

Reading Report

Subversive Witness: Scripture's Call to Leverage Privilege

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Overview

The central theme or object of Gillard's book, *Subversive Witness* is to introduce and enhance the readers' understanding of our purpose, role and responsibility in regards to privilege and as subversive witness for God. Exercising privilege and subversive witnessing are critically important for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. This is vitally important in addressing the needs of others and for repentance to occur. For profound results to occur in our societies as a result of engagement in these topics, will require commitment by all for progress to be achieved.

Analysis

The book was outlined to be informative to the readers, and to produce thought provoking ideas as well as responses in regards to the topics of privilege and subversive witness. Readers are provided with and challenged by the salient and insightful pointers which are shared by the author in association to these above-mentioned topics. The author's writing style was engaging and can be identified as impactful to the consciousness of the readers of this book.

The first profound and notable strength which I extracted from this book, was the ease in reading this book without repeatedly having to utilize a dictionary or thesaurus to clarify terminology. The second strength was the author's use of various Old and New Testament Biblical examples to reinforce the idea of privilege and subversive witness. This provided a strong and definitive theological connection to the content. It also provided rich exemplary individuals including Jesus who readers could emulate or identify with. The third strength was the use of current and relevant circumstances in regards to the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. This reinforced the fact that this is not just a historical topic but still one which is still ingrained in the current struggles of today.

I enjoyed reading this book however, in my opinion, one weakness is the author failing to include the personal accounts of how people felt about the different points which were discussed. Providing readers with those personal accounts regarding their different challenges as well as highlight moments, could be extremely valuable to individuals who are considering or are presently ministering to others and addressing what might be relatable. A second weakness is that the author could have shared both his personal “mountain-top” as well as “valley low” experiences he encountered in regards to these subject topics.

In my opinion, there is tremendous usefulness in this book for the intended readers. It provides helpful points for personal consideration, participation in, and implementation. The author not only provided an indelible historical content on the subject topic, but what can be utilized as part of the incarnational model and mindset to reach out to individuals. The author discussed some of the past failures and present struggles on this subject of subversive witness. He presented some growth and development areas which are still needed. Even with the best of intention, there are not only some challenges but some personal sacrifices which are critical for successful outreach to others. Tremendous committed effort must be cultivated and sustained to foster an environment for community relationship and development. The usefulness and help of what was presented by the author pointed readers to the understanding that God is willing to work not only in the overall community or surrounding communities but on a personal level.

Take-a-ways

My initial take-a-way from what was discussed is that, “Choosing to speak out against evil will always cost us something, and staying silent as oppression abounds will fatally seal the fate of our neighbors” (Gilliard, 2021, 55). This highlights the need for incarnational ministry and using our privilege as a subversive witness for God as we engage in outreach in our

respective communities. My second take away was that “Lamentation is a spiritual practice that softens hardened hearts, a revolutionary act that ushers into uncensored communion with God” (Gilliard, 2021, 51). I need to be willing to be broken in response to the brokenness around me. My third takeaway was that, “Christians are called to acknowledge privilege because it is real and because doing so liberated us from its power. Confronting and addressing privilege liberates us to live into our created purpose fully and freely” (Gilliard, 2021, 9). As a result, what resonated in my thoughts was John 8:36 (NIV) - “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” These take-a-aways serve as reminders to seek God’s guidance as I minister to the needs of others.

Significance for Ministry

Based upon the reading, my first significance for ministry point is to ensure that I prayerfully pursue God’s direction and strategy as I engage in being a subversive witness. If my true goal is to help local community individuals, then I must remember that there is a bigger picture than my personal perspective and view. Secondly, I am challenged to authentically express empathy, compassion, and concern to others. It is important that I take the time to understand their suffering and be willing to listen to their stories. Me being a good listener could be vitally important in achieving personal as well as community healing and restoration.

The third significance for ministry point is for me to strive to be a consistent subversive witness. This is core to my walking the walk, talking the talk and living the life. This step catapults my commitment to another level. My decision to make the personal sacrifice to reach the lives of others will serve as the epitome or heartfelt example of when and where subversive witness is not just a good concept, or book that was read, but a daily part of living in my home, my church and my community.

Reference

Gilliard, Dominique DuBois. *Subversive Witness: Scripture's Call to Leverage Privilege*.

Michigan: Zondervan Reflective, 2021.