

Too Social, Too Frivolous

Dub McClish

In a recent Ann Landers column, she printed a letter in which someone complained about how “social” and “frivolous” worship meetings had become in the Protestant church of which he is a member. Ann asked for comments and among them were many who agreed, including Catholics and Jews, concerning their religious meetings. There were complaints about selling tickets to ball games, “fun stuff,” funding churches with bingo, style shows, little worshipping, having to wait till one gets home to pray, a “show-biz” atmosphere, applause, hugging and kissing of strangers and almost gutter language in the pulpit. One respondent wrote: “Everything is so laid-back; you might as well be in an amusement park.”

Sound familiar? It should. Many of the things we see publicized in church bulletins and brotherhood newspapers are in the same category. It is becoming more and more common for an audience to applaud a preacher at some of our college lecture programs, as if he were a performer in a theatre. We also are aware of some who encourage the practice in their worship assemblies of turning to rank strangers, embracing them, or telling them “I love you.” I don’t know of any of our brethren who are using bingo yet, but I have a church bulletin in which a preacher thanked God for a Christian who won a government-sponsored lottery and gave some of it to the church! It is becoming more and more common to read of brethren who are quite willing to make merchandise of the Gospel by their singing concerts. They are touring the country and advertising for “bookings” just like professional musicians (which is what they are). Some of these, while not yet using mechanical instruments, are imitating such sounds with their voices. Some of them are now performing in denominational churches.

It is becoming increasingly common to read in church bulletins of churches conducting car washes, yard sales and similar activities to raise money for “mission work” or other works in which they are involved.

Why can’t men let the world be the world and the church be the church? Why can’t men, including our brethren, be content with allowing the church to retain its spiritual nature and do its spiritual work? Try to place the Lord or Paul in the place of endorsing any such travesties and you will see how profane they really are!

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, November 26, 1987, of which I was editor.]

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