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McDill's "Twelve Essential Skills for Great Preaching" (Book Review)

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Schumacher finally examines the theology of Thomas Aquinas in hopes of initiating a dialog with Thomist scholars who often challenge Balthasar’s theology. She does so in a spirit of Christian unity, playing upon the concept of unity-in-difference within the teachings of Balthasar and Aquinas.

This excellent and highly documented work requires substantial background knowledge of Trinitarian and anthropological theology. It is appropriate for use in graduate and post-graduate studies in theology and philosophy.

**Twelve Essential Skills for Great Preaching,**
ISBN 9780805432978

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This book is a revision of the author’s 1994 book with the same name. He says that it is expanded and revised but the length of the book is not much longer than the original. According to the author, this book was totally revised due to his experiences in teaching this subject, feedback from his family, as well as due to letters and comments he received over the years about the book. He considers this to be a book on how to write an expository sermon, defining expository as exposing “the meaning of a text of scripture.” He breaks the book into four sections: text analysis, theological interpretation, sermon development, and sermon design (each of these sections has an introductory chapter before he introduces the skills). He further breaks down each section of this book into three skills/chapters. The first section is diagramming the text structure, noting the text structure, and asking research questions. Second is naming the text idea, bridging text to sermon, and writing sermon divisions. The third section is balancing persuasive elements, exploring natural analogies, and drawing pictures/telling stories. The last section is touching the human experience, aiming for the faith response, and planning the oral presentation. The book is very technical and is at times hard to understand for the novice. He does not use a sample scriptural text to help the reader understand the author’s process. The reader has to rely on samples of sermons which show each step of the process. So, doing a sermon at the same time the reader is reading this book would be a good idea. As well as questions at the end of each chapter, there is a template for the skill that chapter is teaching. The author states that this book is for the beginning preacher as well as the experienced preacher. This text is based on a class that he taught on the doctoral level, so this is more for the experienced preacher. This book is also available on the Logos Software.