

Is God Exciting Enough?

Recently one Taiwanese recipient of the MTV awards publicly gave thanks to Jesus Christ for his success. The fans went wild and responded with excitement, cheers and applause. A verse from 2Cor 6:15 came to mind when I read about it. What concord hath Christ with Belial? And what agreement has Christ with MTV? None.

MTV is a platform for promoting trash and flesh. It is an industry that packs music with sexy images. On MTV awards night, the world takes the stage to award those that promote its lifestyle and culture. And it is spiritually out of place when Jesus Christ is thanked on a night when the world celebrates the triumph of its fallen culture. Should Christ be thanked when sin celebrates its success? Again I put it to you, what common agreement is there between Christ and MTV?

I want to discuss another related subject - that is, religion and entertainment. Putting Christ on the entertainment stage has many problems. Let me just state one. When we put Christ on the worldly entertainment stage, whether it is to make him a superstar or to thank Him for our stardom, we create a trend in contemporary Christianity - that God must be exciting to be relevant.

When faith and entertainment merge, we create a religious culture similar to the entertainment industry. Like the latest theatrical production, God must be exciting, God must be popular, and God must have a pop image. Just as Broadway uses looks and music, choreography and skits to stimulate our senses so that we feel good about the whole production, churches today rely on personalities, dance, music and drama to stimulate our happiness on Sundays.

In our consumer culture, sights and sounds are used to stimulate the consumer's senses to create an urge to buy. Sights and sounds are of course not per se wrong. But when sights and sounds are employed as the main tools in communicating the gospel, and they become the main attractions in worship, it is problematic. For worshippers come expecting better music, better images, and better productions to feel high about their religion. What this means is that each week, the music ministry team of these contemporary churches must put up a better show to satisfy the people's longing for better music. When a religious personnel not too long ago in Singapore did a stunt to raise money for charity, the problem is obvious. Better showmanship is expected to outdo the donations collected this year. Such showmanship in the Church is finally dangerous. For people gets led away from studying solid truths to seek gratification in entertainment. God, like a stage artiste, is expected to humour the audience and counsel like a guru.

By Pastor Cheah Fook Meng