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Interdisciplinary Approaches and
International Explorations



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Contributors

Dr Helmut Schwier received his doctorate in New Testament Theology from Heidelberg University in 1988 (»Temple and Temple Destruction«) and completed his habilitation in Practical Theology at Protestant University Bethel in 2000 with a thesis on the liturgical reform of Protestant churches in Germany. From 1988 to 1996 he worked as a pastor in training and as a pastor in a congregation in Herford and taught liturgy at the local institute for church music. From 1996 to 1999 he was a research assistant for Practical theology at Protestant University Bethel. From 1999 to 2001, he was a church official in the Office of the Protestant Church of the Union in Berlin, where he was responsible for the doctrinal conversations of the »Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (Leuenberg Church Fellowship)« and for the preparation and organization of the General Assembly in Belfast (2001). One focus of his work was the document »Church and Israel«. From 2001 to 2024 he was Professor of New Testament and Practical Theology at the University of Heidelberg and Lecturer in Homiletics at the Preaching Seminary of the Protestant Church in Baden. Since 2003 he has served as an honorary university preacher at St. Peter's Church in Heidelberg. His research and teaching focuses on hermeneutics, homiletics, liturgics and aesthetics, in recent years particularly on the relationship between liturgy and diaconia, queer theology and liturgy, and the new challenges of political preaching. In retirement, he pursues his passion for theology with his new hobbies as a trumpet player and baker.

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Autor:innen

Dr. Helmut Schwier wurde 1988 im Fach Neutestamentliche Theologie in Heidelberg promoviert (»Tempel und Tempelzerstörung«) und habilitierte sich 2000 an der Kirchlichen Hochschule Bethel im Fach Praktische Theologie mit einer Arbeit über die Liturgiereform evangelischer Kirchen in Deutschland. Von 1988–1996 arbeitete er als Vikar und Pastor in einer Kirchengemeinde in Herford, unterrichtete an der dortigen Hochschule für Kirchenmusik das Fach Liturgik und war von 1996–1999 Wissenschaftlicher Assistent für Praktische Theologie an der Kirchlichen Hochschule Bethel. Von 1999–2001 war er Kirchenrat in der Kirchenkanzlei der Ev. Kirche der Union, Berlin und dort verantwortlich für die theologischen Lehrgespräche der »Gemeinschaft evangelischer Kirchen in Europa (Leuenberger Kirchengemeinschaft)« und für Vorbereitung und Durchführung der Vollversammlung in Belfast (2001). Ein Schwerpunkt war hier die Arbeit an dem Dokument »Kirche und Israel«. 2001–2024 war er Professor für Neutestamentliche und Praktische Theologie an der Universität Heidelberg und Dozent für Homiletik am Predigerseminar der Ev. Kirche in Baden. Seit 2003 war er ehrenamtlicher Universitätsprediger an der Heidelberger Peterskirche. Schwerpunkte in Forschung und Lehre sind Hermeneutik, Homiletik, Liturgik und Ästhetik, in den letzten Jahren insbesondere das Verhältnis von Liturgie und Diakonie, von Queertheologie und -liturgie und die neuen Herausforderungen politischer Predigt. Im Ruhestand teilt er seine Leidenschaft für Theologie mit den neuen Hobbys als Trompeter und Bäcker.

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And How Can They Hear Without a Preacher?

Prophetic Leadership and Preaching with the Bible in One Hand and a Newspaper in the Other¹

Jonathan C. Augustine

But how can they call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? Rom 10:14 (NRSV)²

Abstract

»The preacher should preach with the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other,« is a time-honored axiom, often attributed to the Swiss theologian Karl Barth. In the American context, given the United States' racialized imbalances and historic 20th and 21st century struggles for social justice, Barth's expression often manifests through »prophetic preaching,« or »political preaching.« This paper explores prophetic leadership through the munus triplex doctrine (the threefold office: prophet, priest, and king/royal), with a particular emphasis on Jesus the Christ's political ministry and political aspects of Christianity within the prophetic domain. This paper also explores how prophetic leaders influence social justice movements, typically through prophetic preaching, and how that type of preaching is more relevant than ever, given society's secularization during the postmodern era.

Zusammenfassung

»Der Prediger sollte mit der Bibel in der einen und einer Zeitung in der anderen Hand predigen« ist ein altbekanntes Axiom, das häufig dem Schweizer Theologen Karl Barth zugeschrieben wird. Angesichts der rassifizierten Ungleichheit

¹ This work is largely based on my 2023 fellowship, at the Black Theology & Leadership Institute of Princeton Theological Seminary, and my subsequently published article, Augustine 2024. It is also based on my most recent book Augustine 2023.

² Any and all scriptural references herein are based on the New Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible, unless expressly otherwise noted.

ten und des Kampfes um soziale Gerechtigkeit im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert wird Barths Forderung im amerikanischen Kontext oft im »prophetischen Predigen« oder »politischen Predigen« verwirklicht. Dieser Beitrag erkundet prophetische Leitung im Lichte der *munus triplex*-Lehre (Lehre vom dreifachen Amt Christi: Prophet, Priester und König) mit einem Schwerpunkt auf dem politischen Amt Jesu Christi und den politischen Aspekten des Christentums im prophetischen Bereich. Des Weiteren wird untersucht, wie prophetische Führungspersonlichkeiten Bewegungen für soziale Gerechtigkeit beeinflussen, typischerweise durch prophetisches Predigen, und weshalb dieser Typus der Predigt in Anbetracht der gesellschaftlichen Säkularisierung im Zeitalter der Postmoderne bedeutsamer ist als je zuvor.

Introduction

Attribution is often the preacher's. The preacher shows the other. Taken together, these show that scripture is not only Barth's also means of advance, as related to »prophetic preaching in Black church tradition.

In paying tribute to the prophet, I offer this as a sermon. I am an American pastor who speaks of preaching on a regular basis, rather than simply preaching. Prophetic preaching is an imperative in a world colored by the system of segregation, achievement, and aggressive mindset that embrace of an anti-racism referenced as »Malcolm X.

To emphasize the importance of the Bible in the

³ »Black« is a cultural term. Francois 2022: 42. The term later came to denote a specific culture. e. g., Kendi 2016: 36. I use these references those with Black American, but those who are a natural part of America and intentionally capture the essence of the culture denotes a specific cultural identity.

⁴ Anthea Butler describes the white Christian nationalist principles [and the principles of the land, and that the laws, principles, and practices of the land].

⁵ Although the slogan »Black Lives Matter« was used in 2016, 2020, and 2024, it is not any single political cause. It is the last half-century's position in a xenophobic and racist world. Black. I argue the slogan »Black Lives Matter« is a working class whites' slogan.

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Introduction

Attribution is often given to the Swiss theologian Karl Barth, for having said, »The preacher should preach with the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other.« Taken as a metaphor, Barth presumably meant the preacher must show that scripture has and maintains a contemporary relevance. I believe Barth also meant that the preacher must proclaim scripture's moral relevance, as related to contemporary social issues. That type of preaching is »prophetic preaching« and, in the American context, it is often seen in the Black church tradition.³

In paying tribute to Professor Helmut Schwier, on celebrating his retirement, I offer this work on preaching from the perspective of an African American pastor who serves in the Black church tradition and engages in prophetic preaching on a regular basis. To qualify my use of the term *prophetic*, it is more than simply preaching from the Holy Bible's »prophetic books.« Instead, prophetic preaching requires a hermeneutic lens through which scripture's moral imperative is applied to contemporary life. From my perspective, that lens is colored by the systemic marginalization of a people who were enslaved and segregated, achieved in spite of circumstances, and are currently battling a regressive mindset that seeks to roll back the twentieth century progress with the embrace of an anti-egalitarian (white) Christian nationalism,⁴ often popularly referenced as »Make America Great Again.«⁵

To emphasize this work's subtopic, »Prophetic leadership and preaching with the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other,« while also remain-

³ »Black« is a cultural identifier associated with the social construct of race. See, e. g., Francois 2022: 42. The term »race« was initially used in referring to hunting dogs, but later came to denote the immutable characteristics of different classes or people. See, e. g., Kendi 2016: 36. My use of the term, consistent with the social construct of race, references those with whom I not only share physical characteristics, as an African American, but those who come from familial lineages of enslaved Africans and are a cultural part of America's freedom struggle. Further, I also join other progressive scholars and intentionally capitalize »Black,« as a proper noun. Similar to Asian and Latino, Black denotes a specific cultural group. See, e. g., Augustine 2018: 243–262.

⁴ Anthea Butler describes this phenomenon of Christian nationalism, and specifically white Christian nationalism, as, »the belief that America's founding is based on Christian principles [and that], white [P]rotestant Christianity is the operational religion of the land, and that Christianity should be the foundation of how the nation develops its laws, principles, and policies.« Butler 2022: 4.

⁵ Although the slogan »Make America Great Again« was popularly associated with the 2016, 2020, and 2024 presidential campaigns of Donald Trump, it cannot be limited to any single political candidate. Instead, it represents a regressive alliance that sees the last half-century's post-civil rights movement changes as negative. It has also manifested in a xenophobic cultural »whitelash« that is antiimmigrant, antisemitic, and anti-Black. I argue the slogan expresses a collective desire to return America to a time when working class whites had greater social control: Augustine 2022: 72–74.

ing consistent with the scriptural reference noting the central importance of preaching (Rom 10:14), I first define prophetic preaching and then contextualize it through an analysis of, what I believe to be, the four substantive elements of »Black preaching,« a *type of* prophetic preaching.

First, Black preaching notes the centrality of scripture and a belief that God's providence meets the Black lived experience. Second, as a direct extension, Black preaching sees scripture as »biased« in noting that God is on the side of the oppressed. Third, as probably presumed with Black preaching, there is the requisite transcendence of the Holy Spirit, such that the sermon becomes shared between the pulpit and pew, fostering an element for »participant proclamation.« This is possibly when the *mortal* preacher gives way to the presence of the *immortal* God, as an active part of sermon delivery. Finally, in considering the socioeconomic circumstances many Blacks must face on a daily basis, Black preaching is also often *political*, but not to be confused with *partisan*. »Politics,« as used in the English lexicon, originates from the Greek word *polis*, which simply means »affairs of the cities.« Political preaching, therefore, as part of prophetic leadership, deals with issues of fairness and equity and calls for the equal treatment of all God's children. That is really the heart of Black preaching.

1. Prophetic Leadership and Prophetic Preaching within the Threefold Office

Prophetic preaching, a broader category of preaching that often includes Black preaching, breaks pulpit silence by raising social justice issues in the local church. It is both divinely inspired and socially determined in that it promulgates God's word from a liberative perspective, by focusing on justice and equality, within both the church and society-at-large, and human empowerment in response to social marginalization. I maintain that prophetic preaching should always invoke a divinely inspired and social justice-oriented response that provides hope for humanity, specifically rebuking any dominant norms of marginalization and oppression of any of God's children, based on human-made social constructs.

Prophetic preaching is a part of the prophetic leadership domain, or the *munus triplex* doctrine, also called the threefold office. Indeed, it uses Jesus as the exemplar and explores three types of leadership: priestly, kingly (royal), and prophetic. It is through the lens of prophetic leadership that the call for prophetic preaching and the ministry of reconciliation come together. Indeed, it takes the courage of prophetic leadership to address topics of social injustice and fulfill the ministry of reconciliation Jesus left to the church (2 Cor 5:17–19).

The *munus triplex* doctrine views Jesus's leadership through his varied roles as a prophet, priest, and king (or royal). Although the threefold office's terminology is traditionally used to describe *ecclesial* leadership, there are also three very similar dimensions in secular leadership: direct, relational, and in-

strumental.⁶ Direct offers care and enhanc- tal leadership motiv- et. Although the »pr- its domains will ove- the need for proph-

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2. So, What Elements Characterize Black Preaching Experience

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2.1 A Belief in the Centrality of the Black Lived Experience to Understanding Black Preaching

⁶ Lipman-Blumen 2000: 10.

⁷ Augustine 2023: 5.

⁸ Gilbert 2018: X.

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strumental.⁶ Direct leadership takes charge, like a king. Relational leadership offers care and enhances others self-worth, much like a priest. And instrumental leadership motivates others into new ways of seeing and acting, like a prophet. Although the »prophet, priest and king« leadership model is not static, and its domains will overlap, its rubric provides an effective framework to explore the need for prophetic preaching as a part of prophetic leadership.

The kingly (royal) domain categorizes leadership as building infrastructure for people and protecting them, while also making decisions about the allocation of scarce resources and creating optimism during the inevitability of crisis. The priestly domain categorizes leadership that creates meaning for people in an organization through story and consensus building, while also helping to create order from disorder, so lives can be reordered. With respect to prophetic leadership, however, a prophetic leader exposes systems that are unjust and unfair, while »speaking truth to power,« or perhaps, *institutions of power*, in attempting to change them. A great example of prophetic leadership, contextualized through prophetic preaching, is often Black preaching. Accordingly, I now offer an analysis of Black preaching and its four fundamental elements.

2. So, What Exactly is »Black Preaching?«: Four Elements Come Together in the Black Worship Experience

Is Black preaching simply *prophetic preaching* or preaching that is designed to provoke a social justice-oriented response, while providing hope for humanity and rebuking forms of marginalization?⁷ Is Black preaching *exodus preaching* or meditational speech that is God-summoned, while simultaneously being rooted in cultural particularity?⁸ Inasmuch as it is those things, Black preaching is also much more. Although it most certainly centers on matters of personal piety and salvation in the »kingdom-to-come,« Black preaching also addresses social injustices in the »kingdom-at-hand.« In other words, Black preaching is a type of *prophetic preaching* and *prophetic preaching* is often *political preaching* because it often makes a political appeal in the name of social justice, calling for the equal treatment of all God's children.

2.1 A Belief in the Centrality of Scripture in the Black Lived Experience

Understanding Black culture and the corresponding Black theology that Black preaching represents, means also understanding that all things »Black« begin with the Black lived experience in America. In other words, to paraphrase James

⁶ Lipman-Blumen 2000.

⁷ Augustine 2023: 5.

⁸ Gilbert 2018: X.

H. Cone, the father of Black liberation theology, there is no Black theology that does not begin with the Black experience as its starting point.⁹ Indeed, »[t]he African American understanding of God grows out of the unique social situation in which [B]lacks find themselves in America. This assertion must not be understated and is crucial to understanding what prompts, motivates, shapes, and gives life to [B]lack preaching.«¹⁰

At its core, there is a foundational belief in the fact that God's providence is directly connected to the Black experience insofar as, »[t]here is no truth for and about [B]lack people that does not emerge out of the context of their experience.«¹¹ The scripture that arguably best embodies this understanding is, »We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.« (Rom 8:28)

Because scripture holds such a central place in Black culture, the Bible is the single most important source of language, imagery, and story for the Black preacher's message.¹² LaRue argues that, »Any preacher who seeks to be heard [...] in the [B]lack church must learn some method of engaging the scriptural text and drawing from that encounter some sense of the Word of God revealed to and acting on the present-day human situation of the [B]lack listener.«¹³ Consider the example of Martin Luther King Jr.

King perfectly illustrated the centrality of scripture and God's providence in the lives of Black Americans who were denied the right to vote because of bigotry and discrimination. In Montgomery, Alabama, on March 25, 1965 – prior to passage of the Voting Rights Act and only weeks after the infamous Bloody Sunday march from Selma failed to reach Montgomery because of bloodshed – King used repetition (anaphora) in expounding on Psalm 13 and applying it to the way in which Blacks were continually marginalized. King rhetorically asked:

How long? Not long, because no lie can live forever. How long? Not long, because you still reap what you sow. How long? Not long, because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice. How long? Not long, »cause mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.«¹⁴

King's performative technique of »plea and praise« underscores this key aspect of Black preaching: God's providence is directly connected to the Black lived experience through the centrality of scripture.

2.2 A Belief that God

Just as Jesus's initial preaching was as a marginalized ethnic Jew, the scripture is so central to Black life and effective application of God is on the side of the oppressed.

In building on the tradition of Black life, Black preaching for the oppressed, begins with the revealed through Scripture.

In the Exodus-Sinai tradition, the relation is identical with the edge of Yahweh's presence. The oppressed of the land of Egypt came not from a completely controlled land.

Indeed, Eddie S. Glaude Jr. speaks of the hopefulness, as the Black church who were empowered.

Further, through the tradition is also a conqueror. »The suffering and hope, crucifixion. In other words, God's presence in the stances. Cone also highlights deliverance and the Resurrection.

Yahweh is known and who raised Jesus from the dead and the Establisher of the experience the acts of God for the weak and the help.

Stated otherwise, God's presence through scripture, is manifest.

⁹ Cone 1999: 16.

¹⁰ LaRue 2000: 5.

¹¹ Cone 1999: 16.

¹² LaRue 2012: 61.

¹³ Ibid.: 57 (emphasis in original).

¹⁴ Lischer 1995: 128.

¹⁵ Hendricks Jr. 2006: 7f (textualizing his politically 4:18f.).

¹⁶ Cone 1999: 59.

¹⁷ See, generally, Glaude

¹⁸ Powery 2009: 35.

¹⁹ Cone 1999: 57.

2.2 A Belief that God is on the Side of the Oppressed

Just as Jesus's initial preaching (Luke 4:18f.) was shaped by his social station as a marginalized ethnic minority,¹⁵ directly stemming from the premise that scripture is so central *in* the Black lived experience, I also argue that knowledge and effective application of scripture *to* the Black lived experience shows that God is on the side of the oppressed!

In building on the foundational belief that God's providence is connected to Black life, Black preaching embraces a hopefulness that sees God's penchant for the oppressed, beginning with Exodus deliverance, as God's presence is revealed through Scripture. In *God of the Oppressed*, Cone wrote:

In the Exodus-Sinai tradition Yahweh is disclosed as the God of history, whose revelation is identical with God's power to liberate the oppressed. There is no knowledge of Yahweh except through God's political activity on behalf of the weak and oppressed of the land [...]. The biblical writer wishes to emphasize that Israel's liberation came not from its own strength but solely from the power of Yahweh, who completely controls history.¹⁶

Indeed, Eddie S. Glaude Jr. notes the prominence of the Exodus motif in Black hopefulness, as the Black community formed a distinctive sense of a peoplehood who were empowered by the liberating God.¹⁷

Further, through the power of lament, God is not only a liberator, but God is also a conqueror. »The Holy Spirit is integrally connected with expressions of suffering and hope, crucifixion and resurrection, and lament and celebration.«¹⁸ In other words, God's power is revealed through the most harrowing circumstances. Cone also highlights this perspective as present in both the Exodus deliverance and the Resurrection narrative:

Yahweh is known and worshiped as the One who brought Israel out of Egypt, and who raised Jesus from the dead. God is the political God, the Protector of the poor and the Establisher of the right for those who are oppressed. To know God is to experience the acts of God in the concrete affairs and relationships of people, liberating the weak and the helpless from pain and humiliation.¹⁹

Stated otherwise, God sides with the oppressed and God's penchant, as manifest through scripture, is made evident in Black preaching.

¹⁵ Hendricks Jr. 2006: 7f. (describing Jesus as an ethnically marginalized Jew and contextualizing his politically revolutionary and radical inaugural sermon, detailed in Luke 4:18f.).

¹⁶ Cone 1999: 59.

¹⁷ See, generally, Glaude 2000: 44–56.

¹⁸ Powery 2009: 35.

¹⁹ Cone 1999: 57.

2.3 The Transcendence of the Holy Spirit Creates an Atmosphere for Participant Proclamation

The Black preaching tradition recognizes a dependence on God, a *transcendence* of the Holy Spirit, that moves hearts and minds. To describe this reliance on the Holy Spirit in the preaching moment, »[i]t can be called transcendence, divine beneficence, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost, or the Spirit. Preachers believe that beyond their best abilities and preparation, their sermons are controlled, enriched, and guided by the Spirit.«²⁰ This spirit-speech can engage a congregation in the melodious call and response of a »talk back« homiletical moment.

Evans E. Crawford, my undergraduate dean of chapel at Howard University, called it »participant proclamation,« when the Spirit moves among congregants such that the preacher no longer holds a hierarchical monopoly on the sermon, as it belongs to the congregation too. »It strengthens and manifests one of the central principles of the Protestant heritage: »the priesthood of all believers.«²¹ (1 Pet 2:5–9). It's *not* the preacher; it's the Holy Spirit moving *through* the preacher and throughout the congregation. In its truest sense, this shared emotive feeling that is often typical in Black preaching cannot exist without the Black worshipping community.²² Only the Holy Spirit can engage congregants in »participant proclamation.«

Similarly, Maurice J. Nutt highlights the Black preacher's dependence on God as changing the preaching moment, transforming it into a conduit for liberation that allows the body of believers to *feel* the Holy Spirit.

When somebody says »amen,« shouts, claps the hands, or stomps the feet with rhythmic cadence and perfect timing, he or she is responding to the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of the voice of God. Unquestionably, it is a voice heard through the Black preacher. The ability to excite the emotions with the eloquence of the spoken word remains a characteristic of the preacher who ministers to the masses of Black people. Black people want to »feel something« when the preacher preaches [...]. They want to feel that God hears their cries, and despite their sins, they are accepted; despite the doom and gloom of oppressive life situations, they want to be assured that »there is a bright side somewhere.« They want the preacher's message to touch them, to help them understand, and to fight against poverty, oppression, racism, sexism, and all forms of hatred and injustice. Not only that, they want the preacher to speak to their individual needs, troubles, desires, and frailties.²³

No human can independently do all those things in the preaching moment. They are all successfully done, however, because of the preacher's dependence on the Holy Spirit.

²⁰ Simmons/Thomas 2010: 8.

²¹ Crawford 1995: 39.

²² LaRue 2002: 5.

²³ Nutt 2022: 34.

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²⁴ Ibid.: 36.

²⁵ Simmons/Thomas 2

²⁶ McMickle 2006: 17.

²⁷ Augustine 2023: 15f

²⁸ Gilbert 2018: IX.

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2.4 The Political Call for Human Equality

Inasmuch as Black preaching embraces both a belief that God's providence is directly connected to the Black lived experience and a recognition of God's penchant for the oppressed, Black preaching is also political (prophetic). It is »social activist preaching« that calls for human equality. Black preaching assures listeners that God is active in their situation, and, despite circumstance, *justice* is what God intends.²⁴ This assurance – in the face of *injustice* – is often political.

I again emphasize that there is a difference between being *political* and being *partisan*. The Bible becomes »political« when the exodus moves from individualism to a communal deliverance, making it a *political* event. Moses was *political* when he told Pharaoh that God said, »Let my people go!« (Exod. 5:1; 9:1). Shadrach, Meshach and Abendigo were *political*, when they used civil disobedience, rather than give-in to Nebuchadnezzar's dictates (Dan. 3). Moreover, Jesus was also *political*, as his public ministry began by addressing Israel's social marginalization (Luke 4:18–19). To speak to the Black lived experience, therefore, Black preaching must likewise be *political*, to address issues of fairness and human equality.

In describing what they categorize as *social activist preaching* – what I call *political preaching* or *prophetic preaching* – Simmons and Thomas write:

Social activist preaching aims to induce social activism by providing the spiritual, political, and cultural underpinnings for liberation struggles, including the prophetic voice of social critique and redress. It is principally projected to a wider American culture and world, but also serves as an inner critique of the [B]lack church and [B]lack culture. The social activist preaching agenda includes poverty alleviation, racial and gender equality, and all peace, justice, and economic struggles.²⁵

Political preaching is, therefore, *prophetic preaching* because it speaks to issues that are the root causes of the social problems faced by the Black community.²⁶

In *When Prophets Preach*, I highlight Martin Luther King Jr.'s leadership in bringing the Black church into secular politics and allowing the church universal to follow. »As an ordained minister, King preached about salvation in the afterlife. Moreover, as a prophetic leader who was also a member of a marginalized social class, he also preached about social injustices in this life.«²⁷ King's political preaching – now widely associated with Black preaching – is consistent with scripture's political undertones and the realization that prophetic preachers treat social justice issues as independent of God, but as emanating from God's word.²⁸ Stated otherwise, »Prophetic preaching is designed to motivate

²⁴ Ibid.: 36.

²⁵ Simmons/Thomas 2010: 10.

²⁶ McMickle 2006: 17.

²⁷ Augustine 2023: 15f.

²⁸ Gilbert 2018: IX.

people to move beyond lifting up holy hands and begin to extend helping hands to those Jesus describes in Matthew 25 as »the least of these.«²⁹

Twentieth century Black preachers were political when they spoke out against lynching, Jim Crow segregation, and police violence, along with other moral ills in America.³⁰ It was King, however, who squarely brought the Black church and then the church universal into politics, with his activism in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. In King's first book, *Stride Toward Freedom*, he shares a political theology that undergirds Black preachers' political activism:

But a religion true to its nature must also be concerned about man's social conditions. Religion deals with both earth and heaven and, both time and eternity. Religion operates not only on the vertical plane but also on the horizontal. It seeks not only to integrate men with God but to integrate men with men and each man with himself. This means, at bottom, that the Christian gospel is a two-way road. On the one hand, it seeks to change the souls of men, and thereby unite them with God; on the other hand[,] it seeks to change the environmental conditions of men so that the soul will have a chance after it is changed. Any religion that professes to be concerned with the souls of men and is not concerned with the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, and the social conditions that cripple them is a dry-as-dust religion.³¹

Such political engagement, addressing both salvation in the »kingdom-to-come« and social injustices in the »kingdom-at-hand,« was historically associated with Black preaching in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Moreover, political engagement continues to shape Black preaching in the twenty-first century, because of necessity, as African Americans are continually marginalized by voter suppression laws, environmental *injustice* policies, and housing crises, created by gentrification in so many urban areas.

3. Conclusion

I return to the questions raised by Paul that are cited in the epigraph of this work: »But how can they call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?« (Rom 10:14). I also answer them by indicating, in the American context – where the social construct of race has been and remains so influential – they need a preacher, specifically a *prophetic* preacher.

²⁹ McMickle 2006: 85.

³⁰ Ibid.: 339.

³¹ King Jr. 2001: 63.

Prophetic preaching remains of the *munus tri* exemplar who was per same. In the Black church on prophetic leadership deed, what is common preaching.

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to extend helping hands to these.²⁹ When they spoke out in silence, along with others, they brought the Black church with his activism in the *Forward Freedom*, he shares his political activism:

about man's social condition both time and eternity. Religion is horizontal. It seeks not to unite men and each man with God but is a two-way road. On the one hand, it seeks to unite them with God; on the other, it seeks to unite them with the conditions of men so that they can see the slums that damn them, the social conditions that cripple

in the »kingdom-to-come« which is historically associated with the church. Moreover, political conditions in the twenty-first century, especially marginalized by voter suppression and housing crises, created

in the epigraph of this book: »And how are they to be saved?« I also answer them by the biblical construct of race has been, specifically a *prophetic*

Prophetic preaching is a part of prophetic leadership, one of the three domains of the *munus triplex* doctrine, also called the threefold office. Jesus is an exemplar who was perfect in all three domains. No human being can do the same. In the Black church tradition, however, where there is a premium placed on prophetic leadership, there is a great importance placed on preaching. Indeed, what is commonly referred to as »Black preaching,« is often *prophetic* preaching.

Although there is no one style that characterizes Black preaching, it manifests through spirit speech centered on the connection between God's providence and the Black lived experience, along with a scripturally based perspective that sees God as on the side of the oppressed. Moreover, the performative aspect of Black preaching, that is often emotive, only creates an atmosphere for »participant proclamation« through the preacher's dependence on God and transcendence of God's Holy Spirit. Additionally, because of its prophetic nature, Black preaching is often *political* preaching, when it ethically addresses social justice issues that are viewed as emanating from God's word. These core elements emerged as historically characteristic of Black preaching and they remain present today.

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Von Natur

Biologie, Naturre

Andreas Krebs

Zusammenfass

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Abstract

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