



BOOK REVIEWS

An Essential Guide to Public Speaking: Serving Your Audience with Faith, Skill, and Virtue. By Quentin J. Schultze. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020. 978-1-5409-6188-4, 229 pp., \$26.99.

Reviewer: *Jared E. Alcántara, Baylor's Truett Theological Seminary, Waco, TX.*

In *An Essential Guide to Public Speaking*, Quentin J. Schultze offers readers an accessible handbook on speech communication drawn from his 40-plus-year career as a scholar, teacher, and practitioner. Although he is now professor of communication emeritus from Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Schultze still maintains an active ministry of writing, consulting, mentoring, and public speaking in the areas of speech communication, media ecology, and leadership. In 2006, he published the first edition of this popular textbook as an instruction manual for public speaking written from a Christian perspective for communication classrooms at Christian colleges and universities. In the second edition, published in 2020, Schultze has rewritten, updated, and expanded his work to reach a new generation. He features guest authors in at least five chapters; provides discussion questions at the end of each chapter; and directs readers to his personal website, YouTube channel, and the online materials provided by his publisher.

In Chapter 1, Schultze lays out his thesis that faithful Christian public speaking should be understood as “servant speaking,” which he defines as “using God’s gift of speech publicly to love our neighbors as ourselves” (3). A servant speaker moves beyond acquiring skills to practicing virtues, beyond public speaking as self-promotion to public speaking as love and service to our neighbors, including those who do not have the power to “speak up for themselves” (6). Then, in the

remaining chapters (Chapters 2-21), Schultze shows readers how to plan speeches using a 7-step process, how to overcome speaker-specific obstacles (e.g., anxiety and fear) or listener-specific obstacles (e.g., distractions and hostility), how to become a virtuous communicator, how to tell stories well, how to use media, how to overcome problems in delivery (e.g., voice and nonverbals), and how to think biblically and theologically about speech communication. Those who read *An Essential Guide to Public Speaking* will notice the extensive overlap between the subjects covered in its pages and the work of Christian preaching such as the importance of having a main idea, a purpose for speaking, a clear flow and structure, knowing one's audience, the *ethos* of the speaker, and speech as a spiritual act of worship.

Preachers will likely appreciate the sections of this book that offer wisdom on speaking without notes, telling better stories, and using multimedia (e.g., recording videos), subjects that often do not make it into standard preaching textbooks. Those preachers who wrestle with fear and anxiety will likely be inspired by the author's willingness to talk openly and vulnerably about having to overcome his deep phobia of public speaking and frequent panic attacks stemming from his difficult childhood. Some readers may struggle to follow the flow, structure, and progression of the book on account of its complicated layout and tendency toward information overload: twenty-one chapters without clear sections, frequent spotlight sections in each chapter that may or may not be by a guest writer, several guest-written chapters with a foreword and an afterword; it comes across at times as a collection of essays.

In the hands of a preaching pastor, this book will offer helpful knowledge on preaching as speech communication, provide fresh ideas for writing and delivering sermons, and close a few gaps in one's training. In the hands of a preaching professor, it will serve as a good resource for teaching students how to speak extemporaneously, engage their audiences, and overcome their fears. Although this book could serve as an informative required textbook for a preaching elective on sermon delivery, the most appropriate and best landing spot for it

continues to be an undergraduate public speaking course at a Christian college or university.



The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation, 2nd ed. By Jim Herrington, Trisha Taylor, and R. Robert Creech. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020. 978-1-5409-052-8, 234 pp., \$25.00.

Reviewer: Gary L. Shultz Jr., First Baptist Church, Tallahassee, FL.

Preachers are leaders. To stand in front of a congregation and open the word of God, calling on people to believe, repent, and conform their lives to God's vision instead of their own, is to lead. Pastors are called to lead in a number of different ways, but nowhere is their leadership more evident, and more impactful, than in the pulpit. Therefore, any book that equips pastors to be better leaders will impact their preaching, even if leading through preaching is not the primary focus of the book.

The Leader's Journey is not a book on preaching, but if its instruction on pastoral leadership is put into practice, it will benefit the pastor's preaching as well. The purpose of *The Leader's Journey* is to offer a practical pathway for becoming a better congregational leader by helping leaders understand themselves, the groups they lead, and the discipleship processes that actually lead to personal and congregational change. The authors define effective leaders as those who have "the capacity to know and do the right things" (1). Their conviction, based on their shared experiences in different contexts of helping equip pastors to lead (seminary professor, pastoral counselor, and leader of a leadership-training organization), is that while knowing the right thing to do is common, actually knowing how to do the right thing when faced with the typical challenges and stresses of pastoral ministry is much less common. They aim not to offer another book of leadership techniques and strategies but an

understanding of human relationships and how best to engage in those relationships for effective leadership.

The authors' understanding of leadership is rooted in Murray Bowen's Family Systems Theory, which the authors explain and apply from a Christian perspective. Bowen understood human behavior in light of "living systems" and believed changing behavior required an understanding of those systems. Building on his work, the authors organize *The Leader's Journey* into four sections. The first is "The Call to Transformation," which includes chapters on the problems pastors regularly face, the call to personal transformation, and the elements of experiencing this transformation. To illustrate the path the authors are calling pastors to follow, this section includes an examination of the life of Jesus from a systems perspective and how he always knew and knew how to do the right thing despite the pressures he faced. The second section focuses on leading living systems, introducing the basic concepts of systems thinking and how to put those principles into practice within a congregation. The third section helps leaders understand their family backgrounds and the impact their families have on how they lead. The last section of the book then focuses on the role of discipleship in transformation and leadership, with chapters on spiritual disciplines, the Spirit's transforming processes, and how to approach family systems theory from an explicitly biblical perspective. Helpful questions for self-assessment are found at the end of each chapter, and the book ends with three appendices designed to help the reader put the principles they have just read into practice.

Just as essential as a preacher's content is a preacher's character and relationship with their congregation, and it is in these areas where *The Leader's Journey* will be most helpful to the preacher. The authors offer a solid psychological basis for personal transformation as well as clear biblical instruction that enables personal transformation. Written at an introductory level and drawing on authors as varied as Edwin Friedman and Dallas Willard, the book explains and applies a number of concepts such as systems thinking, emotional triangles, and chronic anxiety,

which are all pertinent both to the pastor's personal life and to life within a congregation. Potential sermon applications for helping congregations resolve conflict and work through times of crisis from the conflict can also be found throughout the book. While not a book one would look to for homiletical instruction, it is certainly a book that would benefit any preacher's ministry.



Diary of a Pastor's Soul: The Holy Moments in a Life of Ministry. By M. Craig Barnes. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2020. 978-1-5874-3444-0, 240 pp., \$18.25.

Reviewer: Larry Torres, *Edinburgh Theological Seminary, Edinburgh, UK.*

In *Diary of a Pastor's Soul*, M. Craig Barnes gives unique insight into his years of experience as a pastor. The book is written in the form of journal entries of a pastor who has decided to retire a year after the first entry. Barnes does not write this book as an exact account of what happened during his time as a pastor but as a fictitious account based on his experience. Throughout the book, the protagonist reflects on his years of ministry while dealing with the issues facing his congregation and congregants as they come. The events in the book have their ups, downs, and everything in-between, reflecting how life and pastoral ministry can be.

It is important to note that Barnes is part of the PC-USA denomination, so this book is written from the perspective of a PC-USA pastor in what appears to be a predominantly Caucasian-American suburban church. So those who decide to read this book who come from different denominational or ethnic backgrounds may not be able to relate to everything the protagonist deals with in his church. There is nothing wrong with this because Barnes is simply writing from his own experience in the pastorate, but the book is still valuable for those who serve or seek to serve churches in different contexts. The

universal aspect Barnes touches on, which is dealing with people, is what ministry is all about. The different congregants the protagonist ministers to and describes are types of people many pastors will encounter in their ministries.

This book gives readers a picture into what pastoral ministry is like without romanticizing or sugarcoating the complexities of it. Barnes keeps each chapter or diary entry short, only a few pages, and this makes the book easy to read and follow and leaves the reader wanting more and wanting to continue reading. This book would do well as assigned reading for a pastoral ministry course in seminaries. It is filled with wisdom and it is presented creatively. One major insight that Barnes offers to his readers is that the pastorate is not glamorous or a place to desire big dreams of glory and recognition for oneself; it is a place that is ordinary and requires faithfulness and constant reliance on God's grace. Many pastors are unknown outside of their churches and small communities. Those who are called to the ministry must be ready to accept this reality, and at the same time be ready to love the people of their church with their messy and broken lives because this is where pastors encounter the Holy as Barnes puts it. *Diary of a Pastor's Soul* is a good balance to the technical and theological works that are read in pastoral ministry classes (which are important), and it offers something different and interesting that is relatable and filled with practical wisdom for pastors in training.



The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to the Sexual Revolution. By Carl R. Trueman. Wheaton: Crossway, 2020. 978-1-4335-5633-3, 425 pp., \$34.99 (hardback).

Reviewer: Gregory K. Hollifield, Memphis College of Urban and Theological Studies at Union University, Memphis, TN.

"The origins of this book lie in my curiosity about how and why a particular statement has come to be regarded as coherent and meaningful: 'I am a woman trapped in a man's body'" (19). With that, Carl Trueman is off and running in his timely and insightful work on *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*.

Trueman is professor of biblical and religious studies at Grove City College. An esteemed church historian, he previously served as the William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and Public Life at Princeton University and has authored or edited more than a dozen books.

Drawing from the ideas of Philip Rieff, Charles Taylor, and Alasdair MacIntyre, part one of Trueman's book analyzes the development of America's sexual revolution as a symptom rather than the cause for much of Western culture's upheaval that we are currently witnessing, particularly in the realms of sexual ethics and gender identity. In part two he traces the foundations of the revolution starting with the thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, continuing with the influence of key figures associated with Romanticism, and ending with a discussion of ideas from Frederick Nietzsche, Karl Marx, and Charles Darwin. Part three turns to a consideration of Sigmund Freud's sexualizing of psychology and the New Left's politicizing of sex, followed by specific examples in part four of how different areas of contemporary society have been transformed by the conceptual developments analyzed in preceding chapters. A helpful "unscientific prologue" concludes the volume, including an all too brief consideration of how the church should respond to the ongoing revolution in its surrounding culture.

The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self is the kind of book that will put more than a pebble or two in the preacher's shoe. It provides readers with a clear, albeit thick, set of lenses through which to see and a new set of terms to name the challenges faced by today's church in the Western world, starting in the sexual realm and stretching from there. The biggest challenge is the central role that "expressive individualism" (46) takes in what Taylor calls our "social imaginary" (36-39). In today's "third-world culture" (74-78) where "plastic" (50) people no longer

imagine life to be controlled by fate or faith but by feelings, in this “liquid” (43) world of “psychological man” (45-50), it is the inner self as the individual perceives it that is the true self. The pursuit of happiness through sexual fulfillment is life’s chief end, producing not a culture but an “anti-culture” (89) of “deathworks” (96-99). Societal expectations, particularly those identified with Christian sexual codes and the normative status of lifelong, monogamous, heterosexual marriage, are considered oppressive and harmful. History’s victims of the enforcement of those codes are her true heroes. Any idea that nature has intrinsic meaning, that human beings are especially significant, or that any authority should be allowed to suppress one’s true self are to be quashed. Aesthetics/feelings trump logic, and it is therapy, not salvation, that people most need in this strange new world.

Trueman’s concluding thoughts on “three things that should mark the church” as she moves forward in the wake of society’s current revolution are particularly noteworthy. First, she should consider carefully “the connection between aesthetics and her core beliefs and practices” (402), emphasizing the latter over the former. For preachers this means consistently reminding hearers of the Bible’s authority, their church’s doctrines, and the reasons for her practices, while exercising pastoral compassion within the bounds of “deeper, transcendent commitments” (403). Second, the church must be a true community. Selves are formed, known, and affirmed in communion with others. People long for the type of stable community that a world of egocentric individualists cannot provide. Preaching helps to create and maintain a church’s community by touting those beliefs and practices that unify it and exposing the same that undermine it. Third, the church needs “to recover both natural law and a high view of the physical body” (405). Regarding the latter, Trueman warns, “Protestantism, with its emphasis on the preached word grasped by faith, is perhaps peculiarly vulnerable to downplaying the importance of the physical. But to tear identity away from physical embodiment and to root it entirely in the psychological would be to operate along the same trajectory as transgenderism” (405-6). Naturally, a renewed emphasis on the

physical body should lend itself to discussion of biblical sexual morality.

That same expressive individualism that fuels transgenderism and current initiatives to separate gender identity from sex can be found today in common catchphrases (“You do you!”), popular cinema (as when Thor says in *Avengers: Endgame*, “It’s time for me to be who I am instead of who I’m supposed to be.”), and local church (as when a preacher or Sunday school teacher says, “I just *feel* that this is what God is saying to us today.”). God has given us a “more sure word” than that! It’s *that* word which we must preach. Trueman’s work will undoubtedly help us Western preachers to expound God’s sure word more effectively by its thoughtful exegesis of the world in which we and our hearers now live.



ESV Literary Study Bible. By Leland Ryken and Philip Graham Ryken, eds. Wheaton: Crossway, 2020. 978-1-43356-871-8, 2032 pp., \$39.99 (hardback).

Reviewer: Alex Kato, Trinity Baptist Church, Renton, WA.

The *ESV Literary Study Bible* is the second edition of a 2007 book by Ryken, Wheaton Professor of English Emeritus, and son Ryken, current Wheaton president. Crossway advertises the new edition as “all the same content,” “refreshed with an all-new typesetting,” but this new edition also incorporates the 2016 version of the ESV text and a tasteful clothbound cover. The study supplements include 12 pages of introduction on literary study of the Bible; short introductions to each book discussing genre, structure, and themes; and roughly 1200 introductions to literary units (most of which follow chapter divisions). One of the volume’s strengths is this use of unit introductions, allowing the reader to read the preparatory notes and then the whole of the biblical passage rather than interrupting reading to consult footnotes.

Ryken and Ryken's decision to compile an entire study Bible centered on literary interpretation should academically interest many EHS members. They try to show their readers how "the content of any piece of writing is communicated *through form*" (ix), a claim EHS members recognize and discuss to an uncommon degree. In the context of our ongoing hermeneutical debates, the fact of the project boldly asserts the priority of the text itself over the world of the author and the world of the reader. Of particular note to EHS members, this leads the editors in most unit introductions to focus on the details of the pericope rather than the canonical or Christological implications, though each book introduction does end by locating the book "in the Master Story of the Bible." Due to their focus on the text itself, the editors also try to maintain neutrality on contemporary theological controversies, though they generally follow the ecumenically evangelical approach for which their institution is known.

Curiously, the *Literary Study Bible's* weakness is its form. After using it in both personal devotions and sermon preparation, I find the ideal reader remains unclear. Most laypeople would be confused by the hermeneutical polemic and would benefit from notes that included but did not limit themselves to literary analysis. Most preachers and homileticsians would find the study portions sound but unsurprising. The book introductions and unit notes are not robust enough to replace commentaries in sermon preparation (and most high-quality commentaries would include similar literary analysis). The introduction is too short to be an academic case for literary interpretation (Ryken's 1987 *Words of Delight* better serves this purpose). That said, even an advanced reader could find the study notes alongside a stylized and less well-known passage (such as Job or Ecclesiastes) to be a helpful quick-start guide. A yearly Bible reader might benefit from a year with this volume to see the text with fresh eyes.

A study Bible is a major investment, if not of money, of devotional or study time. While this volume does promote a skill most EHS members would like to promote among their

congregants and students—apprehending what biblical texts are communicating in their forms—the form of this book limits its audience, in turn limiting its potential to equip the saints with this ability.



The Whole Counsel of God: Why and How to Preach the Entire Bible. By Tim Patrick and Andrew Reid. Wheaton: Crossway, 2020. 978-1-43356-007-1, 256 pp., \$22.99.

Reviewer: Kevin Koslowsky, Faith Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, DE.

In their book *The Whole Counsel of God*, Tim Patrick and Andrew Reid urge “preachers to make it their goal to preach the *entire* Bible” which, they clarify, is more than “preaching *from across* the Bible” (22). Their central thesis: “All vocational preachers should set themselves the goal of preaching through the entire Bible over a thirty-five-year period...every chapter of every book, and every verse of every chapter—the whole lot!” (81). Their book develops this thesis across three main sections. Chapters 1-3 cover the importance of preaching the whole Bible. Chapters 4-8 explain how to meet this goal by providing theological strategies and practical planning suggestions. Finally, chapters 9-12 offer further practical and pastoral suggestions.

The authors’ high view of Scripture and optimistic tone will encourage readers in their ministry of the word. Their pastoral sensitivities and insights generated by decades of experience in the church and academy edify the reader over and over.

Commendably, Patrick and Reid warn against the dangers of a patchwork approach to choosing texts or preaching only the highlights of the Bible, like an abridged children’s Bible. Topical series, they suggest, should be reserved for retreats or other venues beyond Sunday morning. Their summaries of biblical theology, systematic theology, and gospel theology—the gospel

of Jesus is “the single biggest topic in the Bible” (99)—are certainly noteworthy.

Unfortunately, the book fails to make its case for preaching every verse of Scripture during a preacher’s lifetime. Its argument rests, primarily, on Paul’s claim in Acts 20:27 to have preached the whole counsel of God to the Ephesians. But, as Patrick and Reid admit, Paul ministered in Ephesus for only two or three years and could not have possibly preached every verse of the Old Testament in that length of time. Therefore, the Acts passage should be understood to mean something else. Observing that the Bible’s message centers on “the person and work of Jesus” (41), they conclude that preaching the whole counsel of God cannot require preaching every verse, but instead means that every verse preached is related to the whole and centered on the gospel.

Despite their failure to make their case for preaching every verse, Patrick and Reid’s work is not totally devoid of value. Their theological emphasis and practical ideas will serve to broaden the reader’s efforts to preach more fully across the Bible’s many books and genres. Readers will also benefit from the authors’ admonition to plan their preaching. Patrick and Reid offer a sample framework for how to do this built around a six-fold division of the Bible: Torah, Former Prophets, Latter Prophets, Writings, Gospels, Other New Testament Books (130). They discourage preaching straight through from Genesis to Revelation because “the huge time frame we are considering would mean that the benefit of it would probably be lost” (123). Ironically, this admission of the massive timeline, along with their understanding that many people will cycle through a congregation in only a few years, further undermines the authors’ initial suggested goal of preaching every verse.

Those who choose to follow the model suggested by Patrick and Reid should beware that a biblical passage can only be preached once during a minister’s lifetime. They explain, “once we have preached a passage, we should not expect to preach it again” (135). While they offer flexibility in choosing texts for each sermon which may cover only one verse or could

cover an entire section of Scripture, like “the temple vision of Ezekiel 40-48” (162), they instruct the reader to never go back to preach those chapters in greater detail since “whatever we plan to preach now we will not plan to preach again” (140).

The Whole Counsel of God offers a strong argument for a broader diet of preaching from across the Bible. The authors rightly assert, “Our goal in preaching is to serve, not to impress” (235). But perhaps their arbitrary goal of preaching every verse once in a lifetime introduces the subtle temptation to impress others with a massive lifetime accomplishment. Patrick and Reid foster a meaningful conversation and encourage each believer to submit to the whole counsel of God in their devotional reading (209). They conclude that preachers should “feed our congregations with as much of the word of God as we are able, even if it does not end up that we preach every single chapter and verse ourselves” (240). This final bit of practical wisdom and various insights offered along the way commend their book to preaching pastors and students as good food for thought.



Preaching Romans: Four Perspectives. By Scot McKnight and Joseph B. Modica, eds. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019. 978-0-8028-7545-7, 191 pp., \$20.00.

Reviewer: *Matthew Morvay, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.*

Scot McKnight, the Julius R. Mantey Professor of New Testament at Northern Seminary (Lisle, Illinois) and Joseph B. Modica, university chaplain and Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Eastern University (St. David's, Pennsylvania) have edited a fantastic resource for preachers and lay people alike, *Preaching Romans: Four Perspectives*. Pauline scholarship can be a hot bed of various schools of thought, and this work aims to present an accessible sketch of the four major interpretive schools of thought on Paul today: the Reformational (old) perspective, the new

perspective, the apocalyptic Paul, and the participationist perspective (xi).

The book is organized into two major sections: (1) interpretive perspectives on the apostle Paul and (2) preaching Romans: sermons. The first section seeks to present the four major perspectives by leading proponents of each, explaining how that perspective influences the preaching of the letter. The first perspective, the *Reformational perspective*, offers as its central emphasis the sacrificial death of Jesus for all people, who are under God's judgment, and are counted righteous through faith in Christ (4). The *new perspective*, being influenced by E. P. Sanders, has its focus on the new way of understanding Judaism (25). The *apocalyptic perspective*, rooted in the work of J. Louis Martyn, focuses on the epistemology of Paul's revelation (43). Finally, the *participationist perspective* stresses the transformative participation of the believer in the life of the Father, Son, and Spirit (79).

The second section provides three sermons from well-known preachers that illustrate how a particular approach to interpreting Romans might show up in preaching Paul. The Reformational perspective sermons are drawn from Michael F. Bird, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Carl R. Trueman; the new perspective sermons are by James D. G. Dunn, Tara Beth Leach, and Scot McKnight; the apocalyptic perspective exemplifies sermons from Jason Micheli, Fleming Rutledge, and William H. Willimon; finally, the participationist perspective provides sermons by Timothy G. Gombis, Richard B. Hays, and Suzanne Watts Henderson (85-168).

In the final chapter, Modica provides four observations in light of the various perspectives: "(1) each perspective is an earnest attempt to interpret the Letter to the Romans, (2) each perspective offers a way of understanding what the perspective thinks is the main thread in the apostle Paul's theology, (3) the perspectives on the apostle Paul are actually perspectives on first-century Judaism, and (4) each perspective needs the others to exist" (170-174).

Preaching Romans is a great one-stop resource for laypeople and preachers alike who are interested in navigating through some of the complexities of academic debates in Pauline scholarship, particularly in the book of Romans. The unique contribution of this work comes through the four perspectives that are clearly presented and the demonstration of how these views show up in sermons. The deep dive into Pauline scholarship as applied to the interpretation and preaching of Romans makes this book worth a read!



Sunday's Sermon for Monday's World: Preaching to Shape Daring Witness. By Sally A. Brown. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020. 978-0-8028-7112-1, 216 pp., \$19.99.

Reviewer: *Eric Price, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.*

In a society divided along so many lines, there perennially exists “the temptation to retreat into homogenous social enclaves” (xvii). Yet for Christians, social retreat from the world – and from those who are different than us – would be an abdication of our responsibility for public witness. In *Sunday's Sermon for Monday's World*, Sally Brown, professor of preaching and worship at Princeton Theological Seminary, explores how preachers can equip listeners for public witness in their day-to-day lives and social contexts.

To address this topic, Brown integrates theology of mission with homiletical theory. The first section of the book – “Rethinking the Shape of Christian Witness in Everyday Life” – consists of two chapters. Chapter 1 surveys and critiques contemporary missional theology. “The emphasis in missional theology falls on the congregation as the basic unit of public Christian witness” (5). While appreciating the corporate aspect of missional theology, Brown suggests it has “not enough focus on individual believers acting in public space” (32). In practice, missional theology overlooks the fact that most public witness

takes place in spaces that are not explicitly Christian. Individual believers must learn to navigate pluralistic settings well in order to witness effectively.

In chapter 2, Brown offers a theology of mission that better accounts for “the witness of ordinary, individual Christian lives carried out in...everyday places” (42). Drawing from missional theologians Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, Brown emphasizes that individuals are called to participate in the ways “God is already redemptively at work in the world” (44). This requires imagination because our “participation cannot be read out of a rule book” (44). Due to life’s complexity, sermons cannot offer exact steps for faithful witness in every given situation. Rather, “the aim of the sermon...is to imaginatively rehearse courses of action that might realistically play out in the everyday settings of the world our listeners will face on Monday and beyond” (135).

The second part of the book – “Preaching to Shape the Everyday Witness of Ordinary Lives” – provides homiletical strategies for this theology of mission. Chapter 3 proposes that “a hermeneutical lens of hope...is appropriate for interpreting *both* Scripture *and* the realities of everyday life” (72, italics original). Because of the redemptive hope of new creation, preachers should help listeners “see any situation...as it will be...when, in the power of the Spirit, the dynamics of inclusive divine love, restorative justice, and healing mercy have fully claimed that situation” (72). Readers may note that Brown’s underlying theology of religions is at times ambiguous – for example, when she says that “those of other faiths also know the God who makes and keeps promises” (74). Consequently, it is unclear to what extent the gospel message offers hope that is distinct from other religions. Further clarity on this matter would strengthen the case for distinctively Christian preaching.

Chapter 4 suggests that pastors preach on subjects pertaining to the church’s communal practices, including the sacraments and corporate fellowship. Such preaching empowers everyday witness by demonstrating how the relational dynamics we ought to model toward one another within the church should

also characterize our interactions with others in society. Chapter 5 discusses the homiletical use of stories to form listeners' imaginations. Through story, preachers imagine possible correspondences between the biblical text and contemporary context. "Ideally, the aim of story-driven preaching is to transfer the work of imagination from the preacher to the listener" (136).

Finally, chapter 6 explores the value of structuring individual sermons around a dominant metaphor. Brown says that metaphors can become lenses to help listeners re-frame daily situations as possible sites of gospel opportunity. "A well-crafted metaphor functions as a key to unlock imagination, aligning biblical witness and contemporary context." (167).

As I read Brown's homiletical suggestions, I wondered what strategies of congregational ethnography she might suggest to preachers for learning about parishioners' Monday-Saturday lives. If peoples' daily lives remain an abstraction to the preacher, then he/she will have difficulty concretely guiding people to imagine ways of acting redemptively in daily life.

Though *Sunday's Sermon for Monday's World* does not directly answer the question of ethnographic practices, the fact that it raises the question is a testament to the book's value. Brown's homiletical proposal sensitizes preachers to the disconnect that can occur in listeners' minds when preaching appears indifferent to lived realities. Sermons which oversimplify the complexities of life by offering pat answers may lose credibility with listeners. Because many situations in life elude easy answers, preachers should help people develop the wisdom, tact, and discernment to navigate these complex realities with creative gospel faithfulness. Brown's call for preachers to engage listeners' imaginations with redemptive possibilities is a promising way to honor the complexity of life while maintaining the authoritative nature of preaching.



A Lay Preacher's Guide: How to Craft a Faithful Sermon. By Karoline M. Lewis. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2020. 978-15064-6273-8, 136 pp., \$18.99.

Reviewer: *Keith Essex, The Master's Seminary, Sun Valley, CA.*

A Lay Preacher's Guide is the fourth of five volumes in the "Working Preacher Books" series currently in print. These books are designed to provide assistance to the bi-vocational preacher who has little or no formal training in preaching. Lewis writes, "There is no one way to teach preaching, but I hope this book will provide you with enough central homiletical capacities to feel more confident in what faithful preaching sounds like and feels like" (viii). She articulates her one goal in this volume for the homiletical novice is "to give you the tools you need to be the preacher God has called you to be" (xi). To that end, the book gives a succinct but precise guide from the author's perspective on how the preacher can craft a faithful sermon, a sermon in which provides the listener an encounter with God.

There are seven components listed in the book that characterize a faithful sermon. These characteristics for which the preacher should strive are described in the first seven chapters. Faithful preaching is viewed as a step-by-step process incorporating these features, but not necessarily in a linear progression. A faithful sermon is biblical, autobiographical, contextual, theological, intellectual, emotional, and inspirational. Because faithful preaching is not just something preachers do, but is to be a way of life, the eighth and final chapter presents "A Faithful Preaching Life."

The book is primarily a guide to Lewis's understanding of a faithful sermon. A sermon is a proclamation of the preacher's testimony of an encounter with God (autobiographical), thus the text of Scripture is not an object to be studied, but a narrative of people's experiences with God to which the preacher gives witness (biblical). A sermon brings the touch and presence of

God into every aspect of the human condition (contextual). As the preacher leads the sermon hearers to constantly engage with our ever-changing God, the perceptions of and beliefs about God progress (theological). A sermon is organized around a main point with subpoints or, better, a number of moves that engage the mind (intellectual), tap into powerful and intense feelings (emotional), and inspire the listeners to embody the gospel in their lives (inspirational).

Although not the specific purpose of the book, *A Lay Preacher's Guide* is a clear and concise presentation of the contemporary liberal, mainstream Protestant approach to preaching that can serve as an excellent introduction of that viewpoint for the evangelical expositor. With the growing number of bi-vocational preachers without formal homiletical training throughout the world, a similar volume from the evangelical perspective is a definite need.



A Little Book for New Preachers: Why and How to Study Homiletics. By Matthew D. Kim. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2020. 978-0-83085-347-2, 128 pp., \$12.00.

Reviewer: Rob O'Lynn, Kentucky Christian University, Grayson, KY.

In this excellent "little book," Matthew Kim, an Associate Professor of Preaching and Ministry and Director of the Haddon W. Robinson Center at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, introduces what preaching is from a theological and professional perspective. Part of the new "Little Books" series from IVP Academic, this volume focuses "on the characteristics of what makes for effective sermons and faithful preachers" (14). In writing this "little book" on preaching, Kim hopes to alleviate concerns one might have about the task of preaching and ignite a deep passion for communicating God's word.

The book breaks down into three units that focus on why one should study preaching, the characteristics of faithful

preaching, and the characteristics of faithful preachers. Each unit is comprised of three chapters, and each chapter is titled in such a way as to demonstrate connection between the contents of each section. For example, in the unit on faithful preachers, each chapter begins with "Being," indicating that the personal and spiritual qualities of the person in the pulpit rather than demonstrated rhetorical skill is of more importance to defining faithful preaching.

In terms of strengths, Kim avoids the traditional discussion about sermon models and delivery mechanics. Instead, he focuses on more central issues such as "Faithful Exegesis" and "Being a Person of Character and Integrity," two often overlooked topics in most preaching introductions. Additionally, Kim includes a chapter titled "Faithful Cultural Exegesis," which builds off his larger (and also excellent) volume *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence*. Plus, in his footnotes, he provides the building blocks of an incredible pastoral library for the new (and even seasoned) preacher.

My only criticisms are that I wish he had given at least some illustrations that would have matched his second and third units, "Characteristics of Faithful Preaching" and "Characteristics of Faithful Preachers" respectively. I think a single sermon illustrating the concepts of that unit would have added an extra dimension to this already excellent volume. Also, his chapter on "Faithful Application" is somewhat lacking. In abstract terms, it is fairly solid. Yet, until we in the homiletic community take educational theory seriously and begin connecting a pedagogical moment to our sermons (such as we see in the works of Paul Scott Wilson, Rick Blackwood, Richard Voelz, and Scott Gibson), we will continue to be just one abstract step away from the moralistic preaching that Kim (and many others, including myself) are rightfully concerned about.

That being said, I plan to use this book in my introductory preaching class the next time it comes around. And because Kim is quickly becoming a leading author and scholar in the preaching community, I look forward to continuing to glean from his writing for years to come.



The Learning Cycle: Insights for Faithful Teaching from Neuroscience and the Social Sciences. By Muriel I. Elmer and Duane H. Elmer. Downer's Grove: Intervarsity Academic, 2020. 978-0-8308-5383-0, 240 pp., \$22.00.

Reviewer: *Nathan Wright, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC.*

How shall we, as Christian teachers and pastors, teach so that our hearers gain not only knowledge of truth but also the character, integrity, and wisdom to live out the truth? In their insightful and engaging book, Drs. Muriel and Duane Elmer trace out an answer that synthesizes scriptural teaching with the most recent insights from neuroscience and the social sciences. Their answer probes what it looks like for a human to learn and to change, and the book thus takes form as a taxonomy of human change in service of the teachers of God's truth. The progression of the chapters illustrates five levels in what the Elmers call "The Learning Cycle." These levels are as follows: 1) Recall - I remember the information. 2) Recall with Appreciation - I value the information. 3) Recall with Speculation - I ponder how to use the information. 4) Recall with Practice - I begin changing my behavior. 5) Recall with Habit - I do consistently. Between levels 3 and 4, the Elmers' discussion probes barriers that hinder learners from changing and how such barriers can be overcome. The book is written for teachers and pastors, and its discussion regularly engages issues relevant for those groups.

In the authors' own words, "[i]n its most succinct form, this book is about teaching for orthodoxy (correct knowing or believing), orthopathos (appropriate emotions or feelings stemming from correct knowing and believing), and disciplined orthopraxis (living truthfully)" (197). This book is clearly about how to form doers of the word and not just hearers of the word. At several key points Dallas Willard's influence appears, including Willard's quote: "...we must never forget that Jesus

points beyond action to the source of action in character. This is a general principle that governs all he says" (189). This idea—that teaching Scripture and the Christian faith should actually result in Christians changing their choices and behavior—is foundational for this book, though it remains unfortunately prophetic in today's world.

This reviewer welcomes particularly several pieces of the work. The generally holistic view of the human person fits well with not only Scripture, but with longstanding catechetical traditions of the Church, and even reinvigorates classical views of the human. This is a welcomed development. Our hearers are not just absorbers of information but are made in God's image, with bodies, emotions, intellects—we are living humans. Education in the kingdom of God, then, aims to enlist and ennoble the entirety of the human person. The result of real catechesis is not mere confession of Christ or of a creed but a life lived in integrity, wisdom, and character. The Elmers understanding of this infuses this book and lends a coherence to an inevitably broad discussion of Scripture, neuroscience, and social sciences. The book's synthesis of recent scientific insight is helpful and easily understood. I found myself regularly revisiting my own methods of teaching homiletics, but also reviewing my own sermons, as I followed the book's lines of helpful reasoning. The chapters on barriers to change were particularly insightful—worth the price of the book itself.

In all, a welcome and helpful book not only for preachers, but for teachers of preaching.



A Commentary on James. By Aída Besançon Spencer. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020. 978-0-82544-461-6, 320 pp., \$26.99 (hardback).

Reviewer: *Cisco Cotto, Village Bible Church, Sugar Grove, IL.*

Aída Besançon Spencer, a Ph.D. graduate of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, is Senior Professor of New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Her current work is a volume in the Kregel Exegetical Library series of commentaries. The book's cover states that it "sheds exegetical and theological light on the book of James for contemporary preachers and students of Scripture."

One of the challenges in using this commentary series is the significant differences in how each volume is formatted. Unlike other commentary series that feature uniform structure despite different authors, this series appears to allow each author to structure the commentary in a way that feels appropriate for them. That means some volumes (e.g., Allen Ross on Psalms, Robert Chisholm on Judges and Ruth, and John Harvey on Romans) read as though they were specifically written to help with the homiletical task. Others, such as Duane Garrett on Exodus and Michael Shepherd on the Minor Prophets, offer only fleeting help with application and the unique theological themes contained in each pericope. Spencer's volume falls into the latter group. The preacher will benefit from this commentary because of its exegetical heft, not its attempt at application or other sermon suggestions.

The reader benefits greatly from Spencer's many years of studying the book of James. She digs deeply into the text. The reader has access to 40-50 pages of detailed exposition for each chapter of James. The author offers word-by-word and phrase-by-phrase commentary. The bulk of the volume features this detailed analysis. There are portions of the book that reflect both her mastery of the Greek and her ability to present material clearly that she has developed over many years as a teacher, such as when she discusses the promise of healing in 5:16. She shows simply and convincingly that the Greek construction precludes the idea of immediate physical healing. The reader may wish she had offered this same exegetical clarity in areas such as James' seeming assertion that a person is justified by works in 2:24.

Spencer arranges the book into just five large passages according to the chapters of James. Someone preaching through

the book would likely break it up into 10-14 preaching units. It would be more helpful to the preacher if the commentary was organized according to individual pericopes. This would help the preacher more easily access the theological points of the shorter passages.

Spencer engages with the latest scholarship but also shows the maturity of thought that comes from working with and reflecting on the text for many years. The reader will benefit from the fruit of her labor and would be wise to consult this commentary often when preaching through James.



Finding Our Voice: A Vision for Asian North American Preaching. By Matthew D. Kim and Daniel L. Wong. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020. 978-1-68359-378-2. 187 pp., \$17.99.

Reviewer: *Gregory K. Hollifield, Memphis College of Urban and Theological Studies at Union University, Memphis, TN.*

As a white professor who teaches homiletics primarily to black student-preachers, I appreciate books that address preaching related matters from cultural minority viewpoints within a North American context, especially when written by authors who hold a high view of Scripture's inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility. Matthew Kim and Daniel Wong are to be commended for writing just such a book. Their work, *Finding Our Voice*, is unique in its attempt to distinguish Asian North American (hereafter, ANA) preaching from preaching that is either entirely Asian or European American.

Rejecting Russell Yee's assertion that there are "no particular Asian American...styles of preaching," Wong asserts "there are enough particularities of ANA preaching, preachers, and listeners that make it a vital area of study" (104). What, specifically, are the particularities of ANA preaching? Where are they found? According to the authors, ANA preaching, "like preaching in traditions associated with other minority groups,

should be distinct in the areas of hermeneutics, illustrations, applications, delivery, and in the choice of topics to address” (141). How exactly is ANA preaching distinct in these areas? To answer that question requires an understanding of ANAs themselves, their hermeneutics, and their theological influences.

Before turning their attention to the aforementioned topics, Kim and Wong provide an illuminating Preface to their book. Through it, they help the reader to begin to understand what it is like to be considered both a member of the “model minority” and a “perpetual foreigner” (42-43) at the same time. Here they also helpfully clarify why they prefer the term Asian North American to the older category of Asian American.

Wong develops the topic of ANA identity in chapter one. Most insightful, and somewhat painful to read, are his descriptions of the expectations that first generation Asian immigrants often place on their American-born children relative to language acquisition, education, career choice, marriage, and children. The resulting shame for children who fail to meet those expectations can be profound and lifelong.

As for ANA hermeneutics, Kim contends that “ANA preachers require a bicultural or ‘hybrid’ hermeneutic that takes into consideration both Western and Eastern cultures and philosophies” (50-51). The two prevalent Western hermeneutical perspectives to be accounted for in Kim’s view are the redemptive-historic and law/gospel. The hermeneutics that he identifies as “Eastern” are Confucian (emphasizing a harmonious existence through a system of hierarchy and ethical living), pilgrimage/marginalization/liberation (resulting from the ANA’s outsider status), postcolonial (requiring the reinterpretation of biblical texts previously abused by a group’s oppressors), and blessing (seeking from God a spiritual version of the secular American Dream). Against this backdrop, Kim calls for a form of ANA contextualization that respects the “vowels of hermeneutics” (64)—observation (What in this text will grab my ANA hearers’ attention?), experience (How do my ANA hearers’ experiences confirm or conflict with the situations in this text?), understanding (Which of my ANA hearers’ preconceived

notions or understandings does this text call into question or reject?), interpretation (What assumptions, conflicts, and questions will my ANA hearers have as they wrestle with this text?), and application (What will obedience to this text look like for an ANA hearer?).

Turning to theology, Kim maintains “there is no pure, culture-free theology” (76). After listing some of the various theologies that ANAs have adopted and adapted across the years then speaking to the dangers of pluralism and syncretism, Kim, a theological exclusivist, calls for an integrated theology that accentuates both the Asian and North American elements of a person. Such a theology celebrates the image of God in every person, recognizes the ANA’s liminal location on this continent as being reflective of the Christian’s situation in this world as both on pilgrimage and at home in Christ, and finds in the Christological statement of Chalcedon a helpful way of understanding the concept of “duality” in a single person. Biblical examples of people possessing and struggling with the demands of dual identity cited by Kim include Moses (a Hebrew reared as Pharaoh’s son) and Esther (a Jew seated as Persia’s queen).

Finding Our Voice is not the final word on ANA preaching. It is rather, as the book’s subtitle indicates, a “vision”—showing how the authors view ANA preaching today and their hopes for where it’s headed. If the two sample sermons by Kim and Wong that round out the volume are indicative of ANA preaching, that future appears bright. Their work demonstrates that preaching can, and must be, both biblically sound and culturally relevant.



Say It!: Celebrating Expository Preaching in the African American Tradition. By Eric C. Redmond. Chicago: Moody, 2020. 978-08024-1920-0, 238 pp., \$15.00.

Reviewer: Cameron R. Thomas, Samford University, Birmingham, AL.

Eric Redmond, associate professor of Bible at Moody Bible Institute, has compiled an insightful volume to clarify the rich tradition of African-American preaching relative to sound exposition. Redmond and nine pastors from the African-American expository preaching tradition display the diversity, distinctives, and dynamic elements found in the African-American pulpit.

To begin, Redmond and his fellow contributors set out to dispel any notion that the African-American preaching tradition competes with the expository preaching tradition (31).

Redmond defines expository preaching as an “invitation for the preacher to explain the central idea of the text to an audience with a means that would be understood by the audience, while prompting the audience to obey God’s Word within that audience’s contemporary social and ecclesial contexts.” He goes on to clarify, “Expository preaching and African-American stylistics are all-star dance partners, not battlefield enemies” (27). According to Redmond, the African-American preaching tradition emphasizes justice and hope because of the lived experiences of African-Americans in these United States, and that along with emphases, African-Americans have long practiced faithful biblical exposition.

Part one of the book discusses the foundation and background of expository preaching and discusses the African-American tradition relative to this form of preaching. In part two, contributors consider what’s required to preach Old Testament texts, highlighting the importance of both biblical and cultural exegesis. Part three addresses sermon development from the varying genres in the New Testament, with the common thread being a desire to communicate the hope of Christ in every sermon.

This book’s major strength lay in its presentation of select African-American preachers’ contributions in the fields of biblical exegesis and exposition. Along the way, Redmond and his contributors analyze sermons, raise questions for further

consideration, and expose readers to the distinctives of the liturgical calendar as it's used in the African-American church.

Say It! informs readers about the extent to which expository preaching has been practiced throughout the history of the African-American church. The book insists that the African-American preaching tradition has much to contribute to expository preaching, without "requiring a particular verbal delivery" (26).

The study of African-American preaching is gaining ground among evangelicals. *Say It!* invites readers to explore the theological undergirding of African-American expository preaching and serves as a launching pad for further investigation into the subject.



Life-Situation Preaching for African-Americans. By Willie J. Newton Jr. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2019. 978-1-5326-5497-8, 135 pp., \$21.00 (paperback) / \$40.15 (hardback).

Reviewer: Larrin Robertson, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN.

Prompted by a quest to identify the "life-giving, life-sustaining spiritual and intellectual substance of the word of God" (xii) for persons who listen to sermons, with *Life-Situation Preaching for African-Americans*, Willie J. Newton Jr. demonstrates the potential of life-situation preaching. By grounding life-situation preaching within the tradition of African-American preaching, Newton also aims to enhance the relevance and reach of life-situation preaching within the tradition of African-American preaching. Readers of this volume will be satisfied that Newton has accomplished both goals.

With *Life-Situation Preaching*, Newton is simultaneously concerned about young African-American preachers and "the preacher of any ethnicity who is accountable to African-American listeners" (xvii). For the benefit of African-American

preachers and their listeners, Newton calls for contemporary experiences of African-American life-situations as a starting point for their preaching. Despite obvious contextual and cultural distinctions, for non-African-American preachers, Newton believes life-situation preaching has value for all conscientious preachers. Within this call, Newton is aware that African-American listeners of preaching listen to preachers who are not African-American. Thus, while the title suggests a narrow audience, the content can be useful on a broader scale.

Given the title and aim of this work, Newton concedes that his focus on the life-situation preaching of Harry Emerson Fosdick, a white preacher whose primary audience was not African-American, is rather surprising. Newton manages Fosdick's distance from the experiences of African-American life-situations by connecting Fosdick's personal and ministerial contexts (i.e., white and quite distant from the pastoral ministry of most African-American preachers) to the book's intended audience. Anticipating that such a distance raises questions of appropriateness, Newton highlights Fosdick's homiletical influence on iconic African-American preaching personalities, including Benjamin E. Mays, Samuel DeWitt Proctor, and Martin Luther King Jr. Moreover, Newton locates life-situation as a viable homiletical theory already present within African-American preaching. The notable distinction, however, is that "the point of departure for African-American preaching" differs from Fosdick's homiletic, which "represents the white homiletic tradition" (97).

Readers interested in a helpful critique of life-situation preaching will benefit from Newton's analysis of the method's weaknesses. Newton offers compelling discussions regarding Fosdick's appeal to life-situations as the starting point for preaching, the seeming lack of appreciation for the role of the Holy Spirit in preaching, and the place of the church and doctrine in preaching. To these discussions, Newton engages the work of William Willimon, Marvin McMickle, James Forbes, and Richard Lischer to good effect. The attention paid to weaknesses of Fosdick's life-situation preaching notwithstanding, Newton does

not offer similar support for the strengths of life-situation preaching. The reader is left to surmise that Fosdick and Newton, by extension, are on solid footing. That said, a case is made separately for the method's theoretical potential within the tradition of African-American preaching.

Newton's composite sketches of the theories advanced by leading African-American scholar-practitioners strengthen his call for life-situation preaching. They are also helpful primers for persons unaware of the depth of similar calls from within the tradition of African-American preaching. Newton is right: African-American preaching may be difficult to define, but characteristic of the practice is the concern for relevance achieved through the address of African-American experiences. Including these voices can encourage succeeding generations of African-American preaching scholars and practitioners to hold close the homiletic imperative to address the vast life-situations that are unique to African-American persons and communities.

Also noteworthy is Newton's approach to preaching in response to difficult, contemporary sociological realities. As a point of reference for life-situation preaching, unfortunate and ill-framed conversations of so-called Black-on-Black crime must not escape the mind or practice of preachers who "are accountable to African-American listeners." Newton handles this subject matter well with a direct address, while carefully dismantling dangerous pathologies that influence uninformed preachers and their preaching. This conversation stands to add discernment and depth to preaching that does not presently hold this type of sociological tension in view.

Where some readers will find wanting the focus on the homiletic method of a non-African-American preacher, Newton remains objective enough to rightly locate Fosdick as a product of his time who was on the right side of the question of race. Still, for those hesitant to accept Fosdick, Newton offers his own set of five traits of a life-situation sermon that can help to bridge the gap between Fosdick's world and that of Newton's young African-American preacher and the listener with whom the preacher must identify. With *Life-Situation Preaching for African*

Americans, Newton adds a helpful volume worthy of consideration for preaching practitioners.



Waging War in an Age of Doubt. By Robert David Smart. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2020. 978-1-60178-762-0, 155 pp., \$16.00.

Reviewer: Joshua Peeler, Mount Olive Baptist Church, Pittsboro, NC.

In *Waging War in an Age of Doubt*, Robert Smart examines spiritual warfare in light of twenty-first century skepticism. Part handbook, part historical and theological treatise, this work explores topics surrounding spiritual warfare. His approach combines several disciplines: "...this 'military textbook' combines knowledge of the Bible, historical theology, contemporary culture, apologetics, practical theology, and biblical counseling" (17). Smart believes that the better versed a Christian is in spiritual warfare, the more prepared that person is when faced with an encounter. Throughout this work, Smart provides detailed stories that reflect real world application of spiritual warfare. These stories serve as a complement to his theological, apologetic, and historical analysis. Drawing from a variety of sources, these stories of demonic encounters by missionaries, preachers, and evangelists underscore the value of his systematic biblical approach. After all, Christians must be prepared to engage the powers, principalities, and rulers of this present age.

Drawing from over thirty years of pastoral experience, Smart's writing addresses a variety of subjects. Although his dissertation and formal education focused on Jonathan Edwards, his later works examined spiritual formation. *Waging War in an Age of Doubt* provides theological insight and practical application for spiritual formation in power encounters with the demonic.

Smart organizes this book around a series of related themes, such as biblical foundations for spiritual warfare, Satan's strategies when Christians are vulnerable, and waging war in God's strength. (7-8) Each chapter includes a brief examination of relevant biblical passages that addresses the overall theme of the chapter. Smart's discussion of historical theology, for example, contains the reflections of several theologians' perspectives on key warfare passages. (34-70). Discussion questions are placed at the end of each chapter. These questions re-emphasize the main concepts from each chapter and encourage personalized application of the content. In "Waging War in God's Strength, Armor, and Weapons," Smart asks whether a personal application of this chapter is "reasonable, measurable and attainable" (124). Overall, Smart's discussion questions are relevant, applicable, and well written.

Throughout this work, Smart makes effective use of personal testimony. In chapter six for instance, he discusses the lies he believed about himself and his lack of significance. He argues that it was not enough to simply identify the truth about his own significance, but that he had to repent, identify, and renounce it (127). Smart also describes his early interest in spiritual warfare during his period as an evangelist. During the early part of his ministry, Smart found himself faced with powerful spiritual forces and strange encounters. Relating one story, he remembered a young man "shaking and bent over in an unusual way" (3). After praying over him, the student eventually repented, was saved, and was very fruitful that week. Each of Smart's testimonies adds a level of authenticity and practicality to this work. His sophisticated arguments of biblical, apologetic, and historical theology are dramatically strengthened by including his own personal testimonies of "power encounters" (3).

Although the content, activity, and action of spiritual warfare can at times be overwhelming, Smart concludes this work reminding Christians that they must hold fast, resisting the devil and his schemes, for they are more than conquerors (155). Smart's ambitious work is excellent, examining topics related to

spiritual warfare in deep, engaging, and practical ways. It is truly both a guidebook for spiritual encounters and a theological treatise on the subject. At a time of doubt and skepticism about the place of power encounters in ministry, many pastors would do well to pick up this work.



Pulpit Apologist: The Vital Link Between Preaching and Apologetics. By Thomas J. Gentry II. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2020. 978-1-5326-9504-9, 104 pp., \$16.00.

Reviewer: *Michael Hogeland, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA.*

The work of the apologist is necessary for defending the faith, but what role should apologetics play in preaching? Thomas Gentry's *Pulpit Apologist* seeks to demonstrate apologetics' essential link to preaching, especially for sake of evangelism and discipleship (x).

Gentry provides readers with two particularly helpful ideas for integrating apologetics into their sermons. First, he recommends the use of moral apologetics. He defines moral apologetics as "either positively or negatively making an apologetic argument for the existence of God derived from the existence of objective moral facts and their implications for the existence of a moral being whose character and commands provide the basis for those facts" (24). According to Gentry, the use of moral apologetics in a sermon will strengthen its appeals to reason and emotion when dealing with "sin, righteousness, and redemption" (30), which is vital for preachers in a post-modern world as they attempt to engage their hearers with a text's practical implications and guide them toward a biblical worldview.

Second, Gentry recommends the use of abductive argumentation. Instead of using a deductive or inductive structure when preaching apologetic themes, Gentry proposes

that preachers use abductive arguments to promote humility and to avoid oversimplifying the truth (42). He explains abduction with expertise and clarity, including a biblical example in the form of Joshua's second farewell sermon (37-42). According to the author, there are two ways that preachers can argue abductively. He explains both using STEPS as his acronym. In the first, he outlines how a negative apologetic sermon defends the faith with a Specific challenge, Tells the challenger's argument, Exposes the challenger's weakness, Presents the biblical answer, and Summarizes (45-52). In the second, he outlines how a positive apologetic sermon presents faith's rationality with a Specific topic, Tells the subject's importance, Explains the biblical reasoning, Practically applies the topic, and Summarizes (52-59).

While deductive and inductive arguments are beneficial in preaching, Gentry shows that abductive arguments can be equally so (35). Abduction is routinely used by doctors, mechanics, and technicians when diagnosing a problem. Preachers who take the time to learn how to use abductive argumentation will undoubtedly discover it to be a valuable tool to add to their preaching toolkit.

Though Gentry provides helpful links between the works of apologetics and homiletics, two of his ideas are less helpful. The first is his identification of apologetic preaching as a particular sermon genre. I would agree that sermons often require an apologetic appeal, but I am unconvinced that the entire sermon must be shaped as an apology in order to persuade an audience toward a biblical worldview.

Second, Gentry suggests that preachers begin with a topic when preparing their apologetic sermons. I find this to be a potentially problematic approach because it seeks to present and defend a text's theological truth less than it attempts to address a specific challenge to the Christian faith. The four sample sermons provided by Gentry address the problem of evil, the reliability of Scripture (twice), and the resurrection of Christ. While preachers undoubtedly need to discuss these topics, how are they to address them apologetically in the course of an expository

sermon? Does apologetics in preaching yield topical sermons only, or can apologetics serve the expository sermon as well?

Pulpit Apologist is a valuable introductory book on the subject. Any pastor or homiletician interested in this topic will benefit from the author's knowledge and experience.



Taken Up and Preached: A Collection of Biblical Sermons. By Blayne A. Banting. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2019. 978-1-53269-035-8, 203 pp., \$25.00.

Reviewer: *Derek Kitterlin, Leavell College, New Orleans, LA.*

Banting begins his book by noting the pedagogical conundrum that accompanies homiletical instruction. One can formulate a homiletical method but demonstrating how to implement that method requires written examples to examine. Still, an examination must take place to determine if the homiletician practices what he preaches or, better yet, if what he is teaching correlates with his preaching. Banting, therefore, offers *Taken Up and Preached* as a supplement to his previous work *Take Up and Preach: A Primer for Interpreting Texts*. The sermons offered in *Taken Up and Preached* illustrate the homiletical bridge methodology developed in his previous book.

The sermons presented in this second volume are sermons that Banting delivered to his own congregation. They are real world samples from one who is both a professor and preacher. These sermons are shared as manuscripts rather than transcripts, being what he intended to say rather than what he actually said.

As part of this work's introduction, Banting includes an overview of his homiletical bridge method. I have not read his earlier work in which he details his method, but I found that to be unnecessary—at least for sake of this review—thanks to the overview presented here. In his homiletic method, Banting uses a double-pylon cable suspension bridge as an analogy. The cables that hold the bridge tell the story of redemption in Scripture. The

two pylons that support the bridge are God and human needs. The God pylon is the Divine Vision Disclosed (DVD) within a pericope and the human pylon represents the Deep Needs Addressed (DNA). The bridge deck contains five lanes, with the deck being the redeemed community, that is, the listening church. The five lanes account for a pericope's (and sermon's) form, flow, focus, function, and feel. The form lane identifies the sub-genre of the text itself. The flow lane examines the macro and micro sense of the text. The macro is the literary sense of the text in the larger context, and the micro sense is the specific internal flow of the text that is being preached. The focus lane studies what the text is saying and doing. The function lane examines what the text intends to do to the reader, while the feel lane is the emotive quality of the text (and sermon).

Banting groups his sample sermons into three types: discursive, poetic, and narrative. Each section contains ten sermons related to the type. His sermons are humorous, relevant, and witty—with regular uses of antanaclasis and paronomasia. Banting uses various schemes and tropes—rhetorical devices—for added seasoning. He unites the truth of each text with the context of his congregation. His sermons touch the head, move the heart, and urge the hands to action. His Canadian humor is unique and funny. (I wondered to myself how a town came to be named “Moose Jaw.”)

One particular concern came to mind when reading this collection of sermons. All the reader is able to see is the finished product, the supposed result of Banting using his homiletical bridge to develop each sermon. Is the reader to heuristically integrate the bridge method/model onto or into the finished sermon and find the implementation of the five lanes, our location on the bridge deck, and the other traits of the method/model? The book would have risen above other sermon books if the author had noted how the components of his method directly impacted the development and delivery of each sermon. As a collection of sermons built on a particular homiletical method, I was looking for how Banting's method shaped his preaching. I read this specific collection of sermons looking for

more than sermon content. Banting noted in the introduction how the questions that his students have asked him regarding his method led to the production of this book. I would like to have seen a little more detail, more background work related to his use of the bridge. Regardless, this is a collection of sermons well worth reading.



Preaching to Head and Heart. By Thomas R. Swears. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2019. 978-1-5326-9010-5, 157 pp., \$19.00.

Reviewer: *Dongjin Park, McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, ON.*

Thomas R. Swears' book, *Preaching to Head and Heart*, leads preachers to reflect on the longest journey—from the head to the heart—in their preaching ministries. Some preachers tend to focus on delivering theological information to the congregation, disregarding preaching's emotional aspect. In contrast, other preachers make an effort to evoke emotions in the listeners' hearts at the expense of theological understanding. In this book, Swears suggests that the combination of head and heart in preaching can bring about "the most compelling, evoking responses" (18) in preaching events.

In his consideration of what's involved in the journey from head to heart, first, the author defines preaching as a craft rather than a science (information) or an art (emotion) because it involves "the deep bonding of heart, mind, memory, volition, and visceral response to the word" (34). Then, Swears guides his readers on this journey step by step, driving them to consider preacher, listener, sermon, and preaching event. As for preacher (Chapter 2: "The Person in the Pulpit"), the author emphasizes the preacher's integrity (harmony between word and deed), authenticity (the presence of Christ in the preacher's life), and authority (encountering the presence of God in the preacher's words).

Regarding the listener (Chapter 3: “Valuing the Listener”), Swears emphasizes the preacher’s valuing his/her listeners as active partners, not just passive recipients of information. Swears points out that the relationship of “openness and trust” (71) between preacher and listener is required for effective communication. He also argues that preachers should preserve “an internal honesty about the ambiguities of daily life” (75), not attempting to speak with dishonest confidence about something unsure.

Concerning the preparation of a sermon (Chapter 4: “How to Develop the Head and Heart Connection”), the author first suggests practical methods for obtaining a message from the chosen biblical text. Then, he describes how to form a sermon to deliver the message, emphasizing the significance of “movement” in the sermon: “from a felt discrepancy toward a resolution” (98). Lastly, Swears suggests “metaphor” as the most appropriate language for effective preaching. For preachers, for instance, when introducing the person of Christ, it is better to describe “the Bright Morning Star” than “the incarnation reality constituent of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity” (111).

As for the act of preaching (Chapter 5: “Communicating to the Head and Heart Connection Effectively”), the author presents such principles of effective communication as partnering, preaching as an art of action, freeing the text, and scripting. In the last chapter (Chapter 6: “Making the Connection”), Swears includes two of his own sermons as examples that connect head and heart successfully.

Swears’ goal in this brief volume is to help preachers who are supposed to deliver sermons weekly to the same congregation over an extended period. As such, this work is a helpful and detailed resource that will guide preachers in an examination of their current preaching ministry in terms of the “journey from head to heart” according to the four aforementioned categories (preacher, listener, sermon, and preaching event). Unfortunately, the author does not deal much with the Holy Spirit’s role in preaching events. It is the Spirit that ultimately not only combines intellect and emotion in the

preacher as well as in the listener but also makes preaching effective. Moreover, the author's understanding of preaching, focusing only on the conversational (horizontal) aspect, seems to disregard the proclamatory (vertical) part. Nonetheless, *Preaching to Head and Heart* is a valuable work for reminding preachers that the ultimate goal of preaching is to transform the hearer's whole being (mind, heart, and will). For this reason, the journey from head to heart is crucial in every preaching event.



Revelation (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament). By Buist M. Fanning. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020. 978-0-310-24417-2, 623 pp., \$54.99.

Reviewer: Andrew Thompson, Union City Church, Brunswick, GA.

Zondervan has recently released the Revelation volume of its *Exegetical Commentary* series, a volume authored by Buist M. Fanning. The structure of the book is standard. Beginning with a substantial (49-page) introduction and bibliography, the bulk of the work is commentary, followed by a brief essay on the theology of Revelation and various indices. Within the body, the commentary on each passage follows the ZECNT format: literary context, main idea of the passage, translation and graphical layout (a simplified semantic structural analysis of each passage in English), comments on structure, exegetical outline of the passage, explanation of the text, and theology and application. Fanning also includes "in depth" discussion boxes on special topics like Armageddon and the Millennium.

The book's strengths are manifold. Readers who use it to study and preach will immediately appreciate Fanning's clear style and his strong grasp of the linguistic, exegetical, and theological tar pits that can suck unwary preachers into eschatological despair.

The commentary's format offers another boon: the editorial team designed it with serious students and preachers in

mind. The main ideas for each passage and the exegetical outline orient readers to the text at hand within the flow of the book. The graphical layout tool is priceless. It diagrams each sentence in terms of its clauses and their functions, giving an instant and intuitive grasp of the flow of John's thought. The Greek text is displayed with no transliteration, and Fanning comments often on the grammar of the passage, which will be helpful to those who study in the original language. Most of the technical grammatical and textual material is in the footnotes, so the main body can be followed by those whose Greek textbooks are in a cardboard box in the attic.

Fanning's introduction is also, in my judgment, the right length and depth for preachers. He states his own interpretive approach clearly then quickly covers the basics of author, setting, and genre. His discussion on text critical issues and the grammar and style of Revelation are brief but excellent.

All of these strengths make the book worth buying and using as a study companion when preaching from Revelation and for classroom use in seminaries. Nonetheless, readers should bear in mind the following.

First, the introduction promises more than the body delivers. Fanning's comments on the text of Revelation and on hermeneutics for interpreting Old Testament and extrabiblical allusions are engaging, and one hopes to see those stances unfold in the body of the commentary. They rarely do. Where they appear, discussion is relegated to text-critical footnotes and parenthetical citations of the Old Testament texts.

Second, Fanning's theological approach to Revelation could render much of his work irrelevant to readers who have different perspectives. This is true of any book but particularly one that addresses so many controversial topics. Fanning, an evangelical with a hearty respect for the Scriptures as the word of God, bills himself as a preterist-idealist-futurist, but the accent falls heavily on the latter. The commentary interprets much of John's work as referring to future periods immediately before the return of Christ (though not without 1st-century and 21st-century preludes). As a progressive dispensationalist, he finds

clear divisions between Israel and the church in God's future plan and looks for the premillennial return of Christ. If preachers view these topics (or the rapture, the great tribulation, Armageddon, or 666) from within other frameworks, they may not find Fanning as helpful as they had hoped.

Finally, the commentary lacks a clear statement of the macro-theme of the book as a whole and clear argumentation for its macro-structure (which contributes to that macro-theme more directly for Revelation than most other books of the Bible). Neither the introduction nor the theological conclusion answers the questions, "What is John talking about, and what is he saying about what he is talking about?" Such an orientation would have helped readers entering into the jungle of a strange and challenging New Testament book.

This is a commentary for preachers and professors who are not primarily New Testament scholars but who want to get serious about Revelation and preach expository sermons based on John's Apocalypse. The format and the level of detail are right for that purpose. Additionally, preachers will derive helpful indicators for application from the commentary, which gives responsible direction for that application without spelling everything out. As helpful as Fanning's work is, it should not be the only commentary one uses. I do not believe a single all-sufficient commentary on Revelation has yet been written, nor do I see it coming soon.