

**Sam T. Rajkumar. *Resounding Faith: Embracing Modern Music in Children's Ministry*. Bangalore, India: Omega Book World, 2023, 130 pp. ISBN: 9789389069815 (paperback).**

The book *Resounding Faith: Embracing Modern Music in Children's Ministry*, offers a transformative look at the role of contemporary music in promoting spiritual growth among children. The author, with his extensive experience in theology and music education, argues that modern music can be effectively integrated into children's ministry. Though "Resounding Faith" has seven chapters apart from the introduction and conclusion, fascinatingly, it can be structured into three main sections: theological foundations, practical applications, and case studies, based on the contents, flow of thought, in-depth analysis of the subject matter, style, and arrangements of ideas. Each section is meticulously crafted to build upon the previous one, providing readers with a comprehensive understanding of the theological basis, practical implementation, and real-world impact of modern music in children's ministry.

In the primary section, Rajkumar's argument for using music in worship is based on biblical and doctrinal foundations, emphasizing music as a form of expression and communication with God. He addresses common misconceptions about contemporary music in the church and asserts that all forms of music can glorify God and enhance worship when used appropriately. Rajkumar begins his theological exploration by examining the role of music in the Old Testament, citing examples like the songs of Miriam and Moses in Exodus, the Psalms, and King David's instrumental worship. He also highlights the use of music in early Christian worship in the New Testament, citing hymns by Jesus and his disciples, Paul's encouragement to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and the worship practices in the Book of Revelation. Rajkumar counters criticisms about contemporary music in worship, arguing that the essence of worship is not tied to a specific style but to the heart and intention behind it. He asserts that contemporary music, when used thoughtfully and with theological integrity, can enhance worship and make it more accessible and meaningful to children.

The subsequent section of the book offers practical advice on incorporating modern music into children's ministry, including selecting

songs, planning worship sessions, and engaging children in musical activities. It emphasizes the importance of choosing age-appropriate songs that resonate with children's experiences and interests. The author suggests a mixture of contemporary worship songs, traditional hymns, and children's worship music and provides tips for creating a balanced worship set list. The book also provides guidance on creating engaging worship sessions, emphasizing the need for a welcoming, inclusive, and interactive environment. Multimedia elements, movement, dance, and creative arts are suggested to encourage children to express their faith in diverse ways.

One of the outstanding features of this section is that Rajkumar emphasizes the significance of incorporating music into children's ministry, such as Sunday school and children's church, to teach biblical stories, reinforce themes, and promote spiritual growth. He suggests that leaders should involve children in music-making, providing opportunities for singing, playing instruments, and participating in worship teams. This fosters a deeper connection to faith and responsibility in their spiritual journey. Rajkumar also emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and diversity, encouraging leaders to incorporate music from diverse cultures and traditions to reflect the diverse backgrounds of the children they serve. This approach enhances the worship experience and fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance among children.

Rajkumar provides advice on incorporating multicultural music into children's ministry, including selecting songs in different languages, exploring diverse musical styles, and inviting guest musicians. He suggests that ministry leaders educate children about the cultural and historical context of music, helping them appreciate and respect God's creation. Also, he addresses the logistical challenges of integrating modern music, offering solutions like building a music team, training volunteers, and sourcing affordable instruments. Likewise, he proposes gaining church leadership and congregational support through workshops, presentations, and demonstrations, and encourages leaders to communicate the theological and practical reasons for incorporating contemporary music, enhancing worship, and engaging the younger generation.

The latter section of the book presents case studies from churches and ministries that successfully incorporate modern music into their children's programs, highlighting its positive impact on spiritual growth and community engagement. The case studies cover rural churches, urban congregations, and multicultural communities, accompanied by interviews

with ministry leaders, parents, and children. The author discusses the implementation of modern music in various ministries, highlighting its benefits in enhancing children's spiritual growth, faith connection, worship participation, and understanding of biblical teachings. The book also discusses the challenges faced by some ministries, including resistance from traditionalists, limited resources, and initial scepticism from parents and leaders. Despite these obstacles, the book highlights the perseverance and creativity of ministry leaders who found innovative solutions, ultimately transforming their worship practices.

“Resounding Faith” explores the role of music in children's ministry. It balances theory and practice, highlighting the importance of music in worship and its implementation in ministries. The book emphasizes inclusivity and diversity, incorporating music from diverse cultures and traditions. Rajkumar calls for this approach to reflect the multicultural nature of congregations, enrich worship, and teach children about acceptance and unity. The book offers practical advice on selecting songs, planning worship sessions, and engaging children in musical activities. It also provides suggestions for overcoming logistical challenges and gaining support from church leadership and the congregation.

Readers seeking a scholarly and theologically informed exploration of *Embracing Modern Music in Children's Ministry* will find “Resounding Faith” to be a valuable resource. However, the book's depth and academic focus may be a bit challenging for those without a background in music. While the book's depth of research is commendable, it could be more accessible to general readers. Nevertheless, “Resounding Faith” will plausibly serve as a vital resource for pastors, worship leaders, educators, and those involved in children's spiritual formation, aiming to enhance the dynamic and relevant worship experience.

***Santhosh G***

United Theological College, Bangalo