



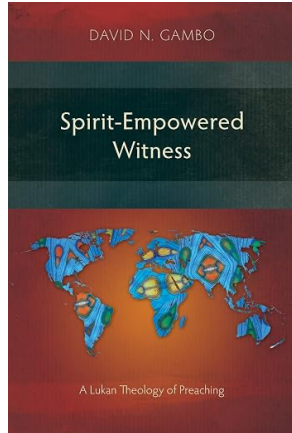
BOOK NOTE REVIEW

Gambo, David N. *Spirit-Empowered Witness: A Lukan Theology of Preaching.* Studies in Homiletics. Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Langham Academic, 2022. Pp. ix + 140. £ 16.99 (Paperback)

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Any serious scholar of the gospels would agree that the Spirit is an important theme in the Gospel of Luke. David Gambo's book is therefore written on the theology of preaching from a Lukan point of view of the Spirit. According to Gambo, irrespective of the fact that the Gospel of Luke has a lot of material on the Spirit, which should help the contemporary church re-discover its Spirit-empowered preaching activities, the reality remains that "few books focus on the theology of preaching, especially Spirit-empowered preaching" (ix). By implication, Gambo's argument is that there is a neglect of pneumatology in the preaching activities of the Church today. This book therefore focuses on providing the contemporary church with material that will serve its Spirit-empowered preaching needs. To do this, the author carefully selects four passages within the Luke-Acts corpus (Lk 4:14–30; Lk 24:13–35, Acts 1:1–5 and 10:34–43) which, he argues, deal with Spirit-empowerment. Methodologically, the author approached his task of reading these texts through a careful exegetical approach which, to him, was a combination of the grammatical, syntactical, lexical, historical, and literary analysis. After a thorough-going exegesis of the identified texts, the author gives their implication for preaching. That way, he was able to weave together an exegesis of these passages with a focus on their implications for preaching.



As a Lukan scholar who completed my doctoral thesis on material possessions in Luke, I had read some of the works Gambo reviews, enabling me to identify gaps in his literature review. But I will strongly say that of the many

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**BOOK NOTE REVIEW: *Crashed Realities? Gender Dynamics*
in *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, by Itohan Mercy Idumwonyi**

books on Luke on pneumatology and issues of preaching I have read, I rank Gambo's work the most thoroughly exegetical. One of the strengths of this book is its deep and careful analysis of Greek words in the texts it exegeted. The book therefore shows rigor in its approach, methodologically. It is accessible to both experts and non-experts of biblical studies.

Notwithstanding, I feel that the author's claim that the contemporary Church is silent on the Holy Spirit (ix) is not entirely true. Equally problematic is his other claim in being motivated to write the book because of the rate at which preachers are quitting the ministry because of ministerial burnout and depression (ix). While it is always advisable to put such claims in a context, especially in an academic work, I doubt the correctness of Gambo's claim even when applied to his own roots in Nigeria. Nigeria happens to be my own context and I would not know how true his claims are in other contexts. But since the time the Pentecostals and Charismatics began to exert huge influence on Nigerian Christianity, there has been an awakening of Holy Spirit consciousness in the Church. The different charismatic groups in the churches have emphasized, and continue to emphasize, the place of the Holy Spirit in the Church. In fact, the contemporary Church is Spirit-conscious more than ever. Even so, it is clear that instead of ministers of the word being in shortage in Nigeria, they are ever-multiplying. From a critical perspective, church ministry in the country is being driven by, most times, economic gains. This is why multiplicity of churches in Nigeria is a fact and a troubling situation to keen observers of the situation.

One more thing that deserves to be said is the eclectic methodological approach by the author. His combination of many exegetical methods in reading the texts could have been reduced to three important ones: grammatical, historical, and literary analysis of the text. After all, there is a thin line between lexical and grammatical analysis. In addition, a good exegesis should present readers with the texts being exegeted in both their original language and the author's translations. Gambo's work only did the later.

Irrespective of these few shortcomings of the work, Gambo has presented today's church with formative material to help church leaders in their preaching activities from a Spirit-empowered perspective as contained in the gospel of Luke. I strongly recommend this piece for church leaders, those preparing to become preachers of the word, New Testament scholars, and those particularly interested in issues of pneumatology and preaching.