

Are We Done Circling the Mountain?

Not long ago you could draw crowds by merely mentioning the words *worship conference*. On the heels of renewal and revival in the 1990s, gatherings with no agenda but to adore God became *the* place to be for Spirit-filled believers.

It's no wonder why. From clouds appearing onstage after marathon worship sessions to worshippers instantly healed without anyone laying a hand on them, God responded to His people's passionate praise in incredible ways during that season.

But then, to use Old Testament imagery, the cloud moved on, and we failed to move with it. Or maybe we set up idols and began worshipping worship leaders, the "new sound" or worship itself rather than the one whom even the rocks praise.

I honestly don't know what happened, I just know *something's* different when it comes to worship these days. God is still moving and responding to our worship, of course. In fact, it excites me how He's globally drawing a new generation into a lifestyle of radical worship. And I marvel at how He's igniting blazing fires of worship amid increasing darkness in the world.

But without sounding like I'm trying to pour water on the Spirit's fire, let me raise a caution flag for younger generations before we circle the mountain again and go another decade without learning our lesson. The Western church is currently in a season of emphasizing the *doing* part of worship. Call it social justice, call it being Jesus' hands and feet ... whatever the term, we're finding that worship requires heart *and* action—otherwise it's simply "noisy hymns of praise" to God (Amos 5:23, NLT).

This is wonderful. But history proves we also have a tendency to turn truth into the latest “fad” and ride it until it goes down in flames. I love this social justice-is-worship movement and don’t want it to be a fad any more than I want evangelism or discipleship to be considered trendy. These are fundamental elements of our faith. Yet until we realize the goal of worship isn’t to be relevant, to sound good or even to help the oppressed more, we’ll continue lapping the mountain as we celebrate how much more “real” our faith is compared to past generations.

Worship begins and ends with God, not with us or our actions. Yes, worship involves caring for the poor, the widows and orphans. But once our actions begin to overshadow (at least in our eyes) God Himself, we’ve missed the point. Please, let’s not go around the mountain again; let’s glean from the past and move on with God.

Marcus Yoars *is the editor of Charisma. You can check out his blog at [www.marcusyoars.com](#) or connect with him via Twitter @marcusyoars or [Facebook](#).*