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Mission

The mission of Thousand Tongues is to cultivate worship for the glory of God through the joy of the church in Jesus Christ.

We long to cultivate worship that is:

- True
- Historical
- Overflowing in Missions and Mercy
- Understandable
- Stirring
- All-Of-Life
- Nourishing Congregational Participation
- Deep

We will accomplish this mission by

- Writing songs and other materials for worship,
- Leading others in worship,
- Teaching and preaching on worship, and
- Developing songwriters and worship leaders.

Worship Values

Worship must be true. By this we mean that 1) worship is in and for Jesus Christ, the *true* God, and 2) worship is directed and driven by the revelation of God's *truth*. 1) Worship is *in Christ* because His mediating work alone transforms our idolatry to true worship. Worship is *for Christ* because the aim of worship is the glory of God through the glory of His Son Jesus. 2) Worship is the proper response we make to God's revelation. God reveals Himself to us in creation, by His Word, and through the ministry of His Spirit. The Bible is the only objective and sure way to know the true God and how to worship Him rightly. Therefore, the Bible must not only *direct* our understanding and practice of worship, but should also *drive* our worship as we seek to encounter God in response to understanding Him in Scripture. The centerpiece of God's revelation – the gospel of God's grace shown to undeserving sinners through the substitutionary life and death of His Son – must also be the central theme which every time of worship remembers, proclaims, and celebrates.

Worship must be historical. While Scripture is the only infallible source of direct revelation concerning a right understanding and practice of worship, it leaves out many specifics concerning liturgical forms for worship. Because of pride, we have a natural tendency to believe that our opinions and ideas about worship forms are more effective or relevant than the opinions of those who have gone before us. We will seek to stem this tide by using and updating various worship elements from church history including hymns, creeds, prayers, and readings.

Worship must overflow in missions and mercy. Just as Isaiah's powerful encounter with the holy God moved him to volunteer for God's mission to Israel, our worship should propel us outward to proclaim the gospel to all nations. The goal of missions is to see idolaters become *worshippers*, for the glory of God and the joy of all peoples. Public worship itself should also be a witness of God's presence to unbelieving visitors as the church celebrates God's truth. God shows undeserving, spiritually bankrupt sinners unconditional and unfathomable mercy in the gospel as Jesus exchanges all our debts for His riches. As we remember and experience this truth in worship we should be moved to extend mercy to others in concrete acts of charity.

Worship must be understandable. The effectiveness of particular vocabulary, phrasing, posture, liturgies, musical styles, lyric forms, styles of dress, and even architecture and room layout are all integrally tied to culture. While truth never changes, the way that truth is expressed and has impact varies from culture to culture (or sub-culture to sub-culture). While always looking to the past for wisdom and proven liturgical guidance, we will seek, though not exclusively, to update the styles and forms of the past for today's culture. A concrete example of this is taking hymn texts from several



hundred years ago and updating their language for clarity and writing new tunes and styles of music in which to cast them. Though public worship is primarily for believers, we must worship in a way that is culturally accessible and intelligible for unbelievers as well.

Worship must be stirring. God is the ultimate creative being. He formed the universe by the word of His power, out of nothing, in order to provide a compelling witness to His power and beauty. Man has been designed in His image with both creativity and the ability to be affected by creation, and with a charge to bring order and beauty to this world. We should strive to use the creative power God has given us to captivate people – mind and heart – and direct them to God's truth in order that they might worship Him with their whole being. Taking care not to rely on the power of art rather than the Holy Spirit, and taking care not to let creativity or beauty become idols, we nonetheless should strive to make worship, in all of its forms, beautiful.

Worship must be experienced in all of life. Scripture reveals several ways that worship manifests itself: public or gathered worship, family worship, private worship, and conversational worship. Public worship refers to the gathered assembly of a local church or sub-group of the local church. Family worship refers to those in a household turning their attention towards God together at set times. Private worship refers to individual devotional time with God. Conversational worship refers to the spontaneous response to God believers are commanded to offer throughout their day on a moment-by-moment basis. We will seek to cultivate all-of-life worship, worship in all of these forms.

Worship must nurture congregation participation. Our songs, readings, prayers, and other liturgical elements should be written and led in such a way as to encourage participation by all. Our services should seek to balance passive participation such as listening with active participation such as speaking and singing. The *primary* function of music in worship is to encourage, support, and enhance congregational singing. When the inherent power of music is wed to truth-filled lyrics it becomes a unique and powerful tool that God uses to help us connect our minds and hearts and feel the great doctrines that we sing.

Worship must be theologically deep. The more deeply we understand God's character and works, the more deeply we can experience Him in worship. Every element of our worship, from songs to sermons, should be marked by a pursuit of the knowledge of God both biblically and systematically. At the same time, we should strive to communicate the deep truths of Scripture at an intellectual level that is accessible to our particular congregation and provide a balance of simple and complex elements of worship. We particularly value the theology that was emphasized and clarified in the Protestant Reformation.