

volumes), Counseling (7), Devotionals (15), Theology (230 volumes), Church History (68 volumes), Apologetics (55 volumes), Lectionaries (7), Parallel Passages and Harmonies (13), Ancient Language Texts and Morphologies (49), Ancient Texts in Translation (16), Original Language Grammars and Tools (55 volumes), Original Language Lexicons (36), Timelines (8), Features and Databases (45). This makes LBS 4: PE the most powerful and yet simple to use digital library.

Needless to say, the list of books included in LBS 4: PE invites information overload. Unfortunately, the titles of the sets or collections are not hyperlinked in the comparison chart at the Logos website, so it is necessary to select, copy, and paste specific titles into the search box in order to see the details of any particular collection.

With the release of LBS 4: PE the Logos team has advanced biblical software beyond expectation. Logos has completely redesigned its interface and the results are amazing. I enjoyed working with Logos 3, but I am really enjoying Logos 4 even more. From personal experience, Logos provides by far the largest electronic biblical library sold anywhere, yet manages to be user-friendly.

Although LBS 4: PE is expensive, having access to these well-selected resources with full-text search capabilities is more than worth the price. It contains more than 1,650 resources that Logos price at more than \$31,000.00 retail. In addition, Logos has excellent discounts and payment plans for students, faculty, and staff (<[www.logos.com/academic/program](http://www.logos.com/academic/program)>). The range of standard resources and the search functions alone make this biblical software a must for any serious student of the Bible.

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ENRIQUE BAEZ

Long, Thomas G., and Lenora Tubbs Tisdale. *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice: A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008. 239 pp. Paper, \$29.95.

Preachers, as well as those who teach preaching, are acutely aware that teaching preaching is a complex, if not difficult, task, perhaps because preaching is at once an inherently complex and difficult activity; yet “good preaching can be taught and learned” (16). In *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice*, a phalanx of outstanding preaching professors, who participated in a two-year consultation on homiletical pedagogy sponsored by the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, argue for a radically new approach to the way preaching is taught. The theme that unifies their individual contributions is that homiletics must “move away from teacher-oriented and learner-centered pedagogy and toward a *learning-centered* methodology.” Readers are challenged to recognize and accept that “preaching is a Christian practice, with a centuries-long tradition” (vii).

*Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice* is edited by two recognized and respected scholars of preaching: Thomas G. Long, who teaches preaching at

Candler School of Theology, Emory University, is the author of the widely acclaimed *The Witness of Preaching*; and Lenora Tubbs Tisdale, a professor of Homiletics at Yale Divinity School, is the author of *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*. Neatly divided into four sections, the volume's fourteen contributors represent a good cross section of those who teach preaching on the graduate theological level.

In section 1, "Preaching as a Christian Practice," the authors examine preaching as a Christian practice and the implications of this for the teaching of preaching, especially its impact on the preaching curriculum. Fundamentally, "a practice," they propose, "is a constellation of actions that people have performed over time that are common, meaningful, strategic, and purposeful" (12). Professedly, when preaching is viewed as a "living, developing practice that has an identifiable shape, a literature to support it, and a broad set of norms and desired outcomes," several important advantages will ensue, including a "balance between commonalities and distinctives in homiletics"; actual performance that will be described and understood; a demand that "the history and sociology of preaching be aspects of the student's learning"; standards of excellence that will be identified and encouraged; and the creation of "pedagogical strategies designed to engender competent preaching" (14-16). In this section, the key elements of a teaching practice are also identified and expanded and a strong case is made for why practice matters.

Section 2 is the longest section of the book, consisting of eight chapters that identify and examine several of the critical components of preaching. The components include the interpretation of texts for preaching, exegeting the congregation, the interpretation of the larger social context, the cultivation of historical vision, the use of language, the preaching imagination, the creation of form, and voice and diction. The eight authors in this section are insightful and interesting, and the editors succeed in having them speak in a unified voice. Long and Tubbs Tisdale point out that the components are sequenced randomly rather than chronologically or in importance, and they leave it up to preaching professors to introduce the components to their students as they see fit.

The chapter I found most useful in section 2 is chapter 8, "The Preaching Imagination," by Anna Carter Florence. Carter Florence views preaching as a uniquely "Christian appeal to the faithful imagination." She contends that the primary task of teachers of preachers is to help students develop and further strengthen their faithful imaginations "so that they will be better equipped to prepare sermons that will, through God's grace and with the Spirit's help, facilitate the congregation's engagement with the biblical text" (123). As simple as it may sound, this goal is replete with challenges and not easily reached; yet it must be pursued. The fifteen practices and exercises shared by Carter Florence should help in the cultivation and achievement of this type of imagination.

In section 3, "Assessment and Formation," two dominant issues in current pedagogical dialogue are explored. Assessing for competency acquisition is more than the buzzword of the day, and the same holds true for the formation of the student. Ironically, this section, in my view, is the weakest part of the book, consisting of but two chapters. The first seeks to expand on

the hallmarks of faithful preaching practices, but ends up discussing the keys to faithful preaching, while the second, which seeks to address the critically important issue of methods of assessment, supplies no new ideas. The two authors featured in this section do not even speculate about what it means to assess preaching, or if it is even possible to meaningfully assess preaching.

The last section of the book, "Preaching in the Curriculum," also consists of two chapters. The first investigates the ways in which an introductory course in preaching may be configured to deliver the basic skills required for good preaching. The second explores the place of preaching in the broader framework of the institution and its constituency. Like Section 3, this section also fails to introduce or expose the reader to any new topics.

*Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice* does not attempt to exhaust all the components of preaching and, regrettably, the reader is left to speculate as to why some components are addressed while others are not. The editors do freely admit that some key elements of preaching are not addressed, including the spiritual disciplines or practices that contribute to the preacher's formation and the fundamental significance of theological analysis. They ask that readers view the volume as an "invitation to others to add their voices and analyses to ours" (viii). The delimitations of the editors notwithstanding, the reader will be hard pressed to resist the feeling that the volume fails to address a number of key themes and issues.

The major strength of the book is its examination of the practice of preaching. The premise it embraces is that preaching is a practice that can and should be taught. Because it has been some time since a book dealing with the teaching of preaching has been published, this volume should succeed in resurrecting a discussion that should be ongoing. Given the role of preaching in the life and mission of the church, teaching preaching is an important activity that should receive focused attention and emphasis in the curriculum of theological schools and Christian faith communities. Though some may argue that this book breaks little new ground, especially as it relates to its subtitle, "A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy," I believe that it is still worth reading and, as such, I highly recommend that every homiletics professor do just that.

In the end, *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice* shows that teaching and writing about the art of preaching are deceptively complex activities that defy and/or elude precise, neat definitions. Perhaps because preaching is a profoundly theological act in which the divine invades and inhabits the human, preaching will always be full of intrigue and mystery, making the teaching of preaching a humbling task.

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MacDonald, Nathan. *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. xv + 156 pp. Paper, \$16.00.

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