

# Can We All Come Together?

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This summer I wrote a song called, "Can We All Come Together". The song is a summary of my convictions about how I believe my church ought to view the weekly practice of worshipping God. Every church is unique and needs to let the Lord lead them in how they should worship, but I do believe a general rule applies to every local church: **The way your church worships God ought to be an outgrowth and expression of the current members of your church.** There's not a worship style, model or formula that is sure to usher your church into the presence of Almighty God, even if it seems to be doing that at some other church. It just doesn't work that way. If you really love someone and want to tell them so, I suppose you could borrow someone else's love letters and perhaps get your message across, but you just can't fool the Holy Spirit. A local church needs to let their worship be their unique love-letter to God. We can certainly implement the tools used by others, past or present, ancient or modern, if they indeed capture our heart's expression, but we also need to work hard at finding creative and fresh ways to express our praise to God. The point is: We are His children and He wants us to "crawl up into His lap" on a regular basis and express our love to Him and let Him love and care for us.

There are many churches today that have basically divided their congregations into two (or more) groups based on different worship styles such as "contemporary", "traditional", "classic", "modern", "seeker" and "blended". On the surface, it seems like a logical thing to do because of the wide range of musical tastes within the church and the seemingly impossible challenge to please everyone. So, the thought is to just let the birds of like feathers flock together. Most of the time this division is mainly driven by the felt need for more contemporary worship to be the "optional alternative" to the way things have always been done in a church which gets labeled (subjectively) as being unappealing, dull or out-of-step with the masses in our high-tech modern world. Often, an uncompromising attitude on the part of those opposed to modern trends in worship adds to the decision to just go ahead and divide out of fear that unless they hang on to their valued traditions separately they will lose them altogether.

The positive side to having a separate, contemporary worship style does have several good arguments: 1. Unless we change our method, not the message, to be more appealing to the un-churched (i.e. The Lost), we are not going to communicate well with people who know little or nothing about elements of a worship style that has not changed in 50 years or more. 2. Unless we change our method, not the message, to look and sound more fresh and modern to new or younger-aged Christians, we are not going to allow those Christians who do not have sentimental or historical ties to expressions of praise offered by our forefathers to be able to offer praise in worship that truly expresses their heart to God. Here is where my philosophy of church music says that I agree with the above two statements, but I also believe that it is not best to divide a local Body of Believers into separate flocks in order to achieve the above goals. That is why I strive very hard to lead my congregation in a blended style of worship which does not seem old-fashioned or dull to young or potential Christians in attendance, but neither is it so pop-culture/seeker-oriented that we lose sight of who we are and where we came from.

A basic truth has had an impact on my approach to worship through the years. It is this: **The worship of God is an exclusive activity of Believers only.** Truthfully as Jesus said, "No man comes unto the Father except by me." So how can non-Christians enter into His presence to worship Him? They can certainly *attend* a worship service and even go through the motions of worship, but they cannot fully worship a God that they do not know. But the very essence of true worship begins with a response to God for who He is and what He has done. If a pre-repentant soul begins to respond to God's Spirit in any way in a service of worship, then the seed of true worship has begun to germinate in his heart. That's why we include an Invitation in all our services so all of us, Believers and any outside the Body of Christ can respond to God and the calling of His Spirit. But my task as the worship leader for the "assembling of ourselves together" is primarily for the entire Body of Christ – the young Christians and old Christians, the new Christians and the vintage Christians, the loud and zealous Christians and the quiet and reserved Christians – to come together on common ground to say that we are united in our love of God and for one another. This sends a strong message to those outside the Body as Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples: if you have love for one another." Our unity pleases God and empowers our evangelism. Evangelism can be the by-product of true worship, but cannot take the place of the worship of God by His people. Our services can be "seeker-sensitive" without being separate "seeker services."

Now, having said all of this, if the Lord directs us to find a periodic, or weekly time slot to conduct a service targeting a specific group of people with the gospel, equipped with the best method to communicate most effectively with that target audience, then let's do it! But this must be done with the full knowledge that those who implement such a project are doing so as missionaries who still have a need to worship with the whole Body of Christ in a balance of spiritual nutrition. It's like this: Kids might love a steady diet of Burger King. For a while they might feel satisfied, but good health requires a Blended diet. *1 Cor. 12:21- says, "The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable."* We must strive for unity and be creative in finding ways that we can show love and acceptance for each other in Christ. We live in a "Burger King age" where everybody wants it their way. Remember the first line of "The Purpose Driven Life"? It is this: "It's not about you." When that phrase is applied in worship, then true worship can begin.

Joyfully Yours,  
Dan

**Can We All Come Together    By Dan Williams   July 2007**

Chorus:

Can we all come together?  
Stand on common ground in God's big family?  
Bring something old, something new,  
Bring your best offering with you,  
And we will praise the Lord in blended harmony!

1. The Church has stood the test of time, our fathers' faith is living still.  
Don't forget the songs they sang, sometimes as they were being killed.
2. And sing a new song to the Lord, God loves a new creative phrase.  
Every kind of music brings a fresh new way to sing God's praise.
3. So let the Church be one for all, God's people who are all for One!  
Let Young and old together sing to show the world God's only Son!
4. Sometimes it's good to meet with those who tastes are all the same.  
But we are The Church, The Bride, His Sheep; A worship style is not our name.

Repeat Chorus