

R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *He is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Moody, 2008)

I will always remember when I saw this author's name for the first time. May 1994. I was visiting Southern Seminary in Louisville. And up on the wall was a picture of Mohler, recently installed as President of Southern, together with his wife and some inscription. Two things struck me. Al Mohler was three weeks *younger* than me, becoming President of the largest(?) denominational seminary in the world in his mid-thirties during the height of the Southern Baptist wars. Incredible?! And the second thing about the photo? His wife was wearing exactly the same dress that my wife, Barby, owned at the time.

But back to the book...

Well - it is pretty simple. Fans of Mohler will most certainly love it. Those who are not fans probably will not. He comes from a section of the church which polarises people. A bit of a shame because there is some valuable material in here. He tends to mix a little exposition of scripture with quotations from others and then add a few comments of his own.

For someone who is seen to be such a fine exponent of preaching, his handling of these texts didn't impact me so much . with two exceptions. Deuteronomy 4 in a chapter on a theology of exposition (p 52f) and then his treatment of Acts 17 in a chapter on preaching to a postmodern culture was the best part of the book for me. First he summarises postmodernism in a few pages (not easy to do!) with some neat alliteration: the deconstruction of truth, the death of metanarrative, the demise of the text, the dominion of therapy (nice touch . I quite like it!), the decline of authority and the displacement of morality (116-123). Yes - maybe a bit simplistic, but then he backs it up with a fresh little exposition of Acts 17.

Some other insights remain with me. The gracious gift of revelation seen as %God's forfeiture of His own personal privacy+(57) out of his desire to speak to us. Embedded in his paragraph-long definition of exposition we discover that %as the Word of God, the text of Scripture has the right to establish both the substance and the structure of the sermon+(65). There is also a call for pastors to be theologians as was always the case once upon a time (105-114).

Overall I'd have to say I was disappointed. I was expecting more, much more. It was an easy and quick read when I was looking for more substance and originality. I can't help wondering if it was written in a hurry? Maybe the target readership is people starting out with preaching.

Paul Windsor