

Assignment Title: Reading Report

Word and Power Church / Report by Nathan Northcutt

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Campus Location: ATS/NY City

Course Title: Personal, Professional, and Theological Foundations For Ministry
Course Number: SF505
Semester & Year: 2023
Professor: Dr. Ronald Walborn
Date Submitted: 01/26/2023

The author's main argument throughout the book is that evangelical and charismatic churches both have something to offer. He argues that churches can be more effective in their ministry to the world if they join together. The author also believes that this is happening.

According to Banister, “God is blending the strengths of both the evangelical and charismatic traditions together in churches across America. I call these word and power churches.”¹

Banister tells his own story of how he became a word and power Christian. He then makes the case for why evangelical and charismatic churches should become one. He does this by showing how evangelical churches need more of the Spirit and charismatic churches need a stronger view of the authority of Scripture. After this, the bulk of the book lays out the strengths of each tradition and then shows the reader how the two traditions can come together to become a Word and Power Church.

This book matched up pretty well with my worldview. I do not believe in limiting what the Spirit can do. I have always believed that spiritual gifts are still possible today, however, I do not have much experience with them. Banister says, “The unsettling, maddening reality about divine healing is this: Sometimes God heals, sometimes he doesn’t, and he never bothers to tell us why.”² This resonated with me. I know God can heal, but due to certain past experiences, I don’t expect him to. I know he has the power, but I’ve never experienced miraculous healing.

I agreed with Banister that churches need to balance “solid orthodoxy with an experiential, intimate walk with Christ.”³ I fully believe that the Bible is our authority. It is the word of God to us and it is the primary way that God has chosen to speak to us. However, I totally agree that many churches lack the power of the Spirit and are missing out on all that God has for them. Personally, I want to know and experience the power and presence of the Spirit more than I do. I love the Bible. It is amazing. But, I want to experience more of God and grow in intimacy with

1 Douglas Banister, *The Word and Power Church: What Happens When a Church Experiences All God Has to Offer?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 25-26.

2 Banister, *The Word and Power Church*, 257.

3 Banister, *The Word and Power Church*, 55.

Him. Wholeness should be our desire, and I fully agree with Banister that to do so we need to strive to understand God's word and grow in intimacy with God and His Spirit.

I wholeheartedly agree that churches need to “teach their people to listen to the talking God.”⁴ In my own experience in the church, we spend a far greater amount of time teaching people what the word of God says, and not very much time teaching them how to listen to a talking God. I think this is vital for people to learn. If we talk about having a relationship with God, then that must mean God talks back. If He doesn't then it is no relationship. We must teach our people how to listen and hear from God, and we can only do that if we learn ourselves.

There wasn't anything that I disagreed with in this book. I felt that Banister was very balanced overall. He challenged what I believe is possible and even challenged what I should desire. Personally, I have always thought that speaking in tongues or a spiritual language is strange, and so I have no real desire to do so. But, this book made me consider if this desire to not speak in a spiritual language is the correct stance.

My desire is to see the Spirit move more in my ministry. I love God's word, and I read it consistently, but I want to experience the Spirit and for the Spirit's power to impact my ministry more. I want the teenagers I serve to know AND experience the God that I love. I pray that the Spirit will see fit to gift me with the power and gifts I need to do the work God's called me to.

Bibliography

Banister, Douglas, *The Word and Power Church: What Happens When a Church Experiences*

All God Has to Offer? Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1999.

⁴ Banister, *The Word and Power Church*, 179.

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: Nathan Northcutt _____