

Abstract

This dissertation looks to Deuteronomy for a model of interactivity with the Scriptures, which I argue is profoundly relevant to a Church subject to potent formative forces in twenty-first century society. I outline the methodological approach I take to Deuteronomy, isolating two literary techniques (inscription and repetition) which are instrumental to its formative effect upon its audiences, and then (in alternating chapters) compare their use in Deuteronomy (centred in Deut. 6) and in the Anglican Daily Office (centred in the Ministry of the Word). I begin by studying Deuteronomy's use of inscription, arguing that it creates for its readers vivid experiences of the narrative past and the immediate future (from within Deuteronomy's framing narrative), allowing them to participate (imaginatively and vicariously) in these events, and placing their present moment in continuity with Deuteronomy's narrative. I then examine how the Daily Office likewise solicits imaginative participation in the Scriptures by the act of proclaiming them aloud to twenty-first century worshippers, and more specifically by inviting the responsorial appropriation of canticles, which requires worshippers to inscribe themselves into personal continuity with the broad narrative of the Scriptures. Next, I turn to how Deuteronomy's use of repetition enacts and mandates continual, active contact with its past and its future, which effects the formation of its audiences' imaginations towards a devotion to God based on their experience of God's works. Finally, I consider how the Daily Office, especially in its use of canticles, can accomplish a similar kind of formation through repetition: memorising inscriptive texts becomes a means by which the worshipper's every moment can be pulled into continuity with the narrative world of the Scriptures. I conclude by arguing for the counter-formatational potential of the Daily Office as a gift to the twenty-first century Church.