

Worship Services?

Introduction

I have talked about the importance of mutual edification as being the basis of the meetings of the local church many times (e.g. 'The Grace of Fellowship') but in this paper I wish to examine more on the subject of worship in the church.

Basic Biblical proposition: we are all worshippers all the time

This must be emphasised. Every believer is a worshipper and his worship never stops. A saint does not go to worship but is a worshipper and when he meets with other believers they will all worship together.

This does not mean that one is mouthing praise non-stop but rather than he has a constant worshipful attitude in his heart which frequently breaks out into smaller or larger expressions of praise. There may be stimuli for this; there may not be. For example a person may see a wonderful sunset, be worshipful and then utter praise or thanks. On another occasion a person may simply be in prayer and then be caught up in worship with no external stimulus. Worship comes before praise; praise is the result of worship.

We were created to be worshippers. Our job is to glorify God and celebrate his holiness, wisdom and goodness. After the return of Christ when believers are changed, this will be a constant preoccupation in spiritual perfection. Until then, despite our human weaknesses, we still worship God throughout the day, even as we do practical chores.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. Rm 12:1

'Service' here is *latreia* meaning: 'service or ministration based in worship, the service of God, the service and worship of God, religious rites'. It is often translated as 'worship'. The NAS and NAB have 'service of worship'. The RSV and NRSV have 'spiritual worship'. BBE has 'worship'.

Other occasions of cognate words include:

But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. Acts 24:14

For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Phil 3:3

Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. Heb 9:1

The priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. Heb 9:6

It *was* symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience. Heb 9:9

For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshippers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. Heb 10:2

‘And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge’, said God, ‘and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place’. Acts 7:7

Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven. Acts 7:42

Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. Rev 7:15

And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. Rev 22:3

In every case where ‘service’ is used, ‘worship’ works just as well.

Our bodies are to be constantly presented to God as a living sacrifice. Paul has in mind a burnt offering given wholly to God. Our reasonable worship is to present our whole life to God to serve his testimony. Worship involves all of us all the time.

In the days of the Tabernacle there was a ‘continual burnt offering’ operating all the time (Exod 29:38-42; Lev 6:9-13). On the Sabbath this was doubled (Num 28:9-10). There were also burnt offerings at the Passover, Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement and other occasions such as the consecration of Aaron or the temple. There were also free-will burnt offerings as an occasion demanded, such as the accession of Solomon or Hezekiah’s reformation.

The burnt offering was different in that the entire animal was sacrificed; in the other bloody offerings only part of the animal was burned. Thus it is also called a ‘whole burnt offering’. This was the commonest offering and the only one mentioned in Genesis. Note the offerings by Abel (Gen 4:3, 4), Noah (Gen 8:20), Abraham (Gen 22:2, 7, 8, 13) and by the Hebrews in Egypt (Exod 10:25).

This offering signified the complete dedication of the offerer unto God. It represented total consecration to God; which is why Paul has this offering in mind in Rm 12:1.

This proves that believers are always to be worshippers. We must not think of worship as an event that we go to. It is not a meeting; it is what we are.

What is worship?

We have already established that worship is divine service, but what exactly is this service? What is the basis of our service that makes it worship?

This is best explained by looking at the words God chose to describe it

Proskuneo

The main NT word for ‘worship’ is *proskuneo*. It means: ‘to kiss the hand towards one, in token of reverence’. It implies a falling upon the knees and touching the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence – and this was how it was acted out in the Ancient Near East. In the NT it means kneeling or prostration to do homage or make obeisance shown to beings of superior rank.

In other words it implies a complete submission and dedication to one worthy of great honour.

Here are the examples:

Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him. Matt 2:2

And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him*, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also'. Matt 2:8

And he said to Him, 'All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me'. Matt 4:9

Then Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve"'. Matt 4:10

Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. Matt 20:20

Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours. Lk 4:7

And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve"'. Lk 4:8

And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Lk 24:52

Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship. Jn 4:20

Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father'. Jn 4:21

You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. Jn 4:22

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. Jn 4:23

God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. Jn 4:24

Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Jn 12:20

You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, And the star of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; And I will carry you away beyond Babylon. Acts 7:43

So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship. Acts 8:27

Because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. Acts 24:11

And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you. 1 Cor 14:25

But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: 'Let all the angels of God worship Him'. Heb 1:6

Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie -- indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Rev 3:9

The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne. Rev 4:10

But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. Rev 9:20

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Rev 13:8

And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. Rev 13:12

He was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. Rev 13:15

Saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water'. Rev 14:7

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand'. Rev 14:9

And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name. Rev 14:11

Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For *You* alone *are* holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested. Rev 15:4

And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, 'See *that you do not do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy'. Rev 19:10

Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Rev 22:8

John is the apostle that uses the word the most. Paul hardly uses it at all. Thus Paul is concerned with worshipful service but John is concerned with veneration. This is because John's testimony involved seeing Jesus in his glory as love, light and life (Jn 1:14, 2:11, 11:40, 12:41; 1 Jn 1:1-2). [Each apostle has his own revelation of the Lord and gives his own experience and viewpoint; also each has his own vocation.]

Proskuneo is thus summarised as: 'The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne' (Rev 4:10).

This does not involve activity; it is an attitude of heart physically expressed in reverence. The activity involved in external worship is better represented by the word 'praise'. Thus worship is usually silent while praise is expressive.

Worship and praise

Psalm 95 illustrates this well:

Praise

1 Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving [*towdah* - praise]; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.

Reason for praise: objective things; God as Creator

3 For the LORD *is* the great God, And the great King above all gods.

4 In His hand *are* the deep places of the earth; The heights of the hills *are* His also.

5 The sea *is* His, for He made it; And His hands formed the dry *land*.

Worship

6 Oh come, let us worship [*shachah*] and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.

Reason for worship: subjective things; God as our Father

7 For He *is* our God, and we *are* the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.

Praise involves: singing, shouting joyfully, thanksgiving; worship involves kneeling and bowing down.

Praise follows a specific external stimulus, such as a deliverance from trouble, which results in thanksgiving; worship is a reaction to God's personal glory and splendour.

Praise is usually associated with corporate expression in church meetings. There is nothing wrong with that. However, the phrase 'sacrifice of praise' like 'worship' is meant to be continual throughout one's life, not reserved especially for corporate gatherings.

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Heb 13:15-16

The context of this verse is 'Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come' (verses 13-14). Therefore it is not restricted to church meetings but our external testimony in the world. Our praise to God should also be continual as we find opportunity and cause everyday.

In fact, in the NT the word 'praise' is not often used with reference to God. It is used of men and false praise, but only as godly praise 12 times. Praise is not as important as worship.

Lesser words

Sebomai: to revere, to worship. Matt 15:9; Mk 7:7; Acts 18:13, 19:27.

Eusebeo: to act piously or reverently towards God, one's country, magistrates, relations, and all to whom dutiful regard or reverence is due. Acts 17:23.

Superficial worship

False worship is *threskeia*: religious worship especially that which is external; that which consists of mere ceremonies; religious discipline.

Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. Col 2:18

This is important. The worship involved in rituals, something external, is *threskeia* not *proskuneo*. *Threskeia* is only used of the false worship of angels in the NT.

We can directly apply this to Charismatic worship, which is based upon ceremony and ritual. Modern worship services are not *proskuneo* but *threskeia*. Mark this well.

Services

Most modern churchgoers talk about their meetings as a 'service' and that going to church is service to God. The church building notice-board will advertise the times of 'church services'.

We cannot supply Greek words used for this because they do not exist. Church meetings are never called 'services' in the NT.

This is actually a failure to understand what church meetings are for and what God's purpose is. We don't gather to serve God because we should be serving him all the time; we gather to serve one another in order to edify the body. Mutual edification builds up the body.

Spirit and truth

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. Jn 4:23-24

The basis of true worship is spirit and truth. Worship arises from spiritual doctrine.

First note that Jesus speaks of true worshippers. This means that there are also false worshippers. No one can presume that their worship is true unless they fulfil the conditions of true worship, which is a foundation in spirit and truth: the essence of the spiritual is the life of God; the centre of truth is Christ (Jn 14:6). Thus true worship focuses on God and Christ.

Now false worship amongst heathens is easy to spot, but most Christians seem to be unaware of the false worship that occurs in churches. Just because a church conducts a worship service in a certain way does not mean that this is true worship.

Any worship that is based upon a lie is false worship. Any church whose worship is based upon souliness¹ or the flesh² is false worship. There is the worship of the old nature (e.g. Cain, Saul) and the worship of the new nature (e.g. David). New nature worship, based upon spirit and truth, is godly because it is centred in Christ, the source of the new nature.

True worship stems from the cross. The blood of Christ purifies and enables your fellowship with God, just as Isaiah needed coals from the altar to purify his communion (Isa 6:1-7). The old nature is not cleansed by the cross but is destined for death and we fight to put off the old man pending its removal at the end. The new nature is always in communion with God and is thus the basis of worship from the spirit.

The human spirit is the dwelling place of the whole Trinity; this is why it is a source of true worship – it comes from God and returns to God. It is spiritual – not earthly, not worldly, not fleshly, not satanic.

For worship to be true it must be Biblical – it must be centred on God's word. In apostolic terms, it means that worship must be New Covenant – following the Law of Christ and not the Law of Moses.

Types of false worship

- Superficial worship. This is surface praise that has no depth. It is following a formal liturgy with no commitment. It is common in Anglican meetings.

¹ That is something not spiritual but emanating from man.

² That is, the soul given over to the old nature.

- **Worldly worship.** This follows the characteristics of the world. For example, worship that requires instrumental music, human control or light shows.
- **Fleshly worship.** This is when the soul is given over to the old nature and it can take many forms of sinfulness. Worship that results in sinful pursuits, such as fornication, is fleshly worship. [Unbelievably, worship has led to fornication throughout church history, mainly in cults with domineering leaders and a mainly female congregation. The Children of God is one example.]
- **Earthly worship.** This is worship that accepts something lower than divine worship. It is satisfied with human factors rather than truth. People who go to church meetings chiefly to socialise are following earthly worship. Many Emerging Churches practice earthly, humanistic worship. Churches based upon communes is another example.
- **Soulish worship.** This is worship based upon the human soul and not the spirit. This can take many forms: it can be emotionalism, intellectualism or wilful. The worship of people who go to a church meeting to hear their favourite preacher and consider little else is intellectual worship. When people go to a meeting just to get an uplift of feelings in the worship time is emotional worship. The worship based upon a dominating leader who enforces his will upon a congregation is wilful worship; the Lakeland 'Revival' was an example of this. Mysticism is hyper-emotionalism.
- **Demonic worship.** This is when fleshly worship descends further into the abyss and follows demonic temptations. This happened regularly in the Toronto Blessing. Another example is idolatry, such as the worship of statues of Mary in Roman churches or icons in Eastern Orthodox churches. Another example is following demonic doctrines (1 Tim 4:1) as the basis of worship.

The New Covenant

The context of Jesus' discourse is the difference between Old Covenant forms of worship and that of the New Covenant, which is based on spirit and truth.

The New Covenant is what Jesus brought in through his atoning work on the cross. This ended the Old Covenant in all its forms and established a new paradigm so that everything is new. There is a new song, a New Covenant, a new nature, new wineskins, a new teaching, a new commandment, a new creation, a new name, a new Jerusalem, a new heaven and earth.

Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new'. Rev 21:5

The cancellation of the Old Covenant (Heb 8:13) means that all the realms of shadows have been rescinded; they no longer operate. Any attempt to revive them is blasphemy – trying to undo what God has done. Thus all aspects of Old Covenant worship are abrogated. This includes, musical instruments, blood offerings, a priesthood, vestments, a temple, an altar, a sanctuary, feast days, fast days, festivals, holy oil, incense and everything else. The revival of many of these in Pentecostalism, Messianic Christianity and Charismania is blasphemy (see later). The pollution of these modern forms of Old Covenant religion is a deliberate satanic strategy that many have fallen for.

The centre of New Covenant worship is very simple; it is Christ manifested in the fellowship of believers (who are all priests). We don't need rock bands, light shows, buildings, stages, worship leaders, choirs, or even a liturgy. We just need Christ and each other, 'For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them' (Matt 18:20).

Church meetings are not for worship sessions but edification

There are three aspects to ministry in the church: God to men; men to God and men to men. Church services should be triangulated between these for best results.

However, most churchgoers believe that they go to church to serve God not each other; such as to offer praise. However, God's word does not tell us this at all. In fact, the focus God brings to our attention in the NT is mutual edification. There is no verse that tells us to gather in order to worship.

There will be worship in church meetings because believers are worshippers and worship all the time, but the purpose of meetings is to develop and equip the saints through mutual edification. We meet to edify and encourage one another. The point is to build the church up to make it effective (Eph 4:11-15).

This is why a sermon is never mentioned as being essential or even present at all. Never! The reason is that a sermon is perhaps the worst method of teaching anyone. People remember so little of what is preached at them because they are not directly involved. RL Dabney reckoned only 4% was retained. Jesus never preached to the disciples but taught them (didactics) and answered their questions.

Sermons in the NT are directed at outsiders and are mentioned in terms meaning proclamation or heralded, but are usually translated as 'preach'.³ Christians are never preached at in Biblical church meetings, they are pastored. There are no sermons in NT churches but dialogues (Acts 20:7). Sermons are for outsiders. The so-called 'sermon on the mount' (Matt 5+) is described as instruction not preaching; *didasko* (Matt 5:2) i.e. didactics. This summarised record did not bother to include all that was said, which probably included questions. But in any case this is not a church meeting but proclamation of the Gospel.

There is proclamation and bringing good news in the church, but this is not necessarily sermonic in format (Acts 20:25 - *kerusso*; 1 Cor 2:4 - *kerugma*; Acts 5:42 *euaggelizo*). A Greek word meaning 'to preach a sermon' is never used for the instruction of God's people in churches. The idea is absent. In fact, the English word 'sermon' does not appear in the NKJ version of the Bible at all. How could sermons become so dominant in church history when the word isn't even in the Bible?⁴ Sermons lead to a focus upon one man when the church is meant to be mutual edification, 'the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all' (1 Cor 12:7).

See the repeated mentions of 'edification' and 'edify' in the NT. We come together to edify, encourage and admonish one another. In fact the phrase 'one another' occurs nearly 60 times in the NT; we minister to one another. The idea of one man dominating a meeting and doing all the talking is completely opposite to the instruction of the apostles and inimical to the idea of fellowship. There is not even a single dominating leader in Biblical churches but always a team of equal elders.

To avoid repetition, see my paper 'The grace of fellowship' and other papers for more data on this.

³ *Kerusso* (proclaim), *kerugma* (that which is proclaimed), *euaggelizo* (bring good news), *laleo* (speak), *kataggelio* (announce), *parrhesiazomai* (speak boldly), *prokerusso* (announce beforehand).

⁴ The answer is that it was part of the secular things brought into the church by the early fathers. Sermons were a common Greek method of public speaking and debate, or even entertainment. The fathers abandoned one-anothering and established a clergy/laity split, authoritarian bishops and formal liturgies.

Since mutual edification is the centre of church meetings it is thus obvious that worship is not the focus when we gather together. We do not meet as the church in order to worship together – we fellowship to edify one another. This means every member participation in teaching, encouragement, exhortation and admonishment. Even the singing is meant to be one-anothering (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16).

The Lord's Supper is centred in the midst of fellowship with everyone participating and set in the context of a fellowship meal. This memorial of the Lord clearly involves worship because it is done by worshippers, but the context is fellowship.

So the idea of gathering together and spending half of the time (or even more) 'worshipping' (that is, offering sung praise with little intellectual content) has no Biblical basis whatsoever; in fact it is an Old Covenant idea.

This Old Covenant Mosaic form developed via the early church fathers, Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism into common acceptance. While the Reformation did much theologically, it did little to reform church meetings and much of the Roman forms remained in Protestant churches but the overt idolatry was stripped back. Thus the idea of a worship time based on a liturgy is a human construct added to the church in error.

Charismatic worship

Charismatic meetings are the height of Old Covenant religion – which the apostles tell us is finished and cancelled. Such things are rejuvenating that which God says is dead and which was only ever a shadow and not the reality (Col 2:17; Heb 8:5, 10:1).

Choirs, musicians, festival days (celebrations), prophets and all the rest are Old Covenant and dead.⁵ Worse, many of the forms found in Charismatic churches actually stem from paganism.

The NT, for instance, never tells us to use instrumental music; it never occurs in church and music is never mentioned at all, except symbolically for the worship of heaven (Rev 14:2, 15:2). You cannot find a NT verse supporting the idea of instrumental music in church meetings. The same goes for choirs.

Worse, Charismatic 'worship' sessions stimulate the flesh not the spirit. They pander to the soulish (mainly the emotional) and they damage the intellect and will (by inducing passivity). This is a pagan concept, whereby music and repetitive chanting is deliberately used to make people passive and suggestible to engender a mystical state, which masquerades as God but is really heightened deep emotions and abandoned volition. Such folk are suggestible and easily influenced to accept whatever comes next (such as fake healings or acceptance of an authoritarian message). Getting people into a mystical state is very advantageous to unethical men who want to control a group of people. Add to that mix authoritarian titles for leaders (such as 'apostles' and 'prophets') with demands for submission and you have a cult.

It was the development of the Charismatic 'worship time' that enabled the massive growth of the Charismatic movement. At the beginning, in the 1960s, Renewal churches were still fairly traditional but perhaps had a few Elim choruses and occasionally a guitar. By the

⁵ Many Pentecostal churches revive all the Old Covenant forms except animal sacrifices: vestments, priests, fast days, temples, sanctuaries, holy oil and so on. They also add pagan forms such as priestesses and exorcisms.

1970s Charismatic worship had become much more organised, especially at Bible Week conferences, and the worship band began to arise. Then the professional worship leader appeared and the worship time became a social event that equalled, or outdid, the sermon.

By the mid-1980s, with the appearance of the John Wimber conferences, the worship times became fully secular. They were based upon a folk-rock band using popular secular musical forms with all the trappings and equipment of a rock concert. Guitars became dominant over keyboards. Drums had arisen (never mentioned in the Bible but rhythmic worship is always associated with paganism and idolatry) and worship now required sound technicians, professional PA systems and significant volume (to match the drums).

After the 90s the worship of many large Charismatic churches better resembled a night club than a church, with rock bands, choirs, PA systems, smoke machines, spotlights, light shows and dancers. The worship leader became a star as much as the preacher and the music was sold separately on CDs so that people could 'worship' at home. More and more the idea of worship became synonymous with music and singing rather than reverent submission.

It was the vibrant worship times that attracted most believers into the Charismatic churches from the mid-70s onwards. The huge growth was due to the 'powerful' worship sessions more than the preaching. In fact, apart from a few superstar leaders, the preaching in many Charismatic churches was extremely poor and very superficial. Some Charismatic churches grew because of radical phenomena which claimed to be God's power but was really mystical paganism run riot, but most Charismatic churches grew because people came to be entertained by the music and be elevated (hypnotised) by the chanting of superficial repetitious songs.

But none of this has anything to do with Biblical worship. It is light years away from true worship of God. It is soulish at best (emotionalism) but demonic at worst. In many cases it gives way to excesses of the flesh.

The extremes of the worship sessions during the Toronto Blessing craziness was pure flesh run riot. In fact, this has been evident in all historic forms of revivalism going back centuries, as I have explained several times.⁶ The flesh was exhibited in uncontrolled behaviour such as: screaming, laughing, shouting, dancing, jumping, making animal noises or worse. Such phenomena often accompanies religious group hypnotism and a lack of self-control. It occurs in witchcraft, mysticism and eastern religious rituals.⁷

So, Charismatic worship is:

- Old Covenant.
- Soulsh (chiefly emotional).
- Fleshly (that is, opposed to the Spirit).
- Influenced by Romanism.
- Influenced by paganism.
- Influenced by the world (which is the enemy of God).

Unbiblical characteristics of Charismatic worship include:

- A worship leader. This has more in common with a Jewish synagogue cantor than a Biblical church. There is no such person mentioned in the NT.

⁶ A classic example was the Cane Ridge 'Revival', but there were many more historical examples.

⁷ For example in the Rajneesh 'orange people' abuses.

- A rock band or various instrumentalist musicians. No mention in the NT.
- A choir. No mention in the NT.
- Songs composed by men that are usually superficial and are chanted repetitively. The NT does mention songs and includes some examples; but these are centred on Scripture and endorsed by the apostles. Many modern church songs are unscriptural, superficial and emotional.
- Light shows, spotlights, backlights. No mention in the NT.
- Dancers of various sorts. No mention in the NT.
- Dramas. No mention in the NT.
- A focus upon sinners. No mention in the NT; indeed this is the opposite of what church is supposed to be – a gathering of saints for mutual edification.
- Smoke machines. No mention in the NT.
- Singing in the Spirit as a corporate improvised chant.⁸ The singing in the Spirit in 1 Cor 14:15 is not corporate but individual. It was an improvised, individual, sung praise to God that was subsequently interpreted. This was a feature of the early church to substantiate the Gospel, which died out quite early – within 30-40 years.⁹ No mention after 1 Corinthians (56 AD). The Charismatic corporate chant in tongues is a common occult feature found in many religions, mystics and witchcraft.
- Radical phenomena: screaming, laughing, crying, dancing, jumping, animal noises etc. No mention in the NT. These sins are examples of an abandonment of self-control, proving they are not of the Spirit (Gal 5:23).

In short, this worship is not worship and it is not godly. It has nothing to do with *proskuneo* but everything to do with *threskeia*. Charismatic worship is unbiblical and damaging to believers. This is why it often leads directly to demonic excesses (Toronto. Lakeland, Pensacola, mysticism etc.).

Worse still, there is evidence that the rapid expansion of Charismania was funded and resourced by the global elite deliberately to subvert true Christianity and weaken the church from being any kind of threat to the destabilisation of society that has been going on for 120 years or more.¹⁰ This was real spiritual warfare designed to weaken the spiritual capacity of the church and make it ineffective in confronting the development of an antichristian fascistic empire.

Caveat

There are many sincere believers stuck in Charismatic churches for various reasons; just as there are in many other apostate denominations. Within a typical Charismatic worship service there may well be several sincere believers truly worshipping God while the vast majority around them are only superficially worshipping God and following forms. This is also true in Anglican and Catholic worship services. I do not criticise such folk in justly criticising false denominational worship. However, the call to them is, ‘**Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you**’ (2 Cor 6:17).

⁸ This involves no interpretation so it is false. In any case tongues have ceased as Paul promised they would. Modern gibberish tongues are not the tongues seen in Acts which were unlearned languages praising God.

⁹ There are a few mentions in later years by certain church fathers but these cannot be substantiated or endorsed. The Montanists had ecstatic tongues and prophecy but were an aberrant group (even though they started as a reform movement).

¹⁰ See for example my ‘Depths of Deception’ or ‘Cultural Marxism’.

Conclusion

Worship is reverential veneration of a higher being; submission and prostration to God. True worship is based upon spirit and truth and has nothing to do with the world or the flesh.

When the church comes together, although it is a gathering of worshippers, worship is not the purpose of gathering. We gather together in Christ for mutual edification so that the church is equipped and grows in spiritual strength and authority, able to be a strong testimony to Christ. Worship will occur, especially in the Supper, but it is not the focus.

The worship times in modern Charismatic churches and celebrations are a far cry from true Biblical worship. Such 'worship' is soulish, earthly, fleshly, and sometimes demonic and idolatrous. This means that the vast majority of Christians are worshipping wrongly in modern churches.

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