

The Contribution of the Book of Psalms to a Pentecostal Theology of Worship

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Abstract

This article seeks to integrate two perspectives on worship: one from the book of Psalms and the other from the Pentecostal movement. Regarding the psalms, as Israel's response to YHWH's self-revelation and actions, they represent a significant expression of Israel's theology. Although the psalms have been used consistently within Jewish and Christian worship, they have rarely been consulted in the construction of a theology of worship. Regarding the Pentecostal movement, although Pentecostalism has impacted worship practices around the world, it has not developed a fully-formed theology of worship. This study examines the book of Psalms in order to discern the ways in which the Psalter might contribute to a Pentecostal theology of worship. The article concludes that, when taken as a whole, the book of Psalms stresses the importance of worship, grounds worship in covenantal commitment, integrates worship and theology, conceives of music as an end in itself, sees worship as a location of spiritual formation, and presents worship as a form of proclamation.

Keywords

liturgical theology, spirituality, spiritual disciplines, Pentecostal theology

Introduction

Depictions of worship, encouragements to worship, and instructions for worship are scattered throughout the Bible – beginning with the offerings of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4 and concluding with the imperative 'Worship God' in Rev. 22.9. It is the book of Psalms, however, that gives the most sustained attention to the topic of worship. Therefore, while any attempt to develop a theology of worship should include the study of a wide variety of biblical texts from both Old and New Testaments, the book of Psalms must be afforded serious consideration.

The form-critical approach pioneered by Hermann Gunkel (1967) has produced a vast and lasting contribution to scholarship on the Psalms. Form criticism has rendered a helpful

classification of Psalm types, and it has contributed to our understanding of the ancient function of the Psalter and the various *Sitze im Leben* of the individual psalms. More recent studies in the Psalms have moved beyond the study of the ancient context and have demonstrated the Psalter's use throughout history and have offered helpful suggestions regarding the employment of the Psalms in the context of the contemporary liturgy. Therefore, for the most part, scholarship on the Psalms has focused on their liturgical usage, either in ancient times or in contemporary times. What is missing from biblical scholarship, however, is an investigation into how the book of Psalms may contribute to a biblical theology of worship. This lack is also due in part to historical criticism's de-spiritualizing of the Psalter, which, according to Brueggemann, results in interpretation that 'is frequently arid, because it lingers excessively on formal questions' (1984: 16).

It should be pointed out that not everyone accepts the Old Testament as a valid source for Christian theology and practice. At least two questions arise whenever the Old Testament is appealed to in support of particular worship practices: 1. Can the Old Testament can be considered authoritative at all? 2. If we accept the authority of the Old Testament, how do we determine which practices are legitimate for Christian worship and which practices should not be included in Christian worship? I would argue that the role of the Old Testament in theological construction is a hermeneutical matter that impacts not just the question of worship but also the broader theological task. Pentecostalism, in agreement with most other Christian traditions, accepts the authority of the Old Testament in matters of theology, ethics, and practice (cf. 2 Tim. 3.16), with the proviso that certain practices (such as temple rituals, sacrifices, and cleanliness codes) have their theological fulfillment in the New Covenant of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Pentecostal scholar Gerald Sheppard (1992: 155) can insist, 'The Psalms as scripture constitute a prime territory for our theological reflection, something far more than merely a prayer book among the artifacts of ancient Israelite religion'. Another Pentecostal writer, P.A. Minnaar (1983: 3), sees Psalm 95 as 'guideline on the nature of worship and how to practice it'. Old Testament scholar Elizabeth Achtemeier (2001: 104) agrees, stating that the Psalms tell us 'how properly to lament before the Sovereign Lord of the universe and how properly to praise him'. She explains further:

And the hermeneutics behind that consists in the fact that the church is, according to Paul, the 'Israel of God' (Gal. 6:16), the wild branches grafted into the root of Israel (Rom. 11:7-24), or in Ephesians, those who, through the work of Jesus Christ, have been brought into the commonwealth (2001: 104).

Ernest Gentile proposes that the Psalms were utilized by early Christians. He writes, 'The worship forms found in the book of Psalms provided an ideal way for the lively, Spirit-filled Christians of Bible days to express themselves in personal and corporate worship' (1994: 3-4). John Lamb extends the paradigmatic function of the Psalms to contemporary

worship: 'The Psalter which itself teaches the duty of praise, provides the necessary ideas and expressions' (1962: 163). Renowned Psalms scholar Sigmund Mowinckel agrees that the Psalms have at least some paradigmatic use. He writes, 'The psalms are not only useful for performance in worship, they are useful as models for contemporary hymn writing' (1967: v). Michael Barrett suggests that the theology of worship is a prominent element in the book of Psalms and 'the Psalms are paradigms for worship'. He argues, 'The Psalms give patterns for both individual and corporate worship' (2006: 159-161).

Given the Old Testament's authority in the Christian tradition generally and in the Pentecostal tradition specifically, I will proceed on the assumption that while the relative value each specific worship practice in the Psalms may be assessed on its own merits, these practices and the broader and more basic theological concerns of the Psalter can be accepted as valuable for constructing a Pentecostal theology of worship. Interpreters will no doubt disagree as to what constitutes the essential concerns of the book of Psalms, but it is hoped that this study will at least generate a helpful discussion about Pentecostal worship and the Psalter.

The remainder of this article will outline a theology of worship derived from the Psalms and suggest ways that the Psalter might contribute more specifically to a Pentecostal theology of worship.

The book of Psalms stresses the importance of worship.

We must be careful at the outset that we do not overlook the most obvious point that the Psalter expresses the value of worship both to the individual believer and to the community of faith. The importance of worship is registered in two ways. First, the very presence of the book of Psalms within the canon bears witness to the necessity of worship. It is not insignificant that one of the largest books in the Bible consists of words addressed to God rather than words that come from God. Nahum Sarna (1993: 3) writes, 'In the Law and the Prophets, God reaches out to [humanity]. The initiative is His. The message is His ... In the Psalms, human beings reach out to God. The initiative is human. The language is human. We make the effort to communicate.' By my count, 109 of the 150 psalms include words addressed directly to God while the other 49 offer worship to God in a more indirect fashion (e.g. Psalm 150). C. Westermann argues that God is praised whenever his actions or attributes are commended either directly or indirectly and that 'praise *occurs*' even in those psalms that lack explicit words of praise (1981: 15-18, emphasis original). Therefore, the book of Psalms testifies to the importance of the human covenantal response to God's person and actions and also to other critically important issues such as (1) how one may remain godly in the face of great trials and tribulations; (2) oppression; (3) how to deal with depression and despair; (4) human mortality; (5) the issue of suffering; (6) the need for repentance, forgiveness, mercy; (7) the reconciliation of the entire human race; (8) and God's glory and grandeur. Whenever God acts, the appropriate human response is worship, as may be witnessed in not only in the Psalms

but also in other texts such as Exodus 15, Deuteronomy 32, Judges 5, 1 Samuel 2, Jonah 2, and Habakkuk 3, where songs of praise and thanksgiving are recorded. However, these human words addressed to God become a word from God as the community participates through joining the dialogue and overhearing the interchange during times of worship.

Second, a multitude of texts in the book of Psalms attest to the importance of worship. Over and over, the psalms invite and command God's people to sing, to worship, to serve, to pray, to rejoice, to call out to God, to dance, to play instruments, to bring offerings, to enter the temple, and so on (Kraus, 1986: 12).

In the Psalms, worship is both individual and communal. The first Psalm opens with a reference to the individual ('Blessed is the man', Hb. *'ish*), but it concludes with statements about the community ('congregation', Hb. *'edah*, and 'righteous ones', Hb. *tsadeyqim*). Throughout the Psalter, we find both individual prayers and communal prayers, individual testimonies and communal testimonies, individual praises and communal praises (Lamb, 1962:3). On the whole, there is a discernable progression from individualistic language at the beginning of the Psalter to communal language at the end of the Psalter. This progression corresponds to the movement from lament at the beginning of the Psalter to praise at the end of the Psalter.

Erhard Gerstenberger argues that the psalms are inherently communal. He writes,

Modern psalm-research has proved beyond reasonable doubt that Old Testament psalmody in no case was a private, poetic affair of closed-in individuals. There is nothing like our seemingly 'private' poetry in ancient times ... All Old Testament literature is community oriented, destined to be used in groups and congregations (1985: 157).

Lamb (1962:162) adds,

The worshiper is not merely a human soul alone before his maker and father; he is a member of the family, of the body of Christ, of the communion of saints. He shares in the whole work of the church, whether in worship or in the proclamation of the gospel, or in the social advancement of the kingdom of God. The Psalter witnesses to this solidarity of the church.

Similarly, Teun van der Leer (2013: 26) contends that the psalms 'teach us to believe and pray with and from within the community':

However personal the Psalms can be (Ps. 27:7-14; 77:1-4), they are and remain songs of the faith community. There are quite a few Psalms with an illogical transition from 'I' to 'we', for example Ps. 122:1-2; 123:1-2; or they start with 'me' and conclude within the community, see for example Ps. 22. Many Psalms are even filled with longing for the community: Ps. 42:5.

The book of Psalms grounds worship in covenantal commitment.

The corporate nature of Old Testament worship is generated by the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel (Brueggemann, 2005:7-9), and the book of Psalms testifies to the importance of Israel's worship as a covenantal response to God's person and actions (cf. Rad, 1962: 355-370). The worship of the Psalms, therefore, flows out of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel. Worship is an expression of Israel's covenant commitment to YHWH, and Israel's praises are in direct response to YHWH's covenant faithfulness as embodied in YHWH's *hesed* (Brueggemann, 2005:7-9).

Mutual commitment is the heart of the covenant; and is, therefore, the foundation of genuine worship. YHWH is fully committed to Israel, and Israel is fully committed to YHWH. YHWH promises to be present, 'enthroned on the praises of Israel' (Ps. 22.4), and every Israelite is required to be present in worship (Brueggemann, 2005:13). 'Thus worship in Israel consists in a *dialogic interaction* in which both parties are fully present, both parties are to some extent defined by the other, and both parties are put to some extent at risk by the transaction' (Brueggemann, 2005:9).

The covenant is exclusive, which means that YHWH is the only legitimate object of worship. Mutual commitment is implied in Exod. 6.7: 'I will take you as my people, and I will be your God'. Israel's commitment to worship YHWH exclusively is required in the Decalogue: 'You shall have no other gods beside me ... you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, YHWH your God, am a jealous God' (Exod. 20.3-5). All other gods are interlopers in the covenant relationship between YHWH and Israel. The psalmist declares, 'For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but YHWH made the heavens' (Ps. 96.5). In their worship, the Israelites can affirm, '[W]e have not forgotten you, nor been disloyal to your covenant' (Ps. 44.18).

The importance of the covenant as the foundation of worship is expressed in the Psalter in at least three ways. First and most obvious are the numerous psalms in which the covenant is mentioned. The Hebrew word *berith*, which is translated 'covenant' occurs 21 times in the Psalter. For example, the psalms of historical recital praise YHWH's faithful remembrance of the covenant. The psalmist exclaims that YHWH 'remembers his covenant forever, the word which he commanded, for a thousand generations' (Ps. 105.8). See also Pss. 89.4, 29, 35, 40; 105.10; 106.45; 111.5, 9; 132.12. Moreover, all references to the torah could be interpreted as references to the covenant.

Second, the praises that resound in the hymns are often motivated by YHWH's covenant loyalty (Hb. *hesed*). Translated as 'lovingkindness', 'mercy', 'faithfulness', or 'steadfast love', *hesed* is found 130 times in the Psalter (Brown, et al., 1979: 339; Köhler and Baumgartner, 2001: 336-337). The word *hesed* indicates the overarching covenantal, relational quality of Yahweh (Jenni and Westermann, 1997: 451). Therefore, the psalmist enters into worship with YHWH's steadfast love in mind: 'But I, through the abundance of

your steadfast love (*hesed*), will enter into your house' (Ps. 5.8). Psalm 33 encourages the congregation to 'sing to [YHWH] a new song' (v. 3) because 'the earth is full of the *hesed* of YHWH' (v. 5). Worshipers are encouraged to 'Give thanks to YHWH, for he is good; his *hesed* endures forever' (Ps. 107.1). From beginning to end, Psalm 136 repeatedly calls for the praise of YHWH because 'His *hesed* endures forever' (vv. 1-26).

Third, the pleas found in the laments are founded upon the psalmist's covenant relationship to YHWH. The psalmist cries out, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Ps. 22.1). The psalms of lament, therefore, are grounded upon the certainty of the divine-human relationship. John Eaton asserts that 'the emphatic "my God" expresses the covenantal bond with all its assurances' (Eaton, 2003: 235). The phrase 'my God' (or 'Lord') occurs 60 times in the Psalter; and 'our God' (or 'Lord') is found 30 times. The connection between covenant and lament is explored by Scott Ellington, who writes,

Biblical lament, while it does include tears, pleas, complaints and protests, is something more. It is the experience of loss suffered within the context of *relatedness*. A relationship of trust, intimacy, and love is a necessary precondition for genuine lament. When the biblical writers lament, they do so from within the context of a foundational relationship that binds together the individual with members of the community of faith and that community with their God (2008: 7, emphasis original).

This covenantal foundation of worship includes a number of related elements such as devotion to Mt. Zion (e.g. Psalm 48), the centrality of the Jerusalem temple (e.g. Psalm 84), the role of sacrificial offerings as an expected part of worship (e.g. Ps. 50.5), and the enthronement of the royal Davidic heir (e.g. Psalm 2). Psalm 50.5, for example, views the sacrifices as integrally related to the covenant: 'Gather my holy ones together to me, those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice' (cf. Ps. 4.6). (Cf. Kraus, 1986:67-100).

Although Israel's theology of worship as found in the book of Psalms assumes the importance of Mt. Zion, the presence of God at the Jerusalem temple, the role of sacrificial offerings, and the continuation of the Davidic dynasty, these elements of worship must be filtered through the New Testament before they can be carried forward into Pentecostal worship. The New Testament shows that each of these Old Testament features has an underlying theology that should be part of our theology of worship. Both Mt. Zion and the Jerusalem temple bear witness to the ongoing presence of God in the midst of his people (Cf. Heb. 12.22-24; 1 Cor. 3.16). The sacrifices were fulfilled when Jesus offered himself (Heb. 7.27). However, the costliness of worship is registered through the expected offering of one's body (Rom. 12.1) and one's praises: 'Therefore, through [Jesus] let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name' (Heb. 13.15). Finally, the Davidic king continues to reign in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, 'the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star' (Rev. 22.16).

The book of Psalms integrates worship and theology.

The Old Testament is not a book of systematic theology. Instead, Old Testament theology is expressed in story and in song. The Psalms, therefore, are sung theology. Martin Luther (1960: 254) declares that the book of Psalms 'might well be called a little Bible. In it is comprehended most beautifully and briefly everything that is in the entire Bible.' Furthermore, Since it has 150 messages in which there is encouragement, instruction, inspiration, truth and solutions to the great problems faced by people. It demonstrates real care and concern for people. Erhard Gerstenberger (1988: 36) expresses his amazement at the theological depth and breadth of the Psalms. He writes,

the Psalter does not contain a summa of theological thought or any kind of theological system... Still, the Psalter is so vast in its theological dimensions that any systematizing effort must fall short. It will continue to stimulate our life of faith even in this different age, just as it has done for centuries.

Brevard Childs (1979: 514), writes that the Psalms 'accurately reflect the theology of Israel'. Worship, therefore, embodies, celebrates, and communicates the Church's theology. In regard to the planning of worship, Timothy Pierce observes, 'Music leaders, writers, and performers need to become better versed in theology ... Music must be immersed in proper theology precisely because it has a power to instruct and evoke in a manner that few mediums can' (2008: 239). Consequently, the church's liturgy must be planned and executed with theological faithfulness in mind. When evaluating our worship, we should ask what kind of theology our worship conveys.

Moreover, while I agree wholeheartedly that worship must be grounded in good theology, I would also argue for the converse, which is that theology must be grounded in good worship. Samuel Terrien declares, 'Doxology is the key to theology' (2003: 60). The book of Psalms is a collection of songs, and these songs are deeply theological, a fact that calls for our intentional integration of worship and theology. Thus, when we consider the book of Psalms as a whole, we come to the conclusion that worship should be deeply theological and also that theology should be deeply worshipful.

The book of Psalms models the value of music in worship.

The Psalms may be read, recited, or chanted, but they were originally meant to be sung (Kraus, 1986: 12), a fact that testifies to the value of music in worship. The root meaning of the Psalms in both Hebrew *mizmor* and Greek *psalmos* is to play instrumental music and to sing to some musical accompaniment/s. The Hebrew word *mizmor*, translated 'psalm', is 'a song sung to an instrumental accompaniment' (Köhler and Baumgartner, 2001:566), and its root word, *zamar*, encompasses the broad idea of 'making music' (Brown, et al., 1979:274). The noun *mizmor* ('psalm') occurs 57 times in the book of Psalms and the verb *zamar* ('make music') is found 41 times. The Psalter, therefore,

places heavy emphasis upon music as a part of worship. This suggests that the services in the temple involved the singing of hymns with the accompaniment of both stringed and wind instruments. Essentially the book of Psalms was a sort of hymnal for temple services. Sigmund Mowinckel observes that in all ancient worship,

song, music and dance play an important role. So they do in the Psalms ... There can be no doubt that the Psalms were meant to be sung. They contain a number of allusions to singing, and they are often described in the titles as songs rendered to music, or as hymns (1967:8; cf. Lamb, 1962:6-7).

The Church's songs embody the communal memory and transmit the corporate ethos to new believers and to each new generation.

The Psalter's emphasis upon music would suggest that worship through song is an end in itself and that singing does not necessarily lead to another, more important part of worship such as preaching. Evangelical scholar Daniel Block, however, argues that since there is no reference to music in the instructions for the tabernacle (Exodus 25 through Leviticus 16) music is neither 'essential' to worship nor is it the main element in worship. As we might expect, Block believes preaching to be the central act of worship (2014: 241). If Block's argument is taken seriously, we should note as well that there is no reference in those texts to either preaching or prayer.

The significant role of music in the Pentecostal tradition can hardly be overstated. In their book on global Pentecostalism, Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori offer the following insight: 'Whether in a storefront building with bare florescent tubes hanging from the ceiling or in a theater with a sophisticated sound system, the heart of Pentecostalism is the music' (2007: 23-24). Harvey Cox, in his celebrated study of Pentecostalism, devotes an entire chapter to the importance of music; and regarding Pentecostalism's openness to a broad variety of musical styles, Cox observes,

Most pentecostals gladly welcome any instrument you can blow, pluck, bow, bang, scrape, or rattle in the praise of God. I have seen photos of saxophones being played at pentecostal revivals as early as 1910 ... I have heard congregations sing to the beat of salsa, bossa nova, country western, and a dozen other tempos (1996: 142-143).

In his groundbreaking work, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, theologian Steve Land argues that the songs of Pentecostalism are forms of theological reflection, and they contribute to the distinctiveness of Pentecostal worship. Land argues,

The dance of joy and the celebration of speech were evidence that victims were freed to become participants in salvation history. Music was and is very important in that celebration; it expresses, directs, and deepens that joy ... The oral-narrative liturgy and witness of Pentecostals was a rehearsal of and for the kingdom of God. They

rehearsed for the coming of the Lord, the final event of the historical drama; and the songs, testimonies and so on were a means of grace used to sanctify, encourage, mobilize, and direct them on their journey (2010: 107; Cf. Samuel, 2014: 98-122).

The Pentecostal emphasis upon music is affirmed by the presence of the book of Psalms within the biblical canon – 150 songs (not to mention the other songs scattered throughout Scripture). In light of the Psalms, I would argue that songs can function as the word of God just as surely as preaching can. God speaks to the Church through preaching, but God speaks through music also.

The book of Psalms witnesses to worship as spiritual formation.

Worship and discipleship are often separated as two different activities with two different goals, but Jerome Boone argues that worship contributes to discipleship. In fact, he insists that within the Pentecostal tradition, worship is the ‘primary locus of Christian formation’ (1996: 135). According to Boone, all of the elements of Pentecostal worship move toward formation (1996: 135-142; cf. Johns, 1993: 121-123; Alvarado, 2012: 135-151). Marva Dawn (1995: 4) agrees, arguing that worship’s ‘character-forming potential is so subtle and barely noticed, and yet worship creates a great impact on the hearts and minds and lives of a congregation’s members’. It follows, therefore, that the worship of Pentecostals ‘forms’ who they are becoming.

The observation that Pentecostal worship is a means to spiritual formation is echoed in the Psalms in at least three ways. First, the overall shape of the book of Psalms portrays the life of faith as dynamic rather than static, and it represents worship as a practice that generates progress toward spiritual growth and maturity (Brueggemann, 1995). Claus Westermann (1989: 14) argues that life is a pendulum that swings back and forth between the extremes of lament and praise and that the Psalms take full advantage of that experiential movement to contribute to the believer’s spiritual growth.

Walter Brueggemann, refining and expanding on Westermann’s thesis, argues that the psalms can be classified according to their functions as either psalms of orientation, psalms of disorientation, or psalms of reorientation (1984). The psalms of orientation set forth the foundational Hebrew world view. These psalms affirm that God is good and reigns over an orderly world that operates by dependable rules, in which good is rewarded and evil is punished (e.g. Psalm 1). Everything begins with this orientation, but the disruptions of life call into question the goodness of God and the assumption that the world is orderly and just. The psalms of disorientation, therefore, give voice to the complaints that surface when life is thrown into disarray (e.g. Psalm 13). The third category, the psalms of reorientation, are songs of new life that celebrate God’s surprising acts of intervention and deliverance (e.g. Psalm 30). Brueggemann explains that the life of faith is a repeated movement through the cycle of orientation to disorientation to reorientation, a movement that should produce spiritual development.

Second, the concern for spiritual formation is reflected not only in the overall shape of the Psalms but also in the psalms of instruction (sometimes called the wisdom psalms) (Kraus, 1986:15-16). The entire Psalter might be considered instructional, but several psalms are aimed explicitly toward the shaping of world view and the transmitting of the Hebrew faith (e.g. Psalms 1, 32, 37, 49, 73, 78, 112, 119, 127, 128, 133, and 145). Prayer and praise are valuable aspects of worship, but the very first psalm emphasizes worship as a learning experience, and the curriculum for learning is the 'torah of YHWH' (Ps. 1.2). Thus, the book of Psalms begins with teaching and includes teaching throughout the book. The wisdom psalms point to the inclusion of instructional songs as a part of the liturgy.

Third, the function of the psalms as aids to spiritual formation is implied by the hymns of praise for Torah (e.g. Psalms 1, 19, and 119). The word *torah* itself signifies instruction or teaching. The verbal form of *torah* is *yarah* and means 'to point' or 'to show'.

The Psalter's overall shape, its inclusion of instructional psalms, and its praise of the Torah combine to show the power of worship to effect spiritual growth and transformation. One element of this spiritual formation is particularly impacted by the Psalms. As I have argued elsewhere (Martin, 2010; 2013; and 2014), the book of Psalms is aimed in part at the formation of the affections:

Steven Land [2010: 34] observes that while Pentecostals accept the necessity of orthodoxy (right doctrine) and orthopraxy (right practice), they see orthopathy (right affections) as the integrating center for both orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Consequently, a Pentecostal approach would recognize the Psalms not only as a witness to right theology and practice, but also as an aide in the formation of the affections.

Leonard Maré pushes even farther and suggests that the spiritual formation of the individual will influence the entire community of faith. He writes that Psalm 63, for example, invites the worshiper to 'follow in the footsteps of the poet in the process of spiritual renewal ... This will in turn lead to the transformation of the community of the faithful' (2008: 227). It is time that we recognized the potential spiritual growth that can be realized through worship.

The book of Psalms presents worship as a prophetic witness.

The centerpiece of Walter Brueggemann's recent book on the Psalms, *From Whom No Secrets Are Hid* (2014), is his chapter entitled 'The Counter-World of the Psalms'. In this essay, which Brueggemann considers to be his clearest formulation of the nature and function of the Psalms, he argues that the Psalms 'voice and mediate to us a counter-world that is at least in tension with our other, closely held world and in fact is often also in direct odds with that closely held world' (2014: 10). Brueggemann identifies 'seven marks of the dominant ideology of our culture' (2014: 10-25), and then suggests contrasting

marks that are found in the counter-world of the Psalms. The resulting contrasts are: 1. anxiety that is rooted in scarcity vs. trustful fidelity, 2. greed vs. a world of abundance, 3. self-sufficiency vs. ultimate dependence, 4. denial vs. abrasive truth telling, 5. despair vs. a world of hope, 6. amnesia vs. lively remembering, and 7. a normless world vs. normed fidelity (2014: 27).

At this point, Brueggemann inserts references to the Old Testament prophets, making clear a parallel that the reader may have noticed already. That is, Brueggemann's characterization of the theology of the Psalms is in fact quite similar to his description of the fundamental message of the prophets, as we find it described in his book, *The Prophetic Imagination* (1987). The theology of the Psalms, of course, is not structured in the form of judgment speeches and salvation speeches as we find in the prophets, but in the form of songs that imagine what the world is like when the preaching of the prophets is brought to real life.

What Brueggemann's insights bring to this study of worship is that in light of the fact that the Psalms are particular examples of worship, they can be a model for our contemporary worship. Worship should imagine an alternative community and alternative way of life for God's people.

We find in the Psalms 'the testimony by which those who sing, pray, and speak point beyond themselves, the "kerygmatic intention" of their praise and confession, their prayers and teachings' (Kraus, 1986:13). Pentecostals have always conceived of their preaching as prophetic speech, and they have practiced the prophetic charismata. I am suggesting, however, that they go even farther and recognize their entire liturgy as a prophetic witness to the transformative presence and power of God in this world.

Conclusion

We have seen that, when taken as a whole, the book of Psalms stresses the importance of worship, grounds worship in covenantal commitment, integrates worship and theology, conceives of music as an end in itself, sees worship as a location of spiritual formation, and presents worship as a form of proclamation.

Obviously, the observations made in this study are not comprehensive; nevertheless, they are suggestive for a Pentecostal theology of worship. Moreover, they must be weighed together with other voices in the biblical choir before they can be accepted in Christian worship.

Many of the elements of worship that I have identified in the Psalms were present in early Pentecostalism, and they remain present in many churches, especially in the majority world. Pentecostal worship in the USA, however, has been influenced by contemporary evangelical currents, including the so-called seeker friendly, emergent, and missional models, which have pushed Pentecostalism closer in worship practices to mainline

Protestantism. Unfortunately, if Pentecostalism loses the distinctive heart of its worship practices, it will also lose its distinctive spirituality, theology, and identity.

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