

## *From the Pastor's Pen*

Worship is an interesting thing. Today, in churches all across North America, you will discover that there are no two worship styles alike. This is because our understanding of worship is subjective; we tend to think of worship in terms of the music we sing and the culture we come from. Each generation has its own culture, especially in the area of music, and when we get to the issue of worship, each generation thinks that their way is best.

In my own congregation, which is a healthy blend of young and old, there is much dialogue regarding how we should approach the worship service. There are those who are convinced that we should come in quietly and reverently, and there are those who feel we should come in with a jubilant and joyful spirit to be truly reverent. Should you poll my congregation regarding this matter, you would find that about half believe one way, while the other fifty percent take the opposite position. As their pastor, I understand that this difference has more to do with which generation and culture they belong to and far less to do with a true definition of worship.

Not too long ago I visited a church in another state. The congregation was younger, and they had a worship team along with a worship band. I knew all the songs they sang, but the young leader of worship not only sang but also danced before the Lord. While my head kept telling me that the Lord was pleased with this, I couldn't seem to shake the fact that it distracted me. I knew it was a cultural and generational issue that kept getting in the way.

So I began to talk to the Lord, and I asked Him, "Lord, is this what my seniors go through?" and He answered, "Yes." In the next minute or so I tried even harder to worship and not be distracted. Then it was the Lord's turn to speak to me. He said, "Carl, worship is not about you—it is about Me!"

I then looked around and discovered that most of those about me (younger, of course) seemed to be worshipping with their whole heart, just like the leader, and I concluded in my heart that this is a good thing for my King!

I am going to close my article with Psalm 95, as I believe the psalmist really had a grip on what worship was about. Before I do, I would like to bullet some points I found in his challenge to worship:

- Worship is corporate—note how many times he uses the term "let us."
- Worship is singing about our Joy of the Lord.
- Worship is humbling ourselves before our Maker.
- Worship is hearing God.
- Worship is opening our hearts to God.
- Worship is acknowledging the Lord's sovereignty.
- Worship is obedience & faithfulness.

...But nowhere in this psalm do I find him mentioning what style we should use to come before the Lord. O God, help us Worship in Spirit and Truth!

### **Psalm 95 (NIV)**

***<sup>1</sup> Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. <sup>2</sup> Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. <sup>3</sup> For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. <sup>4</sup> In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him.***

***<sup>5</sup> The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. <sup>6</sup> Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; <sup>7</sup> for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.***

***Today, if you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert, <sup>9</sup> where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did. <sup>10</sup> For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways."***

***<sup>11</sup> So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest."***

See you in Worship!

*Pastor Tenney*