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## "Sunday's Coming" Movie Trailer

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## "Sunday's Coming" Movie Trailer

### Abstract

This is a review of *"Sunday's Coming" Movie Trailer* (2010).

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For family reasons I recently attended a Sunday service that would qualify as "contemporary Christian worship." Shortly after my encounter with a contemporary religious service, my friend, the Reverend Russell Terman-White, Chaplain at the Nebraska Medical Center, sent me a link to "*Sunday's Coming* Movie Trailer". He sent me the link because he knows that I am particularly interested in short films. *Sunday's Coming* is a short parody of the "contemporary" Christian service, where being cool is more important than the message of the Gospels.

The voice over tells us: "It used to be called 'contemporary'." "Some call it 'relevant'." "We're so cool we call it 'contemporvant'." And, then, we are led through a contemporvant Christian worship service.

There is an opening song with lights and big drums and "you know it's cool because you heard it on the radio." Then we meet the host of the service. He is young, hip, and Asian, indicating that this church is into promoting diversity. He wears a graphic tee shirt and cool glasses and he welcomes the congregation with open arms. The open arms reveal a tattoo, which indicates that the host has a past. This is no goodie two shoes leading the service. The host leads us back to more music – the song that everyone knows and to which the congregation sings along.

The song that everybody knows is followed by the singer's new song, a song that nobody knows. But the singer encourages the congregation to learn the new song and, of course, to buy my record in the bookstore – after the service.

After the song nobody knows, the congregation is given the opportunity to make an offering. "Feel free to give, if you're feeling led." Whether you give or not is between you and God, but ... we're tracking it. After the offering the big screen poses several questions for the congregation to ponder and then we meet the man who has all the answers--the man who gives the sermon. This man speaks softly to draw you in, then speaks emphatically to drive home his point. He engages in long pauses. He whispers and he is repetitive. He shows a pained expression at just the right moment and says a long prayer (giving the host time to get back on the stage). The service ends with the closing song "with strings that will make you cry." (I was reminded here of some televangelists who cry at the twenty-five minute mark of every half hour show. It always seemed odd to me that they would feel the urge to cry at just the same moment in every show. Then I realized that this was also the moment for asking the audience to make a contribution to their ministry.)

On one website, people responded to the film and I was surprised by how many respondents defended "contemporary Christian worship." Most of the defenders claimed that it was the message itself (that Jesus loves you or something along this line) that was important and not how the message was presented. But the

movie claims, in the way that movies make claims, that how the message is delivered is every bit as important as the message itself. When the bearers of the message are attempting to manipulate the feelings of the congregation or when being "cool" or at least seen as cool is important to those who bear the message, it turns out to be a very different message from the message of scripture.

At the end of the film, the voice over tells us that this is a new kind of church where you will be lifted high and challenged to grow. We call this "Growtivation."