

# HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP IN NORTH AMERICA, 1960-2000

Sketching Complexity  
J Witvliet, January 2006

## I. IMPULSES

*Central recurring aspects or types of how particular people and communities experience the Christian faith and respond to their cultural context. They could be labeled “traditions” in spirituality. These impulses recur throughout the history of the church. I prefer to give them more than psychological labels (this is deeper than Myers-Briggs), though they certainly involve personality types.*

- A. Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water*: Contemplative Tradition, Holiness Tradition, Charismatic Tradition, Social Justice Tradition, Evangelical Tradition, Incarnational Tradition
- B. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, Christ against culture, of culture, above culture, in paradox with culture, transforms culture
- C. *Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture*: transcultural, crosscultural, contextual, countercultural
- D. Clarence Boomsma: Doctrinalist, Pietism, Transformationalist

## II. MOVEMENTS

*Intentional, organized, widespread phenomena influencing wide range of congregations in many Christian traditions. They tend to involve proposals for every aspect of worship. One sign that you have a movement is that there are large conferences and periodicals built around promoting its goals and ends.*

- A. Charismatic Movement: experiential, supernatural, emotive
- B. Worship and Evangelism: accessible, winsome, inviting
- C. Liturgical Movement: deeper symbolic participation (n.b. for some this meant making worship more “low church”; for others it meant making worship more “high church”)
- D. Ecumenical Movement: unity in Christ
- E. Restoring Confessional Identity: preserve truth and wisdom of past practice

## III. FORCES

*Influential realities that shape worship in many traditions, sometimes without people noticing. There usually aren't conferences or periodicals to promote these “forces,” but there may be books or articles about them.*

- A. CCM Industry
- B. Continuing Immigration: African Churches, Korean and Latino Immigration, etc.
- C. Television's Influence on Communication Strategies and Practices
- D. Racism and Anti-Racism Initiatives