

Assignment Title: Reading Report –

The Word and Power Church / Report by Douglas Banister

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Mentioned several times throughout this book, the author's main point is that the two previously opposing positions that relate to the use of spiritual gifts in the Body of Christ are becoming more united and accepting of each other.

“Charismatics and evangelicals are working together today in unprecedented ways. One leader recently told me that he believed ten years from now the terms evangelical and charismatic would no longer be in use.”¹

This does not mean that either is abandoning its stance, but rather that they are endeavoring to learn from the other in areas where they have not emphasized. Pentecostal/Charismatics are welcoming more focus on the Word, while Evangelicals are reaching out for a more spiritual experience in their walk. In addition to anecdotal support to illustrate this, Banister draws on how own personal experience and that of the congregation he pastors.

Banister goes to great lengths to show that acceptance of the use of spiritual gifts is not a new position, but one that has been held historically by many well-known Evangelical leaders.

He also emphasizes that the disagreements in the past were focused more on the “tyranny of the OR”, and he argues that we should be free to accept the “genius of the AND” instead (indicating we can have the best of both worlds).

“It’s not hard to see how the church is enslaved by the tyranny of an “either-or” approach. One way to view the history of Christianity is to see the body of Christ swinging from one extreme to the other, rarely finding the middle way... Let’s apply the “genius of the AND” to the one organization that truly is built to last, the church.”²

A few other points he makes is the authority of Scripture over spiritual gifts, calling it the “Northstar by which all gifts set their compasses”, the importance of passion, and the priority of love in all things. He ends in the Appendix with a 10-point presentation the cessation view of gifts and a gentle response to each, followed by a discussion of personal prayer language.

¹ Doug Banister, *The Word & Power Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 27.

² Banister, *Word & Power*, 23.

My ministry is impacted by this issue in two main areas; raising support from churches and working with other denominations on the field. Both carry implications and potential for conflict and loss of funding. Navigating this requires wisdom from the Holy Spirit and trust that God will accomplish His plan and purpose despite doctrinal differences.

I would agree with the author that the two camps have been moving closer over the last few decades. One relevant example of this in my context is the forming of MissioNexus. Previously, the two largest mission associations in the US were the IFMA (Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association) and the EFMA (Evangelical Foreign Missions Association). The IFMA had a strict doctrinal condition for members that did not acknowledge the use of spiritual gifts. The EFMA was more accepting of such denominations and agencies. In 2012, these two associations officially merged under the mantra “the Great Commission is too big for anyone to accomplish alone and too important not to try to do together.”³

While I agree that this is changing, I disagree with the extent that the author seems to believe this is happening. There still remains very strong opinions on each side of this issue both in the US and in Latin America. Some still question the salvation of those on the other side.

The author missed two important areas of consideration; mainly that seminaries need to embrace reaching out to the other side, and the analysis of the Word of Faith Movement. Since the latter has a supposed high regard for Scripture (*Word of Faith*), this would be imperative.

As for my own theology and ministry, I resonated with the author’s desire to have power in my life for ministry, for victory, and for fruitfulness. This treatment of the subject has helped to alleviate fears of investigating areas that are not as common in my experience, and trust the Spirit of God for wisdom and discernment.

³ <https://missionexus.org/the-great-commission-big-important/>

With integrity, I have read this book (circle one):

Thoroughly and Entirely 100 %

Quickly but Completely _____%

Thoroughly but NOT Entirely _____%

Quickly and NOT Completely _____%

Not at all

Signed:  _____