

Reading Report 1

The Word and Power Church by Doug Banister

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Personal, Professional, and Theological Foundations for Ministry

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Summary

The Word and Power Church by Doug Banister explores the author's experience with the charismatic and how it shaped his strategy for ministry. In the first part of this book, he reviews the opposing relationship between the evangelical and the charismatic. In the third chapter, he explains how his church, with this strategy, has been attracting different Christians. Banister then explains the differences in how they both started, their strengths, and their beliefs. The author then analyzes the two churches in the second half of this book and discusses how there are positives and negatives to each theology. His goal is to find the solution for combining the best parts of both churches. Banister shows the wonderful possibility of a church that is not only grounded in Scripture but active in the Spirit. He explores the beauty of the AND.

Interaction and Critique

With my current ministry context, as I am serving in my church as a youth group bible study teacher. We have a new youth group pastor who is new to ministry whose sermons are not scripture heavy and he does not preach gifts of the Holy Spirit. Our youth group's previous identity, though, was very charismatic. I remember students being slain in the middle of worship, students encouraged to pray in tongues, and students who were overjoyed with tears in His presence. The author writes "Effective healing prayer begins by listening to the voice of God," (Banister 1999, 158). Our pastor at that time specialized in "listening prayer" and taught it to our youth group well. So, this book has reminded me of my own spiritual history and what lens I view church and how it shapes my expectations of pastors.

Recently, I had a pastor for the English Ministry at the church I serve. He stayed for about two years, but there was a lot of friction between him and the members. He was very scripture focused and showed out-right hatred of the charismatic, though our congregation had a heavy charismatic background. This pastor would tell me he doesn't want to 'sell' the Gospel

and that if we were mature enough, we would understand his preaching. “Believers are most effective and fruitful when they are ministering to their unique gifting” (Banister 1999, 85). I believe it was because I was not guided to minister to my own giftings that I felt ineffective as a congregant of this church.

“We are more concerned to love the people than to make sure someone with a prayer language can use his or her gift,” (Banister 1999, 121). When I read this statement, the charismatic in me wanted to disagree. I thought “we should allow people to have an open space to exercise their gifts!” The more I thought about it, I realized the danger if the open space is not well-managed. Something Jesus has taught me over and over again is that love is always the answer. “How can I love my neighbor as myself?” So, the more I think about this statement, the more I agree. The “open space” needs to be managed by a spiritual authority, so that there can be less chaos and more space to grow in love and in their gifting.

This book has reminded me of my own charismatic history and the positive things that came out of it. I forgot God speaks to me when I call. I forgot how important prayer is and the power behind prayer and the God I pray to. The author has taught me the importance of being both grounded in scripture and flowing in the Spirit. The most important thing, though, is love. It was a good reminder to prioritize loving the people before wanting to see the powerful move of God through our giftings. I am reminded of the very famous passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 13 where love is more important than the practice and showing of people’s gifts. I am encouraged and excited to lead a ministry that chooses to prioritize love before anything else.

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: _____ Jessica Lee _____

Bibliography

Banister, Doug. *The Word and Power Church: What Happens When a Church Seeks All That God Has To Offer?* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1999.