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Worship the Lord (Book Review)

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book is easily read and includes stimulating discussion questions for each chapter which make it especially adaptable for church groups, citizen associations, and as I have found, for classroom use.

Simon successfully brings together penetrating insights

Worship the Lord. Edited by James R. Esther and Donald J. Bruggink. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987. Reviewed by Joan M. Ringerwole, Professor of Music.

This attractive paperbound book contains all the liturgical forms needed for public worship in the Reformed Church of America. It was designed to be a liturgical companion to the Reformed Church's hymnal *Rejoice in the Lord: A Hymn Companion to the Scriptures*, edited by Erik Routley. The book is written in five parts: congregational services, occasional services, classical services, the directory for worship, and our song of hope.

In Part I, the *congregational services* are a model for a worship service (liturgy), the sacrament of baptism, reception into communicant membership, the ordination and installation of elders and deacons, and the preparatory exhortation before the celebration of the Lord's Supper. All are familiar forms to those of the Reformed faith with the exception of acceptance into communicant membership. This form is a highly structured way of examining candidates before the elders of the church. The second part of this form is to be used in examining the candidates before the congregation.

The occasional services in the second part of this book include the order of worship for marriage and burial. The services for marriage are similar in content to those which have existed previously in most Reformed churches. However, the addition of the burial service is a unique and valuable one, with the intention that the burial service in the church be an official church service. This service also could be an excellent guideline for ministers who wish to create their own service.

More unusual and perhaps debatable as an order of worship is the worship service: Orders for Christian Healing. Debatable issues might be the Litany of Intercession for Healing and the invitation to "invite worshippers to receive the laying on of hands and anointing with oil" (39). These elements are not customarily a part of the worship liturgy, and in this service they are added after the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. There is also a service intended for the hospital.

The third part includes the ordination and installation services of a minister, the reception into the classis and installation of a minister of the Word, and a directory for reception into the classis and installation into a specialized

ministry. All these services are perhaps necessary, but appear somewhat too lengthy to be used in the service after the sermon.

A necessary and fourth part of the book is the directory for worship. If every church member studied these pages, I am sure all the aspects of worship would become more meaningful. Many books which contain forms and doctrinal confessions do not explain the meaning of worship or important elements of worship. Yet, it is extremely crucial to worship that these aspects are available to and understood by every member of the congregation. The various elements of worship all defined from a Reformed, biblical perspective can be an aid for every worshipper.

This section is written in a concise way and with a direct approach telling what worship is about. Sermons could develop from the extensive list of definitions pertaining to worship, and the worshiper could study and follow along during the sermon. This section is so important that it could well have been placed first in this book.

Last of all is the Confession of Faith entitled "Our Song of Hope." It is presented in 21 verses in seven sections concluded by a prayer. Whether spoken or sung, one or several sections can easily be used within a worship service. The entire song, however, is very lengthy and if used entirely might consume a major part of the liturgy.

The content and quality of this book is superb with services which can satisfy both the conservative and liberal elements within the church. The models presented are structured and yet flexible.

Donald Bruggink has co-authored other excellent books on aspects of worship, notably *Christ and Architecture*. Therefore, he is a relatively known author; however, his co-author James R. Esther is not. Perhaps a discreet statement about these two people could have been included somewhere in this book, so that those outside the Reformed faith would gain some knowledge about them.

Many Reformed churches could benefit much by using this book in their services. I would also highly recommend it as an excellent resource for anyone who wishes to *Worship the Lord*.

Caring and Commitment: Learning to Live the Love We Promise. Lewis B. Smedes. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988. 152 pp. Reviewed by Charles Veenstra, Professor of Communication.

In lively style, Smedes shows the important functions of commitment in long-term relationships. Given the present societal scene in which commitment appears to be declining, this thought-provoking book is a timely contribution. The significant place of commitment in marriage deserves book-length consideration.

Smedes focuses on commitments to people, not to institutions or beliefs. Part I, "The Celebration of Commitment," describes the nature of commitment, why people keep commitments, and the positive value in keeping them. Caring is the essential ingredient that keeps commitment alive. Part II, "The Commit-