



2016

George, Massey, and Smith's "Our Sufficiency Is of God: Essays on Preaching in Honor of Gardner C. Taylor" (Book Review)

Deborah McConkey
Horizon College & Seminary

The Christian Librarian is the official publication of the Association of Christian Librarians (ACL). To learn more about ACL and its products and services please visit <http://www.acl.org/>

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl>

Recommended Citation

McConkey, Deborah (2016) "George, Massey, and Smith's "Our Sufficiency Is of God: Essays on Preaching in Honor of Gardner C. Taylor" (Book Review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 59 : Iss. 1 , Article 67.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl/vol59/iss1/67>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Christian Librarian by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

The book is rich with bibliographic references to both articles and books on the subject from business and library literature. This book is appropriate for library directors or leaders particularly in large university libraries but with broader applicability to higher education settings and perhaps large public libraries. This process for planning would require a supportive institutional environment to be practical. This work is also available as an e-book or print/e-book bundle.

**Our Sufficiency Is of God: Essays on Preaching in Honor of
Gardner C. Taylor,**

edited by Timothy George, James Early Massey, and Robert Smith, Jr. Macon, GA:
Mercer University Press, 2010. 342 pp. ISBN 9780881462067

Reviewed by Deborah McConkey, Librarian, Horizon College & Seminary

As the title suggests, this work is a collection of essays about preaching in honor of Gardner C. Taylor, long-time pastor of the 14,000 member Concord Baptist Church of Christ in Brooklyn. In addition to a legacy of preaching, Taylor worked with Martin Luther King, Jr., joining him in the fight for civil rights. One will find numerous references to King, as well as others involved in the early struggles for social justice. The editors admit that the essays are written with affection and great respect, by his “colleagues, students, and friends” (p. ix). I wish there had been more stories, and my main criticism of the work is that there weren’t enough of them. The introduction, written by Timothy George, establishes the context for the work, providing insightful information about Taylor’s life along with some personal anecdotes describing their friendship. George also introduces the reader to the other writers, and the lineup refreshingly comes from very diverse backgrounds. I have to admit, though, my initial question was, “I wonder how many pages it will take before George mentions John Calvin?” (The answer is five). The authors stayed true to their assignments, writing about preaching, albeit with varying degrees of quality. Sometimes an essay made me feel like I was taking homiletics 101, with lecture notes reformatted with the ending, “and, Taylor preached like this.” Sometimes an author complained about pet peeves in modern preaching, and postmodernism was definitely a targeted theme. Some of the writers would use words that left me wondering what point they were trying to make. For example, after Joel C. Gregory dropped exotic names such as Csikszentmihalyi in a section summarizing psychological theories about creativity, he then followed with an illustration on “perspectival anamorphoses in painting” (p. 31). Say what? Big words can be intimidating and incomprehensible. In my opinion, the greatest strength of this work is when it embodied good preaching by using Taylor’s life and words as a challenge to continue his prophetic efforts today, reminding us that we still have a long way to go with respect to social justice. To

this end, Henry H. Mitchell's essay, "Preaching as Experience of the Gospel," stands out as an inspiring work reflecting on Taylor's gracious approach to combatting racism. David G. Buttrick's essay was quite provocative, challenging the reader to re-evaluate Jeremiah Wright's controversial video clip where he screamed, "God damn America." Cheryl J. Sanders was quite moving as she outlined the "trajectory" of African American preaching as it originated in the suffering of slavery. The book ends with a bibliography of Taylor's selected works and a brief biographical sketch of each of the essayists. The cover includes a CD, where one can hear Taylor's rich voice and eloquent words model the classic "start low, go slow, raise higher, catch fire" approach. Overall, the work is a nice tribute. Pastors hoping to glean insights from African American preaching, and those interested in the civil rights movement will especially find this book helpful.

**Preaching the Farewell Discourse: an expository walk through John
13:31-17:26,**

by L. Scott Kellum. Nashville: B&H, 2014. 350 pp. \$29.99.
ISBN 9781433673764.

*Reviewed by J. James Mancuso, Head Librarian,
Northeastern Baptist College, Bennington, VT*

The pastor who sets out to prepare an excellent sermon must first know how to interpret the text correctly, then analyze the passage, exposit that text, and be adept at crafting an effective sermon. Although these skills can be learned independently, too often the field of theological education does not do a good job of teaching them as a seamless flow of interrelated thought processes. This book attempts to do just that. First, Kellum shows his readers how to move from the biblical text to the final sermon. In the latter part of this book he applies these theories and procedures to the creation of a series of sermons on the Farewell Discourse (John 13:31-17:26).

This text is highly recommended for collections that support coursework in hermeneutics, discourse analysis, biblical exposition and homiletics, precisely for the reason that it addresses all four stages in the production of a series of sermons on a biblical text. Since most academic texts treat these steps in isolation, students would benefit from the exercise of seeing them addressed holistically as a continuum, rather than as discrete activities.

Having served as both pastor and professor at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary for many years, Kellum himself brings a wide variety of skills and experience to the task of combining these topics into one text, which is technical and academic,