

BOEKRESENSIES / BOOK REVIEWS

BYBELWETENSKAPPE / BIBLICAL SCIENCES

Helmer, C (ed) 2005. *Biblical Interpretation: History, Context and Reality*. Leiden: Brill.

This scholarly edition is an outcome of a seminar of the Biblical Theological Group during the Society of Biblical Literature's International Meeting in Berlin, July 20 2002. Contributions are in English and in German with abstracts in the 'other' language for each essay. After an introduction by the editor which provides the philosophical background for the edition, the book is divided into two parts: Part one focuses on historical and theological interpretation and part two on philosophical interpretation.

Bernd Janowski's introductory chapter bears the title: 'Biblische Theologie heute: Formale und materiale Aspekte'. From a historical point of view, he addresses the problem of the twofold nature of biblical theology: should historical or dogmatic issues deserve more attention? Is biblical theology descriptive, or prescriptive? A further point of concern is the fact that the Christian Bible is divided in two testaments, the second one developing its own christological hermeneutics on the basis of the first. Janowski the argues that history and culture account for the different ways in which the transcendent is experienced. Both history and theology played a role in the formation of the canon. Therefore contemporary biblical theology should take both historical matters and theological articulation into account in creative contemporary understanding.

A powerful illustration of how biblical interpretation reflects contemporary views on reality and the world, is Maren R Niehoff's essay: 'New Garments for Biblical Joseph'. Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus both appropriate the biblical story of Joseph for different reasons. Philo makes Joseph the model of Jewish identity in Egypt, also picturing him against the Romans, of course. Josephus, within his Roman context, depicts Joseph as the innocent who is victimised by his evil brothers. The similarities between Josephus' own personal life and the way in which he portrays the life of Joseph are striking. Context, personal experience and personal intentions shape biblical interpretation.

Harold W Attridge provides a new perspective on Heracleon in: 'Heracleon and John: Reassessment of an Early Christian

Debate'. The church father Origen regarded Heracleon as a heretic and especially a gnostic. By comparing the different readings of Origen and Heracleon of the biblical Gospel of John, Attridge proposes to restore Heacleon as a worthy exegete of his time, violating the text no more than Origen. In fact, Heracleon's less rigid appropriation of categories like 'nature' may have been closer to a possible original meaning of the text.

The last essay in this section is Karen Jo Torjesen's: 'The Enscripturation of Philosophy: The Incorporeality of God in Origen's Exegesis'. This time Origen's crisis with regards to biblical anthropomorphic language and the corporeal images of God is examined. Origen, steeped in the philosophy of Plato, found it very difficult to accept the ways in which myths, poems and rituals embodied the divine. By means of several interpretative strategies, he resolved to allegory to connect the scriptural words and their spiritual meaning. In this way he criticised biblical corporeality, and with the help of rhetorical strategies, convinced some early Christians that true, pure piety could not allow bodily images of God.

The second section is introduced by Martin Sweeny's essay: 'The Democratization of Messianism in Modern Jewish Thought'. Sweeny's point of departure is the Davidic covenant which appears in a 'democratized' fashion in several so-called messianic texts. However, the role of Jews and Judaism to bring about an ideal messianic age, moves beyond biblical prophecy and extends Jewish biblical theology towards the later traditions of Judaism, especially the Kabbalah. Once considered illegitimate and marginal, the Kabbalistic thought is now considered to be central to modern Jewish thought. The contributions of three Jewish mystics are discussed: Isaac Luria, Moses Mendelsohn and Asher Ginzberg. Luria's ideas are developed by Mendelsohn and finally appropriated by Ginzberg. It appears that Tikkun Olam – the Repair of the World – does not imply that the whole world converts to Judaism. Instead, Jews are compelled to bring knowledge of God to the world in which Gentiles will develop their own religious traditions that will express that knowledge. Tikkun Olam is the responsibility of all nations to work differently towards the same end.

The Gospel of John is once again the focus of Stephan Grätzels contribution: 'Verkündigung in Übereinstimmung mit der Vernunft: Fichtes Auslegung des Johannesevangeliums'. Like other

philosophers Fichte grapples with the relationship between *Sein* (being) and *Dasein* (existence). In order to investigate this metaphysical question, he turns to history. In two prominent works, Fichte takes as exegetical point of departure the Gospel of John, particularly the Prologue, to underscore the relation between historical religion and philosophy. The incarnated historical Jesus reveals what the transition from being to existence means: the word becomes flesh. This historical revelation enables philosophical reason to grasp the relations between both being and existence, and existence and knowledge with love at the core of these relationships. Fichte calls this metaphysical insight *Seligkeitslehre* (doctrine of blessedness).

Christine Helmer focuses on Schleiermacher and Colossians in her essay: 'The Consummation of Reality: Soteriological Metaphysics in Schleiermacher's Interpretation of Colossians 1:15-20'. Helmer is of the opinion that Schleiermacher is often unfairly criticised for imposing theological doctrines onto literal texts. She argues instead that his exegesis of the Greek passages presupposes an idiosyncratic understanding of the relationship between the past and the present. For Schleiermacher a soteriological metaphysics permeates reality and the world according to the inner power of redemption in Christ. This becomes clear in his commentary on Col 1:15-20. The soteriological metaphysics that he attributes to Paul, is in fact a feature of his own contemporary understanding of reality. Although Schleiermacher's own position shapes his interpretation of the text, his work has the merit for arguing that all scholarly exegesis and hermeneutics are closely related to the metaphysics of the exegete.

Hegel's views on Genesis 3 are discussed in Joachim Ringleben's contribution: 'Die Dialektik von Freiheit und Sünde: Hegels Interpretation von Genesis 3'. Hegel uses his philosophical concept of 'subjectivity' in order to interpret the narrative of the Fall. Innocence also implies 'unfree', thus Fall would necessarily contradict innocence, yet promote freedom. Subjective freedom is reality only when the self departs from its ground, and paves the way for gaining subjective consciousness. However, this estrangement of the self from its ground, is also called the Fall. Freedom can be dangerous. Evil is the treasure of freedom. However, this 'positive negativity' can be overcome if the free subject aims at reconciliation

with the Absolute, or God. Only then the history of the origin of freedom is complete.

Wilhelm Gräb's essay bears the title: "Anerkannte Kontingenz: Schellings Existenziale Interpretation des Johannesprologs in der *Philosophie der Offenbarung*. Gräb's point of departure is Schellings sensational lectures during 1841-42 on the 'Philosophy of Revelation'. Schelling approaches John's prologue from a philosophical point of view, thereby probing the important question of nineteenth century transcendental Idealism: what is the relationship between reason and its ground? Reason is incapable of conceptualising its own ground, however, when placed in relation to its ground, reason has the possibility to transcend itself. Self-transcendence is not a matter of objective knowledge, but is a function of religion. The contingent relation of reason to its ground becomes clear in the revelation of Jesus: a historical reasonable person who acted in relation to the world, yet essentially related to God.

The last contribution in this book is by Garrett Green: 'Feuerbach and the Hermeneutics of Imagination'. Due to his so-called 'projection theory' and 'hermeneutics of suspicion', Ludwig Feuerbach is often branded as an atheist. Garrett Green argues that imagination is for Feuerbach the organ of religion. However, imagination does not necessarily imply illusion or fantasy. The philosophy of the second half of the twentieth century observed the shaky basis of foundational truths and the consequent important role that imagination plays, even in the natural sciences. A biblical hermeneutics of imagination moves beyond a projected imaginary 'construct' of God and takes as point of departure the Christian gospels that portray Jesus as the image of God, to enable believers to imagine God as He truly is.

This edition by Christine Helmer, with the assistance of Taylor G. Petry is not easy reading, and certainly not recommended for the lay theologian. Knowledge is required of theology, philosophy and history. The undeniable interaction between these fields is demonstrated convincingly and by innovative means. Therefore theologians who take hermeneutics seriously, will definitely find this book useful.

Gerda de Villiers

DOGMATIEK / DOGMATICS

Jehle, F 2006. *Emil Brunner. Theologe im 20. Jahrhundert*. Zurich: TVZ. 637pp. ISBN-10:3-290-17392-5 / ISBN -13:978-3-290-17392-0. Price: unknown.

Dr Frank Jehle, who has retired in 2004 as “Seelsorger und Lehrbeauftragter für Evangelische Theologie” at the University of St Gallen, Zürich, Switzerland was given the task by the Emil-Brunner-Stiftung of compiling an Emil Brunner (1889 – 1966) biography. Interestingly, Jehle who had earlier published books on many other topics [such as *Kleine St Galler Reformationsgeschichte* (2006), *Johannes Kessler. Chronist der Reformation* (2003) and *Lieber unangenehm laut als angenehm leise. Der Theologe Karl Barth und die Politik* (1999)], had no previous book publications on Brunner. He therefore explicitly mentions in the last section “Dank” (page 583) that a Brunner biography was not his own idea, but that of a former president of the Brunner-Stiftung, Werner Kramer. Perhaps the fact that Jehle inherited an almost complete Brunner collection from his father-in-law Hans Wildberger (a Brunner disciple, who described him as his “geliebter und verehrter Lehrer” see page 584) might have been an impetus for the Brunner-Stiftung in assigning Jehle with this task, apart from him being an able researcher. Be this as it may, the idea subsequently took on concretely shape over the period from Christmas 1999 to Pentecost 2006. Jehle do however make the following personal remark in the “Zur Einführung” (“Introduction”) that he found the “Begegnung” (“encounter”) with the eminent and highly influential Swiss theologian Brunner “anregend und faszinierend” (page 18). And it clearly shows in his biographical exposition of Brunner.

In a detailed manner he unfolds the life story of Brunner from a wide range of sources: letters, diaries and unpublished manuscripts. The profile that Jehle draws from the neo-orthodox theologian Brunner, from his “Herkunft und Jugendzeit” (page 19ff), his study years (page 33ff) and involvement with the socialist movement, his turbulent years as “Pfarrer” (page 69ff) in Obstalden-Filzbach (a period in which Brunner openly declared: “Echter Sozialismus und Evangelium sind untrennbar”, that is, true socialism and the gospel cannot be separated), through his most important theological publications and his involvement with the dialectical theologians (page 237ff), his overseas visits to America and later to Asia (page 355), up to his “Abschied” (page 545ff) in which his

health after a severe stroke deteriorated rapidly over a period of nine years until his death in 1966, and “Nachklang” (Brunner’s funeral service and theological appraisals by Wildberger, Ebeling and Rich, see page 569ff), makes indeed for intriguing reading. Intriguing reading that confirms the words of the *Präsident des Stiftungsrates der Emil-Brunner-Stiftung*, Johannes Fischer (see Vorwort, page 9) that this publication is of more than just historical interest, since it does not only fill retrospectively a huge historical gap, but is also especially of importance for the understanding of the significant theological contribution of Brunner. In this Jehle did well!

Brunner’s theological contribution is clearly highlighted by Jehle: the first Christology, namely “Der Mittler” (1927) from the ranks of the dialectical theologians; his relationship with Karl Barth and their conflict regarding Natural Theology; his (earlier) strong support of socialism (“Ich bin Socialist, weil ich an Gott glaube”, that is, I am a socialist because I believe in God) and his influential contribution to social ethics, especially his “Das Gebot und die Ordnungen” (1932); the role he played at the “Weltkirchenkonferenz” in Oxford in 1937, and as visiting professor in Asia and in the lives of many theological students and ministers. Perhaps the most important point that Jehle wants to make regarding the life of Brunner, is captured in the one sentence: Brunner lived his theology (see page 12). And this lived theology of Brunner re-lives through the careful historical-theological reconstructive efforts of Jehle. For the serious Brunner scholar as well as those scholars who have interest in the course of European Protestantism, this Biography is in my opinion not only an indispensable research aid for any further Brunner studies, but also for critical dialogue on the self-understanding(s) and perceptions regarding 20th century European Protestantism (see eg the remarks by prof Friedrich Wilhelm Graf in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of 17 March 2007 on the Brunner Biography by Jehle).

With its “Zeittafel” (timetable of Brunner’s life, see page 585ff), indication of various sources (see “Quelle”, page 591ff), additional bibliographic material (page 593ff), monographs (page 599) and a “Personenregister” (index of names, see page 609), it is indeed a helpful publication. Interestingly there is no subject index. Given the extent of the Biography, that would have been useful.

D P Veldsman

GODSDIENS- EN SENDINGWETENSKAP / RELIGIOUS AND MISSIONARY SCIENCES

Saayman, W 2007. *Being Missionary Being Human – an overview of Dutch Reformed Mission*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster. ISBN 9781875053650. Prys R60-00

Willem Saayman is 'n baie gerespekteerde Missioloog wat die NG Kerk se sendinggeskiedenis goed ken en Suid-Afrika passievol liefhet. Hy pak die grootse taak om langer as 350 jaar se sendinggeskiedenis van die NG Kerk oorsigtelik te beskryf vanuit die sosiale verstaan van geskiedenis aan en poog doelbewus om die geskiedenis van die Afrikaner in die verhaal van die NG Kerk, en andersom, te lees en in te skryf (2007:3). Vandaar ook Saayman se titel *Being missionary - being human*. Die sendingverhaal van die NG Kerk (die *being missionary* van die kerk) word vanuit menslike perspektief en die groot gebeure in die Afrikaner se geskiedenis (*being human*) toegelig. Saayman kies dus vir 'n interdisiplinêre benadering wat die noue wisselwerking tussen kultuur, godsdiens en die politieke ekonomie respekteer – baie in die trant van De Gruchy in sy belangrike werk *The church struggle in South Africa* (1986: Kaapstad: David Phillip). Konteks en roeping, omstandighede en missionêre bewussyn, vul mekaar aan (:19).

Saayman kies ook om die sosiale geskiedenis te verstaan vanuit die perspektief van *golwe van verandering*. Daarmee verwys hy na omvattende sosiale bewegings wat vanuit 'n geloofsgemeenskap opwel, daaroor spoel en so 'n geloofsgemeenskap, maar ook die breë gemeenskap, meesleur en die lewens van die meerderheid lede van die geloofsgemeenskap aanraak (2007:9). Hy ondersoek die redes vir die ontstaan van die opwelling van sendingbetrokkenheid in die NG Kerk en die wisselwerking tussen geestelike herlewering en alledaagse politieke en ekonomiese gebeure.

Die boek verteenwoordig in baie opsigte eerstes: die eerste sosiale geskiedenis van die NG Kerk se sendingwerk; die eerste wat die konsep van golwe van verandering in 'n boek oor die NG kerk ontwikkel; die eerste wat die verwickeldheid van die geskiedenis van die Afrikaner en die NG Kerk se sendingwerk in 'n breë sosiale konteks plaas en daaruit interpreteer. Die meriete van die boek spreek reeds uit die innoverende aanwending van hierdie eerstes.

Volgens Saayman het 4 groot golwe wat oor Suid-Afrika gespoel het, sendingentoesiasme hoog in die lewe van die NG Kerk gelig op die deining van die geskiedenis:

- Die 1^{ste} golf (1779-1834) beskryf die eerste sendingwerk van die NG Kerk binne die raamwerk van die vrylating van slawe en die ontstaan van 'n koloniale samelewing aan die Kaap. Die datering begin met die petisie van Vryburgers aan die Kaap aan die Here XVII aangesien dit een van die belangrike temas van die geskiedenis inlui – die evolusie van die nedersetting aan die Kaap van 'n verversingspos na die begin van 'n kolonie (:14). Die betrokke era eindig in 1834 met die Groot Trek en die vrylating van slawe. Die pionierswerk van twee predikante, H R van Lier en M C Vos, staan midde-in hierdie golf van verandering. Saayman (:28-34) beskryf hulle werk onder die slawe en Vryburgers met besondere klem op die feit dat beide predikante se opvoeding, agtergrond en piëtistiese spiritualiteit hulle op besondere maniere toegerus het vir hulle sendingwerk. Die kenmerke van die 1^{ste} golf kan kortliks as volg opgesom word:
 - Die sendingontwaking in Europese Protestantse kerke het die groeiende identiteitsvorming van die koloniste aan die Kaap aangevul. Dit is 'n geval dat Van Lier en Vos die regte persone op die regte tyd was om die golf van sendingontwaking te ry en 'n bediening met belangrike gevolge te begin.
 - Beide leraars was goed toegerus om die nuwe klas Vryburgers aan die Kaap te motiveer tot betrokkenheid by sending. Hulle sukses dien ook as bewys van die bepalende rol wat predikante in die mobilisering van lidmate vir sending kan speel
 - Hoewel beide Vos en Van Lier gebore en getoë gereformeerdes was, het die Piëtisme hulle bediening sterk bepaal. Dit het sedertdien 'n bepalende kenmerk van die sendingwerk van die NG Kerk gebly (:41).
 - Die NG Kerk se sendingwerk het veral op slawe, die groep wat die duidelikste as nie-Christene geïdentifiseer kon word, gefokus. Saayman is egter krities oor die rol wat 'n skuldige gewete in die fokus gespeel het.
 - Die 1^{ste} golf lei die institusionalisering van rassisme in die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing in.

- Die 2^{de} golf (1867-1939) beskryf die sendingwerk van die NG Kerk as grense wat verskuif. Die belangrikste temas van hierdie tydperk is die ontwaking van Afrikaneridentiteit in omstandighede van verstedeliking en industrialisasie. Die 2^{de} golf begin met die ontdekking van diamante naby Kimberley (1867) en die aanbreek van 'n nuwe era van myne en industrie in Suid-Afrika (:46). Die golf spoel uit in die 2^{de} Wêreldoorlog en die gepaardgaande verdeeldheid in Afrikanergeledere oor deelname aan die oorlog. Saayman beskryf die impak van die 2^{de} Anglo-Boereoorlog en die bediening van Andrew Murray jr. op die NG Kerk as bepalende gebeure in hierdie era. Saayman beskryf onder andere die volgende kenmerke van die 2^{de} golf:
 - Die Skotse invloed op NG Kerk.
 - Die groot *oop gebiede* in Suid-Afrika bied unieke geleenthede aan NG Kerk vir sendingwerk.
 - Die ervaring van Afrikaners dat God hulle met 'n spesiale roeping in Afrika geplaas het, dien as motivering vir sendingwerk sowel as regverdiging vir die kolonialisering van die land.
 - Die groot rol wat predikante speel in die mobilisering van lidmate vir sendingwerk.
 - Die feit dat sendelinge ook betrokke geraak het by sosiale aksies dui op hulle kommer oor mense se geestelike en fisiese nood.
- Die 3^{de} golf (1954-1976) word beskryf as die verskuiwing van innerlike grense. Die era moet verstaan word vanuit die institusionalisering van apartheid as juridiese en staatkundige raamwerk en sosiale sisteem onder die leiding van die Nasionale Party. Dit begin met die eerste stappe in die herskikking van die staatkundige opset om Apartheid te vestig en eindig met die aanvang van die Soweto-opstand van 1976 en die begin van 'n nuwe fase in die swart bevrydingstryd. Saayman teken die belang van die Tomlinsonverslag (oor sosio-ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die tuislande) en die Eiselenverslag (oor swart onderwys). Dit is juis hierdie verslae wat nuwe insig onder NG lidmate in die wêreld van swart Suid-Afrikaners gebring het en gelei het tot 'n nuwe golf van sendingwerk (:74). Saayman lewer 'n besondere bydrae tot die verstaan van die NG Kerk se sendingwerk met die

uitgebreide aantekening van die rol van swart plaasskole. (:78-95) Hoewel hy 'n aantal (soms voorlopige) bevindinge maak, open hy op vaardige wyse 'n nuwe terrein van ondersoek deur sosiale wetenskaplikes en sendingkundiges. Enkele kenmerke van die 3^{de} golf gee insig in Saayman se verstaan daarvan:

- Die bestaan van twee afsonderlike wêreldes in Suid-Afrika – 'n wit en swart wêreld. Die Tomlinsonverslag het wit Suid-Afrikaners genoop om innerlike grense oor te steek en die wêreld van swart mense te verken.
 - Die saambestaan van rassisme en sendingywer. Hy poog om die paradoks van die saak toe te lig en wys op die idealisme onder Afrikaners om erns te maak met die uitdagings wat die Tomlinsonverslag aan die orde gebring het
 - Die NG Kerk raak baie betrokke by opvoeding, gesondheid en ontwikkeling.
 - Die teologies-filosofiese kontinuïteit tussen die NG Kerk en die Nasionale Party.
- Die 4^{de} golf begin in 1990 met pres. F W de Klerk se aankondiging in die Parlement oor die ontbanning van swart bevrydingsbewegings en die begin van die *nuwe Suid-Afrika*. Dit lei 'n nuwe era van sendingywer tot *aan die einde van die aarde in*. Saayman wys op die meer omvattende verstaan van die NG Kerk se sendingtaak wat in dié era omskryf word as 'n wyer bediening van die wêreld en ganse mensdom. Die omvattender gerigtheid kom veral in gemeentes tereg met 'n verskuiwing van sendinginisiatief weg van sinodes na gemeentes (:107). Hy bespreek twee gevallestudies om die punt te staaf. Die feit dat die 4^{de} golf nog besig is om te breek noop Saayman om sy omskrywing van kenmerke van die era versigtig en voorlopig te formuleer:
- Hy wys op die identiteitskrisis by NG lidmate weens die vinnige politieke verandering in Suid-Afrika en beskuldig die NG Kerk dat sy haar lidmate nie genoegsaam pastoraal versorg het in die omstandighede nie.
 - Die finansiële las wat met sendingwerk in arm Afrika gepaard gaan het tot gevolg dat NG lidmate eerder op hulle *eie* mense fokus (:121). Saayman se argument gaan mank aan deeglike motivering en selfs 'n oorsigtelike lees van verslae wat by NG

sinodes dien, toon aan hoe die verskuiwing van fokus na gemeentes baie meer fondse en hulpkrigte vir sendingwerk ontsluit het.

- Baie gemeentes is betrokke by sending ver buite Suid-Afrika se grense – dalk weens verhoogde internasionale mobiliteit.

Saayman sluit die werk af met 'n aantal omvattende gevolgtrekkings. Dit wissel van die erkenning van die rol van vroue in sending (:128) tot ernstige kritiek op die NG Kerk wat haar rol in die institusionalisering en handhawing van apartheid volgens hom nog nie genoegsaam en openbaar erken het nie (:135). Die gevolgtrekkings bied 'n geheelbeeld oor die wisselwerking tussen roeping en konteks, tussen die menslike en missionêre aard van kerkwees, en bied as sulks baie stof tot nadenke.

Being missionary - being human bied 'n vars perspektief op die sendinggeskiedenis van die NG Kerk en die beskrywing van die 4 golwe gee 'n verantwoordbare raamwerk vir die verstaan van die interaksie tussen konteks en sending.

C J P Niemandt

KERKGESKIEDENIS / CHURCH HISTORY

Chapman M (ed.) 2008. *The Anglican Covenant. Unity and diversity in the Anglican Community*. London: Continuum. ISBN: 978-0567-03253-9. Price: £14.99. Pp. 224.

This is the latest in what is amounting to a library of works in the current crisis in the Anglican Communion arising predominantly, but not exclusively, from the ongoing homosexuality debate within that world-wide fellowship, but which is similarly affecting many Christian denominations at the present time.

The editor opens with an excellent introduction on the current situation in global Anglicanism in which he draws the analogy with multi-national companies characterised by branding and promotion of products, quality control and the ubiquity of conflict especially as their international offspring develop separate identities; yet, at least with regard to the church, tied together by intangible tradition made manifest through many recognised symbols some of which relate to the power of moral authority as a means of achieving consensual (or other) authority. However, the analogy breaks down at the point of discussion on 'centres' of control which, in the Anglican

communion, unlike their multi-national counterparts where there exists a considerable degree of international regulation, are diversified. As a result, a discontinuity develops between consistent reliability where there are a variety of local branches.

In the Anglican Communion, critical conflicts have arisen when parts of the body act out of concert with the prevailing understanding of what it means to be Anglican. There is now general agreement that there is a need for a covenant which will reinforce the bonds of mutual trust which govern relationships between member churches which have traditionally been based on 'mutual reciprocity and forbearance'. As used here, 'covenant' refers to a pledge to abide by an agreement arising out of a sense of commitment about what constitutes the Anglican Communion.

There can and will be no progress until freedom for diversity of opinion is allowed. The current situation is a reaction to liberal imperialism and is consistent with post-colonial thinking. This has to be seen in relation to the basics of The Anglican Communion, i.e. Scripture, the historic creeds, the two dominical sacraments and the historic episcopacy. Consequently, the homosexual issue cannot be resolved while there is substantial disagreement about what is meant by 'homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture'.

Cameron's paper places the debate in the wider ecumenical context with a discussion on the positive value of *koinonia*. He rejects the alternative solutions presented in terms of contract, code and confession in favour of covenant based on humility, generosity and hospitality. Goddard insists that homosexuality is only the presenting problem in this debate, while the substantial issue is how to maintain unity and a degree of diversity in a situation of contextual mission. For him, the bounds of diversity are determined by the authority of scripture however that is defined. The way forward is communion and covenant as a means and expression of God's wish for the Communion. Franklin reminds us of the important place of covenants in clarifying the nature of covenants as part of God's mission. Atta-Baffoe, writing from an African perspective, promotes a progressive orthodoxy in which the traditional faith of the church is balanced alongside an understanding of the contemporary diverse cultural contexts in a pluralistic society. This sounds like unachievable Anglican double talk precisely because much of the current debate does not allow for this option. There are also papers written from historical, Roman Catholic and

Methodist perspectives. In a final essay on a biblical understanding of covenant, John Barton is brutally honest in his summation: ‘After all, if the term is biblical, and if the proposed agreement is called by a term hallowed by biblical usage, who can oppose it without opposing the Bible itself. ... The term is not being used in any recognisable biblical sense. ... Anglicans need to agree to go on talking to each other about the matters that divide them, and to do so honourable and straightforwardly. I doubt whether it helps this process to ask them to sign a “covenant” to do so’ (:203).

Written under the auspices of the Affirming Catholicism Movement, the authors provide readers with a relatively unbiased and thought-provoking study of the draft Covenant which was prepared for the meeting of Anglican Primates meeting in 2007. It is a pity that the text of the draft covenant is not included (though it is summarised (:26) as this would have made the debate more accessible to those who do not know its background. However, what makes this book unique is its attempt to work towards a resolution of the issue using practical, theological and ecclesiological approaches. While focussing on one branch of the Christian faith, it offers much food for theological reflection to those of us coming from other branches.

G A Duncan

PRAKTIESE TEOLOGIE / PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Vos, C J A, Hogan, L L & Cilliers J H (eds) 2007. *Preaching as a language of hope*. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis (Studia Homiletica). Paperback. Pp 236. ISBN: 978-1-86919-194-8. Price: ZAR120-00.

One of the discussions in South African homiletical circles is about the questions raised by postmodern challenges to homiletics. Can we speak of ‘truth’ – the truth of the message we hear and understand in our own context in the Biblical text; can our language transcend the view of a closed reality when we name God in our sermons; are we compelled to preach only in narrative modes in our contemporary context?

This book contains the papers read from scholars from all over the world during the 7th Congress of the Societas Homiletica (5-10 August 2006) at the University of Pretoria. These scholars confront us with a refreshing diversity of approaches and aspects of contemporary homiletical research. They work in one or other way

with a post-fundamentalist approach to epistemology in the rationality sphere of Wentzel van Huyssteen's thinking and speak with integrity on sensible communication of the gospel in preaching in our day (see pp. 76; 23). We can speak of God in preaching with integrity.

All the papers have a *contextual* approach. The eight contributions of Part III deal with preaching hope in different contexts: An example of empirical homiletics in a suffering world (Immink and Verweij), HIV and AIDS (Cilliers), hunger and affluence (De Klerk), pastoral care (Anderson), hunger and affluence in India (Gnanavaram), love as a support base for the alleviation of poverty (Letsosa), hope in the field of psychotherapy (E Grözinger) and those who had an influence on a black person in South Africa (Masango).

Fundamental theological arguments play a role in putting theoretical insights on the table for contemporary preaching in different contexts (pp.29-58). In every age homiletics cannot exist without theological thinking. Therefore a rhetorical form is still very important in our day. Not only stories communicate the gospel today but also arguments (Part 1 of the book). It is, however, necessary that preachers should preach with imagination: seeing visions and dreaming dreams (pp. 60-69).

It is not a surprise, therefore, that heavy emphasis is put on metaphors in sermons in nearly every contribution to this book (for instance pp. 22-24; 79-81). Preaching is a language event. The different uses of language are studied throughout the history of homiletics. In this book not only rhetorical language and the narrative is presented, but also the poetic.

Regarding narrative preaching Albrecht Grözinger has contributed a fascinating piece of writing on the parables of the Kingdom. The theme of hope is reflected in all the papers. Preachers who feel despondent and doubtful about the role of preaching in the *Zeitgeist* of our day will be inspired anew that our speech in preaching is able to communicate hope.

H J C Pieterse