

Leah D. Schade. *Creation-Crisis Preaching: Ecology, Theology, and the Pulpit*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2015. 208 pages. \$23.99.

Creation-Crisis Preaching draws from ecofeminist theology and homiletic theory to provide an assessment of the urgency for the need for repentance from collective guilt of “ecological sin” and to embrace the Earth and its most vulnerable human and non-human creation alike with a renewed sense of reverence. In seven chapters plus an introduction, Schade makes a strong connection between human rights, civil liberties, and the moral obligation to safeguard the Earth’s existence. The text provides a theologically informed redirection of conventional narratives about the environment by addressing topics ranging from the expansion of nuclear weapons, “anthropogenic climate change,” and economic injustices as contrary to Biblical mandates.

The book addresses the problematic aspects of nicely packaged, emotionally manipulative rhetoric that intends to control ideas and information in support of hegemonic structures as agents of environmental discrimination. For example, sociologist Robert D. Bullard’s findings indicate that “government and business elites in the United States have targeted black communities for polluting industries, municipal landfills, and toxic-waste dumps, even while these enterprises are touted as job-creators for these impoverished communities” (20). Furthermore, job-creation talk ignores problems associated with systemic wage disparities, health risks, and broad forms of habitat destruction. Solvents and other forms of industrial waste affect air, ground water, and soil--each essential for life for all creatures.

Schade devotes the book to the art and discipline of crisis preaching to “help listeners find common ground for communicating about how we may proclaim God’s word of justice, hope, reconciliation, and healing for the Earth’s community, inclusive of humanity” (35). A significant portion of the book presents ecofeminism at the heart of moral resolution for humankind and essential for human survival. Early in the book, Schade presents three major branches of radical ecology: deep ecologists, social ecologists, and ecofeminist ecologists who are committed to dismantling patriarchal values, exploitive tendencies, and authoritarianism such that humanity will love and respect nature as self. Throughout the text, the author stresses that human creatures have a high level of interconnectivity with nature while abandoning nature with limited appreciation for the intrinsic value of all of creation. Such disregard for the Earth functions as an extension of sexism and hostile intergroup relations. The author could have placed more emphasis on the elements of Western society that deny the existence of an ecological crisis. An essential part of the social gospel entails raising consciousness among the masses with regards to humanity’s relationship with nature, the state of the Earth, and a call to direct action.

The book’s primary audience includes clergy, practical theologians with an emphasis in homiletics, activists, and scholars of social movements and peace studies. All should find the book equally beneficial. The timeliness of *Creation-Crisis Preaching* rests in its moral appeal to expand one’s definition of neighbor beyond the human creature, with preaching functioning as a viable means to that end. Schade provides the reader with the following three approaches to preaching within the context of crisis: consciousness-raising, call for action, and transformation on the individual and cultural levels. Furthermore, the author urges preachers to use parables in order to invite critical

thinking while utilizing intuitive faculties with regards to such moral issues. A helpful feature of the text includes the exposure of common rhetorical strategies that promote inactivity through subliminal scare tactics and the discouragement of change. The author provides sample sermons designed to create enough outrage to provoke action and progressive social movements. It would have been helpful for the author to mention the role propaganda plays in a politically charged and polarized context that ultimately impacts the church. Although environmentalism transcends liberal and conservative ideals, its subjection to the ebb and flow of partisan politics has further functioned as a means for promoting indifference to the Earth as a fragile entity. *Creation-Crisis Preaching* challenges the audience's assumptions about the boundaries of moral consideration.

The author critiques misogyny as producing values that transfer from oppression against women to nature. Throughout the book, Shade demonstrates how preaching can instill positive associations with the natural world and women through the mindful use of metaphors and images. Beyond the book's theme of ecojustice, it provides a useful guide for bridging the gap between the rhetoric of preaching and the response of direct action among individuals and groups. Ultimately, preaching aims to bring action into fruition. Attitudinal readjustments, personal conviction, and acceptance of a new revelation function as the first steps towards an active response.

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