

Scott M. Gibson and Matthew D. Kim, eds. *Homiletics and Hermeneutics: Four Views on Preaching Today*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. 192 pages. \$21.99.

Every homiletician approaches the craft of preaching differently. *Homiletics and Hermeneutics* is a conversation among four seasoned preaching professors about the hermeneutical implications of their preaching methods. The collaborative work allows Bryan Chapell, Abraham Kuruvilla, Kenneth Langley, and Paul Scott Wilson to describe their homiletical methods and respond to each other.

Chapell describes a redemptive-historic method of preaching whereby preaching the wider “context” of redemption throughout scripture situates a text in relationship to the pinnacle of revelation in Christ (4). Through an exposition of the text and its connection within redemptive history, redemptive-historic preaching relates human depravity with grace in Christ. Kuruvilla offers a christiconic view of preaching, which understands the central task of preaching as conforming to the image of Christ. The function of a biblical text is to invite readers to live in God’s “ideal world” through an understanding of what the author was doing in the particular passage (57). The text invites interpreters to conform to a facet of Christ uncovered in the chosen pericope.

Langley proposes a theocentric homiletic where God is at the center of preaching. He is wary of preaching models that regulate God as secondary to Christ and believes that the Bible is primarily about God. Langley argues that any other central focal point for preaching is not broad enough. Wilson’s law and gospel approach is grounded by the notion that the word of God “both condemns and liberates” (117). Preaching is about proclaiming the gospel, which requires law to be heard. Sermons move from law to gospel, even as the terms are not mutually exclusive. The work concludes with comments from the editors that offer a helpful analysis of the four models.

The responses at the end of each chapter acknowledge that privileging a certain theme or theological belief is directly connected to homiletical methods. This format invites readers to grapple with tensions and complexities within the field of preaching. While each preaching model makes unique contributions to the book, two specific areas of concern are especially worth highlighting. Throughout the book, the authors wrestle with whether sermons should always make an explicit turn to Christ. A second general topic is the place of the Old Testament in preaching. These central questions continue to be dividing within evangelical homiletics. The debates are left unsolved, but readers are invited to reflect on the topics and their implications. When responding to each other, the authors help the readers to identify what is at stake in the discussions.

This book does not simply describe the authors’ previously published preaching models. Each author responds to criticisms they have received over time about their work, which allows them to provide greater clarity. In addition, the juxtaposition of the models in dialogue with hermeneutics and theology offer fresh insights into the models. The work clearly illustrates that the way a person approaches scripture has a significant influence on the model of preaching. Whatever the authors believe the Bible or God’s word is primarily about, redemption-history in Jesus, conforming to the image of Jesus, God, and law and gospel become primary for how the homiletician understands preaching.

The evangelical nature of the models is evident throughout the book. This is most clearly seen in the strong emphasis each author places on the text or word of God. Those outside the evangelical tradition might find some parts challenging but the work is a valuable addition to the field. It offers an entry point into the approaches and debates within evangelical homiletics. At

times, I found myself disagreeing with the authors and their views; however, the descriptive purpose of the projects invites a diversity of perspectives. Perhaps the greatest weakness of the work is its general lack of attention to the way that contexts and identities shape preaching, hermeneutics, and theology.

The work could serve well as a supplemental text in a preaching course. Students will find the models within their grasp and are given the necessary source information to study each model in more depth. *Homiletics and Hermeneutics* bring together four preaching scholars to discuss the complex relationships between interpreting scripture and preaching. The authors make it clear that theology and hermeneutics are not secondary to preaching. Preaching is formed by them. Ultimately, the authors seek to be faithful to their callings in the formidable task of preaching. They have found methods that work for them, and they invite you to do likewise.

Scott Donahue-Martens, Boston University School of Theology, Boston, MA