

Reflections on Worship Services for the Consultation on Black Worship

While worship is fundamentally a meeting between the body (individual and corporate) and God, the need for this Consultation on Black Worship is born from the varied crosses which Black folk bear in both the sacred and secular worlds. There is a need to acknowledge and overcome these crosses, as a people, in order completely to claim our freedom in Christ.

As people who are not prone simply to theorize using white, Westernized frameworks about any given subject, the awesome task was mine to facilitate an *authentic* experience of the phenomena of worship. The biggest concern was to answer the question: "How can this be done without contriving some concept of the ideal worship and, most of all, without stifling the Spirit to speak and move within the gathered people of God freely and powerfully?"

Though secondary, the awareness of the variety of scholarly perceptions, theories, and traditions of the participants provided simultaneous the challenge and anxiety to allow God to use me and all those gathered at this particular time for God's own purpose, rather than our own.

The theme, "An Easter People in a Good Friday World," had been hanging on the cobwebs of my soul, waiting to be developed for just such a time as this. With leaders of worship in the congregation of the Consultation, brilliant musicians (vocal and instrumental), theologians, psychologists, practitioners in every facet of the Black worship event, it seemed imperative to use as many of these gifts and talents as possible. In reality, this underlies any orchestration or sculpting of worship, i.e. involving, engaging the varied gifts of the worshipers. The following seemed to be mandated for inclusion:

- * Familiar texts and melodies of hymns, spirituals, and gospel songs.
- * Solid scripture from the Old Testament and New Testament, informed by the conviction that the New Testament lesson is incomplete without the correlation, use, and understanding of the Old Testament.

* Dr. Salmon-Campbell, Associate Executive for Mission, Philadelphia Presbytery, Presbyterian Church (USA), conducted worship during this consultation.

- * Congregational participation in litanies, music, prayers, read and spoken word.

Outcomes:

- * Hymns resounded with the fervor of cantabile voices, searching souls, and convicting witness of congregants—beautiful!
- * Old Testament scriptures were adapted for a litany form.
- * The sung responses highlighted the glory of God and the reason why we as Christians are an Easter people: "He Has Done Great Things For Me!"
- * The New Testament scripture read prior to the sermon by the preacher is important in order to emphasize the text as inspired for this moment. Varied sermon forms were used in every instance. Music was lead by the preacher, but a solo and congregational prayer pulled the whole body prayerfully into concentrated unity, to focus on, draw out, and use God's revealed message of grace.

Sermon Outline and Bulletin:

- * Used the context of the secular world to define Good Friday World.
- * Provided Jesus Christ's response to the Good Friday World.
- * Highlighted the relevance of all this for Blacks in America, Third World brothers and sisters, humans everywhere, and individuals congregated for this worship.
- * Explained how the congregated might be affected in this setting by the Good Friday World.
- * Urged taking off the heavy yoke of the world and putting on Christ's easy yoke of hope and new life.
- * Treated the hymn of response or discipleship as still a part of the sermon. Carefully selected, this hymn provides assurance for and encouragement of the congregation to lift concerns to God, for specific needs which they identify for themselves and others.
- * A bidding prayer was followed by a preacher's prayer of gathered intercession on behalf of worshipers. This prayer was shaped by the congregants' needs and was expanded by the preacher, all led, moved, and informed by the Spirit.
- * Filled with such a Spirit, frequently the cup overflows, the energy of the Holy Spirit seeks direction, thus the passing of the Peace can be a time of unknown corporate and individual healing for God's peoples' sake.
- * Because Offering was not a part of these worship services, any passing on of love through touch or eye contact is a way of offering a part of oneself to God by reaching out to bless another.
- * The closing gospel song or hymn provided the congregation's corporate message of joy, praise, determination, recommitment, direction for the continued liturgy, work of the people as they go out into the world.
- * The Charge informed by the Spirit for those gathered at this moment of worship and message shared.
- * The Benediction, a blessing into the next acts of life.

After the first sermon, opportunities for the spoken word, informed by a prepared sense of theme and liturgy, attempted to do the following:

- * Gather in the points of controversy during various presentations for this Consultation.
- * Address the evidence of our own impatience and errors of humanness with each other when healing, forgiveness and focus on God are needed most, even among God's ordained and anointed by the Holy Spirit.
- * Address individual and corporate needs, points of confession and striving.

- * Consider and use of diverse of various traditions, moods, temperaments, tastes, talents.
- * The use of symbols are important to any worship experience and were embodied in the following ways:
 - Rock and Water (both relate to Baptism)
 - Candles
 - Bread
 - Wine
 - Vestments
 - Colors

The working class in Scotland was not a homogeneous group. It was divided into many different groups, and each group had its own interests and needs. The working class was not a single entity, but a collection of many different groups, each with its own interests and needs. The working class was not a single entity, but a collection of many different groups, each with its own interests and needs. The working class was not a single entity, but a collection of many different groups, each with its own interests and needs.

The Working Class in Scotland

The working class in Scotland was not a homogeneous group. It was divided into many different groups, and each group had its own interests and needs. The working class was not a single entity, but a collection of many different groups, each with its own interests and needs. The working class was not a single entity, but a collection of many different groups, each with its own interests and needs.

The working class in Scotland was not a homogeneous group. It was divided into many different groups, and each group had its own interests and needs. The working class was not a single entity, but a collection of many different groups, each with its own interests and needs. The working class was not a single entity, but a collection of many different groups, each with its own interests and needs.

The working class in Scotland was not a homogeneous group. It was divided into many different groups, and each group had its own interests and needs. The working class was not a single entity, but a collection of many different groups, each with its own interests and needs. The working class was not a single entity, but a collection of many different groups, each with its own interests and needs.