

# **“Mixing It Up”: A Seminar for Leaders**

What Kinds of Worship Reach 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seekers?



# Morning Session: Worship as Gospel

## Conversation One: What Excites You About Worship?

### A Tabernacle for the Enactment of an Alternative Mode of Being.

“As liminal, antistructural occasions, sacraments provide a temporary surcease from the pressures of social structure. That is, they offer in ritualized time a freedom from what the New Testament calls ‘the world,’ their ritual form becoming a tabernacle for the enactment of **an alternative mode of being**. In sacraments the “kingdoms of the world” are first acknowledged and then set ritually aside. Instead of conforming to the roles expected in everyday society, which pertain to the ‘old Adam,’ worshipers may follow St. Paul’s injunction to ‘let your bearing towards one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus.’ That is to say, in the Eucharist, persons may become possessed by the spirit of Christ, in whatever form that spirit chooses to be present...Originally, we should suppose, the water, bread, and wine belonged to rituals in which persons were ecstatically possessed by a power they identified as ‘the risen Christ.’”

Liberating Rites: Understanding the Transformative Power of Ritual, by Tom F. Driver

1. Worship operating in dynamic liminal space – the dance between this world and one coming, between sacred and profane, between divine and human, between tangible and spiritual, between world as it is and world as it should be.
2. Worship enacting alternative modes of being – extravagant welcome for all children of God, radical equality and sharing of resources, nonviolence and collaboration in addressing conflict and difference, stillness and mystery...
3. Worship arising out of life in Christ Jesus – not just an idea or a tradition, but a power, a force, a relationship. Celebrants of old were “possessed” by power of the risen Christ. That power made it possible and thrilling to live in the liminal space.

Is it helpful to see worship as “a tabernacle for the enactment of an alternative mode of being”? And if so, what might that mean for us in terms of...

What Kinds of Leadership?

Lay Participation?

Sacrament?

What Kinds of Preaching? Story?

Music?

Setting and Furniture?

Technology/media?

What else?

## An Induction into the Revolution.

“It is my judgment that we live in a moment in the U.S. church that requires a serious and explicit **rethinking of the meaning of faithful obedience**. At the core of evangelical faith is the claim that faith knows some things that matter for genuine life, which are now urgent for our society. Such an explicit rethinking, which is the work of the whole congregation, may operate with these affirmations:

The Enlightenment offer of unfettered freedom without accountability is an unreachable mirage, an illusion never available to us.

The neat and conventional antithesis between law and grace is a distortion of faith because there are no unconditional or conditional relationships in the gospel, but only relationships of fidelity that prize both freedom and accountability...

Baptism is induction into the revolution of the coming rule of God. Like every revolution, this one has demanding disciplines that distinguish its adherents from all others.

Baptism is an acknowledgment of our true desire, our eagerness to be with, commune with, delight in, and delight through glad obedience to this life-giving Holy Other?

It is precisely in our most primary zones of sexuality and economics that the demands and desires of this alternative life are most demanding and most satisfying...

Rejection of disciplines of the revolution and the distortion of our true desire may take place either through flat, one-dimensional traditionalism or through self-indulgence...

Willingness to join the revolution or to practice this core desire can never be coerced. Such engagement is possible only by those who perceive their true identity in this coming rule. And then the disciplines and desire are winsome, joyous, and life-giving, not at all burdensome.

“Duty as Delight and Desire” in Exilic Preaching by Walter Brueggemann

1. Worship that delights in and through glad obedience to the Holy Other – an ongoing ‘induction’ into the revolution of the coming rule of God.
2. Worship that identifies, models, encourages disciplines that distinguish Christ’s disciples – eg. radical hospitality for the other, nonviolence in conflict and distress, joy, servanthood, prayer and meditation, etc.
3. Worship that prizes both freedom and accountability in relationships of fidelity.

Is it helpful to see worship as “induction into the revolution of the coming rule of God”? If so, what are the disciplines that distinguish us from all others? And what might that mean for us in terms of..

What Kinds of Leadership?

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## Hands and Feet and Glands and Cells – Dancing!

What is laughter? What is laughter?  
It is God waking up! O it is God waking up!  
It is the sun poking its sweet head out  
From behind a cloud  
You have been carrying too long,  
Veiling your eyes and heart.

It is Light breaking ground for a great Structure  
That is your Real body – called Truth.

It is happiness applauding itself and then taking flight  
To embrace everyone and everything in this world.

Laughter is the polestar  
Held in the sky by our Beloved,  
Who eternally says,

“Yes, dear ones, come this way,  
Come this way toward Me and Love!

**Come with your tender mouths moving  
And your beautiful tongues conducting songs  
And with your movements – your magic movements  
Of hands and feet and glands and cells – Dancing!**

Know that to God’s Eye,  
All movement is a Wondrous Language,  
And Music – such exquisite, wild Music!”

O what is laughter, Hafiz?  
What is this precious love and laughter  
Budding in our hearts?

It is the glorious sound  
Of a soul waking up!

“Laughter” by Hafiz

1. Worship as God's joy applauding itself and then taking flight to embrace everyone and everything in this world.
2. Worship as freedom – physical, spiritual, imaginative – beyond all the restriction, all the hopelessness, all the predictability of contemporary culture.
3. Worship as the glorious sound of a soul waking up.

Is it helpful to see worship as freedom beyond all restriction, hopelessness and predictability? Are the communities we serve (and have yet to serve) weary of all this and eager to experience the kind of freedom Hafiz describes? If so, what does this mean for...

What Kinds of Leadership?

Lay Participation?

Sacrament?

What Kinds of Preaching? Story?

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## Conversation Two: Worship & UCC Vision & Values

In the three readings above, we're exploring worship as:

1. A tabernacle for the enactment of an alternative mode of being.
2. A dance between this world and the one coming, between the sacred and the profane and back again.
3. An experience of the power and energy and commitment of the risen Christ.
4. An ongoing induction into the revolution of the coming rule of God.
5. A modeling and encouraging of disciplines that distinguish that revolution from others.
6. A prizing of freedom and accountability in relationships of fidelity.
7. God's joy taking flight to embrace everyone and everything in the world.
8. Freedom beyond all the restrictions, limitations and hopelessness of contemporary culture and politics.
9. The glorious sound of a soul waking up.

We might say that UCC vision & Reformed values include:



1. Dynamic and ongoing revelation:  
"God is still speaking,"
2. Open, affirming, inclusive community:  
"Extravagant welcome for all,"
3. Activist commitment to justice and peace:  
"To believe is to do,"
4. Nurturing and equipping ministers:  
"Priesthood of all believers,"
5. Ecumenical partnership and interfaith reach: "Unity in Spirit,"
6. Bible as 'sacrament' – the dynamic role of scripture, study, sacred word
7. Informed faith – bringing together science, reason, literary tradition, intellect
8. What's missing?



Where are YOU and where is YOUR CONGREGATION within this conversation?

Tell us about the opportunities, conversations, tensions around worship in your church?

# Morning Session: Worship as Strategy

## Conversation Three:

### What Kinds of Worship Reach 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seekers?

Think a bit about the kinds of communities (“microcultures”) you’re hoping to engage in ministry, dance, revolution and joy...

For example:

In Santa Cruz County:

UCSC and Cabrillo College Undergrads  
UCSC grad students and young faculty

LGBT young adults (18-40)  
LGBT adults (40-100)

Latino/a Community in SC County

Progressive-Activist Political Crowd

Families with Small Children  
Single Parent Families  
Gay Parents Raising Kids

Retired Couples and Single Folk

<p>Name the microculture: _____</p> <p>Age:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 70 – 100 yrs old</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 55 – 70 yrs old</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 26 – 55 yrs old</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 13 – 25 yrs old</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 0 – 13 yrs old</p> <p>Religious Background:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grew up in progressive mainline Xty</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grew up in more conservative Xty</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grew up in fundamentalist Xty</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grew up in other religious commun.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grew up with no religious commun.</p> <p>Racial/Ethnic Background:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> European-American Ancestry/Identity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> African-American Ancestry/Identity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Latino/a-American Ancestry/Identity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Asian-American Ancestry/Identity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Native-American Ancestry/Identity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Islander-American Identity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other? _____</p> <p>Music That Inspires this Microculture (What They Listen To During the Week):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Inspired by classical music.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Inspired by folk/acoustic music.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Inspired by rock/hip-hop.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Inspired by country/easy listening.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Inspired by world music/jazz/reggae.</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Which of These Dimensions Would Seem Most Important to this Particular Microculture? (And, how might you weave this into your worship...)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joy! _____ _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Freedom! _____ _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Revolution! _____ _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Souls Waking Up! (Transformation!) _____ _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Extravagant Welcome! _____ _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Priesthood of All Believers! _____ _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Power of Risen Christ! _____ _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Distinguishing Disciplines! _____ _____</p>
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