

Thomas H. Troeger and H. Edward Everding, Jr. *So That All May Know: Preaching that Engages the Congregation*. Nashville, TN, Abingdon Press. 108 pages, \$17.00

Homiletics has sometimes struggled to establish itself as a stand-alone, academic discipline. Yet it must be acknowledged that from the beginning homiletics has been a very synthetic discipline, borrowing and benefiting from the work of researchers and practitioners in many disciplines. *So That All May Know* is one more example of homiletics employing the insights gained from other fields of knowledge. Troeger and Everding would have the reader first acknowledge the diversity of the assembly; they then propose three ways in which that diversity can be addressed, even bridged: multiple intelligences, children's ways of knowing, and adult ways of knowing.

They first point out that we all learn in multiple ways: feeling, thinking, imagining, and doing (4). We use all four modes but may rely more heavily on one. While the authors do not employ the Myers-Briggs Temperament Indicator, certainly this observation evokes the Jungian research on which MBTI relies. Indeed, a related program entitled Four Communication Styles employs the labels that Jung used: Feeler, Thinker, Intuitor and Senser, which are obviously similar to the labels used in the book under review.

The authors employ the work of Howard Gardener to explain and explore multiple intelligences. There are eight categories of intelligence listed: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist. Helpful charts are provided that contain summaries of the qualities that define each of the intelligences. While there is no homily example provided, there are snippets which suggest how one might address a single intelligence. The obvious challenge would be to weave several intelligences into one sermon. We could use a little more guidance in this regard. The footnotes do provide references for additional reading.

With children's ways of knowing, the authors note that children [of what age?] "have not yet developed the conceptual capacities to understand the difference between a pageant and real life, between a symbol and an idea." I know I have heard plenty of children's sermons that have given evidence of a lack of this knowledge, and I suspect that I have preached a few. Yet we are not talking about children's sermons, but about sermons for adults and children that acknowledge a child's way of knowing. We meet two alliterative characters to capture the challenge: Magical Maggie and Literal Larry. Even imaginative stories get filtered through these two epistemological "filters." Again, charts provide summaries of each character's qualities. A sample sermon with explanatory commentary is provided. Also listed are five benefits that accrue in using this way of knowing in one's preaching. A sample sermon is provided.

The final section covers adults' ways of knowing. Key is realizing that different perspectives are present even in the most homogenous grouping. We encounter another alliterative family: Affiliating Al, Bargaining Betty, Conceptualizing Charles, and Dialectical Donna. There did not seem to be any external source for these categories, so I wondered how comprehensive or representative they might be, how valid and reliable as categories. Do they relate to MBTI categories or some other psychological or pedagogical scheme? Six characteristics of the several adult ways of knowing are listed: worldview, reasoning, community/service, justice, symbols, and biblical interpretation.

The authors explain and give examples of the characteristics for each of the characters mentioned above. Three sample sermons are provided.

Thankfully, the authors acknowledge that no one sermon is likely to fully address all the permutations possible. Typically the first question raised when I speak of “hearer-centered” preaching is, how can the preacher possibly adapt to all the ways in which people differ from one another? But over time, the preacher should be attentive to the many ways that people learn and intentionally attend to them. It is a matter of design, not default. Finally, this is not a matter of telling people what they want to hear, but preaching in a way that they can hear what is being communicated, in a sense, speaking their language, their dialect.

In the final analysis, throughout the book I found myself wishing for more information and more examples. The book is a bit short for what it purports to do. Their main point is certainly well-taken: there are many ways in which we learn. Perhaps they could have taken just multiple intelligences or children’s v. adult ways of knowing and expanded their discussion. In any case, we are better preachers (and teachers) for their reminder that our assemblies are diverse bodies that require careful reflection on how we can best preach with them.

Richard Stern
Saint Meinrad School of Theology