

Commentary: Beware of the ‘Sneak-a-Preach’

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Somewhere in the mists of time, it got a label that stuck: “Sneak-a-Preach.” That’s when a church leader — usually a pastor — uses any element of worship that’s not supposed to be a sermon to insert a mini-sermon anyway. Most often, this happens in a prayer.

You may also be acquainted with a related phenomenon I’ll label “Sneak-An-Announcement.” That’s when the pastor has forgotten to make an important announcement and thus slips it in the benediction or some other prayer during worship. Like this: “And Lord, please bless the youth who will gather here at the church at 9:30 Saturday morning for their trip to Six Flags with \$15 each for lunch money and a ride home around 9 p.m.”

We can laugh about announcements not-so-subtly stuffed into a prayer because the act is so obvious. But theologically, I have a greater problem with the sermon inserted into corporate prayer because it demonstrates a lack of thoughtfulness about the role of prayer in worship and denies the congregation a voice in prayer. This appears to be an increasing phenomenon in the Christian church today.

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