

Contemporary Worship

By Ron Boatwright

From where did the idea of "contemporary worship" come? The purpose of contemporary worship is so everyone can have the worship they want and enjoy and not what God has authorized as acceptable. This is selfish rebelliousness. That which is called "contemporary" includes much which God has not approved and for which He has no respect.

Even in the generation following Adam and Eve, Cain offered to God "contemporary worship". In other words Cain offered to God worship that pleased himself instead of God. Cain's worship was contemporary for his time period. "Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, **but He did not respect Cain and his offering**. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell" (Genesis 4:3-5). Why did the Lord have respect for Abel's worship but not for Cain's? "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous" (Hebrews 11:4). How did Abel offer his sacrifice by faith when Cain didn't? "So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Since Abel offered his worship by faith, that is by the word of God, his worship was accepted. Cain's worship was rejected since it was not according to God's word. God has always dictated to man how He is to be worshipped.

The idea that worship can be changed to suit each generation is outrageous. In every generation, worship must always be what God has approved in His word. "It is not in man that walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Contemporary worship includes: baby dedications, worship services with denominations, women leading worship, clapping of hands, waving of arms in the air, swaying from side to side while standing, praise teams, also women in the praise teams taking part in the leading, drama groups, singing groups, mechanical instruments of music, burning candles and incense, etc. Besides all this entertainment during worship, gymnasiums are now being added for everyone's recreation and enjoyment after worship is over. Where is God's authority for all of this? "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). To do "all in the name of the Lord Jesus" is to do everything by His authority. There is no authority from the Lord for many of the things done in contemporary worship.

Contemporary worship is based on what is popular and pleases people at the time and not on what God has authorized in the Bible. The various things done during contemporary worship usually have their start in the denominations and then congregations of the Lord's blood bought church "copy cat" them, just as Israel wanted to be "like all those nations" around them (1 Samuel 8:5). Contemporary worship will usually change when something else new comes along. Contemporary worship is designed to please men rather than God. Paul asks the question, "do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10).

If we want to be true worshippers of God, our worship must be in spirit and in truth. Jesus says, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). It doesn't say, "God is Spirit and we can worship Him any way we want". In contemporary worship people don't seem to care if God is worshipped in spirit and in truth or not. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3). Contemporary worship is a "feel good" worship mainly concerned with what me, myself, and I want, and not what God has authorized.

In contemporary worship man does what seems right to him, just as in Israel's day when "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6). When people engage in worship, which God has not authorized, their worship is vain. Jesus says, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:7). Contemporary worship is vain, since it is after the doctrines of men and not from God. It is another tool of Satan designed to cause people to lose their soul.