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# Preach the Word: Expository Preaching from the Book of Ephesians

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from which to contextualise the specific perspectives of particular religious practices. Mystical experience may well be the loom on which to weave a compassionate and integrated cloth of shared religious generosity.

There are some limitations to the book. The essence of contemplative practice is even simpler than the clear presentations in chapter one. Consulting the writings of Benedictines John Main and Lawrence Freeman of the Montreal Priory will provide balance. Both approaches, however, tend to put more emphasis on concentration than is necessary, and so may needlessly deter people who seek the kind of spiritual depth that meditation may provide. It is the disposition, not the performance of the person in contemplation that makes the difference.

*The Way to Contemplation: Encountering God Today* has the power quietly to move the reader. It will remain a highly valued reference for those who wish refreshment from the overemphasis in the Christian tradition upon thought and neglect of the body as an instrument for spiritual growth. In so doing the work brings into focus the otherwise remote allusions of pre-modern mystical theology. Its lucid description of contemplative practices provides access to personal spiritual nourishment required for a lifetime's commitment to the healing of a broken world. If "My body that is broken for you" can be allowed to refer also to global community, then contemplation may truly be the healing birth of God both at the micro and macro interstices of Being.

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## **Preach the Word: Expository Preaching From the Book of Ephesians**

John R. Mumaw

Scottdale, PA and Kitchener, ON: Herald Press, 1987

286 pp.

Mumaw, a Mennonite pastor and educator, now retired, was president at Eastern Mennonite Seminary for a time; he taught homiletics there for 38 years. Throughout his ministry in six congregations and as seminary professor he has consistently used the expository method. We assume, then, that this book is a summation of some 50 years' experience with expository preaching.

The concept of the book is praiseworthy, namely, to present and discuss the aspects of expository preaching and at the same time to develop (in outline) a course of sermons on the Epistle to the Ephesians.

"Expository" preaching is here defined in the common way as sermons whose "theme and major divisions are drawn from the content of the text";

their aim "is to make clear the content and teachings of the Bible... [and to] make application of the exposed truth to Christian life" (31-32). Expository preaching, according to this Evangelical definition, views the Bible as the literal written truth of God which God has made known, and which "needs to be understood, exposed, and applied" (24).

After four brief introductory chapters on expository preaching and Ephesians, Mumaw devotes the remaining 27 chapters to his dual purpose. Each chapter typically presents "guidelines" on some aspect of expository preaching (e.g., Introductions, ch. 5; Purpose in Preaching, ch. 6; Exegesis, ch. 10; Interpretation, ch. 11; Formulating a theme, ch. 21; Persuasion, ch. 24; Conviction, ch. 31); the "guidelines" are followed by a sermon outline of a passage of Ephesians, brief studies of key words in the passage, alternate outlines, and finally a brief discussion of a homiletical subject (e.g., transitions, integrity in preaching, the Holy Spirit in preaching) which may or may not be related to the subject of the "guidelines".

While the concept of the book is praiseworthy, it regrettably is less than successful in achieving both endeavors. The constant need to shift from an expository concern to outlines to a related or tangential homiletical concern is wearisome. One could use it as a workbook on preaching through Ephesians, but then one would need to read all the "guideline" sections in order to be instructed in the method. So one wishes the book were in fact divided into two parts, one on expository preaching and one on developing outlines and sermons as illustrative and instructive. Moreover, the homiletical "guidelines" and discussions are mainly of a spiritual-hortatory nature, and (with some exceptions) not helpful in a "how-to" manner. The outlines are elaborate and detailed, for, as Mumaw maintains, "There is no virtue in having a subtle structure" (67). He loves to outline, and especially loves repetitive outlines, e.g.,

A. Reconciliation resolves irritating differences. Walls of separation are removed in Christ.

1. Christ removes the dividing wall of race
  - a. Racial barriers are removed by experience in Christ
  - b. Cultural barriers are removed by experience in Christ.
2. Christ removes the dividing wall of class...
3. Christ removes the dividing wall of creed...

B. Reconciliation resolves antagonistic feelings... (138, on Ephesians 2:14-18)

It is often difficult to determine how some of his elaborate outlines derive from the text. And it would have been exceedingly beneficial to have had at least one sermon included in order to see how Mumaw brings these masses of divisions, sub-divisions, and sub-sub-divisions to life.

Two observations are in order. A Lutheran reader of this book is forcefully struck by the difference in Lutheran and Evangelical approaches to Scripture and preaching. Mumaw is concerned to present the Scriptures,

“what the Scripture passage says applied to us”. Lutherans use the Scriptures to preach the Gospel.

Secondly, a Lutheran reader is reminded by this book that the need to teach “what the Scripture says” is an increasingly important preaching task, and is impressed by the authority placed in the simple “there-ness” of the text, i.e., the text with its truths is there before us, and that is reason enough to expound it and to hear the exposition. Nevertheless, I do not find this book a viable model for teaching the Scriptures to contemporary media-age hearers. I would recommend the approach advocated by David Buttrick in *Homiletic; Moves and Structures* (Fortress, 1987), which avoids the rather dreadful “exegesis, exposition, application” sequence and proposes a flow of dynamic “moves” which “exposit” the text and our lives at one and the very same time.

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## Ritual and Pastoral Care

Elaine Ramshaw

Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987

117 pp. \$11.00

Elaine Ramshaw, a Lutheran who teaches Pastoral Care at the Methodist School of Theology in Delaware, Ohio, and guest speaker at the Canadian Liturgical Society's 1989 *Symposium* in Scarborough, Ontario, has written a book in which she tries to bridge the gap between the “ritualists” and the “counsellors” in ministry. She maintains that to separate and isolate these two ministerial functions, as has often been done, is to distort both functions, and to minimize the contributions each can make to ministry. Furthermore, she sees the reality of wholistic pastoral care as lying between the hierarchical role of the pure ritualist and the “just folks” role of the pastoral counsellor, in a realm she calls “mutuality”. She affirms that pastoral leadership is an accepted and required ministerial role, but demands that “leadership is defined by service” (20).

Following a brief introduction, Ramshaw presents her argument and its illustrations in three chapters, each of which deals with a particular category of pastoral care administered through ritual means. “Ritual Care for the Community” deals with ritual as pastoral care in the context of the congregational community. Here she discusses baptism, holy communion, confirmation, marriage, and other life-cycle rituals, including such timely topics as the confirmation of handicapped and retarded persons, rites and rituals for divorce, and the communion of the baptized.