unreachable. Variation in orders of service, music, drama, poetry, use of multi-media, and preaching which involves the congregation are being used.

This creativity itself demanded **a greater tolerance of variety in Adventist worship**. Not all worshippers have the same needs. While all should work within appropriate boundaries, there needs to be opportunity for people to worship in a way that gives them the greatest sense of adoration and praise to God. This has been happening in Adventist churches in North America for many years. The Afro-American (black) congregations are worshipping according to their own culture and needs. The white churches worship in their own way. There has been tolerance. In this respect the North American model is one that we can all benefit from.

Discussion questions
1. Why did Adventist public worship become more conservative after beginning in an "enthusiastic" fashion? Has the change been positive or negative?
2. Why is worship such a contentious issue for Adventist Christians?

A pleasing development has been **the realisation that worship is for everyone**. What's more, the church family can be an extension of the nuclear family and provide the same sense of security and love that exists at home. More importantly, the church can provide a sense of family for those who do not have a family, or who come from broken and dysfunctional families. Worship is the gathering of the family of God. All the members of the family can participate. This is a good innovation in Adventist worship.

A vital part of Adventist worship is the sermon. It can be the vibrant heart of worship or the chilling death of it. Many pastors and elders are not resting content with presenting the "same old stuff" week after week. The use of dialogical, narrative, dramatic and inductive techniques are giving **greater opportunity for the congregation to become involved in the sermon**. The sermon should uplift the worshipper to God; not club him/her into submission or induce a sleepy stupor.

The Future?

The future holds exciting possibilities for Adventist worship. It does not have to repeat the excesses of the past, the sort of excesses in that farmhouse in Atkinson, Maine in 1845. Nor does it have to perpetuate a liturgical drone. The appeal is for each Adventist congregation to be intentional about its worship. Each local church needs a committed leadership team which is prepared to bring to the congregation each Sabbath a well-planned, participative worship service; the kind of worship which brings the worshipper into the presence of God and sends us out into the world to be the kind of Christians that we all want to be.

Principles of Worship

Barry D. Oliver

Because the last fifteen years have seen a revolution in the way Christians worship, it is important that we have good reasons for worshipping the way we do. This section will list some of the principles which should be taken into consideration when Christians think about worship. These principles supplement those which were discussed in the

earlier section on worship in the Old and New Testaments. The last part of this section will make some practical suggestions about how the principles can be applied in the local congregation. The intention is that the reader gain an awareness of the need for appropriate flexibility in worship styles and practices.

1. Biblical Principles

Acts of worship are described repeatedly throughout Scripture. From Genesis to Revelation the people of God are depicted in various acts of adoration and worship (Gen 22:5; Exod 34:14; Psa 95:6, 96:9; Jer 7:2; Matt 4:10; John 4:23; Rev 19:10, 20:4). Careful examination of scriptural examples of worship is particularly significant for Seventh-day Adventists. In Daniel and Revelation worship is a test of loyalty. In Daniel 3, for example, the issue is the allegiance of Daniel's three companions. Will they bow and worship the great golden image, or will they remain loyal to the God of their fathers? In Revelation (Rev 13:4, 8, 12, 15; 14:9,11; 19:20) worship of the dragon, the beast, and the image to the beast is shown to be contrary to allegiance to God. Clearly, false worship is an option chosen by many. But a remnant remain loyal.

It is important to notice that the issue of worship in Daniel and Revelation does not so much centre on ***how*** to worship as it does on ***who*** to worship. Clearly, there are appropriate ways for God's people to worship. But the discussion of true worship or false worship in Daniel and Revelation is primarily an issue of loyalty. Although related, the manner of worship in itself is never the primary determining factor in the discussion.

Biblical writers appear to give us two broad perspectives on the issue of how to worship. (It should be noted that there are clear directives that worship should be conducted "decently and in order" [1 Cor 14:26-40].) In Exod 3:5, Moses was commanded to "take off [his] sandals," because the place where he was standing was holy ground. Almost 1500 years later the author of Hebrews was to call the new Israel to "worship God acceptably with reverence and awe." He added, "For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 12:28,29; NIV). Even a casual acquaintance with the history of the people of God is sufficient to remind us that there were numerous occasions when worship was characterised by solemnity, silence, solitude, fasting, ritual, tradition, and awe. Authentic worship had an element of mystery. It called for an attitude of silence and wonder. Having received the vision of the ladder stretching from heaven to earth Jacob declared, "What an awesome place this is! It must be the house of God; it must be the gate that opens into heaven!" (Gen 28:17).

On the other hand, there were many other occasions (or sometimes even the same occasion), both in the Old Testament and New Testament when worship was conducted with great exhilaration, exuberance, spontaneity and joy. The Psalmist exhorted the people to "praise his [God's] name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp" (Psa 149:3), and to "praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute" (Psa 150:4). The prophet Zephaniah proclaimed: "Sing and shout for joy, people of Israel! Rejoice with all your heart" (Zeph 3:14). Deep sorrow and repentance for sin (Psa 4:4) was to be accompanied by assurance and joy in the knowledge of sins forgiven and the power of the Lord (Psa 32).

> While worship could be addressed to God in solitude and fasting, it could also be given in the context of community celebration and feasting.

In summary, it seems to me that there are two key biblical worship principles:

First, **worship is directed toward God.** It is the appropriate response of the created being toward the creator. The Creator is God, the Holy One, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Eternal One, our Saviour and Friend. Surely God is worthy of our adoration and worship.

With our worship we give to God (Gen 4:3,4; 8:20-22; 23:1-19. We hear from God (Gen 15:1-19; 28:10-27; 1 Kings 3:3-15). We meet with God (Exod 3:1-6; Isa 6:1-8). We submit to God (2 Chron 20:5-30). We obey God (Isa 1:12-20, Mal 3:8-15). And, we express praise to God (Pss 90-96).[152]

Second, **worship is service rendered to God.** We serve God in our praises, our prayers, our ministry, and our solitude. Worship is both individual and corporate. It can be addressed to God in the desert and in the city; in the synagogue and in the church; in the secret place and in the community of faith. Worship is not simply something observed or attended. It derives from what we are and is something we must give.

2. Psychological Principles

Over the last forty-five years, thorough research has been able to describe many of the relationships that exist between how our minds work and the way we behave. More recently some of the findings of this research have been applied to investigation of religious behaviour. It has been demonstrated by a number of different approaches that there is a significant relationship between the psychological orientation of the individual and the manner in which that individual expresses and fulfils the need to worship God. While it would be presumptuous to assume that a person's psychological perspective is the only factor that determines why people worship the way they do, it would be just as inappropriate to disregard the considerable body of research that is continuing to accumulate. By way of example, we will briefly describe three streams of research.

Personality trait theory: It is well recognised that people differ in the way in which they express their feelings. The extroverted personality is generally exuberant, vocal, and active. The introverted personality is generally reflective, quiet, and sedate. Each individual has a bias toward the way in which he/she needs to worship that reflects his/her personality traits. Worship should provide opportunity for expression and growth by individuals with different personality traits. The back door of the church may swing too often because those who plan worship have failed to take this rather obvious factor into account.[153] While consensus should arrive at appropriate boundaries, the local church should be careful in case it perpetuates a pattern of worship that is always being planned by people who are each of the same personality type. Such a practice will not only fail to attract, but will actually repel other personality types. People of differing personality types should assist in worship planning.

Developmental psychology: Not only do different people display different personality traits, but each individual passes through a number of developmental stages which also may affect the manner in which people want to worship. It has been shown that views of God and methods of worship can undergo significant development as each of us mature.[154] Since this growth can continue throughout life, or may indeed be arrested by any of a number of circumstances, worshippers in any congregation may each be at different stages of development and, consequently, need to express their worship in ways appropriate to their own stage of growth[155]. Thus it again follows that there should be allowance for a diversity of worship styles within the congregation.

Attachment theories: More recently, there have been some significant research findings which link the experiences in early life with perceptions of God and worship. Attachment theories propose that experiences in early life help to shape the way in which the individual will relate with others in later life. These experiences also influence the way in which each individual relates to God. Worship and expressions of the various attributes of worship, are indicators of how we relate to God.[156] Needs and responses in worship differ insofar as each individual has had different life experiences in early childhood. The diversity of early life experience predisposes the congregation to the need to allow diverse experiences of worship. Again, to impose uniformity is to disregard the needs of many.

Why should psychological, sociological and cultural issues be considered in the matter of worship planning?

To summarize, these three examples—personality trait theory, developmental psychology, and attachment theories—demonstrate that within any worshipping community or local congregation there is, of necessity, a diversity of personality types, developmental stages, and perceptions of the character and nature of God. The need to worship may be universal, but the manner in which it is done is not. It is entirely possible for Seventh-day Adventist Church members to accept every one of the twenty-seven fundamentals of Adventism and still hold some different views of God and how worship should be conducted. If the Seventh-day Adventist Church is going to address itself adequately to appropriate forms of worship it cannot avoid the implications of these data.

3. Sociological Principles

In addition to the psychological factors referred to above there are some sociological factors that lead to the same conclusion: that there needs to be allowance for a variety of worship forms. Some of those factors are: (1) the socio-economic diversity between the members of the congregation; (2) the diversity of educational attainment within the congregation; (3) the generational differences in the congregation; (4) whether the congregation has rural or city orientation (remembering that it is entirely possible to be located in the city but have a rural orientation and vice versa); and (5) the size of the congregation.[157] It would appear that the reasonable conclusion based on sociological factors is again that variety in worship is needed.

4. Anthropological-Cultural Principles

Even a fleeting acquaintance with some of the principles which inform the practice of mission in a cross-cultural situation should be sufficient to indicate that cultural bias has a great deal to do with deciding the appropriateness of worship forms. The differences between white and black churches in North America is an obvious illustration. In that country, it is recognised that culture has a great deal to do with what is considered appropriate worship practice. The same holds true, on a less extensive scale among the various ethnic churches in Australia and New Zealand. Cultural blindness or bias can impose culturally alien worship forms on ethnic congregations, or on individuals within a multicultural congregation.[158] Variety, which takes into account cultural diversity is necessary.

Is public worship still essential in a society that is highly individualistic?

5. The Principle of Continuity

While worship certainly should be joyful, and should enhance the worshipper's relationship with the Lord, its purpose is best served when the experience that *is taken from* worship is a continuation of the experience in the Lord that is *brought to* worship. An attitude which does not recognise the active presence of God in the life of the Christian for six of the seven days of the week may find it exceedingly difficult to generate acceptable worship on the seventh day.

A Diagnostic Checklist for Worship Health

How do we apply the principles listed above to worship planning in Seventh-day Adventist congregations?

First, it is vital to the health of the congregation that opportunity be given for those with different views about worship to talk together. The spirit of destructive criticism is anti-Christian and inappropriate. Leaders in the local church should seek the counsel of the members and provide opportunities for sharing and dialogue.[159]

Second, the strengths and weaknesses of different points of view should be made available to the church at large so that the members can evaluate, discuss, and arrive at consensus on the appropriate worship forms. It is unlikely that coming generations will tolerate "the same old stuff" just because it is familiar. What is true of worship will be true of most other things the church does. Church members will not become enthusiastic if they perceive that guidelines are being imposed. Healthy churches in the twenty-first century will be those which participate in the development of a strong biblically-based theology of worship, and implement broadly-based worship practices which value appropriate flexibility.

Third, when dialogue and research reveals the necessity, congregations need to be willing to experiment. In seeking to give attention to appropriate worship, and recognising that meaningful worship brings together many different elements, the following questions should be addressed.

What about participation? Is everything possible being done to maximise the *participation* of members, both in planning and presenting the worship service? Who plans the service each week? Who prays, reads the Scripture and presents special music? How often are the minority groups in the church involved (youth, children, aged, widows, ethnics)? Is there variety? Why, or why not?

What about sensitivity? Is there a consciousness that worship must be expressed with *sensitivity*? There are times when even the most extroverted worshipper cannot be exuberantly joyful. There are those suffering grief; those who are ill; those who are in the centre of an inter-personal conflict. Appropriate expression of worship will take these members of the congregation into consideration.

What about the preaching? Appropriate worship will be enhanced by *good preaching*. Deductive method in preaching will especially feed those in the congregation who find meaningful worship in a more cognitive presentation of the gospel. Inductive method in preaching will be better suited to those who find their need for worship oriented more toward the affective.[160] A well-planned preaching program will provide both of these types of sermons as well as others.

What about fellowship? Worship can be enhanced by the sense of *fellowship* and community that is promoted within the congregation. Many studies have focused on the need for fellowship in the church. The lack of fellowship is generally recognised as a more significant reason for people dropping out of the congregation than doctrinal aberration or apostasy.

What about celebration of service? Meaningful worship is closely related to *service or ministry*. The people of God can find joy in service if they are empowered to serve. Worship on Sabbath can be a celebration of the ministry that has been an essential part of the lifestyle of the worshipper during the week.

What about the planning? How well does the local congregation *plan* its worship? The process of planning worship must be participative and thorough. When careful planning is not carried out the result is that the bias of the leader will inevitably determine the "flavour" of worship. If that is the case, only some members of the congregation will be able to enter into meaningful worship. What is more, if the same lack of planning occurs regularly, and the same leader is permitted to dictate the style of worship, the situation will rapidly develop where some of the congregation will find that they are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the worship service.

What about the music? Careful thought should especially be given to the *music* for worship. Probably in no other area is there likely to be so much contention as in the choice of appropriate music. In this area, careful consideration should be given to finding music which contains some elements which meet the needs of as wide a spectrum of worshippers as possible. Different styles should be chosen which are appreciated by different groups within the church. Never, however, should the extremes of a particular style be permitted within the church. Worshippers need to be sensitive to their fellow worshippers and not demand or expect that others should necessarily find adequate occasion for their expression of joy in the Holy Spirit in exactly the same way as themselves.

What about a sense of awe? All worship, if it is directed toward God should enhance the sense of awe. In earlier centuries and in other lands this was done by the erection of gothic cathedrals with stained glass windows, pipe organs and choirs rendering Gregorian chants. While Seventh-day Adventists do not generally use these forms of worship, there is, nevertheless, a great need to find ways of creating a sense of awe and the majesty of God in ways that are uniquely Adventist and locally acceptable. One of the deep-seated reasons for the rejection of religion in many places is the manner in which Christians have often imported worship forms from other places and failed to contextualise them within a local Christianity. Seventh-day Adventists have not been innocent in this regard. Worship will be enhanced when worshippers can experience God's presence in the context of their own imagery resonating with Christian life as it must be lived from day to day.

Great care should be exercised in bringing experimental forms of worship into the local congregation. They should be introduced on an experimental basis only and not imposed by the will of any individual.

What about willingness to experiment? For some, there will be an openness to more *experimental forms* of worship. Great care should be exercised in bringing these into the local congregation. They should be introduced on an experimental basis only and not imposed by the will of any individual. Drama and mime are two such forms of worship that come readily to mind. It should be remembered that in many cultures of the world these mediums are the traditional vehicles of community knowledge. They are not intrinsically bad nor inappropriate for worship.

Finally, it is an unfortunate commentary on most local Adventist churches that there is usually little attempt to put in place an adequate evaluation process which assesses the ministries and functions of the church. Many congregations are in a rut. They are content to

continue doing the same things with the same people year after year. They appear to be making no endeavour to evaluate their success or failure. Worship may well be enhanced if the congregation is prepared to intentionally assess its own performance. The use of agreed trial periods may be one way to do this. Wise leadership will never try to introduce change by deleting an existing program or methodology and substituting another. Rather, the new and untried will be introduced by addition rather than substitution, and always only for a trial period.

More than Strategies

This chapter has presented some reasons why there cannot be one prescribed worship form that is satisfactory to all. It has also made reference to the fact that there cannot be a careless approach to worship that is dictated by the whim of the person or persons who organise the worship service. Rather, a well balanced approach to worship in the local church should be formed as the congregation engages in a participative process which takes account of biblical and contextual principles such as those which have been discussed in this chapter.

However, innovative strategies, creative planning, participation, etc. does not guarantee that worship will take place. Worship actually requires worshippers! Unless people are actually encountering God, worship has not taken place. Ultimately, worship grows out of a realization of the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ. So, God may be just as truly worshipped in a traditional or a contemporary worship service. Or, then again, he may not be!