Within this discussion, it is possible to find fleeting glimpses of the nature of the homiletical project in a postmodern world.

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26 Paul Lakeland, *Postmodernity: Christian Identity in a Fragmented Age.* Fortress, 1997. $14.00.

In *Postmodernity: Christian Identity in a Fragmented Age,* Paul Lakeland sets out to write a brief (113 page) introduction to the relationship between postmodernity and Christian thought. What he achieves in this small book is astonishing. Chapter One begins with an overview of the culture of postmodernity (shopping malls, virtual reality, microwave cooking, etc.), and an assessment of "postmodern sensibility," which he suggests is "nonsequential, noneschatological, nonutopian, nonsystematic, nonfoundational, and ultimately, nonpolitical." From there, Lakeland moves on to organize "postmodern thought" into three camps: radical postmodernism (philosophers: Derrida, Foucault, Kristeva, Rorty, Irigaray; theologians: Mark C. Taylor, Altizer, Christ, Welch), late modernism (philosopher: Habermas; theologians: Tracy, McFague, Moltmann, Hodgson), and nostalgic postmodernism or countermodernism (philosopher: Heidegger; theologians: Frei, Lindbeck, Milbank). Lakeland's affinities are clearly with the late moderns. He organizes his discussion of these three schools of thought around three topics: the postmodern "problem of God," the role of the Christian community in the postmodern world, and "the implications of Christian claims to uniqueness in face of postmodernity's attention to otherness."

In relation to the doctrine of God, Lakeland concludes that radical postmoderns have removed God (since God is dead) in order to set in motion "a fuller and deeper sense of the religious." He is less clear about what countermoderns think of God, choosing to spend most of his time critiquing Gustafson and Kaufman, "soft-core postmoderns" who seem to lie somewhere between radical postmoderns and late moderns on his grid. According to Lakeland, these two theologians provide good examples of what happens to the idea of God when all anthropomorphism has been removed. Gustafson's God winds up too passive and Kaufman's too evolutionary and optimistic. Lakeland opts more for the modified panentheism of McFague and Hodgson as preserving more of God's personality (the world as God's body) and of God's agency (God is the spirit of the body).

On the issue of the role of Christian community in the postmodern world, Lakeland turns primarily to liberation movements as fledgling models of "faithful sociality" to emulate. According to Lakeland, Christian ecclesiality in the postmodern world should be "centrifugal, grass-roots-oriented, community-based, nonhierarchical, intersubjective, devolutionary, in a phrase, 'small scale'." He believes that liberation communities ultimately have more in common with late modernism, because they maintain forms of communicative action that reach across communities in order to form public alliances

of power that will promote emancipatory change. Lakeland observes rightly that postliberalism (soft countermodernity) has yet to inspire or produce recognizable alternative Christian communities. Although some liberation communities seem to represent cultural-linguistic forms of sociality, they generally break the cultural-linguistic rules once they begin to form non-sectarian solidarities with other communities. Lakeland is likewise unable to find clear ecclesial examples of the hard countermodernism of Milbank. He worries, however, that, were he able to find such communities, they would be essentially totalitarian, privileging a hierarchically maintained "peace over what can sometimes be cleansing conflict."

On the issue of Christian claims to uniqueness in the face of postmodernity's attention to otherness, Lakeland generally eschews countermodernism's blending of exclusivity and pluralism. He argues that it produces "a theology that stresses respecting the incommensurability of other traditions while it licenses a concentration upon one's own as if we still lived within the world of Christian hegemony." On the other extreme, the radical postmodernists seem to favor a radical pluralism stressing absolute incommensurability between religions as the only way to preserve difference. Realizing that a liberal pluralism that "substitutes a Western notion of Mystery or Reality for the particular ultimates of various religious traditions" is not viable in a postmodern context, Lakeland favors a late modern hybrid that blends a feminist attention to otherness with a Habermasian commitment to some form of "undominative discourse," and a Gadamerian commitment to genuine "fusion of horizons."

In the final chapter Lakeland ventures his own "Christian Apologetic." Within a modified panentheist framework, Lakeland asserts that God is "that reality which enables free human agency, even at the price of the divine self-effacement." The church must be "engaged in collaborative efforts toward the amelioration and elimination of problems, and confidently oriented toward a radically open future." Christ, God's "other," both affirms individual personhood and difference, and kenotically indicates that the direction of God's love is not exclusively toward the church, but rather is aimed at the world in which we live.

Homileticians looking for a short book to introduce students to postmodernism and Christian Theology will find this book useful. Post-liberals and "countermodernists," pre-modernists, liberals, and radical postmodernists will not feel adequately represented by Lakeland, but this is to be expected in a book in which the author is thankfully unwilling to accede to the wishy-washiness of most "surveys." Because of Lakeland's forthcoming commitments, the questions raised by postmodernity are sharpened, and the possible answers become clearer. Although well written, the book is not always easy reading, and will require a good deal of contextualization in lectures. This, also, is good. Lakeland assumes that enough vocabulary and contextual knowledge is being provided in lectures to leave something for the teacher to do in the classroom.

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