

CD 701: Worship Arts and Disciplines

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Book Report 4 By David A. Ostrander

Opstal's book is about people from all different backgrounds coming together to worship (p25). There are many reasons for people to feel uncomfortable in cross cultural situations. One reason people feel uncomfortable is lack of exposure (p26). If people could just get to experience other people's cultures the fear of getting to know other people would go away. The church we attend has short-term mission trips that give people the chance to learn about people that live differently than they do.

Opstal gives three categories of people we should be looking to reach out to, but it's a little limited, (p28). What about older people? What about people with special needs? The church should welcome whoever will believe in the gospel even if it's just a few people. There is a key paragraph on page 63 of Opstal's book. She says that in most multi-ethnic churches the dominant race wins out. In many churches, the ethnic groups that have less representation are expected to blend in with the majority. That's not really what multiculturalism is about, Everyone should have a say in what takes place in their community. No one should feel like they are left out.

Opstal talks about leadership styles (p 83). Many leaders are more interested in loyalty than the abilities of the people they employ. This is true but training is important. Many churches care about their pastor's having an MDiv but in other churches, very little education is required. What happens is that the congregants get a poor quality of teaching and training. What is required in a worship leader is musical knowledge but often they are self-taught in theology. The

reason theology is mentioned is that modern worship leaders are often teachers and preachers of the word. They often lead worship and teach or preach on other occasions as well as address the congregation between songs. Here is Opstal's description of a worship leader who is trying to imitate ethnic music without ethnic musicians.

“This reminds me of a choir conducted by someone classically trained. Though they are singing a South African song, the experience clearly is not South African, mostly due to the reserved movement of the choir. Maybe it's a gospel song, but the leader isn't truly ministering in that style.” Opstal explains “In both of these first two levels it's likely that one worship director is shaping and leading the entire experience which is a sort of potluck - one type of music from each ethnicity or mostly contemporary Christian music with a few other elements thrown in”.

The last line about the contemporary Christian music hodge-podge is very much like many worship services today. The worship leader is a rockstar as Opstal calls them. We have to go back and look at all the music that is available to us today and use the songs that genuinely worship our Lord and Savior. We shouldn't do a new song just because it's contemporary and throw out the hymns just because they are old. Ethnic worship should be done by ethnic people from the congregation when possible and then there will be genuine worship.

Multi-ethnic worship is needed to develop a multi-ethnic church. (p 110). Opstal's book talks a lot about perceptions. Different cultures preserve things differently. Food is an example as well as music and the perception of time. Europeans tend to have shorter more organized services while Navajo Native Americans thought the services were too short (p131). The Navajos included food and celebration in their services. The story in Chapter 7 about a church that hired many outside musicians, developed a multicultural music ministry and began to lose

congregants seemed a little odd to me. Maybe they changed too quickly, The white congregation couldn't handle the change. Things need to be introduced slowly and people's thoughts need to be taken into consideration.