

Carol Tomlin. *Preach It! Understanding African Caribbean Preaching*. London: SCM Press Norwich, 2019. 201 pages. \$17.99.

In *Preach It*, Carol Tomlin utilizes her experience and academic expertise to describe African Caribbean preaching in Britain. The work continues Tomlin's research in Pentecostal beliefs and practices, with special attention to homiletics. Tomlin argues that African Caribbean preaching contains a mixture of African and North American Pentecostal influences. She maintains that African diaspora Pentecostal Christians share common traditions and practices throughout the world, even as her focus is on Britain.

The book is divided into two parts based on her central frame. She says, "the study of preaching has two dimensions: the linguistics which centres [sic] on areas such as lexis, phonology, syntax and semantics, and the stylistic which outlines the ways in which these different elements are combined to create a variety of effects" (7). Throughout the work, Tomlin demonstrates how these two parts are intimately related to theology and context. The use and structure of language(s) in preaching is central to Tomlin's description and analysis. Part I explores the complex backgrounds of African Caribbean Pentecostal preaching in Britain, especially its history and use of languages. Chapter 1 provides an outline of African spirituality and Pentecostalism. The preservation of African spirituality's combination of the sacred and the secular through slavery partially explains the predilection of preaching in African Caribbean Pentecostalism. The second chapter continues tracing the movement of Pentecostalism from Los Angeles, the Caribbean, and finally Britain. Brief theological descriptions of particular Pentecostal movements in Britain help contextualize preaching and other practices in the liturgical settings. The third chapter describes "code-switching," where preachers use different forms of English and/or Creole within the same sermon. Tomlin exposes colonial, cultural, theological, and generational implications of the use of language in preaching. The final chapter of the first part focuses on ten principles of Pentecostal preaching, such as a preference for deduction over induction.

Part two describes the tools used by Pentecostal preaching that relate to style. Chapter 5 discusses the centrality of orality in the Pentecostal movement. Readers will recognize many elements discussed in black homiletics texts, such as improvisation, call and response, creativity, and narrativity; however, the Pentecostal lens offers fresh perspectives. Call and response is the major topic of the sixth chapter where Tomlin notes how they function throughout the whole service. The chapter helpfully describes different types and functions of call and response, revealing their complexity. She identifies repetition as a central aspect of Pentecostal preaching and the service in chapter 7. Her conclusion reiterates her thesis, that "elements of African retentions are reflected in the homiletic practices" of Pentecostal preaching (140). Tomlin draws from the works of many black homileticians who have made similar arguments, but her analysis is distinct in its focus on the African Caribbean Pentecostal context in Britain. The appendix includes sermon notes taken to the pulpit by a preacher and a transcript of the same sermon as it was preached. Tomlin uses the frames and tools from the work to analyze the message. This conclusion was particularly helpful as a synthesis of *Preach It* and as a glimpse into Pentecostal preaching.

Tomlin helpfully names the rise of global Pentecostalism as a need for further study of the preaching practices of the charismatic movement. Students and scholars of preaching are given an excellent introduction to African Caribbean Pentecostal preaching in *Preach It*. While

Tomlin focuses on Britain, the descriptive work and theological analysis extend beyond the immediate context. The impressive scope of the work gives the reader a wide view that considers some of the complexities of Pentecostal preaching. At the same time, the introductory nature of the work reveals the need for continued scholarship on the topic. Tomlin's descriptive work is compelling, but I wanted elements that are more constructive as well.

One of the strengths of *Preach It* is Tomlin's clarity when she connects a description of Pentecostal preaching practices with homiletical theory. She often draws from the North American homiletical literature, and the New Homiletic in particular, as a way of explaining the characteristics and methods of Pentecostal preaching. Those looking for a connection between the Pentecostal practices of preaching and homiletical theory should find this work instructive. The work is accessible to readers in the United States or those around the world. The book could serve well in a class on global or contextual models of preaching, and I recommend it to anyone seeking to learn about Pentecostal preaching.

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