

Authentic Worship

Contributed by Rev. Ken Ponders
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As never before, there is a real hunger in people's hearts for authentic worship/spiritual experience. This younger generation is not interested in empty form but in reality...in truly experiencing and glorifying the Lord.

Traditional worship (by definition) is based on the traditions of that particular group. Some of those traditions are meaningful and some are empty (meaningless). Often times the elements of traditional worship styles are antiquated. For example, they sing songs and play music from past generations (sometimes from hundreds of years ago). Many times there are rules (unwritten) to the worship experience that only an insider would know. Unless someone grew up in that tradition, it is totally meaningless to them and may even seem ridiculous. They sing nineteenth century German hymns but there are no nineteenth century Germans present.

Contemporary worship is far more appealing to many people (especially young people) because it allows us to enter the presence of the Lord in a way that is honoring to Him while at the same time being relevant and appealing to us. It is communicating to Him and with Him in the language and culture that we know and understand.

I have the opportunity to be in different churches every week all around the world and there is a definite shift toward contemporary worship and casual attire. My experience preaching in these churches (as well as traditional churches) is that the people in the contemporary setting tend to be more open to the Word and ready to respond and apply it to their life. Their desire for up to date music, attire, and communication seem to flow from a desire for a spiritual experience that is relevant and meaningful to everyday life (not just Sunday in one specific place).

In many traditional churches (not all) the tendency seems to be a "form" rather than substance. There tends to be opposition to change. There is many times a sense of duty in being in the service rather than a burning passion for more of His presence. Of course, there is a resistance to contemporary worship because it violates the traditions (how we have always done it) and the "ancient and outdated" is viewed as being more holy.

Jesus told the woman (that He ministered to) at the well that "those who worship (ascribe worth) must do so in Spirit (with the heart) and Truth (in reality). David repeatedly said throughout the Psalms, "I will worship with all my heart in every way and form possible." I believe that is what the Lord desires from us. He wants to find a heart abandoned to Him that is being manifested through our outward expression of praise and worship (no matter what form that worship experience is takes).