

Forget About Blended...Why Not Unified?

By Pastor Mike Bohr

For years now, Riverpark Bible Church has been a place where our worship music has been labeled “blended” in its style. Our morning worship services are identical by design. We sing hymns and choruses in all of our services and we combine both traditional and contemporary styles of music in each of our services. We have both drums and organ, guitars and piano, in just about every Sunday morning and evening worship service.

“Blended” worship has as its goal the joining together of people of all generations as we glorify the Lord in song. If I can be perfectly honest, this really means that having a blended worship style gives everyone a little bit of what they want to hear. That may sound a little wrong because isn’t our worship supposed to be for the Lord and what He wants from us? Let me try to explain where I’m going with this. For lack of a better word, a blended style of worship hopes to “cater” to everyone in the congregation. Let’s face it, every single person has their personal preference when it comes to music. Every person has their favorite radio station, favorite singer, artist, or group that they listen to. I’m not saying that’s wrong at all! My concern comes when we make the focus in church the “Style of worship” and we lose sight of the “Person we worship.”

Pastor George recently preached a sermon in Romans 15. Verses 5-6 say, “*Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and voice you may glorify the Lord.*” By the way, this is the Riverpark Worship Ministry theme verse. You can call it our slogan. Pastor George made the point that when we are so concerned with our desire to glorify God, we will be willing to work at unity and be willing to give up our rights for the benefit of others. To put it another way, when we have the desire to glorify God we won’t let the differences in our music style preferences distract us from corporately praising God together.

Ephesians 4:2-3 says, “*With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*”

Colossians 3:16 says, “*Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*”

Psalms 96:1-2 says, “*Sing to the Lord a new song; Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His name; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day.*”

Psalms 150 says, “*Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty expanse. Praise Him for His mighty deeds; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness. Praise Him with trumpet sound; Praise Him with harp and lyre. Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe. Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.*”

The point here is that God’s Word doesn’t talk about style of music. However, Scripture gives us clear direction on how we are to worship the Lord. With psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, new songs, instruments, and voices. In all of this we are to be **UNIFIED!** I think it might be time for us to change our terminology when it comes to our style of worship. I say out with “blended” and in with “unified.”