

Leonora Tubbs Tisdale. *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010. 138 pages. \$19.95.

Where have the prophets gone? This question sparks a conversation among strong voices that seek the renewal of prophetic preaching in the church and among those who craft their preaching in its service. If you are interested in deepening the prophetic witness through the preaching of the church, then this is a great book for you.

The author, Nora Tisdale, takes the reader through a logical journey from the scarcity of prophetic witness to the hope for the renewal of prophetic preaching in local congregations. After recognizing the work of Marvin McMickle on this subject, Tisdale opens up the conversation to include other voices that have contributed to the fashioning of what she calls the “Seven Hallmarks of Prophetic Preaching (10).” Ending the chapter with the seven reasons that preachers resist bringing the prophetic witness into their sermons, she turns to issues of spirituality that can under gird the prophetic preacher in this struggle to speak “truth to love.” Out of her own pastoral sensitivity as a preacher, she moves the conversation toward how preaching can be prophetic and pastoral at the same time. She suggests ten homiletic strategies for approaching prophetic concerns from the pulpit. In Chapter Four, Tisdale gives concrete examples of sermon designs that reflect the various homiletical approaches she has outlined. Finally, she closes her conversation with emphasis on the importance of theological and spiritual integrity for preacher and congregation in order for the prophetic witness to be effective.

True to Tisdale’s personal commitments, she engages many voices in the writing of this text. From the contributions of various members of the academy to a cadre of scholars from other disciplines and a significant number of preachers from various races, genders, and backgrounds, the reader feels that the subject is truly a conversation among preachers for the purpose of strengthening the prophetic witness of the church. Unique to this conversation, however, is the valuable contribution of the historic voices of the pastors of Riverside Church in New York. Tisdale brings to life the witness of Fosdick, McCracken, Campbell, Coffin and Forbes as valuable examples of preachers who lived and spoke with prophetic authority.

As a teacher of preaching, I will use this text in my homiletics classes and will recommend it to any preacher who is ready to bring the prophetic witness into her or his preaching in a more intentional way.

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