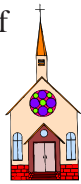


For many people, however, that way of interpreting the Bible doesn't work. Our churches are therefore losing a lot of those people. Isn't it time to work on stopping this loss? We might lessen it by acknowledging the inconsistencies in some familiar portrayals of God, and by presenting a greater variety of pictures.



Countless descriptions to choose from

The Bible contains many different descriptions of God, and throughout later centuries, inspired people have described God in additional ways. Why not include more of those descriptions in our wor-

ship services? In a future *Connections* I plan to suggest some ways of describing God that might make our expressions of faith more convincing to people who can't take the church's most common descriptions of God seriously. Also, for some of the Christians who are still attending our services but only reluctantly, presenting more variety in what we say about God might replace boredom with interest and with greater commitment and enthusiasm.

Since the God we worship is limitless, why should we limit the ways in which we describe God?

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What kind of God?

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In a church group I was in recently, participants listed these as the pictures of God they get from the worship services they attend. Notice how some of these contradict what we say we believe, and some seem mutually exclusive.

male
father
judge
king on a throne
like a person
totally in control
all good and all loving
all powerful and in control of everything
suspends natural law at times
all knowing



unchanging
will or mind is known
has a plan but we can't know it
at war with evil
opposes our enemies
partial to churchgoers
accessible only to Christians
present everywhere
out there
above

provider
protector
creator
gives what you ask for
wrote a book that says it all
speaks in 17th century English
needs our prayers and adoration
isn't finished with us



If you were making such a list, what would you put on it?
How might we need to change the impressions of God that we give in our worship services?

