

BOOK REVIEWS

Bailey, Raymond, ed. *Hermeneutics for Preaching: Approaches to Contemporary Interpretation of Scripture*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992. 223 pp. \$16.99.

Recent years have seen radical changes in the way preaching is conceptualized. The emphasis on a "new homiletic" has brought about renewed interest in biblical preaching. *Hermeneutics for Preaching: Approaches to Contemporary Interpretation of Scripture* may be the only volume of its kind to deal directly with the link between hermeneutics and preaching.

The volume describes seven contemporary models for interpreting and preaching the biblical text. Editor Raymond Bailey, Professor of Christian Preaching at Southern Seminary, directed the project. Each chapter introduces and summarizes one hermeneutical model, uses it to analyze a passage of Scripture, and then illustrates by a sample sermon how the hermeneutical model facilitates sermon preparation. Bibliographies for each chapter encourage further study. The seven models presented are: historical, canonical, literary, rhetorical, African-American, philosophical, and theological.

The historical model, represented by the expository methods of Haddon Robinson, John Stott, and Joel C. Gregory, emphasizes "faithful exegesis of the grammar, history, genre, and the cultural and literary setting of the text," in order to show the contemporary significance of the normative, historical meaning of Scripture.

The canonical model focuses major attention on the interpretation of the text of Scripture within the literary and canonical context of the Bible. "The authoritative use of the whole Bible is the substance of canonical interpretation."

The literary model grows out of narrative-critical concerns that view structure as the key issue for interpreting the text. Because the distinctive feature of the model is the primacy of biblical narrative, storytelling becomes central to the sermon.

The twentieth-century rhetorician, Kenneth Burke, sets forth the rhetorical model. Burke believes that in most cases writers create literary works to challenge existing problems or move humans to action. Thus, he seeks to discover a rhetorical motive behind each biblical text.

A fifth model includes much that is common to all biblical preaching. It is distinctive in its presenting hermeneutical perspectives from within the African-American community, namely, a "socio-cultural environment within which a shared set of experiences has occasioned some distinctive social understandings, assumptions about the world, expectations from religious faith, and unique leadership demands." The African-American model emphasizes themes of liberation and community.

The philosophical model posed in this essay suggests that hermeneutics is concerned not only with "the world in back of the text," but necessitates a ven-

ture into "the world in front of the text." This suggests that one should take seriously a first "naive" reading of the text, testing this with the help of critical methodologies. Interpretation is not completed, however, until one ventures into a postcritical understanding of the text with a similar naive appropriation of its meaning. Although this is not as objective as traditional paradigms, the author suggests that it "can in principle be regarded as solidly rational."

The final model presented is a theological approach written by Bailey himself. He suggests that "theological hermeneutics look not behind the text, in the text, or in front of the text, but above the text," stressing the vertical rather than horizontal authority.

This is not a book easily read at one sitting. The various models demand time for reflection. While every chapter offers useful ideas, the crucial question of the "locus of meaning" needs further examination. The reader and expositor must decide whether the meaning of a passage lies "behind the text, in the text, in a world universal consciousness, in the listener, or somewhere in the interaction of these points. Is truth behind, within, or in front of the text?" Admittedly, the task is not simple, because the questions may impose an artificial structure on the way one seeks the answers.

Even though each chapter contains an actual sermon developed through the method it presents, not all chapters are equally clear and thorough. The chapters on canonical and philosophical models showed a particular lack of clarity.

The volume could also be strengthened by giving biographical information about the writers of each chapter. The introduction in the flyleaf claims that "each model is based on the most recent research by international scholars in a wide variety of fields: biblical studies, philosophy, theology, history, sociology, literature, homiletics, communication theory, and others." Some of the authors are better known than others. Knowing something about the authors could increase understanding of their material.

The basic issue that the book raises needs some further examination. The question of the "locus of meaning" seems apparent in all the chapters. Despite its limitations, the book is helpful in raising the concerns of the exegete. The text may be used as supplementary reading for homiletics classes.

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Baloian, Bruce Edward. *Anger in the Old Testament*. American University Studies, series 7, Theology and Religion, vol. 99. New York: Peter Lang, 1992. 225 pp. \$45.

The topic of the wrath of God is an important, albeit somewhat neglected, subject of Biblical theology, and therefore this recent study should be welcomed as a needed investigation. *Anger in the Old Testament* is an apparently unrevised