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WAYS TO DIVERSIFY YOUR WORSHIP EXPRESSION

From the beginnings of the Church in the first and second centuries, expressions of worship began to quickly diversify according to cultural and demographic differences in newly planted communities.[1] While vital practices such as singing, the reading of the scriptures and the sharing of Lord's Table remained a vibrant part of the worshiping life of the Church, individual cultures began to create their own unique, cultural responses to the joy of experiencing the resurrection life of Jesus.

In today's multicultural world, the Church can represent this beautiful diversity of cultural, ethnic, traditional and generational expression without losing the unique, individual personality of each congregation. Here are some ideas on how to invite fresh diversity into your worship expressions:

1. HOST ANOTHER EXPRESSION OF THE CHURCH, AND OF WORSHIP STYLE, THAT IS UNFAMILIAR TO YOUR COMMUNITY.

Invite to your church a guest speaker and worship team from a faith community with a different ethnic demographic and/or musical style than your own. Joyfully affirm their uniqueness, and the gift of that uniqueness to your city or town, as you welcome them to offer their gift in ministering to your community. A conference setting, or a Sunday morning, can be an ideal time for this.

2. EXPOSE YOURSELF TO OTHER EXPRESSIONS OF WORSHIP GOING ON IN YOUR CITY.

Take a few Sundays in the year to visit churches that are impacting a vital demographic in your community. Go as a learner, and watch how they attend to the target community that God has given them. What is their worship tradition? What ages are they reaching? What is the demographic they are focused toward? Glean wisdom from them, and ask God how you can better communicate through the medium of worship music with the people group that God has uniquely called your church to reach.

3. INVITE DIVERSITY INTO YOUR WORSHIP TEAM.

Taking your time, give some space to other expressions of music and worship within your own worship team. Without sacrificing your own values in worship, intentionally pursue the value of diversity in small steps, giving opportunity in "one-off" services, or in special settings to other unique expressions of worship in your church. Experiment with ethnic diversity, worship tradition diversity, and even age diversity. See what happens, take the best, and run forward.

[1] Paul F. Bradshaw, "The Search For The Origins Of Christian Worship," in *Twenty Centuries Of Christian Worship*, ed. Robert E. Webber (Nashville: Star Song Publishing Group, 1994), 4.

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