

MEET PTS



PROFESSOR JEROME CREACH CONTINUES HIS RESEARCH AND WRITING ON PSALMS

Now that the Rev. Dr. Jerome Creach, Robert C. Holland Professor of Old Testament, is back from giving the John B. and Mildred H. Rogers Lectures on “Thirsting for God: The Psalms and Human Longing for God” in Bennettsville, S.C., he’s returning his attention to four current writing projects—all also focused on the Psalms. Those projects include finalizing for publication an article on the changing views of kingship in the Persian Period as evidenced in the Book of Psalms, as well as beginning to flesh out an introductory volume on “Discovering the Psalms” for publishers SPCK and Eerdmans.

But between these “bookend” projects, Jerome has been busy producing two more important resources for pastors and the church. One of them consists in a Psalms study for publisher Westminster John Knox. “The series, formerly called ‘Being Reformed,’ is now titled ‘Themes You Should Know in the Bible,’” notes Jerome. “Developed for adult education and older youth audiences, the series identifies six themes Christians should know about each book in the Bible,” he adds. Keying off specific psalms, the themes Jerome identifies in his study on the Book of Psalms include: what it means to be happy (Ps 1); who the human being is (Pss 8, 104); thirsting for God (Pss 42-43, 63); suffering (Ps 22); praying anger (Ps 137); and the Lord as shepherd (Ps 23).

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The second and longer resource is a commentary on the Psalms in publisher Smyth & Helwys’s “Reading the Old Testament” series. “I’ll complete the writing of ‘Reading the Psalms’ this spring,” says Jerome. “It’s an interesting endeavor when you try to cover an entire book of 150 free-standing ‘chapters’ in 320 pages,” he notes. “But keeping in mind that the goal of the series is to develop better-informed readers of these biblical books gives some shape to the approach that I, and authors of the other volumes, take in our writing. The challenge is to keep the comments succinct—brief enough not to overwhelm the reader while at the same time broad enough to address the most important interpretive issues. The point is to give the reader some informed theological perspective on the Psalms without rehearsing every scholarly opinion on every possible issue or giving dauntingly extensive textual notes, detailed historical background, and so forth. You’d need many more pages to for those things!”

Jerome’s scholarly mentor was “big on brevity,” so the approach of giving the Book of Psalms a theological reading that covers the crucial exegetical issues comes naturally to him. “And since similar language and themes come up in different contexts throughout Psalms, I can often point the reader back to observations that I’ve already made at previous points in the commentary.” While “Reading the Psalms” won’t focus on historical background or textual issues, the book will address them when it’s exegetically necessary for enhancing the theological understanding of pastors and students of the Bible—including Jerome’s students at Pittsburgh Seminary!

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