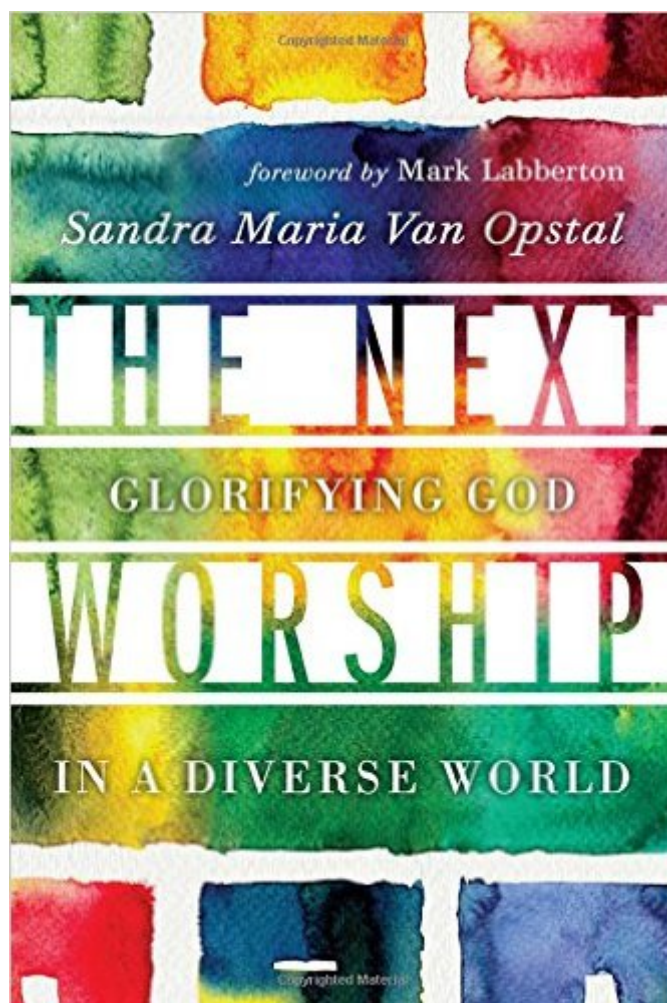


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The Next Worship: Glorifying God In A Diverse World



Synopsis

What happens when a diverse church glorifies the global God? We live in a time of unprecedented intercultural exchange, where our communities welcome people from around the world. Music and media from every culture are easily accessible, and our worship is infused with a rich variety of musical and liturgical influences. But leading worship in multicultural contexts can be a crosscultural experience for everybody. How do we help our congregations navigate the journey? Innovative worship leader Sandra Maria Van Opstal is known for crafting worship that embodies the global, multiethnic body of Christ. Likening diverse worship to a sumptuous banquet, she shows how worship leaders can set the table and welcome worshipers from every tribe and tongue. Van Opstal provides biblical foundations for multiethnic worship, with practical tools and resources for planning services that reflect God's invitation for all peoples to praise him. When multiethnic worship is done well, the church models reconciliation and prophetic justice, heralding God's good news for the world. Enter into the praise of our king, and let the nations rejoice!

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Van Opstal asserts that "it is no longer a questions of whether we like or want diversity. The church is diverse. And congregational worship should reflect the diversity of God's people, even if a local congregation itself is not diverse" (14). Thus, it becomes imperative that our churches adopt a multicultural approach to their music if they are to live into the mission of doing God's work. The Next Worship walks readers through the the theological and sociological rationales and strategies for

diverse worship music noting that "multiethnic worship acknowledges and honors the diversity of people in the local and global church, and teaches congregations to understand and honor that same diversity." (16) Worship is an essential vehicle through which we build community and form the inclusive body of Christ. Van Opstal invites us to move from simple hospitality, to solidarity and mutuality in our worship. Each chapter of the book includes an outline of the key concepts covered, as well as questions for both personal reflection and for group discussion. Each chapter also concludes in a prayer, driving home the idea that this work is holy work, and will only succeed when we call upon the Lord to offer guidance and encouragement to our worship teams.

Whether you worship God as a worship pastor, on a worship team, or with the congregation, this book is for you. The Next Worship will meet you where you are at and give you practical tools and Biblical wisdom to grow you in worshipping in ways that show hospitality to those in your church body, in ways that express solidarity with believers worldwide, and ultimately in ways that express mutuality, saying "We need you" to the body of Christ in all of its diverse expressions.

This book, which was recently gifted to me, has rocked my world! "The Next Worship" is helping me to re-imagine what kingdom-devoted music could and should look like in my home church where I serve as worship director as well as other worship platforms. It has become a much desired, needed resource to me on the subject of multiethnic, kingdom worship. I am grateful that this book has inspired me to revise my worship vision to ensure that I am clearly and effectively communicating to my teams and audiences what it is I now know to be true - worship music reconciles us to God and to one another.

This book is refreshing! Its approach to worship reflects a latitude given for the nuances of specific "people groups", - with an approach to worship being appreciated and understood from a cultural perspective. Dominant culture is not right or wrong. Neither is the reverse. Our global God is big enough to appreciate and accept all and so we must be diligent to not pigeon-hole how we portray the living God based on our preferences. I highly recommend this as a must read for leaders; not just worship leaders. The premise of this book is transferable. Anyone who desires to be intentional in recognizing blind spots and their affect on communicating a global God will find value in reading and making a cross application to leadership in the church and beyond.

I got three so I could share with other worship leaders and realized that I need to order more...

Sandra's book is really for more than just Worship ministry! There's valuable information that can be useful in the mission field, various work places, and even personal discipleship on top of giving practical information for worship leaders.

Revelation 7:9 gives us a preview of heaven, when people from every nation, tribe, people and language will stand before the throne of God together. What a beautiful future! But we have to acknowledge that, most of the time, our church gatherings (especially the traditional/white/evangelical/American churches) don't look like Revelation 7:9. And our attempts to be more multicultural often amount to inviting people of color to join us and then conform to our way of doing things. "Come be with us," we say. "Come be like us!" Is there any hope that we can experience even part of the Revelation 7:9 vision today? As a church leader wrestling with these issues, "The Next Worship" has deeply impacted me. Sandra Maria Van Opstal is a rare visionary practitioner, and I'm thankful we have her as a guide. She offers hope that progress is possible. We don't have to wait for heaven to experience the diversity of our Father's family. My copy of "The Next Worship" is filled with underlines passages, turned-down pages and notes from "aha!" moments. I know I will keep coming back to "The Next Worship". I wish I could give it 6 stars. It has my highest recommendation.

This is a practical, theologically grounded book on leadership and worship. Van Opstal gives helpful frameworks, reflection guides, and resources for worship leaders to grow in the craft as well as in the spiritual work of leading and being lead. It is accessible for lay leaders who may not lead a worship team but are interested in deepening their understanding of what worship is and how various elements of worship can and are shaped by culture, what that communicates, and how they can invite people into a deeper relationship with God and the global Church.

This book has been an amazing read! It has been equal parts challenging, encouraging, and convicting. I especially enjoyed the guided reflection questions/discussion points at the end of each chapter. Not only is it a great resource for worship leaders wanting to diversify their church's worship experience but it is also a great tool for those leading a diverse group of people. I recommend this book to anyone who is in ministry.

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