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## Review of People are the Mission: How Churches Can Welcome Guests without Compromising the Gospel, by Danny Franks

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understand the nature of the problem and offer practical, well thought out solutions. This kind of leader is known as “value-add” and a problem solver (loc. 2981). Great leaders also reject passivity. They think as an owner and not as an employee. They understand that you don’t have to “be in charge to take charge” (loc. 1991). When they challenge up, they know the difference between challenging the process without necessarily challenging the person. Scroggins’ advice? “The more challenging the conversation, the more private it should be. Challenge privately. Champion publicly. Do not confuse these two! Though they sound similar, very little does more to damage a relationship than confusing them” (loc. 2485).

Influence and not authority is the currency of leadership. Scroggins’ book brings to the leadership community a fresh reminder, especially for those biding their time waiting for a higher position; that the time for leadership is now. If leaders get to lead well when they are in charge, it is because they led that way long before they got there. The influence leaders develop along the way may prove very useful in leading later without the need of pulling out the “gun of authority” (loc. 292).

A pastor by profession, Scroggins uses many biblical references throughout the book to clarify his points and draws great insights and applications to the dynamics of leading within the church environment. The book has a foundational, common sense approach to it which gives it the appearance that it is being directed primarily to those who are newcomers to the workforce. While the religious undertone may be a deterrent for some readers, the book aims to speak to a broader audience, finding its relevance in any ministry

or secular work environments where leadership is evidenced, even when one is not “in charge.” It speaks well to the leadership dynamics found within the Christian community, large or small, where the strength of community and social connection play perhaps a more significant role than in the typical corporation culture.

I would recommend this book to anyone wanting to learn how to better leverage influence in their work environment or who could benefit from an inspiring reminder that leadership is far less about formal authority and much more about a mindset that is larger than their work environment. It is for those who are determined to lead like life depends on it. Clay Scroggins believes it does.

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## **PEOPLE ARE THE MISSION: HOW CHURCHES CAN WELCOME GUESTS WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE GOSPEL**

*By Danny Franks  
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan (2018)  
Kindle edition*

*Reviewed by CHERI GATTON*

Pastor Danny Franks presents a straightforward and polite analysis of the dysfunction many churches experience today. He says it this way: “In churches today, we ‘clutter up the Court of the Gentiles’ when we fail to make accommodations for the outsider in our preaching, music, language, the practice of our traditions,

children's programs, and parking and signage" (loc. 109).

According to Pastor Franks' research, Nelson Searcy says, "Many first-time guests are dragged into church by someone else. When they decide to return for a second time, it's usually out of their own volition" (loc. 186).

These two statements summarize the mission of this book. In the introduction, J. D. Greear, author and pastor of the Summit Church, Raleigh-Durham, NC adds, "Your church's preaching and worship styles may draw a crowd, but to keep a crowd, people must sense that you love them, that you expected them, and that you can't wait for them to return" (loc. 128).

What is our purpose and mission on any given Sabbath? Is it to entertain each other? Are we excited about inviting others to meet Jesus and our church family? Franks points out that some churches go through the motions of worship without the Spirit and in others, the service may be more like the money-changers in Jesus' day, whipping up the crowd for entertainment and selfish gain. We want our visitors (and members) to experience rich Spirit-filled, gospel-based, Sabbath worships but to make this happen it first requires an accurate analysis of our mission and effectiveness of our gospel presence. Popularity isn't what Franks is advocating, but awareness and joy in the Lord are contagious. As we pay attention we will recognize the characterizations Franks uses in his book and strategic processes to become a more people-missioned, gospel-centered congregation.

Pastor Franks explains that most churches fall on or between these two examples:

[The] "Experience Is Superficial" church . . . steeped

in tradition. They pride themselves on the old ways of doing church and see themselves as primarily a protective bubble: it's okay by them if they keep the saints in and the sinners out. . . . They tend to be heavy on doctrine and light on delight. Emotional expression during a church service is frowned upon. (loc. 217)

He summarizes it this way: "While they give careful attention to what they say, they give little attention to what a guest hears. They may indeed preach truth, but they don't accompany it with relational love" (loc. 225).

Church type number two is the "Experience Is Central" church. In some ways they are a reaction to the traditional church. There are no stuffy-sounding names here, so we'll call this fellowship "Tribe" (loc. 232). He goes on to describe the "Tribe" and its mission that is all about, well, adding you to their tribe. So, they pull out all the stops: handcrafted, fair-trade coffee stations. Rockin' band. Parking shuttles. Swirly slides at kids' check-in. They want to impact the world for Jesus" (loc. 232). They will also entertain you or do whatever else it takes to make sure you visit again. There is only one big problem with this approach. "They craft series around felt needs rather than the exposition of Scripture. In an attempt to show everyone how welcome they are, they relax standards for membership and accommodate lifestyles that aren't yielded to the lordship of Jesus" (loc. 240).

Does this sound familiar? Many of our churches are struggling with these same questions. What Pastor Franks offers as solutions to this growing dilemma is profound. In Part 1, he calls it "Looking Out," or the community-facing ministry of our churches. In Part 2, he calls it

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“Looking In,” with the “focus to inward discipleship: the gut check we must undergo if we’re going to pursue gospel-fueled hospitality” (loc. 274).

Franks was effective in offering ideas on how to do church hospitality that is gospel-centered and motivating to even the least social member. He also points to developing a solid foundation for our outreach by first knowing what it is that God has specifically called your church to do. We can’t please everyone and yet we must be aware of everyone. We have a God-given call and gifting that will give life to our mission.

I give this book a high recommendation for diagnosing your church’s attitude and aptitude on reaching the outsider and “to reckon with your own identity” (loc. 346). Being able to see the needs and understand the valuable gifts we can share will elevate the member’s reason for being engaged in the missional work of the gospel. We are all called to be part of the priesthood and it is attractive to an outsider when adequately demonstrated as this book so aptly describes.

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**DISSERTATION NOTICES**

**Kooreman, E. (2018). *A study of collaborative skills of graduates of a national, faith-based, leadership development program*. Ph.D., Andrews University, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. 10751259.**

Collaboration is often cited as a long-term benefit of participation in leadership development programs. Successful collaboration requires unique leadership skills which rely on trust and influence rather than authority and position takes place over time. Evaluation of leadership development programs that focus on outcomes after the passage of time is rare, making it difficult to confirm if a relationship between the collaborative skills taught and measurable collaboration activity exists.

This study was able to draw on the alumni of the DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative, a national faith-based leadership development program that maintains on-going relationships with its graduates. Alumni from a ten-year period were surveyed using a pre-existing instrument called the Collaborative Leadership Self-Assessment and a collaboration activity measurement designed for the study. An analysis of the effect of the collaborative leadership skills and demographics of the participants on collaboration activity was conducted using Pearson correlation, multiple regression analysis, and one-way analysis of variance.

All of the collaborative leadership skills had a significant relationship to reported collaboration activity. The ability of the leader to bring clarity to a shared vision and create action plans to mobilize people had the most direct contact to collaboration activity. Leaders who showed a willingness to share power and influence also had a