

worshipleader

“... FOR MY HOUSE WILL
BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER
FOR ALL NATIONS.”

INCLUDE

ART OF THE WELCOME

JOEL HUNTER
ROSS PARSLEY
DARLENE ZSCHECH
MARK DEYMAZ
PAUL LOUIS METZGER
AND MORE

TOP 20 GEAR INNOVATIONS

SONG STORY
“BEAUTIFUL THINGS”
WITH MICHAEL GUNGOR

BACK TO SCHOOL
WORSHIP LEADER'S COLLEGE GUIDE



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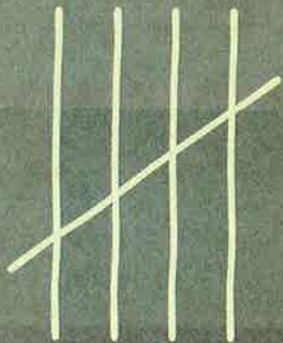
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WORSHIP VARIETY:



5

groups to include today

1 MANY CULTURES:



be water

BY VAUGHN THOMPSON, JR

empty your mind; be formless, shapeless like water. If you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle and it becomes the bottle. You put it in a teapot it becomes the teapot. Now, water can flow or it can crash. Be water my friend. —Bruce Lee

This quote brings back so many memories for me as a young boy watching Kung-Fu Theatre, running around the house defending the honor of the Thompson Temple (my bedroom). But even more so, this quote has found its way into my personal approaches to worship leadership in this ever-evolving cultural landscape.

The world is not the same as it was 20 years ago. Cultural lines are becoming blurred and less definitive as globalization and the booming technology age makes the world smaller and flatter than ever before. As a result of this cultural and social evolution, leadership in this day and age becomes that much more difficult as we find ourselves leading extremely diverse teams.

In a recent poll, referenced on HR.com, Fortune 500 companies were asked what

is needed the most to be successful in today's world. The answer was overwhelmingly, the need for culturally competent leaders. So if corporate America is noticing this dynamic, the question is not, "Is multicultural leadership needed in the Church or not?" The question now becomes, "How do we do it?" Well here are a few things we can consider.

WATER

The first thing we can all learn from the Bruce Lee quote is that the goal is to be formless, pliable, and adaptable. Multicultural leadership is a philosophy, not a form. We must learn the art of water.

One mistake I think we are all in danger of making is to associate multiculturalism to a form or even a genre of music rather than a philosophy behind the art form. As worship leaders we must assess our surroundings, our congregations, and our teams to determine what response comes naturally. We must pour ourselves into that context and try to apprehend the heart and mind of God for that congrega-

tion. I believe it's helpful to do a natural and spiritual inventory in our congregations and teams much like we do with our individual lives.

Here are some questions to ask.

- What has God placed in our hands?
- What spiritual gifts are already here?
- What musical gifts are in the house?
- What languages and cultural expressions come naturally?

Doing this, will help us develop trust and relational equity with those we are trying to lead. I love the saying, "You never want to be so far in front of the people you lead that you appear to be the enemy." We must immerse ourselves in the communities of those we are called to lead. Jesus' incarnational ministry becomes our ultimate example of this.

GLASSES

The second thing I suggest is a good pair of glasses. And by glasses I mean a new lens in which to see our part in the king-

dom. What we need is a healthy understanding of the local church as it relates to the global Church.

The local church does not hold the responsibility of the global Church to produce the multicultural sound. The kingdom of God is already multicultural and needs no help in that department. It is, by his design, a beautiful mosaic of culture and expression. I believe that the “multicultural sound” that we are looking for is essentially the sound of the kingdom globally. Multicultural worship is the sound of all creation in response to the person, work, and love of God. What we need are conduits of that sound that are strategically placed throughout the kingdom to sound in harmony with the rest of God’s redeemed symphony. The kingdom sound needs you to play your part, not every part.

Some helpful ways to do this:

- Connect with leaders around the globe. What are they doing? What is working and what is not working?
- Make conferences and traveling a rhythm in your yearly schedule. Experience other environments; don’t just read about them.
- Explore other traditions and denominations. Much can be learned from every voice and cultural expression.
- Partner with local churches. View them as teammates, not local competition. This local view is really important to the global view.

LIGHT

Perhaps the most vital thing is light, which is Jesus. It may seem very obvious or perhaps even elementary, but it must always be mentioned. We can be so consumed by how “multicultural” we are that we can forget that it’s about how great our God is. The phrase “putting the em-PHA-sis on the wrong syl-LA-ble,” rings true here.

Our goal is helping others meet Jesus. If our multicultural methods get in the way of us creating environments for meeting Jesus then maybe we need to let them go.

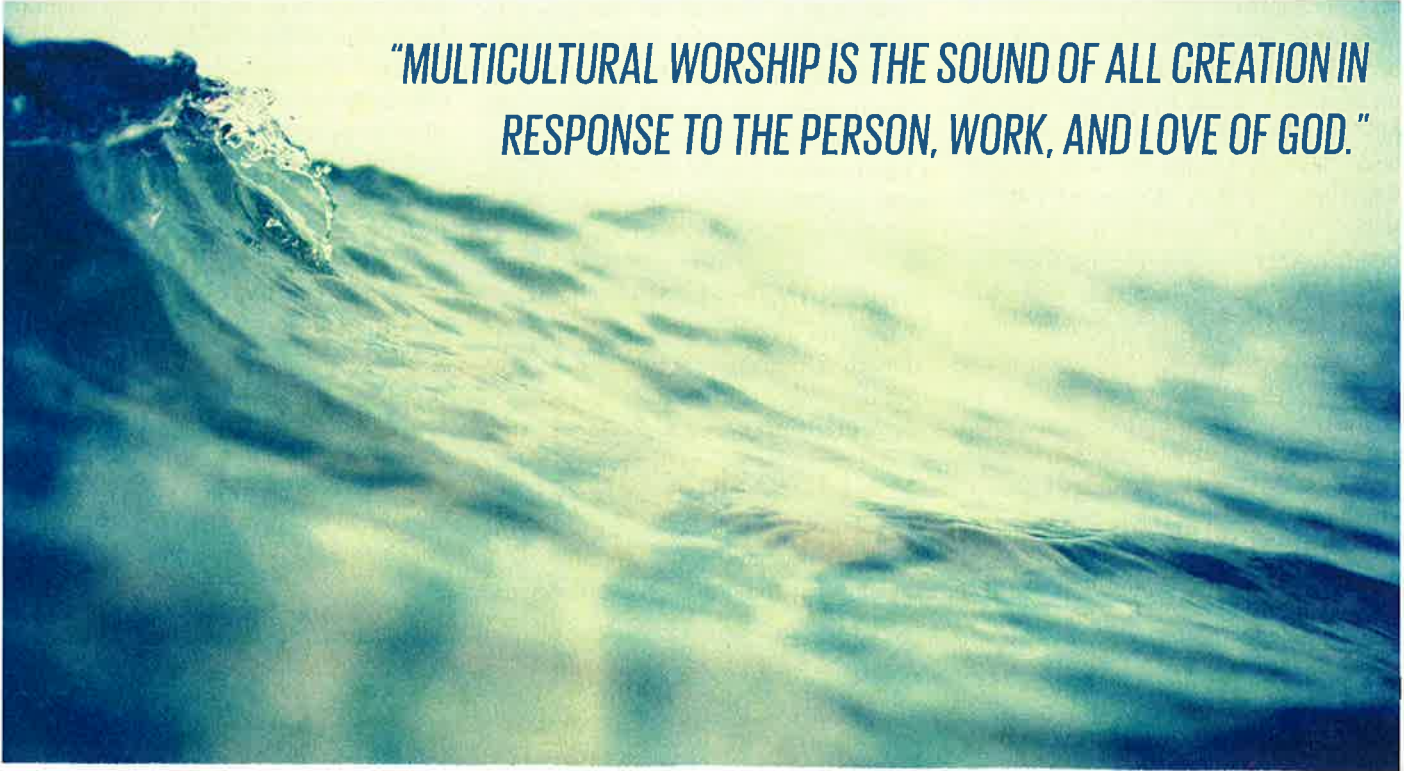
A beautifully crafted stained glass window only displays its vibrant colors with the power of natural light projecting thought it. It’s not just about the glass; it’s primarily about the light. It’s about the message not our methods. Some practical ways to remain Christ-focused:

- Ensure lyrical content is centered on Jesus. Make worship sets move toward vertical moments.
- Emphasize his passion for us over our passion for him.
- Develop a sound biblical theology of worship leadership. Study content from scholars, not just experiential testimonies of worship leaders.
- Know why we do what we do and not just how to do what we do.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Somewhere, someone is authentically leading in the place God has called him or her to serve. Because they have poured themselves into their community they have discovered their natural musical expression. And what is emerging from that cultural intersection is a sound that God desires to hear from them. It is fresh, new and effective. Our first reaction may be to copy it. But let’s be challenged as leaders in this multicultural kingdom to not duplicate someone else’s form. Let’s try to learn from their process. I believe the question becomes less “how do we do multicultural worship?” and more “how do we become multicultural worship?” It’s less about what we do and more about who we are. Pour yourself into your community. “Be water my friend.” **WJ**

Vaughn Thompson Jr. is a worship leader/songwriter, and the Worship Pastor at Cathedral of Faith, a multicultural, multi-site, 8,000+ member, church in San Jose, CA. Vaughn and wife Irene Marin Thompson have formed Third Culture Worship (TCW). Vaughn was recognized in WLM’s Bests of the Best issue of 2011 for his song “You Are Exalted” and his entire album was voted in the Top 5 Indie Albums of the year.



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