



## BOOK NOTE REVIEW

Ajibade, Ezekiel A. *Expository Preaching in Africa: Engaging Orality for Effective Proclamation*. Bukuru, Nigeria: HippoBooks, 2021. Pp. xi +235. £15.99 (paperback).

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### Introduction

Gospel proclamation is a sacred responsibility that requires a passionate and dedicated pursuit of excellence in communication. Unfortunately, a deficiency in the commitment to honing adequate skills impedes the impactful delivery of the gospel message. In contemporary times, a lack of commitment to acquiring the necessary skills for effectively disseminating the gospel has led to a discernible scarcity of sound biblical exposition. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of gospel proclamation transcends the literacy levels of both the preacher and the audience. The essence of sound biblical exposition lies not in the eloquence of words but in the clarity with which the message is conveyed. Differences in literacy between preachers and their listeners make the problem much more difficult.

### Overview

When addressing audiences with varying literacy levels, a committed preacher can bridge the gap through thoughtful communication strategies and a genuine connection with the hearts of the listeners. There is a pressing need for renewed commitment among preachers to acquire and refine the skills necessary for effective gospel communication to address the current dearth of sound biblical exposition. This involves profoundly understanding the Scriptures, mastering communication techniques, and tailoring the message to resonate with diverse audiences. *Expository Preaching in Africa* addresses this exigency.

Ajibade's work emerges as a pertinent resource that navigates the complexities of effectively proclaiming the gospel within the African setting. It is a comprehensive exploration of expository preaching, uniquely focusing on engaging orality for effective proclamation. Thus, it comprehensively explores

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the intersection between expository preaching and African orality. It is, therefore, a groundbreaking exploration of integrating African oral elements into expository preaching.

The book is organized into eight major chapters, covering topics such as homiletic theories and the concept of expository preaching, form and content in expository preaching, the historical context of Christian preaching in Africa, the role of orality in gospel communication, and using African orality to contextualize expository preaching. It draws parallels from diverse experiences, including Korean, African-American, and Ghanaian. Moreover, Ajibade delves into the intricacies of expository preaching, emphasizing the integration of African oral elements — including myths, proverbs, folklore, dance, and drama — to enhance the effectiveness of biblical proclamation. The latter chapters present sample expository sermons rooted in African orality, addressing the potential dangers of contextualization. The book culminates with a thoughtful reflection on the entire discourse and resourceful appendices.

Ajibade's writing stands out because it offers an informed appraisal of the African setting — a viewpoint that many other writers choose to ignore. Ajibade correctly asserts that cultural sensitivity and contextualization are necessary for successful proclamation. Thus, he explains that “contextualization is planting, watering, and nurturing the gospel message within the culture so much that people feel a sense of ownership of it and are ready to run with it without tampering with the biblical roots and essence of the message” (2). Ajibade's combination of orality with expository preaching may seem unconventional but provides an essential viewpoint. The book also significantly enhances the body of current literature by filling in knowledge gaps on preaching in diverse cultural contexts. It establishes that “Africans are predominantly oral in their nature and culture and that they enjoy communication best in an oral atmosphere” (71). Hence, this bridges the gap between traditional expository methods and the rich oral traditions of Africa. The book also provides a rich overview of orality, historical insights, and a thought-provoking exploration of the dangers associated with contextualization and provides a thoughtful evaluation of the challenges and opportunities associated with incorporating orality into expository preaching. Ajibade insists that “preaching can surely be done in a contextualized form without compromising the substance of God's infallible word” (192).

### **Evaluation**

The strength of this book lies in the practical techniques offered, the extensive analysis of Africans in the history of Christian preaching (49–70), and the cautionary exploration of potential dangers in contextualization (189–193). Including sample expository sermons serves as practical guidance for

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implementing the principles discussed (171–187). Ajibade’s emphasis on engaging orality aligns with the imperative to reach all segments of society, ensuring that the transformative message of the gospel transcends barriers and resonates with individuals across different educational backgrounds (71). Thus, this book is a testament to the importance of adapting preaching techniques to the unique characteristics of African contexts, where orality plays a significant role in communication. A potential weakness of the book is a lack of a more detailed examination of case studies to illustrate successful implementations of the proposed techniques. While the book excels in highlighting the benefits of contextualization, a more robust discussion on potential pitfalls could enhance the overall balance of the text. Furthermore, a more concrete example of successful implementations and an in-depth analysis of potential barriers could enhance the text.

### **Conclusion**

Preachers, seminary students, and academics who want to learn more about expository preaching in African contexts will find this book very helpful. There are important lessons for pastors and educators who want to make their sermons more engaging and culturally relevant. It also serves individuals interested in the relationship between orality, cultural variety, and Christian preaching, providing insightful viewpoints for modern preachers. Moreover, the examination of possible hazards in contextualization is an essential aid for preachers attempting to strike a balance between theological faithfulness and cultural relevance.