

Worship at ClearView Community Church

By Pastor Brandon Chism

At ClearView, we hope to follow Paul's exhortation in Colossians 3:16 and be a fellowship of believers which is built on the Word of God. Our worship through music is one of the pillars of that fellowship. The following principles are adapted from Gregg Allison's *Sojourners and Strangers, The Doctrine of the Church* to demonstrate how we as a singing, worshiping body can be focused on the Word and edifying each other.

- 1) **Worship is God-Oriented.** "*Doxological*" *Worship*: everything we do as the church, in any gathering or setting, is first and foremost oriented toward the glory of God. Isaiah 6 begins with a magnificent vision of God in His holiness in verses 1-4; worship, confession, service, and mission all flow from this central theme of God's glory and holiness in subsequent verses. Practically speaking, we as worshipers ought to have a response pattern in our personal lives which emulates Isaiah's response as all we do (not just on Sundays) responds to, reflects, and declares the glory of God.
- 2) **Worship is Word-Centered.** "*Logocentric*" *Worship*: everything we do as the church is focused on the Word of God, referring both to Jesus Christ as the incarnate Word and Scripture as God's inspired word. In the post-modern culture, general spirituality has often been exalted over external standards and claims to objective truth. In many churches today, the spiritual, often more emotional experience has taken precedence over the priority of instruction in the Word. However, we as a worshiping body should consciously keep Christ as the center of our worship by remembering that He is the reason we gather. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus says that He will build *His* church, and Paul agrees in Ephesians 2:20 as he refers to Christ as the cornerstone of the church. Practically speaking, we as a music ministry should always work to create music sets which guide the worshipper through a biblical concept and point them toward objective truth about God and themselves. For many churches, music is viewed as the emotional warm-up for the sermon. While Biblical teaching is presented primarily in spoken word, the church's artistic expressions ought to always accompany the spoken word in also communicating truth objectively and clearly. This allows the congregation's worship to not just be responsive, but truly confessional.
- 3) **Worship is Spirit-Empowered.** "*Pneumadynamic*" *Worship*: the Holy Spirit not only illuminates our hearts and seals our salvation, but compels us in worship and empowers us for the Lord's work. From the very beginning, the equal person of the Holy Spirit was active in creation and is just as active today in revealing the truth of the gospel to us. In worship, the Spirit does not reveal new truth to us outside of Scripture, nor does He cause confusion or musical dysfunction in worship (1 Corinthians 14:33), but He is active in drawing our hearts and praises to God, turning information into transformation, and works both preemptively in the worship leader's preparation of a service *and* often spontaneously in a worship service. Practically speaking, we as worshipers seek to submit ourselves to the Spirit in our daily practice of worship, giving Him an "all-access pass" to our hearts to know and test our thoughts and attitudes, and genuinely respond emotionally and cognitively.
- 4) **Worship is Confessional.** Worship is, in one sense, the résumé of the Christian faith in that it is the church's doctrine, values, and beliefs set to a form which the congregation can more easily memorize and, with one voice, confess to God and each other. With an increasing illiteracy of Scripture in the church today, it becomes all the more imperative that congregations hide truth in their hearts; music and creeds take large strides to that end. Practically speaking, we as worshipers will not forsake gathering together regularly as is the habit of some, but will prioritize our corporate worship together each week as we confess together the truths we hold dear for our own sakes, for the sake of our children who observe and learn to participate with us, and for the sake of the watching unbelieving world.