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In Doug Banister's book *The Word & Power Church*, the reader is asked to wrestle with the idea of the current state of Christianity as well as the future of what the Church could look like if it reconciled a debate that has been happening over the past seventy or eighty years. Banister presents the argument that the Church needs to be one which holds strong convictions to Scripture as well as experiencing the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Banister masterfully brings together two segregated opinions and calls both sides to see the beauty of the other while showing each the possibility of what it could look like to live together in harmony.

Banister's use of illustration when speaking to the beauty of two rivers becoming one is one that speaks to my ministry context. The author writes, "*that's what God is doing today*, I thought. *The two rivers are becoming one*. The charismatic movement and the evangelical movement are like two mighty rivers surging through the twentieth century."<sup>1</sup> As a youth pastor at a large evangelical church in the state of Connecticut, I feel the tension of imagery coming together as we attempt to learn what it looks like to have these two function together within a church and staff which is largely split on the theology of what is right and wrong. As I read Doug's book, I could not help, but feel the tension of wishing and wanting for elders and senior leadership to read this book to see that both charismatics and evangelicals can live together in harmony because what we see throughout the New Testament is how both the Word and Power flow together perfectly. Yet the tension is felt when we want the church to be a space where new or nonbelievers can feel like they have a place while also ministering to those who are seeking and have a hunger for more than spiritual milk. Yet, Banister writes, "the times demand that we

<sup>1</sup>Banister, Doug. *The Word & Power Church*. Colorado Springs, CO: Zondervan, 1999, 29

create word and power churches that both edify the believer and evangelize the seeker at the same time.”<sup>2</sup> The incredible part about this statement made is that it was pointing to Gen X and not even taking into account millennials or Gen Z who are looking for more than what we are providing them if we just provide them with the Word or Power. This generation is looking for a marriage between the two.

This book revealed my hunger and expectation to see the Church and my own leadership grow in learning how Scripture and the power/gifts of the Holy Spirit can work together in a way to draw God’s people closer to Him. I greatly appreciated Banister’s ability to show the good from both sides while also revealing the pitfalls of both evangelicalism and charismatics. Yet calling them together to recognize and see what it looks like for those two groups to work together. Even Doug’s ability to show both sides that they’re essentially saying the same thing with a different language/perspective was powerful,

The Scriptures compel us to embrace the ‘genius of the AND,’ whether we want to or not. Two truths are held in tension throughout Scripture: God’s Word is authoritative. It is the final word. The canon is closed. There is no new authoritative revelation being given today. God speaks today through ways other than the Bible. The prophetic ministry is alive and well today.<sup>3</sup>

As a body, we must acknowledge the power of unity and what would happen if we allowed both rivers to truly flow into one another. I believe that just as Banister claims, this is the key to reaching the next generation. We just need to be willing to fight to see both sides as honoring the other.

<sup>2</sup> Banister, 141

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 99

Bibliography

Banister, Doug. *The Word & Power Church*. Colorado Springs, CO: Zondervan, 1999.

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

Thoroughly and Entirely\_\_\_\_%

Quickly but Completely\_\_\_\_%

Thoroughly but NOT Entirely\_\_90\_\_%

Quickly and NOT Completely\_\_\_\_%

Not at all

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_Andres Ayala III\_\_\_\_\_