

Martin, R.P. (1964). *Worship in the Early Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

This is a good introductory study of worship for those who want to begin with a careful analysis of the New Testament. The reader will find that, although there is no explicit elaboration of the exact form of worship in the New Testament, its pages are full of implications that worship is central to the life of the Church. The actions and instructions of our Lord, the prayers and exhortations of St. Paul, and the spirituality of St. John all reflect implicitly the forms of worship that lie behind the New Testament record.

The reader of this book will also realize that Christian worship flows out of Jewish temple, synagogue, and familial rites. As clear as this point is made in Chapter 2, readers are not told enough about how the "synaxis" (form of the synagogue service) was becoming the first part of the Christian Eucharist.

Martin is strong in showing the liturgical background of St. Paul's prayers in the Epistles. At his most glorious moments of exhortation, Paul broke away from the prose teaching and into "forms" of praise being used in the churches to whom he was writing: "although absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit." " The book is more than worth it for this feature alone.

The author beautifully introduces the spirit and tone of worship. We sense immediately the attitude of awe and praise and servitude one needs in approaching the Most High. And that sense carries throughout the book. What lacks is an adequate treatment of the "form" of worship, the significance of offering, and the importance of the material. The author misses the crucial continuity between the New Testament missionary letters and the Christian documents that describe what kind of worship was coming to be in New Testament times.

Still, the spirit and Biblical references of this book make it a good introduction to the spirit of worship. Then those who would take seriously our Lord's command to, "Do this!" can go on to Willimon's *Word, Water, Wine and Bread* and Cullmann's *Early Christian Worship* to find out what exactly what it is that Christians are to do.

IMPLICATIONS

1. Young people are more open to worship than most adults and leaders realize, especially if they understand the worship and are brought into the planning of the liturgy.
2. Worship is more significant to all who understand it.

Dean Borgman cCYS