

Jacob D. Myers and Sunggu A. Yang. *Preaching Philosophy: French Thought for Gospel Proclamation*. Baylor University Press, 2025. 274 pages. \$49.99.

Jacob D. Myers and Sunggu A. Yang provide a rich intersection between major 20th-century French philosophers and homiletics. *Preaching Philosophy* is not a book on how to preach philosophy but a formulation of several ways that philosophy does, or at least should, underpin homiletics. “Our preaching philosophy is that preaching *is* philosophy” (1). The authors in no way wish to supplant the centrality of the gospel for preaching’s content; however, they persuasively show how “the mode, medium, and message of Christian preaching overlap at every point with philosophy” (2). The five chapters are structured such that they pair an influential philosopher with a major preacher or homiletician. These pairings are typically topical. Myers and Yang allow the individual views of the figures to remain distinct while placing the perspectives in critical conversation.

The first chapter connects Julia Kristeva and Jarena Lee as a means of relating abjection and horror with Lee’s experiences preaching as a black woman. Pairing these two yields a focus on marginalized identity, especially regarding race and gender. The second chapter continues to examine the impact of the sociopolitical context on preachers and pulpits, drawing on Foucault and Craddock. Yang and Myers invite readers to consider Craddock’s investigation of authority and Foucault’s wrestling with power as a necessary reconsideration of the entangled power of preachers and pulpits. Chapter three foregrounds Philip Brook’s “truth through personality,” especially in relation to Pierre Bourdieu’s articulation of habitus. This reframing of how Brooks is typically treated in homiletics continues to deepen the guild’s current emphasis on the intersection of experience, identity, and truth. Importantly, habitus and personality are viewed as more collective or interdependent than individualistic.

Chapter four places Luce Irigaray and John Broadus in conversation to discuss “their shared confidence in the power of discourse to shape the lived experiences of others” (99). Irigaray pushes back against phallogocentric discourse and how discourse itself is phallogocentric which offers points of connection and disconnection with Broadus’ emphasis on authenticity. The authors note that both “share a desire for discourse to foster the others’ becoming” (121). The final chapter explores Jean-Luc Marion and Henry Mitchell as a way of deepening homiletical considerations on biblical interpretation, revelation, and the Word of God. Mitchell’s central place for celebration is enhanced through “Marion’s phenomenology of givenness,” which “provides homiletics with a rigorous way of describing the unfolding of the Word as a gift for Christian proclamation” (151). While shorter than a full chapter, the book also contains a coda titled “Disturbing Homiletical Pedagogies with Gilles Deleuze” (161). Myers and Yang engage practical theology and theological education here, along with Deleuze, to shift toward a rhizomatic orientation for preaching.

Preaching Philosophy is intellectually rigorous but accessible for scholars of homiletics. Readers do not need to be experts in French philosophy to benefit from the book as the authors do an excellent job framing concepts and figures. In fact, the book would serve well to introduce advanced homiletics students to the intersection of philosophy and homiletics. In addition to the main interlocutors of the chapters, the work engages many recent significant texts in homiletics which discuss matters of identity or experience. In this way, the text engages robustly 20th-century philosophy and 21st-century homiletics. Yang and Myers do not seek agreement between their intra-chapter interlocutors. This is important as it would otherwise reduce their arguments

and views. It's helpful to read the points of convergence and divergence, which hopefully prompt additional critical consideration in the reader.

The introduction outlines a helpful homiletical circle which can serve as a framework for the book. The authors argue that each element of the circle is essential to preaching, and the individual chapters relate to some aspect(s) of the circle. The circle includes *socius* (congregation/society), Selfhood (Preachers), Scripture, and Sermon (5). The episodic nature of the chapters though means the homiletical circle fades out of view in the chapters as a heuristic guide. While I believe it was not the intention of the authors to provide a full description of the homiletical circle, or how the individual thinkers could contribute to the homiletical circle, perhaps readers needing additional conceptual guidance navigating the work would benefit by returning to the homiletical circle in the introduction every so often. However, such a structure might counter the rhizomatic pedagogical approach outlined by the authors in the Coda.

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