

The Rhetoric of Sir Garfield Todd: Christian Imagination and the Dream of an African Democracy. By Michael W. Casey. Texas: Baylor University Press, 2007; pp xii + 389.

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Michael Casey's latest book, *The Rhetoric of Sir Garfield Todd: Christian Imagination and the Dream of an African Democracy*, is a timely publication. It has come out at a time when Zimbabwe, called Southern Rhodesia and simply Rhodesia before the attainment of independence in 1980, is reeling in a political and economic crisis mainly due to the undemocratic principles of the regime, a situation which is more or less the same as that Sir Garfield Todd's prophetic rhetoric fiercely attacked when he became a radical advocate of African democracy, staunchly believing that. "security, peace and opportunity are based upon the rights of the individual" (79). Juxtaposing Todd's heroic fight for African rights through his rhetoric and actions with the current situation in Zimbabwe, one can come to the conclusion that surely history repeats itself. The only difference between the two epochs being the *dramatis personae* in the violation of human rights. One also gets the feeling that had whites swallowed their pride and given majority rule to Africans at an earlier stage as Todd suggested, the civil war that claimed thousands of lives in Rhodesia could have been avoided.

In this book Casey aptly demonstrates the role the Campbellian heritage played in Todd's oratorical demeanor through the Churches of Christ's democratic culture. The Campbellian tradition was grounded upon beliefs which included "the priesthood of all believers, the right of an individual to think for oneself, the importance of education and reason, and the impulse to reform society or the spreading of liberty and liberation across all society" (16). We see Todd's ethos growing out of the democratic rhetorical tradition of the Disciples of Christ. In other words, Todd rhetorical ethos is an example of "how religion can serve as a basis for political rhetoric...To overlook the role of religion in Todd's life would fundamentally misunderstand him" (121). Casey corrects the view that Todd's democratic ethos was grounded in the British liberal political tradition. The author provides undisputed evidence that plainly shows that Todd's democratic ethos emanated from his religious heritage. The author also illustrates how early training in public speaking lay the foundation of Todd's oratorical prowess both as a preacher and politician.

Casey does not shower Todd with praises for being the champion of the African cause throughout the book. The writer's objectivity is seen when he identifies Todd as a limited democrat who "... did not want universal franchise in the 1940s and 1950s. believing that it would lead to universal chaos" (49). But the reader's disillusionment at this changes as the author presents Todd's transformation from paternalism to a radical fighter for democracy leading to the chagrin of the white Rhodesians who felt betrayed by Todd's actions and rhetoric. We see a Todd whose "... rhetorical trajectory ... naturally led him away from paternalism as Africans saw him as a Moses and a Savior who was crucified by whites on a cross of racism" (40). Sowing

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the seeds of African nationalism was an anathema to the whites that believed in their segregationist policies which denied the Africans basic rights in their native land. This led to the whites' ouster of Todd's as prime minister making him the sacrificial lamb in their quest to perpetuate white supremacy in Southern Rhodesia.

Casey expertly documents Todd's spellbinding oratory, dovetailing it with his indefatigable pursuit for the emancipation of the African people in Southern Rhodesia. As a preacher of democratic values, Todd condemned the discriminatory laws of the white government attacking them as being anachronistic. We are made to see Todd's radical democratic ethos through his sermon texts, political speeches and prophetic speeches. For instance, after becoming the first missionary prime minister, Todd "cultivated a rhetorical premiership paralleling the rhetorical American rhetorical presidency and an eloquence paralleling American presidential rhetoric" (118). As a preacher, former MP and prime minister, Todd's prophetic rhetoric about the situation in Rhodesia was so compelling that in 1962 and 1964 the UN Committee on Colonialism supported Todd's proposal "to give majority rule to Southern Rhodesian Africans and to restrain the white extremists" (82). Such addresses in local and international venues which attempted to end white supremacy in Rhodesia attracted the wrath of Ian Smith government leading to Todd's detention under treason charges crafted also as a result of his open and sincere association with leaders of African nationalism such as Joshua Nkomo and Ndabaningi Sithole.

The book is a reservoir of a sample of Todd's remarkable speeches which can be used in rhetorical studies, history, religion and other humanities. The Sermon Tests section comprises sermons Todd delivered in different places in the world while the Political Speeches section provides a good sample of Todd's speeches in parliament. The Prophetic Speeches part of the book gives speeches that Todd gave in different places in the world and represents Todd's prophetic rhetoric. In the concluding sermon Todd makes a synopsis of his entire life and career. In this marvellous summation Todd walks the reader through his entire life in such a way that Todd's more-than-life figure becomes indelibly imprinted in the reader's mind. The multidisciplinary approach that Casey adopts in the analysis of Todd's speeches, especially the nexus between rhetoric, religion and democracy, is highly commendable. The book is an authentic source for studies in political argumentation, rhetoric and democracy, the history of the struggle for independence and democracy in Zimbabwe, the relationship between Christianity, rhetoric and democracy and, of course, other related humanities and social sciences like sociology. The enormous amount of documentary evidence that Casey uses in his thesis of Todd's rhetoric is clear testimony of the author's thorough research on this remarkable man in modern political history. Casey uses the evidence to buttress his scholarly analysis and interpretation of Todd's rhetoric. Casey demonstrates that Todd's narrative rhetoric is Zimbabwe's narrative history. And all this brilliant work Casey presents in straightforward language that communicates ideas without esotericism.

Todd's obsession with promoting African education is paralleled to Campbell's whose efforts in public education were a major contribution to American democracy. Dadaya mission is portrayed as a beacon of African education and Christianity with the Todds playing a pivotal role in eradicating ignorance and bringing hope to many Africans, some of whom were to become national leaders of African resistance against colonialism. The coming of the Todds to Dadaya in 1934 revolutionized the

education of the black and when Todd became a Member of Parliament he continued demanding more funding to improve native education. Although the book is on Todd, the glimpses the reader gets of Grace Todd are enough to demonstrate the support he got from his wife throughout his career.

The reader gets convinced that Todd was a true democrat who remained resolute and focused to his cause of justice for all people. When he was ironically stripped of his citizenship by the paranoid Zimbabwean government in 2002, he boldly remarked: “Just as we stood with courage against the racism of the past, so today, we must stand with courage against the terror of the present” adding that he was prepared to “...cast [his] ballot for good against evil” (122). But, sadly, he was he never exercised his right. Ironically, he ended up getting a raw deal from the black people he had spent most of his life fighting for.

In *The Rhetoric of Sir Garfield Todd: Christian Imagination and the Dream of an African Democracy*, Casey pays a befitting tribute to this illustrious son of New Zealand who distinguished himself a genuine advocate for African rights. And to crown it all, Queen Elizabeth II’s words “Rise Sir Garfield –‘protect the poor and punish the wicked’” when she knighted him in 1986 are a fitting description of Todd’s life and career. Casey made a splendid undertaking in producing this book which proves that religion, democracy and rhetoric cannot be separated. Truly a must read!

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