

Jessica Flores

CD701 Worship Arts and Disciplines

Book Review – “Christ Centered Worship” by Bryan Chapell

In this reading, the author Bryan Chapell gives us an understanding on how to do corporate worship. He gets into the history behind the “liturgy also known as all that is included in worship. Liturgy is the public way a church honors God in its times of gathered praise, prayer, instruction, and commitment.” (pg. 18)

Chapell begins by talking about structure and how structures tell stories. The way a church is built and what is in it is used to tell a story. Everything in the church was designed to tell the story of the Gospel. With this same principal in mind every part of the Liturgy is to tell the story of the Gospel. That is why it is of utmost importance that the church seeks wisdom and insights from church forebears and take those lessons and allow them to make the church ready for the mission of today. The study of the gospel and understanding of the church’s history, will help build the contemporary church. Chapell wants to convey that “A church’s worship pattern unites them with multiple centuries of fellow Christians who have worshiped similarly and unites them in mission”. (pg. 19)

Chapell makes a valid point when speaking on the fact that all aspects of the Liturgy are equally important. He points out that some people believe that the Sermon or whatever part they prefer is the most important part of the Liturgy and that is not the case. When people get an understanding that Liturgy is telling the story of the gospel, they will see that every part of it has value and a message. They need to understand that “Church leaders designed their orders of worship to communicate the truths of Scripture, to touch the hearts of worshipers with the implication of those truths, and then equip believers to live faithfully in the world as witnesses to

Jessica Flores

CD701 Worship Arts and Disciplines

Book Review – “Christ Centered Worship” by Bryan Chapell

those truths.” (pg.21) Therefore worship is not just for evangelism but to speak to the heart of the believer. Chapell correctly points out that the liturgy needs to speak about God’s grace, power to save, sanctify and prepare the people for everyday life and eternity by the telling of the full gospel. This is what was done historically and should be done today.

Leaders of churches also need to make things relevant for the current times to address the need of the people, while staying true to the Gospel. Contemporary worship music is an example of this in that it is worship and it connects with the people of today. “The worship music echoes secular trends, making the church seem less odd for the unchurched and less remote from everyday life for those who have found their churches’ music traditions stale.” (pg.70) There are some critics who do not want a consumer approach to worship. The key is staying true to the gospel in that leaders need to “discern how the traditions of the church can become an integrating grid for helping believers understand and transform their world. Such a grid does not morph the church to the shape of the world, but rather becomes a means for examining the world through traditions that have God’s people maintain gospel priorities across the centuries.” (pg.71) This is called the contemporary classical movement. The reality is that change is part of life, as time passes, the church will face change, the key is staying true to the gospel while making it practical and relevant to the people and the context that they are in.

In this reading we learn how the gospel shapes liturgy and that it has two major segments. “The Liturgy of the Upper Room is the part that includes the Lord’s supper, or communion and then there is the liturgy of the word, where the preaching takes place.” (pg.19) The gospel story

Jessica Flores

CD701 Worship Arts and Disciplines

Book Review – “Christ Centered Worship” by Bryan Chapell

shapes and is embraced in each part. Throughout the years what remains consistent in the liturgies is “Adoration: Recognition of God’s Character; Confession: Acknowledgement of our character; Assurance: Affirmation of Grace; Thanksgiving: Expression of Devotion; Petition and Intercession: Desire for Aid in Living for God; Instruction from God’s Word: Acquiring knowledge for pleasing God; Charge and Benediction: Living unto God with His blessing.”(pg.100) In incorporating these into corporate worship you are sharing the story of the gospel. Hence, what is being represented and shared during worship is a reflection of the church’s heart.

There is much validity and beauty in the ideas presented in this reading. The idea that the liturgy tells the story of the Gospel, allows you to see the importance of every part. Chapell wants the leaders of the church to understand that “sacraments and liturgy are expressions of grace that reinforce the gospel in the Word preached, therefore each is more appreciated at the same time reinforcing the other parts of it” (pg295) When you look at the entire message in the reading, you can see a similarity in how God works, in that we all have value and are connected. There is a sense of unity and purpose to all of His creation. People are His image bearers and believers’ representatives of God, so everything we do and create is a reflection of Him. When you look at nature and His creation it speaks of Him, therefore it makes sense that everything that takes place in the Church and in Liturgy should tell the story of His gospel. This is in alignment with His character and plan that none should perish. Therefore, when people enter into the church, everything in that church should minister His love and grace to them. Every part

of Him and His message to us needs to be conveyed. Therefore, church leaders need to be mindful of what is being done and what is not being done, because everything relates a message. The message that should always be conveyed is the full Gospel.