

EXPLORING POSTMODERN WORSHIP:  
WORSHIP INNOVATION IN A TRADITIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to explore what makes worship meaningful to people and to determine if postmodern worship could be incorporated into a traditional Baptist church's worship in a way that would be meaningful to adults of all ages. For the purpose of the project, we defined postmodern worship as worship that is multisensory, experiential, enhanced with art, video or other imagery, is more participatory in nature, less clergy centric and word driven. In order to measure if postmodern worship was more meaningful, we ran a mixed methods research project at First Baptist Church in Columbia, MO; the research included the collection of both quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (interviews) data.

We designed a series of six worship services, which included elements enhanced with a postmodern style. After three of those worship services, we conducted surveys with the worship participants. We had them rank each element of the worship service based on how meaningful it was and we asked them a series of open-ended questions about the worship service. In addition, we conducted in-depth interviews with members of the congregation to determine what made worship meaningful to them and to further explore their experience of the postmodern elements in the worship services. After analyzing the data, our research revealed that the postmodern elements of worship were indeed more meaningful to members of the congregation.

During the project, we were not attempting to radically alter worship at First Baptist. Instead, we focused on worship innovation, renewing our worship by adding a more postmodern style to what we were already doing. This approach proved very successful. The congregation responded with enthusiasm and since the conclusion of the project, we have continued to utilize a more post postmodern style in worship.

For my husband Michael, my partner in ministry and life, I would not be me without you. And in memory of my mother, for understanding that not all who wander are lost.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### WORSHIP IN A CHANGING WORLD

Baptists are called ‘free church people’ which means our worship does not have to follow a set liturgy.<sup>1</sup> However, I have been a member of more than one Baptist church where the worship services were so predictable that you could almost set your watch by it. You knew that the service would include these elements: an organ prelude, an opening hymn, a prayer of invocation, a greeting that included the opportunity to shake hands with those around you, followed by a children’s sermon, another hymn, an offertory prayer, the offertory, a scripture reading, and an anthem sung by the choir, followed by the sermon, which moved into two verses of a hymn of invitation, announcements and the benediction.

Sunday after Sunday, year after year, the elements of worship and even the structure of the service remained basically the same. Worshipers knew that the anthem would take place around 11:20 a.m. and would be followed by the sermon, which meant that they could sit down at 11:20 a.m. and physically and mentally disengage for the next 30 minutes. The worshiper would not have to do anything until around 11:50, when the pastor asked them to stand and sing the first and last stanzas of the hymn of invitation. Perhaps as a pastor, I should not admit this but the truth is, my interest in postmodern worship arose, because I have sat through many predictable worship services which I found boring.

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<sup>1</sup> “Church freedom” is a term that comes from Walter B. Shurden, *The Baptist Identity : Four Fragile Freedoms* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publisher, 1993). Shurden defines church freedom this way, “Church freedom is the historic Baptist affirmation that local churches are free, under the Lordship of Christ, to determine their membership and leadership, to order their worship and work, to ordain whom they perceive as gifted for ministry, male or female, and to participate in the larger Body of Christ, of whose unity and mission Baptists are proudly a part.” Regarding worship, this means that unlike churches with a hierarchal structure of governance, Baptists are free in the local church context to determine how they will structure their worship. Unlike Episcopalians, for instance, there is no authorized liturgy.

Certainly, the mindset of the worshiper contributes greatly to how one experiences worship. It is possible that my own state of mind contributed to how I experienced those worship services. At the same time, I am a highly motivated worshiper. I want to be in worship and I long to experience God's presence through worship. Still, I have often found myself counting the minutes until worship was over. For that reason, the narrative of concern for this project began with my own desire as a pastor to create worship services that were meaningful to people, engaged people more fully, and drew them into the worship of God instead of allowing them to mentally check out. Several years ago, I began to learn about postmodern worship and came to believe that this might be an avenue for creating more meaningful worship. This paper focuses on how postmodern worship (worship that is multisensory, experiential, enhanced with art, video or other imagery, is more participatory in nature, less clergy centric and word driven) is vital in reaching people today. It focuses on worship that engages the whole person.

My first experience of worship that was less predictable and one-dimensional was during seminary. The church that I interned with during seminary, Lake Shore Baptist Church in Waco, TX, celebrated the liturgical year with colorful seasonal banners, image-rich bulletin covers and on occasion, other visualizations meant to enhance worship. I clearly remember the Sunday when worship was focused around the theme of vocation and calling. During the week prior to worship, we let church members know that we were going to be talking about calling and vocation.

As Baptist, we believe that all those who follow Christ are called to serve God in their daily life and work.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, church members were asked to bring items to worship that

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<sup>2</sup> Baptist often talk about the priesthood of all believers as one of our core values. This value comes from the work of Protestant reformer Martin Luther who taught that all baptized believers are set apart for God's work. For

represented their calling. At the beginning of the worship service, people from the congregation were invited to bring the items up to the front of the sanctuary and place them on a table. The table was decorated with lovely multi-colored fabric and a beautiful flower arrangement prior to the service. People brought forward items like a briefcase, a laptop computer, textbooks, homemade bread and cans of food. Years later, I can still picture the table, covered with the visualizations of calling. I remember feeling like the participation of the people in the congregation was important. As Robert Webber has observed in his book, *Worship is a Verb*, much of our worship has become clergy centric, and congregants have been relegated to passive observers.<sup>3</sup> Looking back on that worship service, it was meaningful and memorable, because the congregation was not just an audience; they were participants. For me, this was worship.

After seminary, for nine years, I served as an associate in churches where the worship included very little imagery, art, banners or non-traditional participation, the worship services were more predictable and one-dimensional. For this reason, when I came to First Baptist Columbia, Missouri in 2012, I was thrilled to discover that the worship at First Baptist Columbia already incorporated some elements of the liturgical year which I enjoyed at Lake Shore Baptist Church as a seminarian.<sup>4</sup> During Lent and Advent, First Baptist Columbia used art on the bulletin cover, banners in the worship space and occasionally other visualizations to enhance

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Baptist, this means that all people can seek God's grace directly and that all followers of Christ are ministers. Despite this important emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, Baptists do ordain specific individuals for the ministry. Bill Leonard, *An Introduction to Baptist Principles* (Brentwood, TN: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2005), 16.

<sup>3</sup> Robert E. Webber, *Worship Is a Verb: Eight Principles for Transforming Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 7.

<sup>4</sup> The *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* lists 29 different Baptist groups or denominations in the United States alone. For a complete list see Craig D. Atwood, Frank S. Mead, and Samuel S. Hill, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 13th ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010). First Baptist Columbia, MO, where this project was conducted affiliates with American Baptist Churches USA and The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

worship. So far during my time at First Baptist, I have enjoyed the benefits of having worship enhanced with those elements, at least during Lent and Advent, but I felt there could be more.

In the spring of 2013, I heard Leonard Sweet speak about his work on postmodern worship. Following the event, I began to read about Sweet's take on postmodern culture and worship. In his book *Postmodern Pilgrims*, Sweet describes the postmodern culture as EPIC, which means, it is "Experiential, Participatory, Image-driven and Connected."<sup>5</sup> He argues that the church has been slow to respond to these attributes of postmodern culture, and remains locked in a primarily a one-dimensional, verbal model, of communication in worship which has led to decline in church attendance and participation.<sup>6</sup>

Then, in March of 2014, several churches in Columbia came together to host Phyllis Tickle for a lecture series. Leading up the series, I read Phyllis Tickle's books *The Great Emergence* as did many people in my congregation.<sup>7</sup> Tickle offers an overview of church history contending that every 500 years or so, people of faith have a giant rummage sale of sorts where they reexamine Christianity. She argues that the church is in the middle of one such transformative time, not unlike the Protestant Reformation. During this shake up, new forms of worship and alternative worship services have emerged to minister to the needs of our changing culture. Tickle's work introduced me to the emergent worship movement.

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<sup>5</sup> Leonard I. Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims : First Century Passion for the 21st Century World* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence : How Christianity Is Changing and Why* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008).



Emergent worship needs to be distinguished from the contemporary worship movement, which began around 1975 in nondenominational and Pentecostal churches.<sup>8</sup> In the book *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*, author's Swee Hong Lim and Lester Ruth point out that people think about the contemporary worship movement as being primarily about music, but these are not the only distinguishing features. Authors Lim and Ruth have identified nine qualities that characterize contemporary worship. They include things like a focus on using contemporary language, a preference for informality and a reliance on electronic technology.<sup>9</sup> To make worship more accessible and less formal, contemporary worship, also shied away from traditional sacred symbols such as the pulpit, the communion table or the cross.<sup>10</sup>

Emergent worship was different because it commonly embraced these ancient worship practices and symbols. In addition, emergent worship did not center around one form of music. Emergent worship tended to be eclectic, which makes it hard to describe. It often incorporated the creativity of the local church body. At the same time, it did have a few common elements. According to Ruth Duck, "Multisensory participation is key in emerging worship services, and sometimes this is done through stations, each offering a different activity in which worshipers can participate individually or in groups; these contemplative activities lead into common

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<sup>8</sup> Ruth C. Duck, *Worship for the Whole People of God : Vital Worship for the 21st Century*, First ed. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 257.

<sup>9</sup> Swee Hong Lim and Lester Ruth, *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2017), 2-3.

<sup>10</sup> Leonard I. Sweet, "Outstorming Christianity's Perfect Storm" in *The Church of the Perfect Storm*, ed Lenoard Sweet (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008).

worship.”<sup>11</sup> In addition, the use of artwork, symbols like the cross, images projected on screens, and candles are often used to create sacred space for emerging worship.

All of this led to my narrative of concern. After having experienced worship during seminary, which was enhanced with art, imagery and congregational participation, after hearing Leonard Sweet speak and learning more about EPIC worship, and after hearing Phyllis Tickle speak and learning more about emerging worship, I was concerned that our worship at First Baptist Columbia and my preaching was primarily verbal, or mono-sensory, it focused on people’s ability and willingness to listen. It did not include enough imagery, opportunities for participation, or experiential elements to keep the modern worshiper’s attention, much less to capture their imagination. In addition, I knew that the postmodern elements that we had been occasionally introducing into our worship were meaningful to me, but I wondered if the congregation found them meaningful too.

After all, First Baptist is a traditional Baptist church. It was founded in the 1800s. When I use the word traditional to describe First Baptist, I am refereeing to how long ago the church was founded and the implications of this. Churches founded in the last thirty years are very different than older traditional churches. In my observation, they tend to have contemporary worship services, which include music lead by a band and not an organ. They tend to be more open to technology and may more readily embrace utilizing screens with imagery and videos to enhance worship. Traditional churches were founded earlier and have years of history and

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<sup>11</sup> Duck, 259.

customs to overcome before they consider embracing postmodern worship. First Baptist Columbia, MO where this project was initiated is by these criteria a traditional church.

To give some history, First Baptist Columbia was founded in in 1823. The church's archives contain bound copies of worship service bulletins dating back to the fall of 1923. The earliest bulletin is from September 2, 1923. The order of service in the bulletin is as follows:

*"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,  
And into His courts with praise." Ps. 100:4.*

## *Program For The Day*

MORNING WORSHIP  
10:45 O'CLOCK

*Prelude*  
*Holy, Holy, Holy*  
*Invocation*  
*Hymn 15* (second tune)  
*Children's Sermon*  
*Responsive Reading 36*  
*Gloria*  
*Scripture Lesson*  
*Prayer*  
*Response*  
*Offering*  
*Offertory Selection*  
*Offertory Prayer*  
*Hymn 425*  
*Sermon by the Pastor*  
*Response*  
*Benediction* (Congregation seated)  
*Postlude*

EVENING WORSHIP  
*Church Family Night*  
8:00 O'CLOCK

*Prelude*  
*Hymns 633, 636*  
*Scripture*  
*Quartette*  
*Prayer*  
*Response*  
*Offering*  
*Violin Solo—MISS HELEN RICHARDS*  
*Offertory Prayer*  
*Hymn 637*  
*Soprano Solo—MRS. R. E. LUCAS*  
*Sermon by the Pastor*  
*Response*  
*Benediction* (Congregation Seated)

MRS. R. E. LUCAS, Choir Leader, Soprano  
MRS. M. L. LIPSCOMB, JR., Organist

*"Look 'round our world! behold the chain of love  
Combining all below and all above."*

## *To-night*

THE tie that binds us in loyalty to Christ should bind us together in a warm Christian Fellowship. We are a part of one family; and we desire the atmosphere of our church home to be so cordial and friendly that outsiders coming in will feel it and think to themselves, "Behold, how these Christians love one another."

Our service to-night is to foster just such an atmosphere. Following the worship hour we will tarry for a while and visit with each other and the pastor.

### *New Members*

Reverend and Mrs. A. J. Hensley, and their son, W. A. Hensley, united with the church by letters at Prayer Meeting, August 29. They live at 820 North 7th Street.

An examination of the church's worship bulletins dating from 1923 to 2014 reveals that they have much in common. Most services begin with a prelude, followed quickly by a call to worship, most services end with a time of response, a benediction and a postlude. The order of the other elements within the worship service change somewhat from week to week but the elements are typically the same and include hymns, an offertory, special music of some kind, responsive readings and a sermon. The elements included in the service have remained basically the same for the last 91 years.

In 2003, First Baptist Columbia began a contemporary worship service, called Awakening, in addition to the traditional service. The music in the contemporary service is decidedly different than the music in the traditional service; we sang contemporary praise and worship music, which was led by a praise band, not a choir and a professional musician. The worship service was also less formal. At the same time, the elements of the worship service and the structure of the worship service remained primarily the same. Consequently, despite some changes in the type of music used in worship, the fact remains that for nearly a hundred years, First Baptist Columbia's worship services have included the same elements and the same basic structure.

Yet, during that same time, culture has undergone a cataclysmic shift-- the transition from modernity to postmodernity. Modernity was built on the Enlightenment and scientific reason. It was a period of progress and optimism when people believed that technology and knowledge might solve the world's problems. Modernity was characterized by a trust in

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<sup>12</sup> First Baptist Church Calendar: September 1923-September 1925. Vol. 1. First Baptist Church Columbia, Missouri.

individual and collective reason and a denigration of emotion and intuition.<sup>13</sup> Knowledge was power and “human reasoning, logic and science formed the basis of understanding even in helping to explain and interpret God.”<sup>14</sup>

This gave rise to educated clergy, biblical criticism and a form of worship that was decidedly modern. Worship in general became rational and linear, performance based, with a choir and a lecture style sermon; it centered primarily on words and focused on the individual worshiper.<sup>15</sup> It was mono-sensory, primarily auditory. As Leonard Sweet describes in his book *The Church of the Perfect Storm*, the high point of worship in the modernity was the sermon.<sup>16</sup> Worshipers waited for the homily, which was given in the style of a lecture, knowledge was handed down from the educated, professional clergymen, to the people. The goal of preaching was orthodoxy--correct belief.<sup>17</sup>

The postmodern era emerged as a response to the shortcomings of modernity. Leonard Sweet describes postmodernity as a move from “rational to experiential, from representative to participatory, from word-based to image driven and from individual” to communal.<sup>18</sup> Sweet writes, “Postmodernity is an EPIC culture: Experiential, Participatory, Image-based and Connected.”<sup>19</sup> Worship that engages and connects with postmodern individuals must therefore also be EPIC.

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<sup>13</sup> *The Church of the Perfect Storm*, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Edward H. Hammett and James R. Pierce, *Reaching People under 40 While Keeping People over 60 : Being Church for All Generations* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2007), 70.

<sup>15</sup> Hammett and Pierce, 32.

<sup>16</sup> *The Church of the Perfect Storm*, 10.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, xxi.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

The culture around First Baptist Columbia has changed tremendously, yet prior to this project, our worship services remained largely the same. The narrative of opportunity is the chance to explore how our style of worship might become more postmodern, in ways that might be meaningful to people who live in a postmodern culture. The challenge is to do this in a way that does not alienate church members who have been faithful to the church for decades.

The motto of many churches is, “This is the way we have always done it.” Particularly when it comes to worship, churches often have a set routine for worship, and changing worship can create conflict. Thankfully, First Baptist Columbia has also been on a journey of inching toward multisensory worship for several years led by the Associate Pastor of Music. To give some background, in 2006, the Associate Pastor of Music attended a conference where he saw worship being enhanced with art and fabric for the first time. After the conference, he came back to First Baptist Columbia and began introducing elements such as banners and images on the bulletin covers, into worship particularly during the seasons of Advent and Lent. He also on occasion began to use other visualizations to enhance worship during Lent and Advent.

In 2012, when I was interviewing for the position as pastor at First Baptist Columbia, I asked the search committee to tell me about a worship experience at First Baptist Columbia that had been significant to them. They told me about the first Sunday of Lent earlier that year. At the beginning of the service, the associate pastor and other members of the congregation had stripped the front of the sanctuary and taken away the candles, the paraments on the communion table and the pulpit, and they had removed all the live plants that usually adored the sanctuary. Then, they carried in large a dead tree branch, which remained on the platform the entire season of lent. It was a visual symbol of the solemnness of the season and they remembered it.

Reflecting on my story, the story of the Associate Pastor and of First Baptist Columbia, I can see “God’s gracious action in our lives” that has brought us to this juncture of transforming worship.<sup>20</sup> As worship leaders, we cannot make someone worship. All we can do is create the conditions for worship to happen. This purpose of this project was to learn about what makes worship meaningful to me and to the people at First Baptist Columbia and to determine if a more postmodern style of worship could be incorporated into a traditional Baptist worship service in ways that were meaningful to adult worshipers of all ages. In addition, I also wanted to evaluate my leadership in worship. Having imagery, art, videos and participatory elements in worship is meaningful to me as a worshiper but I wanted to know if my pastoral vision for worship was shared by the congregation.

## CHAPTER TWO

### MAKING WORSHIP NEW AGAIN

Worship theologian Marva Dawn teaches that God is both the subject and the object of worship.<sup>21</sup> God is the subject of worship, which means God is the content of our worship. For Christians, specifically, God as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ and mediated to us today by the Spirit is the content of worship. The content of worship does not change. In addition, God is also the object of our worship, which means that God is the primary focus and purpose of our worship. Even the meaning of the word worship points toward this. The word worship comes from “the old English roots weorth, meaning “honor” and “worthiness.”<sup>22</sup> When we worship, we

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<sup>20</sup> Carl Savage and William Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry* (Louisville, KY: Wayne Oates Institute, 2008), 54.

<sup>21</sup> Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching out without Dumbing Down : A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995), 76-80.

<sup>22</sup> Duck, 3.



are honoring and praising God. As Psalm 113:3 says, “From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the LORD is praised.” Therefore, worship is primarily about God.

Most local congregations meet regularly, even weekly, for worship and worship is a communal task. The Greek root of the word liturgy means “work of the people.”<sup>23</sup> This means that worship is at the heart of every church’s life together. Foundational to this work is a commitment to Scripture, as the book of the church, and the organizing center of worship.<sup>24</sup> This centrality of worship, in the church, means that any attempt to change or reimagine a church’s worship must be done with great care considering the nonnegotiable content of worship, which is God as revealed in Jesus Christ and mediated today by the Holy Spirit and scripture as the organizing center of worship.

However, when thinking about changing a churches worship, as Leonard Sweet writes, “There is a vast difference between invention and innovation. Invention comes from the root word inventus, which means to start from scratch and discover something new. Innovation’s root word is nova. Nova means to make something new again, to take something that already exists and make it fresh...”<sup>25</sup> This project sought to make worship new again at First Baptist Columbia. It was about innovation. It did not start from scratch. The project was built on God as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ and mediated by the Holy Spirit today as the content of worship, scripture as the organizing center of worship, a history of Christian worship that spans

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<sup>23</sup> Rodney Wallace Kennedy and Derek C. Hatch, *Gathering Together Baptists at Work in Worship* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), x.

<sup>24</sup> Kennedy and Hatch, x.

<sup>25</sup> Leonard I. Sweet and Andy Crouch, *The Church in Emerging Culture : Five Perspectives* (El Cajon, CA: Youth Specialties, 2003), 32-33.

millennia, and a history of worship at First Baptist Columbia, which began in 1823. Throughout this project, I tried to honor these foundations.

If you trace the history worship, beginning in the Hebrew Bible and moving forward to the New Testament, it becomes evident that worship has never been static. Innovation in worship is not new. Genesis chapter 4 recorded the first act of worship. Cain brought the Lord an offering from his garden and Abel brought the Lord an offering from his flock. These brothers both brought offerings to the altar, a sacred space, and gave their gifts to God. It was a simple act of worship, with very little structure.

As the story of God and God's people continued in the Hebrew Bible, worship became more complex and structured. In the book of Exodus, God delivered the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt and made a covenant with them at Mount Sinai. Then, according to scripture, God gave Moses specific instructions about some aspects of their worship going forward. They were commanded to build the tabernacle, a portable worship space, and given specific instructions about the items to be used in worship in the tabernacle. They were also commanded to hold a Passover worship festival every year commemorating their rescue from slavery. As a result of these instructions given by God their worship became more structured and ritualized.

When the Hebrews settled into the Promised Land and began to solidify as a nation state, King David selected land to build a permanent structure for worship. His son King Solomon oversaw the construction of that structure, the temple. When the temple was complete, worship innovation happened again. The two defining acts of public worship became the celebration of festivals at the temple and sacrifices, which were offered by priests at the temple. Worship was tied to a specific place and was led by experts, the priests. Later the destruction of the temple and the Babylonian exile necessitated that worship change again. Worship became decentralized

and local congregations called synagogues formed. Without the temple, sacrifices could no longer be offered by the priests. Consequently, the study of Torah became a central feature of worship in synagogues. Therefore, the rituals and structure which once guided worship changed again; innovation in worship was necessary.

This summary of worship in the Hebrew Bible demonstrates that worship has always evolved and changed. As Byung Yoon Kim writes, “Sometimes this change is through God’s initiative (such as the institution of tabernacle worship) and sometimes through circumstances (such as the development of synagogues and increased focus on the Law during the exile, when it was not possible to pursue the cult of Temple worship).”<sup>26</sup> Christian worship is connected to this history of worship in the Hebrew Bible. Christianity grew out of Judaism, but centers around the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament. As stated earlier, for Christians, God as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ and mediated to us today by the Spirit is the content of worship.

The biblical foundation for Christian worship is rooted in Acts 2 and the day of Pentecost when the Spirit descended on the disciples who were gathered together. A violent wind shook the house where they were gathered, and tongues of fire rested on each of the disciple’s head. Though the power of the Spirit, Peter preached a sermon that resulted in three thousand new believers being baptized. After Pentecost, this new group of believers “devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers.”<sup>27</sup> Reflecting on this passage, Kimberly Bracken Long writes, “We recognize this pattern, of course, because it is our

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<sup>26</sup> Byung Yoon Kim, “Epic Worship for the Salvation Army Korean Community Church in London, United Kingdom” (Drew University, May 2007), 5.

<sup>27</sup> Acts 2:42 NRSV.

own.”<sup>28</sup> When Christians gather for worship today, our worship is filled with many of these same elements. We pray, proclaim the good news, we fellowship and share the Lord’s Supper. At the same time, while Acts chapter 2 revealed some of the elements that were included in early Christian worship, the New Testament does not contain one thoroughly developed framework for Christian worship.

Jesus gave his followers a few instructions that have implications for worship. The last night that Jesus spent with his disciples prior to his death and resurrection, Jesus gathered his followers around a table and instituted an embodied worship practice, the Lord’s Supper. He instructed his followers, “Do this in remembrance of me.”<sup>29</sup> In addition, right before Jesus ascended to heaven in Matthew 28:19, he instructed his followers, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>30</sup> From these two passages of scripture, the Lord’s Supper and Baptism were established and have been central to Christian worship ever since. However, even the practice of the Lord’s Supper has evolved since Jesus first instituted it. In the early church, the Lord’s Supper was eaten as part of a larger fellowship meal, which later became the love feast and then today’s practice of the Eucharist.<sup>31</sup> All of this is to illustrate that worship has always evolved and changed. As I explained earlier, innovation in worship is not new.

Furthermore, in *Worship for the Whole People of God* Ruth Duck points out, “From the very beginning, Christian worship has been diverse.”<sup>32</sup> Part of this diversity is the result of

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<sup>28</sup> Kimberly B. Long, *The Worshiping Body: The Art of Leading Worship* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 5.

<sup>29</sup> Luke 22:19 NRSV.

<sup>30</sup> Matthew 28:19 NRSV.

<sup>31</sup> Kim, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Duck, xv.

cultural differences, a church's worship is shaped by cultural expressions like language, music, architecture, economics of a given community and art. A local church's worship can also be influenced by denominational differences. First Baptist Church Columbia's denominational heritage is, of course, Baptist. The first distinguishable Baptist group emerged in 1609 when a small band of Puritan Separatists left the Church of England and fled to Amsterdam.<sup>33</sup> In contrast to infant baptism, which was practiced by most Christians at the time, they became convinced that baptism should be administered only to those who profess faith in Jesus Christ for themselves. This doctrine became known as believer's baptism and eventually became the groups namesake. While believer's baptism played an important role in the emergence of Baptist churches, baptism is not a prominent feature in the weekly worship services at Baptist churches.

In his book, *The Baptist Heritage*, H. Leon McBeth, indicates that the oldest description of a Baptist worship comes from a letter describing a worship service held in Amsterdam in 1609.<sup>34</sup> The letter shows that the worship experience included multiple prayers, readings from the Bible, remarks and conversations about the readings, preaching, an offering to be used for the poor, and even some church business. According to McBeth, this basic pattern of worship continued in Baptist churches for the next century. The worship services were long and focused on biblical exposition and preaching; worshipers were invited to offer their insights into the biblical text as well. At the end of the service, the offering for the poor was collected, and any business of the church, which may have included matters of church discipline, was conducted.

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<sup>33</sup> Charles W. Deweese, *An Introduction to Baptists* (Brentwood, Tennessee: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2005), 6.

<sup>34</sup> Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 91.

One of the most significant contributions of Baptists to the structure of Christian worship was the inclusion of singing hymns. In the seventeenth century, some English churches opposed congregational singing. They were concerned that if non-Christians sang it would taint the worship service. They also felt that hymns not taken directly from Scripture were human inventions and not appropriate for worship. Many Baptist, however, began to sing in worship and even write and publish hymns. This movement among Baptists helped to popularize hymn singing in other churches too.<sup>35</sup>

While every Baptist church that I have ever attended sang hymns, because of church freedom, the historic Baptist affirmation that local churches are free to order their worship as they choose, this practice does not necessarily give us a glimpse of Baptist worship as a whole. As Kyle Childress puts it, “There is a saying that I’ve heard around Baptist clergy circles for years that goes, ‘There are all kinds of Baptists, everything from those who burn incense to those who bay at the moon.’”<sup>36</sup> Baptists have a long history of worshipping God in a variety of ways.

In fact, my own experience as a Baptist reflects this sentiment. I grew up in a rural Baptist church in Tennessee where we never had a printed order of worship, the pastor relied on the movement of the Spirit and not on a manuscript to guide his sermons, hymns were selected by the congregation each week, as they called out their requests during the worship service, and communion was celebrated once or twice a year in conjunction with a foot washing service. The Baptist church that I attended during seminary was completely different. The clergy wore robes and preached from a manuscript, the printed order of worship was our guide for the worship

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<sup>35</sup> McBeth, 93.

<sup>36</sup> Kyle Childress, “Worship and Becoming the Body of Christ,” in *Gathering Together Baptists at Work in Worship*, ed. Rodney Wallace Kennedy and Derek Hatch ( Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013), 1.

service; it included carefully crafted responsive prayers, the music was more classical in nature and preselected by the clergy, and we celebrated communion the first Sunday of each month.

With all this diversity in Baptist worship services, this raises the question, are there some values about Christian worship that remain consistent over time and across cultures? Building on the work of Don E. Sailer, Ruth Duck purposes four theological norms for Christian worship that can perhaps apply across time and place.<sup>37</sup> I found these theological norms to be helpful in defining what worship is and in contemplating what values we want to make sure we hold on to when we change our worship services. Unlike Phyllis Tickle and Leonard Sweet, Duck does not come from the emerging worship movement nor is she a student of postmodernism. Duck is a professor and the author of a text book on worship. Her background is more traditional. Frankly, the postmodern worship movement lacks some of the depth and theological reflection on worship which Ruth Duck and others bring to the table. Accordingly, I used Duck's four norms as the basis for defining worship and reflecting on what values we hold on to when changing worship.

The first theological norm for worship that Duck purposes is "Christian worship aspires to praise and thank God and to transform humanity and all creation through communion with God."<sup>38</sup> This norm is a reminder that first and foremost worship is about God. As mentioned already, this is the nonnegotiable content of our worship. Therefore, we begin with God and not with humanity.

Yet, as Alan Roxburgh argues throughout modernity, which emphasized the purpose of life as fulfilling one's personal goals and needs, church became a way to achieve personal

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<sup>37</sup> Duck, 266-669.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.

wholeness and individual spiritual development.<sup>39</sup> While Roxburgh does not apply this specifically to worship, it makes sense that worship would be impacted by this changing worldview. In modernity, worship became more self-centered. This transition is not all bad, because even though God is the primary focus of our worship, as Ruth Duck says, encounter with God should lead to human transformation.<sup>40</sup>

Human transformation by means of Christian worship happens through sustained encounter with God, but in a world where people write in 140-character tweets and speak in soundbites, fragmentation and short attention spans are a real problem. In her book, *The Worship Architect*, Constance Cherry uses the worship pattern of ancient Israel to explore what sustained worship looked like.<sup>41</sup> For the Jews, worship was a life time endeavor that with a yearly rhythm to it; “Three times each year, all adult males were expected to appear in Jerusalem in order to keep the primary feasts: The Feast of Passover, The Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Booths.”<sup>42</sup> These journeys were seen as holy pilgrimages. Family and friends often traveled together, across perilous terrain, to fulfil their worship obligations. The entire journey, which took sacrifice and commitment, was part of the ritual of worship. A journey of this magnitude undertaken three times a year, year after year, would surely shape one’s life. This worship history is a reminder that sustained encounter with God through worship, over time, is what leads to human transformation. With all of this in mind, my personal definition of worship is bringing our whole lives to the altar, where we offer our praise and thanksgiving to God, opening

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<sup>39</sup> Alan J. Roxburgh and M. Scott Boren, *Introducing the Missional Church : What It Is, Why It Matters, How to Become One* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 59.

<sup>40</sup> Duck, 267.

<sup>41</sup> Constance M. Cherry, *The Worship Architect : A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 15.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.



ourselves to transformation through regular communion with God and the gathered body of Christ. This harkens back to my first experiences of worship that was less one-dimensional, when church members were invited to bring symbols of their vocation to the altar. Therefore, changes to any Christian worship service must be measured against this first theological norm, “Christian worship aspires to praise and thank God and to transform humanity and all creation through communion with God.”<sup>43</sup>

With this definition of worship in mind, I see the role of the worship leader as creating the atmosphere whereby people may be willing and able to bring their lives to the altar and offer praise and thanksgiving to God and open themselves up to transformation. When people come to worship, they have a million other things on their mind besides the worship of God. Creating the space for people to bring their lives to the altar means inviting people to either set aside all the other things on their mind or to bring them before God. Sometimes this also means helping worshipers to focus through participation and experiential opportunities. This is where postmodern worship, which tends to be more participatory and experiential is helpful in engaging worshipers.

The second theological norm for worship that Duck proposes is “Christian worship locates us in the whole story of God with us in Jesus Christ through the Spirit.”<sup>44</sup> The whole story of God begins with creation and extends into the future when the Kingdom of God is fully realized. For this reason, when I traced history of worship I began in Genesis and not in the New Testament. This theological norm is also why I have described the content of our worship as God, revealed in the person of Jesus Christ and mediated to us today by the Spirit. The whole

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<sup>43</sup> Duck, 267.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

story of God is so much more than the present moment or just some vague notion of God. When we lead worship, we are inviting worshipers into this particular story of God and giving them a chance to see themselves as part of something greater than this moment.

For the most part, contemporary worship has moved away from the rhythm of the church year, which commemorates “God’s activity in Christ through seasons of preparation and celebration.”<sup>45</sup> For example, Advent is the season of expectant preparation leading up to celebration of Christ birth at Christmas. Advent also focuses on the return of Christ at the end of time. Lent is the season of preparation leading up to Easter. In an effort to be more relevant most contemporary worship services have not included these seasons of the church year.<sup>46</sup> However, commemorating these seasons, year after year, connects worshipers with the long history of Christian worship that is rooted in the life of Christ. It helps to locate our worship of God in a story that reaches back in time to Christ birth and forward in time to the second coming. Consequently, the innovation of worship does not mean letting go of this rich history. It could simply mean making Advent or Lent new again by celebrating in a postmodern style. This project was completed during the seasons of Lent. Holding on to these seasons of the church year helps us to locate our worship in the whole story of God.

The third theological norm for worship that Duck puts forth is “Christian worship invites the wholehearted participation of the congregation in worship and in life with God and in the world.”<sup>47</sup> This theological norm, which highlights the importance of participation, supports my thesis that worship today should move from modernity’s focus on clergy centric worship to

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<sup>45</sup> Lim and Ruth, 27.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>47</sup> Duck, 268.

worship that engages the participation of the worshiper more fully. The fourth theological norm for Christian worship that Duck suggests is “Christian worship draws on the language, symbols, and art forms of local culture to glorify God, transform humanity, tell the story, and engage heartfelt participation, while at the same time remaining in tension with elements of culture.”<sup>48</sup> Throughout time, human beings have drawn on their own culture to create worship. For example, Duck points out, “Even the word “Easter” probably comes from the spring celebration of Eostre, a pre-Christian Anglo-Saxon dawn goddess in England.”<sup>49</sup> The vestments worn by my clergy used to be common forms of clothing for people in of a certain class.<sup>50</sup> For pastors today to dress in casual clothing, which mirrors culture is not unlike dawning vestments at an earlier time. In the same way, the music we have used in worship, the style of the worship space and even the language that we utilize during worship has always been influenced by culture. However, as theologian Kathryn Tanner states reminds us, “relations with the wider culture are never simply ones of either accommodation, on the one hand, or opposition and radical critical revision, on the other, but always some mixture.”<sup>51</sup> When innovating in worship, we cannot simply adopt any cultural norm. They must be evaluated against scripture, our theological traditions and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

In summarizing her four theological norms, Ruth Duck writes, “Christian worship has integrity when it focuses on praise, welcomes transformation, tells the story, and engages participation in all the ways that are appropriate and yet in tension with the culture.”<sup>52</sup> Whenever

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 269.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 269.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 269.

<sup>51</sup> Sweet and Crouch, 16.

<sup>52</sup> Duck, 270.

we consider worship innovations, we must measure the changes that we are purposing against these theological norms that ensure integrity in worship. This is difficult work that requires patience and values stability, practices that stand the test of time, and not just invention for the sake of keeping up with whatever worship fad might emerge next.

## CHAPTER 3

### EXPERIMENTING WITH POSTMODERN WORSHIP

This purpose of this project was to learn about what makes worship meaningful to me and to the people at First Baptist Columbia and to determine if a more postmodern style of worship could be incorporated into a traditional Baptist worship service in ways that were meaningful to adult worshipers of all ages. As a reminder, we defined postmodern worship as worship that is multisensory, experiential, enhanced with art, video or other imagery, is more participatory in nature, less clergy centric and word driven. We were not attempting to radically alter worship at First Baptist. Instead, we were trying to seamlessly integrate a postmodern style into our worship services in ways that would be meaningful and could perhaps be carried into the future. To fulfill this purpose, during Lent of 2015, we ran a mixed methods research project in worship. The content of worship remained the same, God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Many of the elements of worship remained the same; we still used hymns, prayers, scripture readings, testimonies, choral anthems, special music, pastoral prayers, and benedictions. Elements that have been used in worship at First Baptist since 1823. The structure of worship varied somewhat each week, but not in ways that made it unfamiliar to worshipers; what changed during the project was the style of the worship service.

Each week, we sought to infuse some elements of the worship service with a postmodern style. In other words, the way we prayed, the way I preach, the way we read scripture, and the way we took up the offering were more postmodern. We were not attempting to completely alter our worship services, but to innovate. Innovation as Leonard Sweet describes it is “to make something new again, to take something that already exists and make it fresh.”<sup>53</sup> Consequently, as we planned worship each week, we asked: How can we make some of the elements of this worship service postmodern? Using the definition of postmodern worship used above, we sought to make some of the elements of worship multisensory, experiential, enhanced with art, video or other imagery and to make it more participatory in nature, less clergy centric and word driven. We were seeking to create worship that engaged the whole person.

After worship planning was complete but prior to the worship service, we numbered each element of the worship service and then, ranked each element of worship on a scale of 1-3 based on how postmodern they were, with one being not postmodern, two being somewhat postmodern and three being postmodern. For example, if the offertory was a piano solo that included no imagery or other multisensory component, it was ranked a one. If the call to worship was done in a more postmodern style, by including congregational participation and a dramatist, it was ranked a three. Of course, this is somewhat subjective, but we used the definition of postmodern worship stated above to guide our ranking for each element. We did not set a goal for a specific goal for the number of postmodern elements per worship service. Instead, we gave ourselves permission to think outside the box and let creativity flow and see how many postmodern elements we could come up with, which was a challenging and fulfilling experience.

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<sup>53</sup> Sweet and Crouch, 32-33.

To determine if the postmodern elements were meaningful to worshipers. We developed and administered a survey, which was conducted immediately following worship, three of the six Sundays in Lent (see Appendix A and B for the Questionnaire for Worshipers in both Awakening and Traditional Worship). The survey asked participants to rank each element of the worship service on a scale of 1-4 based on how meaningful it was, with one being not meaningful, two being somewhat meaningful and three being meaningful and four being very meaningful. The survey also included demographic data and the opportunity to answer some open-ended questions about that worship services (Appendix D contains the demographic data).

To enhance what we learned through the surveys, the Lay Advisory Committee and I also conducted 15 qualitative interviews with individuals in the congregation. The qualitative interviews were done using a convenience sample of the congregation. Our goal was to have a cross section of the congregation participate in the interviews; we wanted both men and women, a range of ages over 18, and people from both Traditional and Awakening Worship. To obtain the sample, we let the congregation know that we were looking for individuals to interview. Prior to Lent, we announced it in worship on Sundays, in our church newsletter and on social media; we asked people to submit their names as potential interviewees. Once we had a pool of participants, we sorted their names into categories like Awakening Worship or Traditional Worship, male or female. Then, we invited a few specific individuals to submit their names to the sample pool to balance out those categories. Finally, we choose the 15 interview participants by lottery.

Lay Advisory Committee members and I divided up the participants and conducted the interviews using a Qualitative Interview Protocol that we had created to insure consistence in the interviews (see Appendix C for the Qualitative Interview Protocol). The qualitative interviews

used open ended questions like: Tell me about a time that you felt very connected to God in worship? Tell me about a time that you felt very connected to God in worship at First Baptist? When the interviews were complete, we had them transcribed. Then, members of the LAC and I read them to look for themes and stories about what makes worship meaningful for people at First Baptist.

Following Lent, as we began to analyze the data the first step that we took was to determine how many elements were in each worship service and of those elements how many did we rank as somewhat postmodern and postmodern. In Awakening worship, there were 40 elements total for all three worship services. In Traditional worship, combining all three services there were 52 elements. Combining both Awakening and Traditional Worship, overall there were 92 elements. When we counted the rankings, 36 elements were deemed not postmodern, 37 elements were deemed somewhat postmodern and 19 were deemed postmodern (See Appendix E).

Next, we began to analyze the data by obtaining the average score for each element in all six worship services. We quickly became aware that the data was positively skewed, because the congregation rated all the elements of the worship service as meaningful. As a reminder, the survey asked participants to rank each element of the worship service on a scale of 1-4 based on how meaningful it was, with one being not meaningful, two being somewhat meaningful and three being meaningful and four being very meaningful. The score ranged from 2.72, as our lowest, (which is closer to meaningful than not meaningful), to the highest which was 3.88 which is almost as high as you could rank it. In other words, the congregation ranked almost all the elements of the worship service as meaningful. It was skewed in a positive direction.

At first, I thought that perhaps the congregation was just being kind. I worried that they had not been honest in their responses on the survey. I thought perhaps they were trying to paint their pastor in a positive light for her doctoral project. However, after reviewing the responses to the open-ended questions on the surveys and the qualitative interviews, I believe that the data represents their genuine feelings about the worship services.

Congregants had three opportunities in anonymous surveys to give us feedback, but we received very little negative feedback. A few congregants did talk about certain postmodern elements that were less appealing to them than others. For example, an 82-year-old indicated that she did not like the use of movie clips, but then, she expressed appreciation for the overall approach and went on to say, "...the whole multi-sensory approach that we're using, I'm finding is what's making everything more meaningful."<sup>54</sup> One person who said they did not care for the postmodern style, still expressed understanding and an open-mindedness to moving worship in this direction. He said, "...this is a way to mix it up... I understand and appreciate that for some people that might be needed."<sup>55</sup> The lack of negative comments and the open-mindedness expressed in the interviews lead me to believe that the data was accurate. Congregants found the overall experience of worship to be meaningful. Therefore, they ranked all the elements positively.

Consequently, we can say with some confidence that overall the worship services were meaningful to people; however, since the data was skewed positively, we wanted to find out if the postmodern elements were more meaningful to the congregation than the other elements. To do so, we took averages for each service element and compared them by type of service

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<sup>54</sup> First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview # 13.

<sup>55</sup> First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview # 8.



(meaning Awakening or Traditional) and by the type of element (meaning not postmodern, somewhat postmodern or postmodern). This analysis revealed that the postmodern elements were in fact more meaningful; it was statistically significant.

The postmodern elements were more meaningful than the other elements of the worship service; they were ranked higher at a statistically significant margin. I was thrilled that the simple answer to our research question was yes. We were able to incorporate a more postmodern style of worship into a traditional Baptist worship service in ways that were meaningful to adult worshipers of all ages. To expound on our finding, I will go back and describe the Lenten worship series and the postmodern elements that we used. Then, I will use the congregant's own words from the open-ended questions on the surveys and the qualitative interviews to explain what they found meaningful.

As we planned for the project and thought about how to weave a postmodern style into our worship services, we wanted to have a theme that could carry us through Lent. As our starting point, we decided to use a Lenten worship series called *The Way* created by worship coach Marcia McFee.<sup>56</sup> The series *The Way* is based loosely on the lectionary scriptures for Lent Year C and it utilizes the imagery of pilgrimage to talk about the Lenten journey. The title for the series comes from a movie with the same name, which was written and directed by Emilio Estevez, and stars Martin Sheen.<sup>57</sup> *The Way* is a fictional story of a man who hikes the Camino de Santiago in France, which is a real ancient pilgrimage route still in use today. McFee suggests using the movie *The Way* in worship as a modern visual of pilgrimage. She suggests decorating the worship space using imagery like paths, hiking boots and walking sticks. Using

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<sup>56</sup> Marcia McFee. "The Way." 2013. *The Worship Design Studio*. <http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com>.

<sup>57</sup> *The Way*, directed by Emilio Estevez (2010; Santa Monica, CA: Icon Entertainment International).

this as a starting point, our series focused on using the imagery of pilgrimage to talk about the journey of Lent as we seek to follow Jesus on the way to the cross and to Easter.

As mentioned already, postmodern worship is often enhanced with visual imagery and art in the worship spaces. Prior to Lent, a congregant painted a long piece of canvas to look like a path. During Lent, the path lengthened as additional canvas was added to it. To give the path depth, one Sunday, we added other features like rocks and plants, which I will describe in more detail later. We played with the imagery of path and journey in other ways too. Each week, the cover of the worship bulletin featured a photograph of a different labyrinth from somewhere in the world and a verse from Isaiah 43:19b which says, “I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”<sup>58</sup> In one of the qualitative interviews a 60-year-old congregant talked about how the images on the bulletin covers and, on the screens, made her think. She said, “I’m a visual learner, and a visual person. When I see the bulletin covers and I see the images that have been presented... I analyze what that means to me and what it means to other people as well.”<sup>59</sup>

In addition to using the imagery of labyrinths in worship, we also procured a portable Labyrinth, which was set up in our fellowship hall, where Awakening Worship takes place; it was open for use throughout Lent. Our hope was that the congregation would use the labyrinth to meditate and pray. We thought it would be a great opportunity for people to experience a new prayer practice based on the imagery of our Lenten theme and we hoped that it would enhance people’s Lenten experience.

All of this, the Lenten theme, *The Way*, the liturgical art and the labyrinth, helped to set the stage for the Lenten worship services. Now, I am going to describe how we used a

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<sup>58</sup> Isaiah 43: 19 NRSV.

<sup>59</sup> First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview # 12.

postmodern style in the services and talk about some of the elements that we ranked as somewhat postmodern or postmodern. For simplification, the descriptions will focus on the Traditional worship service because most of the elements that I describe were utilized in both worship services. When Awakening worship varies from what we did in Traditional worship, I will describe the differences. As I describe the elements, I will also discuss how the survey responses and qualitative interviews reveal congregant's responses to the elements.

The first week served as an introduction to Lent and to the theme *The Way*. When worshipers entered the Sanctuary, the painted stone path was already in place. On the first Sunday the path was hung like a banner at the back of the chancel. We also had a pair of hiking boots and a walking stick out on the chancel. To give an overview of the series, early in the worship service we did a theme interpretation entitled the good journey. As I introduced the theme *The Way* and talked about Lent as a journey, a dramatist dressed in hiking gear made her way to the front of the sanctuary. She was barefoot and walked slowly down the aisle. As I talked about the spiritual practice of pilgrimage and described how Christians have hiked the Camino de Santiago for hundreds of years, the dramatist sat down on the steps and unhurriedly began to put on the hiking boots. Then, I began to talk about the observation of Lent as a spiritual practice of intentionally following Jesus on the way to Good Friday and Easter. As I talked, the dramatist took out her water bottle and took a long slow drink. By the time that I finished introducing the theme, she had put on her backpack, picked up her walking stick and gradually made her way down the aisle. Then, I asked the congregation: How will you choose to

embrace this intentional journey of Lent? Reflecting on the worship service, one congregant wrote, “The hiker was a helpful visualization of the theme.”<sup>60</sup> The hiker embodied the theme.

Later in the service, the sermon focused on Jesus being lead into the wilderness for 40 days by the spirit and the connection to the 40 days of Lent. I described how during Lent, we are invited to embrace an intentional journey, a time of soul searching and reflection, a pilgrimage of sorts. Then, I talked about the Camino de Santiago again. To enhance the message with a postmodern style, I used visuals like a map showing the Camino de Santiago, photographs of pilgrims walking the Camino de Santiago and a video clip from the movie *The Way*. I wanted the congregation to have imagery for the spiritual practice of pilgrimage. I encouraged the congregation to think of pilgrimage as a metaphor for how to observe Lent, as an intentional journey. As part of the sermon, worshipers were given the opportunity for self-reflection and commitment. The worship bulletin included two questions: What would prevent you from taking this journey? How will you embrace this intentional journey through Lent? We gave them time in silence to reflect and write their answers in their bulletins. These questions for reflection stuck with people because they mentioned them in the survey.

When asked: When you leave worship today is there anything that you will continue to think about? One person wrote, “How to embrace this intentional journey through Lent.”<sup>61</sup> In response to the same question another person wrote, “Life is a journey. I will think about making a conscious effort throughout the Lenten season and work week to pray and make more connections to God, not just in church.”<sup>62</sup> Another person wrote, “What is my commitment?”

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<sup>60</sup> First Baptist church member, questionnaire to worshipers #1216.

<sup>61</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #1103.

<sup>62</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #1123.

Interestingly, one person wrote, “I didn’t rank anything as very meaningful today- I was a bit distracted... but I love the last activity where we responded to the message by defining how we could embrace the lent journey.”<sup>63</sup> The postmodern element, the participation, brought the worshiper back to the present moment and fostered engagement. Consequently, not only was that element meaningful to people, it also drew people into worship.

The theme introduction and the message were the only two elements labeled postmodern in the first Lenten worship service. Some elements like Passing the Peace of Christ and a Prayer, which included a spoken congregational response and music, were ranked somewhat postmodern. When we analyzed the data, in both Awakening and Traditional worship, the message, which included the opportunity for reflection mentioned above, was ranked as the most meaningful element of worship. In the open-ended questions on the surveys, many congregants talked about the message, one person said it was the most meaningful because “it utilized varied media and built on a theme.”<sup>64</sup> Another person picked up on the postmodern style throughout the worship service and wrote, “I loved how the various senses were involved-the visual effects, the film clip, the drama, the music, and the intellectual aspect of the sermon. I really like that our worship recently tapped all of those experiences and used art, drama and technology.”<sup>65</sup> Therefore, the postmodern elements were meaningful to the congregation.

The third Sunday of Lent was the second Sunday that we conducted surveys after worship. Coincidentally, at that time, First Baptist was hosting Room at the Inn. Room at the Inn is a non-profit in our community that provides shelter for those who have no place to sleep

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<sup>63</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #1126.

<sup>64</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #1110.

<sup>65</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #1220.

during the winter months. Room at the Inn functions by utilizing churches as host-sites for the shelter. During the two weeks that we host, First Baptist fellowship hall is turned into a shelter. Green cots are set up for people to sleep on and some of our church members volunteer to check guests in, serve meals and be overnight host. As we thought about planning worship for the third Sunday of Lent, we kept this context in mind. We decided to connect this mission with worship. As a reminder, my personal definition of worship is bringing our whole lives to the altar, where we offer our praise and thanksgiving to God, opening ourselves to transformation through regular communion with God and the gathered body of Christ. I believe that worship should permeate our whole life and not be confined to Sundays. It should carry over into our work and our family life. Certainly, the worship hour is set apart and unique, but at the same time it is in continuity with the rest of our life. Focusing on Room at Inn, felt like a great opportunity to connect mission with whole life worship.

With this context in mind, the third Sunday of Lent the worship service focused on Isaiah 55 and the way of welcome. Isaiah 55 described how God offered nourishment to a weary people; all who were hungry were invited to come and eat. As we planned worship for that week, we wanted to focus on God's hospitality toward us and our call to be hospitable toward those around us. As we thought about how to add a postmodern style to our worship service, we came up with several ways to enhance the service.

The liturgical art, the path, which had been hanging on the back wall was moved. We wanted to create the impression of movement; we draped the path over the chair rail in front of the choir and it flowed out onto the chancel. In addition, we also took one of the cots from the shelter and set it up on the chancel. We had a pitcher of water and a glass displayed on a table on the chancel. During the worship service, as Isaiah 55 was read aloud, a young man in our

congregation walked to the chancel and wearily sat down on the cot. He slumped down and took off his shoes. After the scripture was read about God offering nourishment, the choir sang *Come to the Water* and I walked up and poured a glass of water and handed it to the young man; he took a long slow drink. Reflecting on this, one person wrote, “Just the presence of the cot and water immediately made me emotional because of the cots downstairs in our fellowship hall and then, the young man coming up made me cry.”<sup>66</sup> Of course the purpose is not necessarily to evoke emotion, but emotion can be a sign that something is meaningful. The imagery of hospitality and the cot connected with people.

Later in the worship service, we had three congregants give testimonies of hospitality; they talked about receiving and giving hospitality. The first person talked about serving at Room at the Inn and providing hospitality for those in need of shelter. The second person talked about the hospitality that his family received when his mother was diagnosed with cancer and the church rallied around the family. The third person talked about being a public-school teacher and providing hospitality in her classroom. In the open-ended responses to the surveys, seventy-seven people wrote something about the testimonies. Clearly, this was a meaningful postmodern element. When asked when during the service did you feel most connected to God, one person wrote, “The testimonial really made me reflect on God’s grace and mercy.”<sup>67</sup> Another person wrote, “I felt God’s presence in their stories of helping others.”<sup>68</sup> Still another person wrote, “I was moved by the stories of compassion.”<sup>69</sup> Although we do not have testimonies often, they were not a new element in our worship. The testimonies followed the same format that we

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<sup>66</sup> First Baptist church member, questionnaire to worshiper #2250.

<sup>67</sup> First Baptist church member, questionnaire to worshiper #2217.

<sup>68</sup> First Baptist church member, questionnaire to worshiper #2221.

<sup>69</sup> First Baptist church member, questionnaire to worshiper #2255.

typically used. The inclusion of testimonies is a reminder that we were not attempting to completely change our worship services. This project was about innovation, making worship new again.<sup>70</sup> In addition, according to definition of postmodern worship, the testimonies were postmodern. They involved significant congregational participation and they were lay centric and not clergy centric. They were connective and intimate experiences. The congregant's response indicated that the postmodern style of laity involvement was very meaningful.

That Sunday in Awakening Worship, we also had a baptism. While baptism was not a new element of worship, we ranked it as postmodern especially considering how it is practiced in Awakening Worship. Awakening Worship takes place in the fellowship hall, which does not have a baptistry. Therefore, when we have baptisms the entire congregation walks over to the sanctuary and gathers on the chancel. On that day, they were packed shoulder to shoulder on the chancel, which is only a few feet from the baptistry. It created a very intimate, connective experience. The baptismal candidate, a third-grade girl, gave a short personal testimony about why she decided to get baptized. Following the baptism, the congregation made a commitment to the newly baptized; they said in unison, "We rejoice with you. We will pray for you. And we will walk with you in the way of Jesus." In the open-ended questions, many people wrote about the baptism as being meaningful. When asked what the most meaningful element of the worship service was, one person wrote, "The baptism, watching a new member profess Jesus as her Lord and savior is why I am here, to remind me of my faith."<sup>71</sup> Several people used the word joy to

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<sup>70</sup> Sweet and Crouch, 32-33.

<sup>71</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshiper #2107.



describe the experience of watching the baptism. For example, one person wrote, “The baptism was a heartfelt and joyous entry into God’s family.”<sup>72</sup>

In Traditional worship, we did not have a baptism, but we did have a baby dedication. In Baptist churches baby dedications are opportunities for parents to present their child to the church, to ask the community for support in nurturing the child, and to dedicate the child to God. At First Baptist, we have a litany that we normally use for the dedication in which the parents and the congregation make commitments to the child and to each other. In the open-ended questions, many people wrote about how meaningful the baby dedication was. When asked what the most meaningful element of worship was, one person wrote, “The baby dedication is a reminder that we are a family and are responsible to support each other.”<sup>73</sup> The word joy came up again in the describe of the baby dedication. When asked when during the worship service did you feel emotion, one person wrote simply, “baby dedication, joy.”<sup>74</sup> Another person wrote about how the baby giggled during the dedication and this made them happy.<sup>75</sup>

Baptisms, baby dedications and testimonies were not new elements in worship. These elements followed the same format that we typically used. Yet according to our definition, they were postmodern. They involved significant congregational participation. They were connective and intimate experiences. One congregant’s reflection on the worship service sums it up, “I love seeing members of our church being celebrated and sharing their experiences.”<sup>76</sup> Therefore, it made sense that in both worship services the message was the highest ranked

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<sup>72</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshiper #2112.

<sup>73</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshiper #2218.

<sup>74</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshiper #2257.

<sup>75</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshiper #2261.

<sup>76</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshiper #2110.

element followed by the baptism in Awakening worship and the baby dedication in Traditional worship. The congregation really responded to these longstanding, yet postmodern elements of worship. The sense of longing for connection and community was met in these intimate elements. The testimonies, baptism, baby dedication, and the scripture reading with the drama were the only postmodern elements in the service. Several other elements, including the sermon, were ranked somewhat postmodern.

The fifth Sunday of Lent was the last Sunday that we surveyed the congregation. The theme for the service was the free way, which was suggested by Marcia McFee.<sup>77</sup> It was based on Isaiah 43, which says, “I will make a way in the wilderness.” The theme for the worship service focused on how new paths into the future were possible via the freedom that is offered to us through Christ.<sup>78</sup> As worshipers came into the sanctuary, we gave them each a small stone to hold until later in the service.

The worship service began with a call to worship, which at the time we ranked as somewhat postmodern. However, reflecting on it now, it should have been labeled postmodern because it included congregational participation and dramatic liturgical art. The call to worship, written by our Associate Pastor, was based on Isaiah 43 and included quotes from that passage of scripture. Here is the call to worship:

Let us worship God, who has done great things.

**We rejoice in God, who provides a pathway through the wilderness of our world.**

Let us worship God, who has done great things.

**We rejoice in God, who provides a river of mercy through the desert lands of our life.**

The Lord says, “I am about to do a new thing!”

**“I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”**

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<sup>77</sup> McFee, "The Way."

<sup>78</sup> McFee, "The Way."

The Associate Pastor read the first line and the congregation responded by reading the bold. When the congregation got to the word pathway, four members of the congregation walked to the chancel and unfolded fabric and began lengthening the path; it cascaded down the steps of the cancel into the center aisle of the sanctuary. They also added plants along each side of the path. At the end of the second stanza, which referenced a river of mercy, two members of the congregation spread out a long blue shimmering piece of fabric and gently swayed it back in forth to represent moving water. Then, they lay the fabric down perpendicular over the path. After the call to worship, we sang the refrain, “Whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold new things have come.”<sup>79</sup> I thought this element of the worship service was very creative and attention grabbing; it drew me into worship. However, only one person wrote about this element of worship in the open-ended questions on the survey. Perhaps this is because while it was visually interesting, it was not very participatory beyond the handful of people who helped to dramatis it.

The service also included a postmodern theme interpretation, which we called paving new paths. During the interpretation, I described a time when my husband and I backpacked around Europe after seminary. Prior to the trip, we spent hours trying to determine what items to pack so that our backpacks would be as light as possible. We debated and weighted each item carefully before packing it. After describing this painstaking process, I began talking about how many people who hike the Camino de Santiago follow a tradition of bringing a stone from home along. It is an unnecessary item, which adds additional weight to their packs. Yet, many people

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<sup>79</sup> John Biery, *Behold, a New Creation*, 2010, St. Louis, MO: Birnamwood Publications.

who hike the Camino choose to bring a stone because there is a stop on the Camino called the iron cross where they deposit it.

I showed the congregation an image of the stop. It is a mound of stones, a monument or shrine of sorts, topped by an iron cross. The mound is made up of all the stones that pilgrims throughout the ages have left. The stone that a pilgrim brings represents a burden or something that has been weighing them down. Pilgrims leave the stone at the iron cross as a symbol of letting the burden go.<sup>80</sup> Hopefully, letting the burden go opens them up to whatever new insight or new path might arise. In worship, following this theme interpretation, we prayed a prayer of invocation in unison, which talked about the weariness that we often feel and the weightiness of our lives. One person said this was the most meaningful part of the worship service and wrote, “Paving new paths opened me to living in the present more fully.”<sup>81</sup>

Throughout the worship service we continued to reinforce the theme of freedom through Christ. Then, at the end of sermon, we invited the congregation to take out the stone that they were given. As they held the stones, they were asked to invite the Holy Spirit to reveal to them if they were stuck in the past and needed a new path or if something in their life needed to be released or changed. Then as we sang, *We Will Lay Our Burden Down* and invited them to come to the front of the sanctuary and lay their stone at the foot of the cross.<sup>82</sup>

When we analyzed the data, we found that the laying of stones was one of the most meaningful postmodern elements that we did during the series. Seventy-five people mentioned this element in their responses to the open-ended questions. One person wrote, “The physical act

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<sup>80</sup> McFee, "The Way."

<sup>81</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshiper #3117.

<sup>82</sup> John Ferguson, *We Will Lay Our Burden Down*, 1995, GIA Publication Inc.

of the stone at the foot of the cross made a meaningful impact on my life. I let go of a lot of painful memories in my heart and gave them to Christ.”<sup>83</sup> Another person described how laying the stones was our way of doing imitating what pilgrimages on the Camino de Santiago do and “rather than just talking about it. It was nice to have everybody interact with it.”<sup>84</sup> The multi-sensory and experiential nature of the element really connected with worshipers. Actually, laying the stones at the cross brought the message to life.

Perhaps another reason this element was so meaningful is because it was both personal and communal. In the open-ended questions we asked when people felt most connected to God and when they felt most connected to the other people in worship. One congregant wrote, “Laying the stone at the foot of the cross was a personal and introspective experience.”<sup>85</sup> Another person wrote, “It was a communal act, yet very personal at the same time.”<sup>86</sup> Being alone with God, together, was meaningful to worshipers.

Throughout the worship series, we tried to make all the elements of the worship service build on one another and give a sense of integration around the theme. One congregant reflected on the connection between the message and the act of laying stones and wrote, “The physical act reflected and reinforced the message in a dramatic way and gave it more meaning.”<sup>87</sup> As a worship leader this is one of the aspects of postmodern worship that I appreciate the most, the ability to create synergy by adding multiple dimensions to the worship service.

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<sup>83</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshiper #3103.

<sup>84</sup> First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview #2.

<sup>85</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshiper #3108.

<sup>86</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshiper #3220.

<sup>87</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshiper #3262.

Laying stones, the theme interpretation called paving new paths, and the message were the only postmodern elements in the service. Several other elements like the call to worship, the invocation and the invitation to pass the peace were ranked somewhat postmodern. In both Awakening and Traditional worship, congregants ranked the message as most the meaningful element and laying stones at the foot of the cross as the second most meaningful element.

Now that I have described the three Lenten worship services and the postmodern elements, I will describe some overall themes that emerged in the research. As I mentioned above, one way we analyzed the open-ended questions in the surveys was to put all the answers in a spreadsheet. Then, the Lay Advisory Team and I went through the spreadsheet and looked for themes. We highlighted elements that were mentioned multiple times and we specifically focused on the mentions of the postmodern elements. We took this same approach of looking for themes in the qualitative interviews.

One theme that jumped out immediately was music. In the responses to the open-ended questions, 285 comments were about the music in the worship services. In both Awakening and Traditional worship, congregants wrote about the music. For example, when asked, when in the worship service did you feel most connected to God? A person from Awakening said, “During the song *Beautiful Things*, I just unplugged and was able to step back and reflect on things, quasi-meditative.”<sup>88</sup> When asked when during the service did you feel most connected with God, one person wrote, “During the songs because I feel like I’m singing directly to God.”<sup>89</sup> Another person from Traditional worship wrote, “The hymn of commitment is one that I sang as

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<sup>88</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire for worshiper #1111.

<sup>89</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire for worshipers #2119.

a small child. It brought memories of how I have always loved the Lord.”<sup>90</sup> In one of the qualitative interviews another congregant talked about how music brings him peace. He said, “I have a worrisome nature and there’s something about hearing that song with those voices it just forced me in a way to relax and feel God’s presence.”<sup>91</sup> The music was a place of deep connection for people. One of the purposes of this project was to determine what makes worship meaningful to people at First Baptist. Clearly, music helped to make worship meaningful.

Over and over, people talked about how important the music was to their worship experience. Consequently, it is interesting that music was never ranked as the most meaningful element in any of the worship services nor was it the second most meaningful element in any of the worship services. As I will discuss in a moment, in all six worship services the sermon was ranked as the most meaningful element of worship. Perhaps this is due in part to the focus placed on preaching in Baptist churches. As Baptist historian Bill Leonard states, “Throughout the twentieth century preaching was an important element of Baptist life, and in most congregations it served as the central event of Sunday worship services.”<sup>92</sup> In addition, as Randall Bradley points out about Baptist worship, “Historically, music in many free churches was viewed as a commodity whose purpose was to serve preaching.”<sup>93</sup> Throughout Baptist history, preaching has often been elevated above music. However, this research suggests that although music was never ranked as the most meaningful element of worship, it was very

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<sup>90</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #2251.

<sup>91</sup> First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview # 7.

<sup>92</sup> Bill Leonard, *Baptists in America, Columbia Contemporary American Religion Series* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

<sup>93</sup> Kennedy and Hatch, 126.

important to people's worship experience. The research indicated that both the music and the sermon were essential to how meaningful people found worship to be.

As I mentioned, in all six worship services, the sermon was ranked as the most meaningful element of the service, with an average score of 3.78. In the responses to the open-ended questions, there were 173 mentions of the message and people talked about the messages throughout the qualitative interviews. What was it about the messages that were so meaningful to people? Congregants talked about my ability to make scripture relevant to their daily lives. One person wrote, "Carol does a good job of making the subject pertinent to my life."<sup>94</sup> Another person wrote, "The most meaningful part of the service was the message because I feel like the words that are being spoken relate to me in my everyday life..."<sup>95</sup> Still another person wrote, "The message spoke to me. I enjoy the mix of history, facts, and real-world application."<sup>96</sup> People found the messages meaningful because they could relate to them; they were applicable to their everyday lives.

Several congregants also talked about my ability to explain scripture. When asked what the most meaningful part of worship was, one person wrote, "In the beginning of Carol's sermon during which Carol put into her own words the scripture reading. She turned it into a story that I could experience in my mind to better understand Jesus journey."<sup>97</sup> Another person wrote, "Hearing Carol's deliver and interpretation of scripture always speaks to me and leaves me thinking."<sup>98</sup> Some people talked about the overall style of my preaching. When asked to

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<sup>94</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #1112.

<sup>95</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #2118.

<sup>96</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #2105.

<sup>97</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #1205.

<sup>98</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #2102.



evaluate me as a worship leader, one person who grew up in the church said my style is “more conversational and more storytelling” than other preachers they have had.<sup>99</sup> Another person wrote, “The sermon makes me feel like Carol is talking directly to me.”<sup>100</sup> When I am preaching I try to engage the congregation’s imagination and enable them to envision themselves in scripture. As if reading my mind, when asked what the most meaningful part of worship was, one congregant wrote, “The picture Carol painted with her words during the message.”<sup>101</sup>

In the qualitative interviews, congregants did not simply focus their comments on the Lenten season, they talked about how meaningful my preaching has been throughout my tenure at the church. For example, one person wrote, “The message is always good.”<sup>102</sup> At the same time, it is important to note that the way that I preached throughout the project was with a more postmodern style. The sermons included more video clips, images on the screen and interactive responses, than I normally use. Consequently, it is possible that my preaching was more meaningful to people than it typically would be because of the postmodern style. I will talk more about the implications of this in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### LET THE WORSHIP CREATIVITY FLOW

Prior to this research project, I knew that I enjoyed worship services that were enhanced with a postmodern style, but I was unsure if my congregation felt the same way. I was concerned that worship at First Baptist and my preaching was mono-sensory. It was primarily

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<sup>99</sup> First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview #1.

<sup>100</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #1124.

<sup>101</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #1237.

<sup>102</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #1230.

verbal, and it focused on people's ability and willingness to listen. Interestingly, in our qualitative interviews one of my congregants captured my concern when she said, "I'm not really good at just sitting and listening, I get bored and I kind of space out."<sup>103</sup> I worried that our worship did not include enough imagery, opportunities for participation, or experiential elements for postmodern worshipers like her. At the same time, I was hesitant to make significant changes to our worship services because the worship wars of the 1990s played like a cautionary tale in my mind. I knew that attempting to change a church's worship style could lead to incredible conflict.

This research project was a chance to determine if worshipers at First Baptist would find a more postmodern style of worship meaningful. It was an opportunity for the congregation to evaluate my worship leadership. In addition, it gave me the opportunity to explore what it would be like to regularly plan worship with postmodern elements. After completing the project, I feel confident that my congregation did find this kind of worship meaningful and that we can utilize a more postmodern style of worship on a regular basis at First Baptist. Therefore, one of the primary benefits of this project was that it set us free to be very creative in our worship planning going forward. Since the project was completed, we have continued to regularly incorporate a more postmodern style into our worship services.

Since completing the project, the way that we plan worship has also changed. Prior to my tenure at First Baptist, worship was planned by utilizing the fourfold move of worship. Worship Professor Constance Cherry advocates for the fourfold move of worship in her book *The Worship Architect*.<sup>104</sup> The fourfold move of worship gives a structure for planning the

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<sup>103</sup>First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview #2.

<sup>104</sup> Cherry, 35.

service. This structure is rooted in scripture and the book of Acts, which tells us that the early Christians “...devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”<sup>105</sup> As Cherry writes, “The primary activities of early Christians worship were (1) receiving instruction and (2) celebrating the resurrected Lord at table.”<sup>106</sup> Utilizing this as the foundation, Word and Table are the central part of the larger fourfold structure. The two other elements, gathering and dismissal, lead into and out of those two. Therefore, the fourfold structure is “gathering (sometimes called entrance, Word, Table, and sending (sometimes called dismissal).”<sup>107</sup> Since Baptists do not celebrate communion on a weekly basis, the movement called Table is used as a time for thanksgiving or response. After completing this project, we continue to plan worship with this structure in mind. At the same time, we feel freer to deviate from the structure when a creative idea emerges. In addition, each week, we also use a theme to unify the service.

It is important to note that Cherry warns against utilizing a thematic approach to planning worship. She sees two problems with this approach. First, she warns that the theme can become the priority in worship planning and usurp the story of God in Jesus Christ. Second, she argues that the thematic approach becomes “more concerned with getting all the ideas for interpreting the theme into the service than with considering the ways in which the worship acts are related.”<sup>108</sup> However, I have found a thematic approach to be a faith way to plan worship, as long as, the theme does not become the primary driver. Worship theologian Ruth Duck echo this assertion. She writes, “Other theological dimensions of the service may be discovered by asking

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<sup>105</sup> Acts 2:42 NRSV.

<sup>106</sup> Cherry, 47.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

what unifies the service: A Scripture? A theme? An event in the church or world?”<sup>109</sup> The content or primary driver of worship is always God as revealed in Jesus Christ and mediated today by the Holy Spirit. Our planning begins with this content and with prayerful study of scripture, which is also an organizing center for worship. The theme for the week flows from this center. Therefore, I see the theme as secondary but unifying.

The research project suggests that congregants at First Baptist agreed that the theme unified the worship service. When asked, what part of the worship environment helped to create a sense of worship for you today, one person said, “The combination of the hymns, scripture and sermon creating a unifying message about Jesus.”<sup>110</sup> Another person wrote, “It all worked together so well- the visual, the music, the lay participation, the message.”<sup>111</sup> When asked which part of the service was the most meaningful, another person said, “The way the message, themes and music complement each other.”<sup>112</sup> Without knowing our approach to worship planning, another person wrote, “I really like how each service has a theme and it relates to our overarching theme of Lent.”<sup>113</sup> The congregation found this approach to worship planning to be meaningful. It enhanced their worship experience.

Still, Cherry argues that problems arise because of the “temptation to use many and varied worship acts that express the theme, whether or not they sustain intelligent flow from one to the other.” But another outcome of this project is an understanding that worship can be more postmodern without changing everything about the worship service. During the project, we

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<sup>109</sup> Duck, 76.

<sup>110</sup>First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #1205.

<sup>111</sup>First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #2223.

<sup>112</sup>First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #1261.

<sup>113</sup>First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers, #2238.

maintained our normal structure for worship and infused some of the elements with a postmodern style. In the same way, when we plan worship now, most of the time, the structure is not what changes. It is the way we work within the structure. Which means if we can't find a prayer that focuses on the theme for the week, we still pray. If we can't find a benediction that focuses on the theme, we still have a benediction. Therefore, using a theme to plan worship is not the main driver but it does give the worship service focus and it creates synergy.

In summary, since completing the project, we have continued to utilize the fourfold move of worship as a structure, most of the time, and we have worked from a theme each week. Because of the project, the questions that we ask when planning worship have changed. As we think about the scripture passage for the day and the theme that flows out of the passage, we ask questions like: what can we do to help others visualize this? How can we get other adults or children involved in the worship service? What experiential prayer practice might work with this theme? All these questions help us to create worship that is more postmodern. Therefore, the project has changed the way we plan worship on a weekly basis.

In addition to the project's impact on our weekly worship planning, we have also created a few worship series that are intentionally more postmodern. For example, in the fall of 2015, we did a worship series entitled *The Man Behind the Movies*. The series focused on the life of Moses and utilized video clips from all the different movies about Moses. One of the benefits of utilizing worship series is the opportunity to use the same images or liturgical art for several weeks in a row. This series also included imagery on the cover of the worship bulletins, dramatic readings and other participatory elements. Later during Lent in 2016, we planned a series called *Beauty and the Cross*. We built a 10-foot wooden cross for both our worship spaces. In Awakening worship, which takes place in the fellowship hall, we laid the cross down

in the middle of the room and set the chairs up around the cross. Worship took place in the round with the cross at the center. In the sanctuary, where our Traditional worship service takes place, we built a platform on the steps leading up the chancel and the cross was placed there. Each week, in both Awakening and Traditional worship the services included a participatory element that took place at the cross. For instance, one week during the prayers of the people, congregants were invited to light a candle at the cross in honor of someone they were praying for. On Easter, congregants were invited to bring flowers and we covered the entire cross with them. As a worship leader these series have been fulfilling, and the congregation has continued to respond with enthusiasm.

A very different outcome from the project has to do with what we learned from the labyrinth. During the project, we procured a labyrinth and set it up in our Fellowship Hall. Congregants were invited to use it through Lent, but very few people did. We wanted the congregation to utilize the portable labyrinth and learn a new prayer practice. We had hoped that the labyrinth would deepen the congregations Lenten experience by giving them an opportunity, outside of worship, to connect with God. However, only about ten percent of the congregation utilized the labyrinth. Unfortunately, we did not ask our qualitative interview participants specifically about the labyrinth, which means I do not have any specific feedback about the labyrinth. Therefore, the observations that I am about to state need further exploration. However, prior to my tenure as pastor, the church had very little exposure to the contemplative tradition of Christianity. When we procured the labyrinth, we knew that most of our congregants would have no prior experience with a labyrinth. Reflecting on the lack of participation, perhaps, the reason that so few people participated was because the labyrinth was simply too unfamiliar.

Through the newsletter and in worship, we tried to explain the labyrinth by giving an overview of its history and use. We also created a handout that was available for people to read on their own. In our planning phase, we considered creating an additional event to explain the labyrinth more thoroughly and then, invite people to utilize it. But we decided against this approach because we were concerned that the capacity of the labyrinth was too small to accommodate the number of people that would come, which would have resulted in long waits for the labyrinth. Therefore, we decided not to hold a specific event and to simply open the labyrinth up for use. Although we tried to explain what the labyrinth was and how to use it, my guess is that the prayer practice was too unfamiliar. In addition, people were expected to show up and walk the labyrinth on their own, which may have been intimidating. In retrospect, we could have had people sign up to use the labyrinth, at specific times, in small groups. Then, we could have given the history of labyrinths, talked about the purpose and practice and then, invited people to walk the labyrinth. Through this experience, we learned that congregants need a thorough explanation before they are willing to try new spiritual practices on their own.

The lesson that we learned from the labyrinth has carried into our worship planning. Since the project, we have occasionally used unfamiliar contemplative spiritual practices during worship. We have done Lectio Divina and centering prayer; we even did a worship series that included the embodied practice of making the sign of the cross each week, which is completely outside the comfort zone for most Baptist. We learned from the labyrinth that when we introduce a new element in worship, we need to take plenty of time to explain the practice. Therefore, during the series when we did the sign of the cross, each week I explained- what it meant and why we were practicing it. I did this every week for the entire six-week series. Still, since the practice was so unfamiliar, I expected to receive negative feedback from the

congregation, but we did not get any. We learned from the experience of the labyrinth the importance of thoroughly explaining the practice. We have learned that if we offer a thorough explanation and if we guide people through the practice, they are willing to try new practices.

The outcome of the project have been the opportunity or freedom to be very creative in our worship planning without fear of conflict in the church. The project has led to a change in our weekly worship planning as we seek to make each service more postmodern and the project has led to the intentional cultivation of a few postmodern worship series throughout the year. Finally, the project has helped us learn how to introduce unfamiliar spiritual practices in a way that allows the congregation to engage.

The project was also an opportunity for the congregation to evaluate my worship leadership. In the qualitative interviews, congregants were asked specifically to reflect on these questions: “How has worship changed or not changed since Carol McEntyre came as pastor? What elements do you like? Is there something you miss? Why?”<sup>114</sup> Once again, we received very little negative feedback. The responses were overwhelmingly positive.

In response to the question, how has worship changed, several people talked about increased coordination and communication in worship planning that is evident in the worship services. One person said, “At least in the Awakening service, it seems more thematic, and the songs go with the scripture, which obviously goes with the sermon. I like that because it reemphasizes the message. It is more organized.”<sup>115</sup> Another person said, “The coordination and planning of the worship experience is noticeable.”<sup>116</sup> He talked about how it took serious

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<sup>114</sup> First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview protocol.

<sup>115</sup> First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview #5.

<sup>116</sup> First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview #10.



attention and planning to coordinate skits, art work, videos and special music all around the same theme.<sup>117</sup> Another person said, “Everything is coordinated and goes smoothly.” This feedback was helpful because the way that we plan worship takes a great deal of time and energy. It is encouraging to know that the congregation is picking up on the attention that we put into worship planning.

When asked how worship has changed, several people talked about the synergy of the message and the rest of the worship service. One congregant said, “I see a lot of synergy between what Carol is talking about and the rest of worship. I see the whole service, including the sermon, is meaningful; it works together.”<sup>118</sup> Another person said, “I loved how the various senses were involved-the visual artifacts, the film clip, the drama, the music (both by the choir and the congregation and the intellectual aspect (through the sermon especially). I really like that our worship recently has tapped into all of these experiences and used art, drama and technology.”<sup>119</sup>

In addition, a few people talked about how the worship services have become more creative. For example, a 33-year-old congregant talked about growing up in a Methodist church, which he described as “more traditional environment” where the worship services were “polished and very well planned out.”<sup>120</sup> This was not negative, but at the same time, he went on to say that at First Baptist there was more room for creativity. The worship was still polished,

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<sup>117</sup> First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview #10.

<sup>118</sup> First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview # 8

<sup>119</sup> First Baptist Church member, questionnaire to worshipers #1221.

<sup>120</sup> First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview #7.

and they were “multi-dimensional.”<sup>121</sup> As mentioned earlier, as a worship leader, this room for creativity is important to me. I am thankful that the congregation sees this as positive too.

As a reminder, my personal definition of worship is bringing our whole lives to the altar, where we offer our praise and thanksgiving to God, opening ourselves to transformation through regular communion with God and the gathered body of Christ. I see the role of the worship leader as clearing a path to the altar or creating an atmosphere that allows worshipers to bring their lives to the altar. The congregations wholehearted engage in these worship services indicates that they were able to find their way to the altar and offer their praise to God. Overall, the congregation was pleased with my worship leadership.

In the qualitative interviews, we also asked the congregation to reflect on my preaching. We asked them the following questions: “How is the pastor’s style of preaching similar or different from what you have experienced in the past? Is it meaningful to you? How?”<sup>122</sup> Multiple congregants talked about my preaching style as intellectual and relatable. As a reminder, First Baptist is in a university town and has throughout its history been a highly educated congregation. Therefore, the intellectual aspect of sermons has been important. However, as one 82-year-old who attends Traditional worship described, in the past he has felt like their pastors, “...were trying to impress all the professors.”<sup>123</sup> In other words, they were too cerebral. Other congregants echoed this sentiment. As a 48-year-old who attends Traditional worship said, “Carol’s obviously done a lot of study and work. Yet at the same time she works in examples and engaging stories...”<sup>124</sup> Another 74-year-old congregant said, “We’ve always

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<sup>121</sup> First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview #7.

<sup>122</sup> First Baptist Church member, qualitative interview protocol.

<sup>123</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #13.

<sup>124</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #10.

had an intellectual basis in the church, which I fortunately feel we have retained...but it has also opened up the emotional and sensory a lot more.”<sup>125</sup> Still another person described my messages as a “balance between heart and mind.”<sup>126</sup> She articulated it this way, “I think maybe you were educated not just in the biblical and theological sense, but your education was also in the social and interpersonal.”<sup>127</sup> Still another 48-year-old who attends Awakening said, “I have been through five or six different preachers and hands down she is the one who makes you think the most.”<sup>128</sup> This congregant goes on to say, “I like how she integrates contemporary aspects, whether or not it’s a movie, or an interview, or a poem or a quote from an article or something that somebody has written, and then she brings it back to what it means to me.”<sup>129</sup> Consequently, the research revealed that while the congregation values the intellectual aspect of the sermon, they also desire sermons that are relatable and understandable.

Repeatedly, they used the word “relatable” to describe my preaching. Relatable is an interesting choice of terms because it can be connected with the incarnation. The incarnation is what we call God’s embodiment, when God became flesh in the person of Jesus. In the incarnation, God became relatable to humanity. The word relatable was used to describe my preaching by both men and women and by worshipers who attend Traditional and Awakening worship. Through my preaching, perhaps God became less distant and more relatable. A 36-year-old female who attends Awakening worship said, “Carol’s style is more relatable and conversational.”<sup>130</sup> A 60-year-old female who attends Awakening said, “I feel extremely

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<sup>125</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #14.

<sup>126</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #6.

<sup>127</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #6.

<sup>128</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #15.

<sup>129</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #15.

<sup>130</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #1.

comfortable with her ability to deliver a message in a way that I can relate to, and that my granddaughter can relate to.”<sup>131</sup> Another congregant who attends Traditional worship said, “Pastor Carol is interesting to listen to, because she is really good at making everything really relatable.”<sup>132</sup> Still another 31-year-old female who attends Awakening worship said, “The way she speaks is easier for me to understand; she has a way of weaving the scripture into an everyday life story that can make me ponder what it is that she wants me to know from the Bible.”<sup>133</sup> I was encouraged that the congregation was able to connect with my messages, understand them and feel like the messages are applicable to their lives.

As I mentioned in chapter 3, it is important to note that the way that I preached throughout the project was in a more postmodern style. The sermons included more video clips, images on the screen and interactive opportunities than I would have used prior to the project. While it is possible that the congregation found the sermons to be more meaningful because of the style, I believe that the overwhelmingly positive responses to the sermons in both the qualitative and quantitative data would indicate that the congregation found my sermons meaningful before the project. In other words, it is not just the postmodern style that they were responding positively to. The intellectual aspect of the sermons and the relatability of the sermons did not change with the project.

The only negative comments that we did receive regarding the sermons were about the postmodern additions. For example, one 82-year-old congregant said that the multi-sensory approach was making everything more meaningful, but he did not “care for” the movie clips

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<sup>131</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #12.

<sup>132</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #2.

<sup>133</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #3.

during the sermons.<sup>134</sup> One might assume that his dislike for the movies was connected to his age. However, a 72-year-old found the movie clips to be very meaningful and said about the them, “I have really liked the appeal to all the senses.”<sup>135</sup> The video clips appealed to one person and not another.

During the project, another way that I attempted to infuse my messages with a postmodern style was to have a time of discussion during the sermon. I was attempting to move the sermon from purely monologue to include some dialogue. On several Sundays during the project, I came up with a question for the congregation to discuss during the sermon. For example, the Sunday that focused on hospitality, I asked the congregation to turn to their neighbor and discuss the following question: Have you ever refused the hospitality of God? In response to this postmodern element in my messages, a 36-year-old female congregant said, “I don’t like the turn to your neighbor and talk about this during the sermon.”<sup>136</sup> She described the discussion as interrupting the flow of the sermon. However, a 48-year-old female congregant talked about how this moment in the sermon increased the connection that she felt with her fellow worshipers.<sup>137</sup> She found the discussion to be meaningful. This revealed that the specific ways that I enhanced my sermons with a postmodern style were appealing to some congregants but not to others.

Understanding that some people find discussion or movie clips during the sermon very meaningful, while others find it to be a distraction was helpful. Going forward, I still plan to use both these postmodern additions during sermons. However, I do not feel compelled to include a

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<sup>134</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #13.

<sup>135</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #14.

<sup>136</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #1.

<sup>137</sup> First Baptist church member, qualitative interview #10.

time for dialogue or a movie clip every week because I know that the message can be enhanced with a postmodern style in multiple ways. Using a variety of methods ensures that I connect with more worshipers through the sermons. Therefore, another outcome from the project has been a change in my sermon preparation time.

I still spend time studying the biblical text and reading commentaries. I still try to bring the historical context of the passage alive and put the passage within the larger biblical framework. These aspects of sermon preparation have remained the same. Since completion of the project, my sermon preparation now includes time thinking about how to infuse the message with a postmodern style. Sometimes this is simple. Whenever I can, I use images to explain what I am talking about. For example, instead of just talking about the temple mount in the Herodian Period, I use images of what historians think the temple mount looked like. If I am using a story from the evening news as an illustration, instead of just talking about it, I show the video of the news clip. At other times, using a postmodern style is more complex. For example, we have created handouts to go with the sermon. The handout might include a section for notes, questions for reflections, or a spiritual practice that goes with the topic for the sermon. All of this is to make the sermon a more interactive experience for worshipers. The positive feedback that I received during the research project has led me to proceed with a more postmodern style of preaching. The freedom to be creative is helpful in my sermon preparation time as well.

When the project began, I knew that I found postmodern worship to be meaningful, but I wondered if my congregation felt the same way. I set out to determine if postmodern worship could be incorporated into a traditional Baptist worship service in a way that would be meaningful to worshipers. As I reviewed the literature, and thought about how to design the

project, I discovered that other dissertations have been written about the need for postmodern worship. However, I did not find another project that utilized a mixed methods research study to determine if postmodern worship was more meaningful than other styles of worship. Therefore, the method used in this project is a unique contribution. It was rewarding to analyze the data and discover that the postmodern elements of worship were indeed more meaningful to members of the congregation. Hopefully, further research will be conducted in other congregations and will validate these findings.

As we designed the research project at First Baptist, we were respectful of the long history of worship at the church and did not attempt to completely alter worship. Instead this project was about worship innovation, making worship new again.<sup>138</sup> Innovation was an important aspect of the project, because my hope was to design a project that would be a spring board for utilizing a more postmodern style in worship in the future at First Baptist. The congregation's enthusiastic response to the worship series was gratifying. It has been exciting to finish the project and continue the work of incorporating a more postmodern style into our worship services. The desired outcome has come to fruition. It is exciting to have the opportunity and freedom to be very creative in our worship planning. As a worship leader, my job is to create the space for people to draw near to God and for now, until worship needs to be made new again, postmodern worship is the venue that allows my congregation to do so.

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<sup>138</sup> Sweet and Crouch, 32-33.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR AWAKENING WORSHIPERS

Our pastor, Carol McEntyre, is a candidate for the Doctor of Ministry at Drew University. As members of her Lay Advisory Committee, we are working with Carol to gather important information for her thesis project, which will also be of benefit to First Baptist in understanding worship. This questionnaire will serve to collect data as to what elements of worship are most meaningful to you.

DIRECTIONS: We are interested in knowing about your experiences in today’s worship service. Please complete each section of the questionnaire below and place it in the basket at the exit.

Thank you,

Lay Advisory Committee- Randy Wyatt, chair, Bob Stewart, Deb Carr, Marilyn Zumwalt, Abby Hartsfield, Mark Thomas and Anne Bills.

**PART ONE**

Please review the elements of today’s worship service and rate each of them in terms of how meaningful they were to your worship experience. Rate the elements of worship using the scale given below.

	<b>Not meaningful Meaningful</b>	<b>Somewhat Meaningful</b>	<b>Meaningful</b>	<b>Very</b>
<b>Greeting</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Songs of Commitment- I Will Follow, Lord I Need You</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Passing of the Peace</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>The Good Journey</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Scripture Reading</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Song of Response to Scripture- 40 Days</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Gospel Reflection-Wilderness</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Songs of Encouragement-</b>	1	2	3	4



### **Something Beautiful, Beautiful Things**

<b>Offertory Prayer</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Offertory- 40 Days</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Message- The Wandering Way</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Song of Response- Oceans</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Benediction</b>	1	2	3	4

### **PART TWO**

#### **Please answer the following questions:**

Thinking about Part One of this survey, and the elements of worship that you ranked as very meaningful, which experience(s) was/were the most meaningful to you? Why?

When during the worship service did you feel most connected to God? Why?

At what times during the worship service did you feel most connected to the other people in the room?

What parts of the worship environment helped to create a sense of worship for you today?

When during the worship service did you feel emotion (example: joy or sorrow)? Was this a time of connection with God?

When you leave worship today is there anything that you will continue to think about?

**PART THREE**

1. What is your Gender? (circle one) M      F

2. What is your age? (circle one)

18-24 years old

25-33 years old

34-49 years old

50-65 years old

65-74 years old

75 years or older

3. I am a (circle one)

Visitor

Regular Attender- non-member

Member-regular attender

Member -attend when I can

4. How many years have you attended First Baptist? \_\_\_\_\_

5. My Christian heritage is:

Southern Baptist

American Baptist

Other Protestant

Catholic

New Believer

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TRADITIONAL WORSHIPERS

Our pastor, Carol McEntyre, is a candidate for the Doctor of Ministry at Drew University. As members of her Lay Advisory Committee, we are working with Carol to gather important information for her thesis project, which will also be of benefit to First Baptist in understanding worship. This questionnaire will serve to collect data as to what elements of worship are most meaningful to you.

DIRECTIONS: We are interested in knowing about your experiences in today’s worship service. Please complete each section of the questionnaire below and place it in the basket at the exit.

Thank you,

Lay Advisory Committee- Randy Wyatt, chair, Bob Stewart, Deb Carr, Marilyn Zumwalt, Abby Hartsfield, Mark Thomas and Anne Bills.

**PART ONE**

Please review the elements of today’s worship service and rate each of them in terms of how meaningful they were to your worship experience. Rate the elements of worship using the scale given below.

	<b>Not meaningful</b>	<b>Somewhat Meaningful</b>	<b>Meaningful</b>	
<b>Very Meaningful</b>				
<b>Greeting</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>The Good Journey</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Gospel Reading</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>I Want Jesus to Walk with Me</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Prelude</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Call to Worship</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Processional</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Passing the Peace of Christ</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Gospel Reflection-Wilderness</b>	1	2	3	4

<b>Anthem</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Prayer</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Hymn- I Want Jesus to Walk with Me</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Message- The Wandering Way</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Hymn of Commitment</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Offertory Sentence</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Offertory</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Benediction and Dismissal</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Postlude</b>	1	2	3	4

## **PART TWO**

### **Please answer the following questions:**

Thinking about Part One of this survey, and the elements of worship that you ranked as very meaningful, which experience(s) was/were the most meaningful to you? Why?

When during the worship service did you feel most connected to God? Why?

At what times, during the worship service, did you feel most connected to the other people in the room?

What parts of the worship environment helped to create a sense of worship for you today?

When during the worship service did you feel emotion (example: joy or sorrow)? Was this a time of connection with God?

When you leave worship today is there anything that you will continue to think about?

**PART THREE**

1. What is your Gender? (circle one) M      F

2. What is your age? (circle one)

18-24 years old

25-33 years old

34-49 years old

50-65 years old

65-74 years old

75 years or older

3. I am a (circle one)

Visitor

Regular Attender- non-member

Member-regular attender

Member -attend when I can

4. How many years have you attended First Baptist? \_\_\_\_\_

5. My Christian heritage is:

Southern Baptist

American Baptist

Other Protestant

Catholic

New Believer

## APPENDIX C

### QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

This is the guidelines for doing the interviews to insure consistence and increase reliability of the findings.

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today.

I am \_\_\_\_\_ and I am serving on the Lay Advisory Committee for our pastors Doctor of Ministry Project. I want to thank you for your willingness to be interviewed. We are interested in learning about how you connect with God and what makes worship meaningful to you. I will be asking you questions regarding those topics. The interview should take less than an hour. I will be taping the session because I don't want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I can't possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we're on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we don't miss your comments. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that after the interview your responses will be transcribed, assigned a code, and no name will be attached. Then, your interview responses will be shared with the Lay Advisory Committee and Carol McEntyre. We will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent. Remember, you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to and you may end the interview at any time.

Are there any questions about what I have just explained?

Are you willing to participate in this interview?

Have them sign the informed consent document.

TURN on the tape recorder.

Begin the Interview

Please state your age and which worship service you attend.

Tell me about a time that you felt very connected to God in worship?

Tell me about a time that you felt very connected to God in worship at First Baptist?

Tell me about the last worship service you attended at First Baptist.

Thinking about that last worship service you attended at First Baptist, when during the worship service did you feel most connected to God? Why?

When during that service did you feel the most connected to the other people in the room?

How have the participatory elements of the worship services (like being asked to write the name of someone on the crane or drop a rock in water) contributed to your worship experience?

How has the imagery (i.e. the bulletin covers, images on the screen and the Lenten décor) impacted your experience of worship?

Statement of Clarification: Now, we would like for you to reflect on Carol McEntyre as a worship leader. This is not an evaluation; your comments will only be used for research purposes.

How has worship changed or not changed since Carol McEntyre came as pastor? What elements do you like? Is there something you miss? Why?

How is the pastor's style of preaching similar or different from what you have experienced in the past? Is it meaningful to you? How?

Is there anything else you would like to add about your worship experience, here at First Baptist?

Use probes as needed. These include:

- Would you give me an example?
- Can you elaborate on that idea?
- Would you explain that further?
- I'm not sure I understand what you're saying.
- Is there anything else?

Thank them for participating. Let them know that we will be reporting back to the congregation about what we learn.

Following the interview

Check audiotape

Summarize any key information or findings in written form.

## APPENDIX D

### RESPONSES TO SURVEYS

After both Awakening and Traditional Worship, for 3 Sundays in Lent, we conducted surveys. The total number of survey participants for all 6 worship services was 280.

#### SURVEY PARTICIPANTS BY WORSHIP SERVICE

Awakening	72
Traditional	208
Grand Total	280

#### GENDER (Some people did not indicate a gender)

Female	133
Male	115
Grand Total	248

#### AGE COUNT OF AGE (Some people did not indicate an age)

1 -18-24	33
2 -25-33	27
3 -34-49	46
4 -50-64	57
5 -65-74	20
6 -75+ 70	
Grand Total	253

#### YEARS ATTENDING FIRST BAPTIST (Some people did not indicate years attending)

1	0-10	60
2	11-20	75
3	21-30	25
5	41-50	22
4	31-40	17
6	51-60	17
7	60+	10
Grand Total		226



APPENDIX E

SERVICE ELEMENT CODING

Service	EL1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
A1	1	2	2	3	1	1	2	2	1	1	3	2	1	1				
A2	1	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	1	3	2	1					
A3	1	2	2	3	2	2	1	3	2	3	1	1	2	1				
T1	1	3	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	3	2	1	2	1	1
T2	1	1	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	
T3	1	2	1	1	3	2	2	2	1	3	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	

Not Postmodern

Somewhat Postmodern – Interactive

Postmodern

Service	Not Postmodern	Somewhat Postmodern – Interactive	Postmodern
A1	6	5	2
A2	3	5	5
A3	5	6	3
T1	8	8	2
T2	5	8	4
T3	9	5	3
	36	37	19

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