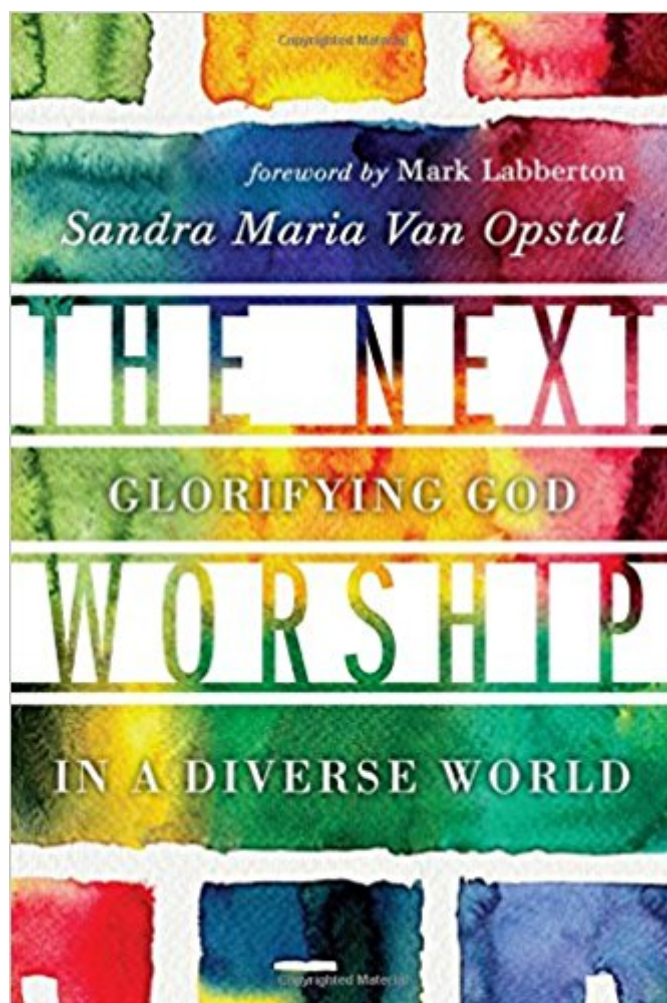


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# The Next Worship: Glorifying God In A Diverse World



## Synopsis

Christianity Today's 2017 Book of the Year Award of Merit - Church/Pastoral Leadership 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!

## Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: IVP Books (January 3, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0830841296

ISBN-13: 978-0830841295

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.6 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 20 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #57,343 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #25 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Church Institutions & Organizations](#) #29 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Worship & Devotion > Rites & Ceremonies](#) #133 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Pastoral Resources](#)

## Customer Reviews

"The Next Worship is an important book for our increasingly diverse church. Writing as a practitioner and theologian, Sandra Van Opstal employs the extended metaphor of the table to describe the rich fellowship of diverse worship. Drawing on deep biblical study and years of personal experience, Van Opstal moves us to stand with our diverse congregations in postures of hospitality ('we welcome

you'), solidarity ('we stand with you') and mutuality ('we need you'). Not at all naïf, this book acknowledges the tensions and challenges of diverse worship as well as its opportunities. Van Opstal skillfully guides us through processes of change, the necessity of shared leadership and the challenges and joys of training other leaders for this task. This is a needed book, not only by worship leaders but also by pastors, elders and every Christian who longs to enter into and to rehearse the ultimate diverse worship of the new heavens and the new earth." (Steven C. Roy, associate professor of pastoral theology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School)"All Christians are on a journey toward God's multicultural kingdom. We live in a remarkable time of opportunity for growth in understanding and shared practices across cultures. Drawing on years of creative leadership in a variety of contexts, Sandra Van Opstal offers us testimonies, tools and insights to inform the next steps in our own journeys of growth and sanctification. May God use this book to break down barriers and strengthen intercultural bonds of many worshipping communities!" (John Witvliet, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary)"What Sandra Van Opstal does so importantly here is to help make the arc of this worship transformation clear and practicable. Out of her life experience and rich ministry background, Sandra does for us here what she has done over the years for many of those she has led as worship teams and as worshipers. This book is a vital gift for a changing church that needs to reflect the God of all the nations." (From the foreword by Mark Labberton, president, Fuller Theological Seminary, author, *The Dangerous Act of Worship*)"The Next Worship argues persuasively that achieving unity in worship requires taking diversity seriously. At once prophetic and pastoral, the book presents a set of principles for navigating the complexities of race, ethnicity and culture within congregational worship. Van Opstal calls worship leaders to be anthropologists as well as theologians: self-aware students of culture who engage in critical reflection about their contexts, who take responsibility for interpreting their actions and who summon the courage and humility to truly collaborate. Van Opstal's writing models her leadership strategy—her accounts from her own experience through the years are enriched by perspectives from a number of key leaders and scholars. Though its account is ultimately hopeful, the book does not downplay the difficulties inherent in building worshipping congregations across lines of cultural difference. Rather, it shows that coming together across these differences will frequently lead to tension, discomfort and sometimes pain. A commitment to working together through these issues is key to developing the kinds of relationships that characterize the coming kingdom. The Next Worship makes a compelling argument that building worshipping communities across lines of division cannot be a niche interest. Rather, engaging diverse perspectives and learning to share authority must become priorities for all Christ-followers interested in the continued

life and health of the church." (Monique Ingalls, professor of church music, Baylor University)"We have lost the language of love in our worship—love for God and love for our neighbor. This is a book for those who want to recover these loves by practicing reconciliation in worship. The Next Worship shows us how to love God and love our neighbor practically in worship, specifically by sharing leadership and guiding others in change. Through her personal relationships and experience in community Sandra teaches us to create spaces of hospitality, solidarity and mutuality through worship. I highly recommend this book, having experienced Sandra's leadership and knowing the wealth she has crossing cultures domestically and globally." (John Perkins, cofounder, CCDA, founder, John and Vera Mae Perkins Foundation)"For those of us who are committed to the work of Christian community development in vulnerable neighborhoods, being rooted in a faith community with an expression of worship that is rooted in our struggle for justice and reconciliation is essential. Sandra's new book, *The Next Worship: Glorifying God in a Diverse World*, provides a much needed resource for leaders who are committed to crafting worship experiences rooted in diversity." (Noel Castellanos, CEO and president, CCDA)"One of most significant challenges for the next era of evangelicalism is developing unity in the worship life of a multicultural Christian community. Sandra Van Opstal recognizes that multicultural worship is a long journey with many bumps along the way—there are no simple and easy answers. In *The Next Worship*, Sandra puts forth key principles and helpful models that should inspire us to pursue this noble goal. This book may well become the essential text that helps multiethnic churches turn the corner in their worship life." (Soong-Chan Rah, Milton B. Engebretson Professor of Church Growth and Evangelism, North Park Theological Seminary, author of *The Next Evangelicalism and Prophetic Lament*)"If we worship leaders are taking our pastoral roles seriously, one of our jobs is to prepare our churches for heaven's worship where all nations are gathered. This book inspires, encourages and teaches how to do just that!" (Zac Hicks, recording artist, pastor of worship at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, Ft. Lauderdale, FL)"Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. lamented that one of the most segregated hours is eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, when the church gathers for worship. Sandra Van Opstal offers a fresh vision where the church reflects the diversity of God's kingdom rather than conforming to the patterns of segregation. The Next Worship reminds us that unity is not about uniformity, but about harmonizing rather than homogenizing. Van Opstal reminds us that what may be just as important as how we worship is who we worship with. This is a beautiful book." (Shane Claiborne, author and activist, codirector, Red Letter Christians, founder, The Simple Way)"While acknowledging that inclusive worship will look different in each congregational context, *The Next Worship* shows how we can move toward gathered worship that 'points to the future

celebration of God's people from every tribe, tongue, people and language.' Besides being full of stories acknowledging the challenges of multiethnic worship, this immensely practical volume also provides hope and how-to advice for preparing (sometimes reluctant) congregations to worship in ways that connect them with the global church in their community and abroad. In a refreshingly broad approach, Sandra Van Opstal goes beyond discussions of music styles to explore what multiethnic worship might look like in Scripture reading, prayers, other arts, the Lord's Supper, the teaching of the Word and more. Furthermore, her own rich experience in mentoring worship leaders has given her keen insight regarding collaborative service planning and the development of diverse worship leadership. The summaries of key concepts at the end of each chapter along with probing questions for reflection and discussion make this a vital resource for pastors, worship leaders, worship planning committees and training programs." (Robin P. Harris, director, Center for Excellence in World Arts at GIAL, president, International Council of Ethnodoxologists)"For many years, Sandra Van Opstal has been leading diverse people to do more than sing of love and justice (Psalm 101:1). She has led them to walk, work and worship God together as one beyond the distinctions of this world that so often and otherwise divide. In *The Next Worship*, Sandra provides competent insight and practical advice for ministry leaders seeking to present a more credible witness of God's love for all people in an increasingly diverse and cynical society." (Mark DeYmaz, directional leader, Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas, president, Mosaix Global Network, author of *Building a Healthy Multi-ethnic Church* and *re:MIX*)"In a time of great ethnic diversity—also division—this book is sorely needed. Van Opstal provides a practical theology and missional framework for why we must rethink the corporate experience of worship. Her vision goes beyond building a diverse worship team or singing songs in an unfamiliar language. I pray every pastor and worship leader will read this book." (Efrem Smith, *Christianity Today*, The 2017 Book Awards)"Because we live in an increasingly diverse, mixed and multicultural reality, *The Next Worship* is a must-read resource for pastors and worship leaders. Navigating the profound complexities of cultural identity within the life of the church, Sandra Van Opstal equips and compels us toward becoming a more competent, generous and self-aware leader." (Gail Song Bantum, executive pastor, Quest Church)"One of the most compelling things in life is to see someone who lives into the specific gifting God has placed in them for the building of the kingdom. What is so beautiful and compelling is the passion, depth and experience Sandra pours out in this book. This book—rooted in the biblical-theological understanding of servanthood—is vital to facilitating worship in any context. Regardless of where you are on the journey, this book will encourage, challenge and convict you to model the kingdom in the way Christ models it for us! A

must-read for anyone in leadership, regardless of vocation." (Stephen Kelly, worship leader, Willow Creek Chicago, worship arts director, North Park University)"Often people look for a template for success, but when it comes to multicultural worship, there is no defined template. But we can learn from the efforts of others and apply what we've learned in our own ministry. Sandra Van Opstal takes us on a journey through different multicultural worship experiences and helps us learn valuable lessons from them. While there is no one right model, there are principles that we can glean from these distinctive experiences. Van Opstal's work beautifully builds on my early observations about the power of multicultural worship to bring together the diverse people of God." (George Yancey, professor of sociology, University of North Texas, author of *Beyond Racial Gridlock and Hostile Environment*)"For those of us who believe that the culmination of all things involves 'every tribe, tongue and nation' worshipping Jesus in unity, we need to figure out today how to worship across the vast diversity of the church, with a particular attentiveness to those voices on the margins. With rich biblical reflection and vivid examples from decades of experience at the intersection of racial reconciliation and worship, my friend Sandra Van Opstal has written a definitive resource for the church today." (Matthew Soerens, US church training specialist, World Relief, coauthor, *Welcoming the Stranger*)"Can we, victims and perpetrators of worship wars, imagine what a 'heaven-on-earth' worship experience might look like? Weaving theological, intercultural and practical insights, *The Next Worship* presents readers with needed wisdom, enabling us to see the challenges we face as well as the faithful steps we must take. This is a valuable resource for anyone who is engaged in the ministry of worship, indeed the ministry of the gospel, in today's divided, multicultural world." (Peter Cha, associate professor of pastoral theology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School)"The *Next Worship* not only crosses boundaries but redefines them. Sandra Van Opstal invites readers to join in a journey of hospitality around the table—Jesus' table. She so beautifully puts the analogy of diverse worship alongside our calling to be both a host and a guest at the table where everyone is welcome and can play a role. The invitation is to learn and draw from one another, experiencing the culinary delights we may not otherwise partake in. Sandra's examples show a richness and necessity of crosscultural community, understanding and participation. This book addresses our spiritual mandate for inclusion and also provides very practical tools, stories and examples from which the reader is able to gain incredible insight, avoid common crosscultural pitfalls, and acquire an increased sensitivity and awareness. I recommend this book not only to anyone seeking to understand and develop multiethnic worship communities, but also to anyone seeking to understand God's heart for diversity and how to engage our neighbors more meaningfully." (Mark Reddy, executive producer, The Justice Conference)"The

Next Worship is an indispensable guide for leaders who want to thoughtfully engage their communities in the worship giftings of many communities. This book is insightful, practical, immensely helpful and profound! Van Opstal blends an academic understanding of peoples and cultures with a pastor's heart and a practitioner's no-nonsense advice. Many claim to value multiethnic worship, but few have journeyed so deeply and so broadly. "Van Opstal is one of those few." (Nikki Toyama-Szeto, vice president of global church strategies, International Justice Mission, coauthor of *God of Justice*) "In worship we stand at the intersection of heaven and earth. The banquet of heaven is brought to the people of earth, and the groans of creation are brought to the throne of heaven. This worship isn't first of all something we do. It's something in which we participate, for all worship is vicarious as we participate by the Spirit in the Son's intercession and worship as high priest. Therefore, far less important than the appeal of particular styles of worship is the privilege of our participation in this ongoing triune worship. But we need to be prepared for this: it doesn't come naturally. We tend to be captivated by our own voice, and yet worship in heaven joyfully incorporates the rich voices of people from all cultures and nations. Sandra offers us a field guide to prepare us now for the wondrous diversity of heaven's worship. Ultimately, the only relevant worship and the only relevant church in our world is ethnically diverse. The Next Worship helps guide us on the way." (Tim Dearborn, director, Lloyd John Ogilvie Institute of Preaching, Fuller Theological Seminary) "I love this book! The Next Worship is theologically and biblically sound, socially and culturally relevant, and extremely current and practical. The truth and experiential wisdom shared by Sandra Van Opstal has the potential to spark a movement that creates inclusive communities of trust where people from every walk of life are welcomed to the table of God. If you have been looking for a way to infuse new life into your faith community, look no further. You must read this book!" (Brenda Salter McNeil, associate professor of reconciliation studies, Seattle Pacific University, author of *Roadmap to Reconciliation* and *A Credible Witness*)

Sandra Maria Van Opstal (M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) is a Chicago-born, second-generation Latina and a leading practitioner of multiethnic worship. A preacher, trainer, liturgist and activist, she is passionate about creating atmospheres that mobilize for reconciliation and justice. She served as the worship director for the Urbana Student Missions Conference and has led worship for the Willow Creek Association, the Christian Community Development Association, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, the Evangelical Covenant Church and the Evangelical Immigration Table. Sandra regularly consults as both a worship leader and a mission trainer with Christian colleges, conferences and local churches, and she serves on the board of

Evangelicals 4 Justice. She and her husband Karl minister at Grace and Peace Community in Chicago, and she is the author of *The Mission of Worship*. Mark Labberton is president of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He previously served as Lloyd John Ogilvie chair for preaching and director of the Lloyd John Ogilvie Institute for Preaching. Labberton came to Fuller after sixteen years as senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, California. He has served as chair of John Stott Ministries (now Langham Partnership) and co-chair of the John Stott Ministries Global Initiative Fund. Today he continues to contribute to the mission of the global church as a senior fellow of International Justice Mission. He is the author of *The Dangerous Act of Loving Your Neighbor* and *The Dangerous Act of Worship*.

Sandra Van Opstal has written the best introduction for worship service planners and worship leaders waking up to the reality of diversity. Written with equal parts cultural intelligence, theological concern, and practical anecdotes, Van Opstal's book is a must read for those in the field. Occasionally provocative, it will stimulate thinking and start conversations that are long overdue for much of majority culture evangelicalism. No book on this topic could be comprehensive, but "The Next Worship" is now the definitive starting place. Follow this with the complementary perspective in Marti's, "Worship Across the Racial Divide," and the global perspective of Krabill's "Worship and Mission for the Global Church." Then perhaps multiethnic church literature like Emerson/Smith's "Divided by Faith" and Edwards' "The Elusive Dream." Perhaps the book could have been improved by discussing the different roles that worship leaders serve within different church traditions. The difference between, say, traditions which (1) consider leading congregational singing as diaconal ministry and those which (2) consider the worship leader as a prophetic/priestly role. But this sort of conversation would have perhaps derailed Van Opstal's important goal: a cry in the wilderness declaring prepare diverse ways for the cosmic Lord of the global church. Hear that cry and read this book.

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.

The author is very knowledgeable and experienced which gives great insight to multicultural



worship. I have no worship talent or experience. My interest is strictly the multicultural aspect of "church". I gained more knowledge about the various approaches to integrating other cultures. I am glad to see there are many ways to approach it. It is written in a way that even those of us with little to no knowledge of the music side of worship can understand it and appreciate what goes into it. I can't figure out if my "4" rating has more to do with my lack of interest in the music side or the desire to hear more about the multicultural aspect. While I love that we have many options, it would help to guide us through those options. If I had more experience with worship, I may have given this a 5.

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 underlined 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.

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.

This book clearly lays out the why and how of multiethnic worship at a depth that isn't available in many other resources that are currently available. Over the last few months I took my worship team (of a multiethnic church plant) through this book and was challenged, encouraged, and given some clear steps forward as we continue to grow in deeper, diverse, inclusive worship that says: I welcome you, I stand with you, and I need you.

In an increasingly global and diverse society worship is changing. The struggle to shepherd those in your care and reach those who you are called to tremendous. The Next Worship is a gentle encyclopedia of resources and wisdom of how to lead and implement change that will help the church resonate with those in their global and local communities.

Very Good book for worship leaders.

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