when we worship God, do we express reverence and adoration in our worship? In what ways are they expressed? Would it make a difference in how we worship? And would the quality of our worship matter?

I believe a significant part of the problem is that we do not understand our own worship. Although we claim to worship God, our lack of understanding in our actions detracts us from fully participating and experiencing genuine worship. Worship that does not enable participants to encounter God and allow them to be transformed will not produce authenticity, and quite harshly, it can be deemed as irrelevant.

Rather than seeking to uncover the underlying issues of our worship, many churches react with the tendency to make quick the diagnose as “the change of times,” which immediately is followed by a prescription to change worship in the name of relevancy. Often, the prescription calls to “update” our worship by adding or subtracting various parts of the

¹ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/worship> (Accessed on April, 18, 2019)

liturgy. And one of the most common additions is the immediate plug-and-play of contemporary worship.

But before going any further, it must be made clear that contemporary worship is a culprit of the issues. But, the change can exacerbate and compounds the underlying issues because there results in the addition of another complexity – the introduction of a different form of worship that is theologically different in its engagement of God.

The purpose of this paper is not to challenge the biblical content of our faith or even Reformed doctrine. It is also not an indictment the Reformed tradition. Nor is it advocating for either contemporary or traditional styles of worship. Worship has a place for both. The purpose of this paper is to discover the meaning of Reform worship, to understand its advantages and limitations, and to discover and frame other traditions, particularly contemporary worship, in a way that can supplement our worship to enrich our acts of reverence and adoration.

1.2 Personal Interest

My faith has been shaped by Reformed theology for all of my life. As an infant, I was baptized in the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan in Chungli Presbyterian Church. Once my family immigrated to the United States, my confirmation took place at the age of 17 at Atlanta Taiwanese Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia.

In my teenage years, I actively began to be musically involved in my church. On occasions I would serve as the pianist for the Taiwanese service. However, most of my church participation occurred in praise and worship for the English service. This continued during my undergraduate years, where I served on my campus fellowship. My understands of worship began to develop and change during this time as my interest in theological knowledge increased. Through the guidance of church pastors, church co-workers, and mentors, my ideas about worship continue to evolve well into my professional life. I continue to lead worship at church and other functions, but I started to have a desire to teach and equip young musicians and worship leaders to engage and think deeper about worship.

This curiosity grew considerably once I began my M.Div. studies. Through the theological education I received in class, I began to reflect and challenge my understanding of worship. With the guidance of my professors, particularly my worship professor, it challenged me to think deeper and wider about the possibilities of worship.

Through the research of this paper, I hope to gain more insight into the realm of worship, to appreciate the vast possibilities to engage God and fellow believers, and to allow this research be a starting point of further discoveries.

1.3 Methodology:

1. To discover a biblical foundation for worship through surveying the Bible in both Old Testament and New Testament. The goal is to establish a base that is extrapolated through the historical context of scripture.
2. To understand worship in the Reformed perspective. This will be achieved by examining the works of John Calvin, to uncover the theological framework of and to highlight the underlying purpose of Reformed worship.
3. To understand contemporary worship through its historical development, thereby examining the theological foundation through its formation within the Pentecostal tradition.
4. In discovering the principles of Reformed and contemporary worship, an attempt will be offered to frame worship in the Reformed perspective while expanding its scope with the principle of contemporary worship.

It is my hope that this paper may shed light into the practice of Reformed worship, affirming its values, thereby opening the possibilities for a harmonious union with contemporary worship.

Chapter 2: Biblical Understanding of Worship

2.1 Introduction

In order to have a better understanding of what worship is, it is important to search for its place in scripture. Worship has always been an important role since the dawn of creation. Inside the hearts of all peoples are the desires of worship. Robert Webber says, “Between the pages of Genesis and Revelation the Scriptures portray a moving story, which depicts the themes of worship, of how God worked in human history to initiate a saving relationship with the people of the world.”² As such, worship begins with God. There are many instances of worship recorded throughout scripture.

2.2 The Old Testament

In Genesis, when God created all things, God delighted in the created works and shared it with the images of his creation, Adam and Eve. In the Garden of Eden, the two of them had a perfect relationship with God, being able to enjoy God’s presence, having the ability to live a life of complete worship. However, humanity soon forgot the reason for worship, turning their hearts away from God and toward their own sinfulness. Although they were no longer able to remain in the garden, God never left them, and they continued to seek and worship God. When Adam and Eve had their sons, Cain and Abel, the two brothers offered sacrifices to God as their affections for worship.³ Yet, in this act of worship grew the seed of contempt and jealousy that ultimately ended in the murder of a brother’s life.

Acts of rebellion against God continued to happen, which resulted in their judgement of the Flood. But after the event, Noah came out of the ark and then first and foremost, he built an altar in worship of God,⁴ and in this act, God again confirmed to humanity the purpose of worship. It is at this point that worship began to take on a covenantal aspect, as the rainbow is the sign of God’s promises to all creation. This theme develops further when the narrative turns to Abram. When God spoke to Abram and made a covenant with him,

² Robert Webber, *Worship Old and New*, Revised Edition, (Grand Rapids: Zandervan, 1994), 19.

³ Genesis 4:1-15

⁴ Genesis 8:20

Abram built an altar to express worship in the presence of God.⁵ What Genesis revealed is that the central object of worship, where worship properly belongs to, is God.

As scripture proceeded into Exodus, there began to develop an advancement in the form of worship. The simple altar sacrifice of the earlier system was beginning to be systematically formulated in the time of Moses. It was here that worship took on a communal aspect, that worship was practiced as corporate, not in small groups of people, but rather, all of Israel, the entire people of God.⁶ Exodus revealed the attitude in which the people worshiped God. It was socially and culturally purposeful, and it was an act of active participation for all of Israel.

By the period of the Judges, after King Solomon had built the temple, worship of Israel became more elaborate with many symbolic rituals. Careful details, such as space and time, became crucial to the act of worship. For instance, the layout of the temple, including all the ornaments and furnishing, was carefully and purposefully arranged according to God's own order. Furthermore, the sacred sense of the early tabernacle of Moses was further emphasized in this period. Webber stated that "the temple was characterized by a number of sacred rituals."⁷ Not only were there rules for sacrifices, but various types of sacrifices different occasions, such as burnt offering, fellowship offering, sin offering, and trespass offering.⁸ As such, sacrifice became intertwined with the act of worship. The worship of the Old Testament emphasized the holiness of God, culminating in the temple as highest form of worship to God.

However, when Israel was exiled from their lands, temple worship was no longer possible, so the form had to change. Because sacrifices were no longer possible, the focus of worship turned its attention unto reading and understand the scriptures.⁹ In the synagogues, the Word of God became the central element in shaping worship. Where there were various forms of worship, the centrality of scripture became the underlying element.

⁵ Genesis 12:8, 9; 13:18

⁶ Cf. Webber, *Worship*, 33.

⁷ Webber, *Worship*, 26.

⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁹ Cf. Nathaniel Micklem, *Christian Worship: Studies in Its History and Meaning*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 35-36.

In understanding these things about worship in the Old Testament, it can be clear that there were various ways to worship God. From a different vantage point, while worship in the Old Testament certainly contained forms and patterns, it can be said that these factors progressed and changed through time, adapting to the needs of the people at various points of their history. As such, worship in the Old Testament can be seen as a model for worship in which structure and inventiveness occurred at the same time. This dynamic and adaptive approach to worship means that not only can worship exist in structures and forms, it also allows the integration and union of various approaches.

2.3 The New Testament

The acts of worship in the New Testament first began with the account of birth of Jesus, recognized as the fulfillment of the promise to Israel.¹⁰ As the redemptive plan of God is realized through the incarnation of Christ, worship is transformed and expanded with new dimensions and meaning. This reshaping of worship began after Christ's ascension. As the disciples continued the ministry that Jesus started, they began to form and define the new communities of believers. As these communities of believers grew and expanded outside of Jerusalem, they began to receive people whose religious and cultural background differ from the worship of the synagogues.¹¹ As a result, there came a reinterpretation of the old traditions, leading to worship developing characteristics that were distinct and different from the traditions of Old Testament worship.

Worship in the Old Testament was only between God and the people of Israel. However, this dynamic changed as Christ reoriented the relationship between God and humanity, expanding the promise of God to all people. As such, Christ becomes the most important factor of worship in the New Testament, being the perfect sacrifice for the sin offering of the Old Testament through his redemption. As stated in John 14:6, "No one comes to the Father except through me," Christ is at the heart of reorientation, the change of what

¹⁰ Webber, *Worship*. 41. Mark 1:15.

¹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 45

worship is. Christ superseded the temple rituals of the Jews and became the source of worship itself.¹²

In the worship of the New Testament, there are three important elements distinguished it from the Old Testament. First, the worship of God involves the triune aspect of who God is, and this characteristic of God becomes the core of New Testament worship. In contrast, the Old Testament only acknowledged God the Father, the Creator, as the object of worship. Second, whereas Israel were the only people fit to worship God, New Testament reframed worship for humanity, granting access for all to be worshippers in Christ. Third, the worship experience is magnified by the work of the Holy Spirit through the outpouring of the love of Christ and the illumination of God's word.

Worship thus revealed that all believers were united. In Christ, all worshippers received the privilege to worship God, regardless of their background. This translates not only the relationship between an individual worshipper and God, it also transforms the relationship with other worshipers. The fellowship of believers thus becomes an important element of worship. This aspect is particularly highlighted throughout instances of meals within the New Testament.

¹² Cf. Webber, *Worship*, 48.

Chapter 3: Reformed Worship - John Calvin.

3.1 Introduction

John Calvin is the theologian that is widely considered synonymous with Reformed theology. His theological contributions remain models of religious scholarship and faith formation. As a reformer, Calvin's works help framed the theological map in which would later be known as Reformed theology. As such, his approach to worship ought to be seriously considered.

3.2 The Reformer

While Calvin is best known for systematic theology and biblical commentaries, he actually placed great importance in the role of worship. In 1543, he wrote a treatise, "On the Necessity of Reforming the Church," as an explanation and defense of the Reformation to Charles V., the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Near the beginning of the treatise, Calvin stated:

If it be inquired, then, by what things chiefly the Christian religion has a standing existence amongst us, and maintains its truth, it will be found that the following two not only occupy the principal place, but comprehend under them all the other parts, and consequently the whole substance of Christianity, viz., a knowledge, first, of the mode in which God is duly worshipped; and, secondly, of the source from which salvation is to be obtained.¹³

What is remarkable is that Calvin placed worship as the primary objective ahead of salvation as the two important elements of Christianity. This prominence given to worship reoccurred often in Calvin's works. For instance, in the *Institutes of Christian Religion*, Calvin pointed out the status of the first four of the Ten Commandments are related to worship. He

¹³ John Calvin, "On the Necessity of Reforming the Church," *Selected Works of John Calvin*, ed. by Henry Beveridge, vol. 1, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 126.

concluded by stating that "surely the first foundation of righteousness is the worship of God."¹⁴ But why was worship so often highlighted? According to Calvin, worship is the meeting place between God and people. The restoration of the fellowship between God and humanity is expressed most fully in worship. As the fellowship between the Creator and creation was broken by sin in rebellion, so ought its restoration be completed through obedience in God. Only when believers follow what God has commanded in the Word can true worship occur.

As such, Calvin's approach to worship holds scriptures as it's source. The Word must regulate worship that only what is explicitly commanded in the Bible may be an element of worship.¹⁵ Calvin recognize that human beings tend to think that through sincerity and fervor, they can substitute them for truth and faithfulness. This is a falsity due to the human condition: sin.¹⁶

Calvin based this caution about worship from the Fall. One of the most profound effects of the Fall for Calvin was that human beings have become idolaters.¹⁷ The seed of religion left in them does not lead them to the true God, but leads them to fashion gods of their own design. Pamela Meoller points out, "our inherent longing for truth succumbs to vanity."¹⁸ Human beings are not merely idolatrous, our whole nature "is a perpetual factory of idols."¹⁹

The temptation for idolatry requires believers to be very careful and vigilant in regulating their worship by the Scriptures. This caution on matters of worship reflected Calvin's belief that believers too often want to please themselves in worship rather than please God. Calvin related this human tendency of self-worship as a consequence in the desire to please the senses. While Calvin did not advocate for stripping the worship space of

¹⁴ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. by J.T. McNeill, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), II.viii.11.

¹⁵ Cf. Pamela Ann Meoller, *Calvin's Doxology: Worship in the 1559 Institutes with a View to Contemporary Worship Renewal*, (Allison Park: Pickwick, 1997), 154.

¹⁶ Cf. Meoller, *Calvin's's*, 152.

¹⁷ Cf. Meoller, *Calvin's's*, 19-21.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁹ Meoller, *Calvin's's*, 20.

all things that stimulate the sense, he does caution for the awareness of our tendency to be led astray if worship is not in obedience to the Word of God.²⁰

For Calvin, worship is not a means to an end. It is not a means to evangelize or entertain. Worship was an end in itself. Worship was not to be arranged by pragmatic considerations, but was rather to be determined by theological principles derived from the Scriptures. The most basic realities of the Christian life were involved. In worship God meets with his people to bless them. What could be more important? What should require more care and faithfulness?

3.3 Worship in Practice

The importance Calvin placed on worship is reflected in his involvement in reforming worship. Not only did Calvin develop a theology for worship, he was keen to view worship from a pastoral lens. This pastoral approach was apparent in his ministry, as he often would not only preach from the pulpit but would also lead worship as well. Calvin also prepared service books and liturgies for his churches in Strasbourg and then in Geneva. And with a focus on the Word, Calvin supported the use of Psalms as psalters to be sung by the congregation.

Calvin believed that the senses could lead to a wavering of the believer, leading away from worship into idolatry. In striving to uphold worship that is pleasing to God, Calvin removed all religious symbols within the worship space, including the cross.

As he worked to reform the church, several important influences played a role in the formation of his theology. Scripture, the Bible, was at the core of his discoveries. However, Calvin also sought the insight and wisdom of other reformers of his contemporaries. The most influential on his approach to worship was Martin Bucer. During Calvin's time of exile in 1535, he spent his years in Strasbourg under the care of Bucer. Using Bucer's liturgy as a guide, Calvin made adaptations in the process to form his own liturgy of worship, which he later would continue to use upon his return to Geneva in 1541.²¹ In this liturgy, Calvin

²⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 125.

²¹ Cf. Howard L. Rice and James C. Huffstutler, *Reformed Worship*, (Louisville: Geneva Press, 2001), 33.

desired the partaking of the Holy Communion on a weekly basis. However, he was never able to receive enough support to be able to do so. On the matter of communion, Calvin wrote in the *Institutes*:

It was not ordained to be received only once a year, rather it was ordained to be frequently used among all Christian in order that they might frequently return in memory to Christ's passion, by such remembrance to sustain and strength their faith and urge themselves to sing thanksgiving to God and to proclaim his goodness; finally by it to nourish mutual love, and among themselves give witness to this love, and discern its bond in the unity of Christ's body.²²

3.4 Principles of Worship

There are several principles that Calvin held in regards to his theology of worship. The first principle is the centrality of the Word of God. Worship is directed by the Word, and many contents within worship is found in scripture. Scripture is to be read, and the message of God should be preached. The Word should also be sung in one body, and it should also be seen through the partaking of the Holy communion. The gathering together, believers are able to meet God through engaging the Word. However, Calvin recognized that there are matters of worship that are not specified in scripture. For instance, the weekly Sunday gathering for worship is not addressed in the Bible. In such areas, Calvin pointed toward the Word as general guidelines to reach specific decisions that will be edifying for the church. Such decisions should be allowed to change when needed and should not be viewed as if they were a necessity for salvation.²³

The second principle for Calvin was simplicity in worship. The maturation of faith should not be dependent on elaborate and fantastical displays of worship. Calvin argued that Christ has already seated believers in the heavenly realms, so the need of visible support in

²² Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xvii.44.

²³ Cf. *Ibid.*, IV.x.27.

maturation of faith is not warranted.²⁴ However, simplicity does not equate to the absence of liturgical structure. Calvin's liturgy flows with movement from confession to praise, to preaching, to intercessions, to communion, shows a degree of sophistication. In this instance, simplicity meant the removal of physical symbols and rituals that were not instituted in the Word. In doing so, the stripping down of the ornamental and decorative aspects of worship thus allows a clearer relationship of spirituality. In this simplicity, the power of the Holy Spirit and the presence of Christ is not hindered or manipulated by the ornamental. The divine engagement thus is centerstage.

In relationship to simplicity is the third principle – spiritual ascent. For Calvin, believers are transported into the heaven realms while in the act of worship. During the active participation of worship, believers commune with Christ in heaven. The ascensional act of worship is both a mysterious event while being the foundation of the act of worship, particularly in the Holy Communion.²⁵ The event of ascent is part of the worship experience that flows from the salvific work of Christ.

Lastly, the fourth principle for Calvin was reverence. Reverence is indeed a basic element of Christianity for him:

Here indeed is pure and real religion: faith so joined with an earnest fear of God that this fear also embraces willing reverence, and carries with it such legitimate worship as is prescribed in the law. And we ought to note this fact even more diligently: all men have a vague general veneration of God, but very few really reverence him; and wherever there is great ostentation in ceremonies, sincerity of heart is rare indeed.²⁶

The worship of God must be expressed with significance, appropriate for the encountering of God and believers. Calvin wrote that “we have been adopted for this reason: to reverence him as our Father.”²⁷ This reverence is tempered in the moderation of emotion. Moderation is

²⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, IV.x.14.

²⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, IV.xvii.32.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, I.ii.2.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, III.xvii.6.

proper even in expressing joy. “Worship the Lord with reverence, and rejoice with trembling.”²⁸ As the congregation participate actively in worship, they must listen actively in faith to the preaching of the Word, join together to sing praise to God, and pray by lifting their hearts and minds to God. In doing so, these acts of the believers are the reverent participation to which God calls his people.

3.5 True Worship

For Calvin, worship is the action of the sincere faithfulness to the Word of God. Worship must not only be an outward obedient to God's inspired direction, it must a true and sincere expression of the heart. Worship would not be sufficient if it does not proceed from the heart. In true worship the believer exercises faith and repentance as he meets with God and grows in grace.²⁹ The outward form of worship and the inward adoration of the heart must remain firmly joined together.

Calvin's perspective on worship is evident throughout his theology. The nature of idolatry in humanity made it so that instincts and desires ought to be examined with suspicion in regards to worship. Yet, the sovereignty of God reveals God's grace in the act of worship. It is in these perspectives that emerged Calvin's desire to worship God in the truest and purest sense, to experience the joy of union with God in heaven.

²⁸ Psalm 2:11

²⁹ Calvin, “On the Necessity,” 126.

Chapter 4: Contemporary Worship

4.1 Introduction

The attempt to understand contemporary worship in all of its aspects is a daunting task. Because it is not exclusive to one particular theological tradition, tracing its developments can be quite the challenging. However, contemporary worship can trace its roots to Pentecostalism. As this is the case, contemporary worship in this paper will be defined by the approach of worship within the Pentecostal Tradition.

4.2 Historical Development of Pentecostal Movement

As a Protestant denomination, Pentecostalism is quite young in its inception, having only a history for a little over a hundred years. The theological basis of the movement based in the book of Acts, where the story a small group of people who remained in Jerusalem at the instruction of Jesus. The group gathered in an upper room, and they remained steadfastly in prayer. All of the sudden, they undergo a profoundly spiritual experience:

And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.³⁰

This event, which would later be referred to as the "Day of Pentecost," is the foundation upon which the Pentecostal movement is built upon.

In traditional Pentecostalism, an emphasis is placed on having a direct and personal experience with God through baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is distinguished differently from baptism with water.³¹ The baptism of the Holy Spirit is characterized by being bestowed the gifts of the Spirit, which is signaled through gifts such as tongues, healing, and prophecy. The emphasis in Pentecostal worship is on the immediacy of the Spirit and not on scripture, however, scripture is frequently cited to justify the practices that have developed.³²

³⁰ Acts 2:2-4.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Cf. Ibid.

Pentecostalism is widely believed to have started through a series of revivalist prayer meetings held in Los Angeles at the turn of the twentieth century. Through devoted evangelical work, the movement spread swiftly to Canada, so that by 1910, Pentecostal meetings were being held in the homes of various Toronto residents. The movement began to experience a spiritual awakening throughout various places in North America.³³

4.3 Early Developments

In the beginning of Pentecostalism, all leaders preached the doctrine of sanctification as a "second work of grace"³⁴ and the "third blessing"³⁵ as the baptism in the Holy Spirit, with speaking in tongues as the evidence. This teaching and doctrinal statement on the baptism in the Holy Spirit makes the Pentecostal churches distinctive.

The importance given to the emotional experience cannot be overstated. It was thought by many in the holiness tradition that emotional experiences were necessary to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This emphasis on emotion would play a vital part in developing the Pentecostal revival. The acceptance of the "witness of tongues" became the identifying factor of the Pentecostal movement, but this created a divide into two camps, those who accepted the "witness of tongues" and those who did not.³⁶ However, as more and more of experiences of spiritual revivals were taking place, it contributed develop within the holiness revival the association of emotional evidence with the "baptism in the Spirit." By the late 19th century, the Pentecost became the major emphasis of the holiness movement.

However, as time progressed, the Pentecostal movement began to receive individuals who did not identify with the doctrine of the "second blessing," with many considering themselves as Baptists. For the Baptists, "there were only two works of grace, the regeneration of the believer, and his subsequent filling with the Spirit, evidenced by tongues, as an enduement for service. William H. Durham, a Baptist who had received the Baptism

³³ Cf. Swee Hong Lim and Lester Ruth, *Loving on Jesus: a Concise History of Contemporary Worship*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017), 17

³⁴ Or sometimes call the "second blessing." It is the receiving of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that follows the grace received when a believer is first saved.

³⁵ The blessing of the Holy Spirit in receiving spiritual gifts. Usually manifests in the gift of tongues.

³⁶ Cf. Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1987), 65.

and Pentecostal experience, helped bring the conflict to the forefront. Durham did not agree with the Wesleyan doctrines and launched a campaign to discredit the view.³⁷ He was able to infiltrate the Pentecostals had achieve moderate success in spreading his dissenting views, with thousands regularly coming to hear him preach at the Azusa Street Mission. By doing so, Durham had captured a large portion of the Pentecostals in Los Angeles.

By the year 1913 many of the holiness denominations were becoming Pentecostal. However, there were still many small independent Pentecostal churches. An invitation was sent to these independent churches for a "General Convention of Pentecostal saints and churches of God in Christ,"³⁸ and at this meeting, the Assemblies of God was established. The mission of the newly founded church was to officially organize the churches of Pentecostalism. It is interesting to note that at the first meeting, no doctrinal platform was adopted, although Durham's view of sanctification was implied. Salvation and the baptism in the Holy Spirit were the only experiences identified at this meeting. The new denomination also sought in its mission to unify the two different theologies.³⁹

By the year 1916, at a General Council meeting, a view of sanctification and strong trinitarian statement were developed.⁴⁰ As a result of this meeting, any minister that did not agree was asked to leave. It was not until 1945 that the separate movement form a unified organization called the United Pentecostal Church. The United Pentecostal Church great emphasized on being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking with other tongues, and baptism in Jesus' name.

The distinctive characteristics of Pentecostalism are the manifestations of speaking in tongues and the practice of divine healing. Pentecostal believers today are classified as either classical Pentecostals, Neo- Pentecostals, or Charismatics. Classical Pentecostals are those whose origins date back to the beginning of this century and as associated with the Assemblies of God. Neo-Pentecostals are those within "mainline churches" who accept the baptism in the Holy Spirit but choose to stay within their denomination. Charismatic as those

³⁷ Cf. Ibid. 91.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

who affirms the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, outside the framework of classical Pentecostalism in affiliation or doctrine.⁴¹

4.4 Sacramentality of Worship

A Pentecostal theology of worship is still in the making. Its distinctiveness and common practices are yet to be fully determined or developed. Because of the Pentecostal movement's roots in the Wesleyan tradition, much of the theological emphasis has been upon holiness and not orthodox, liturgical praxis. However, there are still identifiable features of contemporary worship that could be considered sacramental to this approach to worship.

One of the distinctive elements of contemporary worship has been the idea of divine presence through congregational song, transforming into systems of theology and praxis.⁴² To achieve this, a uniquely strong connection between music and divine presence has been formed within contemporary worship. This approach is justified with evidence from scripture, such as Psalm 96:1, "Sing to the Lord a new song," supporting the continuous creation of new worship songs, and 1 Corinthians 9:22, "I have become all things to all people," the support to try new styles and genres to reach more people. Together, these verses establish a sense of experiencing God that encourages a cooperate approach in experiencing the divine presence of God. A crucial drive for this approach is the desire for authenticity. In creating new songs while using new methods, this serves as a way of declaring the values in which the worshipper can affirm and declare to be an accurate reflection of their beliefs.⁴³ It is the strife for a precise reflection of faith that the worshipper can acutely identify with.

Another distinctive element is in the missiology of contemporary worship.⁴⁴ As a part of the legacy of the Second Great Awakening, contemporary worship seeks to invite and reach those that may be intimidated by the liturgical hurdle of mainline churches. Because the ordo of contemporary worship is simple, this makes contemporary worship more accessible

⁴¹ Gee, *The Pentecostal Movement*, 56.

⁴² Swee Hong Lim and Lester Ruth, *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017), 121.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

to those who have never set foot in a church. With the worship emphasizing to be identifiable, the hurdles for outreach becomes less intimidating, and it allows for quicker acclimation into the church for new believers.

A large distinctive of contemporary worship is experience. This experience is placed on the divine interaction with the Holy Spirit. This is foundational and paramount to contemporary worship, particularly of Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions. Worship is “designed to provide a context for mystical encounter, an experience with the divine.”⁴⁵ When the worship leader says, “Let’s enter into the presence of the Lord,” it is not merely rhetoric. The mode in which contemporary worship acts is to facilitate the process of entering into the presence of God. It’s music and ritual actions and words function to stimulate the worshippers to enter into the reality of the divine. By using instrumental swells and repetitive lyrics, it seeks to encourage the worshipper to experience God in the spirit, to enter into the portal where the divine eagerly awaits to anoint the gifts of the Spirit.

At the heart of contemporary worship is to encounter and experience God of the entire being. And in this experience, God empowers and commissions, manifesting power into the world. This manifestation of power has “a sacramental quality.”⁴⁶ The Spirit of God empowers the individual to live life in a way that affirms the presence of God in their daily life. This also acts as a commission from God, to be sent out to accomplish the work of God. Thus, contemporary worship is the space in which God empowers through the Spirit to commission for the work of the Lord. (This is good but in reality, people don’t usually put this into practice)

While in recent years, a major shift of direction in many Pentecostal churches have moved toward sharing contacts with other traditions, which have influenced their doctrines and confessions of faith. As such, many Pentecostals have moved toward a commitment toward biblical authority, although spiritual gifts as still very much a part of the movement. Likewise, other Protestant traditions have also become eager to learn from Pentecostals, as

⁴⁵ Daniel E. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 239.

⁴⁶ Albrecht, *Rites*, 247.

wider ecumenical views toward church has been established. As such, the most visible Pentecostal influence across many denominations, including Reformed churches, is use the use of “praise songs” and the three-fold liturgy of worship. As such, how can the Reformed church integrate contemporary worship without compromising its values and beliefs?

Chapter 5: Contemporary and Reformed

5.1 Introduction

In recent years, there is a shift in idea from Scripture to the recovery of some of the practices of the early Christian church to a review of Reformed practices. Its central premise was that public worship is dialogical, that "God speaks and people listen; people speak with the assurance that God listens."⁴⁷ At the same time, there is the increase of the blending of various traditions in worship within the confines of Reformed theology, with contemporary worship being one of the largest influencers, particularly with younger generation. How can the church engage this new reality without losing its identity and distinctness as the Reformed church. Below are a few points to consider.

5.2 Beyond Reformed Tradition

One characteristic of late twentieth century worship is that many traditions, Protestant as well as Catholic, are borrowing from each other. Each are often borrowing, or more accurately precisely, recovering resources and practices from early sources that predate the sixteenth century Reformation. The ecumenical liturgical movement in the twentieth century has its roots in a study of worship in the early church, a heritage shared by all Christian traditions.

However, the Pentecostal and Charismatic worship has gained the most ground in churches around the world for the past several decades. And this trend is likely to continue. But this approach often overtakes and dominates other traditions, and it cannot by itself support Reformed worship. Churches that primarily follow the praise and worship model will come to find that they need to move toward a more inclusive direction or they may eventually be severed from the roots of Reformed worship.

5.2.1 Sing Psalms.

The Reformed church should return to treasuring the psalms and restore its distinctiveness in worship. As the Reformed church looked toward the outside for different sources, it has loss suffer the loss of the gift of Psalms. Meanwhile, denominations in both the liturgical and the charismatic traditions have rediscovered the importance of the psalms for worship. This should not be done for the sake of keeping tradition, but rather, it is the act of

⁴⁷ Rice, *Reformed*, 145.

further elevating the Word as central to worship. The singing of songs from scripture will add more depth and enrich the act of worship, allow God's Word to resonate with the body and soul. This will continue to strengthen the foundations of faith, experiencing the grace of God through the Word of God.

5.2.2 From Rational to Effective.

The way in which believers experiencing God in worship have shifted from the rational toward the effective. The language of daily life has shifted from expressions of "I think" to "I feel." As such, there is a yearning to experience and encounter God in worship, a desire for nourishing for the mind, body, and soul.

While contemporary worship seeks to accomplish this, there is an overemphasis placed on fulfilling the need to engage the heart in meeting with God. In doing so, there results a lack of content and substance that can truly satisfy the whole being. This can lead to a worship that only serves for instant gratification, which counterfeits God with gimmicks to trick the heart, perverting worship to be self-serving. This is the danger in foregoing thoughtful judgment and theologically sound content in the interest of emotional power. As Calvin stated, worshippers then can make real the factory of idols, creating a worship that is not obedient to God but only for the individual.

5.2.3 Uphold Structure

One of the dangers of contemporary worship service is in the lack of historical framework or structure of in its worship. Webber strongly maintained the historic pattern of Christian worship.⁴⁸ Webber states that pattern holds true no matter the style churches. The historic structure of worship includes the elements of Gathering, Word, Lord's Supper, Response, and Sending.⁴⁹ The inclusion of these elements allow for holistic and full engagement in the act of worship.

As stated earlier, Calvin argued for the weekly partaking of the Lord's Supper. Unfortunately, he was unable to do so. The church may have been reluctant to partake the Lord's Supper in fear of being associated with hierarchical approaches to worship. However, this fear is no longer applicable in current times. Perhaps further studies by the Reformed church can be made into the frequency of Holy Communion.

⁴⁸ Cf. Webber, *Worship*, 150.

⁴⁹ Cf. Jeffery A. Truscott, *Worship: A Practical Guide*, (Singapore: Genesis Books, 2011), 123-202.

5.2.4 The Role of Music

“Music witnesses to the transcendence of God and to his work of salvation.”⁵⁰ It is in this important and crucial role that music plays in worship. Not only does music set the mood and tones of worship, it engages the person that stirs the heart and the soul as well. That is the power of music. It is in this lens that music must be view in worship. A few points about music:

First, music is the means through which the church in worship joins the heavenly song, offers otherwise unutterable praises, and experiences the unity of the body of Christ.⁵¹ Music allows worshippers to express themselves in a way that is otherwise inexpressible. It is the avenue in church words are inadequate to express. Through melodic lines and rhythmic patterns, music is able to convey depth of emotions, from the highs of joy and excitement, to the depths of sorrow and pain. Thoughtful consideration must be given into the music used during worship.

Second, music expresses the worship of proclamation, meditation, and praise and thus affects the attitude of the worshiper.⁵² The deployment of music in worship ought to be in line with the what the worship is desiring to achieve. As music convey a message, the message should coincide with the action that is taking place in worship. A well paired music can elevate the worship experience exponentially.

Third, the use of music has undergone a number of significant changes throughout history. Consequently, there are a variety of musical sounds in the church, many of which are reflective of particular historical periods or ethnic groups. Thus, the church has a rich depository of music from which to draw for worship renewal.⁵³ Allow the diversity of music to enrich the worship experience. Exposing worshipper to different types of music can allow the mind to be taken into a imaginative place, to experience God is a new and exciting way. Do not limit the gifts that could be received out of fear or unfamiliarity. Let music transport the worshiper to new experience with God.

5.3 Conclusion

The challenge of future worship is to identify those choruses and spiritual songs that have lasting value, to retain the music from the past that is characterized by depth and a

⁵⁰ Webber, *Worship*, 195.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 203.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

power, and to combine these many forms of music into an order of worship that remembers, proclaims, enacts, and celebrates the story of salvation. While some churches will continue to remain hymn-singing churches only, and other churches will insist on being chorus-singing churches only, the majority of churches are likely to find ways to incorporate both the richness and dignity of the hymns of the church with the inspiration and relevance of gospel songs and contemporary choruses.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The understanding that the church cannot afford to stand still any longer is ever pressing. A church that only look toward self-preservation only leads to its demise, for the Gospel is no longer alive. Yet, to take a leap toward change means to be confronted with the unknown. However, blindly chasing trends for the sake of growth is also not the solution. In the ever-present post-religious world, what the church needs to ask itself is what does it mean to be Christian? What does it mean to be Reformed? It is only in seeking answers to these questions can possibilities be found.

A large part of the problem is that the church lacks the vision to understand its own worship. Without fully engaging in its own practices, a genuine fellowship and union with God cannot and should not be expected. Can worship that lacks knowledge truly be a reflection of faith? Anselm, a profound medieval theologian, coin the phrase *fides quaerens intellectum*, which translates to “faith seeking understanding.”⁵⁴ As people that profess faith, there must be a desire to seek for knowledge in the practices of faith. Only when the church genuinely engage in worship, an act of faith, can it lead people to toward an authentic experience with God.

Through recognizing the values of worship can there truly be room for diversity. By having a firm foundation, the opportunities for diversity can lead to expressions of new possibilities of worship. Exploring diversity in worship allows for new ways to experience God. Celebration and implementation of diverse expression expands the scope to see and experience God. It creates a new and authentic way of worship that also deepens the expressions of worship and encounters with God. Worship needs to be a dynamic contour that moves through and expresses a full range of human emotions as well as intellectual concepts. Reformed strengths in solid biblical scholarship and intellectual interpretation can only be enhanced by the exploration of this expression.

⁵⁴ Cf. John D. Witvliet, *Worship Seeking Understanding: Windows into Christian Practice*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 13.

There is a future for Reformed worship. However, the church must not abandon its roots. Rather, through reclaiming of values in which were fundamental to the Reformed church can the possibilities of new and diverse worship exist. We must encourage the church to hold strong and press forward, to not be afraid to look toward the future, but to keep the foundations of the past close, so that humanity can truly worship and enjoy God forever.

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