

Karyn L. Wiseman. *Queering the Pulpit: A Sexegetical Approach to Preaching an Inclusive Word*. Cascade Books, 2024. 122 pages. \$19.00.

Karyn Wiseman's *Queering the Pulpit: A Sexegetical Approach to Preaching an Inclusive Word* offers a distinctive approach to inclusive preaching in pursuit of a queer-affirming method of gospel proclamation capable of addressing the gap that persists between the church and the queer community. Throughout the book, Wiseman presents her personal story of queer self-discovery, situates queer lives within historical contexts, reexamines biblical texts that have long been used to marginalize queer people, and envisions a theology rooted in an unequivocal and affirming "Yes, PERIOD!"

In the book's first chapter, Wiseman reflects on her journey of coming to understand herself as a lesbian while growing up in West Texas as a member of the United Methodist Church—a church which, until 2024, officially held that homosexuality was "incompatible with Christian teaching" (14). In particular, she shares how the process of coming to terms with her sexuality affected the way she understood her role in the world and in a church that repeatedly responded, "No, period" to questions of queer affirmation (23). The second chapter presents a brief survey of queer life in historical context. In challenging the myth of homosexuality as a modern development, Wiseman helpfully relates the nuanced understandings of "homosexuality" (though, as she reminds us, no such term existed until the late nineteenth century) across different historical periods, discussing ancient Near Eastern, Greek, and Roman cultures, as well as a theological shift in the Middle Ages. Wiseman next discusses the rise of queer oppression in the modern era, from the well-known persecutions of the Nazis, to the infamous Stonewall Inn raid of 1969, and the lesser known 1973 arson of a Metropolitan Community Church congregation gathered for worship above a bar in New Orleans's French Quarter. Chapter 3 explores critical interpretation of scriptural texts, commonly called "clobber texts," whose traditional interpretations have been used to devalue queerness. By emphasizing the use of tradition, reason, and experience in scriptural interpretation, Wiseman reminds the reader of the importance of contextual awareness for an individual's hermeneutical lens. She focuses in particular on Gen 19:1–11 and Rom 1:26–27, situating them in their respective historical and biblical contexts in order to counter fundamentalist notions that the primary purpose of such passages is to communicate lessons about sexual morality.

The book's first three chapters make plain the need for a "Yes, PERIOD" theology, discussed in chapter four, that can challenge heteronormative conventions of pulpit discourse in favor of a mode of preaching that "affirms [queer listeners], honors their very being, and that helps to heal the wounds inflicted on them by the church, their families, and in their daily lives" (77). Given the book's concentration on affirmation and inclusion, the sexegetical approach outlined in Chapter 5 suggests four areas of exegetical focus for preachers preparing to preach about queer-related issues in their local context: 1) congregational demographics, including church members' worldviews; 2) congregational context with regard to human sexuality, taking into account members' experience with dialogue around human sexuality; 3) the polity and doctrine of the denomination to which the congregation belongs; and 4) the existing level of congregational support for sermons dealing with queer themes. After exploring what it means to craft sermons sexegetically, Wiseman concludes with a brief case study devoted to preaching that is both honest about harms perpetrated against the queer community and steadfast in its communication of the good news of God's love for queer people.

In this book, Wiseman offers a concise, inspiring, and much needed addition to the field of queer homiletics. Its importance is especially evident in its reinforcement of the need to address the chasm between the church and the queer community by preaching clearly about God's love for queer people. Wiseman's exegetical method represents homiletical evolution that can support future work in the field, especially in terms of how queer hermeneutics might push conversations in queer homiletics beyond elements of affirmation toward broader understandings of how queer ways of knowing might shape gospel proclamation. With a deeply pastoral sensibility, Wiseman inspires queer preachers to bring their whole selves to the preaching event, invites non-queer preachers to better understand the realities of oppression that persist against queer people, and provides practical tools for truly inclusive preaching. Above all, she asserts that queer people deserve to hear sermons that speak to their realities—their pain *and* their hope—and calls on all preachers to take queer homiletics seriously.

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