**CHRISTIAN WORSHIP - THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE**

Session 7

**Rethinking Worship for the New Millennium**

Lecture 4

Wrong Turns, Confusions, and Idolatries (Part 2)

1. Confusion of Evangelism and Worship

* Willowcreek Church: Sunday Evangelistic Rally and Wednesday Worship; other churches copy it with their Sunday Worship
* Danger: people crop out of their responsibility of evangelism because evangelism is the responsibility of the people
* Non believers cannot worship God because worship means proclaiming God is worthy, God is good—by faith that the non-believers don’t have.
* By not evangelizing as a body, the non-believers don’t see a way of life that warrants belief in worship services.
* The way of life of a church should have in the forefront addressing racial diversity, government military spending, refugee issues, reconstruction of war worn cities, etc.
* Acts 2:42ff lists 7 things that are characteristic of the early church:
  + Apostles’ teaching (doctrine)
  + Fellowship
  + Breaking of bread (the Lord’s Supper)
  + Prayer
  + Sign and wonders
  + Economic redistribution
  + Worship

All being continued after the Pentecost.

* Worship service that use the language of adoration and growth will have evangelistic impacts
  + Objection: “provided people can understand the language”; yes, the dialectical truth is that the Gospel is a scandalous: it is, by its nature, is hard to digest.
  + If the language makes God too accessible, or to reduce the Gospel by removing its scandal to yield to the “tickling ears” of the non-believers, there will be not conversion among the non-believers. (Will Wilmont on preaching)
  + The stumbling block of the Gospel is death to self, without which there is no resurrection of life.
  + The test of a sermon is how understandable it is for the children
* Believer worshippers have the responsibility of personal evangelism:
  + Invite neighbor to worship service
  + Explain the liturgy to the new-comers
  + Accompany the strangers
* Early church approach:
  + First, Catechumen: a personal and relational process to introduce a non-believer the basic message of the Gospel. It may take up to 2 years. (Lutheran Church: Welcome to Christ (3 booklets)
  + Second, invite the non-believer to the worship service

1. Wrong Turns

* Specific worship for different generations
* Until 60’s, there is only one hymn books for all ages
  + Boomers’ rebellion
  + Secular music industry targeted specific age groups for marketing and profits
  + Tween culture: 8-12 years old
* Intergenerational approach: worship, Sunday school, etc.
* Children and adult relationship needs to be “restored” (for the passing of faith from one generation to another)

1. Idolatries in Evangelical Worship

* Money
* Entertainment
* Charismatic personalities / celebrity (some individual is more important than others)
* Idolatries (paired) that are in tension:
  + Knowledge in books vs emotionalism
  + Tradition vs contemporary
  + Conservative vs liberal
  + Contemplative vs active
  + Leadership centered vs void of leadership
  + Doctrine vs free for all
  + Too dense vs no detail
* Pluralism (uniqueness of Christianity)
* Felt need based (not meeting the real need)
* Democracy (decision made by majority) (“charimocracy”)

Questions for Discussion

1. What questions about God or worship or “church” are raised by your neighbors or friends, or colleagues or relatives? How do you respond to their questions?
2. How you see indirectly that your neighbors who do not participate in a church are searching for God?
3. How do you see postmodernism impacting children in your community?
4. What kinds of things do young people say that help you to recognize societal influences?
5. How have the cultural influences in Dr. Dawn’s lecture impacted you? How have they affected your congregation? Why is it important for you to understand the effects of cultural forces on our worship decisions?