

How Prophetic Worship Can Shape a Nation

Brazil's evangelical church has grown more in the past 16 years than at any other time, and worship has been key to that growth because we understand that our worship clears the heavens. Prophetic worship is a distinct characteristic of Brazilian worship. We not only sing worship songs to God, but we also sing our prayers—especially prayers for the healing of our nation. We have many native songs in which we cry out for the healing and restoration of our families, our government, our economy—and these songs often have preceded a move of God, as they've literally broken open the heavenly realm.

Since 2001 we've held large gatherings across the country to worship and pray for our nation, just as we've seen the Holy Spirit do with similar movements around the world. It's nothing that one person is organizing. In the U.S. there's been TheCall and similar events; ours began in 2001, and since then we've seen Christians gather to worship and pray in public arenas.

Virtually every major city's soccer stadium has held gatherings—which says a lot in Brazil, where soccer rules! Our largest gathering to date was in 2003 in São Paulo, the nation's largest city, and drew 2 million people. Last year we were in Manaus, the capital of the Amazonas state. Though Manaus is much smaller than São Paulo, with about 2 million inhabitants, out of those 2 million, more than 800,000 people showed up—almost half the city!

I believe that as we've cleared the heavens for much of our nation with our prophetic praise and worship, people have been saved. We give altar calls in our local churches in every service and see hundreds of people come to Jesus every day in every service. We have altar calls at weddings and altar calls

at birthday parties. We have small groups meeting on college campuses, in schools—everywhere, we have people evangelizing.

Brazilians' hearts are open to the gospel more than ever. They're open to break traditions that have bound them to nominal Christianity, and they're coming to a new birth in Christ, both evangelicals and Catholics. They are also breaking the traditions of witchcraft, which is still strong in Brazil, and Brazilians are stepping forward to receive Jesus as their Savior.

Brazil is naturally a musical country. It blends different cultures, different styles, and our music reflects that. Though worship is much more than music, music is an instrument for our worship expression. And that's why I believe worship has been such a key part of this revival. But it's not just casual worship; it's strategic, prophetic worship. We've been strategic with where we've held these worship and prayer gatherings.

Brazil is also known for its many national festivals, such as Carnival, and at their core these are worship festivals. They involve men seeking worship, but what we've seen is that God is redeeming our gift of worship so we can turn that expression back to Him. In fact, one of the strategies God gave our ministry was to go to these festival sites and gather God's people. Wherever there's a pilgrimage festival, we worship Jesus there. Wherever there's a dancing festival or parade like Carnival, we celebrate the Lord there. Even soccer can be an idol that Brazilians worship. So we're going to every soccer stadium and transforming it, redeeming it and declaring that everything in the earth is the Lord's. Because of this, we believe everything will be converted to true worship of God.

Out of this worship movement we've seen incredible unity among believers. These open-air gatherings bring together worship leaders, pastors and believers from every church group and

denomination. Many of these pastors come from regions where church growth is challenging, so to help them we have prophetic gatherings where we specifically pray for those areas. We use Scriptures such as in Daniel where we ask God for the forgiveness of the fathers, and we identify the spiritual curses behind the corruption and poverty in many of these regions. We expose hidden sins. Though those leaders may have different doctrines, the meetings bring them together like never before with a focus on the Bible and a common cry in intercessory prayer.

God is obviously moving, and it's increasing. In the process, He's giving us more wisdom, as believers—particularly worship leaders—enter the secular media like never before. Secular shows now regularly include Christian worship leaders and artists—singing worship songs, mind you—and we're doing concerts in very popular settings. From television to newspapers to radio, everybody is talking about us and looking at us. It's a privilege, yes, but also a big responsibility, which is why it's been so important for these worship leaders to remain committed to our local church with a community that keeps us humbled and grounded.

But as our culture is engaged in spiritual warfare—for example, we're currently battling legislation involving same-sex marriage—worship leaders are a voice to reinforce biblical principles. With so many people listening to us and watching us, even people struggling with homosexuality, our worship is a vital link to teach the truth and expose darkness. That's why our songs reinforce biblical principles about family, the value of life and other key issues. Our worship is intercession for a nation. We believe it's the key to keep us from a corrupted religion. Worship is leading the way in the declaration.

*An award-winning worship artist, **Ana Paula Valadão** is the*

founder of the music ministry Diante do Trono (Before the Throne). She has recorded multiple worship CDs in Portuguese and English, serves as a worship pastor at Lagoinha Baptist Church in Belo Horizonte and has led millions in worship throughout the world.

Watch as Ana Paula Valadão sings “Isaiah 40” live. Go to