

Midweek reflection

Applied Wisdom

Proverbs 31:10-31; Romans 12:9-21; Luke 14:7-14

Christians go to the ancient texts for wisdom and guidance on how to make sense of their daily lives, because it is active, practical and alive.

The book of Proverbs deals singularly with the notion of Wisdom, which is often personified as a woman, much as the Greek tradition. The name of Wisdom is Sophia. The deification of Wisdom has a Christological development in the Bible. By Wisdom, God creates the world (Prov. 8), which parallels John 1. The incarnation reveals God's interests and approval of the moral wisdom he has infused it. Christ is the Wisdom of God, the fulfillment of the Law.

In the book of Revelation, the Church is also personified as a woman, Zion, who adorns herself to meet her bridegroom, Jesus Christ. The union of heaven and earth attests to the new creation. The adornment of the Church is with the virtues and wisdom listed in Romans 12:9-21. Therefore the excellent wife in Proverbs 31 is the culmination of the book's dealings with Wisdom.

While the virtues of the 'wife' in Proverbs 31 are based on moral religious theory, it is pragmatic, about political economy and leadership. This Wisdom is what Christ exemplifies in his life and teaching, especially where he says that success is dependent on our humility, because humility is community focused. If we want to sustain a certain future in an uncertain world, it is working for others, imparting wisdom and bringing people into the household of God's kingdom, making disciples that will in turn develop a forthcoming group. This is what sustainable and practical wisdom is all about: revealing the ongoing presence and glory of God in the world.