

Whitney's work is to be congratulated for orientating readers to understanding Gunton's theology of culture within the context of his doctrine of creation. Whitney also shows the theological integration of Gunton's work by examining his theology of creation in relation to other doctrinal foci such as christology, pneumatology, anthropology, trinitarian ontology, mediation and culture. As such, this book gives a good overview of the vast scope of Gunton's theological project which leads to some of its problems and much of its promise. At the same time, Whitney's work could have been further strengthened by a deeper engagement with the criticisms which have grown in regards to Gunton's account of relational trinitarian ontology and personhood. This is an important flashpoint in contemporary trinitarian theology in which many of the settled notions of trinitarian theology, from which Gunton operated, have been critiqued. The fifth chapter, which compared Barth's work on creation and culture with Gunton's work, would have benefitted from engagement with Gunton's transcribed lectures on Barth, *The Barth Lectures*. Nonetheless, this is an important contribution to Gunton studies that examines a central aspect of Gunton's theology and highlights the ongoing significance and fruitfulness of his work.

JONATHAN LAMB, *PREACHING MATTERS: ENCOUNTERING THE LIVING GOD*. NOTTINGHAM: INTER-VARSITY PRESS, 2014. 187 PP. [ISBN: 978-1-78359-149-7].

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Jonathan Lamb is CEO and minister-at-large for Keswick Ministries in the United Kingdom. He was the founding Director of Langham Preaching, a global partnership with a vision to establish indigenous preaching movements throughout the majority world. This book is dedicated to the thousands of preachers who have participated in Langham Preaching seminars. It is clearly intended to be a resource for people without much formal preaching training. As the preface says, it "is not intended to be a detailed homiletics book", but a "simple introduction to the dynamics of preaching" for anyone who is involved in teaching the Scriptures, whether that be in a pulpit, a home group, a youth event, or a one-to-one Bible study (p. 16). But do not be deceived by the author's claims. He has distilled a considerable amount of reading and experience into this brief and very simple little book. This combination of accessibility and profundity makes it an excellent introduction to the theology and practice of preaching.

Lamb structures the book around several themes that emerge from Nehemiah 8:1-12, where Ezra the preacher leads God's people into a transforming encounter with the living God through his word. For a book on preaching, it is refreshing to see each section start with a short exposition of this important biblical text. The first section focuses on Scripture and the heart of preaching. With John Stott, Langham's founder, Lamb argues that "the secret of preaching is not so much mastering certain techniques, as being mastered by certain convictions" (p. 36). For Lamb, the central conviction is that the Scriptures constitute God's inspired revelation to all people, cultures and generations. They must therefore set the agenda for each

sermon. For evangelicals, this might sound like a truism but, as Lamb notes, in many evangelical churches the Bible does not set the agenda; “it is simply the background music” (p. 22).

In chapter 2 Lamb argues that to centre their preaching and their lives on the Word of God preachers need to pray the Scriptures. This call to cultivate the kind of disciplines embedded in practices such as *Lectio Divina* and Ignatian Gospel Contemplation has become increasingly common among evangelical writers. We need to hear it. As Hans Urs von Balthasar once said, a strictly clinical historical-critical approach to exegesis too often reduces the living body of Scripture to a dead heap of flesh, blood and bones. Prayerful reflection must, though, be accompanied by diligent study. In chapter 3 Lamb provides some basic instructions for how to understand a passage. He also supplies two helpful tools to assist small groups engage in what he calls “manuscript study”.

The middle section of the book focuses particularly on the teacher and the work of preaching. It is infused with material used in Langham Preaching seminars through the majority world. Chapter 4 claims that the key to effective preaching is to discover the central truth contained in a Bible passage. It is arguable whether every passage could be said to contain just one central truth, but Lamb is surely right to teach that every sermon should be focused on one main idea. In a very helpful diagram (p. 91) he shows how the formulation of this idea is the pivotal step in the journey from text to sermon. Chapter 5 then discusses sermon structure and content. Lamb argues that preachers must honour the literary genre of their passage. Genre is not neutral. The form of a text influences its meaning and rhetorical impact. So if we want to preach a biblical text faithfully, we should allow both its content and its form to impact our sermon. We must let the passage determine both what is said and how it is said.

Borrowing an image from John Stott, Lamb insists in chapter 6 that preachers are to build bridges between the world of the Bible and the world of today. He calls for preachers to become amateur sociologists, to “assess the mood of our culture, to understand the big issues and the commonly expressed questions, the things that are finding their way into newspapers and magazines or TV chat shows, issues that are causing anxiety or shaping the popular consciousness” (p. 114). In chapter 7 Lamb argues that preaching must not just be focused, clear, and relevant. It must also be embodied. Preachers need to embody in their own lives the truths about which they speak. As John Owens used to say, “if the word does not dwell with power *in* us, it will not pass with power *from* us” (p. 131).

The third section of the book addresses the congregation and the purpose of preaching. For many congregations, the sermon is the moment in a worship service where they are most passive. Lamb observes, however, that preaching is a community event which requires the congregation’s active participation. In chapter 8 he suggests various ways by which congregations can play their part in preaching. In the next chapter he explores, briefly, the art of application. Lamb recognises that discussion about exegetical, hermeneutical and homiletical techniques can reduce preaching to a mere technical exercise. Chapter 10, therefore, emphasises the place of the Spirit in preaching.

The final chapter is an impassioned appeal to always proclaim God’s grace in Christ. Lamb argues that for us, standing on this side of the New Testament, preaching grace means preaching Christ. This is one of several discussions in the book where I would like to have seen the author go into greater detail. I

recognise Lamb's intention to keep the book short and relatively simple, but his discussions on relevance (pp. 109-21) and application (pp. 150-57) could also have been strengthened with more specific instruction. Lamb, like Stott, calls for preachers to listen to both the biblical text and their listeners' context in order to bring word and world together. But he gives much more specific instruction on how to exegete Scripture than on how to exegete culture. This is typical of most books and courses on preaching within the evangelical world. A recent exception is Timothy Keller's *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Viking, 2015). But Keller is an exception. Evangelical teachers of preaching would do well to give much more thought to the principles of cultural exegesis. What are the tools, methods, techniques and steps for understanding culture? This book, with its sections on text, preacher and congregation, would have been greatly strengthened by a fourth section, one on the world.

It is by no means as detailed or comprehensive as Darrell Johnson's *The Glory of Preaching* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009) or Thomas G. Long's *The Witness of Preaching* (2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005). Nevertheless, this is an excellent introduction to the theology and practice of preaching. Lamb demonstrates the very qualities which, he argues, mark good preaching: faithfulness, relevance and clarity. He locates his claims in thoughtful exegesis of Nehemiah, Ezra and many other biblical texts. He deploys a range of engaging illustrations to introduce the main idea of each chapter. He communicates those ideas in clear, accessible prose, and he has compiled in the appendices some useful resources for preachers and teachers of preaching. Most of all, I appreciate the balance that Lamb strikes between conviction and technique, theology and methodology. He not only tells us, in very clear terms, how to preach. He also tells us, in no uncertain terms, why to preach. This simple introduction to the dynamics of preaching will, therefore, be a valuable training resource both within local churches and, as an introductory textbook, within theological colleges. It will also be of value to seasoned and weary preachers who want to audit their practices and refresh their convictions.

GRANT, KEITH S. *ANDREW FULLER AND THE EVANGELICAL RENEWAL OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY*. STUDIES IN BAPTIST HISTORY AND THOUGHT 36. MILTON KEYNES, UK: PATERNOSTER, 2013. XX + 157. [ISBN: 978-1842277799]

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With this work Grant examines how the eighteenth century Evangelical Revival changed pastoral theology. He argues that the ministry of Andrew Fuller ably demonstrates this change, explaining that Fuller served as an influential pastor-theologian during the time of the revival. Though many works pertaining to the Evangelical Revival focus on the changes brought to parachurch ministries, Grant writes, "Andrew Fuller's pastoral theology, which was characterized by evangelicalism's emphasis on conversion and affectionate pastoral ministry *as well as* congregationalism's concern for orderly ministry and discipline, demonstrates that