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BOOK REVIEW

Mark R. Glanville. *Preaching in a New Key: Crafting Expository Sermons in Post-Christian Communities*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2025. 248 pp. Pbk. ISBN 9781514010990. \$28.00.

In this book, the author Mark Glanville shares the concerns of preachers in the postmodern era and proposes that, although society has already entered this era and it is becoming more difficult to maintain faith, preachers should still nourish faith and help churches grow into communities of hope and justice. To this end, the author explains the act of preaching by drawing an analogy with jazz, a musical form, and divides it into four key elements: “deeper,” “craft,” “tradition,” and “beauty.”

Deeper, like jazz, is an improvisational performance that incorporates a deep self-understanding into the sermon, reflecting the preacher’s inner self and entire life. With regard to craft, just as jazz requires skill for improvisation, so too does preaching require thorough preparation. Tradition requires preachers to learn storytelling and theology, just as a talented musician must also master tradition. Beauty, too, involves improvisational interaction with the audience, emotional expression, and artistry. Likewise, preaching must also connect with the audience and build a community of faith.

The first key point is “deeper.” Chapters 1 through 3 show the preacher’s preparation. In chapter 1, Glanville argues that the restoration of a preacher’s vitality is contingent upon their internal condition, yet many preachers fail to recognize this correlation. Therefore, it urges him to examine himself and abandon his defensive posture. While chapter 2 emphasizes the importance of the community in a society where the individual has become important, it also underscores that the point of application should be the community. Chapter 3 recommends that communal

hermeneutics go through the stages of text exegesis, method of interpretation, and sermon writing. The concern with communal formation naturally extends to how churches engage emerging generations such as Gen Z. For the current generation, the institutional church is failing to receive them adequately, so a call is made for preachers to reflect the church that young disciples of Jesus want to belong to throughout their lives.

The second key point is “craft.” This part contains chapters 4 through 7, which demonstrate the actual sermon preparation process. The author in chapter 4 maintains that expository preaching remains a vital component of sermon preparation. It is not merely the transmission of information or a vehicle for personal application but rather a means of conveying the author’s own practical methodology for expository preaching. Chapter 5 demonstrates that there is no one method of preaching and that preachers are encouraged to preach through various methods such as inductive and deductive preaching. However, they are encouraged to always maintain the central “Through Line”. Even if the sermon is well written, the sermon delivery is equally important. Chapter 6 urges preachers to avoid technical terms, communicate sincerely, and be careful in word selection, as it pertains to the actual sermon delivery. Finally, the author concludes chapter 7 by introducing tools such as a sketch pad, allowing various sermon ideas to be visualized at a glance.

The third key point is “tradition.” These chapters are 8 through 10, which call for the preacher to return to the Bible. Since it is the post-Christendom era, the author in chapter 8 thought that hermeneutics appropriate to this context are needed, and the author explains them by categorizing them into Bible stories, biblical ethics, gospel, and testimony. Glanville suggests that this can provide practical help to the called-out community. In chapter 9, titled “Beyond Hermeneutics,” it is suggested that the question of biblical authority becomes crucial in today’s context. More specifically, regarding the authority of the Bible, since the present age is a post-authoritarian society, preachers are encouraged to establish the Bible’s authority as a record of salvation history and to preach Christ-centred sermons grounded in this authority. The author argues in chapter 10 that preachers are

encouraged to read the Bible in detail, comment on it, interpret it, and preach according to their cultural interpretation.

The last key point is “beauty.” In chapter 11, the preacher is encouraged to establish a living relationship with the audience through their presence and to preach creatively. Notably, Glanville suggests creative preaching, ranging from classic storytelling to methods that reflect various genres of the text. In chapter 12, the writer encourages the preacher to create space for Gen-Z by fostering love, God’s presence, and margins, and to help the congregation engage with the Word. Sometimes, there is trauma, so the preacher must create a safe space for the congregation. Furthermore, the author states in chapter 13 that the goal of the sermon is to reveal the gentleness of Christ. He also says that it can help cultivate a “Leader-Full” community. Through this, Glanville illustrates that preaching is closely connected to our lives. In chapter 14, Glanville claims that the preacher must explain a text that deals with justice and violence. In such cases, the preacher must not avoid the text but must reflect on it deeply, meditate on it, and preach wisely and empathetically. He goes on to argue that the preacher must live authentically to preach such texts.

Glanville redefines preaching as a relational act. Put differently, while the traditional view sees preaching as an act of teaching or proclaiming, the author emphasizes the importance of understanding the congregation’s life and maintaining an attitude of conveying the love and gospel of Jesus Christ to the audience. Therefore, he believes that the true form of a preacher is not flowery speech but rather embodying the life of Jesus. This argument is in line with the image of Jesus in the Bible. Jesus told his believers to imitate his character, which means that this image that he advocates is also necessary in the post-Christendom era. Thus, the image of demonstrating not through sermons but through one’s own life is something that churches today need.

It is noteworthy that Glanville has not only engaged in theological study but also participated directly in pastoral ministry. This background is evident throughout the book, which goes beyond theoretical concepts or abstract principles to offer specific and practical insights applicable to real-life ministry. In the sec-

tions where the author addresses the concerns of those engaged in ministry and offers practical responses, one can discern the depth of concern he has experienced firsthand. Through the reflection questions and practical takeaways provided at the end of each chapter, readers are not merely passive recipients but are guided to construct a framework for actively applying the content within their own ministry context. As a result, readers can review the book's contents and establish both personal and communal directions for ministry. In this way, the book provides a structured approach that offers practical benefits by serving as a bridge between theology and ministry practice.

However, the book would have benefited from a more thorough development of certain aspects. The author reveals that his primary area of research was the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy. Consequently, when writing the book, there is a noticeable emphasis on the Old Testament Pentateuch. While the New Testament is also addressed in depth alongside the Pentateuch, there is little to no reference to the historical, poetic, or prophetic books of the Old Testament. The text assumes that the target audience is preachers. Put simply, it is intended primarily for those who preach on a weekly or regular basis. If so, preachers should regularly preach not only the Pentateuch but also from other books of both the Old and New Testaments. As a result, the book's lack of a balanced approach to the entire Bible is a regrettable limitation. If all sections of the Bible had been included as examples in a more balanced manner, the book would have been richer.

A further observation concerns the theological aspect of the book, which leans toward a progressive perspective. Naturally, theological perspectives may vary depending on the author's theological orientation, personal background, and cultural context. Furthermore, since the author served as a pastor, it is natural that the context shaped by his cultural background is prominent. If the author's goal was to offer practical guidance to a diverse range of churches, including both progressive and conservative contexts, then a more balanced approach that incorporated conservative theological views would have strengthened the book's accessibility. In the examples found throughout the book, libera-

tion theology and postcolonial theology may align well with the author's theological stance and context, but certain aspects may be difficult to fully engage with from a traditional conservative theological perspective. In chapter 4 especially, the writer outlines the history of salvation, but the soteriological perspective that flows throughout the book reflects a salvation-historical position that is fused with progressive theology. Hence, from a homiletic perspective, the book should be accessible and engaging to readers from both conservative and progressive backgrounds.

The book concludes with a thematic sermon, a short sermon on the main text, and an appendix that helps connect the sermon with everyday calling. These appendices are practical resources applicable to actual pastoral work, providing a valuable resource for preachers.

Overall, Glanville deeply considers how a preacher can embody the influence of Christ within the community and help the church become a "contrastive society". Despite certain limitations, Glanville's book is a timely and practical resource for preachers seeking to communicate the gospel meaningfully in post-Christian contexts.

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