Theology of Worship

D. Min. Program, RTS/Charlotte, Jan. 24-28, 2005

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Course Syllabus

In this course, we will discuss the history and principles of public worship in Scripture, giving particular attention to the role of Scripture in regulating worship, the nature of God-centered and Christ-centered worship, and the importance of edification and communication. We shall also consider issues concerning worship leadership, “parts” of worship, the tone of worship, the place of congregational responses, confessions, music, dance, drama, and choirs. The course will include analysis and evaluation of the controversy concerning the use of contemporary culture, especially music, in worship.

Required Readings

The following readings should be completed before the beginning of the course lectures.

---, “A Fresh Look at the Regulative Principle.” All. *
---, “Above the Battle,” all. *
*Available as part of the course syllabus. May be purchased in the RTS Bookstore

Kline, Meredith G., Images of the Spirit (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 1-56.


Reformed Official Documents (at www.creeds.net)
Belgic Confession, articles 7, 32.
Heidelberg Catechism, questions 93-103.
French Confession, 24.
Second Helvetic Confession, 1, 2, 22-27.
Westminster Larger Catechism, questions 100-121, especially 109.
Westminster Shorter Catechism, questions 42-62.
Book of Church Order, Presbyterian Church in America (www.pcanet.org),
47-63. Note especially 47.6, 47.9, 51.1-5, 52.4.

NOTE: The above readings include around 1500 pp. You are also
assigned 500 pp. of additional reading (your choice) taken from the Bibliography
below.

Integrative Paper

You are asked to submit a paper of 5000-6000 words showing how some
of the course material (readings and/or lectures) has impacted your ministry, or
how that material might impact your ministry if put into practice. Be specific as to
what would change. You should do some research beyond the assigned material
and indicate that research through footnotes and bibliography. The paper should
be turned in or postmarked by April 15, 2005. Please send your paper to

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Or, by e-mail, to jframe@rts.edu.

Abbreviations for Comments on Papers

A - awkward
Amb - ambiguous
Arg - more argument needed
C - compress
Circle (drawn around some text)
  - usually refers to
  misspelling or other
  obvious mistake
D - define
E - expand, elaborate, explain
EA - emphasis argument
F - too figurative for context
G - grammatical error
Il - illegible
Illus - illustrate, give example
Int - interesting
L1 - lateness penalty for one
day (similarly L2, etc.)
Grading System For Papers

A: Good grasp of basic issues, plus something really extraordinary, worthy of publication in either a technical or popular publication. That special excellence may be of various kinds: formulation, illustration, comprehensiveness, subtlety/nuance, creativity, argument, insight, correlations with other issues, historical perspective, philosophical sophistication, research beyond the requirements of the assignment. One of these will be enough!

A-: An A paper, except that it requires some minor improvement before an editor would finally accept it for publication.

B+: Good grasp of basic issues but without the special excellences noted above. A few minor glitches.

B: The average grade for graduate study. Good grasp of basic issues, but can be significantly improved.
B-: Shows an understanding of the issues, but marred by significant errors, unclarities (conceptual or linguistic), unpersuasive arguments, and/or shallow thinking.

C+: Raises suspicions that to some extent the student is merely manipulating terms and concepts without adequately understanding them, even though to a large extent these terms and concepts are used appropriately. Does show serious study and preparation.

C: Uses ideas with some accuracy, but without mastery or insight; thus the paper is often confused.

C-: Problems are such that the student evidently does not understand adequately the issues he/she is writing about, but the work may nevertheless be described as barely competent.

D: I don't give D's on papers.

F: Failure to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

**Annotated Bibliography**

Note also standard reference books: Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, commentaries, biblical and systematic theologies, hymnals, church confessions.


Bushell, Michael, *The Songs of Zion* (Pittsburgh: Crown and Covenant Publications, 1980). This is the best recent argument for exclusive Psalmody and unaccompanied song in worship. I disagree with it at many points, but it is learned, intelligent, and careful. It rejects, for example, the
attempt to restrict the regulative principle to "formal" or "official" services; on that point and others I commend the author.


---, ed., *Worship By the Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002). Contains an essay by Carson on the ways in which Scripture directs worship. Additional essays give examples of worship planning from Anglican (Mark Ashton and C. J. Davis), Free Church (i.e. Independent Church) (R. Kent Hughes), and urban Reformed (Tim Keller) perspectives. Keller's material is of most interest to me.

Clowney, Edmund P., "Song in Worship: the Fruit of the Richly Indwelling Word of Christ," privately photocopied. Argues that Col. 3:16 and Eph. 5:17ff authorize, not the exclusive use of OT Psalms in worship, but also songs reflecting the NT gospel, the wisdom of Christ.


Davies, Glenn, *New Covenant Worship*, a Th. M. thesis. (Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1979). Davies maintains that the term "worship" refers, narrowly, to the ritual of the tabernacle and temple, and, broadly, to the whole life of the believer as a living sacrifice and holy priesthood. He denies that there is any special sense in which the Christian meeting is "worship." The Christian meeting, rather, is for "edification." In WST, I take issue with some of Davies's conclusions, but he shows well how difficult it is to draw sharp distinctions in the New Testament between worship and the rest of life.


---, *A Royal “Waste” of Time* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). See my comments in “Above the Battle.”


Doe, Stephen D., Christmas and Other “Sacred Days” (Barre, VT: Covenant OPC, 1998).

Duguid, Iain, Untitled Ms. On Worship in the Old Testament. I've found it
enormously helpful.


--, see under Myers.

Eire, Carlos M. N., *War Against the Idols* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). A scholarly study of the Protestant Reformers' attack on the use of images in churches. It deals also with broader concerns in the area of worship. I believe there is some truth in his indictment of the Reformers as being to some extent influenced by rationalism.


Gillespie, George, *A Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies Obtruded on the Church of Scotland* (Dallas: Naphtali Press, 1993). This large volume is the most elaborate defense of the classic Puritan-Scottish Presbyterian view of the regulative principle, recently reprinted. Gillespie was an influential member of the Westminster Assembly.

Godfrey, W. Robert, *Pleasing God in our Worship* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1999). Godfrey is a traditionalist, but I don’t disagree with much in this pamphlet.

Gore, R. J., *Covenantal Worship* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2002), foreword by Frame. An excellent study of the history and biblical basis of the regulative principle. Emphasizes the importance of sound hermeneutics in determining what Scripture does and does not prescribe. Gore would like to simply drop the regulative principle from Presbyterian theology. I agree with many of his ideas and arguments, but I believe that the basic idea of the regulative principle, apart from the complicated Puritan amplifications of it, is scriptural.


Haik-Vantoura, Suzanne, *The Music of the Bible-- Revealed* (San Francisco: Bibal Press/KDH, Inc., 1990). Argues that some of the markings in the Hebrew text of the Psalms are musical in nature and indicate tunes to which the Psalms were sung.


--, see Frame above. Given our common Reformed theological commitments, Hart and I are at opposite poles. He is the most consistent and extreme advocate of Reformed traditionalism that I know.

--, and Muether, John, *With Reverence and Awe* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2002). Argues that you can’t be Reformed unless you follow all the Reformed traditions in worship. See my “Above the Battle?” for comment.


--, *In the Face of God* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1996). Acclaimed by *World* magazine, alongside works by such as Faulkner and Churchill, as one of the 100 greatest books of the twentieth century. I love *World*, but they blew it this time. I have many problems with Horton’s argument, especially his exegetical foundation. See comments on Wells, below.


---, *Through New Eyes* (Brentwood, TN: Wohlgemuth and Hyatt, 1988). Remarkably detailed examination of the biblical world view, from Eden, through the tabernacle and temple, to the eschaton.


Jordan's work can be had through Biblical Horizons, P. O. Box 1096, Niceville, FL 32588-1096. See also www.biblicalhorizons.com. I find it to be among the most interesting and stimulating material in the field.

Jordan's view of the regulative principle is close to my own (see *Liturgical Nestorianism*), and he rightly rebukes the liturgical renewal movement (see *The Liturgy Trap*) for being more interested in aesthetics than in biblical principle. He also offers remarkably insightful studies in the structure of biblical symbolism in general and the symbolism of worship in particular (see especially his *Through New Eyes*, a biblical-theological treasure). He does not, however, convince me when he tries to derive from this symbolism strict rules for the order of worship, and I am not persuaded by his advocacy of "high" liturgy, or by all of his aesthetic judgments. In my view, he does not take adequate account of (1) what Scripture *doesn't* say, (2) the centrality of the celebration of the Resurrection in NT worship, and (3) the importance of *intelligibility* in worship.


--, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972). This is the most important work on biblical authority since Warfield.


Leithart, Peter, *From Silence to Song: The Davidic Liturgical Revolution* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003). Worship as covenant renewal. Leithart’s approach is like Jordan’s, making the form of OT worship normative (as covenant renewal) for NT believers. I prefer to put more weight on the NT, particularly the emphasis on celebration of the Resurrection and on the importance of communication.


Longman, Tremper, *Immanuel in Our Place: Seeing Christ in Israel’s Worship* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2001). Excellent study. Popularly written, but informed by Longman’s solid OT scholarship. This is the place to go to learn about the OT offerings, the priest, the tabernacle furniture, etc.


McCann, J. Clinton, *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993). Says the Psalter was not collected to be a hymnbook, but as a book for meditation. Nevertheless, he urges more use of the Psalms in worship.


Miller, C. John, *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986). Miller’s ideas have had great influence on my thinking in the area of worship.


--, *Worship is All of Life* (Camp Hill: Christian Publications, 1984).
Payton, Leonard, *Reforming Our Worship Music* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1999). Some useful historical/musical information here, with a militantly traditionalist polemic. Payton thinks that since he is a professional classical musician, the church should accept his word as to what constitutes the best worship music.
Poythress, Vern, "Ezra 3, Union with Christ, and Exclusive Psalmody," *Westminster Theological Journal* 37:1 (Fall, 1974), pp. 74-94, and 37:2 (Winter, 1975), pp. 218-235. Poythress's approach to the regulative principle is similar to mine; he and I have influenced one another in this area. He also develops some important implications of the fact that Christ sings with his people.
Rayburn, Robert G., *O Come, Let Us Worship: Corporate Worship in the Evangelical Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980). Has a number of good ideas, but I'm not always persuaded by his arguments.

*Reformed Worship* periodical.


"Report of the Committee on Song in the Public Worship of God," in the *Minutes of the Fourteenth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (Philadelphia, Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1947). Recently republished in F. Smith and D. Lachman, ed., *Worship in the Presence of God* (Greenville, SC: Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary Press, 1992), pp. 179-192, 375-392. In keeping with the viewpoint of the Smith/Lachman volume, the minority report is placed in the text, the majority report relegated to an Appendix. The report deals with the question of exclusive Psalmody. The majority report, denying exclusive Psalmody, develops the correlation between singing and prayer, which I think is biblical and helpful: God gives us prayers in Scripture, but he permits us to pray extemporaneously; same for song. The minority report, signed by John Murray and William Young, is one of the better concise arguments for exclusive psalmody. Early in the document, however, it postulates dogmatically that song is an "element" of worship in an artificially narrow sense of "element," and if you deny that premise, the whole argument collapses.


Schuringa, H. David, *Hearing the Word in a Visual Age*. Dissertation for the Theological University of Kampen, the Netherlands, 1995. Argues the legitimacy of visual elements of worship within a Reformed perspective.

Silberling, Murray, *Dancing For Joy* (Baltimore, MD: Lederer Messianic Publications, 1995). Messianic Jew, argues that there is a long tradition of liturgical dance in Judaism that should be recovered by the Christian church today.


Smith, Frank, and Lachman, David, *Worship in the Presence of God* (Greenville, SC: Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary Press, 1992). This volume defends the traditional Puritan version of the regulative principle including exclusive Psalmody. There are some important essays in it, but on the whole the content is disappointing, even granting the writers' point of view. For the most part, they seem to have little understanding of why serious Reformed people have rejected the traditional position, so they don't grapple with any difficult issues; they simply reiterate the same arguments used by the early divines. In that respect, Bushell's book is far superior.


Wallace, Ronald S., *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1997). You should all read this at some time.

Webber, Robert E., *Biblical Foundation of Christian Worship* (Hendrickson)

-- *Blended Worship* (*", 1994, 2000)

-- *Ministries of Christian Worship* (*")


-- *Renewal of Sunday Worship* (Hendrickson)


-- *Worship Old and New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982, 1994). Webber has been one of the leading voices urging evangelicals to adopt more of the historic liturgies. Now he urges “blended worship,” asking us to combine, creatively, the new and the old.

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-- *No Place For Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993). Rightly acclaimed for their graceful style and thorough scholarship, these books, I believe, lead us in a wrong direction. Essentially they ask us to forsake the new for the old, on the basis of historical and sociological analysis. In my judgment that method neglects *sola Scriptura*. See Appendix 2 in my *Contemporary Worship Music*. 

**Worship Resources on the Web**

The following suggestions are from Dudley Hodges, *The Wonder of Worship* (course given at the Seminary at Boca Raton).

http://www.worshiptogether.com

This site offers Bible studies, articles on worship, and a featured worship leader and free song each week. It lists the top ten worship songs that are available for download. You can access sheet music (which can be transposed), discussion groups, an email newsletter and 24/7 worship radio.

http://www.praise.net/worship

The Worship Resource Center is a website dedicated to providing online resources for those involved in worship ministries. They offer a link to worship-related job opportunities, a worship forum, worship surveys and information on over 3,000 songs.

http://www.experiencingworship.com

This site has a large selection of articles on worship, a message board, a link to worship-related job opportunities, drama resources, and sound and video advice.

http://www.heartofworship.com

Put together by Soul Survivor Team (Matt Redman, Tim Hughes, and Matt Weeks), this web site offers worship-related articles, monthly Psalm study from Louis Giglio, a chat room and many worship links.

http://www.worshipphotos.com

A wide range of unique images from 30 years of professional photography by Jim and Mary Whitmer that can be used for backdrops, music, sermon notes, or announcements.
http://www.encouragingmusic.com

Musical resources from Rich Muchow, Pastor of Magnification at Saddleback Church. This site offers answers to FAQs, lead sheets, MP3 downloads, and more.

To these I (JF) would add:

www.thirdmill.org

Click on “worship project.” Links to many confessions, directories of worship, prayer books, examples of calls to worship, etc., some articles on worship subjects, Questions and Answers. Some art, including Reggie’s collection of Roualt. Don’t miss the “Funny Little Story About Hymns and Praise Songs,” though I tend to think the Praise Song parody sounds more like a Handel choir anthem.

www.pdinet.org

This is the site for Sovereign Grace Ministries (formerly “People of Destiny”). They are a group of fifty churches, Reformed, charismatic, and Baptist. They have an excellent music ministry. Their songs and CDs have really rich, biblical lyrics and contemporary settings. Some have become my favorites. They also post articles on worship.

http://www.christcommunity.org/ministries/worship/index.cfm

This is a PCA church in Franklin, TN that has encouraged the development of worship along contemporary lines. CDs from their worship teams are available here, with information about worship conferences and links to other worship materials.

http://www.igracemusic.com/igracemusic/

This is a group connected with the college ministry of the Christ Community Church of Franklin, TN (above) and the RUF ministry at Belmont College. They have produced some really excellent songs with CD’s, somewhat in the folk tradition. Some are new arrangements of traditional hymn texts.

http://www.redeemer2.com/rstore/category.cfm?Category=1&CFID=2902468&CFTOKEN=95984306

Redeemer Music is a resource for new Christian music in the jazz, classical and folk traditions, with texts that uphold the centrality of the Gospel message. Originally created for worship services at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New
York City, this music is now heard at churches throughout the United States and overseas. Included in the Redeemer Music catalogue are compositions and arrangements for orchestra, string quartet, brass quintet, jazz band, vocal soloists and choral ensembles, as well as new congregational worship music. Recordings are available for most selections.