



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 41, No. 36, September 8 , 2015 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter is **a weekly Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

SUNDAY CHURCH-WIDE WORSHIP SERVICE— For WHOM?
[PLEASE STUDY THIS ARTICLE PRAYERFULLY and CAREFULLY! SEE SPECIAL NEWS NOTE AT END!]

I. A flyer for a 'Worship Conference' focusing on music/worship proclaimed: *"Join us for dynamic teaching to set you on the right path, and inspiring worship where you can meet God and receive the energy and love you need to be a mover and shaker in today's world... Alongside our teaching program are worship events which put you in touch with the power and love of God."*

Pastor Todd Pruitt wisely responds: **"Jesus is the only mediator between God and man. He alone is the One who brings us to God!** [IN THE FLYER], Music and "the worship experience" are viewed as means by which we enter the presence of God and receive His saving benefits. There is simply no evidence whatsoever in Scripture that music mediates [brings] direct encounters or experiences with God. This is a common pagan notion. It is far from Christian. **In True Worship Vaughan Roberts offers four consequences of viewing music as an encounter with God.** I will summarize them.

1. God's Word is marginalized. In many Churches and Christian gatherings it is not unusual for God's Word to be shortchanged. Music

gives people the elusive “liver quiver” while the Bible is more mundane. Pulpits have shrunk and even disappeared while bands and lighting have grown. **But faith does not come from music, dynamic experiences, or supposed encounters with God. Faith is birthed through the proclamation of God’s Word** ([Rom 10:17](#)).

2. Our assurance is threatened. If we associate God’s presence with a particular experience or emotion, what happens when we no longer feel it? We search for churches whose praise band, orchestra, or pipe organ produce in us **the feelings we are chasing**... subjective experiences.

3. Musicians are given priestly status. When music is seen as a means to encounter God, worship leaders and musicians are vested with a priestly role. They become the ones who bring us into the presence of God rather than Jesus Christ who alone has already fulfilled that role.

4. Division is increased. If we identify a feeling as an encounter with God, and only a particular kind of music produces that feeling, then we will insist that same music be played regularly in our church or gatherings... Others depend upon a different kind of music to produce the feeling that is important to them then division is cultivated. And because we routinely classify particular feelings as encounters with God our demands for what produce those feelings become very rigid. This is why so many churches succumb to offering multiple styles of worship services. **By doing so, they unwittingly sanction division and self-centeredness among the people of God.**

Scripture is full of exhortations to God’s people to sing and make music to the Lord. Our God has been gracious to give us this means to worship Him. **But it is important to understand that music in our worship is for two specific purposes:** to honor God and to edify our fellow believers...” [Todd Pruitt serves as Lead Pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia.]

II. MAN-CENTERED WORSHIP HAS SIMILARITIES TO A COCAINE RUSH! (The following is edited from Sam Williamson, Beliefs of the Heart) I once met with a man—let’s call him Nathan—who described himself as a, “recovering charismatic.” He was open to it; but his experience of modern

worship gave him pause. As he grew up, his mother frenetically flitted [frantically, obsessively moved rapidly] from one worship experience to the next. After Toronto she visited Florida, then Bethel Church, and then anywhere she heard “something” was happening.

Worship music unceasingly blared throughout the house. She seemed to need its euphoric “oomph” to motivate her for the tiniest of tasks. Wiping kitchen counters took the combined efforts of Matt Redman, Chris Tomlin, and Paul Baloche. Don’t ask what spring cleaning required. **But she remained anxious, fearful, self-concerned, and neglectful of her husband and sons.** She’d say, “I just want to go where God is working,” but it really seemed she just wanted an escape, a place where her problems could be sedated. After describing all this, Nathan added, “A friend of mine became a crack addict. **Frankly I didn’t see much difference between him and my mom. They got their highs in different ways, and their lives remained a mess.**” **“I wonder,” he continued, “if modern worship is like a cocaine rush.”**

I’m Sympathetic: Nathan’s description of his childhood experiences startled me. **I was a worship leader for years, and I often tried to stir up feelings.** I loved to hear someone say, “Wow, that worship was great; I really felt the Lord’s presence.” Now I wonder about our pursuit of euphoria in worship.

Oswald Chambers says, “If we continually try to bring back those exceptional moments of inspiration, **it is a sign that IT IS NOT GOD we want.** Never live for those exceptional moments. God will give us His touches of inspiration only when He sees that we are not in danger of being led away by them (*My Utmost For His Highest*, emphasis added). Most catechisms that I’ve studied say humans are designed to worship God and to enjoy him. But the purpose is to worship God—joy is simply the result. **Unfortunately, it seems to me that the purpose of modern worship services is simply to stir up good feelings.** Do we want worshipers to give their lives in adoration? **Or are we competing with our media-dominated culture by using musical abilities to titillate the emotions of the worshiper?**

What Is Wrong With The World? The problem with the world is self-centeredness; from Hitler-like dictators grabbing for power to three year-old boys making a mountain of matchbox cars to keep them from a younger brother. (Not to mention what you and I do.) Self-centeredness is the cause of all wars, divorce, betrayal, theft, and every miserable part of human history. We are all thinking of ourselves. **And seeking the “rush” in worship is simply another example of concentrating on ourselves** (though we may fail to recognize it because it’s disguised as “worship”).

What Are We To Do? Real Christian worship is the solution for self-centeredness. **It is fixing our mind on the Ultimate Other, [ALMIGHTY GOD!]. It is a heart-gaze on God, contemplating** the majesty and glory and goodness of God. It is consciously staring at His unimaginable love, His unstoppable power, His ultimate justice, His attention to the sparrow’s needs, and His care for every human being. **Worship is attributing** ultimate value to the Ultimate Being who is ultimately beyond us; and yet who is beside us as we sit in our desk chair and in us as we wash the dishes.

Real worship involves an intense focus (of heart, mind, soul and strength) on the beauty of God. It is looking, gazing, meditating, and reflecting on the majesty of God. **It is seeing Him for all HE is, Lord, Master, King, Father, Shepherd, and Friend.** And, yes, seeing His glory often move us to joy as well.

And Worship Changes Us: When we let our heart gaze on the Ultimate Star, when we let its beauty and light penetrate our soul, then we’ll be changed forever. Anxiety, grasping for euphoria, selfish ambition, and even self-consciousness will cease. **We’ll worship and adore the Creator not the creation.** Real worship of the real God does, in the end, bring real life. I’m in favor of experiencing God. I hope I do more. I hope you do too. But the experience is a result of worship (at least sometimes) not the purpose.

III. A Statement of Corporate Worship Philosophy (Adapted from Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, MN. And other sources)

OUR WORSHIP services are to be corporate expressions of our members' love for the God of the Bible. Because worship is an expression of love for God, we come together not to seek first what we may receive out of worship — although we receive and need much — but how we may first through His enabling grace render our service of worship to the supreme God.

God Is Supreme ([Rom. 11:36](#); [Acts 17:24-30](#)). **Our public worship will focus on God.** We will seek to aggressively know Him through His Word and wholeheartedly respond to His supremacy in biblically appropriate ways as a people of God in corporate worship.

God Is Holy ([Lev. 11:44-45](#)). “Holiness” is the term given to God to set Him apart from anything and everything else. In [Ex. 15:11](#) Moses asks, “Who is like you among the gods, O Lord who is like you, majestic in holiness?” Because there is no other god like the God revealed in the Bible, we will encourage individuals **to be enthralled by Him so as to be eagerly overflowing with praise, thanksgiving, fear, repentance, confession, prayer, and obedience through humble dependence on Him.** We will, by our lives and our words, shout joyfully of the wonders of this God. Our worship of the Holy God should compel us to be individuals characterized by holiness as well.

God Has Chosen to Dwell Among His People Through His Spirit ([1 Cor. 3:16](#)). Corporately, God is present when His people gather together. His presence is seen most clearly in our lives when we allow God's Spirit to fill (control) us to such an extent that others see Christ in our lives as we fellowship, love, serve, sing, listen, respond, etc.

Furthermore, God's Spirit is present whenever the truth of God is proclaimed in an understandable way. Therefore, through the lives of Spirit-controlled people and the passionate proclamation of God's Word, our desire would be that a believer leaves our corporate worship time saying, ***“I have met with God today,”*** and the unbeliever would declare, ***“Certainly God is among you”*** ([1 Cor. 14:25](#)).

[NOT BECAUSE OF DRUMMED UP EMOTIONS; BUT BECAUSE OF ENCOUNTERS WITH TRIUNE TRUTH — Father, Son, Holy Spirit — by means

of the Holy Spirit of Truth QUICKENING the Scriptures (The Word of Truth) to us!]

God is Truth ([Is. 65:16](#)). God expects truth in worship ([John 4:23](#)). All aspects of a worship service should be **shaped by and permeated by** the Word of God. Only the truth of Christ ([John 17:17](#)) which is the word of Christ ([Col. 3:16](#)) has any sanctifying impact on the believer and can draw the unbeliever.

Therefore, the truth of God will be proclaimed through preaching, singing, praying, repenting, giving, observing the Lord's Table, testifying, etc. When we respond to God in song, the primary characteristic of our songs will be that they are theologically accurate. These songs may be new choruses, traditional hymns, or other songs; as long as they are theologically accurate, they are acceptable. **Any instrument, arrangement, or sound that detracts from the primacy of the message will be discarded or refined so that it promotes the message of truth. The musical accompaniment is not to be the focal point of worship**—the message of truth will be.

God Knows Our Hearts ([Is. 29:13](#), [Matt. 15:7-9](#)). God is not pleased with vain worship. Vain worship is characterized by things such as personal convenience and entertainment, lack of preparation, mindless participation, irreverence, and apathy. **Heartfelt worship is marked by** personal sacrifice and giving, preparation, focus, reverence, and enthusiasm.

True worship comes from the heart of individuals who are allowing the Word of God to "dwell in [them] richly" ([Col. 3:16](#)). Our goal therefore is to engage our minds and hearts to meditate and apply great spiritual truth put to song and proclaimed through preaching. **Because worship begins with an internal response to the truth of God,** we understand that external music cannot create worship and cannot make us feel and/or experience true worship.

Therefore we will not make it our goal to feel a certain way. A sense of blessedness (awe, joy, peace, exhilaration) and a sense of our

unworthiness before a holy God ([Is. 6:5](#)--sorrow, remorse, fear) **are both by-products of a heart responding appropriately to God.**

God Created the Physical Body ([Gen. 2:7](#)). God created man as both a material (body) and immaterial (heart/soul/mind/spirit/will/etc.) being and declared both elements of man “good.” Worship in the Bible often includes appropriate physical manifestations in the body such as singing, raising of hands, bowing down, and RESPONDING WITH **‘AMENS and HALLELUJAHS’**. God demands, however, that our bodies be under the control of a Spirit-led heart and mind ([Eph. 5:18](#)). While we encourage the freedom to express one’s self physically in worship, these expressions should not draw undue attention to one’s self because our focus in corporate worship is on God.

God is Worthy ([1 Cor. 10:31](#); [14:40](#), [Col. 3:23](#)). God is pleased as we seek to do all that we do in a manner of excellence for His glory. **God is not pleased with mediocre efforts and half-hearted commitments.**

God Is Alive (Ps. 115; [Jer. 10:10](#); [Dan. 6:19-28](#); [1 Tim. 4:10](#)). We will expect fresh expressions of God’s work in the hearts of His people. We will encourage a freedom in worship that is God-honoring and authentic, allowing for biblically appropriate responses to God’s multifaceted glory as we meditate for extended periods on His supremacy. [IN BIBLICAL, CORPORATE WORSHIP, **‘AMENS and HALLELUJAHS’** should often be expressed!]

God Has Renewed His People’s Hearts ([2 Cor. 5:17](#)). God has made His children new creations— having regenerated the hearts of those who have placed their faith in His Son. **Believers have the capacity to offer sacrifices of praise to God.** Therefore we will design worship services mainly for the benefit of believers, as we express corporately our passion for the holiness of God, reflecting it so clearly and joyously that unbelievers who are present may also be awakened and give Him glory.

God Is Light ([1 John 1:5-10](#)). As children of God, we are to walk in the light. We will strive for authenticity and transparency and vulnerability always—public or private. Publicly in worship, we will strive to be real

before God and each other. We will confess public sin publicly and private sin privately and admit openly our imperfections.

Grace to all in Christ! James Bell www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Questions call Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

WEDNESDAYS: 6:30pm— **Children** Ministry/activities; ☐ 6:30pm— **Youth** Activities and Bible Study— **(For both of these... enter via double doors by gym)**

☐ 6:30pm— **CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE**... Come in side entrance, iron steps... meet in Ladies Sunday School Room

LADIES BIBLE STUDY— NEXT, SEPTEMBER 10, 11:00am, The Life of David! Cindy Bell, teaching. {Meet in Ladies Sunday School Room: Come in FRONT doors of the church auditorium or the SIDE door at the top of the IRON STEPS!}

* **EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study!** {Study in ROMANS}... Come to back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru awning... walk forward... till you smell the coffee!

SUNDAY SERVICES! September 13, 27:

1. 9:30am, Sunday School

2. 10:45am, Worship Service

3. NOON 'Covered-Dish' meal

4. 1:00pm afternoon service.

Schedule for Third Sunday, September 20:

1. 9:30am, Sunday School // 2. 10:45am, Worship Service/LORD'S SUPPER SERVICE // 3. NO meal & NO afternoon service

[SOME HOME GROUPS MEET IN THE EVENING— INQUIRE FOR DETAILS]

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**SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL— *Uniting Church, Home, and School in CHRIST!* For the 2015-2016 school term we are offering **Second through Twelfth grades**. Children need the Home, the Church, and the School to model and teach the same basic philosophy of life. ***Children are like young plants in a garden— they must be protected.*****

<http://www.aceministries.com/curriculum/?content=presentingACE>

**SPECIAL NEWS NOTE:** In years past... on occasions we would 'contract' with a company and have a Pictorial Church Directory made. It was always a hassle and the photos they sold were expensive. NOW... WE WILL DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT:

**1. Our church website has a private *MEMBERS ONLY SECTION* that only Southsiders with the 'code' can open and get to. We will place our List of 'Members and those Attending' on the website, in the members only section. WE WILL ADD PHOTOS of each family. Adam and Bethany Troutt will be working with our secretary, Kristina Davis, to make this happen.**

**2. We will also add photos to our PRINTED 'Members and those Attending' list.**

**3. THEREFORE, Adam and/or Bethany will start taking photos... probably this Sunday....**