

Worship development

Starter: *[In pairs]*

Recall your feelings when you tried to read something that was difficult to understand

Sing or read Hymns and Psalms 216

Allow time for everyone to re-read it for themselves along with the comment and the personal focus questions – and reflect alone.

Comment:

Our worship songs are full of images from thousands of years ago, often expressed in a kind of ye olde scriptural English. But how many of these still make sense to congregations? Songs about sheep and shepherds may well have Biblical precedent, but a modern urban congregation wouldn't know a shepherd if one came up and belted them over the head with his crook. And the only sheep they see is cut up and cling-filmed in the supermarket.

Trying to find a modern image in worship songs—one that could only have come from the twentieth century—I found nearly impossible. Out of some 1000 'modern songs surveyed, only 14 use any distinctive, contemporary image. You can find flocks of lambs, vats of anointing oil, enough two-edged swords and chariots to stock an army. But no cars. No electricity. No internet, newspapers or TV. No trains (Well I did find one but only in the phrase 'your train fills the temple'. The song, written in 1999, seems to have been written for young people. I wonder how many of them stood there imaging God arriving on the 3.15 from Paddington?)

Song writers should reflect the present rather than retreat to the past. They should reflect a God who knows about our world, who knows about beer as well as wine, baked beans as well as bread. A God who might prefer to wash me with soap rather than cleanse me with hyssop.

Nick Page Christianity and Renewal August 2003
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9. Singing

Personal Focus Questions:

1. How do hymns and songs help you to worship God?
2. How do you go about choosing hymns or songs for your services?
3. What problems could the hymn 216 cause to adults inside and outside of the church?
4. Would you use any of the hymns/ songs on the reverse side of the sheet? Is the reworking of H & P 216 helpful?

Share together in threes the results of your individual reflection.

Return together as a group and share any insights. Now share together in these applications.

Applications:

1. In what ways does the almost total absence of modern imagery in hymns and songs cause problems?
2. What practical problems need to be addressed in using a wider range of hymns and songs in a service? What can you do about these?

Review *(Individual thought)*

As an individual how will you use the ideas you have heard in this session?

Follow up

If you would like to develop these ideas further then you could organize a workshop with Alan Barker [01522 543168].

Look at the 166 modern hymns of Fred Pratt Green published in 'Partners in Creation', mostly readily singable to known tunes.

Look at some of the hymns of Graham Kendrick or the 'Big Blue Planet' songbook and consider their suitability.

It is worth reading the 'Let the People Worship' Conference report section on music. [Para.39-41]

Worship

End with a time of worship that uses the words of hymns or songs in a variety of ways.

Chorus

**Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart,
Teach me to move in the pow'r of Your Spirit
Teach me to walk in the light of Your Presence,
Teach me to dance to the beat of Your heart.
Teach me to love with your heart of compassion,
Teach me to trust in the word of Your promise,
Teach me to hope in the day of Your coming,
Teach me to dance to the beat of Your heart.**

1. You wrote the rhythm of life,
Created heaven and earth
In you is joy without measure,
So, like a child in Your sight,
I dance to see Your delight,
For I was made for Your pleasure,
Pleasure.

Chorus

2. Let all my movements express
A heart that loves to say "yes",
A will that leaps to obey You.
Let all my energy blaze
To see the joy in Your face;
Let my whole being praise You,
Praise You.

Chorus

Graham Kendrick and Steve Thompson
Songs of Fellowship 1013

[Used with permission]

Who would have thought that Jesus' death
Could bring good news for you and me?
Our godless lives rob Christ of breath.
We torture him on Calvary.
Amazing love! Yet it is true
That Jesus dies for me and you.

It's hard to see how God can die;
We argue it's impossible.
Logical thoughts go all awry
When love, God's love, is seen in full.
Let love convince! Let closed minds go!
God's love is all we need to know.

Love's at the heart of Christ's great deed.
He shrugs off his divinity;
Comes to a world of selfish greed
To bleed for lost humanity.
Obedient love, immense and free,
Goes to the Cross for you and me.

Shut in ourselves, we find despair -
A claustrophobic way to live.
Christ's love is like a breath of air;
Unselfish love he longs to give.
The door flings wide! Love sets us free
To live our life abundantly!

Gone the despair, the guilt, the shame!
In Jesus, we are safe and sound!
Raised to new life in Jesus' name -
His peace and holiness surround!
Love makes us brave! To God we come!
In Jesus, we are welcomed home!

Charles Wesley makeover by P Relf of HP 216

See Jesus as the school patrol
Who stands with outstretched arms;
Who makes a crossing safe for all
And smiles and cheers and calms.

The rush is stopped. The friendly voice
Calls out to 'Follow me':
To young and old, to girls and boys,
To all who would be free.

We cross with Jesus, glad to find
God's love is with us all.
Love frees our body, heart and mind:
We're ready for God's call.

Those outstretched arms are on the cross.

They call us on the street.
To stay behind would be our loss.
Love makes our life complete.

Philip Doddridge *makeover P Relf of HP 588*