

SHOWTIME

This book by Bro. Dan Chambers is subtitled, **Worship in the Age of Show Business**. The author tackles head on the challenges confronting our brethren regarding “contemporary” worship.

* Chapter One probes the question Why are so many modern Christians bored with traditional worship? His conclusion is that “having fun and feeling good are primary goals of many modern worshipers.” Those with this mind set find it hard to engage with enthusiasm in services designed to praise God and teach them gospel truths. What is often presented as a spiritual encounter with God is really emotional gratification through entertainment.

* Chapter Two he entitles Walt Disney World Worship. He presents numerous examples from our religious neighbors of just how far and ridiculous the pursuit of “contemporary worship” can go. Like the waters behind the dam, once a breach is made the rushing waters cannot be controlled.

* In Chapters Three and Four he sets for numerous reasons why the entertainment approach to worship cannot provide a true and acceptable worship experience

* In Chapter Five he examines the various attempts offered to justify the use of entertainment in worship. He raises six questions that every preacher and elder should ponder before adopting proposed changes to their worship format. 1. Would adopting this practice create a high potential for disrupting the harmony of the congregation? 2. Would adopting the practice promote an erroneous view of worship? 3. Would it diminish the sense of awe and reverence that should be present in Worship? 4. Would it help create or destroy worshipers’ appetites for real worship? 5. Would it in any way cheapen the occasion of worship or the message being presented? 6. Would it divert the attention of worshipers away from God to the service itself? (p. 84).

* Chapters 6-9 are devoted to four of the most common changes proposed for our churches: drama, contemporary music, lifting of hands and “special” music by soloists, and groups. He pursues a balanced course, conceding that none of these things are wrong in themselves. He does question the right to introduce drama and special music into the worship in the absence of scriptural authority.

* Chapters 10-12 are devoted to a biblical study of Christian worship. Chapter 10 identifies the meaning and purpose of worship to be to “give honor and praise to God.” Thus our primary reason for worship must not be to get personal rewards (p. 137-138). He then demonstrates that worship is something which is done at specific times and places. It is more than an internal emotion or disposition of mind. In this section he notes the fallacy of those who argue that all of life is worship (p. 142-145). He correctly observes, “If everything a person does is worship, then when one lifts his voice to God in praise and adoration, categorically, that action is no different than when a person is dozing off on the couch while watching...television...with God not even in his consciousness.” In Chapter 11 he discusses Worship Which is Worthy. His points constitute a fine sermon on worship. Chapter 12 notes the blessings that come to those who worship God acceptably. These also provide good sermon material.

* Chapter 13 discusses the items of public worship ordained by Christ for his church. Here the reader will find excellent discussions on communion, public prayer, singing and giving each of which is most suitable for sermon use.

* His closing chapter offers suggestions for inspirational worship with having to resort to entertainment.

Bro. Chambers has done all of us a good service by preparing this book. It should be read by every preacher and elder. Young preachers and youth ministers would especially benefit from this work. You may order **Showtime** from the Gospel Advocate, 1006 Elm Hill Pike, Nashville, TN 37210