

Melinda A. Quivik. *Serving the Word: Preaching in Worship*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009. 96 pages. \$12.00

Melinda A. Quivik's contribution to the "Elements of Preaching" series examines the centrality of the biblical texts in the construction of worship services. Quivik uses the intentional double entendre of her title, *Serving the Word*, to explore both the role of the word (the Scripture texts for the day) as well as the role of the Word (the presence of Christ in worship). She approaches the daunting task of describing the various elements of the liturgy via a descriptive framework and through a case study of her own Ash Wednesday service and sermon. Because of its 'preaching as central to worship' orientation, this volume is more applicable in those settings where the introduction to preaching course is integrated with the introduction to worship course.

Quivik's preference is for a weekly word and table format, though she does explain how her approach works equally well in churches where a word and response format is standard. The first two chapters are devoted to a theoretical defense of the centrality of the word/Word. Quivik explains, "This book will invite the reader to see how God's word is the crux not only of preaching but also of the worship service as a whole, that the whole liturgy serves the Word as Christ is revealed in the midst of God's holy people" (2).

Chapter one focuses on the necessity of worship planning with 'order and intention' (9) while chapter two is a defense of the 'ecumenical ordo' of Gathering, Word, Table, Response. Quivik also advocates for the observance of the Church Calendar and the use of the Revised Common Lectionary as a guide for weekly texts (31). Throughout the book Quivik offers reassurances that other options are acceptable.

In the third chapter Quivik shares the process she went through in crafting the 2009 Ash Wednesday service at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. She includes the sermon she preached and in the appendices she provides the reader with the full *Order of Worship* and the prayers of intercession. Quivik focuses on the process of discovering the *hertzpunkt*, the heart of the text(s), which can then be used to link all of the readings, at least during the minister's weekly sermon preparation. This theme is then applied to the majority of the elements in the worship service.

The final four chapters examine practical ways in which the Gathering, Word, Meal and Sending can be oriented around the central textual theme. As an example of this text-at-the-center model Quivik focuses on the Emmaus road experience as a guide to these chapters. Greetings, prayers, hymns, Scripture reading, preaching, faith confessions, passing the peace, celebrating the Eucharist, returning an offering, and commissioning for service, are all reflected on, some necessarily quite briefly. Quivik encourages a balance of the familiar and the new, the use of a diversity of genres, a mixing of music, prayers and creeds from many eras, the use of various media, etc.

This little volume provides both a theoretical basis for the creation of holistic worship services crafted around a central theme taken from the weekly readings and a genuine example of how that theory might be practiced. For those students in a mainline tradition, especially those who plan to use the Revised Common Lectionary as their guide for preaching texts, this book provides a helpful introduction to the process of crafting a weekly service around those texts. One of the goals of the "Elements" series is to provide a wide range of voices, each of whom addresses a different aspect of the art of preaching. It is not surprising then that Quivik's dominant model is her own ELCA location.

While the concept of a text centered holistic service is clearly one which transcends traditions, students coming out of a ‘free church’ tradition are not likely to find this volume as readily useful – they will need to find the *hertzpunkt* and apply it to their tradition’s practices. One of the most impressive aspects of Quivik’s approach is her subtle but ever-present integration of a biblical foundation, augmented by solid theological inquiry, informed by the dialogue of history. Her theoretical explanations and especially her worship and preaching examples model an integrative approach to the standard disciplines which all preachers would do well to follow.

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