



Preaching While the Church Is Under Reconstruction: The Visionary Role of Preachers in a Fragmented World

Thomas H. Troeger

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In the parable that begins this book, a large chunk has fallen out of the roof of a historic church, exactly where an imposing mosaic of God enthroned in heaven used to reside. The members of the church, unable to agree on how to repair the roof or what image to put there, now worship under a God-shaped hole, trying to come to grips with the loss of old certitudes and the new challenges they face.

The church today faces exactly the same problem, argues Thomas Troeger. We live in a fragmented society, and the church reflects that fragmentation. We, too, sit under the "God-shaped hole," wondering how to proceed now that former ways of understanding who God is and what it means to be God's people are no longer universally or even widely held. How does one preach in this situation? The answer, says Troeger, is to reclaim the imaginative and visionary role of the preacher.

The preacher's job is to employ the creative elements of preaching to help God's people imagine the new thing God is doing in our time. Yet this kind of creative preaching is not just a matter of technique, of learning the right methods for how to preach with imagination. It is foremost a matter of formation; it comes when the preacher opens himself or herself, through the disciplines of prayer and study, to the inspiring presence of God's Spirit.

In *Preaching While the Church Is Under Reconstruction*, Troeger constructs a framework for how to preach in this time of transition and failing certainties. He demonstrates that, enlivened by the work of God's Spirit, it is possible to preach with vision and insight, and help God's people perceive their place in the world which God is creating anew.

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