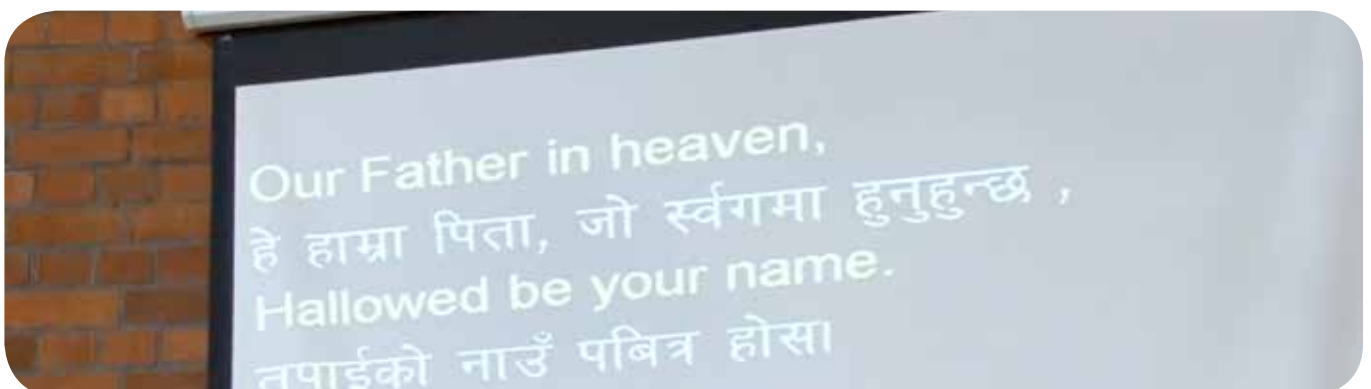


## PENTECOST PEOPLE:

# Advice to Worship Leaders

### Looking at Your Church Worship Culture

- Be aware that churches are not automatically acting 'multi-culturally' just because congregations are ethnically diverse. Culture is much more about the way things are done, rather than who is present. Many UK churches now have quite diverse congregations but despite this, haven't really changed the style or content of their worship.
- To develop truly multi-cultural worship, special attention must be given to questions of leadership. Who makes decisions and how are these decisions made? Audit your leadership makeup and also the worship in your church using the questions: who, how, when, what and why? Spend time finding out how worship is planned and led in other cultures, not just what songs etc are used. This process will help to avoid the tokenism of believing that including an occasional song from another culture is enough.
- Examine your surrounding community. Are cultures represented there which aren't present in church? When people come into church for the first time they pick up quite quickly if it is 'for them' or not. Consider including material from these groups, so that worship can inform mission and vice versa.
- Find out how use of time in worship is viewed in different cultures. Make no assumptions! Is there any notion of 'start time', 'end time', 'on time', 'free time', 'limited time' etc? Similarly look into different cultural ways of planning and preparing versus spontaneity in leading worship.
- Prepare for and acknowledge feelings of discomfort and difficulty along the way. Challenges are to be expected if we are undergoing a deep process. Multi-cultural worship will require sacrifices in order to learn and grow together.
- Set short, mid and long term goals for your journey into multi-cultural worship and revisit them regularly. Developing multi-cultural worship is a process which will take time, perseverance and patience.
- Be prepared to adapt and improvise! Feel free to substitute your version of what is done or used in other cultures according to the resources you have available.
- This advice and approach don't just apply to worship and music but to all areas of church life. Try to include it in your overall strategy and monitor your progress from time to time to make sure it hasn't slipped off the agenda.



## Practical tips to enrich your worship

- Consider varying practical aspects of worship such as room layout, appropriateness and style of clothing, interaction of gender and age, body language, instruments and clapping, symbolism, greetings, artwork, illustrations, food and hospitality etc, from different cultural points of view.
- Include a variety of languages, spoken, sung and written, whenever possible, remembering that English may be useful as a lingua franca but carries hidden messages of culture and power for many.
- Use and get to know different cultural styles of prayer as well as different languages.
- Vary use of songs, music, instruments and dance. Try to get songs led and taught by people from other cultures to enable them to be played in the appropriate cultural style as well as language. Some well-known worship songs exist in a variety of languages and translations as well as English, so all can sing at once or alternate verses. Encourage people to try singing occasionally in other languages as well as in their own. Try to learn some songs from places in the world where the gospel is being preached widely, where the church is growing fast, or facing persecution. Try to establish a culture of voice-led and congregational worship rather than too many solos or performance style worship within your multi-cultural worship, so people are not just listening to but trying each other's styles.
- Read scripture in a variety of languages and in inclusive English, and show texts on the screen when possible. Include a variety of cultural preaching styles such as question and answer, interactive, narrative etc, and make sure verbal and visual illustrations reflect the diversity of the world.
- Include testimonies from people with different backgrounds including what it was like first coming into your church as a visitor.
- Encourage your congregation to create their own songs, music and all kinds of worship which will reflect your unique makeup and circumstances.
- Be aware of the hidden gap of experience and expectation in general and in worship between first generation people arriving into the UK and the second and third generations who have different inherited cultures but who have grown up within a UK worldview.
- Consider featuring worship from cultures represented in your congregation, and from countries where you have mission links.
- Explore how Christian festivals or communion are celebrated in different cultures.
- Explore justice issues locally and world-wide through your multi-cultural and inclusive worship.

