

to dream of a new way of doing church. It obviously would be much more helpful if he had actually tested these ideas in the real world and recommended them because they worked. However, that does not seem to be his intention.

In fact, it appears that Ward really isn't suggesting that we totally abandon "solid church," but it seems that the principles he has dreamed of would be very helpful in enabling "solid churches" to become more "liquid." For example, he envisions church being "a retreat center, a Christian shop, a music group," rather than the weekly meeting of the congregation. Adventist café churches in Scandinavia would probably fit well into his definition of "liquid church." The modern "cell church" movement would also be an attempt to move in the direction of "liquid church." However, even these two examples do not fully display what Ward is dreaming, but in his view they would be important milestones in the right direction. They are headed toward "liquid church" but are not the complete fulfillment of the dream he is envisioning.

The last chapter helps put some flesh on the ideas he promotes throughout the rest of the book. Until one gets to that chapter, the ideas seem unrealistic, but the final chapter helps to capture what Ward actually has in mind. Even then, the idea of a completely liquid church still appears to be an unrealistic glimpse into the future.

The book is well worth reading for anyone engaged in attempting to find solutions to the limited growth of Christ's church in the Western world during the twenty-first century. A person will probably not attempt to implement a completely "liquid church," but there are many parts of "solid church" that can be made more "liquid." From that perspective, the book will be valuable to those who are seeking to find a contemporary approach to mission.

From my perspective, the biggest problem with the ideas expressed is the ability of the church to become a community of faith. Ward seems to recognize this when he suggests: "Liquid church will abandon congregational structures in favor of a varied and changing diet of worship, prayer, study, and activity" (89). Such a structure or nonstructure would mean that communities of believers would be in constant flux and change. Christian fellowship would not be lasting and enduring. It appears as if Ward is suggesting that the spiritual growth of an individual is the primary issue rather than Paul's strong emphasis on the church as a community (Rom 12).

This reviewer recommends the book not as the final answer to the problem of reaching the world for Christ, but to challenge our thinking and ability to move beyond the more structured way of doing church and to discover new ways to "liquefy" the church for the future, even if the church continues to maintain much of its "solid" nature.

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RUSSELL BURRILL

Warren, Mervyn A. *King Came Preaching: The Pulpit Power of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001. 223 pp. Hardcover, \$20.00.

Martin Luther King Jr. was one of America's most prominent twentieth-century religious and social leaders. The son and great-grandson of Southern Baptist preachers, King was raised in the church during an era of disenfranchisement for blacks. At the age of 15, he matriculated at prestigious, all-black Morehouse College in Atlanta before being granted a scholarship to Crozer Theological Seminary, and he earned a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Boston University. King began his pastoral ministry at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, moving on to become the associate pastor of Ebenezer

Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, where his father was senior pastor, and from where he was catapulted into national prominence by the civil-rights movement.

In *King Came Preaching*, Mervyn Warren investigates and analyzes the homiletical methodology and preaching prowess of Dr. King. The book is an outgrowth of Warren's Ph.D. dissertation, which he submitted to the faculty of Michigan State University and gave to King's wife, Coretta Scott King, in 1988. Warren, a preacher and academician, was for many years Professor of Homiletics and Chair of the Department of Religion and Theology at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, and is currently the institution's provost. In this monograph, Warren seeks to avoid two extremes: "a mere biography of a preacher with only incidental references to his hands-on process of bringing a sermon to readiness and presentation, and a flooding of readers and practitioners with homiletical assumptions whose vagueness and impalpability would be mere shadows for chasing around discussion tables in ivory towers" (12).

King's oratorical ability is legendary, and his "I Have a Dream" speech is among the most widely played and heard in the world today. Yet King was first and foremost a preacher of rare gifts and competence who remained the pastor of a church throughout his life. These facts were not lost on Warren, whose focus in this work is on King's pulpit power. To begin with, Warren offers a "homiletical biography" of King, providing a succinct sweep of his spiritual, educational, and vocational journey from infancy to the day he was felled by an assassin's bullet. Acutely aware that King did not live in a vacuum, Warren places him in his social, political, and economic context, an era that began in the "roaring twenties" and ended in the tumultuous sixties.

Warren proceeds to examine the theological underpinnings that informed and shaped King's sermons, following this with an analysis of his audiences. No mean theologian himself, King's dissertation compared the conceptions of God in the thinking of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman, and his sermons abounded with prodigious quotes from philosophers and theologians; yet King was at heart a Bible preacher, whose overriding objective was to "persuade human beings to live together as brothers and sisters and thereby fulfill a prerequisite to experiencing effectually the spiritual relationship with God as their Father and establishing the kingdom of God both on earth and in human hearts" (67).

To expand on the content of King's sermons as reflected in his ethos, logos, and pathos, and to examine his themes, language, sermon design, preparation, and delivery, Warren read and analyzed sixteen of King's sermons. The author's expansive knowledge of communication theory and techniques serves him well in this regard as he painstakingly and faithfully dissects the sermons. A strength of this book is that Warren is not content to state his inferences or conclusions without providing backing for them. Thus, he juxtaposes his own homiletical theory with examples in King's sermons, a practice that does not compromise the author's credibility and makes for easier reading.

As an honest researcher, Warren felt obligated to investigate the charges of plagiarism leveled at King, especially after his death. Warren concludes that King "doubtless assembled ingredients from a number of sources, but then he kneaded and worked and formed until he made his own loaf of bread" (135).

The concluding chapter of this volume explores King's contributions to preaching, theology, and the understanding of Christian life, including rediscovery of the relevance of preaching by applying Christianity to the contemporary context, assisting all Christians in experiencing "a fresh encounter with God" and understanding that "faith in God means also love for fellow human beings in their socioeconomic-political struggle," and facilitating the then-emerging trend among preachers to utilize philosophy

and “formal reasoning” to herald and defend the gospel (169).

Appendices to *King Came Preaching* include a speech King presented at Oakwood College in 1962, a sermon titled “The Ultimate Doom of Evil” that he preached at the Central United Methodist Church in Detroit in 1964, a sermon titled “The Prodigal Son” (Ebenezer Baptist Church ca. 1966), another titled “No Room at the Inn” (Ebenezer ca. 1967), and a spreadsheet noting the quotations and references (including biblical references) in sixteen of King’s sermons. A collection of pictures in the center of the book brings vividness, vibrancy, and poignancy to the volume.

Warren augments his exhaustive research of published material with personal interviews of his subject, a fact that makes *King Came Preaching* ring with authenticity and bulge with fresh insights. The author’s syntax is neat and lucid, and he amply succeeds in realizing his stated objectives. Although there are several books about King on the market, few have tackled his pulpit person and power. So this work makes a valuable contribution to the literature on the veritable drum major for truth and justice. Pitched more to the academic community, the book should still find a ready readership among practitioners of the preaching craft and the general public.

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Warren, Mervyn A. *King Came Preaching: The Pulpit Power of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001. 223 pp. Hardcover, \$20.00.

This is an unusual book. It is not just another biography of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., of which there are plenty. It is not just another book on preaching, of which there are also many. It is neither a romanticizing of a Black hero nor a glamorization of his preaching. It is a homiletical biography. This insightful and informative book by Mervyn Warren, with a foreword by Gardner Taylor, is arranged in nine chapters and five appendices. It explores the sermons, preaching techniques, pulpit gifts, and audience impact of Martin Luther King Jr., whose preaching and leadership in the civil-rights movement changed America for the better.

In *King Came Preaching*, Warren’s doctoral dissertation has been recast for popular consumption. Viewing King as one of the most effective and celebrated preachers in Western history, the author designed the book to revisit King’s life through his sermons. It breaks new ground by giving biographical glimpses into his life as well as “practical, understandable, doable homiletical theory.” This volume is not presented by a detached author who gathered his materials in a library. On the contrary, it was authorized by King, who provided Warren with interviews and opportunities to view him *in situ* as he crafted his work. Illustrations capture King in various stances in the act of sermonic delivery. The book is illustrated and aimed at both the experienced practitioner and the beginning preacher.

While providing insights into King the preacher and his interaction with his congregations, and while analyzing King’s preaching (composition, content, style, presentation, and impact), *King Came Preaching* is also about Mervyn Warren. It offers him an opportunity to reflect on and submit his views of preaching after so many years as a practitioner and teacher of this art, without actually presuming to write another homiletical text (cf. 91). The reader will find much benefit from his insights on King as well as his own approaches to, musings on, and vignettes about the preaching craft.

Chapter 1 introduces the volume with an insightful innovation—a homiletical biography of King. It not only sets his life in the historical context of his times, but also presents his life from beginning to end and traces his homiletical ancestry, solidly rooting him within an intergenerational preaching tradition. This chapter also looks at his academic