

Ruthanna B. Hooke. *Sacramental Presence: An Embodied Theology of Preaching*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2023. 238 pages. \$100.00.

In *Sacramental Presence: An Embodied Theology of Preaching* Ruthanna B. Hooke directs readers toward the sacramental possibilities of preaching. Hooke guides readers through a careful explication of the relationship between Word and Sacrament, especially preaching and the Eucharist. “The purpose of this book is to explore theologically how it is possible that God’s gracious presence is made known in these two events” (ix). This rich approach is concretized through embodiment and a participatory model of the Trinity. Preaching and the Eucharist are both means of grace centrally involving the body and, because of God’s self-disclosure, “draw humans into the divine life” (6). The book follows a fourfold structure of the Eucharist which involves taking, blessing, breaking, and giving. This fourfold structure develops in conversation with preaching moments and insights from Linklater’s phenomenology of speaking. Importantly, the four moments also contribute to Hooke’s participatory vision for preaching as sacramental Trinitarian participation.

Chapter 1 is a survey of different theological approaches to preaching and the sacraments. Hooke draws out interconnections between theologies of preaching and theologies of the sacraments through historical figures like Luther, Calvin, and Barth as well as more recent figures like Rahner, Schmemmann, Morrill, and Chauvet. The survey is not merely an overview, it moves toward the book’s kenotic paschal approach to sacramental preaching as a meeting place between God and humanity. The 2nd chapter considers silence before the spoken word as a location of embodied alignment and generating space for God’s presence to interact with the particularity of the gathered bodies. The chapter continues to reflect on the movement of breath, bodies, and the Divine throughout the process of preaching and the wider liturgy. Chapter 3 moves from silence in preparation to preparatory breathing as primary theology developed alongside pneumatology. Like the *epiclesis* for the Eucharist, the Spirit can be present in and through the preacher’s and congregation’s breaths in manners which do not confuse differences between humanity and the Divine or negate the importance of selfhood. This chapter also includes an ethical orientation to others through the work of Levinas.

Chapter 4 centers on the “breaking” of bread and the breaking of silence with spoken words. Yet, these spoken words come from bodies and reach out to bodies, including the body of Christ crucified. Preaching invites listeners to engage Christ through a “breaking open of the Word” (149). In other words, Hooke constantly envisions preaching as an embodied theology not as disembodied words. Chapter 5 brings additional eschatological and ethical avenues to bear on the proclamation of Scripture stemming from the free voice of the preacher and the free voices of the congregation. Hooke brings the sacramental concept of *anamnesis* into conversation with disruptive preaching. The conclusion presents possible ways of integrating Hooke’s approach to preaching on the environmental crisis and preaching on race and racism.

One of the gifts *Sacramental Presence* offers is the embodied connections between preaching and theology, especially offered through performance theory. Because Hooke offers this homiletical approach through sacramental theology, numerous theological loci are systematically woven throughout the book. Hooke’s work is impressive in its scope and depth. The centrality of embodiment deepens the theological turn in homiletics and connects preaching to wider liturgical and sacramental movements within the Christian tradition. While homiletics continues to be influenced by philosophies of language and the New Hermeneutic, *Sacramental Presence* bases the work of preaching in real bodies and an ethical orientation of free voices.

While Hooke writes from an Episcopal perspective, the work engages theologians and theologies across many different Christian traditions and is by no means exclusively Episcopalian. Those interested in preaching and embodiment, or preaching and the sacraments, will find a wealth of knowledge. A background in sacramental theology is not necessary to read the work, but it would be helpful as the book seems to presume an academic audience. Hooke's clear writing and continual guidance on the importance of the topics at hand help readers through the technical material. With Christ at the center, *Sacramental Presence* helps us approach preaching and the sacraments through divine participation. Hooke's clarity, depth, and ethical orientation in *Sacramental Presence* make the book an invaluable embodied resource on sacramental preaching.

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