

Aura Soraya Angulo-Pichardo
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Subversive Witness: Scripture's Call to Leverage Privilege
by Dominique DuBois Gilliard

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Gilliard tackles the controversial topic of privilege and seeks to demystify its true meaning. The author uses examples from characters in the Bible to demonstrate how Christians can give up or even use the privileges that they are given for the Kingdom of God. As the author states, "...the Gospel demonstrates how we should deal with privilege. Scripture affirms that privilege is real and declares that while we have the option to exploit it for selfish gain or passively benefit from it, we are called to acknowledge and faithfully steward it. We are called to leverage privilege to further the kingdom and love our neighbor" (Gilliard, xxi). In providing textual evidence of the privileged characters from Scripture to support his arguments, Gilliard makes the connections and shows how God used these biblical characters to be subversive witnesses.

Subversive Witness is a call to action for the people of God to use the privileges that they have been given to serve others and to take care of the "least of these". Gilliard addresses some of the debates that are often brought up by those of the Christian faith (that are white) regarding reconciliation and race ministries and seeking true biblical repentance for the church.

Gilliard's purpose for writing *Subversive Witness: Scripture's Call to Leverage Privilege*, is to beseech the body of Christ to take action and use the privileges that we possess and take action and be a subversive witness. He wants to, "deconstruct the spiritual strongholds arresting the church and distorting our witness" (Gilliard, xvii).

There are many strengths in *Subversive Witness*. Gilliard presents his argument in a clear and succinct manner and cites the appropriate biblical passages to support his argument. Additionally at the end of each chapter, Gilliard provides the reader with several reflection questions to further deepen their understanding of what was read. Providing these reflection questions serves as a great way to engage in discussion if this text were to be taught in a small group. The questions are thought-provoking and encourage the reader to go back to the chapter and re-read something that they may not have fully understood. There are no weaknesses that can be identified in this text.

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Gilliard forced me to think about my role in the church and how I can use what I have been “privileged” with to help others; to take action not only in my church but in my community. Seeing the injustices that are going on in the world, especially against individuals with black and brown skin, is something that breaks the heart of God and should break the heart of each and every one of us. This text has caused me to think about what my next steps should be. How can I take action and use what I have been given to serve others?

Throughout the text Gilliard poses several thought-provoking questions to the reader and urges them to wrestle with it. One particular question posed by Gilliard forced me to really sit and think about. He asks, “What keeps good people silent and complicit when they know their neighbor is being dehumanized, oppressed, exploited, and/or massacred? (Gilliard, 25). I can appreciate that Gilliard poses these questions that the church does not want to address but needs to address in order to heal and take the much needed action on behalf of the oppressed and marginalized of society. *Subversive Witness: Scripture's Call to Leverage Privilege* should be

mandatory reading for all members of the Church if we are to truly do what God has called us to be in the world.

Bibliography

Gilliard, Dominique DuBois. *Subversive Witness: Scripture's Call to Leverage Privilege*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2021.