

For All God's Worth. True Worship and the Calling of the Church by N. T. Wright. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1997. Paperback, 136pp.

Each Sunday we have the privilege of worshipping God. But how do we worship? In our individualistic culture, so strongly influenced by television as an entertainment medium, worshippers have become frustrated. Some want to keep the traditional liturgy alive, others experiment with endless innovations. There is even talk about "worship wars." Prolific author and New Testament scholar N. T. Wright, dean of Lichfield Cathedral, Staffordshire, England, is a sane voice in the midst of all the talk about worship, giving profound and rich Biblical insights into its meaning. He shows us in his short volume the wonder of worship, which is "giving God all he's worth." In Part One, Wright discusses "The God Who is Worthy of Praise" and in Part Two he reflects on the way we worship throughout the week in our daily lives. He acknowledges that we come into the presence of God not because we are good people, but we are forgiven sinners. And he believes that we will have a pretty poor time in church if we forget for one moment that we are there because we don't deserve to be. Our worship is due to God's grace!

Our view of God will determine the way we worship. If we lose our sense of awe, worship will become casual and trivial. Wright rightly states that we must again stand in fear before God. We may not dumb down the worship services or reduce them to the lowest common denominator but fall on our face in the presence of the living, holy, Triune God. When we truly love God we will adore Him as "worship is nothing more nor less than love on its knees before the beloved."

But worship is not an isolated act for Sunday only. It integrates with the way we behave. In our daily life we are defined by the God we worship. As God's people our task is to serve the crucified and risen Saviour, to be faithful to the calling of the cross and to live as agents of His love.

Wright's chapters on practical worship are fascinating, especially the one on anti-Semitism. However, his chapter on church unity, "Getting Back to the Road" is idealistic and not realistic. He realizes that it will take a miracle to get the churches together to reveal today the power, the presence and the glory of God. It will indeed take a miracle! How can we travel together on the unity road with those who question the basics of the faith?

Wright's timely book is God honouring, soul stirring, and practical. A welcome book which leads the reader back to the Scriptures and to the celebration and the enjoyment of the great and wondrous love of our majestic covenant God. Warmly recommended!

Johan D. Tangelder