

BLENDING WORSHIP FOR THE 21ST CENTURY MILITARY FORCE

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

BLENDING WORSHIP FOR THE 21ST CENTURY MILITARY FORCE

by

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ABSTRACT

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This research project will study the concept of blending worship for the current military force. Members of the current military force represent a variety of worship backgrounds and spiritual needs. This study will identify the characteristics of two worship traditions: traditional and contemporary. These two worship traditions have become more distinct in recent years as our society evolves in the 21st Century. Because of worship style variations between these two traditions, service members and their families would be best served through separate worship congregations. When this is not possible, blending worship may be an acceptable option. This research will examine the impact of blending worship for these two worship traditions for the current military force.

BLENDING WORSHIP FOR THE 21ST CENTURY MILITARY FORCE

The military institution is a microcosm of the United States of America. Service members join the military to render service to their country; and in the process, they expect reasonable provisions. In the context of this paper, provisions refer to much more than tangibles like financial remuneration or medical benefits. It refers to a way of life to which service members have grown accustomed and that indeed reflects the general life experience in the United States. Service members represent various segments of American society. While the military institution does not replicate each segment that is represented in the population at large, it makes a reasonable attempt at providing comparable experiences and services. The military institution is not designed to be a permanent way of life for service members, but it is a distinct profession which seeks to be self sufficient and address the needs and expectations of members.

This paper focuses on the Army branch of military service, in particular, and its soldiers. Army soldiers transition through the military institution as they serve. The word “transition” describes their “non-permanent” status as they serve the nation. While soldiers transition through military service, the Army institution is committed to providing reasonable resources, services and benefits.

This paper will specifically address the impact of spiritual worship for soldiers and their families as they transition through the military experience. Spiritual worship is an important dynamic for an individual’s emotional health and stability. The routine functions of spiritual worship actually reinforce neural connections in the brain and strengthen a person’s mind as well as heart. When a person goes to a church or a synagogue or mosque, and repeats the same stories, and celebrate the same holidays,

and pray similar prayers, certain neural connections get stimulated and strengthened. Those routine worship practices end up refining an individual's beliefs and personality development. Scientific brain imaging has determined that worship and meditation stimulates the frontal lobes or the attention areas of the brain and enhances an individual's ability to focus attention.¹ Therefore, addressing the spiritual worship needs of soldiers is a worthwhile venture for the Army from both a moral well being perspective as well as a biological focus. When worship needs are provided, a soldier is more focused, mentally stimulated, alert, as well as stronger in moral character.

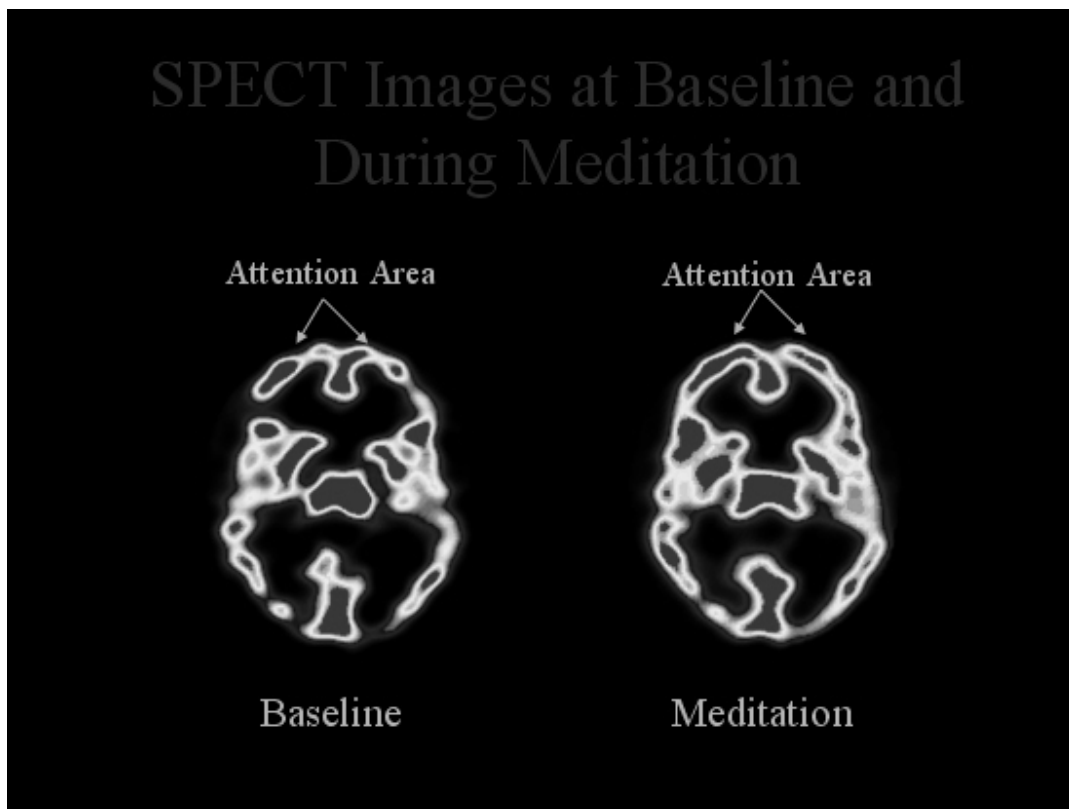


Figure 1

Figure 1, Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography (SPECT) represents blood flow in the brain at two different points: The left image represents a person being at rest or some comparable state, while the right image represents a person engaged in

an activity like meditation or worship. The higher level of red in the Attention Area reflects more stimulation. This stimulation during meditation means two things. First, the individual is focusing on something outside of self such as a sacred object, and secondly, the individual is screening out irrelevant information.² The result is less individual focus and a greater feeling of peace. A soldier at peace is more effective in performing their duties and responsibilities. The following questions will be addressed to explore the effects and methods of worship relative to a soldier's morale and performance.

(1) How does one define or describe worship? (2) How do we identify the scope of worship backgrounds relative to a soldier's worship foundation? (3) What constructs exist in the military institution that can address this issue? (4) Is that construct sufficient? (5) What is the point of blending worship? (6) How can military worship services be blended effectively?

Worship Defined

Worship involves a broad range of experiences. In a very general sense worship involves some kind of interaction or connection with a superior being. Recently a church pastor described worship as "Engaging your heart with God."³ This intriguing description actually represents an invitation and the implication of receiving consolation. The word engage is an invitation to try a type of extraordinary connection; a connection with God, the object of worship. One's heart is often considered as a focal point of emotion and feelings. So if one's heart is connected with the Supreme Being, the implication is that emotions and feelings will remain peaceful. Worship, by virtue of connecting with its object, leaves one feeling better and/or instills a sense of affirmation

or encouragement. Worship can be an awesome feeling that the individual receives from the object of worship.

Worship involves something that an individual offers from within themselves. John MacArthur, Jr., who has published several articles on public worship, defines worship as a way of paying honor to a supreme being. He further concludes that worship involves showing reverence, respect, adoration, praise or glory to a superior being.⁴ Worship allows the ultimate expression of giving as the individual gives themselves to God unselfishly and genuinely from inside.

According to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 92% of Americans believe in the existence of God or a universal spirit. While this high figure reflects general belief in God, the study also concluded that 60% of adults believe that God is a person with whom one can have a personal relationship.⁵ Worship allows an individual to offer one's self in the development of a relationship with God. The following New Testament Bible reference encourages individuals to offer themselves to God through worship: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - - this is your spiritual act of worship."⁶

Worship may also be defined through the practice and offering of prayer. Prayer is talking with God. Talking with God builds a relationship that magnifies God.⁷ Worship through prayer enables this relationship to grow and develop. Through prayer an individual is able to talk openly and honestly with God, in many cases, as with no other person. This open dialogue builds trust between the individual and God. Ultimately then, the individual worshipper becomes an even more trusting and open person. The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life has done research that indicates as much as

75% of the total United States population prays at least weekly.⁸ Prayer worship is a significant part of American life.

Worship transforms an individual through a full range of experiences. A heart engaged with God is likely to be devoted not only to God, but also to high principles and standards as represented by God. An individual who gives unselfishly through worship will more likely perform unselfishly in other activities. Prayer worship helps an individual relax and be at peace. Prayer transforms by getting an individual out of a self-oriented way of thinking by focusing on God.⁹

Worship is both public and private. Though it is generally a public and collective gathering, its greatest impact is personal and private and fulfills a broad range of individual needs. Worship can be characterized if not defined, by a series of descriptive words: Worship is celebration, adoration, motivation, revelation, therapeutic, emotionally healthy, and awe inspiring. Worship is a significant need for those who have experienced its benefits.

How do We Identify the Scope of Worship Backgrounds Relative to a Soldier's Foundation?

The military, as a microcosm of America, must reflect the range of American experiences as much as possible, especially with regard to something as significant for soldiers as worship. The broad scope of worship needs among 21st century soldiers can perhaps be best described through generational differences. The generations that make up the current force can be categorized as follows: Builder Generation, Baby Boomer Generation, Buster Generation, and Millennials. These four generations are distinguished not only by chronological periods, but also by distinct systems of beliefs, cultural dynamics, and certainly worship expressions and styles.

The builder generation is comprised of persons born before 1945 but not earlier than 1908. In American society this generation would identify persons who are middle-aged to senior citizens. This generation is acknowledged for hard work and enduring through the Great Depression and two World Wars. They worked hard to make America strong and create opportunities and benefits for their children that would make their lives better.¹⁰

The builders live by high values rooted in their formative years. Andy Langford, a United Methodist pastor and leading authority on worship and generational differences, has concluded that family and social roles are rigid and personal in builders, while they maintain high individual expectations. Also according to Langford, the builder generations are one-fourth (approximately sixty-eight million people) of the United States population.¹¹ The builder generation is generally unselfish and is more oriented toward developing strong family relationships. They tend to be more committed to church and they worship routinely. Langford suggests that the builder generation worshippers are the foundation for most established congregations; and their presence and support influences how worship is conducted. They see God clearly as The Supreme Being, Judge and Ruler. He contends that builders favor a worship style that is influenced by the liturgical tradition. Their children and grandchildren tend to rebel against that type of worship style.¹²

In the context of a military community, the majority of the builder generation will most likely be comprised of military retirees. As in civilian congregations, builders in the military environment tend to provide the base for many chapel worship services. Builders though, both in civilian congregations and military chapels, are changing their

routines to some degree. As they retire they start to take advantage of opportunities to travel and in some cases move to a whole new community. Consequently, these builders who tend to be the base for the church or chapel may not attend worship and support the church as routinely as they were accustomed.¹³ These realities account, at least in part, for some of the dilemmas that congregations face regarding the focus of worship and ministry. The builders certainly have not abandoned worship. However as their attendance decreases for various reasons, and their generation grows older, perhaps there should be a natural or planned transition or blending of the worship experience that is inclusive of other generations.

The baby boomer generation accounts for persons born between 1945 and 1964. “The baby boomers are the children of the builder generations and represent the largest segment (seventy-eight million people, almost one-third of our population) of North American culture.”¹⁴ The senior ranking officers and non-commissioned officers in the active military are likely to be included in this generation. The baby boomer generation had a different set of experiences than their builder parents and grandparents. Langford outlined some distinctions for boomers:

- They grew up during the era of the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War
- Their lifestyle was influenced by the freedom excesses of the 1970's
- The Reagan boom years shaped this generation of free spirits
- Their heroes included Martin Luther King, Jr., John F. Kennedy, and Gloria Steinem
- They yearn to be proactive change-agents who will create a just and humane society

- They were reared as urban dwellers in blended families with both partners working
- Worship was not part of their childhood formation¹⁵

Baby boomers want to experience as many new things as possible but retain a strong sense of practicality. This generation is probably also the most diverse with regard to practice of worship. They are not as committed to routine worship as their builder parents. This generation has been a generation in transition. “Some of the boomers are very conservative and traditional, while others are exceptionally liberal and innovative, and the majority fall somewhere in between.”¹⁶

The boomer generation is also divided regarding faith and worship. Though they tend to believe in God, they tend to have a more liberal view of their relationship with God and their practice of worship than did the previous generation. For boomers, “scripture provides a road map, and the church is one of many locations for discovering God.”¹⁷ Consequently many conclude that they have the prerogative as to when, where, and how they will worship. Much of their life experience has been characterized by free expression.

Less than half of this generation believes that belonging to church is valuable. While some boomers have always been and always will be church members, others may have never been in a sanctuary and show no interest in the church, and still others do not know what to believe. Boomers who grew up in Liturgical worship are increasingly attracted to Praise and Worship, while their unchurched contemporaries are discovering Seeker services.¹⁸

This generational diversity is also apparent in the military environment.

The third generation to consider here is identified as the Baby Busters. Baby Busters represent the generation born after 1965, and are the children of the baby boomers.¹⁹ “Almost forty-five million (15 percent of the U.S. population) of this

generation lives in an electronic and computer culture grounded in a fast, oral, sound-bite age, shaped from childhood by Sesame Street.”²⁰ Like the previous generation, the busters’ identity is shaped by unique dynamics. Many of them came from single parent homes. They were educated in declining school systems. Because of single parent homes or homes in which both parents worked much of their early childhood daycare was provided by someone outside the family home, and as they grew older they became latchkey kids.²¹ “Pessimistic about the future, the busters feel lost and alone, and lack hope financially, vocationally, relationally, and spiritually. Unlike the boomers, who live to work, this generation works to live.”²²

The buster’s have a distinct perspective on the church and worship. Their formative years provided minimal structure and guidance. They found answers to the questions of life in whatever they perceived or understood as reality. “The busters are uncertain if there is a God, are ignorant of Jesus Christ and the Bible, and consider the church irrelevant. God is vague spirit somewhere else, Jesus is an ancient teacher, and heaven and hell are mythic constructs.”²³ This generation has become independent and survival oriented. They see little use for the church. They are largely unchurched as only one-third of them believe belonging to local congregations is worthwhile.²⁴ The busters do not connect with the institutional church.

Busters are outside the church, looking in, but not sure they want to go in. They do, however, want to be cared for and accepted as they are. They need straight talk – contemporary talk. Busters want an environment led by genuine mentors who will focus on their real-life issues and offer them hope. They want to be part of a community type experience that is greater than themselves.²⁵ “The worship they desire is low-tech

(helps them slow down) and high-touch (fosters deep relationships), with sermons that do not so much offer answers as identify and name their own unique questions”²⁶

This generation in the military includes mostly senior field grade officers and senior non-commissioned officers. They volunteered to serve in the Army and have committed to it as a career. They are deeply engaged in a transforming Army fighting two wars. Consequently, they endure occasional lengthy family separations as they deploy to war. They want to connect with an experience that is constant and comforting for themselves and their families.

The millennial generation categorizes persons born since 1984.²⁷

Millennials are second only to baby boomers in number (seventy-two million or 27 percent of the U.S. population). One-third of them have been born out of wedlock, and some commentators suggest that there will be a class war between the haves (who live in two-income homes) and the have-nots (who live in single-parent/income homes). Half of this generation already lives in blended homes or with just one parent.²⁸

As members of blended homes their degree of success at adapting to new family systems will have some impact on their ability or desire to adapt to a larger community environment, particularly a worship environment. Millennials who had a positive experience with a blended family will more likely be trustful and open to considerations that are important to other persons with whom a community type experience is shared. Conversely, one will be less adaptive if their family experience was less cordial.

Millennials tend to be less emotional, but stronger in areas such as science, math, economics, and politics. Consequently, even in their youthful years, they are prone to be more informed about current issues and favor independent political views. Their preoccupation with the internet as opposed to network news, affords them the opportunity to not only receive news and information, but to be interactive with it. They

are down-to-earth, concerned about preserving the earth's environment and not worried about making money.²⁹

Millennials are concerned about forging their own way. "Like previous generations, they remain distrustful of the government, health systems, the media, and the church. While millennials' religious views are still in flux, the church is just one of the many ways to discover God and has no place of prominence in their lives. Very few of this generation appear attracted to worship of any kind."³⁰

The military members of this generation are represented by mid-level to junior officers and enlisted soldiers. The numbers in this category represent the bulk of the current Army. In view of the current wars in which the United States is engaged, many of this generation entered the Army with the noteworthy intent to participate in a positive effort that is larger than themselves. This notion suggests that perhaps the military millennials may be more open to experimenting with a worship experience. Langford's research indicates that military bases may in fact offer the best models of worship for millennials since military bases are populated with high concentrations of young adults. In those locations military chaplains tend to be more intentional and deliberate about developing a worship environment that reaches these generations.³¹

The foundational experiences of builders, boomers, busters, and millennials are vastly different. Their differences with regard to backgrounds, worldviews, and experiences are described by Mr. Langford in the context of each generation's approach to international armed conflict.

In World War II, many young men of the builder generation left jobs, communities, wives, and children to volunteer to fight overseas. Very few builders questioned the value of denying self and family, even to death, to defend one's country and ideals. During the Vietnam War, many boomers

did everything necessary to resist or dodge the draft. During the Gulf War, one of the busters going into battle was quoted. "Why am I fighting this war declared by an older generation? Get me out of her alive."³²

This insight is particularly relevant for Army chaplains who take on the responsibility of providing worship opportunities in military communities. As in civilian congregations, chaplains have to contemplate the most effective ways to provide meaningful worship for all these generations.

Worship Styles

Worship can be categorized by various styles. As Andy Langford writes about transitions in worship, he mentions that there are over two thousand distinct religious faiths in the United States.³³ This paper focuses on two broad worship styles that can be associated with various faith groups or church denominations: traditional and contemporary. Traditional military chapel services have reflected a liturgical approach to worship. Contemporary worship is understood as considerably more free of structure. Prayer and music in contemporary worship is more modern. As society changes and generations transition there have been and must be transitions in worship styles. Style of worship should not diminish the honor, reverence, or adoration and high esteem attributed to God, the object of worship. Style of worship simply refers to the tools and methods of engaging in genuine worship.

Traditional worship suggests the image of a specific routine and a certain order that limits creative or open expression. Traditional worship evokes the image of an experience that is essentially rooted in history and is not focused on external societal transitions. Those traditional worship styles remain constant and tend to be especially important in liturgical worship. Joseph Rolison draws this parallel as he describes how

the music and general demeanor of traditional worship tends to be taken from decades and indeed centuries of liturgical worship routines. His descriptions includes how traditional ministers hold to wearing robes, cassocks and other forms of clothing from previous generations.³⁴ Traditional worship provides a certain comfort zone and familiarity that staid worshippers don't want to lose.

Traditional worship certainly has a place of prominence. In an article for Reformed Worship, Dr. Robert Webber emphasized the significance of traditional worship principles by restating twelve themes of worship that were initially published by James White, a professor of liturgy at Notre Dame:

- ❖ Worship should be shaped in the light of understanding it as the church's unique contribution to the struggle for justice.
- ❖ The Paschal (Easter) nature of Christian worship should resound throughout all services.
- ❖ The centrality of the Bible in Protestant worship must be recovered.
- ❖ The importance of time as major structure in Christian worship must be rediscovered.
- ❖ All reforms in worship must be shaped ecumenically.
- ❖ Drastic changes are needed in the process of Christian initiation (discipleship and baptism).
- ❖ High on the list of reforms is the need to recover the Eucharist (Lord's Supper) as the chief Sunday service.
- ❖ Recovery of the sense of God's actions in other "commonly called sacraments" is essential.

- ❖ Music must be seen in its pastoral context as fundamentally an enabler of fuller congregational participation.
- ❖ The space of furnishings for worship needs substantial change in most churches.
- ❖ No reform of worship will progress far until much effort is invested in teaching seminarians and clergy to think through the functions of Christian worship.
- ❖ Liturgical renewal is not just a changing of worship but is part of a reshaping of American Christianity root and branch.³⁵

The intent of these principles is to emphasize that change in worship should not happen purely for the sake of change. As Dr. White wrote these principles affirming traditional/liturgical churches, he pointed out that any change in worship style should be based on sound pastoral, theological and historical reasons. “Much of the new is also very old.”³⁶

Contemporary worship styles developed as a result of generation transitions, cultural expression, and liturgical church reform. As Martin Thielen described various phases of worship transition in the church he pastored, he began by identifying his own desired worship style. He described how he wanted a worship experience that reflected warmth, creativity, a modern celebrative atmosphere, as well as the sacramental, liturgical, and transcendent dimensions of ancient worship. He wanted a type of “ancient-modern worship.”³⁷ Thielen’s desire demonstrates the motivation that prompted contemporary worship.

The United Methodist Church, according to Andy Langford, unintentionally initiated internal church reform in the 1980’s and sparked a movement for contemporary

worship. The United Methodist Church wanted to bring order to its worship life and approved a convergence of worship resources in an effort to provide new authorized texts.³⁸ As new resources were made available, the younger liturgists began asking questions about present patterns of worship and offered new ideas. During this period, the youngest of the baby boomers would have been in their twenties. They would have been in tune with cultural societal transitions and were undoubtedly an impetus for encouraging more contemporary worship styles. Martin Thielen indicates that in addition to the vibrant music, use of media and visual arts and a strong sense of community, the genuine effort to be relevant to contemporary culture undergirds a successful transition to a more meaningful worship style.³⁹

Contemporary worship has become firmly established in American culture. By its nature, contemporary worship must continue to evolve in order to remain relevant and fresh. In another article Robert Webber used a contemporary worship manifesto, written by Henry Jauhiainen, pastor of contemporary Pentecostal Charismatic church, to highlight some cutting-edge concerns that bear on contemporary worship:

- ❖ We should see our worship as Christian, occurring within the Pentecostal-Charismatic context – not the reverse.
- ❖ We need to see the vital relationship between Christian worship and Christian truth.
- ❖ We need to maintain the Christological focus, the “Paschal Center” of all worship.
- ❖ We need to place our music more purposefully throughout the service.
- ❖ We need to recover the true sense of mystery in Christian worship.

- ❖ We need to rediscover the essence of the Kingdom of God in our worship.
- ❖ We need to rediscover a deep sense of our constant need for the grace of God.⁴⁰

These concerns do not conflict with the twelve traditional worship themes that Webber previously emphasized. Despite criticisms that contemporary worship lacks any one, true definition; blends spiritual worship with the secular; reduces the apprehension of God's transcendence; and minimizes scripture, these fundamental worship practices can empower contemporary congregations to sustain relevant impact for contemporary culture while also maintaining integrity with theological principles.⁴¹

The United States Army, as an institution, has experienced a similar transition with regard to worship services on military installations. As worship styles in civilian congregations evolve, persons who join the military hope to find similar worship experiences. Military worship services cannot and do not try to compete with civilian congregations. However, the Army chaplaincy does make reasonable attempts to provide relevant worship opportunities for service members and their families.

The Army Chaplain

The Army Chaplain bears the institutional and professional responsibility for providing worship for soldiers of all generations and backgrounds. The Army Chaplaincy approaches this issue through the context of pluralistic ministry. Each chaplain is officially endorsed by a recognized denomination to provide ministry in the military by her or his church denomination or endorsing agency. Although each chaplain will certainly have her or his own generational influence as well as some type of worship background, they are charged with pastoral responsibility for soldiers of

every generation and background. Pluralistic ministry is the construct through which these chaplains provide worship for the various faiths and generations represented in the United States Army. Pluralistic ministry/worship represents the concept of a single chaplain performing or providing worship for as many worship styles as possible or practicable in order to support the religious expression of soldiers and their families. This concept has guided chaplains toward developing worship services based on their awareness of worship styles and traditions. As a result, most Army posts provide Roman Catholic Worship, Jewish Worship and Protestant Worship. Even though each of these groups includes various worship styles, chaplains developed a general traditional blended style for each. This paper will focus on the Protestant Tradition.

What Protestant Worship Services and Styles Exist In the Military Institution that Can Address the Generational Divisions Among Soldiers?

The Protestant tradition, with regard to its worship services, has transformed over time. Protestant worship in the military community represented a blended traditional style of worship identified as General Protestant, also known as Collective Protestant. This worship service was developed for service members who wanted a basic Protestant worship experience without conformity to a specific denominational liturgical worship style. Additionally, on some installations where liturgical chaplains were assigned, the liturgical chaplain conducted traditional liturgical denominational worship such as Lutheran or Episcopal.

Another significant transition in the Protestant tradition developed as a result of cultural emphasis on worship styles. During the middle to late 1960's the Protestant Gospel Worship Service became a part of the Military's Protestant worship tradition. The Gospel service represented the cultural worship styles of African Americans. The

General Protestant worship services reflected the general worship styles and cultural influence of Caucasian Americans and/or European Americans. In conjunction with the Civil Rights Movement, the United States military began to recognize the distinction of spontaneous fervor, free expression, and passionate spiritual reflection that typified traditional worship among African Americans. The Gospel service signaled another transformation in the military Protestant worship tradition. This transformation, though, was not based on generational differences but rather on cultural styles.

Contemporary worship represents another transition in Protestant military services. During the late 1980's to early 1990's, chaplains started Protestant Contemporary worship services on military installations. With relative success chaplains used creative venues like cafeterias, installation clubs, and any sizable meeting room to include chapels. The unusual locations for worship helped soldiers feel more comfortable and open. As in civilian congregations, the most significant difference with the contemporary worship service was the music. Small band groups were included and instead of traditional hymns, contemporary praise songs became the norm. The chaplain's sermon was more conversational. The general tone of the worship was intended to be more inclusive and personal while still emphasizing Christian principles. This new transition in military Protestant worship was effective at reaching the youngest of the boomer generation as well as the busters.

Blending Worship Styles

The concept of blending worship involves combining two worship styles into one worship service. This means of course that the original design of each service will be modified. However, the ultimate aim of worship must remain paramount: an individual

offering her or his heart to God through prayer and praise and experiencing personal positive transformation. The word of God as expressed in Scripture and sermon must be shared genuinely with passion. Dr. Kirk Byron Jones, who teaches social ethics and pastoral ministry at Andover Newton Theological School, implies that ministers need to find some creative way to get inspiration and feel revived. Revived, she or he can prepare to preach with fresh energy.⁴² The minister's fresh energy spreads to the worshippers. In addition to Uniting worship styles, blending hearts and spiritual influence are benefits of blended worship.

Blending worship, as described by Robert Webber, creates a new paradigm for the church. Good worship services can be blended to create a greater sense of community formation, warmth, hospitality to outsiders, inclusion of cultural diversity and intergenerational fellowship.⁴³ Sam Harris saw the benefit of faith and worship and contends that we need to find ways to invoke the power of rituals and mark the transitions through human life such as birth, marriage and death.⁴⁴ Blending worship finds fresh creative and relevant rituals to acknowledge the transitions in human life.

Another term that describes blended worship is convergence worship. Robert Webber used this term in outlining a manifesto on convergence worship, in Randy Sly and Wayne Boosahda's article in, "Twenty Centuries of Christian Worship, vol.II." They recommend the following agenda for convergence congregations:

- ❖ A restored commitment to sacraments, especially the Lord's Table.
- ❖ An increased motivation to know more about the early church.
- ❖ A love for the whole church and a desire to see the church as one.

- ❖ The blending in the practice of all three streams is evident (Liturgical, Charismatic, Evangelical/Reformed), yet each church approaches convergence from a unique point of view.
- ❖ An interest in integrating structure with spontaneity in worship.
- ❖ A greater involvement of sign and symbol in worship.
- ❖ A continuing commitment to personal salvation, biblical teaching, and the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵

When worship services blend or converge, an agenda like this will help establish sound principles on which to build a vibrant worship community that honors God and transforms human lives. It keeps in focus the elements and practices that are central to worship but diverse in method of expression.

The following four outlines are samples for Orders of Worship for blended worship:⁴⁶

Sample of Order of Worship #1

We Gather to Worship God

Welcome and Announcements

Preparation for Worship: “As the Deer”
(Solo accompanied by sign language)

Call to Worship:

Leader: Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
***People:* And blessed be God’s kingdom, now and forever.**
Leader: Lord, open our lips,
***People:* and our mouths shall proclaim your praise.**

Processional Hymn: “All Creatures of Our God and King”

Opening Prayer:

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Book of Common Prayer, p. 355)

Responsive Reading of Psalm 100

Songs of Praise: "Great Is the Lord" and "Glorify Thy Name"

We Listen to the Word of God

Drama Sketch: *God of Bumper Stickers*

Choral Reading of Revelation 4:8-11 and 5:11-14

Choir Anthem: "Worthy of Worship"
(Congregation joins in on third stanza)

Sermon: "Hallowed Be Thy Name"

We Respond to the Call of God

God's Call to *Faith*

Song of Response: "Majesty, Worship His Majesty"

Affirmation of Faith: The Nicene Creed

God's Call to *Prayer*

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Prayers of the People

God's Call to *Stewardship*

Offering

The Doxology

God's Call to *Community*

The Passing of the Peace

Chorus: "I Love You, Lord"

We Celebrate at the Table of God

Invitation to the Sacrament of Holy Communion

Communion Chorus: "Open Our Eyes, Lord"

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord's Prayer

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Communion Songs: "Surely the Presence," "Holy, Holy, Holy," "Sing Hallelujah to the Lord," "Fairest Lord Jesus"

We Depart to Serve God

Closing Prayer:

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Pastoral Benediction

Recessional Hymn: "Here I Am, Lord"

Words of Dismissal:

Sample of Order of Worship #2

Christmas Season
(from Luke 2:8-20)

They Saw God's Glory

"In that region there were shepherds...keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them..."

Welcome and Announcements

Preparation for Worship

Call to Worship

Processional Hymn

Opening Prayer

Songs of Praise

They Heard God's Word

"The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people."

Prayer for Illumination

Dialogue Scripture Reading

Congregational Hymn

Dramatic Monologue Sermon

They Responded to God's Word

"The shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place'...So they went with haste...."

Invitation to Holy Communion

Communion Chorus

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord's Prayer

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Communion Songs

They Went Home Renewed

"The shepherds returned [home], glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them."

Closing Prayer

Pastoral Benediction

Recessional Hymn

Words of Dismissal

Sample of Order of Worship #3

Season of Lent
(From Luke 22:14-23, 39)

They Gathered with Jesus

“When the hour came [for the Passover Meal], Jesus took his place at the table, and the apostles with him.”

They Listened to Jesus

“Jesus said to them, ‘I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for I tell you....’”

They Responded to Jesus

“Then they began to ask one another, which one of them it could be....”

They Communed with Jesus

“Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’”

They Departed, Following Jesus

“He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him.”

Sample of Order of Worship #4

Pentecost Sunday
(Acts 2)

They Gathered and Were Filled with the Spirit

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place....All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit....”

They Listened to God’s Word

“But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them...’listen to what I say.’”

They Responded to God's Word

"Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, 'Brothers, what should we do?'"

They Broke Bread Together

"They devoted themselves to...the breaking of bread...."

They Served God in Their Community

"Many wonders and signs were being done ...; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds...."

Summation

The United States Army has been successful at providing a variety of worship opportunities for service members and their families. Whenever possible and practical the Army chaplaincy will continue providing each of those services through separate venues. However, in cases where resources or limited personnel impair the feasibility of separate services, this model presents a reasonable option to blend worship and thereby continue to enhance the soldiers spiritual fitness, mental stimulation and alertness, feeling of peace as well as strong moral character. As the Army is in transition, there should also be appropriate transition in worship opportunities for the women and men who serve.

Endnotes

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