

# ONE SIZE FITS ALL

## DIFFERENCES

I have been reading a book called Lord Robert which is about Lord Robert Dudley who was Queen Elizabeth 1's "lover".

### SLIDE 1

The book talked about the St Bartholomew Day massacre where the Catholics massacred Protestants, largely because they worshipped in a different way. The major problem was whether the "host" was the actual body and blood of Christ or a symbol of this. This difference became political and dominated the lives of millions for centuries.

### SLIDE 2

The problem? The form of worship that was used. Same God. Same rules. Almost identical theology. The problem? Just how they worshipped.

### SLIDE 3

This monumental difference split Europe at the time and countless people were tortured and went to their deaths in the Inquisition in the most appalling manners, simply on the basis of the question of how they worshiped a loving God. With colonisation, this difference split the world.

### SLIDE 4

Even today, cultures based on this difference still show enmity within continents and countries and are still causing division and death.

When I grew up, this difference, as to how one was to worship, caused division among families and communities to the extent that there were certain people I was not allowed to associate with, simply because of their religion.

Even today, we have differences among Christians, usually based on theology, but also based on how we worship. Pastor or priest? The timing of communion. Hands up, hands down, clapping or not. The list goes on.

## **GARDEN**

I love to go into my garden each morning to pray.

### **SLIDE 5**

## **DIVERSITY**

Every time I spend time in the garden, I am amazed at the diversity of the plants He has made.

### **SLIDE 8**

I have a special place where I love to worship, where I have planted ferns. It never stops amazing me how many different types of ferns there are with all their varying shapes, configuration, needs, and ways of reproducing.

### **SLIDE 9**

Some have spores in intricate patterns under their fronds.

### **SLIDE 10**

Some have tiny babies that form on the tips of the fronds, which then bend down and gently plant the baby in the ground not too far from them, like a mother with her baby.

### **SLIDE 11**

Some have long skinny stick like things that look dead. Some just put out runners under the ground like the brackens or run on top of the ground like the hares foot ferns.

### **SLIDE 12**

The maiden hair ferns are my favourite. The heart shaped leaves are attached to fine black stems with increasing levels of complexity. In the sunlight the leaves look as if they are suspended in the air with no visible means of support.

There are 10,600 species of ferns as well as thousands of subspecies and cultivars and each one is different.

Which one is right?

### SLIDE 13

In the plant world, we see such amazing diversity of creation from single cell algae to Redwoods. All are so essential for all life, as all life on earth depend on plants for oxygen and for food as even meat is produced from plants.

God created the most amazing array of amazing plants which are totally suited for the conditions where they grow. Some of my plants, if I water them as often once a week will cark it. Others have to be watered every day. The difference is critical. The level of light that is needed is critical.

### SLIDE 14

The aspect of a grape vine on a hill will change the taste of a wine amazingly. I mean really, how does a wine vine know if it is facing east or north? The soil type, the level of minerals, obviously the level of light and water are critical. One native and rare wine which I am TRYING to cultivate to encourage a threatened butterfly, needs other vines to climb on. They WILL not climb on synthetic rope. Some will grudgingly struggle on hemp but most won't

So which plant is right?

### SLIDE 15

There are about 7000 languages spoken in the world. How many if we factor in those countless languages that are extinct that we actually know about? What about all those we don't know about? Consider the revival of almost extinct languages like the Aboriginal ones and, of course, the amazing revival of Hebrew which was almost completely dead as a spoken language.

Interestingly, for me at least, is the fact that while Hebrew only survived in pockets of scattered Rabbis, and Latin was, and still is, used as the language of the Church and literature since Christ, still being still taught in schools when I was young, Hebrew is alive and vibrant and the language of the most innovative and modern country in the world and Latin is dead.

So which language is right?

### SLIDE 16

What about architecture? Consider all the ways man has put up walls and a roof since the beginning of time. Which building style is right?

### SLIDE 17

What about all the cultures and colours of the world now, since the beginning of time? Which one is right?

### SLIDE 18

What about the animal world? There are almost 1.6 million species of life forms in the world. Then add in the breeds that man has produced. What about all the species that are extinct?

And what about the amazing diversity within each group, what about the amazing colours and weirdness that some plants and animals display and yet they are all efficient and survive. In some cases, this defies man's understanding.

This level of diversity in this world is staggering and is the basis of so much human endeavour and enjoyment, employment, survival, and usefulness and just pure wonder.

I am sure there is none who would disagree with this.

So which one is right?

So what is my point?

### **VARIETY**

Well, I reckon God likes variety. He likes creativity. He likes to play with variations of themes so see how many different forms He can make that work. If a human being shows such creativity in a painting or sculpture or garden, people applaud this as something special, which it is, but when God does it they say it just happened by chance.

### SLIDE 19

WE know He created this world and all that is in it and He made it diverse, efficient and beautiful. Evolution only needs things to be efficient as only the

most efficient is supposed to survive. Only love, or a loving God causes efficiency and beauty. But I won't get on one of my hobby horses

He tell us this in so many places in Scripture

***Psa 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the expanse proclaims His handiwork.***

***Psa 29:3 The voice of Jehovah is on the waters; the God of glory thunders; Jehovah is above many waters.***

*Psa 29:4 The voice of Jehovah is in power, the voice of Jehovah is in majesty.*

*Psa 29:5 The voice of Jehovah breaks the cedars; yea, Jehovah breaks the cedars of Lebanon.*

*Psa 29:6 He also makes them to skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox.*

*Psa 29:7 The voice of Jehovah goes through flames of fire.*

*Psa 29:8 The voice of Jehovah shakes the wilderness; Jehovah shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.*

*Psa 29:9 The voice of Jehovah causes the does to calve, and uncovers the forests; and in His temple all of it is saying, Glory!*

*Psa 29:10 Jehovah sits on the flood; yea, Jehovah sits as King forever.*

*Job 12:7 But now ask the animals, and they shall teach you; and the birds of the air, and they shall tell you;*

*Job 12:8 or speak to the earth, and it shall teach you; and the fish of the sea shall declare it to you;*

*Job 12:9 who of all these does not know that the hand of Jehovah has done this?*

***Job 12:10 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all flesh, even of man?***

***Psa 95:4 In His hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is also His.***

***Psa 95:5 The sea is His, and He made it, and His hands formed the dry land.***

*Job 37:14 Listen to this, Job; stand still, and consider the wonderful works of God.*

*Job 37:15 Do you know when God placed them, and caused the lightning of His cloud to shine?*

*Job 37:16 Do you know the balancing of the clouds, the wonderful works of Him who is perfect in knowledge?*

***Joh 1:3 All things came into being through Him, and without Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being.***

***Joh 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.***

*Rom 1:20 For the unseen things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being realized by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, for them to be without excuse.*

*Psa 104:24 O Jehovah, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is full of Your riches.*

*Psa 104:25 This is the great and wide sea, in which are creeping things without number, both small and great animals.*

*Psa 104:26 There the ships go; You made this great sea animal to play in it.*

*Psa 104:27 These all wait on You, that You may give them their food in due season.*

*Psa 104:28 You give to them, they gather; You open Your hand; they are filled with good.*

*Psa 104:29 You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.*

*Psa 104:30 You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth.*

*Psa 104:31 The glory of Jehovah shall endure forever; Jehovah shall rejoice in His works.*

*Psa 104:32 He looks on the earth, and it trembles; He touches the hills, and they smoke.*

*Psa 33:5 He loves righteousness and judgment; the earth is full of the mercy of Jehovah.*

*Psa 33:6 By the Word of Jehovah were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.*

*Psa 33:7 He gathered the waters of the sea like a heap, setting the depths in storehouses.*

## **SLIDE 20**

### **STRANGER**

He loves all people and He has always included strangers among His people but they had to fit into the rules and norms of His chosen ones.

There was the mixed multitude which came out of Egypt and who caused problems

***Exo 12:38 And also a mixed multitude went up with them, and flocks, and herds, very much cattle.***

These people, retained their identity, their customs, language and culture and many of these integrated into the Israelites like Rahab. The Israelites were carefully instructed to respect them as long as they respected God's laws. As long as they accepted the core values of God's people they are accepted and allowed to be different.

But all too often they influenced God's people to their ways and led them away from the True God.

## PENTECOST

At Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was imparted to all Christ's followers, and probably took place in the Temple, because so many people were able to comment on the phenomenon, many were strangers.

*Act 2:1 And in the fulfilling of the day of Pentecost, they were all with one accord in one place.*

*Act 2:2 And suddenly a sound came out of the heaven as borne along by the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

*Act 2:3 And tongues as of fire appeared to them, being distributed; and it sat upon each of them.*

*Act 2:4 And they were all filled of the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

*Act 2:5 And dwelling at Jerusalem there were Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven.*

*Act 2:6 But this sound occurring, the multitude came together and were confounded, because they each heard them speaking in his own dialect.*

*Act 2:7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying to one another, Behold, are not these who speak all Galileans?*

*Act 2:8 And how do we each hear in our own dialect in which we were born?*

***Act 2:9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,***

***Act 2:10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya around Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,***

***Act 2:11 Cretans and Arabians, we hear them speaking the great things of God in our own languages.***

This amazing diversity of people was obviously part of God's people but they were different from the accepted model. They became part of Christ's kingdom but still retained their diversity.

## SLIDE 21

### WORSHIP

#### WHY

God is entitled to worship

He is entitled to it. He is entitled to have His work (creation) and His personal attributes acknowledged. There is also a deep concept that, as all processes in Creation are based on cycles which are self-sustaining, when we worship, we

are actually completing the cycle which allows His Spirit of love, energy and order to move freely. We can facilitate this on all the levels of our lives as I showed in my Layer Cake. But that is another story.

## WHO IS TO WORSHIP

All creation worships. There are countless verses in Scripture telling how nature itself actually worships Him

- **HEAVENS**

***Psa 96:11 Let the heavens rejoice,***

The stars and galaxies all emits unique patterns of electromagnetic radiation in the form of sound

***Job 38:7 when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?***

- **EARTH**

***Ps 96:11 he earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness of it.***

***Psa 96:12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it; then shall all the trees of the forest rejoice.***

***Isa 55:12 For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break out before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.***

- **ANIMALS.**

***Psa 148:7 Let praise be to Jehovah from the earth, the sea-monsters, and all deeps;***

***Psa 148:10 beasts and all cattle, creeping things and birds of the wing,***

## SLIDE 22

- **HUMANS**

And obviously humans.

*Psa 148:11 kings of the earth and all people, princes and all judges of the earth,*

***Psa 148:12 both young men and maidens, old men and children;***

***Psa 148:13 let them praise the name of Jehovah;** for His name alone is excellent; His glory is above the earth and heavens.*

*Psa 148:14 He also lifts up the horn of His people, the praise of all His saints, even of the sons of Israel, a people near to Him. Praise Jehovah!*

*Psa 150:6 Let everything that breathes praise Jehovah. Praise Jehovah!*

In fact, we could quite easily say that the purpose for our existence, our very creation, was done for this purpose. Some say that this concept means that God is very egotistical. Well, maybe. But, He is entitled to be. He is really about relationships, not power, but friendship and love.

## SLIDE 23

WHAT?

So what exactly is worship.

Worship is

- Great admiration or devotion shown towards a person or principle.
- The feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for what a person perceived as a deity.
- Religious rites or ceremonies, constituting a formal expression of reverence for a deity. "the worship of celebrity and wealth"

To worship is to

- Show reverence and adoration for (a deity).
- Take part in a religious ceremony.
- Feel great admiration or devotion for.

### SYNONYMS

- Revere,
- Show reverence
- Venerate
- Pay homage to
- Honour
- Adore,

- Praise
- Pray to
- Bow down before
- Glorify
- Exalt
- Extol

I have the concept that prayer and worship are ways of returning to God some of the Spirit He gave us. He works in cycles. Water, is evaporated to heaven, cleansed and returned as rain; water and nutriments cycle through animals and plants giving life then going back into the earth to be used again. Like electricity, if the circuit is broken, nothing happens.

So too with our worship life. In prayer and praise we return His spirit to Him so completing the circle.

#### WHY

- He deserves it.

**2Sa 22:2** *And he said, Jehovah is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer.*

*2Sa 22:3 The God who is my Rock, in Him will I trust. He is my Shield, and the Horn of my salvation, my High Tower, and my Refuge, my Savior. You save me from violence.*

*2Sa 22:4 I will call upon Jehovah, who is worthy to be praised. And I shall be saved from my enemies.*

*Psa 18:2 Jehovah is my strength, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my rock; I will trust in Him; He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower.*

**Psa 18:3** *I will call on Jehovah, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies.*

**1Ti 1:15** *Faithful is the Word and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*

**Jas 2:7** *Do they not blaspheme that worthy Name by which you are called?*

**Rev 4:11** *O Lord, You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because You created all things, and for Your will they are and were created.*

- He is splendid

*1 Chronicles 16:28-30 “Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength! Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! **Worship the Lord in the splendour of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.**”*

*Luke 24:50-53 “Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. **While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.** And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God.”*

- He is trustworthy

*1 Kings 8:22-23 “Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven, and said, “**O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth** beneath, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart.”*

WHEN

Well. Anytime or all the time. The sacrifice in the Temple was continuous.

***Lev 6:20** This is the offering of Aaron and of his sons, which they shall offer to Jehovah in the day he is anointed, the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a **continual food offering, half of it in the morning and half of it at night.***

*Num 4:7 And they shall spread a cloth of blue upon the table of showbread, and put the dishes on it, and the spoons, and the bowls, and the cups of the drink offering, and covers to cover it with. **And the continual bread shall be on it.***

*Num 28:3 And you shall say to them, This is the fire offering which you shall offer to Jehovah: two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, **a continual burnt offering.***

*Num 28:6 It is a continual burnt offering which was ordained in Mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a fire offering to Jehovah,*

*Num 28:10 this is the burnt offering of every Sabbath, besides the continual burnt offering, and its drink offering.*

Anna in the Temple

***Luk 2:36** And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in many days, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity.*

***Luk 2:37** And she was a widow of eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, serving God with fastings and prayers night and day.*

We can constantly thank God for something going right, ask for help when something goes wrong, nag Him about a special event that day, enjoy a beautiful flower with Him, pray for someone you meet who may be having a hard time.

He is then uppermost in your mind, the place of any deity. It is much better to fill your headspace with worship and prayer than listen to the background noise we all carry from Satan and our past hurts.

## SLIDE 24

### HOW DO WE WORSHIP

- **HEBREW**

In Hebrew the main word used for worship is

**H7812** sha<sup>ˆ</sup>cha<sup>ˆ</sup>h *shaw-khaw'*

which means to depress or go down, that is, prostrate oneself in homage to royalty or God: - bow (self) down, crouch, fall down (flat), humbly beseech, do (make) obeisance, do reverence, make to stoop, worship.

This occurs 171 times in Scripture. It means actually physically going down, to touch your forehead on the floor. Similar words have overtones of swimming.

**Gen 23:12** *And Abraham bowed before the people of the land.*

**Exo 18:7** *And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and bowed down to him, and kissed him. And they asked each other of their welfare. And they came into the tent.*

**Exo 20:5** *You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them. For I Jehovah your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons to the third and fourth generation of those that hate me,*

**Psa 72:11** *Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.*

Other words have negative overtones and are used for grieving and only when people are worshipping idols.

## SLIDE 25

- GREEK

I love this one. The Greek word is

**G4352** π ρ ο σ κ υ ν έ ω proskuneō *pros-koo-neh'-o*

From another word meaning to *kiss*, like a dog *licking* his master's hand; to *fawn* or *crouch to*, *prostrate* oneself in homage.

*Mat 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men came from the east to Jerusalem,*

**Mat 2:2** *saying, Where is He who is born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him.*

The next word is used with the overtones of religiosity as with the Pharisees

**Mat 15:9** *But in vain they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."*

The next word means to be hired like a servant, so showing your subservient state.

**Col 2:23** *These things indeed have a reputation of wisdom in self-imposed worship and humility, and unsparing severity of the body, but are not of any value for the satisfying of the flesh.*

The other words carry the overtone of religious ritual rather than genuine worship.

## SLIDE 26

### SPIRIT AND TRUTH

The most important element is spirit and truth but before that we must have faith.

FAITH

*Matthew 28:17-18 “Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. **And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.**”*

I mean if we don't have faith, what is the purpose other than to make a big display for the world to admire you. Actually, the world today thinks we are all nuts, so that is a complete waste of time

Thank God, Jesus was able to define the essentials of worship for us when He told the woman at the well, recorded in John 4,

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

***Joh 4:21 Jesus said to her, Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither worship the Father in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem.***

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

***Joh 4:23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him.***

Contrary to the accepted thinking of the times, place does not matter.

He states that those who wish to worship God MUST do so in spirit and in truth

***Joh 4:24 God is a spirit, and they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.***

FOCUS

Before we approach the Creator of the universe, we must also consider, our attitude as to whether we are there to give Him a good time or whether we are just going to the Supermarket with our shopping list.

Worship is great but the essential thing is that we seek truth and focus on the central aspects of worship, God.

- God incarnate

***Joh 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us. And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and of truth.***

- His Law

***Psa 119:159 See how I love Your Commandments; O Jehovah, according to Your loving-kindness give me life.***

- His Word

***Psa 119:160 Your Word is true from the beginning; and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever***

- His provision for our salvation

***Joh 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by Me.***

- His guidance

***Psa 119:105: Your Word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.***

The God and basic tenants of our faith are the essential things and the things that bring us together. These are the reason we worship.

## **HOW DO WE WORSHIP.**

So, which is the right way to worship?

I think we need to deal with this in the same way as we decided which fern was right, or which style of architecture, or which colour of people was right.

There is no right or wrong answer. God loves diversity and revels in the expression of His creativity. He values individuals and created us all unique because that is how important we are to Him, as are all the animal species, or the plants. All different. All beautiful. All part of Him and an expression of Him.

There are countless ways of doing worshipping and many factors impacting on this and they can range from falling prostrate for hours in homage to a quick call of thanks for a blessing.

Obviously, our corporate praise and thanksgiving are very important but I will leave this to last but there are heaps of other ways. I present these in no particular order of importance of priority.

## **SLIDE 27**

### WORSHIP THROUGH PRAYER.

All prayer is a form of worship whether it is in a group or privately, wherever that may be.

Prayer has the specific purpose of interacting with God but it is more about giving Him a good time.

Think about the issues you usually pray about. How much of your prayer life is about you and how much of it is about God? Without a doubt God wants us to be able to share everything that is going on in our life. But He also wants us to acknowledge Him and get to know Him better.

We can do countless sermons on prayer. But the best way I know is to use the acronym of ACTS which gives us the right balance and focus.

A – Adoration or praise

C – Confession. Getting right with God

T – Thanksgiving

S – Supplication.

Half the the Lord's Prayer is worship of Him, not asking.

## **SLIDE 28**

### GET IN A REGULAR HABIT OF READING THE BIBLE.

The Bible says that we worship God in "spirit and in truth." How can we worship in truth without a clear understanding of who he says He is? He tells us that truth about God is essential to worship. And the ONLY place we can get this truth is from the Bible. Not study aid is pure God. It is filtered through some person!!

Pay special attention to the book of Psalms. No book in the Bible spends as much time carefully describing who God is.

*Ecc 7:25 I set my heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness;*

## **SLIDE 29**

OBEY GOD.

We worship God when we obey Him. We put His way over above our own

We can do this because we love Him and the Law and we love and respect other people and their possessions.

But we can also learn to be obedient to the guidings of the Holy Spirit in our day to day lives where God is not just “up there” but is “in here”. This can be a risky business as sometimes our own thoughts or fears affect this, but prayer and practice can teach us this skill.

*Heb 5:9 And being perfected, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him,*

TITHE.

This is a practical part of worship and in the Old Covenant they couldn't offer a sacrifice for their sins unless they tithed. Today this is not as obvious and many theologies have dismissed the practice.

If we want to know what it is in your life that we actually worship, look at your bank statements.

*Mat 6:20 But lay up treasures in Heaven for yourselves, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.*

*Mat 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

Some say God is egotistical as He wants us to surrender our entire being to Him, and the best way either of us can gauge whether we are doing this is by examining what percentage we give in time and money.

## **SLIDE 30**

OBSERVING ANNUAL FEAST DAYS

The provision of God's Festivals was an integral part of His law and the revelation of His plan. Jesus, His disciples and the early Church observed them and the Feast of Tabernacles will be observed in His Kingdom.

**Joh 12:20** *And there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the Feast.*

### **SLIDE 31**

SERVICES OF LOVE TO OTHERS.

God especially loves those who help others, so doing so pleases Him and reveals His nature to others.

**Mat 25:40** *And the King shall answer and say to them, Truly I say to you, Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you have done it to Me.*

This is the basis of God's Law and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Law tells us how not to hurt others. The Spirit tells us how to help and uplift others.

BUILD DEEP RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS.

The Bible teaches that God designed us to live in community with other Christians. This can be done through outreach but often it is just leaning to "get on" with other Christians and people even though we differ on points of view. God's people are fracturing into smaller and smaller groups, or getting lost in mammoth congregations where they can struggle to feel accepted.

**Php 4:1** *Therefore, my brothers, ones loved and longed for, my joy and crown, stand fast in this way in the Lord, beloved ones.*

SHARE YOUR FAITH.

When we acknowledge God before others, we let them know that He is the most important thing in our lives. We do this by the way we live but what we say gives them an explanation. It is not easy to speak today as the world sees God and His values as judgemental. Well, they are and for a good reason but this world does not want to hear. It can be almost dangerous to take this stand as one runs the risk of losing friends or contacts.

We need to learn skills to put His case in a loving, challenging and well-presented way and be ready to follow up to whatever happens. This can involve quite some personal sacrifice. But then that is what worship is, putting God's needs above our own.

**Act 1:8** *But you shall receive power, the Holy Spirit coming upon you. And you shall be witnesses to Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

#### SUPPORTING OTHERS FINANCIALLY

**2Co 8:1** *And, brothers, we make known to you the grace of God which has been given among the churches of Macedonia;*  
**2Co 8:2** *that in much testing of trouble, the overflowing of their joy, and the depth of their poverty, abounded to the riches of their generosity.*  
**2Co 8:3** *For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability; they gave willingly;*

**Act 2:44** *And all who believed were together and had all things common.*

**Act 2:45** *And they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, according as anyone had need.*

#### CHEERFUL HELP TO OTHERS

This is only worship when we give lovingly, not grudgingly or of necessity but out of a willing heart

**2Co 9:7** *Each one, as he purposes in his heart, let him give; not of grief, or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

#### SLIDE 32

#### USING OUR WORLDLY GIFTS

We can, in a very real sense, worship God by using the natural gifts He has given us

**Eph 4:7** *But to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

**Eph 4:8** *Therefore He says, "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men."*

*Eph 4:15 But that you, speaking the truth in love, may in all things grow up to Him who is the Head, even Christ;*

***Eph 4:16 from whom the whole body, fitted together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of each part, producing the growth of the body to the edifying of itself in love.***

*Act 6:3 Therefore, brothers, look out among you seven men being witnessed to, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this duty.*

*Act 6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.*

### **SLIDE 33**

#### USING OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

And, of course, the supernatural-given gifts He gave us in order to serve as many people as we can

***1Co 12:4 But there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit.***

*1Co 12:5 And there are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.*

*1Co 12:6 And there are differences of workings, but it is the same God working all things in all.*

*1Co 12:7 But to each one is given the showing forth of the Spirit to our profit.*

*1Co 12:8 For through the Spirit is given to one a word of wisdom; and to another a word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit;*

*1Co 12:9 and to another faith by the same Spirit; and to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;*

*1Co 12:10 and to another workings of powers, to another prophecy; and to another discerning of spirits; and to another kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues.*

***1Co 12:11 But the one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing separately to each one as He desires.***

#### BE A LIVING SACRIFICE

Romans 12:1

***So then, my friends, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you:  
Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God***

### **SLIDE 34**

## **PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING**

So now we come to the thorny one. This issue seems to cause and to have caused such division among God's people and especially so now.

Again there are countless ways we do this.

*Eph 5:19 speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*  
*Eph 5:20 always giving thanks for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,*  
*Eph 5:21 submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God.*

Thanksgiving and praise are the essentials of worship. We "do" this as a manifestation of our thankfulness and awe of God.

### **PRIVATE WORSHIP.**

Obviously corporate worship God is important but we should all do this in our private times. Indeed praise and worship should make up the majority of our private prayer.

### **CORPORATE WORSHIP**

Corporate worship involves the local section of the Body of Christ . It brings His family together and we all know the joy of having all our family about us, but only if they are at peace with each other.

So how can we worship as a group?

### **SLIDE 35**

- **SPEAKING**

We can worship God in words as we do with prayer and countless other ways.

*Psalm 34:1 says, "I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips."*

We can do this with sermons and just saying how great He is. Some write sacred poems and this has produced some of the greatest poetry in history.

We do it with Kid's Lessons

The mainstream churches have a responsive psalm where the leader reads one verse and the congregation the next. With some, it seems that the repetition of the second line, has been deliberately written into the Psalm to produce a delicious pattern. Perhaps we could do this occasionally.

Actually all we say should be worship.

- **SHOUTING**

*Psalm 27:6 says, "Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; **at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the Lord.**"*

I remember once on a high hill in freezing Canada looking down on a valley with an amazing green lake. It was late and Pete and I were the only ones there. I just needed to shout out some form of praise at the top of my voice and it echoed down the valley. No one responded like they so in the ad but God, and I were exhilarated. Pete was horrified!!

- **JOYFUL SONGS**

We can worship our Maker through songs like the Psalms. King David especially called on people to make a joyful shout to the Lord and to come before him with singing on our lips. The Psalms are full of Hymns of Praise as well as great wisdom and heartfelt pleas to God.

*Psalm 47:6 says, "Sing praises to God, sing praises to our King, sing praises."*

***Psa 100:1** A Psalm of praise. Make a joyful noise to Jehovah, all you lands.*

*Psa 100:2 Worship Jehovah with gladness; come before His presence with singing.*

*Jas 5:13 Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing psalms.*

*Col 3:16 Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

***Eph 5:19 speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;***

This, obviously, is the most common way we worship together and there have been so many songs of praise written since time began. The number of styles and genres is overwhelming as each age expresses a different aspect of the diversity of God.

So which one is right? Sadly all we seem to think that our way is “best” but, again, we see the wonder of God’s provision and His creativity reflected by men.

### **SLIDE 36**

- **MUSIC**

Traditionally in Christian culture, the only acceptable instrument was the organ and some sublime music has been written for this instrument.

But any instrument is acceptable by God.

***2Ch 7:6** And the priests waited on their offices, and the Levites with instruments of music of Jehovah, which David the king had made to praise Jehovah, because His mercy endures forever, when David praised by their ministry. And the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood.*

A very special praise and thanking to the Lord took place when Solomon completed the temple, with voices and MANY instruments of music praising the God of heaven (2Chronicles 5:13).

***2Ch 5:13** and they were as one to the trumpeters and to the singers, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah; **and as they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised Jehovah,** saying, For He is good, for His mercy endures forever, the house was filled with a cloud, the house of Jehovah,*

Psalm 33:2, 3 says,

*"Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy."*

Today most modern churches have rock bands

- **CLAPPING**

*Psalm 47:1 says, "Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy."*

I remember clearly when hand clapping started to creep into the traditional Christianity I grew up with. In my day we were taught to sit quietly and reverently in church and if we as much moved, we were disciplined. In my mother's day, the greatest humility was to be handed a peppermint for moving your head away from the altar. In my day we were given a hard pinch on the arm if we dared to look at a friend.

So when clapping came in people were horrified. I thought it was great!!!

- **DANCING**

Dancing can also be involved. I saw women doing sacred dancing in Israel at the Feast one year

There was dancing for joy when the sea, through a miracle, killed Pharaoh and his army as they were pursuing the fleeing children of Israel

*Exo 15:20 And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand. And all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.*

*Exo 15:21 And Miriam answered them, Sing to Jehovah, for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider He has thrown into the sea.*

When the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem King David, danced, so much so that his wife was disgusted because he inadvertently revealed parts that would have been better not being revealed

*2Sa 6:5 And David and all the house of Israel were dancing before Jehovah on all instruments of fir wood, with lyres and with harps, and with tambourines, and with sistra, and with cymbals.*

*2Sa 6:14 And David danced before Jehovah with all his might. And David was girded with a linen ephod.*

*Psalm 149:3 Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp."*

People now dance in the aisles or bob in their seats. That is cool.

- **TEARING UP OR CRYING**

I personally know I am really worshipping when I start to tear up or actually physically cry. This can come on all levels from a moist eye to great body wracking sobs and it often surprises me when this occurs. It can be when I least expect it and sometimes when I don't think the issue is of major importance. I have come to see that the Lord can use this reaction to show me His, or my, level of importance of the issue and it gives me greater discernment and comfort, as well as me really opening to Him.

## **THE POSTURE FOR WORSHIP**

So here we come to the crunch, the issue that can set so many Christians apart. Biblically we can worship in so many ways

BOWING –

*Psalm 95:6 says, "Come let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."*

STANDING

*Psalm 119:120 says, "My flesh trembles in fear of you; I stand in awe of your laws."*

PROSTRATE

*Gen 17:3 And Abram fell on his face. And God talked with him, saying,*

SITTING

Interestingly, to me at least, was that I could not find a reference to sitting to worship in Scripture. This surprised me as I assumed one could worship anywhere, and indeed one can, but sitting implies a relationship of equals but worshipping is not about equals but acknowledging a person of higher position.

The whole point of worship is to tell God how great He is, how far above us He is

## LIFTING HANDS

*Psalm 63:4 says, "I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands."*

This issue seems to be a bone of contention for many in the modern Christian world and the "accepted norm" has now changed dramatically from one end of the spectrum of immobility to active participation.

As I said, when I grew up, the traditional form of worship which had been in practice for two thousand years was still very much in use. The priest or minister did the work, up front, and read the proscribed prayer and praise for the day and the people assented silently. Mind you, some of these prayers are so beautifully written that they bring tears to your eyes.

Then responsive prayer and Psalms came in but it was very much scripted. This was all the worship that was done

When I first came back to church, the concept of clapping or raising hands was just coming in and many looked askance at any who had the temerity to clap or, heaven forbid, raise their hands!!! Some were ostracised from groups because of this "unholy" behaviour.

Now the situation is reversed where those who do not raise their hands are considered cold and lifeless and even have their salvation questioned because they have the temerity not to conform to the new "norm"

## RAISED HANDS

Now I have to admit that when I started the PowerPoint, I was staggered that I could not find any photos of other forms of "praise" other than hand raising and when I thought about it I could see that, when I stepped out of my traditional training, this is a very valid position. When I visualised David praising God, when he was not dancing or prostrate or sitting pensively writing Psalms, I pictured him with raised hands. But as I have shown before, this is not the only posture we can use to worship.

But not everyone is comfortable doing this, especially those of us coming from another tradition. Many do not feel called to follow what has become the new normal for countless reasons. Many raise their hands and close their eyes reverently, today, simply because it is the new norm. They may do so for as many reasons as those who do not, don't. How many raise their hands and shut their eyes simply because that is how they perceive they should behave?

Positions for worship vary widely among different congregations and nations.

I have known churches which had disintegrated because they couldn't agree on the right position the hands should be held in.

So in this new norm, which position is the right position?

## **VIDEO**

### **SLIDE 37**

#### **HOLY HANDS**

I have been told by some of my loving and "free in Christ, not imprisoned by the Law" friends that it is a command to raise our hands in worship or praise.

To "prove" this they again quote

***1Ti 2:8 Therefore, I desire that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.***

In "our day", the emphasis of this verse was on "holy" rather than "lifting". Timothy was telling the people to lift holy hands, hands that reflected the new state of their spirit. It was essential that their lives and their deeds and their attitudes and hearts were right with God.

We lift our hands to do all manner of things every minute of our days. We lift hands to wash our faces, to eat our meals, to kiss the kids goodbye, to thank someone for letting you into the line of traffic, to pat the dog. We can also lift our hands to shake our fist at the person who wouldn't let you into the

traffic, to wag a finger in someone's face, to raise one finger in defiance. To king punch someone.

We can lift our hands to kill or to kiss ..... and to praise

**1Co 10:31** *Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

*1Co 10:32 Give no offense, either to the Jews, or to the Greeks or to the church of God;*

*1Co 10:33 even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved*

The rest of the Timothy verse that seems to be overlooked in this new emphasis is that it must be done "without wrath or doubting" so the attitude of the mind and the level of faith are also critical. Not only must our hands be free from sin, but so too, must our mind free of sinful emotions and our faith must be strong.

To limit this verse to the position of the hands in worship is losing so much of the deeper meaning there. Every time we lift our hands, to whatever purpose, but especially praise, they must be holy, not just in praise in the church.

HOLY HOLY HOLY

In "heaven" where the angels and the living creatures praise continually around the throne, and we will too one day, the emphasis is on how holy God is. Holy. Holy, Holy. To the third degree.

Nothing about hand position. Nothing about gifts. Nothing about worldly wealth or power. We are told that all these things will pass away. The only thing that is left are our crowns which are made up of the fruit of the spirit which we have managed to manifest in this life by using holy hands.

**Rev 4:8** *And each one of the four living creatures had six wings about him, and within being full of eyes. And they had no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.*

*Rev 4:9 And whenever the living creatures gave glory and honor and thanks to Him who sat on the throne, who lives forever and ever,*

*Rev 4:10 the twenty-four elders fell down before the One sitting on the throne. And they worshiped Him who lives for ever and ever, and threw their crowns before the throne, saying,*

*Rev 4:11 O Lord, You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because You created all things, and for Your will they are and were created.*

## **FALSE GODS**

It is a natural part of man to worship.

### **SLIDE 38**

You only have to go into any Eastern temple to see people worshipping. These people sincerely and emotionally worship their gods, even bowing prostrate or raising hands in supplication.

### **SLIDE 39**

We all worship something whether we are aware of this or not.

### **SLIDE 40**

We can do this in the emphasis we put on different areas of our lives and the priorities we choose. Your God is that entity which influences you most and where your focus is. This can be anything from God, a car, a puppy, a “rock star” to Satan.

We must be very careful that we don't allow the emphasis on minute matters like Holy Names, Festivals, Sabbath, tongues, positions in worship, His return, healing, music, Trinity, The Host, distract us from the real object. All of these are important and part of our God, but they can take our attention away from the primary objective which is to worship HIM in spirit and truth.

### **SLIDE 41**

It is impossible for another person to know what is in the heart of a worshipper or even which God they are worshipping. Only God can know what is in someone's heart and that is all He is interested in.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **SLIDE 42**

Worship is the process of surrendering your entire life into God's hands. Everything you do can—and should—be an act of worship.

God designed us to worship Him with our whole lives. How we do this is really not very important. God loves diversity as it is an expression of His amazing nature and allows Him to express so many aspects of His creativity, beauty and love.

He created so many amazing plants and animals just because He could. Evolution needs only a couple of hundred dull, grey but efficient forms to express its essence.

So, too, He made us all different, so we can reveal different aspects of His creativity in colour, language, culture, diet, customs, forms of government (none of which work) etc. As He revealed different bits of Himself, to His people through the centuries so too, have different forms of worship emerged. None right, just different and He knew that each form allowed those who worshipped in spirit and truth to do so. No theology or form of worship held by man can be 100% right. No stance or music type or body movement (or lack thereof) can ever be “right” because we can’t all know the whole picture and we are all different.

Only He can know that and He is only interested in hearts.

Did it ever occur to us that we might actually be the ones who are wrong?