

Book Review #4

*The Next Worship:
Glorifying God in a Diverse World*

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Summary

Now, each country in the world is becoming more and more diversified. This is the mix of race and culture, and the mix of language and thought. The world is moving toward diverse communities, but where these diverse communities come together, there are places that are not diverse. It is the church. The church is a place to worship God. It is a place where everyone praises God together. However, today's churches are divided into whites, blacks, and Asians to worship. The divided churches worship God, speaking the language of their own people. Diversity cannot be respected in these places. Multiethnic worship cannot be held in a place like this. This is because there is nothing in the church where diverse ethnic groups are shared in one context. Although it is not an exact answer to this problem, the author is presenting us through this book how we should be able to solve this problem.

Couldn't people from diverse cultures gather in one church, unite diverse cultures, and worship with the same heart? This book gives us several ways. The most important thing is to acknowledge and honor the diversity of people. And not only for music, but for everything that is included in the worship set, the author says, honors for all the diverse people who worship is necessary. The author also talks about a leader who leads the diverse people. Leaders who worship and lead with the diverse people should first clearly recognize that Jesus has reconciled with us. Under this awareness, we need to be in solidarity, unity and share with those who participate in the worship service, with the staff and leaders of other parts. The author says that effective multiethnic worship can be provided when the leader has such an attitude. However, churches under the old tradition often do not respond easily to change. In this case, the author says, we need to respect those who have gone before and have time to be patient.

Critical Analysis

Potential weakness to the arguments of the authors of this book

As I read this book, there was one uncomfortable part. That is, church members hate many changes. My church is a Korean church and a Presbyterian. When the senior pastor wants to pursue something, he should always discuss with church leaders. If church leaders say “No,” he cannot push forward. Also, the senior pastor should face the push of the church members as he proceeds to new work. For senior pastors, this push is a very distressing problem. Of course, the author says we have to be patient in this situation. However, it is difficult to endure for a long time in a situation where various dynamic relationships are intertwined in the church.

Potential strength to the arguments of the authors of this book

The author seems to have a good grasp of how this world is going. I felt like the author was a sociologist. The author's assertion that our churches should also be transformed into spaces that can contain diverse people in order to include the world that is advancing into a diverse community provides us with considerable persuasion. Also, I think that the author is well aware of the real problems of the church that prevents the way to become a multiethnic church and the understanding of the situation and the way to become a multiethnic church.

Diagnosis of Practical Worship through Van Opstal's Book

My church is a Korean church. It is a church made up of a single group people called Koreans, and uses a common language, Korean. Of course, EM mainly uses English, but its main language is Korean. Because of this, it is not easy for people of other ethnicities to come and worship at my church. To be honest, it is impossible for people of other ethnicities to come and worship in my church. This is because Korean is used in all worship sets.

As I read this book, I thought it was for people who use the common language, English. Whatever we do, the language has to go through, but my church uses Korean, so it didn't match what it said in this book and my church's situation. If so, should my church continue to worship only in Korean? The answer is no. The current situation of my church is that Korean-speaking first generations are getting older, and the number of immigrants from Korea is decreasing. Also, more and more people use both Korean and English. In this situation, I think my church will also seek a way to move forward to a multiethnic church. In addition, leaders should be aware that members of the church are changing.

My church leaders who need to pursue change in the future need to listen to Van Opstal's saying She says: "Members of communities, including their leaders, who want to seek change must know how to approach change with humility and respect."¹ As Van Opstal put it, leaders need to always be humble and respect while pursuing change. And I think that in order to become a multiethnic church, we need to study what the church should do and what it should prepare in the future.

Finally, Missionary Jay Kim, Director of Arts in Mission Korea mentioned in this book, is my Facebook friend. I am getting a lot of inspiration for the multiethnic church through Missionary Jay's Facebook posts.

Conclusion

The author says of worship: "Worship is not merely about authentic personal expression but also communal formation. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, we find that worship in community, by the Spirit, forms us in Christ."² As the author said, worship is the process of making a community

¹ Sandra Van Opstal, and Mark Labberton. *The Next Worship: Glorifying God in a Diverse World*. (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2016), 143.

² *Ibid.*, 47.

that worships God. In this process, everyone does fellowship, share, and worship in one Holy Spirit. All people and tongues gather in one place to worship God. People of diverse cultures and languages gather, but if the Holy Spirit is there, we acknowledge and honor each other, it becomes a community. This is exactly what the church God wants us to look like. Now our churches need to make diverse efforts to include this generation with a diverse shapes. Through these diverse efforts, the direction our churches should go forward is to transform into a multiethnic church that recognizes diversity.

Percentage Read : 100%

References:

Van Opstal, Sandra, and Mark Labberton. *The Next Worship: Glorifying God in a Diverse World*. Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2016.