



Q&A

IVP Academic

Seasoned Speech *Rhetoric in the Life of the Church*

May 7, 2019 | \$25, 256 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-5244-4

"It is often very hard to see the obvious—that is, something as basic as the eloquence required for the proclamation of the gospel. But Beitel helps us recognize that the simple truth has an unmistakable eloquence, which is why it matters that we take lessons from the classical rhetorical tradition. Readers of this book will discover that the rhetorical task and questions of the truth of what we believe cannot be separated."

Stanley Hauerwas, author of *The Character of Virtue: Letters to a Godson*

Rhetorical Reflection in the Church

What motivated you to write *Seasoned Speech*?

James E. Beitel III: I wrote this book in response to a perceived need for greater rhetorical reflection in the church. In the book's introductory chapter, I write the following:

"All too often, in the process of attempting to persuade others of the good news of Jesus Christ, Christians take on rhetorical postures that are inimical to the proclamation of the gospel (Steiner, 290-91). When we do so, we need more than theology to return us to right practice. We also need theologically informed rhetorical reflection, which offers resources both to evaluate our communicative practices and to revise those practices in ways that are consistent with the one who chose the form of the cross as his primary bearing in relation to the world."

What is the main idea you want to convey to readers?

James: Extending recent work about the relationship between liturgy and Christian formation, I argue that the worshiping body of Christ has much to teach us about persuasive Christian witness. Christian liturgy and the seasons of the church year invite Christians to embrace particular rhetorical postures as we engage the world.

This book is composed of five case studies and a concluding chapter that attempts to weave the preceding chapters together. The case studies explore the rhetoric of influential Christians: C. S. Lewis, Dorothy L. Sayers, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Desmond Tutu, and Marilynne Robinson.

What is distinctive about *Seasoned Speech*?

James: The book is distinctive because its chapters

1. Take readers through elements of Christian worship (i.e., the call to worship, the creed, the sermon, confession, Eucharist, and benediction),
2. Track with the seasons of the church year (Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost), and
3. Introduce key rhetorical terms related to the notion of ethos (goodwill, enargeia, identification, constitutive rhetoric, ethos-as-dwelling place, and heteroglossia).



Alisse Wissman, print publicity
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or awissman@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, broadcast and online publicity
800.846.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com

INTERVARSITY PRESS | ivpress.com/media





Seasoned Speech *Rhetoric in the Life of the Church*

May 7, 2019 | \$25, 256 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-5244-4

James E. Beitler III (PhD, University of Michigan) is associate professor of English at Wheaton College, where he is the director of First-Year Writing and also coordinates the Writing Fellows Program. He is the author of *Remaking Transitional Justice in the United States: The Rhetorical Authorization of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission*.

What do you hope *Seasoned Speech* contributes to the church?

James:

- *Seasoned Speech* highlights important connections between worship and witness. Our liturgical practices and the seasons of the church year have much to teach us about what the rhetoric of Christian witness ought to look like.
- The book contributes to conversations about the intersections between Christian traditions and rhetorical traditions. I show that Christians “stand to benefit greatly from sustained, and theologically responsible, engagement with the Western rhetorical tradition.”
- The book offers rhetorical readings of five exemplars of Christian witness: C. S. Lewis, Dorothy L. Sayers, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Desmond Tutu, and Marilynne Robinson. Though these figures are not typically thought of as rhetors or rhetoricians, their rhetorical practices serve as models for reflection, discussion, and imitation.



Alisse Wissman, print publicity
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or awissman@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, broadcast and online publicity
800.846.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com

INTERVARSITY PRESS | ivpress.com/media

