

Boekresensies / Book reviews

BYBELWETENSKAPPE / BIBLICAL SCIENCES

Arnold, B T & Williamson, H G M (eds) 2005. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*. Leicester: InterVarsity Press. Pp. xxiii + 1060. Hardcover. ISBN: 1-84474-984-3. Price: ¥32-99.

The *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books (DOTHB)* is the second volume in InterVarsity Press's Old Testament dictionary series and is the only reference book which focuses exclusively on the historical books and the history of Israel. This volume continues where the *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* ends: Joshua and Israel are on the brink to enter the land. It also carries us through the post-exilic period. Following in the tradition of the IVP dictionaries, this encyclopaedic work is characterized by in-depth articles focussing on key topics which are written by noted scholars and experts.

The history of Israel forms the backbone of the literature of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. In order to understand the Hebrew Bible, it is essential to understand this history as well as the biblical books tracing it. The history of Israel has long been contested territory. Much like the quest of the historical Jesus, a quest of the historical Israel is underway. At the heart of the quest to understand the history of Israel and the Old Testament's Historical Books, is the struggle to come to terms with the conventions of ancient historiography. How did these writers conceive of their task and to whom were they writing? Clearly the Old Testament historians did not go about their task as we would today: the divine word was incarnated in an ancient culture. Rather than being a dictionary of quick answers and easy solutions which are only readily provided, the *DOTHB* presents evidence and arguments, allowing a range of informed opinion to enrich the present day conversation and scholarly discussion. This dictionary will not only inform its readers, but draw them into the debate and equip them to examine the evidence and arguments for themselves.

The dictionary presents articles on numerous historical topics, as well as major articles which focus on the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah. Other articles focus on the Deuteronomistic History, as well as the Chronicler's History, the narrative art of Israel's historians, inner-biblical exegesis, text

and textual criticism, and the emergence of these books as canonical. It furthermore contains a series of eight articles on the periods of Israel's history, from the settlement to postexilic period, which form a condensed history of Israel within the *DOTHB*.

One article gives an overview of Syro-Palestinian archaeology. Significant archaeological sites are focussed upon: usually under the names of biblical cities and towns such as Jerusalem and Samaria, Shiloh and Shechem, Dan and Beersheba. Other articles delve into the histories and cultures of the major Ancient Near Eastern empires: Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia and Persia – as well the culture of lesser peoples, such as the Ammonites, Edomites, Moabites, Philistines and Phoenicians. There are also articles on architecture, Solomon's temple, agriculture and animals, roads and highways, trade and travel, and water and water systems.

The languages of Hebrew and Aramaic receive careful treatment. It also pays attention to the role of scribes and their schools, and writing and literacy in ancient Israel and its Ancient Near Eastern environment. The *DOTHB* also investigates the full range of relevant extra-biblical written evidence, with five articles which focus on the various non-Israelite written sources. It even contains articles on Hebrew inscriptions and ancient Near Eastern iconography. We furthermore encounter an article which gives us a concise overview of the appearance of priests and Levites in the historical books. One of the most crucial questions, which is addressed fully, is the relationship between the literary testimonies and its underlying historical reality.

Articles on interpretive methods, on hermeneutics and on preaching the Historical Books will assist students and homileticians in understanding how this biblical literature has been studied and interpreted, and its proper use in homiletics. Theological topics such as God, prayer, faith, forgiveness and righteousness receive separate treatment.

InterVarsity Press has a reputation for publishing quality scholarship in the fields of Theology and Biblical Studies. The IVP Bible Dictionary Series is no exception. IVP mostly employs the more conservative Christian scholars for the articles that comprise their dictionaries. However, often material is gathered for those articles from sources throughout Christian and Judaic scholarship.

Also, each entry provides a bibliography referencing a wide range of sources for further study.

This volume is one of the best dictionaries I have encountered . The treatments are rich and complete, and a concise guide accessible to any reader. Although the authors come from a wide spectrum of points of view, they all work to present a broad and full picture of the issues under discussion. This dictionary is indeed a valuable reference tool for anyone working with the Hebrew Bible. I fully recommend it to scholars of the Hebrew Bible, students of Biblical studies, as well as pastors in the ministry who want to be informed on the latest developments in the field of the Historical Books of the Hebrew Bible.

Alphonso Groenewald

Nouwen, H 2007. *Die terugkeer van die verlore seun. 'n Ware verhaal oor tuiskoms* (vertaal deur Pieter de Villiers). Wellington: Lux Verbi.BM. ISBN: 978 07963 0617 3. Prys: R109-95.

Henri Nouwen is tans een van die gewildste skrywers oor geloof en geloofsbelewenis; na berig word, op die oomblik dié mees geliefde skrywer onder Amerikaanse predikante. 'n Nederlander van geboorte en opleiding, het hy later die hoogste akademiese sporte in die VSA betree. Net om weer alles te laat staan, om onder gestremde mense in Frankryk en Kanada te gaan werk.

Die draaipunt in Nouwen se lewe was 'n skildery – een wat hy goed geken het, maar wat hom op 'n keer só aanspreek, dat dit mettertyd sy hele lewe verander. Die skildery was Rembrandt se “Die terugkeer van die verlore seun” (kyk http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/53/Rembrandt-The_return_of_the_prodigal_son.jpg/240px-Rembrandt-The_return_of_the_prodigal_son.jpg). Dit is hierdie lewensverhaal wat rustig, tog pakkend deur Nouwen self vertel word, en wat nou deur die bekende Nuwe-Testamentikus Pieter de Villiers (buitengewone professor in Bybelse Spiritualiteit aan die Universiteit van die Vrystaat) in Afrikaans vertaal is, as *Die terugkeer van die verlore seun. 'n Ware verhaal oor tuiskoms*.

Hierdie boek het 'n intense gelaagdheid, wat beteken dat vele dimensies op dieselfde tyd tot 'n mens spreek. Daar is die bekende gelykenis van die verlore seun; daar is Jesus se bedoeling met dié gelykenis. Hieroor word gelê die nawerking van dié verhaal, die

interpretasiegeskiedenis, soos dit op Rembrandt ingewerk het, en hoe hy dit dan self nuut weergee. Saam met al hierdie impulse, loop die moderne interpretasiegeskiedenis van beide die skilderwerk én die gelykenis. Nouwen trek dit alles saam, soos wat dit op hom 'n impak gehad het. As akademikus wat baie lees, is sy interpretasie nie 'n ligte weergawe van sy losse gedagtes oor die gelykenis, die skildery, Rembrandt se lewe en sy eie nie. Die interpretasies is diepgaande, en grondig; en waar Nouwen self iets waag, erken hy die gevaar van insegese (bv bl 64).

Hierdie is dus 'n akademies-deurdagte aanbieding; eweneens, 'n eksistensiële soektog. Onpretensieus geskryf, en in goeie idiomatiese Afrikaans vertaal, lê Nouwen sy sielswroeging hier bloot, naamlik sy soeke na sin in die lewe. Hy hardloop nie weg van die negatiewe nie: nie van die karakters in die gelykenis en skildery se skadu-kante nie, en nie in Rembrandt se lewe of in sy eie nie. Maar dié is g'n doem-preek nie; g'n helvresende bekeer!-bekeer!-boodskap nie. Hier is God stilweg onderweg met Henri, en deur analogie, met die leser. Hierdie is 'n sagte, vroulike God, vir wie gevoelens, gewaarwordinge, die innerlike lewe belangrik is. Identifikasie met verskillende figure op verskillende tye word moontlik, en word eksistensiël ontgin: die verlore seun, die pa, die seun wat tuisgebly het, die ander karakters in die skildery, Rembrandt, Nouwen... Al dié betrokkenes kommentariër mekaar se geloofsleuens, en open so 'n web van moontlikhede waarbinne lesers hulleself kan verloor, en vind, en weer...

Hier en daar in die vertaling is sekere goed wat 'n mens laat wonder. Hoekom word sommige instellings en mense se name vertaal, en ander in die Engels behou? Hoekom het die uitgewer besluit op slegs 'n eenbladsy-lange beskrywing van Nouwen, terwyl 'n uitgebreide analise beskikbaar was, wat vir die bedoelde teikengehoor van veel waarde sou wees? Laastens, gaan Afrikaanse gelowiges, wie se spiritualiteit gekenmerk word deur glo-en-dóén, aangetrek word deur hierdie meer dénkende, meer vóélende, meer vloeiende spiritualiteit?

Op laasgenoemde vraag, kan 'n mens voorspel: beslis nie almal nie, maar ewe beslis: wel die groeiende groep Afrikaanse gelowiges wat hulle geloof (wil) belééf – in stilte, in diepgang, in groeiende oorgawe aan God. Soos Nouwen, word die vertaler se lewe ook gekenmerk deur 'n intense samevloeiing van intellektuele

begronning en geloofsdiepgang. Saam begelei hulle die leser van hierdie boek, om weer na dié mistieke God wat deur Bybel én kuns én mense werk, terug te keer.

In my verstaan van die moontlikhede wat tans beskikbaar is binne die Afrikaanse Christendom, lê hierin die mees belowende toekoms vir volgehoue geloof, hoop en liefde...

Christo Lombaard

Snyman, G F 2007. *Om die Bybel anders te lees. 'n Etiek van Bybellees*. Pretoria: Griffel Media. ISBN: 978-0-9802556-6-X. Prys: R130-00.

Die twee voortvlugtige hoofkarakters, in een van die bekende strokiesprenttonele, gaan slaap kwaavriend langs mekaar onder 'n hoop steenkool. Soos die moenie-kwaad-bed-toe-nie-idioom dit wil hê, maak hulle vrede, en Obelix sug so onder die kole uit sy lekkerslaap-sêding: "You're a white man, Asterix!" Op 'n manier herinner Gerrie Snyman se splinternuwe *Om die Bybel anders te lees...* my aan daardie toneel: onder 'n hoop vuil kole uit, skryf Snyman as wit man.

Snyman, verbonde aan UNISA, is een van ons Ou-Testamentici wat die Filosofie ernstig neem. Dit, juis omdat hy, as van huis uit Gereformeerde teoloog, besorg is oor hoe die Bybel onder die breër geloofsgemeenskap tuiskom. Daarom: moenie hier iets verwag soos 'n paar maklike stappies vir Skrifstudie, of dalk soos die effens naerstigtelik-betitelde *How to read the Bible for all its worth* (Fee & Stuart 1993) nie. Ook niks in die trant van die breedweg-bekende, nou klassiek-geworde *Kan ons die Bybel dan nog glo?* (Deist 1986) of die meer tegniese *'n ABC van Bybeluitleg* (Deist & Burden 1980) nie. Eerder vind ons hier 'n sistematies-deurdagte aanbieding van denkbeelde wat die gebruik van die Bybel in Afrikaanse geleedere tradisioneel onderlê.

Snyman analiseer die hoop kole wat apartheid op ons Bybelleeskoppe kom omkeer het: die *naïewe realisme* in ons siening van die Bybelteks; die *vrees vir subjektiwiteit* in interpretasie – 'n onvermybare gegewe, maar wat gegrond op *positivistiese epistemologie* deur die idee van *vertolkingsloosheid* in ons Bybelverstaan verdoesel is; die daarmee gepaardgaande onwillekeurige voorkeur vir 'n *letterlike* Bybelvertaling en vir 'n "*common sense*"-verstaan van die Bybelinhoude; dit alles gesteun deur 'n implisiet-

Kuyperiaanse *inspirasieteorie*. Dat dit gelowiges op die weg na fundamentalisme gelei het, is geen wonder nie. Hierin had Totius (1977) en Stoker (1967) geen geringe aandeel nie.

Behalwe vir die deeglikheid van sy argumente, is Snyman ook dapper. Hy gebruik as voorbeelde kontensieuse kwessies: apartheid; hoe vroue in die kerk swak behandel word; homoseksualiteit; geweld en God; lyfstraf; Jona; Ester. As hy die magspel binne kerke blootlê, is sy passie duidelik. Bes moontlik gebaseer op sy eie ervaring, dui hy aan hoedat die kerk as institusie geloofsvernuwende vrae tot stilte kan dwing. Sodoende word nóg geloof, nóg Bybellees goed bedien. Bo alles staan Snyman hier as apologet vir die Bybel: dat die kwessies wat die Bybel self én veranderde tye aan ons opdring, vierkant in die oë gekyk moet word, ter wille van die integriteit van geloof en die gesonde geloofslewe van kerklidmate. Snyman se onlangse debatte rondom die rol wat hy as dubbele verdagte – naamlik as beide manlik en wit – nog in die Suid-Afrikaanse Teologie te speel het, word hier wyer getrek, tot groter voordeel van meer mense. So ook is sy denke oor homoseksualiteit, Bybel en kerk in sommige opsigte parallel aan dié van Paul Germond in *Aliens in the household of God: Homosexuality and Christian faith in South Africa* (Germond & de Gruchy 1997), maar dan meer produktief: Snyman maak deure oop vir die gebruik van die Bybel in moderne etiese debat.

Snyman se etiese Bybellees sny naamlik na twee kante toe: die historiese (die Bybeltekste moet in hulle sosio-kulturele kontekste verstaan word) en die moderne (ons dra morele verantwoordelikheid vir die gevolge van ons Skrifinterpretasie en -toepassing). Nóg die teks-in-konteks, nóg die mens-in-konteks moet gewond die interpretasiekryt verlaat. Die beste verweer wat ons het daarteen om sulke wonde toe te dien, is om ons filosofiese denkwapens te verklaar. Niemand dink sonder voorveronderstellings nie. Snyman self erken gereeld die Grondwet van Suid-Afrika as deel van sy hermeneutiese raamwerk, soos ook sy vroeëre dienspligervarings, sy belewenisse rondom apartheid en, tans, rondom witheid en manheid. Deur voorveronderstellings te kamoefleer (bv. as “maar net die Woord”), word meer vernietig as wat opgebou word. Waar die Bybel as eensydig welwillende boek aangebied word, verg dit uiteindelik ‘n oneerlike vroomheid van gelowiges, naamlik dat ons nie die eie-aard van die Bybel meer wil / kan erken nie. In hierdie proses kan die Gereformeerde Belydenisskrifte óf negatief óf positief ‘n rol

speel, afhangend of hulle as, onderskeidelik, tydlose waarhede or tydgebonde belydenisse hanteer word.

Soms met fyn, selfgerigte humor, soms self-ontblotend, soms uitdagend, altyd goed deurdag word in hierdie bykans 200 bladsye nuwe blikke op ou weë en, as slot, moontlike nuwe uitsigte gebied. Nog vars van die pers af, gaan dié boek oor die volgende maande druk bespreek word. Welverdiend.

Christo Lombaard

PRAKTIESE TEOLOGIE / PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Barnard, M 2006. *Liturgie voorbij de liturgische beweging*. Zoetermeer: Meinama. €14-90. ISBN: 9021140934/ 9789021140933.

Twee van die belangrikste faktore wat die liturgie en liturgiese ontwikkeling beïnvloed is die tradisie en die konteks. Hierdie boek is 'n poging om hierdie twee faktore in gesprek te bring met die *Liturgiese Beweging* sowel as die sogenaamde *laat-moderne liturgiese vernieuwingsbewegings*. Wat Barnard as *laat-modern* beskryf, sou waarskynlik in ander literatuur ook as *post-modern* gedefinieer kan word.

Die boek val uiteen in twee groot afdelings waarin eers 'n aantal liturgiese tendense bespreek en op gereflekteer word (Deel I). Daarna word 'n paar uiteenlopende liturgieë beskryf en bespreek (Deel II).

Deel I begin met 'n historiese beskrywing van die laaste aantal dekades se liturgiese ontwikkelinge in (veral) Nederland. Een van die belangrike konklusies wat die skrywer maak, is dat daar nie meer veel gemaak word van 'n normatiewe, vaste liturgiese vorm nie. Om hierdie rede is hy van mening dat die meeste kerke in Nederland verby die Liturgiese Beweging is.

In die res van Deel I ontwikkel Barnard 'n *kode* vir die *Liturgiese Beweging* sowel as die *laat-moderne liturgiese vernieuwingsbewegings*. Hy doen dit deur die pragmatiese, semantiese en sintaktiese momente of aspekte van beide bewegings te beskryf. Aan die hand hiervan, kan die twee bewegings kortliks op die volgende wyse met mekaar vergelyk word.

Vanuit 'n *pragmatiese* perspektief sou die Liturgiese Beweging onder andere beskryf kon word as 'n proses wat sy ontstaan aan 'n relatiewe klein groepie teoloë te danke het. Dikwels was diegene wat

oor die liturgie nagedink het, ook die wat die vernuwing geïmplementeer het. Wat die vernuwingsbeweging aan betref, is die ontwikkeling baie meer vloeiend, kompleks en gediffrensieerd.

Op 'n *semantiese* vlak het die Liturgiese Beweging op die konteks gereageer deur teenoor die samelewing se gevoel van onafhanklikheid, die klem te plaas op gemeenskaplike kerklike belydenisse; teenoor 'n groter gereserveerdheid en onsekerheid, het geloof en belydenis 'n al hoe belangriker rol gespeel; en teenoor 'n styl van waarneming het die Liturgiese Beweging 'n proses van deelname probeer bevorder. Die vernuwingsbewegings definieer die kerklike belydenisse in terme van 'n gemeenskaplikheid in die dualiteit van individu en massa. Wat geloof en belydenis betref, word die klem nou geplaas op dissipelskap, toewyding en 'n egtheid van geloof (pneumatopraxie). En die proses van deelname word beskryf as groepsdeelname op 'n individuele manier.

Terwyl die samelewing met minder vaste sekerhede gewerk het, het die Liturgiese Beweging *sintakties* daarop gereageer deur baie klem te plaas op belydende aanbidding en vaste vorme. Die vernuwingsbewegings maak in hierdie verband gebruik van *Praise and Worship* sonder 'n definitiewe kerklike of sakrale idioom.

Samevattend kan gesê word dat die Liturgiese Beweging vaste liturgiese vorme probeer bevorder het, terwyl die vernuwingsbewegings gebruik maak van (dikwels oënskynlike) improvisasie.

Dit is dus duidelik dat die Liturgiese Beweging binne die spel van tradisie en konteks voorkeur gegee het aan die tradisie. Daarteenoor laat die vernuwingsbewegings die klem val op die konteks.

Die bespreking van 'n verskeidenheid liturgieë in Deel II help mens om insig te ontwikkel in die liturgiese strominge wat tans in die kerk te vind is. Daar is voorbeelde uit onder andere die Liturgiese Beweging, laat-moderne- en klassieke ontwikkelinge en die Praise and Worship-beweging.

Die verskillende liturgiese ontwikkelinge het waarskynlik nie in alle lande op presies dieselfde manier as in Nederland ontstaan en ontwikkel nie. Nogtans help die boek mens om 'n klomp dinge wat op baie plekke en in verskillende lande gebeur te verstaan.

Die skrywer slaag daarin om die noue verband tussen die liturgie en enersyds die tradisie en andersyds die konteks opnuut te

verduidelik en te beklemtoon. Dit is duidelik dat die konteks 'n groter rol begin speel in die vernuwingsbewegings. Op 'n prinsipiële vlak het ek tog 'n aanvoeling dat die kreatiewe spanning tussen tradisie en konteks nie opgehef behoort te word nie en dat die skrywer tot 'n groter mate in die rigting van 'n voorstel kon werk wat hierdie spanning kan ontgin. Hopelik sal hierdie begaafde skrywer ons daarmee help in 'n volgende publikasie!

Ferdie Clasen

Roberts, C C 2007. *Creation and Covenant. The significance of sexual difference in the moral theology of marriage*. London: Continuum Books. Pp. 280. £65-00. ISBN: 978-0-567-02655-2.

This book is a reworked version of C R Roberts' PhD thesis submitted at King's College, University of London. Roberts currently lectures at the Catholic Augustinian Villanova University, Pennsylvania.

The gist of Roberts' argument is that it is necessary to focus on the biological sexual *difference* between man and woman in order to develop a "moral theology" of marriage. Though never explicitly worked out, the theme announced by the title, namely creation and covenant, forms the basic premise of the book. In this respect Roberts builds on the legacy of Karl Barth.

In the last chapter (chapter 8, pp 185-231) three current approaches to the theological discussion on marriage are highlighted. The first is the work of Graham Ward who goes beyond the traditional question of whether marriage is a sacrament or not. He focuses rather on marriage as a *linguistic* expression of intimacy in relationship. For him, heterosexual marriage is not the only possibility for expressing the intimate relationship between God and human beings. Same-sex relationships, for example, can also provide a linguistic possibility of expressing this relationship, because such relationships can also embody values like intimacy, fidelity and unconditional love. The consequence of his argument is that the sexual difference between man and woman is *not* a prerequisite for God's salvific interaction with people. This departs not only from the Roman Catholic theology of marriage, but also from Barthian Protestant theology.

The second approach highlighted by Roberts is that of David Matzko McCarthy. According to the latter, the love and caring which

is supposed to be inherent to heterosexual marriage, can also exist in other relationships. His argument implies that *marriage* can therefore also be applicable to relationships that are not necessarily heterosexual. His focus is not on sexual *difference*.

A third approach discussed by Roberts is that of Eugene Rogers for whom procreation should not be deemed central to marriage. Since Luther and Calvin marriage has no longer been considered a “saving grace”. Before the Reformation marriage was regarded as the “remedy” for lust and sexual desire. Sexual enjoyment was considered a sin from which marriage provided salvation. Since the Reformation, it was no longer an either/or. *Both* sexual enjoyment and marriage were acceptable, though sexual desire was still to be controlled by means of marriage.

For Roberts none of the above approaches are convincing. In his view, the creation of man and woman forms part of the order of creation. This, in turn, means that sexual *difference* is of the utmost importance when theologising about marriage. Roberts, building on Karl Barth, who again builds on Luther, does not see marriage as a sacrament. However, both Luther and Barth regard marriage as part of the order of creation. Sexual *difference* is therefore important to Luther and Calvin, as well as to Barth and Rogers when they discuss marriage from a theological perspective.

Roberts’ book shows clearly how the diverse ideas on marriage that were in vogue before the time of Augustine (chapter 1, pp 13-38), were forced into a logical system by Augustine (chapter 2, pp 39-77) and how Augustine’s system determined how marriage was seen within the European tradition up to the Reformation (chapter 5, pp 111-137). The Reformation did not quite succeed in moving beyond Augustine. Roberts’ book illustrates this. In tandem with the Reformers and many Reformed theologians he perpetuates the idea that marriage is “God’s will” and that God willed it to be heterosexual. That is why God created man and woman. Roberts does not seem to be open to the possibility that God may also have created sexual minorities and that sexual intimacy could therefore also be legitimate outside of a heteronormative context.

The book is critical of Pope John Paul II (see chapter 7, pp 171-183) who affirmed that marriage was indeed a sacrament. However Roberts does not succeed in exposing the fact that the idea of marriage as a sacrament which has been prevalent in the Roman

Catholic Church since Augustine and especially with Thomas Aquinas (chapter 4, pp 99-109), has implicitly led to marriage being endowed with soteriological power. Within this sphere of thought, sexual desire and the sexual act without the intention of procreation, were seen as a deadly sin. The sacrament would then be the *medicinum* and *remedium* for this sin.

As long as this unacceptable soteriology is not exposed, theologising about marriage will always be in danger of bestowing soteriological power to something which belongs to the created order. This is tantamount to a natural theology. The ethical implication would be that people of other sexual orientations would be excluded from God's creational covenant, and therefore from salvation. Sexual *difference* then becomes the basis of theologising on marriage. Furthermore heteronormativity (which is a hegemony) and heterosexual marriage are then seen as prerequisites, also for people who have not been created heterosexual.

The author attempts to justify this point of view by distinguishing between sex and gender (pp 6-7) as feminist theory also does. He chooses to confine himself to sex (the biological reality of maleness and femaleness) and not touch on gender (the social construct of masculinity and femininity). Had he included gender, it may have been possible for him to regard sexuality and marriage as social constructs. He consequently shows little appreciation for the authors mentioned above, who argue from a social constructionist perspective. That the categories of sex and gender cannot be separated in such a simplistic fashion when a theology of marriage is explored, is illustrated by the book's basic premise which is unfortunately not worked out critically by the author.

It is a pity that this book does not consider a fourth option. Rather than either a dogmatic or ethical ontological approach to marriage (an *analogia entis* mode of thinking), the focus could have been on language as expression of relationship (*an alogia relationis* mode of thinking). The consequence of such an *analogia relationis* (which neither Bart nor Roberts succeeded in working out to its fullest consequences) would lead to a radically new perspective on sexuality, intimacy and marriage where these three notions do not refer back directly to God's act of creation. The point of departure would rather be that God is in a dynamic relationship with human

beings, the nature of which (namely love) determines human interaction. This includes sexuality, intimacy and marriage. *All* (not only those based on sexual difference) intimate relationships between human beings can then refer back to God's relationship with humans. At the beginning of his book Roberts states that he wants to argue on a *theological* basis rather than "humanitarian". An *analogia relationis* point of departure and its consequences are not humanitarian, however. They are thoroughly theological.

The book contains a wealth of information on the theology of marriage in patristic times (especially the sources on Augustine and Thomas impress). Though the inclusion of chapter 3 on Bernard of Clairveaux's Sermons on the Song of Songs is not essential to the thesis of the book, it was enriching to read. A shortcoming is that the feminist critique on Karl Barth's view on marriage and gender is not addressed sufficiently. This book is an important resource for those who investigate the theology of marriage.

Y Dreyer

Stevenson, Peter K & Wright, Stephen I 2005. *Preaching the atonement*. London/New York: T&T Clark. Pp. 207. Paperback. ISBN: 0-567-08999-1. Price: £60.

The atonement is the crown jewel of Christian doctrine. And it is the responsibility of each generation of theologians to preserve its heritage, explore its facets and allow its radiance to illumine their day. With *Preaching the Atonement* the authors Peter K Stevenson & Stephen I Wright attempt to fulfil this trust at the dawn of a new millennium. The idea for this book emerged from their shared experience of teaching homiletics at Spurgeon's College, London. Both authors are ordained ministers who preach regularly. They have become authorities in the field of homiletics via other theological disciplines, which indeed is reflected in their creative manner of integrating their various areas of experience in an exploration of preaching the central Christian doctrine of atonement. The authors define this doctrine as "God's act of making humanity one with himself in Christ" (p. xi).

Preaching the Atonement indicates a number of ways in which this Christian doctrine of the atonement may be explored in present day preaching. The authors adhere to three basic convictions in this regard (pp. xi-xiv). Firstly, for them Scripture remains the primary

source and resource for preaching. Secondly, preaching takes place as a part of the ongoing dialogue between Christian tradition and Scripture. And thirdly, preaching is a communicative act which is addressed to a specific congregation against a specific background.

Both Testaments provide us with a range of stories and images which points, directly or indirectly, to the idea of atonement. In this regard the authors stress the important fact that the homiletician cannot treat Scripture as if it were a systematic textbook of doctrine. To them preaching the atonement entails telling a story. In this regard they emphasize that biblical narrative comes to us in a metaphorical package. If all our language is bound, in some way to be metaphorical, nowhere is this more true than in our language about God. Therefore an insistence on the 'literal truth' of Scripture can only be seen as a contradiction in terms. The homiletician is part of a century long tradition of Scripture interpretation; he/she who would neglect this fact, is deluding himself/herself. This fact does not preclude fresh insights in the biblical narratives, but adheres to basic hermeneutical principles of biblical interpretation, namely it calls for appreciation for the real insights of the past, honesty about the way we observe things and a readiness to acknowledge the particular stream of the Christian tradition in which we find ourselves. The authors therefore stress the fact that the preacher/homiletician should have ample awareness of the particular manner in which his/her tradition has shaped his/her understanding of scripture; in this specific instance the doctrine of atonement is referred to. The Reformed tradition is the primary perspective of the authors/contributors in this book. Regardless of the tradition we stand in, there is a perpetual temptation to equate 'our' way of text comprehension with the 'biblical' way. Hence, the authors stress the necessity for the homiletician to pay attention to biblical scholarship stemming from other Christian traditions to enable him/her to constantly compare them with his/her own interpretation(s).

Preaching, for the authors, is an act of communication which can never be separated from the context in which it is rooted. This fact underscores the relative character of our sermons. Preaching represents living theology. It consequently uses language – narratives and metaphors – which is fresh and appropriate to the listener: it implies discerning the contemporary applicability of a particular doctrine, recognizing the issues of which these people at a given point in time especially need to hear the message of the

atonement, and embody this message in words which truly concern those issues. The authors furthermore stress the important fact that not only the language of the sermon is relative, but also the structure. The form of the sermon has been a major theme in recent homiletics, therefore the authors present the reader with a variety of forms of preaching in this book. The significance of this fact is that the ways in which the atonement may be preached are in principle as numerous as those who preach it, multiplied by the occasions on which it is preached.

Preaching the Atonement is divided into ten chapters, with each chapter based on a passage of Scripture which points directly or even indirectly to atonement. Each chapter focuses on a specific biblical text, describing a biblical theology of the atonement, culminating in some very helpful sermons. The result is not a systematic theology, but a text-driven, exegetical approach to this subject which is currently much discussed. The authors explore the atonement within the contours of Scripture, looking first at the atonement in the Old Testament (Genesis 22:1-19; Leviticus 16:15-22 and Isaiah 53), and then more closely at the major texts of the New Testament. They explore Mark 15:25-39; Luke 23:32-43; John 1:1-14; Romans 3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2; Colossians 2:8-15; and finally Hebrews 9:11-14. In every chapter the reader is firstly introduced to exegetical and interpretational matters with regard to the specific text. Laudable is the fact that the authors do not shun textual and interpretational complexities. Finally, the implications of the atonement are brought home in the last section of each chapter by viewing the atonement in contemporary preaching and Christian living.

The preacher should be aware of the fact that guidance on preaching can only guide him/her to an extent. The really crucial moments in the forging and delivery of sermons, those moments in which something living is created, happen always and only within the specific context of the occasion itself and the preparation for it. Therefore printed sermons in books can only be pointers beyond themselves, conveying: "This is how it was done once, or might be done – but you will have to do it in your own creative manner". The example may inspire, but the preacher is still called upon to wrestle with scripture. The authors, however, endeavour to present genuine attempts to relate atonement teaching for the twenty-first century, in a range of settings which are quite diverse. This valuable book is

also complemented by providing the following indexes: names, subjects and Biblical references. These are all valuable tools for the reader(s) of this book.

Here is a full-course feast for ministers of the Word, a textbook for homileticians and students of homiletics, and a valuable resource for any theological library. In addition, the style of writing and the overall presentation are clear and reader-friendly.

Cas Vos