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Questions Churches are Asking

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Questions Churches Are Asking:
Responses from Calvin Worship Symposium C10 Attendees
(as of mid-day 1-27-14)

As you read these questions, what common patterns or sub-texts emerge? What are "questions behind the questions"? Also, what makes for a generative question? And what advice would you provide for how and when to ask the question? . . . How powerful questions can be in church leadership!

1. How do we adjust a traditional worship service in order to reach new, un-churched members of the community without alienating the current, faithful congregation?
2. How do we choose between extensive pastoral care for faithful, aging members and youth ministry and faith formation for new or not yet present members of the congregation?
3. We have some who are member volunteers that do get paid and some who do not. We also have non-member friends and family who play but do not get paid. I'd like some suggestions about what might be equitable for everyone.
4. What place does the concept of "emerging" worship hold for our services, and how does that differ from "contemporary" worship aspects?
5. How do we shape our worship service in connection to the broader discussion of Sunday school such that adults see that both are aids in the development of personal and communal ministry?
6. For 20+ years, our church has had two morning services of differing styles--one more traditional, mostly led by organ or piano and choir; the other more contemporary, led by a band and worship team. It has been suggested more recently by our pastors (and perhaps by council members; I'm not sure) that not many churches have two different styles anymore, and that we should maybe consider moving to a single style done twice on Sunday morning. So our question is: how have other churches dealt with the issue of multiple services and worship style? And is it true that having two different styles is becoming less prevalent?
7. The question we often pose has been asked so many times before...how is it we address the young people (youth and adults) about what is or isn't Contemporary Worship? How do we make authentic worship beyond stylistic considerations in congregations who don't all have the musical resources to make the contemporary sound as it is best represented!? How do we continually move to making traditional worship relevant to this digital audience?
8. How do we 'do' blended worship? Specifically, how do we combine musical styles and tastes in a way that celebrates diversity yet sounds unified? How do we balance the achievement of this goal with attentiveness to the wishes (and sometimes complaints) of our congregants?
9. I find that in church music, one wants two things: a) the highest quality of music execution within the musicians' capability, whatever the genre; b) welcome and acceptance of the congregants' gifting and participation, whatever their skill level. How does one strike the balance between the two without sacrificing either? Is that even possible?
10. How is it we address the young people (youth and adults) about what is or isn't Contemporary Worship? How do we make authentic worship beyond stylistic considerations in congregations who don't all have the musical resources to make the contemporary sound as it is best represented!? How do we continually move to making traditional worship relevant to this digital audience?
11. We prefer to project music and words of contemporary songs. This is getting more expensive and we are not always sure we are obeying all of the copyright laws. What trustworthy resources can you recommend?
12. How much is too much? How many new songs can a congregation realistically add to their repertoire year after year?
13. How can we as a ministry team effectively inspire our congregation to seek or desire a deeper connection with God?
14. How can we educate our congregations into "owning" their own worship life instead of just being served with what they are given on Sunday morning?
15. How to construct a service of worship which relates to those who have come to faith with virtually no church background or bible knowledge alongside those who have grown up in church - without either group of people feeling sidelined or unwelcome. (most of our new people coming to profession of faith do so as adults through outreach programmes such as Alpha etc - others exploring faith come by a friendly invitation - there are often a significant number of people in that category each week)

16. What to do about the missing 18-35 year olds - in our case sometimes missing long before they reach 18. Those who do attend e.g. young families - are often sporadic e.g. complex family arrangements mean children may go to another parent on alternate weekends etc. Many secular children's and young people's activities take place on Sundays e.g. football, birthday parties, dance classes, family outings etc Our church is normally well filled but if everyone attended on the same Sunday we wouldn't have space for them all!!
17. How does a congregation adapt its worship and programs to reach a changing neighborhood for Jesus?
18. How do you cultivate a spirit of prayer -- especially for revival -- in a congregation?
19. One of our more significant challenges is finding ways to incorporate our 65+ year old members into visible leadership within worship services. We frequently have children, teens, and younger adults participate in a wide variety of ways. However, many of our more senior members are hesitant to participate in tangible ways such as reading scripture in worship (minister's role), praying for the congregation (Elders' role), or giving a testimony (draw's attention to themselves). How can we invite this portion of our congregation to visibly contribute to our communal worship?
20. How can corporate worship on a Sunday equip believers to live out their faith during the rest of the week (i.e. whole-life worship of the Romans 12 kind)?
21. Is corporate worship different in a mega church vs a smaller church, like a banquet is different than a dinner for 2?
22. Can we keep the momentum and not burn our volunteers out?
23. How can we mentor the next generation of worship leaders when they would rather come and go as their schedule demands?
24. As churches make changes to Sunday services to enhance worship, what are some changes that are being positively received by congregations?
25. Is there a clear trend of how worship styles are moving/evolving? still solidly traditional? more and more contemporary? somewhere in between?
26. Right now we have separate "traditional" and "contemporary" services, except for the last Sunday of the month when we combine for a "blended" service. I'm interested in hearing other churches experiences with this.
27. Should we buy a new hymnal, and if so, which one?
28. How do consumerists get to the praxis that worship is a *giving* exercise?
29. How can we move the adjective "dirgelike" to "introspective and contemplative?"
30. What is the essence of worship? and "What principles we need to follow in worship?
31. How can we break down the intergenerational and intercultural divides that inhibit the whole family of God from worshipping together?
32. How do we tastefully and meaningfully express and develop all facets of "*The Arts*" in the life of our church -- not only the musical arts and not only in our worship services?
33. What are some good ways for the congregation to prepare for the transition to a new pastor once he has arrived? What are some issues that arise with the staff when a new pastor is installed?
34. How to attract those that left the church and are now in their 20s-30s to come back to worship with the others who never left? If they do come back how to keep 20s-30s engaged in worship at a church run by folks aged in their 50s and 60s?
35. How do we make worship meaningful and relevant for our young people and young adults and still remain faithful to our Reformed traditions?
36. A questions that I ask and I hope others are asking is: how do we manage the normal tendency to turn worship around to focus on us when we really desire it to be on God? (For example: excessively long announcements and other comments that take the focus off of God and create a "comfortable" attitude to worship)
37. Also, how can we help worship planners develop a more balanced view of God's holiness and intimacy?