Q. 9: What does the dialogical principle teach us about worship?

A. 9: The dialogical principle teaches us that worship happens within the context of a two-way, covenantal communication between God and His people.

A. The context of worship is the covenant of God.

1. Adam: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring’….And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth…To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD” (Gen. 3:15; 4:25-26).

2. Noah: “But I will establish my covenant with you….Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and...offered burnt offerings on the altar” (Gen. 6:18; 8:20).

3. Abraham: “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing….So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel….And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD” (Gen. 12:2, 7-8).

4. Moses: “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mind; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

5. David: “I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body…He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever’….Then King David went in and sat before the LORD and said, ‘Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far?’” (2 Sam. 7:12-13, 18).

6. Church: “Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe” (Heb. 12:28).

7. “An assembly of public worship is, before all else, a meeting of the triune God with his covenant people. In the covenant, God promises his chosen ones that he will dwell among them as their God and they will be his people” (DPW I.B.1).

B. The context of worship is communion with God.

1. “Send to your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling! Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy…” (Ps. 43:3-4).

2. “So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory” (Ps. 63:2).

3. “Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

4. “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem…and to God, the judge of all…” (Heb. 12:22-23).

5. “Because man’s chief end is to glorify God and fully to enjoy him forever, all of life is to be worshipful. Nevertheless, worship itself consists primarily in specific acts of communion with God” (DPW I.A.1.a)

6. “Through his public ordinances, the covenant God actively works to engage his people in communion with himself. In public worship, God communes with his people, and they with him, in a manner which expresses the close relationships of the Father and his redeemed children, of the Son and his beloved bride, and of the Holy Spirit and the living temple in which he dwells” (DPW I.B.1.b).

7. “Pastors and ruling elders are to endeavor to inculcate in themselves and in the congregation expectations for, attitudes concerning, and behavior during public worship which are appropriate to the glorious fact that public worship is covenantal communion between God and his people in the public ordinances” (DPW I.B.1.c).
Q. 10: Is the covenant dialogue of worship a conversation between equals?
Q. 10: No, in this divine-human dialogue, God is always the sovereign Initiator and His people are always the dependent responders.

A. In the dialogue of worship, God as the Suzerain is always the Initiator.

1. “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Ex. 20:2).
2. “The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens! Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people” (Ps. 113:4-8).
3. “The living and true God, our triune Creator, has instituted the worship of himself by all people everywhere in spirit and in truth” (DPW I.A.1).
4. “Public worship occurs when God, by his Word and Spirit, through the lawful government of the church, calls his people to assemble to worship him together” (DPW I.A.1.c).

B. In the dialogue of worship, God’s people as the vassal are always the responders.

1. “You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3).
2. “...And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped” (Ex. 34:8).
3. “The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders...and in his temple all cry, ‘Glory!’” (Ps. 29:3, 9).

Q. 11: How do we affectionately exalt God in this covenantal dialogue?
A. 11: We affectionately exalt God by receiving His self-communication to us through His word and sacraments and by responding in confession, prayer, praise, consecration, and giving.

A. Worship entails believing reception of God’s self-communication.

1. “And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers” (1 Thess. 2:13).
2. “Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord” (1 Cor. 11:27).
3. “Public worship should be conducted in a manner that enables and expects God’s people by faith actively to embrace the blessing of the Lord in the salutation and benediction; to attend to the reading of God’s Word, to what God reveals of himself, his redeeming actions for them, and his will for their lives; to heed the Word of truth as the sermon is preached and to appropriate it to their lives as God, through his servant, proclaims and applies it...” (DPW I.C.2.a).

B. Worship entails believing response to God’s self-communication.

1. “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people...” (1 Tim. 2:1).
2. “Come, bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD, who stand by night in the house of the LORD!” (Ps. 134:1).
3. “On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper...” (1 Cor. 16:2)
4. “Public worship should be conducted in a manner that enables and expects God’s people by faith actively to pray with him who leads in prayer, so that the prayer being uttered aloud becomes their prayer; to confess together with all the people the faith of the church; to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to the praise of God and the edification of one another; to offer their possessions and themselves together as a living sacrifice to the Lord” (DPW I.C.2.a).