

COMMERCIALIZED RELIGION

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Some of the strongest language of the New Testament is directed by inspiration toward those who make merchandise of the gospel of Christ. Peter wrote, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (II Pet. 2:1-3). Those whose teaching is in opposition to the apostles' doctrine are in error. Paul wrote, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17-18).

The name of Max Lucado is well known due to his popular books soaring in sales to over thirteen million copies. Although his writings have received a wider circulation among Baptist people than members of the church of Christ, he remains affiliated with the church of Christ. At the now famous million-man-march held in the nation's capitol, Lucado prayed for God to work a miracle to bring the nation back to God. In the national spotlight he prayed contrary to I Corinthians 13:8-10. Such compromise "tickled the ears" of the masses present. On a nationally broadcasted radio program he urged the listening audience to accept Jesus and pray the "sinner's prayer" to the chagrin of faithful Christians. At least one Baptist preacher has publicly chided him for teaching Baptist doctrine and being handsomely rewarded financially while remaining positioned with the church of Christ. These are items regarding Lucado that have long been established as factual.

The recent "commercializing of religion" in which he was involved in Memphis goes far beyond the eleven dollars per ticket charged to those who attended the event in the Pyramid which was billed as "An Easter Celebration." The Bible has something to say about those who observe such holy days, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Gal. 4:10-11). But, the sensationalizing of the event exceeded

propriety when billed as “A ONCE IN A LIFETIME EVENT...A night of Praise and Worship...A night of Singing, Teaching and Inspiration! It will be filled with intense emotion. It is the live presentation of the year’s most exciting spiritual campaign.” Guest soloists were joined by a fifty voice choir. Does anyone have any difficulty realizing that if this huge experience of “Praise and Worship” is a “once in a lifetime event” and “the year’s most exciting spiritual campaign” that the Lord’s design of congregational singing in the worship of the saints (Eph. 5:19) has thereby suffered degradation?

But, that is not all. Embellishment sometimes goes with commercializing, but to place into print for the public to absorb the statement, “More than a book, more than the story of the Cross, more than you ever imagined,”¹ is inexcusable. The promoters advanced Lucado’s appearance as “more than the story of the Cross”! “More than the story of the Cross”? Paul’s language is an appropriate rebuke, “(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things)” (Phil. 3:18-19). Lucado’s “lyrical writing style” has gotten him into serious doctrinal trouble. Those who thrill at this sensational brand of commercialized religion cannot get their fill. They will buy more of his books and attend more of his “exciting spiritual campaigns,” but know this, “...God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccles. 12:14).

ENDNOTE

¹Flyer published by Max Lucado through Rush Concerts (www.rushconcerts.com).