

Leah D. Schade. *Preaching and Social Issues: Tools and Tactics for Empowering Your Prophetic Voice*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2025. 260 pages. \$25.00

In her latest book, *Preaching and Social Issues: Tools and Tactics for Empowering Your Prophetic Voice*, Leah D. Schade offers thoughtful, pastoral guidance and helpful strategies for addressing social issues through prophetic proclamation. Throughout the book, Schade argues "...that preachers have a moral, ethical, and vocational..." responsibility to address social issues in a way that is grounded biblically, theologically, and ethically in our identity as the "people of God" and moves worshipping communities towards clearer discernment about how they might live into that identity when it comes to the social concerns of our time. *Preaching and Social Issues* is about prophetic proclamation that brings contemporary social issues into conversation with the biblical text in community (2–3). Throughout the book, Schade effectively argues that preaching is fundamentally formative and that formation happens best within the context of community dialogue.

Steeped in contemporary research and theory, *Preaching and Social Issues* is not just for students and preaching professors. It is for all of those who engage weekly in the task of preaching. The book is written for preachers who are looking for strategies to faithfully address "hot button" issues in their contexts. Schade's model builds on the preacher's understanding of themselves and their congregation. It then explores ways, with the congregation, to put those understandings in conversation with the Bible, theology, and social ethics, with the goal of embodying a more faithful Christian witness. Schade's model is interdisciplinary in its approach and weaves together insights from a myriad of fields and disciplines.

The book is organized into eleven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the text and outlines the book. Chapter 2 is a data-informed assessment of the challenges that come with prophetic proclamation about social issues. Chapters 3 and 4 offer valuable tools and paths to prophetic proclamation that allow the preacher to assess their context and then adapt their approach to an issue based on their assessment. Chapter 5 explores the basic moral and ethical foundations that ground the practice of prophetic preaching. Chapter 6 engages current scholarship in the field of homiletics in search of contemporary frameworks for preaching about social issues that reflect a prophetic witness. Chapter 7 traces the outlines for ethical frameworks for prophetically preaching about social issues and suggest homiletical "Conversation Partners" that the preacher might engage while crafting their sermon. Chapters 8, 9, and 10 apply Schade's model to different social issues. They offer sermon examples and case studies that demonstrate an application of Schade's methods and approaches. The book concludes with straightforward but nuanced guidance for preachers who want to engage social issues from the pulpit, with particular attention given to managing the conflict and pushback that may arise as a result of doing so.

Given the current political and social climates and the theological, political, cultural, and social diversity that exists in most congregations, this book has much to offer. *Preaching and Social Issues* suggests a model for proclamation that is unapologetically socially conscious and prophetic while at the same time lovingly pastoral. The model of proclamation Schade suggests centers the Christian values of love, radical grace, and community. It attends to the need in diverse congregations for the kind of deep listening and conversational/dialogical engagement that builds community and trust and, ultimately, strengthens Christian witness in the world.

Preaching and Social Issues is also very practical. Though grounded in relevant theory and contemporary research, the book quickly moves to application, suggesting ways in which Schade's model might be implemented and how to do it. It offers step-by-step instructions and

includes best practices gleaned from real-life examples in which the model has been used by real people serving in real congregations. Lastly, the book identifies many of the potential consequences that may attend prophetic proclamation in diverse congregations and offers wisdom on how the preacher might best mitigate and/or manage them in a way that maintains the values of love, respect, and community and honors the humanity and dignity of everyone involved when disagreement arises.

Already a strong text, the book would be even stronger if it included more case studies that centered a greater diversity of preachers prophetically preaching about controversial social concerns in their own contexts. For example, the book includes an insightful case study about a continental-African pastor who addressed a controversial issue in their home context in Cameroon. More case studies like this would thicken the already rich discourse in the book and should perhaps be a consideration for future researchers seeking to build on the work that Schade begins in *Preaching and Social Issues*.

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