

Sunggu A. Yang, ed. *Arts and Preaching: A Handbook for Practice*. Volume 1. Cascade Books, 2025. 120 pages. \$24.00.

Arts and Preaching: A Handbook for Practice, Volume 1 is an innovative work that explores the intersectionality of preaching and art in a sensory-rich and interactive age. Editor Sunggu A. Yang analyzes the crossroads of sermons in conjunction with painting, architecture, fashion, film, and theater. Through this work, the contributors seek to fulfill a two-fold need within local ministries: “[1] The dynamic spiritual formation of the preacher, and [2] a holistic-aesthetic and multisensory exposition and engagement with Holy Scripture by both the preacher and the congregation” (xi).

The book makes a revolutionary contribution to discourse related to preaching and art by pursuing a “reawakening of appreciation for mysterium,” engaging a spiritual and artistic collaboration with the divine (x). As noted in the Prologue, “Art can bring the abstract concept of the divine into the tangible realm, stimulating our senses and connecting with us on a primal level” (x). Chapter 1 builds on this premise, initiating a starting point for preaching to align with painting and cubism.

Chapter 2 emphasizes the importance of collaboration in architecture and preaching. Architecture occupies space through storytelling and aesthetics. Such collaboration suggests that the preacher function as a *type* of architect. Preachers will find new meaning in sermon development and spiritual formation when they embrace the beauty of architectural communication. It involves the preacher alongside “the basics of architecture,” including form, space, interaction with the environment, structure, and materiality. This idea of aesthetic wonder employs a variety of mediums that embody an architectural hermeneutic for preaching.

Chapter 3 expands on the importance of the sermon and the use of fashion. Eliana Ah-Rum Ku writes, “Preaching can be enhanced by scrutinizing how fashion generates and conveys messages, interacts with audiences, innovates through reflection on the spirit of the times, and influences social environment” (82). This chapter empowers preachers to pursue “fashionista preaching.” In fashion, the designers seek to express their work aesthetically. In like manner, fashionista preaching propels preachers to engage in creative and imaginative trustworthy communication.

Chapter 4 provokes the preacher to envision the sermon as a director would a film. This means of creativity provides an opportunity for the sermon to follow the moves and interactions of the Holy Spirit in film. This creativity expands and stretches the preacher to enhance their methods of storytelling and exegesis. Chris Murphy suggests, “As a pastor, I am not trying to compete with popular culture and film, but I am trying to stay current to how people are shaped spiritually” (59). Following Murphy’s train of thought, films awaken the listener and the preacher to the transcendent presence of the Spirit in preaching.

Lastly, Chapter 5 envisions theater as an avenue by which the Spirit draws humanity together. Rob O’Lynn suggest that “Preaching is where we enter the beautifully creative theater of salvation (78).” Here, the sermon becomes a narration—preaching laced with storytelling as scenes and dialogue. Scenes are eventually broken in “beats.” This challenges the preacher to develop “dramaturgical episodic plots.” Episodic plots both hook the listener’s attention and guide the sermon to a final resolution.

Chapter 5 expounds on the understanding of sermons as “scenes.” Scenes are reminiscent of the Black preaching tradition when reading O’Lynn’s writing. Black preaching is filled with

rich storytelling, narration, and dialogue. Black sermons are enriched with metanarratives that tell the story of biblical passages. Episodic plot takes it a step further. O'Lynn challenges the preacher to diverge from thinking narratively to processing episodically.

Overall, *Arts and Preaching* is a necessary resource for those interested in the intersectionality of homiletics and art. The writers offer innovative alternatives and perspectives on sermonic development, preaching, and spiritual formation through the Gospel and art. As noted on the back cover, the handbook “serves as a catalyst for enhancing public worship and fostering a deeper congregational life through the arts.” Each chapter outlines a different sermon-planning worksheet, sermon preparation example, and sample sermon. This work is essential for pastors, preachers, and scholars who seek to widen their preaching with artistic vibrancy and holistic multisensory engagement.

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