

images of the crusades as out of bounds for Christian use, the warfare image is entirely appropriate. Christ has little problem with it for He has promised to return on a white stallion to defeat evil. Warfare unbiblically conceived always deserves Christian condemnation, but warfare conceived of biblically deserves support from both the theological and artistic communities. If Skreslet dismisses images that offend non-Christians, he will eventually find himself dismissing his own images, for each of his images visualize the insufficiency of non-Christians religions. His images also visualize the need non-Christians have for the church to proclaim the good news, their need for Christian friends to share Christ with them, their need of shepherding into the fold, their need to become a part of Christ's new building, and their need for the Lord to harvest them in his new crop of eternal life. There is no end to the concessions the world will demand of Christian images once Christians back away from legitimate biblical images.

Despite this, Skreslet has offered a unique work that should enhance the reflection upon and practice of Christian mission. If readers/viewers take his work seriously, and if they can grow in their appreciation of visual arts, they will help Skreslet achieve the purpose behind his commendable work.

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***Preaching With Power.* By Michael Duduitt. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. 256 pages. Softcover, \$16.99.**

Among today's homileticians, Michael Duduitt is no stranger. He is the founding publisher and the editor of "Preaching Magazine." Those familiar with the magazine, will recognize the interviews by Duduitt, published in the magazine during this past decade, interviews which he credits as being among "the most important and popular features." This compilation contains interviews of twenty preachers whom he calls "dynamic outstanding communicators with great influences of preaching."

The introduction includes a summary of the book. Built around twenty interviewees, the book dedicates each chapter to one of these evangelical pastors known to be "classic expositors, creative innovators, and key figures" such as, John MacArthur, Haddon Robinson, Adrian Rogers, David Jeremiah, Rick Warren, T. D. Jakes, Jerry Falwell, John Maxwell, Brian McLaren, Ed Young Jr. and Andy Stanley, just to name a few. Every chapter starts with a short introduction about the person interviewed, then proceeds with standard questions built around his philosophy of preaching, moving toward discussing how these preachers prepare and plan their sermons, discovering who influenced them and their preaching and then concluding with what they would say to each of us regarding preaching. In the first chapter, Duduitt attempts to define Expository Preaching in an interview with Brian Chappel. The rest of the nineteen interviews are arranged around a specific theme or topic he believes best suits the preacher and his preaching context.

As a firm believer that one of the best ways of learning is to examine and watch the ones that have gone before us and accomplished it themselves, I strongly recommend this book.

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***Reading the Sermon on the Mount: Character Formation and Ethical Decision Making in Matthew 5-7.* By Charles H. Talbert, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004. 181 pages. Softcover, \$17.95.**

This text is a scholarly study of the Sermon on the Mount which interprets Jesus' primary intention in His presentation to develop the character of His disciples and prepare them for making moral decisions, based on that character. Part 1 is a brief treatment of such critical issues as Matthew's relation to Judaism, authorship, the structure of the sermon, and the function of character development and decision making. He also attends to the issue of the supposed legalism of this Gospel. Of great interest to the author is that of examining the possible understanding and reactions of the hearers and later followers of Jesus' "sermon." He projects what those "auditors" could have understood by showing what contemporary philosophers (Greek, Roman, Jewish, Egyptian, etc.), or other writers of that general epoch had expressed of similar concepts. Also, since most of the auditors were Jewish or had knowledge of Jewish traditions, Talbert frequently reviews the Old Testament background for many of the Lord's sayings in the Sermon.

The primary technique of the book is the exploration of chapters 5 to 7 of Matthew's Gospel, applying a formula for dealing with each section. That formula consists of (1) utilizing exegetical study of the text, (2) making reflections from contemporary writers and thinkers to project the possible understanding of the "auditors" of the Sermon, (3) application of Jesus' teachings as they pointed to the character development of His disciples and would-be followers, and (4) how those teachings prepared the disciples to live a life of righteousness (in contrast to that of the Jewish leaders—Matt. 5:20-48). Perhaps the genius of this work is that the author consistently interpreted Jesus' intention in the Sermon to be the exposure of His disciples to the necessary ingredients of godly character and to prepare them for being moral agents conscious of God's original intention in much of the moral law of the Old Testament. However, a weakness in the author's presentation is that at times the formula, which he so consistently utilized, seems a bit forced, but not to the degree that it detracts from the growing conviction in the reader that this is a plausible key for understanding the whole Sermon on the Mount.

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