

COMMUNICATION CONSTRUCTS IN  
CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN PROTESTANT PREACHING,  
1940-1945

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.  
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David C. Rags  
Major professor

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**COMMUNICATION CONSTRUCTS IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN  
PROTESTANT PREACHING, 1940-1965**

by

**LeRoy Eldon Kennel**

**A THESIS**

**Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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1967

## **ABSTRACT**

### **COMMUNICATION CONSTRUCTS IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN PROTESTANT PREACHING, 1940-1965**

**by LeRoy Eldon Kennel**

The primary purpose of this study is to define the communication constructs in contemporary American protestant homiletics. It serves as the third phase of a description and an analysis of American protestant preaching following two previous studies leading up to 1940. It provides an understanding of how preaching theories have been revised and how they compare with pre-contemporary homiletical emphases as well as with contemporary rhetoric. The concept of communication constructs is that currently employed in both contemporary rhetoric and public address and in homiletics: speaker-source-preacher, speech-message-sermon, audience-receiver-congregation, and occasion-contextual relationships-preaching situation.

An introductory chapter provides a basis for an examination of the existing status of contemporary homiletics by its consideration of the historical interrelationships of preaching and rhetoric, of the emphases of pre-contemporary American protestant homiletics, and of contemporary trends in rhetoric and public address. Chapters Two through Five provide an individual examination of each communication

construct as it appears in contemporary homiletics. This is done both through case studies and through a review of contemporary homiletical literature and research. The homiletical theories of Drs. Kyle Haselden, H. Grady Davis, Merrill R. Abbey, and Charles R. Stinnette, Jr., all leading homiletical theoreticians, provide case study examinations of the constructs respectively of preacher, sermon, congregation, and preaching situation. Four sermons, one by each of the above four theorists, given to the same congregation, are broken down into rhetorical and substance outlines, and the theorist's own criteria are applied to them in an attempt to clarify and illustrate his theories. The second basic methodology employed through these four chapters is to review and collate contemporary homiletical literature and research (other than, and in comparison with, the theories in the case study). Homiletics texts were chosen primarily on the basis of the frequency with which they are used in the teaching of preaching in the American Association of Theological Schools or if they were written by theorists currently teaching homiletics. Additionally, interpretative material and analysis are based in part upon public lectures by homiletical theorists and upon personal interviews with several of the theorists. A final chapter summarizes the existing status of preaching theory, noting trends in contemporary preaching as compared to pre-contemporary homiletics and contemporary rhetoric, and it considers the implications of this study for teaching of preaching and for additional research.

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Three observations can be made from the above assessment of the trends in contemporary homiletic thought. First, a definite growth and refinement are evident when compared with pre-contemporary theory. Second, homiletical theory has experienced an infusion of insight and methodology from contemporary communication research (as well as from the behavioral sciences). Both disciplines, homiletics and rhetoric, make use of the psychological and sociological insight of interpersonal relationships; both consider the audience an active and integral partner in the communication process. Both have been concerned with developing more effective means of persuasion through message stimuli, and both have built upon such insights of learning theory as reinforcement and stimulus-response. Third, the homiletical constructs of the contemporary period are for the most part treated as being mutually exclusive. Homiletics has thus far failed to consider adequately, on a theoretical basis, the interaction of the constructs in the communication process. Homiletical literature is largely silent on the view of preaching as a unification of the preacher, sermon, and congregation brought together in a preaching situation.

Implications of this study for contemporary American protestant homiletics include synthesizing the contemporary emphases into an inclusive model, a unitary process, a holistic phenomenon, and as such a "new" construct stressing the interaction among the standard elements. Second, if homiletics is to contain all available insights profitable for the communication of the Christian gospel, additional dialogue is



necessary with related disciplines both in the seminary and in the university. A third recommendation for accelerating the infusion of knowledge into the practicalities of preaching outlines six areas of additionally needed research.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many persons whose words of interest and helpful encouragement have contributed to this thesis. Thanks are expressed to all of them. For particular contribution, appreciation is expressed to Dr. David C. Ralph for direction of this study, to Dr. Kenneth G. Hance for his critical evaluations as a whole, and to the additional guidance committee members, Dr. Fred Alexander and Dr. Orden C. Smucker, for their intellectual insights and time. Special appreciation also is offered to Dr. Kyle Haselden, Dr. H. Grady Davis, Dr. Merrill Abbey, and Dr. Charles Stinnette, Jr., for their willingness and permission to serve as case studies, and to the Lombard Mennonite Church members for their cooperation in evaluation of sermons. Finally, acknowledgment is made to Ruth Pauline Kennel for her continuous support and assistance.

## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .</b>	11
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES . . . . .</b>	v
<b>INTRODUCTION . . . . .</b>	1
Purpose . . . . .	1
Justification . . . . .	2
Definitions and Methodology . . . . .	3
Sources . . . . .	5
 <b>Chapter</b>	
<b>I. PREACHING AND RHETORIC: THE LONG VIEW . . . . .</b>	6
The Historical Relationship of Homiletics and Rhetoric . . . . .	6
Pre-Contemporary Trends in American Protestant Preaching . . . . .	16
American Rhetoric . . . . .	22
 <b>II. THE PREACHER . . . . .</b>	 38
Introduction . . . . .	38
A Case Study: The Urgency of Preaching . . . . .	39
The Preacher and the Spoken Word . . . . .	40
The Preacher and His Message . . . . .	42
The Preacher and Himself . . . . .	49
A Case Study: A Sermon on Race Relations . . . . .	51
Other Contemporary Representative Theorists . . . . .	57
Summary . . . . .	83
 <b>III. THE SERMON . . . . .</b>	 84
Introduction . . . . .	84
A Case Study: Design for Preaching . . . . .	85
Anatomy of the Idea . . . . .	89
The Text as Source . . . . .	91
The Expanding Idea . . . . .	94
Continuity . . . . .	101
Tense and Mode . . . . .	105
Processes in Interpretation . . . . .	107
Forms of Development . . . . .	109
Writing for the Ear . . . . .	110

Chapter	Page
A Case Study: The Autocratic Goodness of God . . . . .	114
Other Contemporary Representative Theorists . . . . .	120
Summary . . . . .	186
IV. THE CONGREGATION . . . . .	191
Introduction . . . . .	191
A Case Study: Preaching to the Contemporary Mind . . . . .	193
The Mind in Today's World . . . . .	194
Authority and Communication . . . . .	197
Dynamic Encounter . . . . .	201
Challenging an Axiom . . . . .	203
Strategic Pivot Points . . . . .	209
Vital Doctrines in a Vital Pulpit . . . . .	217
A Case Study: Hope of Mankind's Broken Home . . . . .	226
Other Contemporary Representative Theorists . . . . .	233
Summary . . . . .	280
V. THE PREACHING SITUATION . . . . .	284
Introduction . . . . .	284
A Case Study: The Sharing Community--A Communication-Receiving Context . . . . .	286
The Locus and Roots of Freedom . . . . .	287
Identity Confirmation . . . . .	289
Participatory Knowledge . . . . .	294
A Case Study: The Sharing Community--A Communication-Giving Context . . . . .	301
By Relatedness . . . . .	302
By Language . . . . .	306
By Dialogue . . . . .	307
By Empathy . . . . .	311
Principles of Sharing . . . . .	314
A Case Study: The Ministry Which We Share . . . . .	317
Other Contemporary Representative Theorists . . . . .	326
Summary . . . . .	370
VI. CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	371
Contemporary Theory: Trends . . . . .	371
The Preacher . . . . .	371
The Sermon . . . . .	373
The Congregation . . . . .	375
The Preaching Situation . . . . .	377
Contemporary Theory: Recommendations . . . . .	381
Preaching as a Communicative Process . . . . .	381
Dialogue with Related Disciplines . . . . .	382
Additional Needed Research . . . . .	384
APPENDICES . . . . .	387
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	412

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Page
1. A Sermon on Race Relations . . . . .	387
2. The Autocratic Goodness of God . . . . .	393
3. Hope of Mankind's Broken Home . . . . .	399
4. The Ministry Which We Share . . . . .	405



## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

From the shifting of theological emphases in the 1940's, to the searching for new and relevant ministries in the 1960's, Protestantism has been stirred by the drums of change. It has been a time of taking stock, of rearrangement; it has been said that Protestantism stands on the threshold of a second Reformation.

Homiletics, too, has heard these drums. As the science and art of preaching in an age of electronic inundation, it too has been forced to search for its soul.<sup>1</sup> The preached sermon has encountered in varying degrees and places the disdain of the public, the competition of mass communication media, and the emergence of communication by the small-group movement.<sup>2</sup> The most bitter and shattering thought,

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<sup>1</sup>Ilion T. Jones, professor practical theology at San Francisco Theological Seminary, noting in Principles and Practice of Preaching (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 8, that life never stands still, states that "homiletical methods need to be revised several times within a single lifetime." Similarly, Robert J. McCracken, pastor of Riverside Church and lecturer in homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, New York City, writes in The Making of a Sermon (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 7, that preaching methods of today have not kept pace with the tremendous changes in the human mind and heart.

<sup>2</sup>Theodore O. Wedel, "Is Preaching Outmoded?" Religion in Life, A Christian Quarterly of Opinion and Discussion, Autumn, 1965, Vol. XXXIV, No. 4.



one ordained minister writes, comes when the minister senses that the center of his week--the act of preaching and conducting public worship--is dead in its present form.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the nature of contemporary American Protestant homiletics: to discover what contemporary homileticians have to say about the proclamation of the Christian message by public discourse and to determine whether preaching methods have been and are being revised and how they compare with early homiletical theory and with contemporary rhetorical theory.

### Justification

The intrinsic merit in this study is its description of the existing status of contemporary American Protestant homiletics. Such awareness should provide information and perspective for better teaching in the classroom--for training of preachers as well as for training of public speakers. Moreover, an understanding of contemporary homiletical theory should reveal any gaps or strengths when compared with contemporary rhetorical theory. Further, it is hoped this study will provide scholars with the implications of synthesizing the various homiletical emphases into an inclusive theory of the communication process of preaching.

The second justification of this study lies in the completion of a cycle of scholarship in American homiletics

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<sup>1</sup>Don Keating, "Some Notes on the Ministry," Renewal Magazine, III/7, October 1963, p. 7.

begun by Floyd Wesley Lambertson and continued by Elton Abernathy.<sup>1</sup> It also provides homiletical scholarship with a parallel to the development of American rhetorical studies.<sup>2</sup>

### Definitions and Methodology

This study concerns communication constructs in contemporary American Protestant preaching. The concept of communication constructs is that currently employed in rhetoric and public address as well as in homiletics: speaker-source-preacher, speech-message-sermon, audience-receiver-congregation, and occasion-context relationship-preaching situation.<sup>3</sup> The study concentrates on American homiletical theory since 1940, with special attention to the period from 1955 to 1965.

The first section of this paper surveys the historical relationship between rhetoric and homiletics, previous trends in American homiletics, and patterns in contemporary rhetoric and public address. Sources include current texts in rhetoric, the studies by Lambertson and Abernathy cited previously,

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<sup>1</sup>Floyd Wesley Lambertson, "A Study and Analysis of American Homiletics Prior to 1860," Ph.D. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1930; Elton Abernathy, "Trends in American Homiletical Theory Since 1860," Ph.D. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1941.

<sup>2</sup>Warren A. Guthrie, "The Development of Rhetorical Theory in America, 1635-1850," Ph.D. thesis, Northwestern University, 1940; Harold M. Jordan, "Rhetorical Education in American Colleges and Universities, 1850-1915," Ph.D. thesis, Northwestern University, 1952; Joseph B. Laine, "Rhetorical Theory in American Colleges and Universities, 1915-1954," Ph.D. thesis, Northwestern University, 1958.

<sup>3</sup>These four constructs or viewpoints or emphases are studied in Chapter One as to their role in the communication process as "the sorting, selecting, and sending symbols in such a way as to help a listener recreate in his own mind the meaning contained in the mind of the communicator."

and texts relating to the historical development of rhetoric and homiletics. This section provides a basis for an examination of contemporary homiletics.

Chapters Two through Five provide an individual examination of each communication construct as it appears in contemporary homiletics. This is done both through case studies and through a review of contemporary homiletical literature and research. The homiletical theories of Drs. Kyle Haselden, H. Grady Davis, Merrill R. Abbey, and Charles R. Stinnette, Jr., all leading homiletical theoreticians, provide case study examination of the constructs respectively of preacher, sermon, congregation, and preaching situation.

In each case, the theorist was chosen because his major emphasis has been on his respective construct.<sup>1</sup> Four sermons, one by each of the above four theorists, given to the same congregation, Lombard Mennonite Church, Lombard, Illinois, during the Spring of 1964, are broken down into rhetorical and substance outlines, and the theorist's own criteria are applied to them in an attempt to clarify and illustrate his theories.

The second basic methodology employed through these chapters is to review and collate contemporary homiletical literature and research (other than, and in comparison with, the theories in the case study). Homiletics texts were chosen primarily on the basis of the frequency with which

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<sup>1</sup>Additional criteria for selecting these four theorists are found in the respective chapters.

they are used in the teaching of preaching in the American Association of Theological Schools.<sup>1</sup> Texts by contemporary theorists currently teaching in the area of homiletics or in the "Practical (or Functional) Department" of theological schools were also included. Additionally, interpretative material and analysis are based in part upon public lectures by homiletical theorists and upon personal interviews with several of the theorists.

The final chapter of this study draws the contemporary view of the four communication constructs together, and relates them to earlier American homiletics and to contemporary rhetoric. Further, the chapter explores the possibilities of synthesizing the contemporary emphases into an interrelating process; examines the implications of a holistic preaching phenomenon; and indicates additional areas of study in homiletics.

### Sources

In addition to sources indicated earlier, this study is based on material gathered at homiletics lectures and conferences, from published articles and correspondence, and from unpublished research works. A complete bibliography provides a detailed listing of the sources employed.

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<sup>1</sup>As determined by the Daniel E. Weiss study, "Conceptions of 'Arrangement' in American Protestant Homiletical Theory," Ph.D. thesis, Michigan State University, 1964.

## CHAPTER I

### PREACHING AND RHETORIC: THE LONG VIEW

This chapter will provide a theoretical setting for the study of communication constructs in contemporary preaching by concentrating on three areas. The first section surveys the thought of dominant homileticians, rhetoricians, and homileticians-rhetoricians as it bears on the historic relationship between the two disciplines. The second section examines in perspective the shape of homiletical theory in America from Colonial times to about 1940. The third section reviews the development of American rhetoric and public address, with particular emphasis on the contemporary period.

#### The Historical Relationship of Homiletics and Rhetoric

Homiletics was born with a debt to rhetoric. It was St. Augustine, the first major homiletician, who built the bridge between the established body of classical rhetoric and the new discipline of homiletics. When he crossed it, he found the heritage of rhetoric to be immense. In De Doctrina Christiana, Augustine stresses that homiletics must be "exercised" by a valid rhetoric: he acknowledges the

writing of Cicero no less than 150 times.<sup>1</sup> Augustine's emphasis on Cicero is particularly noteworthy in that it defied the contemporary reluctance of the Church to recognize pagan thinkers. He strived to provide a criticism of sophistic rhetoric, lay a philosophical base for Christian preaching, and attempt a solution regarding the dilemma involved in using the works of pagan authors, all at the same time.<sup>2</sup> In doing so, Augustine established a pattern which affected all subsequent homiletical theory, with little deviation until the thirteenth century. His emphases were on the development of subject matter for preaching, upon invention, and upon style, with somewhat less attention to arrangement and delivery. It can be argued that homiletics was originated by a rhetorician, a "baptized" Cicero.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Charles Sears Baldwin, Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic, (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959), p. 73.

<sup>2</sup>James J. Murphy, "St. Augustine and the Debate About a Christian Rhetoric," Quarterly Journal of Speech, Vol. 46 (December, 1960), pp. 401-410.

<sup>3</sup>This argument does not mean that no one preceded Augustine in bridging the gap between homiletics and rhetoric or to overlook Origen, the Cappadocian Fathers, and Chrysostom, who made rhetorical applications in preaching; it is rather to acknowledge Augustine as the first major homiletician. Moreover, "homiletics originated by a rhetorician" needs the qualification that preaching did occur in both the Old and New Testaments. Yngve Brilioth presents a strong argument in A Brief History of Preaching (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965) that the Christian sermon has a direct continuation of the exposition of Scripture in the synagogue, and that Jesus' sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth is the link in the chain which unites the Jewish proclamation and the Christian sermon. Brilioth's thesis is "the sermon in the Christian church, as a unique oratorical act and form of speech which by degrees was attained in a clearly defined form, is most profoundly influenced by three

The roots of medieval preaching, as well, reached deep into the heritage of classical rhetoric. Ecclesiastica Rhetorica, regarded as the forensic rhetoric for canon law, included manuscripts, commentaries, and translations of classical rhetoricians, both major and minor, going back to Cicero. Created in the tension between secular and religious, as even its title admits, Ecclesiastica Rhetorica was developed in accordance with rhetorical doctrine and was taught as a fundamental subject in cathedral schools, monasteries, and city schools. Caplan has noted, in fact, that the precise field for rhetoric in the Middle Ages was in preaching--in dissuasions from vice, in persuasions to virtue, and in the winning of souls to God. Medieval rhetoric consisted largely of finding the right argument communicable to the right audience under the right circumstances--the inventional use of topoi or commonplaces. For preaching, the proper topoi were: God, the devil, the heavenly city, hell, the world, the soul, the body, sin, penitence, and virtue.<sup>1</sup>

The interrelatedness of medieval preaching and rhetoric was indicated as well in the character of more than 250 contemporary manuscripts treating the theory of preaching.

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component elements or principles found in Jesus' sermon: the liturgical, the exegetical, and the prophetic" and that the study of the history of the sermon keeps in mind the development and interrelatedness of these principles (p. 11). Nevertheless, Brilioth recognizes De Doctrina Christiana as the first attempt to write a homiletics and as the classic original document on the relation between rhetoric and preaching (p. 50).

<sup>1</sup>Harry Caplan, "Classical Rhetoric and the Medieval Theory of Preaching," Classical Philology, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2 (April, 1933), p. 86.



These tractates showed a dependence upon many classical rhetoricians, including Isidore, Cicero, Aristotle, Seneca, Horace, Quintilian, Sidonius, Plato, Lucretius, Persuus, and Ovid. Ironically, despite this linking of homiletics and rhetoric, the tractates also reveal a continuing hesitation on the part of the church fathers to endorse Augustine's "joining eloquence to religion." The theologians questioned dependence upon secular learning; they looked upon style with distaste; and the emphasis of their preaching was on simplicity and unadornment--a rhetorical criticism itself.

During the Renaissance and Reformation, continental religious leaders such as Erasmus, Luther, and Calvin came back once again to the springs of classical rhetoric. In fact, a revived interest in the study of ancient rhetoric appears as the major factor affecting homiletics during this period:

Along with the other great classical writings these which deal especially with the principles of rhetoric come up for fresh and first-hand study. Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and others were read anew and with greater zest. The time for dry compilations and reproductions, for sapless imitations and barren rehashings had passed away. Men were going back to those original sources of higher rhetorical art which had given law to the classical periods of literature.<sup>1</sup>

Ecclesiastes sive Concionator Evangelicus (Gospel Preacher), seen by Dargan as the most significant work on the theory of preaching since Augustine, concerns "the dignity of the preaching office and the virtues and character

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<sup>1</sup>Edwin Charles Dargan, The Art of Preaching in the Light of Its History (New York: A.C. Armstrong and Son, 1905), pp. 94-95.



appropriate to the office . . . doctrines and precepts on the art of preaching derived from rhetoricians, logicians and theologians . . . and topoi for pulpit use."<sup>1</sup> The entire unfolding Protestant Reformation lifted the importance of preaching and invention to new levels. Martin Luther makes the point in Table Talk: "A preacher should be a logician and rhetorician."<sup>2</sup>

Despite the pull of the ancient, rhetorical patterns developed by Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, preachers and homileticians began to discern the unique needs of Christian preaching.

The subject matter of Christian preaching had a distinctiveness that could not be denied. The Christian attitude toward the Bible affected invention, disposition, elocution, memory and pronunciation in varied but distinct ways. The objectives of Christian preaching deviated from those of conventional oratory to the extent that it was sometimes named as a fourth type in addition to deliberative, judicial, and ceremonial. Christian ideology affected the principles of ethical appeal and the legitimate means of persuasion. Nevertheless, the classical rhetoricians had established a pattern that could not be abandoned lightly because it was so much a part of the fundamental reality of public address of all types.<sup>3</sup>

English rhetoricians, and the Americans who followed, continued to illustrate the entwining of preaching and rhetoric.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>3</sup>Norval Pease, "Charles E. Weniger's Theory of the Relationship of Speech and Homiletics as Revealed in His Teaching Procedures, His Writings, and His Public Addresses," (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Dept. of Speech, Michigan State University, 1964). This writer is indebted to Norval Pease for the conceptual approach in the first section of this chapter.

Thomas Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique, published in 1553 as the first complete rhetoric in English, was written with a definite homiletical bias. Wilson spoke of eloquence as a gift from God--lost by man and recovered by the grace of God. The basic philosophy of his rhetoric was classical.<sup>1</sup> George Campbell, who combined the two disciplines of rhetoric and homiletics in his life as rhetorician and clergyman, argued forcefully for a rhetorical base to homiletics:

It is not enough for the Christian minister, that he be instructed in the science of theology. . . . Indeed it may be said, that the study of the science of theology is itself a preparation, and in part it no doubt is so, as it furnishes him with the materials; but the materials alone will not serve his purpose, unless he has acquired the art of using them. And it is this art in preaching which I denominate Christian or pulpit eloquence. To know is one thing; and to be capable of communicating knowledge is another.<sup>2</sup>

Hugh Blair, a third English rhetorician, argued in Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres that eloquence in preaching ought to be grounded in a solid understanding of rhetorical principles:

It may perhaps occur to some, that preaching is no proper subject of the art of eloquence. This, it may be said, belongs only to human studies and inventions. . . . This objection would have weight, if eloquence were as the persons who make such an objection commonly take it to be, an ostentatious and deceitful art, the study of words and of plausibility, only calculated to please, and to tickle the ear. But against this idea

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<sup>1</sup>Russel H. Wagner, "Thomas Wilson's Contributions to Rhetoric," Historical Studies of Rhetoric and Rhetoricians, ed. Raymond F. Howes (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1961).

<sup>2</sup>George Campbell, Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence (Boston: Lincoln & Edmonds, 1832), p. 93. See also Clarence W. Edney, "Campbell's Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence," Speech Monographs, Vol. XIX, No. 1 (March, 1952), pp. 1-10.

of eloquence I have all along guarded. True eloquence is the art of placing truth in the most advantageous light for conviction and persuasion. This is what every good man who preaches the gospel not only may, but ought to have at heart.<sup>1</sup>

The development of rhetorical and homiletical theory in America followed the channel of continental and British thought. While there were attempts to separate the two disciplines, and attempts to synthesize them, the basic application of rhetorical principles to the art of preaching was wholly endorsed. Outstanding early American rhetoricians like Witherspoon, Goodrich, Channing, and Porter were also homileticians.<sup>2</sup> John Quincy Adams, wrestling with a definition of Christian preaching as a fourth classification of oratory, made the analogy that the eloquence of the pulpit is to the science of rhetoric as the western hemisphere is to geography.<sup>3</sup> John A. Broadus, in a work entitled On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, acknowledged his indebtedness to Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Whately, and Vinet.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hugh Blair, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (Philadelphia: Hazes & Zell, 1854), p. 315.

<sup>2</sup>John Hoshor, "American Contribution," History of Speech Education in America, ed. Karl Wallace (New York: Appleton-Century-Craft, Inc., 1954), p. 144. Hoshor cites Shedd's definition of homiletics as denoting the application of the principles of rhetoric to preaching and as being synonymous with Sacred Rhetoric.

<sup>3</sup>John Quincy Adams, Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory, Vol. I, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), p. 322.

<sup>4</sup>John A. Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, (New York: Harper & Bros., 1944). This volume, a revision by J.D. Weatherspoon of Broadus' original work, was ranked by the Daniel Weiss study in 1962 as the second most frequently used text in homiletics classes in the Association of American Theological Seminaries.

"Greek rhetoric was a ready instrument for the proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentile world," Broadus wrote. "Thus arose the science of homiletics, which is simply the adaptation of rhetoric to the particular ends and demands for Christian preaching."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Austin Phelps tightens the bond between homiletics and preaching: "Homiletics is rhetoric, as illustrated in the theory of preaching. Rhetoric is the genus: homiletics is the species."<sup>2</sup> A survey of sixty-eight homiletics textbooks used by Protestants in America between 1834 and 1954 showed a total of 528 references to Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and Augustine.<sup>3</sup> Both speech texts and homiletic texts had a dominant emphasis on persuasion between 1920 and 1930; both applied psychological thought between 1915 and 1954; both emphasized gathering ideas around one unifying thought, presentation of the message as conversation with the audience, and spontaneity of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Austin Phelps, The Theory of Preaching (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), p. 1. Phelps defines homiletics as "the science which treats of the nature, the classification, the analysis, the construction, and the composition of a sermon. More concisely it is the science of that which preaching is the art, and a sermon is the product" (p. 6). Significant also is his view of the "generic idea of the sermon" as six component and cumulative parts: "an oral address--to the popular mind--upon religious truth--as contained in the Christian Scriptures--and elaborately treated--with a view to persuasion."

<sup>3</sup>Lloyd Merle Perry, "Trends and Emphases in the Philosophy Materials and Methodology of American Protestant Homiletical Education as Established by a Study of Selected Trade and Textbooks Published Between 1834 and 1954," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, School of Speech, Northwestern University, 1962), p. 21.





gestures. As a result of his survey, Perry defined the relationship between homiletics and rhetoric as follows:

Homiletics is the term that has been chosen to denote the application of the principles of rhetoric to speaking. It is synonymous consequently with sacred rhetoric. Homiletics is the science and art of preaching. It is the application of the principles of rhetoric to formal Christian discourse.<sup>1</sup>

This quid pro quo relationship, however, is still challenged. Father William Toohey of Holy Cross College, while acknowledging the historical services of rhetoric to homiletics, argues that preaching, in so far as it is the revelation of supernatural truth, stands apart from the categories of all other communicative material.

Preaching does not fall within the province of speaking which entails statement and ensuing argument; preaching works in the service of faith, and is not concerned with discovering suitable arguments to prove a given point. A misconception of the precise nature of preaching leads to the erroneous notion that a training in public speaking is a training for preaching, or that homiletics is merely sacred rhetoric. No one could justifiably deny the many services rhetoric renders to the development of an effective preacher; but it would be lamentable to assume that this means that preaching is only a particular type of deliberative oratory . . . public speaking from a pulpit; or to say, as some have, that the details of the art of preaching are the same as those for the lawyer, the legislator; and for orators in general.<sup>2</sup>

The Reverend Warren E. Faber, Dean of the Bible College at Baptist Theological Seminary, refines this view by acknowledging preaching as both a divine and a human act. In the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>2</sup>William Toohey, "Newsletter," Speech for Religious Workers Interest Group, Speech Association of America (February, 1963), pp. 2-3.



process, he develops a synthesis of mystical and rhetorical elements in preaching.

Insofar as preaching is considered as the timeless link between God's great redemptive act and man's apprehension of it, the medium through which God contemporizes his historic self-disclosure in Christ and offers man the opportunity to respond in faith, it is essentially a divine act as well as human, and rhetoric has little to offer. Preaching, however, is a human act as well as a divine act, and to that extent the preacher is involved in the communication process like any other speaker, and he needs the help of rhetoric. . .

The recognition of preaching as a divine-human act, and of rhetoric as a methodological approach to those aspects of preaching which involve human activity and are common to all speakers, secures a limited but significant place for rhetoric in the training and ministry of the preacher. It demands that he be exposed to enough rhetorical theory to insure a measure of competency in those areas of human responsibility where failure and ineffectiveness can only be attributed to weaknesses in his ability to communicate.<sup>1</sup>

In a paper asking whether rhetoric and theology are incompatible, Dr. William Carson Lantz completes the synthesis:

Keep your belief in God and the mystical experience if you must, but this does not mean you cannot also keep rhetoric. Your use of classical, systematic rhetoric, natural and human as it may seem, is not a denial of God. It is simply a recognition that God uses it and works through it.<sup>2</sup>

In the long view, it can be seen that homiletics has developed with a basic debt to and dependence upon the techniques of rhetoric, and that homiletical theoreticians have periodically turned their attention to the principles of

<sup>1</sup>Warren E. Faber, "Newsletter," Speech for Religious Workers Interest Group, Speech Association of America (May, 1963), pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup>William Carson Lantz, "Rhetoric and Theology--Incompatible?", The Digest of Research in Religious Speaking (October, 1963), p. 5.

rhetoric in an attempt to infuse preaching with new effectiveness. Along with this relationship between the two disciplines, two views of the nature of homiletics have developed. In one, homiletics is seen as a type of rhetoric; often homiletics is considered a category of rhetoric, extended by virtue of its peculiar subject matter into the sacred realm. Thus, in the Middle Ages, homiletics became an argumentative form of rhetoric concentrating on the ten topoi considered appropriate for preaching. In the other view, preaching has come to be understood as a supernatural vehicle for the transmission of God's word, a channel "through which God contemporizes his historic self-disclosure in Christ."<sup>1</sup> Despite its dependence upon rhetorical technique, homiletics in this view stands outside rhetoric because of its dominant mystical element.

### Pre-Contemporary Trends in American Protestant Preaching

A detailed survey of communication theory in American Protestant preaching would be beyond the scope of the present study.<sup>2</sup> In an attempt to describe American homiletics prior to 1940, and to identify trends in the theory of preaching, two unpublished doctoral dissertations are discussed..

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<sup>1</sup>Faber, "Newsletter," pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup>Knower's "Bibliography of Theses in American Schools of Theology" lists no less than 950 studies of religious speaking. While all of these are not concerned specifically with American preaching, this bibliography gives some idea of the extent of the subject.



Floyd W. Lambertson has examined the theory of American homileticians from Colonial times to 1860.<sup>1</sup> In analyzing the work of Cotton Mather, Foxcroft, Barnard, John Cotton, Wigglesworth, Increase Mather, and others prior to 1740, Lambertson found homiletical theory divided into three main communication constructs: sermon, preacher, and audience. He broke them down as follows:

1. The Sermon
  - A. Its purpose: to instruct, to convince, to persuade
  - B. Types of subjects: doctrinal, practical
  - C. The text of the sermon
  - D. The outline of the sermon: kinds--textual, topical, expository; introduction, the discussion--rational materials (evidence and reasoning) and expository materials; the conclusion
  - E. Style of the sermon: perspicuity, figures of speech (for variety and embellishment), unity coherence, emphasis.
2. The Preacher
  - A. Qualifications: prayerfulness, fidelity, zeal, piety
  - B. Methods of study
  - C. Sermon delivery:
    - methods of delivery: reading, memorizing, extemporaneous
    - emotional and intellectual behavior during delivery
    - the voice: pronunciation, quality, force, time, pitch
    - gesture
3. The Audience
  - A. Audience analysis and adaptation
  - B. Motivation

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<sup>1</sup>Floyd W. Lambertson, "A Survey and Analysis of American Homiletics Prior to 1860," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Speech, State University of Iowa, 1930). Lambertson's methodology was to study each successive period of homiletical theory against the previous periods.

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The period from 1740 to 1800 included drastic changes in the establishment of colleges and seminaries and the flourishing of such homileticians as Emmons, Tappan, Chauncy, and Appleton. Yet Lambertson found homiletics during this period to be primarily a continuation in scope and emphasis of the theory prevalent prior to 1740. The first shift in emphasis comes between 1800 and 1830, when the works of Witherspoon, Murdock, Kirkland, Dwight, Griffin, and Channing reveal greater attention to the styling of the sermon, particularly to "figures of speech," and to the topic of "animated and natural delivery." Other homiletical considerations received generally the same emphasis as previously. Lambertson found the period from 1830 to 1860 to be the "high point" in the development of homiletical theory as measured by the number of theorists and the extent of their writings. His review of nearly two hundred sources during this period shows increased emphasis on the subjects of preaching, both doctrinal and practical, and on the methods of sermon delivery.

Lambertson concludes that homiletical theory from Colonial times to 1860 developed primarily in terms of amplification and extension. He found heightened emphasis on "instruction" as a purpose of preaching; more attention given to the use of "practical subjects" in sermons to include those not only from the Bible but from other literature and areas of life as well; and more emphasis on the topic of "extemporaneous delivery." The message received primary attention in this development; the speaker received somewhat



less attention, the audience virtually none, and the construct of "occasion" was not touched upon.

Elton Abernathy, writing in 1941, surveyed American homiletics from 1860 through the early years of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> A changing view of the nature of preaching during this period affected all four preaching constructs, but particularly that of the preacher. Abernathy notes that prior to 1860, the theoreticians firmly believed in an authoritarian view of the ministerial office. The preacher was a divinely inspired ambassador sent to deliver the Gospel to his people; his message was largely doctrinal, and not subject to change, its goal being individual "soul salvation." From around 1900, however, the primary view of the minister's role stressed a social approach to men's problems; individual salvation and an interest in heaven and hell were made subsidiary to group welfare and social uplift. J.P. McHaffy admitted as early as 1882 that the authoritarian position of the pulpit was threatened. Subsequently, writers such as Newton, Patton, and Fosdick largely discarded the emphasis on ministerial authority and dogmatic proclamation from the pulpit. The emphasis on the social nature of the message, and of the use by the minister of his own experience as a basis of his work, rather than a dependence on infallible scriptures, is regarded by Abernathy as the most important development in recent homiletic theory.

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<sup>1</sup>Elton Abernathy, "Trends in American Homiletic Theory since 1860" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Speech, State University of Iowa, 1941).

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Practically all sacred rhetoricians prior to 1900, and many since, followed the classical conception, developed in America by Porter, Kidder, Hoppin, Beecher, Broadus, and their school. Its basic tenets have remained virtually unchanged through three generations of development by such men as Pattison, Sharp, Haynes, Schultz, Bull, and Reu. To them the sermon was, and is, the product of a man divinely inspired to interpret the Bible and the church to his people, to the end that salvation from sin might result. This message with its text, its enrichment of Biblical and doctrinal material, its elaborate structure, its somewhat elevated rhetoric, and its presentation through verbatim memory or reading, reflected the adherence to the orthodox homiletic pattern not fundamentally different from that followed by Edwards and other early American divines. Only in regard to style, delivery, and organization have recent years seen some relaxation from the strictness of this sermonic formula.

At the same time and in parallel development, since about the close of the last century a sharply different point of view has arisen, through the instrumentality of such theorists as Behrends, Hoyt, Calkins, Patton, C.R. Brown, and Fosdick. These authorities look upon the sermon as an attempt on the part of the hearers in the light of Christian principles. General social uplift of the community becomes the primary aim of preaching. According to this conception, the discourse needs neither text or elaborate outline. The materials of the speech may be drawn from any available sources. And in regard to language and delivery, this group, even more strongly than the other, insists upon flexibility and informality.<sup>1</sup>

The major part of Abernathy's study concerns the canons of invention, arrangement, and style of the message. According to Abernathy's investigation, the use of scriptural texts was regarded as essential to the sermon prior to the turn of the century; but the newer writers, who rejected the authoritarian view of the pulpit and the fundamental interpretation of the Bible, also rejected what Fosdick called "slavery to texts." While the Bible remained the

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<sup>1</sup>Elton Abernathy, Speech Monographs, Vol. X, 1943, p. 73.

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prime source of sermon material, writers after 1900 encouraged the gathering of source material from the pastoral round, literature, history, and contemporary life. In the late 1800's, there was an emphasis on textual and expository sermons, in which the exact meaning of scriptural texts was analyzed through proper interpretation; these writers stressed purity, perspicuity, individuality, energy, naturalness, elegance, and precision as the elements of style. Later writers spoke out strongly against the use of technical, theological, and religious terminology.

Through the period covered by Abernathy's study, there was an accelerating trend toward an extemporaneous manner of delivery, until the later writers endorsed and encouraged a conversational tone while preaching. The audience, also, was given more attention. Illustrations were judged not only for their usefulness in clarifying and enforcing truth, but in terms of retaining the audience's interest and attention. Additionally, audience interest became a factor in determining the length of a sermon. The construct of "occasion" remained the neglected stepchild of homiletics, although some theorists suggested that sermon themes be adapted to the needs and interests of the audience and speaker. The primary stress of homiletics during this period was upon the construct of message, with less emphasis, respectively, upon speaker, audience, and occasion.



### American Rhetoric

The spectrum of American rhetoric stretches from the Colonial isolation of style and delivery as the essence of rhetoric to the present concern with the interrelatedness of rhetorical elements and the application of the most sophisticated developments in behavioral science, linguistics, and communication theory to the process of verbal communication.<sup>1</sup> To provide a frame of reference for an examination of contemporary homiletics, this section concentrates on recent developments in rhetorical theory.

Kenneth G. Hance delineates seven stages which marked the development of American rhetoric.<sup>2</sup> The first period, from 1836 to 1730, was characterized by the dominance of the "rhetoric of style." Little attention was paid to the work of classical rhetoricians; instead, the Ramean rationale was adopted by Colonial Colleges, and speech training was restricted to considerations of style and delivery. The second stage, from 1730 to 1785, saw a resurgence of the classical traditions, the introduction of several British rhetorics, and a reconsideration of invention and arrangement. The third period, from 1785 to 1850, continued the

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<sup>1</sup>The observations in this section are based primarily upon the rhetorical studies of Guthrie, Jordan, and Laine; a paper on the teaching of speechmaking, by Kenneth G. Hance; and an analysis of communication theory in current speech texts.

<sup>2</sup>Kenneth G. Hance, "Milestones in the Teaching of Speechmaking in the United States." Hance's categorization is built in part upon Guthrie's studies.

classical re-emphasis with the use of British rhetorics by Campbell, Whately, and Blair. Furthermore, the works of Witherspoon, Adams, Newman, Channing, Porter, Day, and Hope, with their emphasis on invention, marked the development of an "American rhetoric." From 1850 to 1900, the fourth period, rhetorical emphasis shifted to elocution, with speech training centering on the visual and vocal aspects of delivery. The result of this emphasis was the conception of preaching as an oral interpretation of literature and composition. The fifth stage, 1900 to 1935, Hance describes as a "transitional return to classical emphasis." Once again, all the canons of rhetoric were regarded as important. During these years, teachers of public speaking found a sense of identity and withdrew from the National Council of Teachers of English; argumentation developed as a separate aspect of speech training; and rhetoricians viewed the speaker as a molder of thought and feeling. The sixth and seventh periods constitute modern American rhetoric, and deserve a more detailed examination.

Joseph B. Laine's survey of rhetorical theory between 1915 and 1954 acknowledges a broadening of rhetorical concerns and the use of psychological developments in defining the speech process.<sup>1</sup> He notes the appearance of a theory not only for platform speaking, but also for small group discussion. Courses were developed and textbooks written

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph B. Laine, "Rhetorical Theory in American Colleges and Universities."





specifically in argumentation and debate, persuasion, general semantics, parliamentary procedure, and radio speaking. Psychology and reflective deliberation, based on the Dewey thought process, were utilized in speech theory. Laine further notes the growing diversification of rhetoric and its emphases:

The books in speech composition and persuasion grew out of the demand for advanced courses in public speaking. The speech composition books generally stressed the nature of oratory or public speaking; the inter-relationships of speaker, speech, audience, and occasion; the purposes and various arrangement patterns of speeches; the logical and psychological factors in persuasion; and the principles and methods of style. They gave little direct attention to delivery. The books in persuasion emphasized background study in human nature and neurological response mechanisms; and treated methods of audience analysis, motivation, gaining attention and interest, and psychological approaches--together with logical approaches--in securing stimulation, belief, and action.<sup>1</sup>

Theoreticians maintained an inclusive approach to rhetoric during this sixth stage of development, from 1935 to 1955; while one or the other often received primary emphasis, rhetoricians gave their attention to all four communication constructs. In a standard text on speech criticism during this period, Thonsson and Baird survey the criteria of a valid rhetorical criticism and conclude:

The most basic is the critic's evaluation of the speaker's ability to adjust his argument to the four factors of rhetoric as developed by the ancients: himself, his audience, his subject, and the occasion.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Speech Monographs, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, June 1950, pp. 105-106.

<sup>2</sup>Lester Thonsson and A. Craig Baird, Speech Criticism (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1948), p. vi.



Assuming the elements to be the speaker, the subject, the audience, and the occasion, critics have found it consistent with their creative intention to examine an orator's right to high rank by studying the orator as a man, the audiences he faced, the topics he developed, and the circumstances under which he appeared. Many investigators have used this pattern as the overall plan for making their critical estimates.<sup>1</sup>

For Thonsson and Baird, the major emphasis in rhetorical criticism is placed upon the audience and its reaction to the speaker and his speech: "Thus the primary concept is that of speech as communication, i.e., the degree to which it achieves an end consistent with the speaker's intentions."<sup>2</sup>

This consideration is carried over into the seventh period, from 1955 to 1965, which Hance defines as the era of "communication theory of the communication process." Rhetoric opens itself to developments in related fields; it is revitalized by the latest findings of behavioral science and such disciplines as information theory, metalinguistics, cybernetics, and psycho-linguistics, while it retains the traditional emphases. New and specialized courses in speech are developed, such as "Seminar: Psychological and Sociological Aspects of Communication" at Michigan State University, and "Communication Theory: Linguistic Approaches" and "Communication Theory: Psychological Approaches" at Northwestern University. Contemporary speech texts display this infusion of rhetoric with fresh energy from other

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 290.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. vi.

fields and define rhetoric as a "dynamic process" rather than a transfer of word-meanings from one mind to another. The construct of "occasion" comes to mean the speaking situation, as well as the speaking environment, wherein a reciprocal and interacting relationship of speaker, speech, and audience occur.

Ross, for example, views contemporary speech as "containing the best of the old emphasis on skills of language, thought, voice, action and rhetoric" but brought up to date and modified by the best in new theory and research.<sup>1</sup> Among the emphases in his text are the role of language, the psychological approach to persuasion (including Maslow's classification of dynamic needs and Kluckholm and Murray's work on personality), learning theory, and speech anxiety. Ross defines speech and communication as "a dynamic process, a system of coding, decoding, and recoding ideas and emotions."<sup>2</sup> The speech process involves "the sorting, selecting, and sending of symbols in such a way as to help a listener recreate in his own mind the meaning contained in the mind of the communicator."<sup>3</sup>

Let us assume we have a message (which might be referred to as an idea or concept or meaning) which we wish to convey to another person. Our brain or thinking apparatus now sorts through our storehouse of knowledge, experience, feelings, and previous training to refine and select the precise meaning we are seeking. Before

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond S. Ross, Speech Communication (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1965).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. vii.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

it is transmitted it goes through a phase which we may think of as a language-attaching or coding event; that is, the refined idea is not encoded or put into symbols which we commonly think of as language. Gesture, facial expression, and tone of voice may also be considered as symbols or codes. Our meaning could, for example, be put into a sign language, a foreign language, or even international Morse code. This code is then transmitted, and it has meaning to you, the sender. The way in which it is coded, the way and finesse with which it is transmitted, and the medium or channel chosen for its transmission have much to do with the meaning it will have for the receiver. Assuming that the media for this illustration is simply the air between you and the listener, we now have the encoded message, the transmission, and the signal being received by the other person. The receiver now proceeds to decode the signal or at least attempts to recode it. If the signal is in a code with which he is not familiar, such as a foreign language, not much communication will take place. The listener proceeds, figuratively, to sort and select meanings from his storehouse of knowledge, experience, and training until he has created in his own mind a replica of the images and ideas contained in the mind of the sender. The idea, concept, or meaning in the mind of the listener is therefore heavily dependent upon, if not restricted to, the knowledge and experience he can bring to bear on the code.<sup>1</sup>

For Ross, however, the communication process does not conclude with the construction in the listener's mind of a replica of the images and ideas contained in the mind of the speaker. He acknowledges the concept of "feedback," technically defined as the listener feeding back to the transmitted information about the encoded message as it is received; this introduces a two-way element into the communication situation, and provides the speaker information about how the signal needs to be corrected or refined.

Similarly, Monroe describes the speech act as a circular process.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 3.



An idea forms in the speaker's mind, where it is translated into language symbols; reacting to impulses from the nervous system, the muscles used in speech convert these language symbols into audible speech; the sounds are carried as wave patterns in the air until they strike the eardrums of the listener; as nerve impulses, they travel to the brain, where they again become language symbols which convey meaning to the listener's mind; the listener reacts to what he has heard; the speaker observes this reaction and responds to it. Thus we see that the process of communication depends not only on the speaker's saying something to a listener but also on his constant awareness of the listener's reaction to what he says.<sup>1</sup>

Hance, Ralph, and Wiksell indicate how six elements in the communication process constitute a circular process in the speaking situation.

First, the source wants to express himself--to share an experience, convey information, give directions, obtain agreement, or get something done.

Second, he "encodes" his ideas into a message in the form of written or spoken language. The message is the essential thought of the communication process--the reason for communicating and the subject matter to be communicated.

Third, the message is transmitted through such channels as orthographic signs, graphic signs, light vibrations, air vibrations, electrical impulses, and electromagnetic waves.

Fourth, the receiver "decodes" or translates the message into the form of language that is meaningful to him . . .

Fifth, the message produces an effect when the receiver reacts to it as he understands it . . .

Sixth . . . Feedback is the reaction upon the source of the effect of his message upon the receiver . . . It ties together the beginning and ending of the original process and makes it truly continuous or circular.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Alan Monroe, Principles and Types of Speech (fifth ed., rev.; Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1962), pp. 28-29. Monroe also discusses audience reactions during the speech in a discussion, "Analyzing the Occasion and the Audience," p. 165 f.

<sup>2</sup>Kenneth G. Hance, David C. Ralph, Milton J. Wiksell, Principles of Speaking (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1962), p. 6.





Noting that speech is reciprocal in nature, Braden stresses interaction as the important word in the speaking situation.<sup>1</sup> Reid, too, emphasizes that communication is dynamic, with the elements interacting.<sup>2</sup> Both Braden and Reid give recognition to "occasion" as the frame on the circle enclosing the elements of speech, speaker, and audience, noting that communication takes place at a specific time, in a specific place, and in the context of a specific set of circumstances; both, moreover recognize that the reciprocal, interacting relationships take place in the speaking situation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Waldo W. Braden, Public Speaking--The Essentials (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966), pp. 14, 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ronald F. Reid (general editor), Introduction to the Field of Speech (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1965), pp. 6-7.

<sup>3</sup>Other texts illustrate the communication process as interaction occurring in the speaking situation. Donald Bryant and Karl Wallace postulate a "schematic view of the communication process" in Fundamentals of Public Speaking (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, Inc., 1960, p. 23.) in which the listener is viewed as a responding unit whose output is determined by the message (input), the response occurring in the speaking situation. Elizabeth Andersch and Loris Staats in Speech for Everyday Use (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1960, p. 32) emphasize the speaking-listening sequence as a two-way communication system as being complete with interplay between speaker and auditor, and auditor and speaker. Transmission and reception are seen as two large arrows. The first arrow, speaking, is made up of the speaker who thinks, creates, and originates an idea, codes it in words, and transmits it through vocal mechanism, articulatory mechanism, and bodily activity. The second arrow, listening, is made up of the listener who hears, decodes the message in symbols and ideas, evaluates, and reacts--resulting in feedback that creates another stimulus-response cycle. Andrew Thomas Weaver and Ordean Gerhard Ness in An Introduction to Public Speaking (New York: The Odyssey Press, Inc., 1961,

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Building upon Aristotle's categories of speaker, speech, audience, and occasion, a major contemporary treatment of communication theory, The Process of Communication by David Berlo, calls for a study of the interrelatedness of four emphases:

1. Source-Encoder
  - A. Communication Skills:
    - Speaking: vocal, visual, verbal
    - Listening: for interpreting of messages
    - Reasoning: essential for coding
  - B. Attitudes: toward self, receiver, subject matter, context
  - C. Knowledge level: subject matter and of method
  - D. Position within a social-cultural system: his social system and roles, his expectations and others of him, his cultural context
2. Receiver-Decoder (with same sub points as above)
3. Message-Channel
  - A. Code: vocabulary and syntax
  - B. Content: assertions, information, inferences, judgment
  - C. Treatment: style, selecting, arranging, choices of code and content
  - D. Channel: speaking and hearing mechanism, sound and light waves
4. Context-Interaction
  - A. Reciprocity: mutual dependence
  - B. Feedback: responses made
  - C. Action-Reaction
  - D. Expectations-empathy
  - E. Self-development-interaction
  - F. Reciprocal role taking<sup>1</sup>

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pp. 10-31.) treat communication as the interaction of four factors: the communicator, the communique, the communicatee, and the effects of the communication in the speaking process.

<sup>1</sup>David K. Berlo, The Process of Communication (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston Co., 1960), p. 72. Also, David K. Berlo, "Research on Acceptability of a National Shelter Policy," a paper prepared for Disaster Research Group, National Academy of Science, National Research Council (October, 1961). (Mimeographed)

[illegible]

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Berlo, along with four of the other theorists cited, refers to the writings of Wilbur Schramm, who early in the modern period discussed the circular response of two fields of experience of source-encoder and decoder-destination.<sup>1</sup>

Eisenson, Auer, and Irwin, describing intentional communication as the use of symbol behavior that triggers other behavior, break the communicative situation into nine steps:

Speaker A (Listener)

1. Stimulating situation.
2. Physiological, neurological, mental, affective reaction.
3. Evaluation of reaction (including reactions to reactions) in terms of habits, attitudes, wishes, and in terms of sensory, neurological emotional make-up.
4. Translation and selection into words for specific situation based on possibilities of verbal and non-verbal responses.
5. Verbal and non-verbal overt behavior (select and organized sound and light waves) modified and re-organized if necessary as he observes reactions to his responses.
6. Physiological, neurological, mental, affective reactions to and of Speaker A, in terms of original situations verbal and non-verbal reactions of A.
7. Evaluation as in Step 3 of A.
8. Selection of responses according to needs, wishes, capacities, experiences of B (including wish or opportunity to continue or terminate process).
9. Overt verbal and non-verbal behavior as in step 5 of A.<sup>2</sup>

The authors note that the "situation" allows for two ongoing processes of decoding and encoding.<sup>3</sup> In the

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<sup>1</sup>Wilbur Schramm, ed., Process and Effects of Communication (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1954), pp. 3-26.

<sup>2</sup>Jon Eisenson, J. Jeffrey Auer, and John V. Irwin, The Psychology of Communication (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1963), P. 138.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 137.



communicative cycle (described above) the best that a participant can do is to

. . . provoke the other into understanding approximately what he wants understood, or why one participant can succeed in sharing only partially the information he wants shared.<sup>1</sup>

This approximation of understanding (partial rather than full sharing of information) results from various differences between the communicating participants: those of experience, perception, linguistic ability, personality sensory defects, neurological defects, and defects of speech. The difference between contemporary and classical communication theory, according to them, is the degree that "traditional concepts of rhetorical theory" are "modified by the contemporary contributions of the behavioral sciences." They point to rhetoricians as James A. Winans, who adopted the psychology of attention, to William Norwood Brigance, who also incorporated more of the findings of psychological insight, and to Karl Wallace, who stressed that speech be based upon all possible knowledge of the behavior of the speaker and listener, including the psychology of motives, emotions, and attitudes.<sup>2</sup> Eisenson, Auer, and Irwin conclude that:

Both the act and art of communication, then, are concerned with the behavior of man communicating with man for reasons practical, cultural, or aesthetic. The chief sources for our understanding of man's communicative behavior are the traditional concepts of rhetorical theory as modified by the contemporary contributions of the behavioral sciences.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.





In analyzing further how these disciplines provide a conceptual framework as well as the evaluative techniques for a comprehensive study of oral communication, they recognize the traditional rhetorical analysis of the four distinct elements of the speaker or source, the speech or message, the listener or receiver, and the occasion or speaking situation in which reciprocal response occurs.

Any oral communication act (whether in face-to-face groups, co-acting groups, or via the mass media) begins with an idea, concept, or proposition in the mind of the communicator. He then encodes the idea into a communication consisting of a set of audible (and sometimes visible) symbols and transmits it, with light and sound waves as his channel. The receiver is an individual listener (sometimes a member of an audience group) who decodes the symbols into terms meaningful to him, and the communication, or at least a facsimile of it, reaches his mind and elicits some kind of response. This response may be covert only. It may also be overt, in clearly distinguishable physical movement or vocal response, apparent to the communicator and acting as a "feedback" from the impact of his initial communication. Thus his further communication may be affected by his own reaction to his hearer's response.<sup>1</sup>

Several implications, according to Eisenson, Auer, and Irwin, can be drawn from the contemporary understanding of the psychology of communication. Since communication aims to change the behavior of the hearers, learning and remembering become important factors. Perceptual learning, for example, involves the perception of new concepts or modification of old ones and results from reinforced stimuli (usually word symbols) that have been presented. This in turn means that the communicator needs to appreciate that listeners have a selectivity as to what they will listen,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 230.

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that categorization and suggestion in stimulating both learning and remembering need to be utilized, and that specific techniques of impressiveness, such as achieving emphasis for assuring retention need to be operative.<sup>1</sup> Audience analysis, in turn, is needed to provide sufficient motivation to learn, to believe, or to do what the speaker has in mind. Persuasion in public address is defined as "the process of securing acceptance of an idea, or an action, by connecting it favorably with the listener's attitudes, beliefs, and desires."<sup>2</sup> In addition to the employment of motive appeals, the speaker needs an understanding of listener behavior (such as, believing what they want to believe, doing as they are told, acting in accordance with their dominant attitudes, making stereotyped responses to stereotyped stimuli, responding to the emotional connotations of words, yielding to the repetition of stimuli, accepting ideas from those who have prestige--both ascribed and earned status, conforming to the beliefs and actions of fellow-listeners, responding in terms of overt action, and wanting to be rational). Moreover, the speaker fully studies the audience's relationship with the subject (its significance for them, their beliefs, prejudices, and attitudes towards it, and his specific purpose and available time in discussing it) and the audience's relationship with himself (their general and specific characteristics and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 293.



attitudes toward the speaker). It is this body of information that should aid, the authors contend, in maintaining attention, interest, and motivation.

A final area of implication concerns audience situation. Three basic inter-action phenomena are considered: 1) polarization or the crystallization of the group relationships into an audience, which is to a large extent inherent in the physical setting; 2) social facilitation, which strengthens the relationships of audience members with each other, such as the reinforcement effect of imitation and suggestion; and 3) circular response, which increases the relationships of audience members with the speaker due to the effects of the "primary information" and the consequent "secondary information," as well as the "interactional mechanisms of identification and projection."<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

Contemporary communication constructs, as the speech texts cited reveal, are essentially those of the classicists: speaker, speech, audience, and occasion. They have, however, been given contemporary names and insights. Rhetoric received its fresh insights from the behavioral science and information theory. Moreover, communication is viewed as a dynamic process wherein a reciprocal and inter-acting relationship of speaker, speech, and audience occur rather than as transfer of meaning from one mind to another. This dynamic process of "coding, decoding, and recoding ideas and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 275.



emotions" takes place in the speaking situation or speaking context. The construct of "occasion" in contemporary communication theory, therefore, is understood in a dynamic, immediate sense as well as in the traditional, formal way as speaking environment. It is the "climate situation," Ross indicated, that allows for information to correct and refine the signal. Thus, with the exception of "channel," which can be incorporated with the message construct, the contemporary communication constructs in contemporary rhetoric and public address consist of the continuing (and enlarging) four: speaker or source, speech or message, audience or receiver, and occasion or speaking context or situation.

It is from the backdrop of this understanding of communication constructs, the understandings of the historical relationships between the two disciplines of homiletics and rhetoric, and the awarenesses of homiletical theory in American protestant preaching from Colonial times to 1940, that communication constructs in contemporary American protestant preaching can be approached and compared.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The homiletician, and particularly the theologian, would ask, Are these constructs complete enough for preaching? That an important element is omitted, namely the activity of the Spirit of God, is granted. That preaching is, as is emphasized by theologians, "sacramental" in God's contemporaneous acting and speaking, and therefore, the preaching event involving a double relationship--with man and with God, is also assumed in this study. Research and teaching, however, deal with those attributes which God *uses* in giving this "revelation" through one person to another. Therefore, the unique and distinctive action of the "revelatory God" is regarded as an aspect beyond the scope of this study. An incidental footnote is the claim of certain theologians that "revelation from God" also comes in public address. Measurement of the degree that



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God is active in the various forms and substances of address is also an aspect beyond the scope of this study. Homileticians, rhetoricians, and homiletician-rhetoricians are appreciative and sensitive to God's activity in assisting and speaking through the source or preacher as the message or sermon is given to the congregation in a given preaching situation. These respective attitudes and convictions can be, however, and are in this study, assumed in the discussion of the respective constructs in Chapters Two through Five.

The elements of Christian communication can be, of course, itemized in greater detail. Harry C. Spencer, General Secretary of TRAFCO (Television, Radio, and Film Commission) of the Methodist Church, for example, discovers ten "events" which occur in communication between human beings: 1) the person who is the communicator, 2) the purpose of the communication, 3) the message, 4) someone to receive the message, 5) some common knowledge or experience between the communicator and the listener, 6) symbols, 7) the symbols transmitted by some physical means, such as sound waves or electronic impulses later translated into symbols that can be seen or heard or felt, 8) the interpretation of the message, 9) feedback, and 10) revision in light of the information obtained by feedback (taken from an address given June 9, 1966, at the Communications Consultation for Professors in Methodist Theological Seminaries, New York City). Spencer's analysis, does not conflict, however, with the four basic, standard, and continuing foci in American rhetoric and homiletics as discussed in this chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PREACHER

There is among us a sense of embarrassment at being pastors. More and more, we become ashamed of our legitimate pastoral role and less and less challenged by it.<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

In an age when personality is manipulated and diminished by the complexities of life, the preacher appears to many homiletical critics to lack confidence in the validity of his own crucial spiritual experiences and in his ability to share them with others. The preacher appears often a confused man: afraid of being lost, uncertain in his personal relationships, fearful of living deeply before God and man. The preacher no longer wears the robes of authority with comfort. He fails to communicate "the force and exemplification of the interpreter's own life."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Peggy Way, "What's Wrong with the Church: The Clergy," Renewal Magazine, III/7, October 1963, p. 8. Mrs. Way is an ordained minister; at the time of writing she was program consultant to the Chicago City Missionary Society.

<sup>2</sup>Bryant M. Kirkland, "Expository Preaching Revitalized," Pulpit Digest, No. 323, July-August 1965, p. 14. Kirkland is a lecturer in homiletics at Princeton Theological Seminary and Minister of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City.

[illegible]

### A Case Study: The Urgency of Preaching

Kyle Haselden has described the character of the modern preacher: unsure of the power of the spoken word, unsure of the urgency and relevance of the gospel, unsure of himself.<sup>1</sup> This crisis of confidence of the modern preacher is the essential view of contemporary homiletics. Accordingly, the restoration of forceful and vital preaching is seen as depending upon the preacher's recovery of confidence in the efficacy of the spoken word, in the urgency and power of the message, and in the strength and nature of his own personality. It is in these areas that contemporary homiletics concentrates in dealing with the preacher-construct; because Haselden focuses this concern, it is instructive of the whole range of current thought to consider his views carefully.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kyle Haselden, The Urgency of Preaching (New York: Harper and Row, 1963). The substance of this book was originally delivered at the John M. English Lectures on preaching at Andover Newton Theological Seminary in Andover Newton, Massachusetts, in the fall of 1962. Haselden is the epitome of the confident preacher: he has held four pastorates, written two books, edits two church magazines (The Christian Century and The Pulpit, a "journal of contemporary preaching" published since 1929), and has served as a seminary instructor in homiletics at Garrett Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois, and at the Divinity School, University of Chicago, Illinois. His primary homiletical emphasis is on the preacher.

<sup>2</sup>As indicated in the Introduction, the case study method is employed in an individual examination of each communication construct as it appears in contemporary homiletics. Haselden was chosen because his major emphasis is on this construct. As indicated in the above footnote he qualifies as a representative theorist of the contemporary period (1940-1965) under consideration. The analysis of his theories should help provide a definition of contemporary homiletics.

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### The Preacher and the Spoken Word

For Haselden, the recovery of the will to preach depends in good measure upon the preacher's confidence in the effect of the spoken word. The debasement of this emphasis among the clergy derives from two causes: an unnatural division in the view of preaching itself, and an inadequate treatment of homiletics in seminary training.

Preaching, he asserts, is not a divided process, dependent upon what God does, on the one hand, and upon what the preacher does, on the other. It is, instead, a unified process, "what God does when he selects, ordains, empowers and employs the preaching powers of his servant."<sup>1</sup> To consider preaching otherwise, is to turn attention away from the preacher's principal instrument.

Indeed, there is in this country a school of homiletics which seems dedicated to stamping out any preaching except that which throws the whole burden on the Holy Spirit. It is a kind of antinomianism which holds that the poorer one preaches the greater the opening for the Holy Spirit. Lay on the handicaps and give God the glory!<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, the neglect of homiletics in the seminary handicaps the preacher in his approach to the spoken word. Homiletics, Haselden writes,

is hidden away in most seminaries as though it were the black sheep of the theological family. Pity keeps us from turning it out into the cold, but we refer to it with shame. And homiletics in turn is embarrassed by

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

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any reference to the cultivation of the human voice and the perfection of its uses.<sup>1</sup>

The lack of emphasis on the spoken word among preachers is particularly evident by secular communicators who regard it as the most effective tool of communication. In matters of extreme national importance, the President appears on network television to speak directly to the people; ministers have been forced to ask actors, such as Charles Laughton, for instruction in reading the Bible in public.

What a judgment it is when a guide in the Argonne Laboratories speaks with a precision, clarity, and charmingly modulated voice which puts to shame the touring ministers under his care; when television announcers commentators show more respect for the artful possibilities of the human voice than do ministers who use the same oral capacities for a spiritual rather than a secular profession. We would not think of using an untrained mind to explain the scriptures, to interpret church history, relate an eternal gospel to man's current need and condition. For that we are convinced that we need at least four years of college and three or four of seminary training under the ablest teachers we can secure. And we are right. But we assume that whatever kind of voice we have and whatever skills in expression are native to us are good enough to transmit such hard-earned knowledge and precious insight to our people.<sup>2</sup>

With Haselden, the spoken word takes precedence over the written word and all other forms of communication as the "best weapon, the superlative tool."<sup>3</sup> Paul was constrained to preach; Jesus came preaching. For both, preaching had priority over writing. It is the spoken word that should

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 28.



concern the minister since it is the form into which "an urgent message most naturally flows."

In the beginning the voice was the organ of our visceral reactions: fear, alarm, hatred, hunger. It became consequently the organ of the soul's reactions: love, jealousy, hope, despair, courage, faith, aspiration. It is not surprising that the voice opens chambers of our being which the written word, however precise and powerful, cannot even touch.<sup>1</sup>

### The Preacher and His Message

The preacher's approach to his message is of primary importance for Haselden. Human experience precedes and creates language; the preacher's attitudes and responses to his subject matter shape his ability to see the message as a vital experience, urgent, and relevant in its telling. Without this immersion in the reality of his message, and without the conviction that his message bears compulsively upon the reality of his listeners' lives, the preacher is left with a flat and lifeless rhetorical exercise. Only when the preacher adopts an approach to his message which sees it as both urgent and relevant, and when he understands the reality behind it, will he be effectively fulfilling his legitimate role.

Take that swift phrase which summarizes the whole gospel in five words: Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour. Do we believe it? How can we preach that Lord to our times with an earnestness which persuades other men unless we ourselves are confident that he will surely subject all things everywhere to his lordship? How can we preach that Saviour unless we ourselves have the assurance which prepares us to surrender this world and this life in the faith that he has purchased for us another realm and another life? If we believe in a Lord from whose kingdom there is no honorable escape and from whose presence men can go out only into darkness, if we

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

believe in a Saviour who is powerful to save us from any disgrace with a forgiving love which endures beyond our last disobedience--if we are convinced of, and committed to, such a Lord and Saviour, our preaching will not lack courage, pertinence, or urgency. As Bernard of Clairvaux so conclusively put it, "No words will avail to celestial desire, which proceed from a cold heart. Nothing which does not burn itself can kindle flame in anything else."<sup>1</sup>

Good preaching, from pre-Christian times to the present day, has had an internal quality not dependent upon literary styles or sermonio types. This indispensable, sometimes deeply hidden, quality is the sense of the urgency of the gospel. This "sense" finds its expression and illustration in secular literature through the factors of peril, promise, and life's active agents; it must be recognized and defined by the preacher because the same fundamental theme is found in the Bible and constitutes the essence of a Biblical sermon.

This is the primary and ultimate test of whether or not a sermon is biblical, is Christian. Is man's plight or some phase of it declared? Is God's Promise or some part of it offered? Are Peril and Promise viewed in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ?<sup>2</sup>

The Bible is full of infinite variations of its central theme. It never tires of telling the story of the lost, the found, the finder; the estranged, the reconciled, and the redeemer; the doomed, the saved, and the saviour; the exiled, the restored, and the Messiah. The figure changes and we see Egypt, Canaan, and the exodus; Babylon, Jerusalem, and the return; a pigsty in a far country, a young man's memory, and a father's home; hell, heaven, and a cross. Indeed, does not the Bible itself, taken in the whole, rest upon this same

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

plot in an eternal lostness, offered an eternal home through Jesus Christ . . . we have now arrived at the Christian view of the fundamental theme of human existence: the Peril of God's wrath, the Promise of God's love, and the Option offered to all men in God's Son.<sup>1</sup>

The peril, the promise, and the active agent; these are the ingredients of the human drama which must provide the minister with a sense of urgency in preaching. More particularly, it means that good preaching raises some note of warning regarding the peril.

It sounds the alarm; it cries "Danger, look out, beware;" it puts one on guard. If the sermon fails to do so, it is not faithful to the human situation; for the vulnerable life of man is immersed in a sea of troubles. If the sermon fails to do so, it is not faithful to the listener: he is in great and grave danger; his flesh and his spirit are in jeopardy; he is confronted not merely by a minor inconvenience but by a major tragedy; and someone must tell him so or he perishes.<sup>2</sup>

In warning, the preacher points out the consequences of alienation from God and disobedience. But the preacher cannot stop there; he should be compelled to present the promise as well: cleansing and purging for guilt; meaning in place of bewilderment; purpose for scattered, random, and conflicting activity; healing for wounds; and reconciliation to God and brother.

What we do have is a gospel which declares the will of God for men in this life and which sets before them in all the affairs of this life the curse and the blessing.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 40-41.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 58.



Between the peril and the promise, the preacher must find in the reality of Christ a confidence in the active agent, the determinative Alterant: the key, poised between ruin and blessing, one man, God's Son, Jesus Christ. "The Gospel we were appointed to preach is a blunt, apologetic claim that Jesus Christ is the Light of the world--timeless, universal, final, sufficient."<sup>1</sup> The minister must not only preach peril, promise, and Christ, he must also participate in them.

This sense of urgency is insufficient if the preacher has no confidence in the relevancy of his message to the time in which it is preached. The gospel, Haselden writes, is "inherently applicable to man in any of his situations"; it speaks to the condition of man in any age. But the preacher, with an appropriate technique (craftsmanship) and understanding of his pastoral and prophetic roles, can add a new immediacy to the preached word.<sup>2</sup> The first attitude held by the minister regarding the message which will achieve relevancy is craftsmanship. While this consideration has implications for the message construct, Haselden sees its primary influence on the preacher's attitude toward the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>2</sup>Haselden's view that the preacher can heighten the relevancy of the message is not shared by Dietrich Ritschl and other European homileticians. Ritschl argues essentially that the proclaimed word needs only be proclaimed, because in and of itself it has the power to relate itself to man's needs; that exploration of man's heart and an analysis of current situations are unnecessary; and that attempts to shape the gospel to the contours of the age are absurd. (p. 72)

message. It is a requisite that the preacher views himself as an artist since

to admit that the gospel is God's Word to all men in all ages and that it is valid whatever we do to it is not to solve the problem of the relevancy of the ministry, of preaching, or of the church. The actuality and the vitality of the gospel do not prevent the ministry from being superficial, the sermon from being impertinent, or the church from being peripheral. It is folly in our preaching to assume that substance automatically and inevitably finds its most efficient structure. It is irresponsible to assume that content inerrantly evolves into proper form and technique. It is a dereliction on our part to assume that the message for which we have been made the witnesses will in spite of us become flesh and dwell among men.<sup>1</sup>

If the sermon is to be a successful communication of a valuable religious experience through the spoken word, and not a soliloquy overheard by a congregation, the preacher must be a master of that language which promotes "the flow, the impact, the penetration and the reception of ideas."<sup>2</sup> The preacher must find the sermon's own organic form or else it remains an "invisible, inaudible, secret abstraction"; the sermonic idea dies in transmission if the language "misleads, deceives, confuses, or proves inadequate."<sup>3</sup> Craftsmanship and technique must be a major concern of the preacher. Haselden suggests

that no preacher who is anxious to convey God's message to the people with precision, energy, and persuasion can afford to spurn or to treat indifferently the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 73

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

instruments which God has made available. Chief among those instruments is that rich, precise, varied, and beautiful language that we are heir to.<sup>1</sup>

Shoddy work in the pulpit (even though truth is spoken in love) desecrates the instruments the minister has: his language and his voice. Moreover, the minister makes efforts to avoid saying ideas or phrases merely because they play up to people's whims and prejudices. Conversely, he avoids the temptations to placard his knowledge of scientific, sociological, and psychological jargon. In being a craftsman, the minister has adopted an appropriate attitude of using "every available means of communication" to offer man God's promise.

In addition to developing the tools of language, the Preacher must properly conceive of himself in the pastoral and prophetic roles if he is to increase and perfect the relevancy of his message. Haselden rejects the popular conception of the pastoral role as

a bland composite which shows the pastor as the congregation's congenial, ever helpful, ever ready to help boy scout; as the darling of the old ladies and as sufficiently reserved with the young ones; as the father image for young people and a companion to lonely men; as the affable glad-hander at teas and civic club luncheons.<sup>2</sup>

Instead, the pastor is one who feeds, nourishes men with Christ, and endeavors to keep men in His fold. He, too, lays down his life for the sheep by entering in spirit into

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 88-89.

the lives of other men. Through empathy, the pastor "projects his own consciousness into other human beings and is willing to absorb into his own being whatever he finds there--agony or joy, wretchedness or glory."<sup>1</sup> Particularly, the preacher does not preach at his people.

By at they mean . . . the preaching of a man who is detached from them by an unpastoral busyness with other things . . . By at they mean preaching which is intellectually immaculate but which is devoid of all compassionate warmth, . . . By at they mean the preaching of a man who, living among them, remains a stranger to the passions, the trials, and the twisted hopes as well as to the little joys and the big victories which make up their lives. By at they mean a man whose sympathetic nerves, over which the people's pains and pleasures should creep, are benumbed. By at they mean the preaching of a man who is not a pastor.<sup>2</sup>

The third attitude that makes for relevant preaching is that the preacher must think of himself as a prophet speaking in the message. The message must concern itself with more than "prudential moralities on such themes as thoughtfulness, patience, contentment; practical instructions to laymen."<sup>3</sup> The prophetic sermon addresses man, as he is, and where he is, with something more than man's word to man. Without genuineness, the prophetic voice is lost, and the preacher's relationship to his message is shattered. Haselden raises this test of judgment to determine the preacher's success in approaching the message:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 99.





Does the scalpel of our preaching cut through the subcutaneous layers of our people's consciences or does it lie limp and light on the surface? Does it grasp the realness and the earnestness and the innerness of human existence and does it to this existence bring a warning and a hope and a way which are something more than man's cheery encouragement to man? Is God in it, and the devil, and the Christ? Is the Peril in it, and the Promise, and the Cross?<sup>1</sup>

### The Preacher and Himself

The final aspect of the ministerial crisis of confidence lies in the preacher's loss of a sense of profession and identity. For Haselden, the minister's attitudes toward himself form as vital a part of the preaching process as his attitudes toward the message and the spoken word. Without a sense of "professional particularity," the minister's role becomes fragmented, and he becomes, essentially, a victim of amnesia. Haselden sees this fragmentation spreading in at least four directions today. It is reflected in the ministerial accent on amiability, trying to be all things to all men and seeking everyone's approval. It is reflected in the resort to a sentimental paternalism, when ministers see themselves as "big brothers" rather than as servants of Christ. It is seen in a ministerial addiction to activity, being heavy on action and light on motivation (feeling that one is sent to support every good cause, to sign excellent resolutions, and to champion justice, rather than sent to speak for Christ who is sovereign over man's whole psychic and social realm). Finally, this fragmentation is complete

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

when the minister surrenders to "wrong authority" and permits himself to be harassed and intimidated by some laymen, when he echoes the mind and the mood of the people rather than the judgments of God. Fragmentation of the ministerial role, Haselden believes, is a result (rather than a cause) of the minister's own vocational instability, a symptom of vocational ambivalence. Substitution of the "pastoral-preaching-priestly duty" by other priorities is, he feels, an unintentional confession of vocational uncertainty. For some, however, proficiency in the secondary tasks reveals a submerged sense of guilt about their calling.

Coupled with the loss of a sense of profession is the loss of a sense of identity. Since in the Christian ministry personage and person, profession and self, "merge and become indistinguishable and inseparable," since the Christian minister does not have a profession or pursue a profession, but is a profession, unfaithfulness to the "calling" is suicidal.

His life and his profession are Siamese twins with one blood flowing through two bodies which are so closely related that he cannot do violence to the one without doing harm to the other.<sup>1</sup>

Recovery of the conviction "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel" and relating of the ministry "to Christ as the source, to the gospel as message, and to the church as the sphere" are necessary.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

All three impel the minister to proclaim God's good news to men: Christ by direct command, the gospel by its inherent urgency, and the church by its need.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the work of the ministry makes it more correct to state the minister is preacher rather than as preacher. The minister is preacher under the authority of Christ, the Gospel, and the church. Thus, Haselden's diagnosis of the minister's improper self-concept has as its root

that the ultimacy and the totality of Christ's claim upon him is accepted with reservations; his belief in the uniqueness, universality, and finality of the gospel is shaky; and his confidence that God has made him peculiarly and indispensably the herald of the Promise is weak.<sup>2</sup>

Noting that Paul's confidence in Christ was in large part a result of the fact that he preached Christ in obedience to the will of Christ, that he became what he was by doing what Christ had enjoined him to do, Haselden urges preachers to be totally involved, learning truth by obedience to the will of Christ, and doing his will--which is preaching the word.

#### A Case Study: A Sermon on Race Relations

This case study of a sermon by Haselden provides a more explicit presentation of his homiletical concerns as well as concrete evidence of the manner in which his homiletical emphases are expressed in practice.<sup>3</sup> A number of

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>3</sup>This sermon on race relations was delivered at the Lombard Mennonite Church on February 8, 1964. At that time, Lombard, a suburb west of Chicago, had no Negro residents. The sermon appears in full in Appendix 1.

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criteria were used in studying Haselden's sermon. Foremost, his own judgments of the preacher-construct were closely applied to provide additional clarification and illustration of his concepts. Additionally, this study employed rhetorical outlines, rating sheets derived from secular and seminary texts,<sup>1</sup> evidences of audience response, and a personal interview with Haselden.

Haselden, in considering effective use of the voice and confidence in the oral medium, emphasized the development of precision and clarity of speech, of a well-modulated voice, and of a skillful approach to oral interpretation of the scriptures. By applying these criteria and the more technical criteria included in the Diehl and Thurman texts,<sup>2</sup> it was observed that Haselden displayed considerable sophistication in the use of the spoken word as a preaching instrument. Stress on the thought words was achieved by volume increase far more frequently than by vowel duration or by inflection. The double inflection as a means of stress was seldom used. A pattern of loudness-stress on final words in the phrase was detected. The over-all rate at times was slow, although phrasing and pausing were adequate. Under-stress in volume was effectively used several times for

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<sup>1</sup>Dwight E. Stevenson and Charles F. Diehl, Reaching People From the Pulpit--A Guide to Effective Sermon Delivery (New York: Harper & Bros., 1958), p. 133; Theodore D. Hanley and Wayne L. Thurman, Developing Vocal Skills (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1962), p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>Specifically vocal pitch, rate, volume, quality, articulation, and pronunciation.

emphasis. A rapid rate was frequently used to emphasize content, setting off the groups of people not wanted in the "white" church. Articulation and pronunciation were flawless, if one allows Haselden the right to his native Southern accent. Characteristically, the (r) sounds were slighted in such words as "tires," scriptures," and omitted in "Lord." The voice quality was pleasant, the vowel tones free of nasality, harshness, stridency, and thinness. When this evaluator used a -3 to +3 scale, Haselden's analytic speech profile averaged +2.8. The above data would indicate that Haselden had confidence in the oral medium.

Haselden's confidence in the urgency and relevancy of the message was indicated by the inclusion of peril, promise, and alterant, his three point trilogy of criteria that determine urgency of preaching. The sermon as summarized in the substance outline shows:

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Peril=      | I. The oldest of American problems, understanding prejudice, is now expressing itself in demanding a biblical meaning of Negroes knocking on white church doors.                       |
| Promise=    | II. There is a scriptural and Christian way of looking at the racial problem: one observes that God is always breaking old molds, fashioning new patterns, and stirring His people up. |
| Alteration= | III. The gentile is the saviour of the church, giving it constant reminder that Christian "glue" is in the meaning of the "sacraments and not superficialities or sentimentalism."     |

Among the attitudes which promote relevancy, according to Haselden's thesis, is that of craftsmanship. Planned

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expression was illustrated in his sermon through such epigrammatic statements as "There's always the danger that necessary rest will become wasteful relaxation," "an explanation for his exploitation," and "God brings newness out of nothingness." The balancing of semi-formal style with the short and direct sentences, and the dramatic first person speaking attributed to God, further illustrated his craftsmanship. Word choice was particularly thoughtful: "Strange things God is doing," "welds," "stirs." Sentence structure was both clear and at times eloquent.

Haselden indicates a pastoral concern, his second approach for achieving relevancy, by posing racial problems in the form of questions asked by a white middle-class suburban protestant audience:

We protestants have been asking ourselves what can be done to save white Anglo-Saxon American protestantism . . . And what can save it? What can free it from its middle class prison? What can save it from its suburban captivity? Its suburban slavery?

Moreover, a pastoral identification with the audience was demonstrated in the basic question of the sermon: "We protestants have been asking ourselves (italics mine) what can be done . . ." He illustrated further his understanding of the audience's concern by citing his own residential situation: "I live in a suburb so I am not casting stones at you anymore than I am casting them at myself."

The third requirement for relevancy in the message is that of adopting a prophetic role. Are there evidences of "forth-telling" of Biblical truth for and to contemporary concerns? The transitional statements below suggest that

Haselden's sermon did indeed speak biblical truth to some need of the listener:

I want to talk to you about these Negroes who in various parts of the country are now knocking on the doors of white churches. And I want to ask what this means . . .

. . . I begin, therefore, with scripture and I begin in the Old Testament with a scripture from Isaiah.

. . . Now I think this is true, I think that God is always doing something new with his people. And I believe he always does it in a way that we don't expect him to.

. . . He's doing something, what is it?

Haselden asserts that it is essential for the preacher to have confidence in himself. In the introduction, his own confidence finds illustration in his statement that it is a joy to be with the congregation; he said he regarded it a privilege to speak to them. In the sermon body, personal pronouns were abundantly used, numbering approximately fifty (primarily the word "we") in the last two paragraphs and closing prayer. Usage of the second person "you" and "your" approximately fifty times showed his own self acceptance as well as his personal assumption of being an authority on his subject: "You will realize of course that I know how vast and intricate this problem is . . . I want you to consider first of all . . ." The frequent use of the first person plural "we" demonstrated goodwill for and oneness with his audience. His frank analysis of the issue of "negroes knocking on doors of white churches," along with the utilization of scripture and specific incidents of history, commanded the respect of the listener and appeared

to augment a sense of confidence in a speaker who was prepared and knowledgeable. The sermon content and delivery were reinforced with erect posture, confident walk, excellent voice, eye contact, and physical expression--all of which further demonstrated confidence in himself. Audience awareness of his confidence is evident in such typical remarks heard following the sermon as "He sure knows his stuff" and "Best sermon I've heard." One professional person in the social sciences, however, reacted in this manner: "Didn't like him, too conceited and authoritative."

The following chart tabulates the reactions of forty five persons who stayed for a discussion hour following the sermon. These items relate both to the preacher's confidence in his message and his confidence in himself. It will be noted that the audience reaction confirms the above analysis.

	Strong- ly Agree	Agree	No Opin- ion	Dis- agree	Strong- ly Disagree
The preacher was not sincere	0	0	2	16	23
The preacher showed a lack of confidence.	1	0	0	17	27
The preacher appeared imitated to the congregation.	0	0	0	18	27
The words used were unclear.	2	1	0	27	15
The theme was of vital concern.	27	17	0	1	0
The scripture used shed light on the subject or problem discussed.	6	26	8	4	1

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Other Contemporary Representative Theorists  
on the Preacher Construct

To better trace the broad concerns of other modern theorists, a number of homiletics texts and other theoretical materials have been analyzed.

As explained in the Introduction, the second basic methodology employed in Chapters II through V is to review and collate contemporary homiletical literature and research (other than, and in comparison with, the theories in the case study). Homiletics texts were chosen primarily on the basis of the frequency with which they are used in the teaching of preaching in the American Association of Theological Schools. Texts by contemporary theorists currently teaching in the area of homiletics or in the "Practical (or Functional) Department" of theological schools were also included. Additionally, interpretative material and analysis are based in part upon public lectures by homiletical theorists and upon personal interviews with several of the theorists.

Davis et al

The theorists of the nine most frequently used homiletic texts, as per the Daniel Weiss study in 1962, are considered here for their contribution on the views of the preacher.<sup>1</sup> H. Grady Davis does not discuss the preacher

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<sup>1</sup>As shall be noted, these texts skimmed on the construct of the preacher, especially confidence in the vocal skills. Out of nine textbooks, only ten chapters (or parts of them) out of 128 chapters considered delivery; five of the nine books had no discussion at all. Some of the authors treated delivery in a perfunctory manner: discussions

[illegible]

although he cites books on the preacher's communication in his bibliography.<sup>1</sup> John A. Broadus discusses "the place and power of preaching"; his writings on delivery concern the three methods of "reading, recitation, and extemporaneous" and "the distinct powers of the voice" together with "suggestions for general improvement."<sup>2</sup> Ilion T. Jones covers methods of delivery (discussions on how various great past preachers felt about the four types of speaking--impromptu, extemporaneous, memorization and reading) and the speech mechanism (on sound production, word production, and "some miscellaneous do's and don't's").<sup>3</sup> The importance of preaching and the preacher's part in preaching are seen on the bases of these concepts: preaching as redemptive deed, preaching as engagement in God's work, and

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on how various great past preachers felt about the four types of speaking (impromptu, extemporaneous, memorization, and reading) or advice to not end the sermon in a storm. These nine books affirm, however, that preaching is important, a concept contributing to the preacher's confidence.

<sup>1</sup>H. Grady Davis (professor at Chicago Lutheran School of Theology), Design for Preaching (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958). Although Davis' treatment of the valid message and "oral language" contribute indirectly to a preacher's increased confidence both in message and in craftsmanship (two of Haselden's concerns), his writings view these elements from the perspective of the sermon and not of the preacher. Davis' theoretical considerations will be, therefore, described in Chapter III, as will be the case with each of these nine theorists.

<sup>2</sup>John A. Broadus (late professor of homiletics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky), On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944). Revised by Jesse B. Weatherspoon.

<sup>3</sup>Ilion T. Jones (professor of homiletics at San Francisco Theological Seminary), Principles and Practice of Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Cokesbury, 1956).

the preacher's call and commitment. Andrew Blackwood reflects on the importance of preaching as an act of worship and "delivery from the pulpit."<sup>1</sup> W.E. Sangster's "plea for preaching" is a strong expression of preaching as God's chief way of announcing his word and will to the world.<sup>2</sup>

Halford E. Luccock writes that the preacher's confidence resides in his awareness that he is a channel of God.<sup>3</sup> This emphasis clarifies rather than nullifies Haselden's declaration on the importance of the spoken word. Luccock declares that

In real preaching, the preacher is a channel, not a source . . . the primary fact about preaching is that which is behind the preacher--the reality of a God who speaks.<sup>4</sup>

He remarks that if preaching does not begin with this assumption of preacher as channel then it may as well not begin. Craftsmanship is secondary, although always a "minister's reasonable service, a measure of his consecration."<sup>5</sup> But the recurring miracle of preaching is always when revelation is communicated through the channel of the preacher's personality. Therefore, the preacher's desire is to be a

<sup>1</sup>Andrew W. Blackwood (professor homiletics at Princeton Theological Seminary), The Preparation of Sermons (Nashville: Abingdon Cokesbury, 1948).

<sup>2</sup>W.E. Sangster, The Craft of Sermon Construction (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961).

<sup>3</sup>Halford E. Luccock (professor of homiletics at Yale Divinity School), In the Minister's Workshop (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1944).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 12.



personality so tempered that it is an unobstructed channel of communication. Luccock asserts, as Haselden does, that the minister must not only do but be since the gospel is that of an incarnation. In this context, the preacher is to see himself and his situation as an opportunity to bring "a saving word to a perishing world, an activity requiring the most effective technique possible as a precision tool for the message."<sup>1</sup> Ideal preaching will fuse the competencies in skill with a personal intensity resulting from being possessed by a Person and a Gospel.

Other theorists in the "frequency-usage" list share with Luccock the stress that the preacher confidently assume his role as a channel of God. James S. Stewart speaks to the need of a preacher's confidence in his message by insisting that the preaching task is to confront the disillusionment of the day with the Cross of Christ; in his communication skills by stressing "the freedom of delivery in the pulpit" due to carefulness of construction in the study; and in his own selfhood by indicating that the preacher "must be real."<sup>2</sup> Donald G. Miller also recognizes the importance of the preacher in his message-oriented book in his definition of preaching which states that preaching is an act wherein living truth is made a living reality to the preacher; he

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>James S. Stewart, Heralds of God (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946).

acknowledges further that the end of preaching is the sermon situation being transformed from a human encounter between preacher (*italics added*) and congregation into a divine encounter between God, people, and preacher.<sup>1</sup> Peter T. Forsyth attributes an importance to the preacher simultaneously while discussing the message; he regards the message being determined by how the preacher views his charter, authority, world, and congregation.<sup>2</sup>

### Paul Scherer

A survey of the homiletical literature reveals that Haselden's emphasis on preacher confidence is underscored by many homileticians. Paul Scherer in For We Have This Treasure sees today's preacher like St. Paul, needing to sense divine commission as a priest of Christ in the service of God's gospel.<sup>3</sup> The preacher is to believe that he does possess an urgent message, viewing himself as a strong swimmer standing on the brink with a shout of a drowning man in his ears. According to Scherer, God uniquely works through a preacher who senses urgency in that God makes his life "a constant pageant." Scherer insists that if anyone else (the

<sup>1</sup>Donald G. Miller, The Way to Biblical Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Peter T. Forsyth, Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1944).

<sup>3</sup>Paul Scherer (professor of homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, New York, and later at Princeton Theological Seminary), For We Have This Treasure (New York: Harper Chapel Books, Harper and Row, 1965).

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listener) is to be set on fire, the preacher will have to burn a little himself.<sup>1</sup>

### Ralph Sockman

Ralph Sockman writes that the preacher needs to possess courage.<sup>2</sup> Calling it the sine qua non of God's spokesman, Sockman reiterates Haselden's concern for confidence. It is courage, Sockman says, that gives a seer-like quality to the preacher's outlook and that results in his becoming prophetic. The minister is at once both a follower and a forerunner of the Lord. Sockman itemizes several queries to determine the presence of a "forerunner":

Do those who watch us get a more vivid sense of divine guidance? Do we disturb such persons with the joy of elevated thoughts? Do we soften hearts that are hard? Do we make people forget themselves? Do we restore to persons that self-respect which is the necessary preface to personal salvation and social redemption? Do we carry a contagious courage which makes others more willing to trust the power that makes for righteousness?

Keeping the focus on the preacher, he further emphasizes the primacy of personality behind the words: "not what is said, but who says it--that is the consideration which gives weight to what we hear."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 205

<sup>2</sup>Ralph Sockman (professor of homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, New York), The Highway of God (New York: The Macmillan Press, 1942).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

Lee Moorehead

Lee Moorehead in Freedom of the Pulpit comes close to Haselden in his discussion of four essential elements which stand behind the minister's freedom in the pulpit: intellectual toil, courage, love for his people, and willingness to serve.<sup>1</sup> He stresses that confidence born of courage serves as a catalyst--energizing and nerving the preacher in his performance. Courage enables the preacher to be his own true self while following consistently his own insights. Moreover, it is courage that enables him to preach specifically rather than in generalities, and it enables him to pay the necessary price of loyalty when serving as a prophet.

Gene Bartlett

Gene Bartlett in his 1961 Lyman Beecher Lectures also emphasizes the factor of confidence.<sup>2</sup> He sees the role of pastor-preacher as "the scholarship of involvement," an achievement producing something similar to what Haselden referred to as the urgent and relevant message. Bartlett insists that to engage in his creative pastoral teaching and preaching the minister must prepare with a degree of concentration which provides authority--an emphasis similar to what Haselden referred to as "craftsmanship." In an address

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<sup>1</sup>Lee Moorehead (professor of preaching at St. Paul's School of Theology Methodist, Kansas City), Freedom of the Pulpit (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1961).

<sup>2</sup>Gene E. Bartlett (President, Colgate Rochester Divinity School), The Audacity of Preaching (New York: Harper and Bros., 1962).

to a minister's conference at Bethany Theological Seminary, Chicago, in 1955, Bartlett also emphasized the preaching-source. He outlined five conditions for preachers to meet: personal integrity, recognition of one's relatedness to a community of believers, a Biblical view of life, engagement with real issues of life, and the quality of love.<sup>1</sup>

### Kennedy, Coffin, and Sleeth

Three other homileticians concur that preaching has a sacramental nature in that the preacher himself becomes the message. Gerald Kennedy writes

Not only is it a means of spreading information about the Christian faith, but it is in some sense a revelation of that faith in itself . . . The very act of preaching is a part of the Christian revelation. Though other religions and other movements might dispense with speakers and use some other method of spreading themselves, Christianity could not.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Henry Sloane Coffin in *The George Craig Stewart Lectures on Preaching at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary* writes that a sermon, like the Lord's Supper, is a "media through which God in Christ offers Himself in personal fellowship."<sup>3</sup> Ronald Sleeth in Proclaiming the Word notes that the pulpit is the best setting for "mediating God's Word."

<sup>1</sup>Taken from a taped recording at Bethany Theological Seminary.

<sup>2</sup>Gerald Kennedy (listed by the Daniel Weiss study as one of the men who has significantly influenced American homiletics), His Word Through Preaching (New York: Harper and Row, 1947), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Henry Sloane Coffin (President-emeritus of Union Theological Seminary, New York), Communion Through Preaching (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. vii.



- . . . the preaching office must be seen through the preacher. Brooks's words, "truth through personality," have relevance here. Preaching is not simply the transference of theological ideas from one mind to another. This gospel message is being revealed through a person, whose own response to it will be a tremendous factor in its transmission. The Word was made flesh then and now.<sup>1</sup>

### Earl Furgeson

Pastoral psychology has altered, if not refined, the content of the construct of preacher. In particular, it has given an amplification to Haselden's third point--confidence in oneself. Earl Furgeson, who is both Professor of Preaching and Pastoral Theology at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington D.C., affirms that it is not the sermon that people hear but the man behind it, and that the making of a sermon is really the making of a man.<sup>2</sup> His own analysis of listening to sermons leads him to believe that "persuasion in preaching depends, not so much upon what a preacher knows as upon who he is. His success as a servant of the Word is a function of the quality of his life."<sup>3</sup> In the light of depth psychology he further discusses how preachers relate to people in terms of the predominant psychological realities of their own personal situations.

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<sup>1</sup>Ronald E. Sleeth (professor of homiletics at Vanderbilt University Divinity School at the time of writing), Proclaiming the Word (New York: Abingdon, 1964), p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>Earl Furgeson, "Editorial: Psychology and Preaching," Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 14, No. 137, October, 1963, pp. 5-7.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 6.



These may be mature, life-giving, and redemptive, or they may be morbid and restrictive. It would not be impossible to cite sermons which conform to the patterns of relationship known to clinicians as the submissive-dependent (masochistic) or the aggressive-directive (hostile) or the frigid-formal (obsessive-compulsive) or the defeated-despairing (depressive) or, indeed, the cooperative-affiliative (mature), and perhaps others as well.<sup>1</sup>

In an earlier work, Furgeson had stated that the personality of the preacher, in its hidden as well as its open aspects, is a decisive factor in the form, content, and effectiveness of the sermon.<sup>2</sup> In a "discussion" following an article by James T. Hall on "Measuring the Communication of Feeling During Worship" Furgeson continues his clarification of how pastoral psychology and preaching relate.<sup>3</sup> Noting that Hall has discovered that the basic thrust is not in the words of the sermon but rather in what the minister is in himself, Furgeson suggests that preachers should understand that a sermon is to be thought of as

A communion in depth, a kind of "Stereo" broadcast which is beamed out on two channels simultaneously, one intellectual and verbal, the other emotional and non-verbal. A preacher can perform with full facility at the level of terminology without having the slightest notion of the specific needs which are synthesized and projected by his terminology. A man preaching a sermon is like an open eye focused outward upon the world; the eye sees everything, but it does not see itself.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Earl Furgeson, "Preaching and Personality," Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 10, No. 97, October, 1959, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Earl Furgeson, "Discussion: Measuring the Communication of Feeling During Worship," Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 14, No. 137, October, 1963, p. 56f.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

If self knowledge is "zero," the consequences, according to Furgeson, will be that "we don't say what we mean and we don't mean what we say. Our communications go two ways at once; the words of our mouths are refused and denied by the thoughts of our hearts."<sup>1</sup> The preacher, if he is to effectively communicate, must be continuously aware that he speaks in two languages: "one verbal, the other non-verbal; one heard, the other felt."

### Jackson and Bowman

Others have also been influenced by the contributions of psychology to the communication of the man himself.

Edgar Jackson, whose writing, A Psychology for Preaching, shall be considered further in Chapters Four and Five, notes that "what he (the preacher) communicates is an extension of himself."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Rufus D. Bowman, in an article "Personality and Preaching" indicates that a basic principle in the practice preaching course at Bethany Biblical Seminary is

That the increase of effectiveness in preaching is vitally related to the cultivation of right attitudes and the development of a healthful personality . . .<sup>3</sup>

He also notes that although class discussion is addressed to the problems of speech patterns and the needs of greater

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>2</sup>Edgar J. Jackson, A Psychology for Preaching (Great Neck, New York: Channel Press, Inc., 1961), p. 62.

<sup>3</sup>Rufus D. Bowman (late President and professor of preaching, Bethany Biblical Seminary, Chicago), "Personality and Preaching," Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 5, No. 48, November, 1954, p. 9.

self confidence and emotional control, that personal counseling is also needed. He states this method of teaching preaching "is based upon the principle that the development of a healthful personality is a necessary factor in increasing the effectiveness of preaching.

### Roy Pearson

When Roy Pearson in The Ministry of Preaching lists the credentials of the preacher, mental health is listed first.

The indispensable condition of effective preaching is that the pulpit be occupied by a sound, consistent human being. In the peculiar relationship of the pulpit to the pew it is not likely that a diseased mind will make other minds healthy, that a twisted heart will set other hearts straight, or that an empty soul will fill other souls with strength and peace.<sup>1</sup>

Pearson observes that there is a growing movement to require candidates for ordination to the ministry to pass a psychiatric examination. In addition to mental and emotional health, Pearson further itemizes the credentials of today's preacher: He must be a man who is neither effeminate or overly masculine... He must possess educated wisdom, informed about the main currents of the world's culture. And he must be a Christian, thoroughly convinced about the centrality and the finality of the Christian proclamation.

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<sup>1</sup>Roy Pearson (Dean of Andover-Newton Theological School), The Ministry of Preaching (New York: Harper and Bros., 1954), pp. 70-71.

Leslie J. Tizard

Leslie J. Tizard in Preaching: the Art of Communication allocates two of the five chapters to a consideration of "The Personality of the Preacher."<sup>1</sup> Building upon Brooks's definition, Tizard also concerns himself with the personality of the preacher as the channel of truth.<sup>2</sup> Two elements that he sees inherent in the "call to preach" are 1) feeling the needs of men until they are an obsession to one's soul, and 2) an inner constraining love for Christ. These are the ingredients that give a man his true urge, that the Spirit of God can "seize" and inspire. The proclamation of what God has done through Christ in human experience, however, is always done from the preacher's own experience and observation.<sup>3</sup> Perception of a need and consciousness of the ability to meet it will produce certain essential qualities. Tizard lists four: sincerity (intellectual and emotional

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<sup>1</sup>Leslie J. Tizard, Preaching: The Art of Communication (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 20-48. Tizard, although from England, wrote these lectures for the United States. The Daniel Weiss study showed this book as one currently being used in the teaching of preaching. Halford E. Luccock, professor of homiletics at Yale Divinity School, is quoted on the dust-jacket as saying "To any preacher it brings specific, concrete suggestions on communication of ideas and personality (*italics added*) and also a quickening of mind and spirit. It is an amazing sum of wisdom and joy packed into just-about 100 pages, a sheer miracle in itself."

<sup>2</sup>Phillips Brooks in his Yale Lectures on Preaching defined preaching as: the communication of truth by man to men. It has in it two essential elements, truth and personality. Neither of these can it spare and still be preaching . . . preaching is the bringing of truth through personality.

<sup>3</sup>Tizard, p. 12.

integrity), love (a sense of care about others' "hunger"), authority (speaking simply and directly of things that one knows at first hand, as Jesus did), and self-acceptance (resolved to his limitations). Tizard sees the preacher as being threatened by temptations, such as the craving for power, the love of praise, the dangers of self-display, and the satisfaction of some personal emotional need. Successful facing of these "temptations" requires, he feels, successful facing of oneself. Ruthless honesty will enable one to deal with his own problems. Stripping oneself of illusions may even cause the preacher to abandon his calling. Tizard, however, sees another alternative:

These self-regarding impulses, which once mingled with our genuine love of God and man to create the irresistible sense of a call, must be accepted by us and then offered to God that He may control and use them. They are not safe when they are in our hands alone. As we offer them to Him we shall be cleansed from narrow and petty selfishness. But until our sanctification is complete--which will not be in this life--our love of self-display or praise or power will sometimes get the better of us, and then we shall preach, not for God's glory, but our own.<sup>1</sup>

### David MacLennan

David MacLennan, Professor of Preaching at Yale Divinity School, contributes to two concerns on the theory of the preacher. When asked what kind of preacher is needed today, he gives this reply:

All kinds except the authoritarian, the egocentric, the extremely dogmatic, the coercive and moralistic kinds! Preaching, as I see it, is the communication of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 48.



truth in love by a man committed to the Gospel to individuals in their known needs, that such individuals confronted by the good news of God in Christ may be enabled by God's Spirit to grow into fullness of life within the community of Christians.<sup>1</sup>

The second concern is when and to what extent personality be injected into preaching. Much like Tizard, he underscores the occupational disease to which preachers are susceptible: "I-strain."<sup>2</sup> The preacher who must speak with authority can easily become "more enamored of the quality of the transmitter than of the message and its source" with the consequence that he ceases to be prophetic. Thus egotism or Jehovah-complex is the preacher's chief besetting sin. There is a cure, however:

Self-confidence every Christian must possess; but the Christian paradox is that true self-confidence comes when we place our complete confidence in Another, in Him whose servants we have promised to be.<sup>3</sup>

Another paradox regarding the use of pronouns, MacLennan considers, is their necessary use. Personal pronouns serve to personalize the faith. It is unnecessary then to be "afraid to use I when it will reinforce the claim you make for Christ." MacLennan prefers the plural pronouns "We" "us" and "our." He points out the pronouns in the Lord's prayer are plural: "us" and "our," rather than the singular "me"

<sup>1</sup>David A. MacLennan, "Can Preaching be Non-directive?" The Application of Psychology to Preaching ed. Simon Doniger (Great Neck: Pastoral Psychology Press, 1952), p. 59.

<sup>2</sup>David A. MacLennan, Pronouns for Preachers (Great Neck, New York: The Pulpit Press, 1954), p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 32.





and "mine." Plural pronouns identify the preacher both with "a great service" going back to the Upper Room and the prophets, and also with the immediate congregation.

### James W. Clarke

James W. Clarke in Dynamic Preaching recommends the preacher engaging in honest self-analysis. "While the preacher must not engage in self-depreciation, he must engage in honest self-equation."<sup>1</sup> Depreciation comes from the outside in terms of criticism, of toleration, and of hostility. Depreciation comes from within both from close friends as well as the personal problems of being too "secularized" and "professionalized." Like Haselden, Clarke also calls for a "creditable professionalism."<sup>2</sup> It is achieved by a performance in the pulpit wherein

He had introduced and opened up a great religious subject, developed it thoughtfully, illustrated it convincingly, and communicated it clearly. This is a professionalism all of us should strive after, for it enables us to be workmen who need not be ashamed, and rightly divide the word of truth. The preacher whose subjects are selected without relevance to the needs of his congregation, whose thought is shallow, whose material is presented without order or progress, whose diction lacks simple clearness and grammatical correctness, and whose voice is obviously untrained, ought to be ashamed of himself, for he brings upon the preaching vocation and the Christian ministry unnecessary, but deserved criticism.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>James W. Clarke (former head of the department of homiletics at Princeton Theological Seminary), Dynamic Preaching (Westwood: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1960), p. 54.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

The preacher's goal, according to Clarke, is "to raise the dead." His focus is "persons." His preaching is to personal needs.

Christian preaching is centered in people--flesh and blood and spirit people. People who came from God and will return to God. People for whose advantage Jesus Christ was nailed to a bitter cross.<sup>1</sup>

The collateral theorists consulted above have confirmed Haselden's emphasis on the preacher's disposition toward confidence. They have pin-pointed the need for confidence in the spoken word, the message, and oneself; pastoral psychology theorists both clarified and amplified Haselden's particularized concerns. There is yet another group of pedagogues to consult. More specifically, they clarify and amplify both the necessity and possibility of confidence in the oral medium. These men bring to homiletics insights and skills from the area of rhetoric and public address. This discussion considers those insights appropos to the vocal skill of the communicator. Some have contributed several chapters and others have given entire books to the development of the vocal and the visual aspects of communication. Some are concerned with specific kinds of communication, such as, reading of the scripture.

#### Robert White Kirkpatrick

Robert White Kirkpatrick's The Creative Delivery of Sermons provides a necessary elaboration of Haselden's

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

"confidence in one's instrument" concept. Kirkpatrick aims to enable the preacher to recreate all that which was achieved in the preparation and practice. He wants the preacher

Intelligently and confidently to employ the best possible means of attaining and maintaining a vital experience of the truths presented in a particular sermon and of effectively conveying them to others in preaching. Worded differently, the aim is at the moment of preaching to provide the Holy Spirit with as sensitive and as effective an instrument as possible.<sup>1</sup>

Kirkpatrick's formula for creating the reality of the sermon for the hearers at the moment of delivery is similar to the preparation of an oral interpreter who must gain proper impression and then must give proper expression by knowing and feeling and then assimilating the logical and emotional setting and details. He asks that the minister in his sermon preparation develop the power of his imagination while it is under his conscious control and to create with vividness every kind of stimuli which may be real to his hearers. This procedure, according to Kirkpatrick, consists in increasing one's own power to respond to the various kinds of actual stimuli and to convey them audibly to the imagined hearer. The preparation then concentrates alternately upon receiving the stimuli as accurately as possible and upon conveying them as interestingly as possible. In his specific preparation for creating for the hearer at the moment of

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<sup>1</sup>Robert White Kirkpatrick (instructor of homiletics at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia and a former student of American Academy of Dramatic Arts and of Northwestern University School of Speech), The Creative Delivery of Sermons (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1954), Preface, xlii-xiv.

delivery the minister is to attempt to experience in imagination every object of sense perception in the sermon. This requires experiencing a concretion for each abstraction and something specific for each generality. It means responding to every imagined object of sense perception with all the muscle tensions, bodily postures, and speech which one would employ in the actual life situation. Practice of delivery will be performed while imagining the presence of the hearers and while imaginatively experiencing each portion of the message.<sup>1</sup> As he actually preaches, the minister will create the reality of the sermon for the hearers at the moment of delivery by following the same procedures in specific preparation, experiencing imaginatively and vividly each portion of the sermon at the moment he speaks the corresponding words.<sup>2</sup>

Each portion of the reality, he will experience as taking place in the current moment. His one purpose in all this is that his hearers may have, through him, an equally-vivid experience of the reality. This leads him to deliver the sermon to his hearers as to a succession of individuals, rather than as to a blurred group. On the basis of the reactions of specific hearers, he will effect such changes in the delivery as will make the reality most interesting to them.<sup>3</sup>

Kirkpatrick lists specific areas and practices in what he calls the physical mechanism whereby the minister's creative powers can express themselves: posture, breathing,

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 187.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

tone production, resonance, articulation, and enunciation. The result of such expression produces creative preaching or "inspired preaching." He defines the aim of such preaching as that which brings hearers into such an awareness of the reality of the sermon as will lead them to shape their thought, feeling, and life in accord with the Divine will as expressed in the sermon and as delivered through the utilization of every capacity of the preacher's personality. Kirkpatrick further defines inspired preaching as

That speaking for God in which the Divine Reality finds a perfect or well-nigh perfect, channel of expression; in which the preacher's powers of logical perception, emotional reaction, and psychophysical expression function in one grand harmony, while his entire being is freely surrendered to the Divine control; and in which the hearer is convinced that he is brought face to face with the Divine Reality.<sup>1</sup>

If inspired preaching is to occur, the minister must constantly surrender himself to the experiencing of the reality of the sermon during delivery. The result is that the hearer has produced in him the conviction that he is being brought face to face with the Divine reality--whether that reality be the Person of God or one of God's truths.

Kirkpatrick lists fourteen results of such "creative delivery" of sermons:

1. The minister's power will be effectively utilized toward achieving his aim in preaching.
2. The style will be conversational and the sermon more interesting than otherwise.
3. Self-consciousness will be prevented.
4. Speech and volume will be accurately controlled.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 212.

5. Minister tone and minister tune will be prevented.
6. Emotional retrospect and anticipation will be prevented.
7. The powers of expression will be highly cooperative.
8. The impression upon the hearers will be more powerful than otherwise.
9. The minister will be the master of the situation at each moment.
10. Articulation will be aided.
11. The minister will be enabled to recall the sermon content more readily than otherwise.
12. Emphasis will be accurately controlled.
13. Staleness will be prevented.
14. The way will be prepared for inspired speaking.

Thus, from "the human level it is a delivery second to none, and from the level of the Divine viewpoint, a level of cooperation that inspiration can scarcely find uninviting."<sup>1</sup>

In the Foreword to Kirkpatrick's book, Ralph Sockman concurs in the need for a vital experience of truths experienced. He notes that theological seminaries have treated sermon delivery subordinately. He maintains that the vehicle of expression is as necessary and as important to a sermon as transports are to troops in war. He approves the author's efforts to make the "externals of preaching become internal experience before they become natural." He believes that "deep emotional intensity is needed to thaw out the icicled springs of our natures" and that sound reasoning must be "resonant with earnest feeling"--that good thought must be a teamwork of heart and head.<sup>2</sup>

### Akin et al

Books on reading the Bible aloud discuss many of same skills outlined by Kirkpatrick--skills which if achieved

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 232.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. x.

would fulfill the confidence that Haselden hopes will characterize today's preacher. A "Reflection Book" How to Read the Bible Aloud reminds that the Bible was meant to be read aloud and in this respect differs from other books that were meant to be read silently and meditatively.<sup>1</sup> The authors, three of them speech teachers, have endeavored to produce a practical handbook of ways in which both minister and laymen can bring to life the meaning of the Biblical text by reading it aloud, whether privately or publicly. They present an analysis of Biblical language structure and then show how to use vocal pitch, rhythm, projection, and quality to portray this message. Reading aloud and reading silently to oneself, the authors maintain, are as different as listening to an orchestra and merely reading silently the score. In this analogy pitch, rhythm, projection, and quality are the instruments of voice that must be blended together to produce the score. The reader, himself, is the conductor and must decide which "string" must be stressed or is necessary.

### J. Edward Lantz

J. Edward Lantz in Reading the Bible Aloud not only stresses that the Bible was originally intended to be read aloud but also that Paul's writing to Timothy to "give attendance to reading, preaching, and teaching" meant public

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<sup>1</sup>Joynnye Akin, Seth A. Fessenden, P. Merville Larson, and Albert N. Williams, How to Read the Bible Aloud (New York: Association Press, 1965).

reading and preaching.<sup>1</sup> Unless this is continuously done, Lantz maintains, the minister will not be meeting the people's needs. Suggestions are offered for mental, emotional, spiritual, bodily, and vocal preparation. Delivery principles include stress of key words and phrases that get across main ideas in relationship to the subordinate ones, pronunciation, phrasing and pausing, etc. Several special types of religious readings, including the lecture-reading of scripture (in lieu of a sermon) are illustrated. In Speaking in the Church, Lantz discusses spiritual preparation in cooperating with the Spirit as well as mental preparation for having something worthwhile sharing.<sup>2</sup> Two specific chapters are devoted to bodily communication and to voice improvement. These two chapters cover the basic content that contribute to vocal and visual effectiveness. Lantz shows that Brooks's definition of truth through personality requires a proper blend and balance of truth and personality, and that personality development is predicated upon delivery improvement. Vocal and visual attributes are specifically studied and brief, concrete suggestions are offered. Lantz minimizes theology of the preacher and maximizes methodology when compared to Haselden.

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<sup>1</sup>J. Edward Lantz (speech instructor at McCormick Theological Seminary and Gammon Theological Seminary), Reading the Bible Aloud (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1959).

<sup>2</sup>J. Edward Lantz (speech instructor at McCormick Theological Seminary and Gammon Theological Seminary), Speaking in the Church (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1954).



Harold Brack

Harold Brack's Effective Oral Interpretation for Religious Readers assumes the necessity of an adequate understanding of the skills of expression if one is to improve his oral reading.<sup>1</sup> The principles, which are documented by textbooks on oral reading, cover the components of voice, such as pitch, time, quality, force; the standards of bodily actions, use of the printed materials, use of the eyes, the reader's relation to the listeners, and methods for understanding the printed page. Chapters covering the different rituals (baptism, communion, wedding, funeral) as well as chapters focusing on prayers, hymns, and scriptures make this an applicable book for the religious communicator. (Brack's second book is co-authored with Kenneth G. Hance.<sup>2</sup> It is intended as a guide to meet both speaker-audience situations and discussion or conference situations. One chapter "On the Platform" covers eye contact, vocal projection, and posture and gestures.)

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<sup>1</sup>Harold A. Brack (associate professor of speech and homiletics, Drew University Theological School), Effective Oral Interpretation for Religious Readers (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964).

<sup>2</sup>Harold A. Brack and Kenneth G. Hance, Public Speaking and Discussion for Religious Workers (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961).

### Stevenson and Diehl

The most specifically sermon delivery-oriented book seems to be Reaching People from the Pulpit.<sup>1</sup> Chapters include such subject areas as the sound of the sermon, getting ready to hear yourself, what to listen for, foundations of effective voice, ministerial tune, speaking with your whole body, what is being said emotionally, reading the Bible aloud, the creative moment of delivery, a suggested guide for classes and workshops, and self-help program for individuals. Resources in this book include drills, exercises, rating sheets, and examples making it adapted for utilization in the seminary classroom as "a guide to effective sermon delivery." It appears to be the proper companion book for realization of Haselden's concern for confidence in the oral medium.

### Ronald Sleeth

Ronald Sleeth deals with the "Delivery of Persuasion" in his Persuasive Preaching.<sup>2</sup> If anyone wishes to be persuasive in his preaching, Sleeth argues, he will have to recognize that people listen to a sermon as a whole: "They are affected by content, structure, illustration, and

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<sup>1</sup>Dwight F. Stevenson (professor psychology and director of the speech center at the University of Kentucky) and Charles F. Diehl (professor of homiletics at the College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky), Reaching People from the Pulpit (New York: Harper and Bros Publishers, 1958).

<sup>2</sup>Ronald E. Sleeth (professor of preaching and speech at Garrett Biblical Institute), Persuasive Preaching (New York: Harper and Bros. Publishers, 1956).

delivery."<sup>1</sup> (*italics mine*) This means that the preacher necessarily has to be concerned with the sermon's total impact. There is a relationship between content and delivery.

. . . a poor voice or slovenly enunciation blunts the cutting edge of a well-structured sermon. The preacher needs to have all his tools sharp.<sup>2</sup>

With a touch of humor Sleeth itemizes the areas of need for vocal improvement.

It is sad for any preacher to let a good face go to waste in the pulpit.<sup>3</sup>

Many preachers talk as if they were in a phone booth afraid of being overheard by an F.B.I. agent . . . If a public address system is not one of the seven deadly sins, it is surely a close eighth.<sup>4</sup>

Some sermons have the spark of a load of wet cement.<sup>5</sup>

Two typical pulpit diseases are the monotone and the ministerial melody. The monotone kills the sermon and paralyzes the congregation. The ministerial melody--that supersanctimonious rising and falling of the voice--produces a weaving effect in the mind of the hearers which leaves them half dizzy.<sup>6</sup>

The "cures" Sleeth offers include listening to a recording, and asking repeatedly, "Do I sound like a real person talking to real people?" He makes suggestions for rate, pause, articulation, breathing, and methods of delivery.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

### Summary

Contemporary homileticians consider the preacher construct an important one; without an effective preacher, an integral part of the communication process is missing, and that process itself is less likely to be fulfilled. Haselden, as a central figure in this emphasis, demonstrates the need for the preacher developing confidence in the spoken word, in the relevancy and urgency of the message, and in the personality of the preacher himself. His concepts for restoration of a loss of confidence incorporate the concerns of cultivating the skills of the human voice; seeing life's experience (peril, promise, alterant) in the gospel story; developing verbal craftsmanship, pastoral imagination, and prophetic direction; and rediscovering the call to be a profession, totally involved to the will of Christ and under his authority as a "herald of the Promise." The other theorists considered in the survey of contemporary literature confirm Haselden's essential emphases. Two refinements develop. One is that those writers trained in speech theory concentrate on the development of effective oral delivery; at least five frequently-used homiletics texts were silent on this issue. Secondly, those writers trained in pastoral psychology gave additional consideration to the implications in the speech process of the psychological realities of the preacher's personality.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SERMON

At the beginning God expressed himself. That personal expression, that word, was with God and was God, and he existed with God from the beginning.<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

Classical rhetoric, with its emphasis on invention, arrangement, style, and delivery, and traditional homiletics, with its corresponding concerns, have directed their major attention to the message. Contemporary homiletics shares this stress.

Unlike the contemporary homiletical emphasis on preacher, which is marked by considerable unanimity in method and concern, the current homiletical approach to the sermon has considerable divergency in point of view and emphasis. Dr. H. Grady Davis, professor of functional theology at Chicago Lutheran Seminary, represents a synthesis of this divergency, combining the antipodal emphases of other message-theorists whose concern tends to be weighted toward either form or content.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John 1, J.B. Phillips translation.

<sup>2</sup>It should be noted that Davis uses the terms substance and form instead of the classical terminology of invention, arrangement, and style.

Davis is the subject of the case study in this chapter both because of his theoretical synthesis and because his major text, Design for Preaching, is the most frequently used volume in homiletics courses offered by seminaries affiliated with the Association of American Theological Schools.<sup>1</sup> Davis' text is supplemented by classroom lectures, a representative sermon, and personal interviews. In addition, the approach of most other leading contemporary homileticians, toward the sermon is surveyed in a review of published material, filling out the contours of modern homiletical emphasis.<sup>2</sup>

#### A Case Study: Design for Preaching

Davis' primary thesis is that substance--the idea and its development--and form--including arrangement and style--reflect and affect each other, are inseparable, and must be viewed and studied together.

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<sup>1</sup>Davis, op. cit. Since 1937, Davis has been Professor of Functional Theology at Chicago Lutheran Seminary. The Daniel Weiss study cited in the Introduction reveals that Davis' book was the most frequently used text in 1962 and that his writings were the third most influential in affecting contemporary homiletics.

<sup>2</sup>As explained in the Introduction, the second basic methodology employed in Chapters II through V is to analyze and collate contemporary homiletical literature and research (other than, and in comparison to, the theories in the case study). In addition to the texts, the interpretative materials are based in part upon public lectures and personal interviews with several of the theorists.

. . . the answers lie neither in the traditional study of homiletical forms as forms, nor in a preoccupation with the vital content of preaching apart from the forms it takes, but in a sharper awareness that content and form are inseparable elements of the same thing in the design of a good sermon.<sup>1</sup>

Davis notes that life itself is a union of substance and form. Common plants are identified by their form of stem and leaf, flower and fruit; individual cells are analyzed under the microscope according to their individual form. Similarly, the communication of thought is impossible without its form; a thought necessarily takes form in its expression. Davis sees the elemental form of thought as an assertion consisting of a subject and a predicate. All thoughts, he emphasizes, take form when communicated.

The character and dimensions of a thought, its weight, its reach and force, are either limited or extended by the form of its expression. A thought does not seem the same when said indifferently as when said well. When the form is right, form and thought become one. The only way one can extend or limit a thought, can turn or color a thought, is by the words used to express it. The only way one can improve the form is to shape it more exactly to the thought. Once the right thing is said rightly, there is a feeling of finality about it, as if it could never be said so well in any way but this. Thought does not have that feeling of finality until it is said rightly.<sup>2</sup>

Since both substance and form are requisite and related in the act and reception of communication, the formal study of both is essential.

In light of the relation of form to substance in the communication of thought, Davis sees three special reasons

<sup>1</sup>Davis, op. cit., pp. v-vi.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

why the preacher must be concerned about the form of what is being said. First, the purpose of preaching is to win from men a response to the gospel, in attitude as well as in thought, with form doing its work through silent and direct persuasion. Second, the best possible form is needed since the audience may believe intuitively but doubt rationally. Third, man's habitual outlook is self-centered, in contrast to God's Word, which centers in Another. In light of these reasons Davis sees as the critical apparatus in the design of a good sermon the view that content and form are inseparable elements; this is the basis for discrimination for producing sermons that "make texts come alive from a basic statement of truth about God to the living existential person-to-person relationship."<sup>1</sup>

Davis' approach demands that for each sermon there is a right form derived from the substance of the message itself.

A right form can never be imposed on any sermon. If it has to be imposed it is not right. The right form . . . is inseparable from the content, becomes one with the content, and gives a feeling of finality to the sermon.

When form is rightly used, it seems to be the inevitable shape of the thought, and is then indistinguishable from the thing said; it becomes the thing itself.<sup>2</sup>

Although Davis believes the skill involved in finding the "right" form for a given message is nearer to intuition than to deliberation, he nevertheless views it as a craftsmanship dependent upon previous study, just as the poet depends upon

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. vi.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 9.



a study of language, the novelist character, the artist lines. Davis, therefore, especially recommends the study of sermons themselves not for their thought or inspiration but for their craft in actual design. Preoccupation with either form or content is dangerous, according to Davis. Too much concern for form makes the preacher a mere technician; too much concern for content prevents him from fulfilling his potential.

The essential craft that must be learned and applied in actual sermon designing has been set forth and summarized by Davis in poetic form. It is his philosophy of message building, one that asserts the union of form and substance:

A sermon should be like a tree.

It should be a living organism:  
With one sturdy thought like a single stem  
With natural limbs reaching up into the light.

It should have deep roots:  
As much unseen as above the surface  
Roots spreading as widely as its branches spread  
Roots deep underground  
In the soul of life's struggle  
In the subsoil of the Eternal Word.

It should show nothing but its own unfolding parts:  
Branches that thrust out by the force of its inner life  
Sentences like leaves native to this very spray  
True to the species  
Not taken from alien growths  
Illustrations like blossoms opening from  
inside these very twigs  
Not brightly colored kites  
Pulled from the wind of somebody else's thought  
Entangled in these branches.

It should bear flowers and fruit at the  
same time like the orange:  
Having something for food  
For immediate nourishment  
Having something for delight  
For present beauty and fragrance  
For the joy of hope  
For the harvest of a distant day.

To be all this it must grow in a warm climate:  
 In loam enriched by death  
 In love like the all-seeing and all-cherishing sun  
 In trust like the sleep-sheltering night  
 In pity like the rain.<sup>1</sup>

### Anatomy of the Idea

It should be a living organism:  
 With one sturdy thought like a single stem  
 With natural limbs reaching up into the light.

The anatomy of an idea can be determined by two questions: "What is the man talking about?" and "What is he saying about it?" Davis calls these questions "structural" since they concern the organic relationship of the thought. The first points to the true subject; until it is exactly defined and delineated it is impossible to understand or to judge the message's validity. The second provides in condensed form the full body of predication. Both questions are answered satisfactorily, however, in the ideally designed sermon. A good sermon, therefore, is the embodiment of an idea which is a full statement of a significant thought.

It is an organic structure of thought, which unfolds from within,<sup>2</sup> according to the anatomy of the idea that produces it.

It is an idea that consists of only two things: what is talked about and what is said about it. The preacher's duty then, Davis believes, is to "feel for the shape" of his idea, to develop a clearly defined subject and an inclusive

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-16.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-26.

predicate or set of structural assertions concerning the subject.<sup>1</sup> The first task in preaching is that of learning to recognize the anatomical, skeletal form in a potential discourse.

The unitary idea is basic to a sermon. It is a single generalization without which the sermon could not exist. The explicit subject with one or several predicates produces in the listener an effect of unity:

When a sermon is the embodiment of one vigorous idea, when the whole of it becomes simply the elaboration and extension of that idea, then it produces in the listener . . . an impression of oneness and entirety, of an ordered relatedness of parts in a whole.<sup>2</sup>

This anatomical idea (or central thought) produces the sermon by virtue of its own energy and vitality, much as the seed develops into the plant; Davis refers to it as the germinal thought or generative idea, generating the sermon and not vice versa.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 32. As an illustration, Davis uses the sermon "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection" by Thomas Chalmers. "His predicate is as single as his subject. He says one all-inclusive thing about it. He says: Only a new love for God can expel the love of the world and the things in it. Note that this only means nothing else can . . . Here, then, is a sermon idea, that is, a sharply defined subject and an all-inclusive predicate, something significant talked about and something definite said about it. 'A new love for God expels the love of the world, and there is no other way to overcome the love of the world.' That is what the sermon says at great length, and that is all it says, stripped of all particularity and reduced to a single generalization. The whole sermon as it stands is an embodiment, a development of this idea, plus some practical conclusions resulting from it."

### The Text as Source

It should have deep roots:  
 As much unseen as above the surface  
 Roots spreading as widely as its branches spread  
 Roots deep underground  
     In the soil of life's struggle  
     In the subsoil of the eternal Word.

Davis recognizes that the sermon's idea possesses characteristics which are equally true of secular communication: it must be narrow enough to be sharp, must have in it a force that is expanding, must be true, must be loaded with the realities of the human heart.

A far more unique characteristic for preaching, as contrasted with public address, is his fifth qualification: "it must be one of the many facets of the gospel of Christ, some aspect of the eternal Love and Goodness and Truth taking shape in some apprehensible human thought."<sup>1</sup> Anything less might be a work of art but not a Christian sermon. Thus Davis rules out as a usual source of ideas that which derives from casual reading and listening, something in the news, on the screen or stage, in a political or social event. If any of these were, in fact, the usual source, "preaching either runs swiftly and completely dry or a purveyor of trivialities."<sup>2</sup> The authentic source of every Christian sermon, Davis says, is in Scripture. The crucial question is not

Whether the sermon has a text attached to it, but whether the Scripture is the source of the sermon or

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

not, whether the sermon says what the Scripture says or not.<sup>1</sup>

He notes that many sermons that use a text may not be derived from the text; in such cases the text is used merely for literary or psychological effect and is not a source but only a resource.

His concern is that the germinal idea be biblical and have its source in Scripture. As such it grows out of theology and exegesis. This does not mean, however, that the thought necessarily occurred as a result of immediate theological or exegetical study. Nevertheless, the thought must be biblical

With the enormously important proviso that, having found its biblical source, he thereafter adjust his thinking to Scripture's real idea, not adjust Scripture's words to fit his thinking. That is to say, he should never use a false or arbitrary exegesis to make the text support his notion. That does not honor the Bible; it flouts and misrepresents the Bible. It is a dishonest use of the Bible. It is a dishonest use of the Bible as a resource for advancing his own opinion. It would be less irreverent not to use Scripture at all, but preach his idea, if he must, without any text. That would not, of course, be adjusting his preaching to the biblical message, but falsifying the text comes no nearer.<sup>2</sup>

For Davis, this point of view does not exclude truth or "gospel" outside of Scripture, but it explicates Scripture's word as the validating test of the gospel message. It is the gospel discoverable in Scripture that is the germinal

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

idea.<sup>1</sup> There are questions that can be asked by the preacher in discovering the germinal idea: What is being here talked about? What does the undivided text mean? What difference does it make? What is at issue here?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Davis is concerned that idea not be defined philosophically. "But the truth we preach is not an abstract thing. The truth is a person. The goodness we preach is not an ideal quality. The goodness is Someone who is good. The truth, the goodness we preach is not a thing that can first be defined and then applied to God, to Christ. The truth, the goodness, is God in Christ. The love we preach is God himself in Christ. There is no such thing as love--there is only somebody who loves . . . If love is thought of as having substance, its substance is God himself. If love is forever, its eternity is the Eternal. But in order that we might apprehend this eternal Love and Goodness and Truth, it took the form of human flesh and dwelt among us. And in order to speak about it we have to get some idea of it, some incarnation, some vision, image, or plain concept. And any idea we get of it is in the form of a human thought, consisting of subject and predicate. That is to say, truth or goodness or love must take the form of thought to be apprehended and spoken of." Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>This set of questions raises the further question of the relationship of a textbook or course in preaching to theology and exegesis. The homiletician's main contribution, according to Davis, is to show how theology and exegesis become functional in preaching. He is not to teach theology and exegesis, although the teacher or writer should know as much as possible about both. In a course entitled "Biblical Preaching" taught during the Summer Session, 1965, at the Lutheran School Theology (Maywood Campus), Dr. Davis not only demonstrated that he knows much about theology and exegesis, but he also taught, in this writer's judgment, theology and exegesis. The qualification must be made that this particular course was not the beginning course in homilitics. Moreover, Dr. Davis might well assert that as a homiletician he was showing "how theology and exegesis become functional in preaching."

None of the twenty-three books listed in his Bibliography was by a homiletician, with the exception of himself and one man who has written extensively on preaching. The "basic books" reveal that Davis "is in touch" with what is going on in theology and biblical interpretation. Texts included those which are by men who are discussing contemporary hermeneutics (the science of biblical interpretation) such as Gerhard Ebeling, Word and Faith (Philadelphia:

### The Expanding Idea

A sermon should show nothing but its own unfolding parts: Branches that thrust out by the force of its inner life, Sentences like leaves native to this very spray, true to the species, Not taken from alien growths.

Preaching is communication: sharing ideas with people, through explanation, development, and emphasis on their importance and implications. For Davis, this expansion of thought begins with the sharp definition of the actual subject. He emphasizes that without the sharpness and urgency "of a keen point" a sermon does not convey anything of importance to the hearers. A sermon on faith, for example, is not apt to be moving; "The Spirit of Thanksgiving" is broad and fuzzy; "The Character of Christ" properly delimits.

Inherent in an idea is thought form with energy to expand into a significant communication. But the power to expand is difficult to study, Davis maintains, because it is a life process, an action of the mind. Having posed his

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Fortress Press, 1963) and James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr., (Editors), New Frontiers in Theology, Volume II, The New Hermeneutic (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).

Lectures by Davis include "The Biblical Framework of Faith," "Time After and Before" as well as specific biblical passages of discourse, miracle, and parable. Accordingly, Davis viewed the Bible as a book of faith, as the literature and witness of faith, which speaks now. The four periods of biblical history (Before Abraham--the period of human existence without awareness of estrangement with God; Special History--the period of covenant relation established by God's gracious purpose; Advent--the period of encounter in flesh in the Christ event; After Pentecost--the period of believing awareness by God's Spirit operating in the human being) are seen as belonging to all time and phases of human condition. The Bible (source of texts) is therefore living history and preaching more than education of facts or doctrines. Preaching, like its source, aims for faith rather than right ideas.

structural questions of the subject (What is he saying? What is he saying about it?), he asks several functional questions that have to do with the thought's operation, its purpose to communicate meaning, its significance, its validity, and its consequences. These questions include: (1) What is meant? (2) Is it true? (3) What difference does it make or the so what? If these questions are pressed and if every answer is noted, Davis believes the minister will soon know whether or not he has a sermon, and he will know whether or not a body of significant material has accumulated out of which the sermon will be made. If, however, a preacher feels the text is not expanding, Davis recommends two things:

First, let him search this passage of Scripture again . . . Let him now write down what every part of the passage contributes to his subject, changing the subject itself if it proves not to be the right one. Then let him begin to ask himself, What does this idea mean? Do I, do my hearers believe it? Why or why not? What are its consequences to me and my listeners? Let him press these questions, and let him write down every answer that comes to him, expressing them as succinctly and as well as he can, not bothering about their order . . . In this way a body of significant material is accumulated, out of which the sermon will be made. It is not yet a sermon, though all the important assertions may be there. It waits for that moment when it all congeals, crystallizes, when the idea gets up on its feet, as it were, finds shape, movement, and direction, decides where it is going.<sup>1</sup>

Expansion, however, Davis warns, can take place only when the preacher is at work with some specific idea. "Sense and skill have no existence at any time apart from their

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 81.



service to some definite idea," he writes.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Davis stresses that only an idea that comes alive in the preacher has power to expand into a living sermon.

The concept of functional form is a key part of Davis' approach to the developing sermon. Davis sees the function of preaching, however, as difficult to achieve; the preacher faces both the judgment of an indifferent and unbelieving society outside the church and the critical judgment of biblical thinkers within the church. Davis assumes, therefore, that the preaching student realizes he will preach in the intellectual and cultural climate of his day, that romantic Victorian optimism, for example, is irrelevant to the modern world. He assumes also that today's preacher knows the light a revived and deepened theology can cast upon the human condition, how it has affected the church's preaching, as illustrated by the Biblical theology movement in Europe and the publication of Karl Barth's The Word of God and the Word of Man in 1928.

One functional form of preaching, emphasized by Davis, is proclamation, with its concern for the substance preached--the kerygma, the King's message, the gospel of Christ crucified and raised from the dead and in you the hope of glory. Preaching also means the act of proclaiming or publishing or crying out as the herald, the announcing whatever the king

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

has to proclaim. Preaching, technically understood, is thus two fold:

The news of God's redemptive action in Jesus Christ our Lord, revealing God's love toward men and his purpose in history, manifesting at once his judgment and his mercy, furnishing a new basis for the relation between men and God--compassion, forgiveness, unmerited favor and help--and calling into being a reconstituted humanity joined with Christ and living no longer by its biological possibilities but by participation in Christ's life.<sup>1</sup>

Within the communication act, Davis regards the man who preaches as least in importance: the Sender coming first,<sup>2</sup> then the message, next the people addressed, and finally, the instrument, the preacher.

Proclamation is a functional form since the gospel message is sent for a definite purpose to people in a definite condition. It is good news from God to "the poor, the captives, the blind, the oppressed, . . . to those dead in trespasses and in sins . . . every one." It is sent to those who have not heard of God's redemptive action in Christ; its proclamation to them must take the form of a call of God to man. This must be clear if man is to know to whom he must answer. The sermons in Acts, which give these basic essentials of the proclamation, are, Davis believes, in an apparent contradistinction to much current pulpit talk. Davis accords the following importance to biblical proclamation as a function form:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>2</sup>Davis does not clarify, however, the limits of the Sender (God) without the preacher.

The church is where the gospel is preached . . . the only form of discourse known as true preaching in the apostolic church . . . Throughout its history, Christian preaching at its best has had this proclamation of the gospel as its dominant note . . . the best preaching has tried to announce what God has done, to issue the call, tender the offer, convey the promise, with the confident hope that the preaching would be used by the Holy Spirit and that the results would follow.<sup>1</sup>

Although proclamation is a functional form of gospel communication with a definite purpose to reach unbelievers, other functional forms of gospel communication are legitimate and necessary among the believers.

Recognized in the early church is a second functional form of communication called didache or teaching. It is not a second rate type of communication, something to be held in lower esteem than proclamation; teaching is also done at God's command, in his name, to a body or congregation through an instrument, the teacher. Jesus, Peter, and Paul both preached and taught. Moreover, one is not second rate in content. Preaching and teaching do not involve different messages; kerygma is the content of both. The action, call, promise, and Word of God are in both. The difference is that in the assembly of Christians the implications of the gospel are considered. In types of discourse the two are distinguishable, but in practice the line of demarcation is not easily determined. Davis feels that too much current preaching is faulty teaching, that it is, "a mental gymnastic with teaching about a new life that ought to be but is not"

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

and a change of opinion and not a change of purpose.<sup>1</sup>

The third functional form of discourse that Davis emphasizes is "speech for the purpose of effecting some improvement in the hearer, some change in his state or condition, mental, emotional, or religious."<sup>2</sup> This he calls therapy, meaning to cure or restore to health; in homiletical literature, called exhortation. Davis further distinguishes therapeutic speech as centering on the human listener in a greater degree than do preaching or teaching, which emphasize the object of faith. Therapy involves the pastoral ministry of the Holy Spirit. This form, as the previous two, comes from God to persons through human instrumentality, an act of God performed through his servants. Another name for the therapeutic in addition to hortatory is persuasive.<sup>3</sup> Davis is apprehensive that persuasion will replace proclamation, and that preachers will only teach or persuade. He believes the difference among proclamation, teaching, and therapy is one primarily of form, and not a difference of substance.<sup>4</sup>

Another keypoint to Davis' approach of a developing sermon, in addition to the concept of functional form, is the concept of organic form, the structure a sermon assumes as a result of the state in which the germinal thought exists in

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

the preacher's mind. Because the original thought largely determines the sermon structure, sermons take many different forms. The most important element of the thought is the predicate: "only this can expel." The subpoints support and illuminate the all-inclusive statement. "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection," a sermon by Thomas Chalmers, illustrates how the trunk of the tree consists of both subject and predicate, and how the branches burst out from a complete thought:

Only a new love for God can expel the love of the world:

Only a new love of God can expel the love of the world.

Only by preaching the gospel of redeeming love can we present a God who inspires such love.

Only by believing the gospel and its promises can a man experience this new love.<sup>1</sup>

A germinal idea can take the form of a subject to be discussed. This requires that the sermon be a "distributed predication" in which a number of things are said about the subject. A sermon idea may also take the form of a thesis supported. Another form is that of a message illumined, differing from the thesis or proposition in that it asserts an affirmation without posing it as an issue. A sermon may be a question propounded, in which some inquiry is made. The method is to ask and not to tell. Although in structure it is a question, its function remains proclamation. An organic sermon form also may be that of a story told, with the idea "embodied in a structure of events and persons, rather than

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

in a structure of verbal generalizations, whether assertions or questions.<sup>1</sup>

### Continuity

A sermon needs to be viewed as a movement in time, a continuity of sounds, looks, and gestures which follow each other in progression. It is like music in live performance rather than music in the score, or the action of a play on a stage rather than in the printed book. This consideration elevates the importance of audience awareness. If the sermon considers a problem, it must consider it for the listener and from his point of view.

The listening situation of oral communication differs, Davis notes, from that of the reading situation. First, the listener has nothing to go by except the heard sounds, the visual facial expressions, and the visible posture and body movements. Thus implementation of necessary forms in manuscript organization may deceive the preacher into assuming clear design. The design utilized by the listener is that audible movement of thought primarily grasped through his ears. Clear and simple outlines with only a few structural divisions or points beginning perceptibly in time, running their course, and coming to an end in time are essential if the outline is to be of use to the listener. A second difference between hearing and reading is "an inevitable

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

consequence of the movement in time."<sup>1</sup> What is said is said and cannot be re-read. Another difference is that the listener must depend on his memory as he endeavors to put the successive pieces of thought together into a whole idea. The test of sermon design then is not how it stands up under re-examination, but how clearly it "comes through" the first time listeners hear it. The movement of the sermon ideas, therefore, needs to serve the listener's memory.

Audible design involves a sensitivity to the listener's problem of ascertaining what is important on first hearing. Such design will include two or three words which contain the essence of the whole idea in its organic structure. These generalizations effectively give scope, but ineffectively convey an experience of the idea to one who does not already experience it. What is needed, therefore, is a proper blend of generalizations and particulars achieved through reasoning.

Effective design producing continuity is constructed from the structural elements of a sermon. These elements include:

1. A subject, what will be talked about;
2. An inclusive predicate, one main thing the whole sermon will say about it, the central point the sermon will make;
3. A series of structural assertions, two to a half dozen things that must be said to develop the idea, the different points the sermon will make.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid... p. 166.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid... p. 171.

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Four consecutive steps assist in congealing the idea and main assertions: 1) choose first the last assertion that brings people to decision point; 2) choose the structural assertion that is to come first, meeting people where they are and being appropriate to the structural form of the idea and the type of continuity being devised; 3) arrange the order of the intervening points, each point enlarging the people's view and moving toward the goal; and 4) allot to each point the exact number of minute (or half-minutes) allowed for its development.

Davis considers five continuity types for the sermon's body: 1) deductive continuity, which begins with a general conclusion and moves through the particulars that give it content; 2) inductive continuity, which begins with the particulars and ends with the general statement; 3) logical continuity, which is a large and variable class including all continuities not marked by some special characteristic, such as, an extended syllogism or enthymeme; 4) chronological continuity, which is a narrative of unified series in which people and happenings interact to produce some outcome or crisis; 5) dramatic continuity, which contains three steps so related as to produce a dramatic action: exposition, complication, and resolution.

Davis warns against a study of continuity forms as self-conscious devices for artificial use. They are rather to awaken one to the possibilities that thought actually takes in communication. The forms ultimately come into being

as a result of the preacher's attempt to provide for the people a continuous and enlarging experience of the sermon idea.

Although every sermon has a beginning, it does not necessarily need a formal introduction. Some sermons will best begin with a sentence that will put the listeners at once in the middle of the idea. Davis observes that this seemed to be Dr. Fosdick's advice in his instruction to "Tell all you know in the first sentence."<sup>1</sup> A sermon has the beginning point of a new experience; it also points toward the end of that experience. When an actual introduction is present, it is characterized by brevity, interestingness, appropriateness, and especially by relevance.

While every sermon has an ending, it is not necessarily a specific conclusion, since some sermons end with the last point. Davis considers the traditional last point of application of appeal faulty in that the development of thought should have been moving steadily toward the application throughout the entire sermon with the last point bringing the listener to the goal.<sup>2</sup> The main function of the conclusion is to provide a final and more complete view of the central thought:

The conclusion is the moment in which listeners can come nearest to seeing the idea whole and all at one time. It is the moment in which the issue can be seen at its clearest, felt at its sharpest, and carried back into life where, if anywhere, it must be resolved. The conclusion is the last chance to accomplish the sermon's

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 191.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 193.

purpose, whatever that may be. Consequently, this moment is perhaps the most important single moment in the entire continuity. A sermon should conclude, not just stop; it should finish, not just dribble off.<sup>1</sup>

If a prayer is used at the end, it should not be employed for psychological effect or as a subtle form of additional preaching addressed to the congregation. It should be a sincere prayer addressed to God.

### Tense and Mode

It should bear flowers and fruit  
 Having something for good  
 For immediate nourishment  
 Having something for delight  
 For present beauty and fragrance  
 For the joy of hope  
 For the harvest of a distant day.

Language, the instrument of shared meaning, always suggests more than it explicitly states; it conveys feelings as well as additional meanings. For Davis the distinctions of tense and mode, by reflecting the preacher's point of view, provide useful tools for analyzing the sermon. For example, since preaching is contemporaneous, the present tense speaking to the concerns of the day in the current thought forms and language is to be employed. The past cannot be neglected, however, since the gospel is the account of God's action in past time, and every word and act in Christ's life on earth is fixed in a moment of past time. The gospel has a once-for-all character; Christian faith centers in One who is seen in retrospect. But this backward look raises for the preacher

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

a problem, that of staying in the past, of adopting the backward look as a habitual attitude. The answer is an appropriate tense of the sermon determined by discovering the real links between the past and the present, incorporating them in one's point of view.<sup>1</sup> The most authentic links are the similarity of heart between contemporary and biblical people and the identical stance of people in all ages before God--in estrangement and dependence upon mercy. In these facts lie the real unity and solidarity of the human race. Davis reminds that Jesus transcends "all the mutations of time, cancels all tenses except the now of God."<sup>2</sup> The sermon approach, therefore, is a point of view of the universality of the human heart together with the identity of the human condition before God and with Christ.

Davis distinguishes three modes in preaching, corresponding to the three modes of the English verb: the indicative, the conditional, and the imperative. The indicative asserts or questions directly; it assumes objective fact. This mode is used when the communicator wishes to say, "It is thus and so." The imperative expresses command and exhortation; it says, "Let us do this." The conditional represents not an objective fact but a contingent or possible act or state; it says, "if . . . then." Davis is aware that all modes

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 206.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 207.

are proper and necessary in preaching the total gospel. It is necessary to say or emphasize a divine "do this," provided the preacher emphasizes "we must do this" so that it is clear he feels himself involved exactly as the people are and under the same requirements. The conditional mode can indicate man's true image of existence by the use of the concept of contingency. The indicative mode is for Davis the most appropriate outlook of the preacher. "The proclamation of the gospel calls for the indicative mode; the gospel says 'It is so'."<sup>1</sup>

### Processes in Interpretation

The preacher is an interpreter of life. One can look at any of his sermons and ask:

What broad picture of the world it draws, how it judges human beings, what vision of good and evil it reflects, what life and society would be like if the preacher had his way.<sup>2</sup>

Davis sees three steps taken from the vocabulary of medicine that are involved in the processes at work in preaching:

1. Diagnosis-Description-What have we?
2. Etiology-Causation-How come?
3. Prescription-Recommendation-What to do?

Diagnosis is the observation and description of facts as symptoms of a condition, leading to a judgment or opinion in answer to the question, "What have we here?" Etiology is a search for causes, leading to a judgment or opinion in answer to the question, "How did this condition get to be as it is?" "What caused it?"

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 221-222.

Prescription is the recommendation of treatment, antidote for disease and program for health, answering the question, "What should be done about it?"<sup>1</sup>

These related but separate processes outline: "The fix we're in--How did we get this way--What can we do about it?"

The preacher interprets life even as the novelist, playwright, sculptor, painter, columnist, or musician does.<sup>2</sup> He, too, is obligated to honest realism and dare not pass over the actual ills and say all is well and thus give a false diagnosis of humanity. Diagnosis made by the preacher, however, must be made in love and compassion, by one who knows himself as a sharer in the problems that afflict mankind.

Etiology in preaching is a search for causes, a search after ultimate relations. It is theology that determines the interpretation of life causes. Man is to be seen as stamped with the image of his Creator in some unique way, but who is not now as God intends him to be or wills him to be. He is estranged from God; his understanding darkened by a disobedience for which he is responsible. Davis points out this biblical concept differs from other various interpretations. The rationalistic interpretation has its affiliation with the Renaissance and through it with the Greek thought: reason is the king faculty which, when operative, results in a happy

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 223.

<sup>2</sup>Davis observes that diagnosis has been effectively achieved by Thoreau, Nietzsche, Eliot, and other sociological literary critics.

and successful man. Another view, the psychological interpretation of man, neither sees man as a fallen creature of God nor as an intellectual conqueror. Its greatest contribution is diagnostic, revealing the hidden depth and complexity of personality, of self-deception, of subversive and conflicting forces, and of the servitude of reason to non-rational wishes.

Davis feels the preacher has tended to overplay prescription, the third process in preaching, as literature has preoccupied itself with diagnosis. Moreover, the preacher has offered often but one prescription. One brand of religiosity, however, cannot be recommended for all ailments. Advice to pray, for example, may be wrong for the person for whom prayer is an escape from reality. Preaching must be explicit in all three areas of interpretation and especially in its account of evil, but with the offer of hope also always being made.

### Forms of Development

It should show nothing but its own unfolding parts:

Branches that thrust out by the force of its inner life

Sentences like leaves native to this very spray

True to the species, Not taken from alien growths

Illustrations like blossoms opening from inside these very twigs

Not brightly colored kites, pulled from the wind of somebody else's thought  
entangled in these branches.

The developing material is the "tissue, the flesh and blood of the thought-organism."<sup>1</sup> Good thinking will utilize "evocative particularity" and generalization; it constantly moves in both directions, usually beginning with particulars and going to generals only to move back again to particulars. General illustration is one of the commonest forms of support, serving as a concrete example of a general assertion. Specific illustrations, another form of support, serve to bring out the real force of a point. Illustrations, including simile, metaphor, and comparison, must illustrate something to be effective, and that something must not be themselves. Explanation, another form, points out in greater particularity the meaning and implications of a thought. Restatement is also used to develop the idea. Testimony, which can both clarify and support, can be used with effect when it has stated one's point better than one can say it himself and when someone's opinion carries a greater influence or authority than one's own.

### Writing for the Ear

Whereas the test of good writing is permanence, Davis regards the test of good speaking as immediate apprehension and response.<sup>2</sup> To achieve these communication goals, adaptation must be made for the ear. The adaptation, however,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 242.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 265.



must not lower the standards of good language. Davis offers five suggestions for effective use of words when written for the ear:

1. The preacher should learn to express himself in as few words as possible.
2. He should learn to use words that sound well together.
3. He should cultivate a preference for short, strong, clear, familiar words.
4. He should cultivate a preference for sensuous rather than abstract, and specific rather than general words.
5. He should rely on strong nouns and verbs to carry the weight of his thought.

In writing for the ear, Davis believes it is important to remember that a subject is joined to a predicate to make a thought. He emphasizes that clarity doesn't require short sentences. Speech, he believes, is heard as larger and more complex units of thought; that hearing and speaking involves large units. He writes that clear and moving speech uses long sentences in order:

to give breadth and perspective to a field of thought, to combine parts so as to raise some and lower others, to bring some nearer and set others farther off, to accent some and subdue others.<sup>1</sup>

Short sentences have their place, however, their purposes being force, clarity, swiftness.

Specific and rigid observances of principles are stressed by Davis. The basic structure of the good longer sentence is logical, uncluttered, obvious, with an ordered relation of subject, predicate, complement, and possibly an adverbial element. The connecting words show the relation between structural parts of the sentence and mark the transition

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 282.

from one to another. There is correspondence of parts, of the phrases within a clause and of the clauses within the sentence, meaning parallel construction and repeated construction. There is co-ordination, joining together elements of equal rank, words, phrases, and clauses, adding one to another with or without conjunctions. Length of inner parts of the sentence is shorter for the ear than for the eye. The strongest places in a sentence are the beginning and the end.

A final consideration is that language looks different than it sounds. It is language sounds that are most essential in oral communication. Vowels and consonants, variations of the voice in pitch and volume, stress, inflection, intonation, melody, pause lengths, syllabic speed, timing are all supplied by the voice alone.

### Summary

Davis' central thesis is that the relation between substance and form is organic, not mechanical. The sermon is thought expressing itself in form and not thought contained within a form. Moreover, the form is the shape of "the thought itself, its image in the human mind, its likeness to ourselves."<sup>1</sup> His discussions of substance (both the idea and its supportive material), arrangement, and style were made in light of this thesis. Apart from his strong assertion of union of substance and form, Davis has emphasized points common to rhetoric: 1) The vital idea is to be a single

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

thought consisting of a specific subject and an inclusive verb, 2) The central thought or message idea needs to be expanded and developed into two to five points that adequately cover it, 3) The purposes of communication (persuade, inform, stimulate) determine materials employed as well as arrangement, 4) The message is to be organized with a beginning, a body characterized by continuity and progression of thought, and an ending, 5) The process of interpretation (description, causation, and recommendation: the process outline of "The fix we're in--How we got this way--What we can do about it") parallels the analysis of the speech to explore with modified use of the Dewey reflective-pattern and the speech to persuade with modified use of the Monroe motivated-sequence pattern, 6) Forms of development (materials of development) include illustration, explanation, restatement, testimony, and "evocative particularity," and 7) An oral style is to be clear, concise, interesting, and designed for the ear.

Davis differs at least in degree from rhetoric by emphasizing that the idea must come from scripture and be biblical, the subject of the central idea may have a set of assertions or predicates, the key idea generates the expanding ideas rather than the possibility of vice versa, psychological principles as available means of persuasion should be used with hesitation, the introduction and conclusion may be absent, and theological bias determines one's "interpretation of life causes." Moreover, he is not as articulate as contemporary rhetoricians upon understanding language as

symbols encoded according to the psychological realities of the speaker and which stimulate similar thoughts and feelings in the listener, who decodes the symbols according to his own psychological realities.

Compared with precontemporary homiletics, Davis has followed in the footsteps of his predecessors in keeping the primary attention on the message rather than on the speaker, the audience, or the participative relations inherent in the occasion. Davis has, however, altered his study of the message from the precontemporary theorists. He has disbanded the formal study of homiletical forms as forms and has demanded that form and substance reflect and affect the other. Moreover, his treatment of the text reflects the contemporary hermeneutic of interpreting the Source Book, the Bible, as a book of faith that addresses man today in the present tense and in the indicative mood. The exegetical approach, which seeks to discover the true intent of the text coupled with a passionate dislike of using scripture as resource (rather than as a source) for the sermon idea, also contrasts with some pre-contemporary theory which expressed greater concern that the sermon have a text rather than that the text or passage determine the sermon.

#### A Case Study: "The Autocratic Goodness of God"

An analysis of a representative Davis sermon, "The Autocratic Goodness of God," provides a more explicit presentation of his central homiletical concern as well as

concrete evidence of the manner in which his homiletical emphases are expressed in practice.<sup>1</sup> His own criteria of "design" (substance, including the sermon idea and its logical experience and personal supports; and form, including arrangement or disposition and verbal style--and the inter-relationship of substance and form) are analyzed by means of rhetorical outlines. Additional methodology includes the use of a taped recording of the message, a comparison of the sermon given at Lombard with the printed sermon having the same title given by Davis at Garrett Theological Seminary, a tabulation of audience response, and an interview with Davis following the sermon.

From the following substance outline of this sermon, several observations can be made regarding Davis' homiletical theory.

The autocratic goodness of God  
 are not pleasing words  
     since man's eyes are selfish  
     since it illustrates God's goodness as unreasonable  
 are not liked words  
     since they don't serve as an economical theory  
     since they don't serve as a theory of justice  
     since they don't serve as a theory of ethics  
 are relevant words  
     coming to us as a judgment  
     in private life of selfishness, acquisitiveness,  
     fear, jealousy, envy  
     in collective life of what we have done with  
     culture, commerce, science  
 are coming to us as a promise  
     in a goodness above all human dreams  
     in a goodness that is firm and present

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<sup>1</sup>Delivered by Davis at the Lombard Mennonite Church, Lombard, Illinois, March 15, 1964. See Appendix 3 for complete sermon text.

in God with us in struggle in the cross and now  
in aliveness and presence even if atomic  
destruction--He shall gather us and in his  
right hand hold us.

Blessed be the autocratic goodness of God.

Davis' philosophy of a sermon as an "anatomy of an idea . . . one sturdy thought like a single stem" with full subject and predication is apparent in this outline. There is an explicit, delimited subject: not God, or his goodness, but his autocratic goodness. An "all-inclusive predicate" of a subject to be discussed has likewise found expression in the implicative statements made about God's autocratic goodness. His theory of having "a series of structural assertions (two to a half dozen things) that must be said to develop the idea, the different points the sermon will make" is illustrated also.

The sermon is characterized by a reasoned argument that God's goodness is arbitrary. The first major point of the argument, his first interpretation of Jesus' parable, explains why the words are unpleasant. Causal reasoning is employed in explaining that "man's eyes fail to see as God's eyes" due to self-centeredness and jealousy. Implicatively, the second major point argues why Jesus' parable can have only one interpretation--God's mercy or autocratic goodness. The third major point, suggesting cause and effect, explains the results of God's autocratic goodness: judgment and promise. Judgment, in particular, reveals a careful step by step progression: the laborers grumbled, Americans grumble, grumbling is caused by man's conflict with God, man's conflict results

in his misuse of brain power, which in turn brings God's judgmental appraisal of culture and civilization, man's inability to be as superior to God is a judgment, judgment requires repentance, repentance includes both personal and public aspects. The chain of reasoning in this point, as between points, determines the sermon's structure.

The structure "as the cradle for the thought" is also evident in the last subpoint in the last major idea. The sequel point of judgment is promise. The step by step unfolding of promise is evident: God wills it, it is close at hand as illustrated by the Cross; it cannot be destroyed by egotism's suicidal attempts, God's right hand being present to hold the atoms.

The transitions and internal summaries are particularly noteworthy. Between each main point and each subpoint there is a quick restatement, a pointing forward, and an introduction of the new point. In addition, several brief paragraphs serve as restatement of the progress up to that point in light of the central thought.

There is no formal introduction; Davis begins by reading the text. The conclusion, like the introduction, is brief; it consists of a one sentence statement of the thesis. A few concluding paraphrased beatitudes ("blessed be") further restate the thesis.

Davis' theory is illustrated in other ways. The functional form is clear, that of proclamation. If it seems instructive, it is kerygma via teaching. The reasoned

argument facilitates Davis' concern for continuity. The present tense of the verb "are" is used in a series of predictions, making the text come alive from a basic statement of truth about God to the living existential person-to-person relationship. The mode is "is" rather than "ought" or "must." His recommended threefold interpretation is evident: diagnosis (the description of grumbling), etiology (the causation of usurping God's place by man), and prescription (recommendation of repenting and trusting). Forms of support include illustrations and comparisons (General Motors, Russia, Republicans, Democrats, husband griping to wife, the testimony of Ruskin), explanations (God's actions and man's reactions), and restatement ("judgment" repeated seven times, and reiteration of the autocratic goodness of God as arbitrary, self-willed, imperious, unreasonable). The sentences are generally long, several being fifty words long, one 65 words. There are occasional short sentences as few as six words "Our eyes are not God's eyes." The wording seems fitted for the ear:

Well, then, our boasted human enterprise is under judgment before God's goodness; it stands revealed not as an innocent adventure but as a conspiracy; and it cannot succeed.

The substance, the central thought, is based on scripture. The "trunk for the sermon" has the "text as source," and from it gets development. Davis' major thesis of unity of substance and form, a delimited true facet of biblical truth that has within itself its own potential branches, proving that content and form are two inseparable elements of



the same thing in the design of a good sermon, is clearly and effectively applied in practice.

One of Davis' criteria for a sermon is a truth about God coming alive to the existential person-to-person relationship. A letter that arrived two weeks following the sermon from a visitor who had been present read in part, "The sermon gave me more confidence in God. I am grateful." Twenty five members of the audience responded to a questionnaire following the sermon as follows:

	<u>Strong-ly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>No Opin-ion</u>	<u>Disa-gree</u>	<u>Strong-ly Disagree</u>
The theme was of vital concern	15	8	2		
The sermon thoughts were easy to follow	9	14		2	
The explanations were easily understood	9	13	1	2	
The scripture used shed light on the subject or problem being discussed.	16	6	3		

It can be observed from this tabulation that the listeners were conscious of the message accomplishing its author's purpose. But how well did it accomplish the audience's purpose? As previously noted, Davis denotes little discussion to preparing the message from the viewpoint of the listener; this introduction was not audience-oriented and did little to prepare the listener for the message. Moreover, a comparison of two messages, the one studied here and the text of a sermon with same title delivered by Davis at Garrett Theological Seminary in July, 1958, reveals he did not adapt

his supporting materials or wording to the different audience and different occasion in Lombard. This might account in part for the slightly lower audience rating, as compared to the items above, on the items listed below:

	<u>Strong-ly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>No Opin-ion</u>	<u>Disa-gree</u>	<u>Strong-ly Disagree</u>
The illustrations reflected my personal world	6	11	7	1	
The sermon spoke to my needs and predicament	8	10	5	2	
My attention was maintained throughout	14	5	3	2	1

Nevertheless, this sermon, as illustrated above, has a high correlation with Davis' theory, giving additional clarification to his sermon approach.

#### Other Contemporary Representative Theorists on the Message Construct

The number of other theorists whose prime attention has been turned to the sermon is extremely large. This section surveys the thought of these other major contributors to contemporary homiletical theory, chosen either because their writings are currently among the most frequently used or because they are on the faculties of seminaries affiliated with the American Association of Theological Schools.

#### John A. Broadus

On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons by John A. Broadus is the second most frequently used homiletics text in American seminaries. Although it has been revised, it is the

oldest of all the texts currently in use. First published in 1870, it was revised by E.C. Dargan, a student of Broadus and his successor as Professor of Homiletics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in 1897. It was again revised in 1944 by Jesse B. Weatherspoon, Professor of Homiletics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, who stated that he made the revision

in the belief that a revised Broadus will have greater worth for the next generation of preachers than a new book. Few if any books on Homiletics have been able to achieve the comprehensiveness, the timelessness, and withal, the simplicity of Broadus. Refusing to yield to the temptation to impose on the student his own favorite methods, he gave steadfast attention to principles and tested procedures, bringing to his aid the classical works of the centuries which bore upon the art of preaching. For that reason the book still lives and even now needs revision only in secondary matters.<sup>1</sup>

As was previously noted, Broadus viewed the science of homiletics as the adaptation of rhetoric to the "particular ends and demands of Christian preaching." He viewed Greek rhetoric as the ready instrument for the proclamation of the Gospel to the gentile world. It is not accidental, therefore, that the areas of treatment Broadus gives to homiletics resemble those in classical rhetoric. The first section concerns the "foundations" of the sermon such as the text and its interpretation, the subject and its classifications, the title and proposition, and the supportive materials. The second covers "formal elements" such as arrangement, introduction, the discussion plan and divisions, the conclusion, and

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<sup>1</sup>John A. Broadus, op. cit., p. v.

classification of sermon forms (subject, text, and expository). Part three, the "functional elements," elaborates on explanation, argument, illustration, and application. Part four considers the qualities of style (clearness, energy, and elegance) and imagination in preaching. His major concerns are the traditional canons of invention, arrangement, and style. Broadus' presentation of classical theory, together with a treatment of the "why" of preaching and a six-chapter coverage on "methods of preparation and delivery of sermons," combine to make this a continuing and "contemporary" body of homiletical theory. When Broadus and Davis are compared, however, it is clear that a point of divergence exists in Davis' disinterest in the study of the formal elements of arrangement and order in deference to his emphasis that substance and form affect and reflect each other, and his emphasis that the idea makes the sermon rather than the form holding and making the message.

### Ilion T. Jones

Dr. Ilion T. Jones in Principles and Practice of Preaching asserts that the sermon is a unique method for leading people to believe that God is and that God knows them and cares for them, and that it is preaching that can lead men to experience and to understand the meaning of fellowship with God.<sup>1</sup> As a homiletician, Jones is concerned with how

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<sup>1</sup>Ilion T. Jones, op. cit. This book was ranked, in the study cited, as the third most used book. Dr. Jones was professor of homiletics at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

these goals can be realized in the sermon and how such a sermon is produced. His first concern is to obtain the sermon idea by deciding upon an exact or specific truth, stating it clearly in a brief sentence and in terms of definite human needs, and finding a suitable passage from the Bible on which to base the sermon. He cautions that the text choice be a genuine passage of scripture and properly translated, that the truth of the text be the theme of the sermon, and that the text be used in its original and natural meaning.

A further necessary and intentional step of designing the sermon is the outline which is advantageous to the preacher in aiding in development of thought, keeping the preacher on the mental track, keeping parts in right proportion, and assuring movement. It is advantageous to the hearers in enabling understanding, preventing misunderstanding, providing emotional rhythm, and in remembrance of content. The requirements of an outline are unity (of thesis and subthesis), order, proportion, movement, and climax. Jones sees sermons as being classified according to types of outlines:

1. Two-point outline--sometimes called the twin sermon because of two balancing truths.
2. Question outline--each point in the form of a question.
3. Ladder or unfolding telescope outline--each point growing out of the previous one.
4. Classification outline--dividing according to class.
5. Series of statements outline--succession of observations.
6. Jewel outline--viewing all facets.
7. Hegelian outline--thesis-antithesis, and synthesis.
8. Guessing game outline--Is it this? etc.
9. Rebuttal outline--compelled to answer a false idea.
10. Life-situation or Problem solution.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 103-107.

Unique approaches given by Jones include symphonic sermons, imaginary narratives, dramatic use of books, poems, and stories, sermons of hymns and other musical compositions, sermons on art, and on objects. Jones also recommends the expository sermon which he believes should interpret a chapter or portion of a chapter of the Bible but which may also be an exposition of a book or of biblical characters. Certain principles, however, irregardless of the type, are to be emphasized:

1. There is no known way to escape the necessity of planning the outlines of sermons, if they are to achieve their maximum efficiency.
2. No matter what approach one decides upon he will need to arrange in an orderly sequence what he wishes to say.
3. Regardless of the contents of sermons, their outlines will fall consistently into relatively few patterns.
4. Familiarity with a few types of outlines, carefully differentiated from one another, will be of inestimable service in building satisfactory sermon structures and in providing variety in preaching.<sup>1</sup>

The sequential main steps in sermon preparation that Jones regards necessary to be followed are:

1. Select the text and general subject, or idea, for the sermon.
2. Put the subconscious mind to work.
3. Browse in your library and gather material.
4. Brood over the material.
5. Settle upon specific subject and theme and exact purpose.
6. Make a tentative outline.
7. Prepare a complete, detailed outline.
8. Fill in the outline with ideas and illustrations.
9. Write out the sermon in full.
10. Revise and reshape.
11. Get the sermon in your system.
12. Prepare yourself.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

For Jones, illustrations are essential since "abstract statements of truth, detached from the live situations of people, have little power to convince ordinary minds."<sup>1</sup> Illustrations function to make the truth concrete, interesting, impressive, persuasive, practical. When "inventing illustrations," the preacher needs to beware of overindulgence in figures of speech, avoid putting oneself at the center, avoid passing references to long lists of names or books, carefully prepare the anecdotes used, use dialogue for vividness and movement, use dialect sparingly, adapt storytelling technique, and employ oral style.

Similarities to Davis' treatment are present, such as his concern for oral style achieved by simple and expressive words. It appears, however, that his stress on form is at variance with the concern that Davis has for the sermon to grow out of the text "like a tree." Davis is concerned with a substance-form approach and Jones with a form-substance.

### Andrew Blackwood

Andrew Blackwood, author of many books on preaching, is regarded as the second most significant contributor to contemporary homiletical theory. In his best known text, The Preparation of Sermons,<sup>2</sup> Blackwood seeks to combine the science and art of homiletics, fixing attention on preparation for the pulpit. All but five of the 24 chapters cover the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p.136.

<sup>2</sup>Blackwood, op. cit. This book ranked in the Weiss study as the fourth most frequently used text. Dr. Blackwood taught homiletics at Princeton Theological Seminary.

message, treating such areas as the use of the text, expository sermons, supportive materials, structure, the art of the introduction, sermon plans, illustrations, and the ethics of quoting materials. The prime determinant of the sermon idea, according to Blackwood, is the definition of some human need that must be met with divine truth.

Whoever heard of a prophetic or apostolic message delivered at random or in a vacuum? The same principle has governed preaching throughout the history of the Church. Whenever an oral discourse has deserved to be called a sermon, it has met the needs of the hearers.<sup>1</sup>

Blackwood cites three factors that "influence every decision about the content of a sermon.

1. The state of the times affects the substance and the tone color of every sermon. "Today is not yesterday." The interpreter of God's truth makes ready to utter what the auditors most need to hear.
2. The needs of the home community enter into the equation more directly. Each congregation has needs all its own, and these the pastor must sense before he can do his best work as the local interpreter of God's truth.
3. The personality of the preacher also influences the decisions about what to do in the pulpit . . . This working principle helps a man decide about requests for sermons on difficult subjects.<sup>2</sup>

Having determined a human need, the preacher next seeks to meet that need with divine truth. Before choosing a text, the preacher will phrase his statement of purpose, although there will be time, according to Blackwood, when this process will be reversed.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 23-25.



After a minister has set down his purpose, he can use it to guide and restrain in all he does with the sermon. Near the beginning of his labors he may decide about the text, or he may start with the text if it grips him and moves to supply a certain need. Whatever the order of purpose and text, the aim ought to govern everything that follows. The purpose guides in accumulating materials and in determining what to retain. Some of them he finds in the passage, and others elsewhere. Amid all the various sources he uses the purpose as a sort of magnet.<sup>1</sup>

The preacher regards the text as "the biblical source of the sermon, the fountainhead from which he derives the central message," as well as giving suggestion for the sermon's form:

The ability to use a text in meeting a human need today depends on an understanding of both text and the need. A wise man . . . does not start with a wooden form, and then go to the Bible or elsewhere for materials to fill up the mold. He senses the need, and then finds in the Book a truth to meet that need. Only after he understands both the need and the passage can he begin to think clearly about the ultimate form of the sermon.<sup>2</sup>

Blackwood emphasizes that a textual sermon is one whose "structure corresponds with the order of the parts in the text." Expository sermons are to be distinguished from textual sermons in that they grow out of a passage longer than two or three verses. The longer passage is recommended with the qualification that the sermon be preaching and not Bible study. The preacher is to enter the pulpit to meet a human need and not to explain a message. Sermon materials may come from devotional classics, poetry, facts from observation, business and science, fine arts, and sports. Sermon plans

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

include the one-idea sermon, the two contrasting truths, the conventional pattern (a threefold division), the fourfold pattern, etc., the inductive method, the life situation sermon, the case method, the thematic message, the dramatic message, the Hegelian method, and the adverbial plan.

Blackwood, like Jones, sees the value of studying form as a discipline and as a reputable approach to develop the sermon "design." The close interrelationship of substance and form ("like a tree") demanded by Davis is not required by Blackwood. While he insists that the form fit the message, the form could as well hold another message. Blackwood, in contrast to Davis, suggests that first of all the preacher is to sense some human need that is to be met, and having formulated his aim as regards the listener, discover the answer in the biblical text.

### W.E. Sangster

W.E. Sangster in The Craft of Sermon Construction recommends an analysis of sermon classifications according to subject matter, structural type, and psychological method.<sup>1</sup> Adopting Bernard Manning's phrase of preaching as "a manifestation of the Incarnate Word, from the written Word, by the spoken word" and believing that preaching is God's chief way of announcing his will to the world, Sangster is certain that

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<sup>1</sup>Sangster, op. cit. Although the author was at the time Minister of London's Westminster Central Hall, this text ranks fifth in use in America and the author as the fourth most influential contributor to American homiletical theory.

the task of preaching requires master craftsmanship. This craft, he sees, is like the study of logic.

One learns no new fact. The gains appear in a sounder judgment and a profoundly different approach to the work. No well-trained speaker, on the eve of making a speech, assembles in his mind all that he knows of logic and, with a constant reference to the rules of argument, begins to set his thoughts down. Not a bit of it! The logical discipline has gone into him somewhere. In making his speech, he is concerned only with the lucid expression of what is in his mind, and how (if the speech is propagandist) he can persuade others to share his view. For the most part, his logical discipline works unconsciously . . . some subtle fallacy may leap to his eye and he will see more swiftly than other men the weak links in the argument, but, for the most part, the gains of his iron mental discipline are not easily tabulated. But they are there! The order, progression, and structural soundness of what the speaker has to say are all in debt to a study that taught him no new fact, and the technical terms of which he often forgets himself, but a study that has made him an indisputed member of the rare order of things.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Sangster argues, the study of structure theory per se results into subconscious habits and thus aids the preacher in manifesting the Word.

Dr. Sangster itemizes six classical classifications of sermons according to their subject matter (the actual content of the sermon):

1. Biblical Interpretation. There are legitimate forms of Christian preaching . . . that are not direct expositions of the Bible, but no preaching that is out of harmony with the Bible, and no preaching that cannot honestly be related to the Bible, can establish its claim to be Christian preaching at all. No classification of preaching comes nearer to universality. By preaching through the Bible, and applying it to modern life, the preacher could cover (either directly or by implication) nearly every human need.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 29-30.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 34-35.

2. Ethical and Devotional
3. Doctrinal
4. Philosophic and Apologetic
5. Social
6. Evangelistic

This classification is not regarded by Sangster as so exclusive that one type cannot merge into another. Moreover, he seems to concur with the critic of classifications that a Christian sermon should be based on the Bible, ethical in nature, and evangelistic in appeal. Nevertheless, he is certain that the types listed above are clearly distinguishable in thought and that their study as such is profitable. His omission of "topical" and "life-situation" types is intentional since he regards so-called topical preaching as not having the Bible as the source book but rather the newspaper which itself is "in sore need of redemption."<sup>1</sup> Sangster assumes that Christian preaching, in order to be relevant, will have topical references or make topical illustrations but they will be one of the above types. Life-situation preaching is discussed "where it belongs" in the chapter "Beginning the Sermon." Sangster does not view it as a different or new type but rather as "essentially a method of starting."<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Sangster's second concern is with the sermon's central structure, recognizing that "truth does not run all

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

the while in one pattern."<sup>1</sup> The preacher might feel that a given structure works best for a certain subject matter (i.e., exposition to Bible interpretation, argument to doctrine), but, argues Sangster, "there is no exclusiveness about it":

The classification of structural types and the classification of subject matter interweave in unexpected ways. A social sermon may call for exposition and an evangelical appeal involve us in high argument!<sup>2</sup>

Noting that one structure could be made to "bear the freight" of a given subject, Sangster warns against closed-mindedness and recommends a utilitarian approach to central structure.

His theme being fixed, no preacher should approach his early brooding on the subject, or his later-heaped-up material, with his mind already committed to one mold. Such an approach cannot fail to damage his work. Being free with many molds, he needs to approach his material with a mind truly open, and invite the bubbling matter itself to select the mold it really needs. Having crystallized his object in the sermon in one pregnant phrase, and having said within himself, "This will I do," let him draw near and question the heart of it with such thoughts as the following clearly in mind: "How can this best be done? Shall I argue the case--a strip of logic as true as steel? Would it be best to make it all explanation--a piece of patient teaching? Shall I keep returning to the central theme, hanging the one truth in varied lights? Shall I cast it all into one large picture?" The skilled craftsman has many, many ways of imparting the truth. His aim at this point of his preparation is to fix the ideal method for that precise need.<sup>3</sup>

Sangster also notes that variety in structural types eliminates dullness in the pulpit and makes edification interesting. The five structural forms he lists are exposition of a text (for the whole sermon, as a starting point, or as a motto), a

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 65-66.

passage, a book, a biography, a picture; argument, either inductive or deductive; faceting by origins, consequences, implications, concrete instances, eliminations, or means to an end; categorization, as to whom it is addressed or has reference, the enlarging areas of application, different elements in personality, varying periods in time, and ways in which a situation is met; and analogy. In light of the wide variety of molds, Sangster challenges to be confined to no mold and to explore the possibilities of variety and combination.

Sangster's third concern is with the psychological method employed in the presentation of sermons.

When the subject matter of the sermon is clearly determined and the preacher's object in his message plain before his eyes; when the structural type, or combination of types, has been definitely fixed because that one is clearly the best means of conveying the truth, there still remains this other question: What is to be the mental and emotional relationship between the preacher and people? How are the little tendrils of personality which reach out from one to another to touch, engage, and hold firm?<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that Sangster is concerned that the preacher gets his message across to his hearers' minds by studying their minds (rather than the subject matter or form). He regards the answer of "magnetic personality" as to why a given preacher "grips his audience" as fallacious. He proposes that a given sermon's progress is to be measured mentally and emotionally--by the unfolding of the thought and by the mounting tide of feeling. Moreover, the two "test" questions "How

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

does the thought march?" and "How does the feeling mount?" need to be related. Specific areas of consideration that Sangster regards with importance include crowd psychology and the progression of sub-climaxes as they move to the supreme climax. Four distinguishing psychological methods itemized by Sangster are the authoritative (awareness of having a message of the Great King), persuasive (awareness of arguing a case and appealing to a will, as if the congregation were a huge jury from whom one needed to get the right verdict), co-operative (the approach or mental attitude that the preacher also has a subject that perplexes as is made evident with the collective "we"), and subversive (the approach in which the preacher assumes an intellectual position contrary to his own).

Sangster gives suggestions both for the introduction and the conclusion. Regarding the introduction he writes "the beginning of the sermon is really determined for us already by the structural type and psychological method we choose to employ."<sup>1</sup> Canons for the introduction are that it must be brief, interesting, and arresting. Ways to conclude a sermon include: recapitulation, application, demonstration, illustration, and peroration.

When compared to Davis' approach, Sangster's classification system conflicts. Sangster does not make a dichotomy between preaching and teaching as does Davis. He stresses the value of studying the various possible forms and he believes that several structures could be used to "hold" a

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

given message whereas Davis does not. Moreover Sangster's classification on the basis of the means employed in presentation does not appear as a category for Davis.

Halford E. Luccock

In the Minister's Workshop, by Halford E. Luccock, includes nine chapters with an emphasis on message, as evident by their titles: "In the Beginning was the Idea," "The Harvest of the Eye," "Imagination Bodies Forth," "Structure and Outline," "Some Types of Outline," "The Bible as a Source of Preaching," "Getting Started," "Collecting and Assimilating Material," and "Words Are the Soul's Ambassadors."<sup>1</sup> As these titles indicate, Luccock is, himself, a master of words. Luccock believes that just as the preacher is an ambassador of God so words are the preacher's ambassadors; hence they are functional in importance rather than decorative. He writes that words "must be the carriers of meaning, bearing the credentials of sincerity and force."<sup>2</sup> The preacher, he believes, should not disdain art but rather be committed to it by allegiance to his calling; his literary creed is not for art's sake, however, but for Christ's sake. Luccock views clarity and force important for sentence structure as well as for word usage. He emphasizes that among the minister's

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<sup>1</sup>Luccock, op. cit. Dr. Luccock was professor of homiletics at Yale Divinity School. His writings were listed as being the most significant in contemporary American homiletical theory and this particular book as the sixth most frequently used (Daniel Weiss study). This lack of correlation is undoubtedly due to much of his writing being published in articles in pulpit magazines.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 182.



powerful instruments are the deliberately framed short sentence, the periodic sentence, the balanced sentence, along with the "keen-edged tools of contrast, parallel structure, parable, and climax." Luccock's outline types closely parallel those of Ilion Jones (ladder, jewel, skyrocket, twin, Roman candle, analogy, surprise-package, chase technique, rebuttal sermons).

As to invention, Luccock places high priority on the Bible. He lists a number of reasons for making it the preacher's chief source:

1. Such preaching speaks in the common language (it is the language of the church).
2. It contains the most vivid, dramatic, and arresting material to be used.
3. It saves us from the futile strain of trying to preach a "great" sermon every Sunday.
4. The parallels which it afford to present experience (its inherent applicability to life).
5. It is an unrivaled spring of variety and freshness.<sup>1</sup>

Luccock recommends: "Bathe in the Bible; swim in it; live in it."<sup>2</sup> He encourages "brooding" in the Bible and thoughtful asking of questions regarding its relationship to life, a double reading with one eye on its ideas and another on where one lives. In contrast to this, Luccock warns against last-ditch use (Saturday night reading), silk-hat use (out of which "the pulpit prestidigiator conjures little rabbits"), and line-of-least-resistance expository preaching (a lazy man's delight consisting of a weak paraphrase of a scriptural passage and an added moralistic P.S.).

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 151-159.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

Having a biblical idea for the sermon does not, however, cause Luccock to ignore "people as a source of sermons." Being person centered means more than life-situation sermons, of starting the sermon with problems and predicaments, for Luccock would have the sense of people "permeate" the sermon.<sup>1</sup> What Luccock is saying might be labeled experience-centered preparation and preaching. Not only must the ideas deal with personal-centered concerns but also social-centered. Great issues about which the preacher must preach include labor, housing, temperance, social hygiene, race, and religious discrimination.<sup>2</sup> The preacher must preach "a whole gospel--not two gospels, but one--for the saving of individuals and also of communities, nations, and society."<sup>3</sup> The kind of preparation of content in which the "double eye" is maintained can be ascertained in Luccock's list of questions in which he "cross-examines" the theme:

1. What is the particular truth or statement that comes out of this Bible passage? How can it be shaped as an affirmation?
2. To what possible situation or realms of experience does it apply?
3. How can it be made vivid and easy to remember, either in (a) describing the need or situation or (b) describing the solution or cure?
4. What are some causes of the condition or situation discussed?
5. What might be some effects of the solution proposed if it were really adopted?
6. Has this solution or remedy ever really been tried or demonstrated by anyone? If so, give examples.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 232.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 233.

7. Does the sermon tie a knot in the memory?
8. What are some objections to the solution proposed, or the affirmations made; or what may be some real difficulties? This is done to be fair with an audience, or to anticipate the unvoiced queries or skepticism in an audience. In church, hearers do not heckle the speaker; hence he must do it himself on occasion if he wishes his persuasion to have the utmost carrying power. St. Paul does exactly this in the great fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians. He heckles himself, thus making a dialogue instead of a monologue: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"<sup>1</sup>

It can be observed that Luccock's concern for audience-centered preaching and audience-adapted language and audience-focused form is both a quantitative and a qualitative difference when compared to Davis.

### James S. Stewart

James S. Stewart's Heralds of God is also one of the frequently used books in American seminaries.<sup>2</sup> Three of his concerns are appropriate in consideration of the message. Stewart states the preacher's theme always concentrates on preaching Christ, the announcement of certain concrete facts of history, the heralding of real, objective events, the divine redemptive deed on Calvary. Three characteristics clarify this theme: revelation, victory, and challenge. As preaching, the revelation of the cross is presented in the context of the world's suffering and sin. As such, it is a revelation of the hatefulness of sin, the divine judgment of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>2</sup>Stewart, op. cit. As Harry Emerson Fosdick is revered and read in Europe, so, according to John Bishop, Instructor of Homiletics at Princeton Theological Seminary, James Stewart is in America. Stewart served as Professor of New Testament at Edinburgh and is one of few persons who has given both the Warrack and the Beecher lectures.

it, and the invincible love. The second characteristic, victory, sets forth Christ in action, victor over death, vanquisher of demons, going forth conquering and to conquer. The third, challenge, is also part of the preacher's theme because the cross and the revelation bring to birth within man a passionate longing that his life might reveal Christ's spirit.

A second concern of Stewart goes beyond content to form. In a chapter "The Preacher's Study" he demands that no pains be spared to become skilled in the sermon craft and to make the preacher as worthy as possible to best share the message. The preacher is to maintain first-hand communion with God, know his parishioners, and keep in touch with great literature. He seeks to preach expository and observes the Christian year. Each sermon has a definite aim and intention, a central truth to convey. Introductory sentences arrest and main points focus the issue and so help toward obtaining a verdict. Conclusions are decisive and use direct personal appeal.

His third concern, "technique," calls for illustrations and a style free from professional vocabulary achieved by being clear and direct. These three concerns not only fit the classical canons of invention, arrangement, and style, but also are in concurrence with Davis' emphases.

Donald G. Miller

Donald G. Miller in The Way to Biblical Preaching builds his homiletical view on Romans 8, "Faith comes from

what is heard."<sup>1</sup> He regards preaching as achieving its true end by a concentration on the message, not techniques or methods. The message which does not originate with the preacher is a story of what God has done for man in Christ and which must be told. "Good news" is something that has happened and mankind must know that it has happened. Since the accent is "on the news," the message is more central than either the speaker or the audience. Moreover, the nature of this gospel is not a body of ideas to which men are summoned to assent, but the story of God's personal approach to man in holy action for his salvation which demands his surrender and faith.<sup>2</sup> Preaching is, therefore, concerned with rehearsing the story of God's redeeming action in Christ; the retelling of the story means a re-enactment before each generation of the one grand event of incarnation, cross, and resurrection. The goal of such preaching is to make past history present event.

Miller defines exposition in terms of content rather than form, contending that all true preaching is "the reconstituting in the current moment of the historic deed of redemption witnessed in the Bible."<sup>3</sup> He maintains that the

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<sup>1</sup>Miller, op. cit. This text is also listed in the Daniel Weiss study as among the top nine currently being used for the beginning homiletics class.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

substance of one's preaching should be drawn from the Bible, and granting this premise, he observes, it follows that all true preaching is expository. Exposition then is exposing the truth contained in God's word: laying it open and putting it forth where the people may get hold of it.

He emphasizes the substance of an expository sermon should be a reflection of the biblical passage on which it is based, and that the way whereby this is to be achieved is that of "the context historically studies." This concern is at the heart of Miller's definition of expository preaching:

An act wherein the living truth of some portion of Holy Scripture, understood in the light of solid exegetical and historical study, and made a living reality to the preacher by the Holy Spirit, comes alive to the hearer as he is confronted by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit in judgment and redemption.<sup>1</sup>

Elements involved in the above definition include the substance as drawn from Scriptures and found by painstaking study and quickened by the Spirit of God. Because substance makes preaching what it is, form categories (topical, textual and expository) are irrelevant in determining content or message. For him, a biblical sermon may be life-situational, doctrinal, evangelistic, or ethical. All "true preaching" is a laying open of the meaning of the Word of God in the Bible, whatever the homiletic form. Also, preaching is not mere speaking but an act, never leaving man where it finds him. Accordingly, Miller defines preaching as a sermon situation of a human encounter between the preacher and his congregation

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

transformed into a divine encounter between God and preacher and people.

It can be observed that Miller and Davis speak similar language and concerns. Both are demanding that the preacher release the original intent of the scripture through which God speaks. Both lay stress upon the message rather than the messenger or the ones for whom the message is being given. Both underplay form as form and both see the form being determined by the substance (although Davis is more articulate about the latter). In an interview Davis revealed that he has high regard for Miller and that he finds himself in basic agreement with his approach.<sup>1</sup>

#### Peter T. Forsyth

Peter T. Forsyth wrote the first edition of Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind in 1907.<sup>2</sup> The third edition was printed in 1949 and the first American edition was in 1964. This book, with its strong emphasis on the substance of the message, considers the main characteristic of the modern mind to be a passion for reality. The Gospel appeals to this passion and endeavors to show that reality is in the Cross of Christ. Ethical demands also are to be seen against the backdrop of God's holiness. He recommends that one not preach love and faith but Christ who produces and compels

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<sup>1</sup>Interview, March 15, 1964.

<sup>2</sup>Forsyth, op. cit. Although British and also almost sixty years old, this book is the ninth most frequently used text in American seminaries.

both. Thus the church preaching would not suffer from triviality with externality, uncertainty of its foundation, or satisfaction and complacency with itself. Forsyth does not view his emphasis as merely theoretical, but rather that preaching from the real situations in the Bible one will also preach to the real situations of the time. Quite apart from the facts that Miller agrees with Forsyth and Davis with Miller, it is apparent that Davis and Forsyth emphasize similarly the positive and relevant message of the Bible for man's longing for reality.

#### Paul Scherer

In addition to five of the theorists just considered on the basis of their books (Luccock, Blackwood, Davis, Sangster, and Jones) the Daniel Weiss study singled out several other men as having made a significant over-all contribution to contemporary American homiletical theory. Ranking in fifth place was Paul Scherer, Professor of Homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, New York, and at Princeton Theological Seminary. In For We Have This Treasure, the Lyman Beecher Lectures, Yale University, 1943, he minimizes the significance of labeling the different types of sermons: doctrinal, expository, ethical, pastoral, evangelistic.<sup>1</sup>

Let me only say again that I have never preached or heard a sermon worthy of the name which was not to a greater or less degree all five of these together, precisely as a good novel is made up of narrative, description, characterization, and dialogue . . . A sermon without exposition, with nothing which leads to a clearer

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<sup>1</sup>Scherer, op. cit.



understanding of God's Word, is without its highest sanction. A sermon without doctrine, with nothing which leads to a clearer understanding of the cardinal tenets of the Christian faith, is without foundation. A sermon without the ethical is pointless . . . A sermon without the pastoral is spiritless. And a sermon without the evangelistic is Christless and useless altogether!<sup>1</sup>

He does recommend, however, deliberate varying of the emphasis from week to week. Having determined the emphasis of the subject he suggests next the organization of thought "under heads" with no more than three divisions. Having the relationships and sequences of the main divisions in mind, "arranged in the most telling order, without overlapping, driving on toward some great truth or obligation" he then says it is time to block out the introduction and conclusion.<sup>2</sup> In the E.T. Earl lectures at the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California, he reminded the ministers that God never says "please" and that there is little "ought" or "should" in Christianity,<sup>3</sup> a point that is in agreement with Davis' theory that Christianity should be in the indicative mood. Scherer, like Davis, emphasizes that "The Bible is the preacher's book not because it is a record of what happened once but because it is happening today."<sup>4</sup> This same concern is expressed in his latest book, The Word God Sent:

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>3</sup>Elsie T. Culber, "The Earl Lectures," The Christian Century, Vol. LXXI, No. 10, March 4, 1964, p. 316.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

The Word of God is already relevant. It was relevant before we arrived on the scene. The honest toil is called for as one seeks to understand it, and by understanding it to apprehend its relevance. All it asks is that instead of being adjusted to the modern situation, or exploited to ends it never had in mind, it be allowed to address, at this time and in this place, what is most deeply characteristic of human existence.<sup>1</sup>

### Gerald Kennedy

Gerald Kennedy, Bishop of the Los Angeles area of the Methodist Church, was ranked seventh in the Daniel Weiss study of those who have contributed significantly to American homiletical theory. His understanding of message as developed in his 1954 Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching, "God's Good News," includes seven phases: "Of God"--in which people as well as social systems are judged; "Of Action"--in which the good news of active service is presented; "Of Law"--which underlines the moral universe; "Of Concern"--as evident in the compassion of Jesus; "Of Eternity"--the temporal infused with timelessness; "Of Redemption"--the above emphases blended together; and, "Of Truth"--the Gospel according to those who have experienced redemption.<sup>2</sup>

In a series of lectures on preaching given at Union Theological Seminary in the Summer of 1946, Kennedy emphasized a theme which is Davis', the interrelationship of "what we have to say and the way we ought to say it."<sup>3</sup> Although not

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Scherer, The Word God Sent (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), p. xi.

<sup>2</sup>Gerald Kennedy, God's Good News (New York: Harper Bros. Pub., 1955).

<sup>3</sup>Gerald Kennedy, His Word Through Preaching, p. x.

as explicit as Davis, Kennedy calls for a merging of method and message, indicating that the nature of the Gospel has implications for the manner of its presentation. He suggests various methods that can be used for making the outline fit the subject: implications, question and answer, negative and positive, analogy, paradoxes, and "Is it this or that?".

Chalmer E. Faw

From the major text-writers and theorists listed in the Daniel Weiss study, attention is now focused on a list of additional books either currently used or by theorists now teaching at seminaries in the Association of American Theological Schools. The first book, one currently used in teaching homiletics, is A Guide to Biblical Preaching, in which the author develops a guide for finding units of biblical revelation which can be considered "germ ideas" capable of being developed into a complete sermon.<sup>1</sup> This "germ idea" or "preaching value" can be based on the whole Bible, specific books, or Bible atoms (clauses, phrases, words). The procedure, according to Faw, is analogous to the shape of an hourglass. The preacher begins with the largest possible biblical contexts and works his way down to particulars, seeking to bring to each succeeding smaller unit an understanding of its particular complete contextual setting. The further process is illustrated as follows:

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<sup>1</sup>Chalmer E. Faw, A Guide to Biblical Preaching (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1962). Dr. Faw teaches New Testament at Bethany Theological Seminary, Oak Brook, Illinois.

After concentration on these particulars at the wasp-waisted center of the hourglass, he may proceed to take these parts and work them back through the ever widening contexts in which they are found. He will thus obtain a greater and more complete comprehension of the whole. But if he begins with the whole, he will forever have a framework to set the particulars.<sup>1</sup>

The result of such a method is "to rid the Christian world of the dread disease of fragmentosis subjectivosis

the almost unconscious habit of conservatives and liberals alike of fragmentizing the Bible along the lines of their own subjective predilections of theological leanings . . . The exclusive attention to tiny texts and the cavalier way of treating and interpreting these texts . . . have kept alive the impression that the Bible is a string of holy beads, any one of which may be singled out and conjured with and made to speak the final word of God.<sup>2</sup>

Five areas in which previous books on biblical preaching are lacking in discovering and structuring "preaching values", according to Faw, and in which he regards his theory as remedying are: a definition of what constitutes a preaching value, a system of biblical preaching with an over-all pattern for a year-around and a career-long basis, a contextual order for studying scriptural passages and discovering their homiletic riches, an approach of each level (book, section, paragraph, and small-unit) through events, persons, and ideas, thus providing a variety of combination and interaction, and finally, a method of testing the results of one's own work on a mutual exchange basis.

Faw offers a "basic formula" for discovering preaching values which he regards as being true to the point of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

view of the Bible itself, "embodying the Bible's own approach and perspective." The first and central consideration, he suggests, is confrontation of man by God (a divine-human encounter) and its necessary sequel of man's response to God. Not only man's personal but also his societal relations are lived before God (and confronted); not only historical man but also modern man is confronted in the scriptures. Using this approach, Bible study and biblical preaching are not a matter of applying the biblical story but rather discovering "true existence in the midst of the scriptural revelation and living within it."<sup>1</sup> A second dimension of Faw's descriptive formula is viewing the knowledge expressed and known through the person, event, and message of Jesus Christ, and vitalized by the Holy Spirit for each person, as the vital factor of God's encounter with man--both historical and modern. The third and final dimension is the minister "who puts preaching into the preaching value."<sup>2</sup>

Twelve chapters explain and illustrate biblical preaching through large contexts, whole books, sections of books, paragraphs, sentences, and biblical atoms. In his discussion, he recommends homiletical study be dependent upon both devotional and exegetical study. He also offers an evaluation score sheet (which concerns exclusively the message) to be used either by the minister himself or by others. Faw's emphasis in this book upon the source material (both how it

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

is obtained and that it portray its true existence) also echoes Davis.

### Faris D. Whitesell

Faris D. Whitesell in Power in Expository Preaching, like Davis, stresses a dependence upon biblical substance with an inherent form developing from it.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, he believes that the art of expository preaching is the ideal of most ministers and also the most effective for the people. Whitesell's research shows that although most ministers prefer expository sermons it is not their predominant method. He believes the cause of this lack of correlation is due to the minister's improper understanding of expository preaching.

Whitesell's understanding of the sermon types is revealed in the questionnaire sent to the preachers:

A topical sermon is built around a subject-idea taken from the Bible or outside of the Bible. A textual sermon is one based on a verse or two from the Bible, the main theme and the major sermon divisions coming from the text. An expository sermon is based on a Bible passage, usually longer than a verse or two; the theme, the thesis and the major and minor divisions coming from the passage; the whole sermon being an honest attempt to unfold the true grammatical-historical-contextual meaning of the passage, making it relevant to life today by proper organization, argument, illustrations, application and appeal.<sup>2</sup>

His further understanding is discovered in his negative itemization of what expository preaching is not:

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<sup>1</sup>Faris D. Whitesell, Power in Expository Preaching (Los Angeles: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1963). Dr. Whitesell was professor of homiletics at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. vi-vii.

1. It is not running commentary or rambling comment.
2. It is not pure exegesis without regard to theme, thesis, outline, and development.
3. It is not a typical homily using scattered parts of the passage.
4. It is not a Sunday School lesson discussion of a Bible passage organized around a contents outline but lacking sermonic structure and rhetorical factors.
5. It is not a Bible reading which links together a number of scattered Bible passages around a common theme.
6. It is not a devotional or prayer meeting talk of remarks, suggestions and personal reactions.<sup>1</sup>

Of the various classifications of expository preaching,

Whitesell identifies himself with the fourth type:

1. A series of sermons through a book of the Bible.
2. A discussion of a passage longer than two or three verses.
3. An explanation primarily of Scripture.
4. A manner in which the Bible passage is handled (rather than its length).
5. Any preaching drawn from the Bible.<sup>2</sup>

Believing then that expository preaching is a manner of handling he suggests

It is based on a passage in the Bible, either short or long. It seeks to learn the primary, basic meaning of that passage. It relates that meaning to the context of the passage. It digs down for the timeless, universal truths stemming out of the passage. It organizes these truths tightly around one central theme. It uses the rhetorical elements of explanation, argument, illustration, and application to bring the truth of the passage home to the hearer. It seeks to persuade the listener to obey the truth of the passage discussed.<sup>3</sup>

Whitesell, like Davis, believes the homiletics student benefits from studying sermons, and like Blackwood, Whitesell has a companion volume of sermons by expository preachers which he

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. vii-viii.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. viiif.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. xv.

tested by using the following message-centered criteria:  
title, introduction, organization, exposition, argument, illustrations, application, imagination, conclusion, style, and communication.<sup>1</sup>

James W. Clarke

With emphasis upon content, James W. Clarke in Dynamic Preaching calls for another kind of "organic unity" different than Davis' concern for substance and form, that of the personal and social aspects of the message.<sup>2</sup> He states that the issue of social or personal gospel is a false dichotomy of the message since Christ's gospel includes both. Moreover, the organic gospel is needed to meet the needs of an organic society in which individual men are in spiritual defeat and in which social evil is rampant.<sup>3</sup> The interrelationship of these two needs and of the message's two aspects are indicated with these words:

A personal gospel without a social gospel is a soul without body. A social gospel without a personal gospel is a body without a soul. Christ's gospel includes both because it is organic . . . "All the fullness of Christ" is the Christian preacher's mighty message; the comprehensive gospel<sup>4</sup> for the individual and for the entire family of God.

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<sup>1</sup>Fadis D. Whitesell, Great Expository Sermons (Westwood: Fleming H. Revell, 1964).

<sup>2</sup>Clarke, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 89-90.



Clarke is concerned that the emphasis upon the necessity of personal religious experience be not omitted since Christianity is a loyalty to a Person and His way of life. He is additionally concerned that the gospel be always a social gospel since wherever there is a "me" there is a "thou." He regards the gospel itself declaring

that its message and ministry are co-extensive with life itself; that nothing which affects man is outside its purview and judgment.<sup>1</sup>

and that, therefore, "if religion ends with the individual, it ends."

#### Harold Bosley

Regarding function as well as content in the message, Harold Bosley in Preaching on Controversial Issues allows for more opportunity for teaching, and in particular prophetic preaching, than does Davis.<sup>2</sup> Bosley first discusses the possibilities of the controversial sermon and then illustrates such preaching with nineteen sermons. All but two of the sermons were given at the First Methodist Church at Evanston, Illinois, and are to be considered an integral part of a

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>2</sup>Harold A. Bosley, Preaching on Controversial Issues (New York: Harper and Bros., 1953). This book, which is subtitled, "How to Maintain a Free Pulpit in a Free Society," is dedicated to Harry Emerson Fosdick, Charles Whitney Gilkey, Bishop Francis J. McConnell, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, and Ernest Fremont Tittle, "Proven Champions of a Free and Responsible Pulpit." Bosley regards the term "free pulpit" as representing a "a blessed trend" in the Methodist Church. This trend of "direct approach" to social concerns finds little support, if any, in Davis. Dr. Bosley taught homiletics part-time at Garrett Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois.

preaching program of nearly one hundred sermons over a two-year period.<sup>1</sup> Six of the sermons make use of what Bosley called the indirect or general approach to problems while the other sermons use the direct or specific approach.

Bosley regards all vital issues as controversial issues, believing "the only way to avoid controversial issues is to avoid vital issues."<sup>2</sup> Bosley states firmly that the Christian preacher cannot compromise his Christian conviction merely because the issue he wishes to preach about is considered "hot." The question of whether to deal with controversial issues was settled long ago, he feels, by the prophets of Israel who when felt called of God to rebuke Israel for ethical and moral sins they did so. If a minister believes that the Church should concern herself with all problems that "harass the thought and life of her people" he has answered the questions regarding preaching on controversial issues in the pulpit.<sup>3</sup> Not at liberty to "pick and choose" which issues to avoid and fulfilling a role which is more than the conscience of the people of their problems,

He is the voice of the concern and the conscience of the Christian Church which must attempt to keep the entire range of human life under the judgment of the love and the power of God.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

History's record, maintains Bosley, shows the clergy agreed in the absoluteness of concern for moral principles at stake and that they were in uncompromising conviction that it was their duty to speak out on them. In their tradition, the contemporary minister's concern and commitment must likewise focus upon the various tangled issues of today. He cannot keep silent in their presence.

If he belongs to the great tradition of preaching, he will know that it is better to be wrong than be silent in the face of the problems that are tormenting the thought and lives of his people. It is easy to explain mistakes for all honest men will understand and sympathize; it is impossible to explain silence, for none will listen.<sup>1</sup>

Having accepted responsibility to preach on controversial issues, Bosley sees the next challenge as that of being a craftsman in the pulpit. Preaching needs to be planned so that all of the major problems can be dealt with as long as they are real. Preaching will be planned so that issues will be dealt with directly or indirectly, the former approach enabling the people to face it in a clear concise way, and the latter approach allowing a foundation for such action. The craftsmanship for preparing such messages includes the following requirements:

1. He (the minister) must get the facts--not just some but as many as he can get. His research must be as careful and as conscientious as that of a lawyer preparing an important brief or a surgeon preparing to deal with a delicate and dangerous ailment . . .
2. He must get a clear picture of the conflicting interpretations of fact that are at work in the public discussion of the issue . . .

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

3. He must reflect, whenever possible, the judgments of the general church as expressed in documents, and resolutions drawn up by representative religious groups . . . The preacher will find it expedient to make full use of certain days that are coming to be set aside for special emphases . . . Each occasion lends itself to renewed treatment of continuing problems . . .
4. He must assemble and present the considerations that seem to him to be of greatest importance with as much clarity and power as he can muster. He is preaching from conviction and he should preach for a decision. . .
5. He must preach in such fashion that everyone present feels included in the process of thought and conclusions. Even those who disagree with him should feel that neither were their reasons ignored nor their sincerity questioned. The preacher should so present his material and conduct himself in the actual act of preaching that there will be a meeting of minds even where there is a difference of opinion . . .
6. Finally, he must bear his own witness to the truth as he sees it . . . It (the pulpit) is the place set apart for one who feels called of God to preach the Gospel to the best of his ability . . . this calls<sup>1</sup> for humility . . . It calls for courage, too . . .<sup>1</sup>

To the critic, it would appear that Bosley does bear witness to the truth as he sees it not only in words about bearing witness on controversial issues, but in actual words of witness--as illustrated by the nineteen sermons that follow. Bosley regards all preachers as occupants and trustees of one of the most significant institutions--a free pulpit. Moreover, he views it as an exacting and exhilarating responsibility shared with and belonging to the layman, who with the preacher are joint stewards of the spoken and heard Word.

### Theodore Parker Ferris

One of the books referred to by H. Grady Davis as profitable for study is Go Tell the People by Theodore Parker

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 23-25.

Ferris.<sup>1</sup> Most of the book consists of a discussion of the sermon content and form. Ferris' insistence that words "ought," "should," and "must" have no proper place in a sermon is in accordance with Davis' concern. Like Davis, Ferris states that Jesus does not need to be explained so much as he needs to be set forth, that it is the story of the cross, and not the philosophy of the cross, that has power.<sup>2</sup>

Ferris' four sermon classifications of this message are:

1. The prophetic sermon which is an attempt to reveal some aspect of the purpose or will of God in reference to some event or movement in human history.
2. The didactic sermon which is an attempt to reveal some aspect of the truth of God in reference to some human problem or concern.
3. The evangelical sermon which is an attempt to reveal some aspect of the love of God as it is in Christ Jesus and to draw men to him.
4. The therapeutic sermon which is an attempt to reveal some aspect of the healing power of God in reference to some specific human ill or ailment.<sup>3</sup>

Prophetic preaching, the one not listed by Davis, is intentionally placed first

because we live in a time of historical and political confusion, where the voice of the prophet is most needed to be heard.<sup>4</sup>

Ferris' emphasis would appear to be consistent with Bosley's concern for preaching on controversial issues and with Clarke's "organic unity" of the personal and social aspects. Ferris

<sup>1</sup>Theodore Parker Ferris, Go Tell the People (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951). Dr. Ferris has taught homiletics at the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

also seems to be more sympathetic to the therapeutic sermon than Davis:

I for one believe increasingly in the validity of the therapeutic sermon. It is a legitimate extension of the healing ministry of Jesus to those who are sick.<sup>1</sup>

In discussing form, Ferris states that the exposition of the Bible is not to be an end in itself but that the text is to further reveal the reality of God in reference to life as people now live it, and thus the text is to be regarded as a means to an end. With this view, Ferris maintains the outline is no more than the "steel framework of a building":

It is not to be mistaken for the heart of the sermon itself; it is the bone structure without which the heart would cease to beat.<sup>2</sup>

#### Theodore O. Wedel

Concurring in Davis' emphases on present tense and the indicative mood is Theodore O. Wedel in The Pulpit Rediscovered Theology.<sup>3</sup> The question he poses is whether the new biblical understanding of men such as Barth, Bultman, and Tillich can be made intelligible to the lay man and whether the mysteries of apostolic faith and the Christian heritage can be unlocked by the preacher. Wedel answers affirmatively, contending the primary function of the pulpit is to interpret

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>3</sup>Theodore O. Wedel, The Pulpit Rediscovered Theology (Greenwich: The Seabury Press, 1956). Dr. Wedel has served as Canon of Washington Cathedral and Warden of the College of Preachers, Washington D.C.

and not to exhort. Preaching along with the church practices of baptism and the Lord's Supper make Life in Christ a present reality. Wedel opposes moralistic preaching which emphasizes an "ought" response instead of an "is." He further suggests that theological concepts need to be placed in a modern frame of reference and the Bible preached as a dramatic story of God's mighty acts.

Several homileticians offer specific help for "planned preaching" according to the Christian Year, beginning with Advent and going through Trinity Season. These aids are written to not only provide long-range message preparation but also to provide a balanced set of emphases and biblical-theological materials.<sup>1</sup>

#### Clarence Stonelynn Roddy

Clarence Stonelynn Roddy in We Prepare and Preach observes from a study of the methods of sermon construction of eleven preachers "in the evangelical position" that he found

a common depth of conviction as to the sacredness of the call of the preacher and of the cardinal truths of the Christian faith, rooted and founded in that conviction which gives power and character to preaching, namely, the belief that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Books written with this expressed motif include Through the Christian Year (London: National Sunday School Union, 1962) by John Bishop, part-time teacher of homiletics, Princeton Theological Seminary; Planned Preaching (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954) by George Gibson, professor of homiletics at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago; and Preaching the Christian Year (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), edited by Howard A. Johnson.

<sup>2</sup>Clarence Stonelynn Roddy, We Prepare and Preach (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), p. 5. Dr. Roddy is professor of homiletics at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif.

Observing that the methods, manner, and personality differ, he noted that the adherence to the basic principle of homiletics by these various preachers was similar. Roddy believes that homiletical study is at its best when one studies the techniques and methods of those who proved themselves efficient and effective. In this light he also views this text "to supplement, not supplant normal texts such as by Broadus and Blackwood."<sup>1</sup> One of the "outstanding preachers" studied suggests that the best sermons are created when the text chooses the man rather than the man the text, which is the case when sermons begin during the minister's devotional reading of the Bible. The same preacher suggests further that the message should "warn men to flee from the wrath to come" in view of the "world at enmity with, and under the wrath of, God."<sup>2</sup>

### Dietrich Ritschl

To the "right" of Davis is Dietrich Ritschl, author of A Theology of Proclamation, who although similarly stresses the Bible for sermon source and form, nevertheless, de-evaluates form and, when compared to Davis, over-evaluates substance.<sup>3</sup> Ritschl does not see his book as designed for those who "desire recipes for preaching or ready solutions for

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>Dietrich Ritschl, A Theology of Proclamation (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960. Dr. Ritschl teaches at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. This book is a current text.



the main problems of the preparation and delivery of the sermon."<sup>1</sup> Admitting his book does not treat homiletics in the traditional manner, he concerns himself with the biblical understanding of preaching and its context of church worship and mission. Ritschl recognizes that ultimately practical suggestions need to be discussed since theology is practical, but that theology also needs to be discussed since "legitimate practice" is theology. Assumed in his discussion is the involvement of the entire congregation in the responsibility of proclamation, especially through sharing with the preacher in corporate Bible study and sermon preparation. Ritschl, who leaving the pastorate for teaching, states that he decided to rethink and formulate why the church is called to preach and what it is that is actually being done when men preach. This preoccupation with why qualifies his intentional neglect of how. Ritschl does give evidence of realizing that his own theological background and European experiences may contribute to his negative feelings toward "any technical recipes or practical homiletics."<sup>2</sup> Content rather than technique is his concern:

The content is what matters; form and technique will grow out of the content, not vice versa. To preach exclusively on the basis of a Biblical text--as long as we are in this world, and not yet in the "heavenly city" without a temple--is surely not a matter of "technique," but the very condition of all authentic preaching. Where would the Confessional Church have been during the Hitler period, and where would the churches be in their present difficulties, if the preachers presented "subjects" and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

"topics"? And where will the Church on the American scene be if its preachers continue to do this?<sup>1</sup>

### Edmund A. Steimle

Dr. Edmund A. Steimle disagrees with the thesis that a sermon to be biblical means that it must be based on a text; some themes, he contends, are too large for one text.<sup>2</sup> The controlling question for the preacher who would have a biblical sermon is whether his sermon "squares with evangelical theology." He views expositional preaching as implying exegesis with "double vision": "What did God say in this particular vision of the text?" and "What does God have to say now in light of the situation then?" Steimle's emphasis on double vision involves an understanding of the historical text in light of contemporary existence. He warns the preacher not to spend most of his time in exposition to the detriment of contemporary implications. In "throwing the light both ways" he suggests a 1/3 and 2/3 ratio. With regard to form, Steimle, like Davis, considers content and methodology as virtually inseparable. As to style, Steimle views the use of abstractions as a calculated risk; in its place he recommends substituting the concrete picture which is already in the listener's mind and experience.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Notes taken from a series of lectures by Dr. Steimle, July, 1964. Dr. Steimle is professor of homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, New York, and Consulting Editor of The Preacher's Paperback Library.

Richard R. Caemmerer

Beginning with Steimle, the books under consideration here pay more attention to the role of the audience in determining the construction of the message than do previous texts. Richard R. Caemmerer in Preparing for the Church relates the various facets of preaching to the theological principle that "preaching is God's Word in Christ to people."<sup>1</sup> This principle, he believes is consistent with the new insights into the meaning of the Word of God biblical theology. The components of this principle are

1. God has redeemed men through Christ to be His own and puts the Word of Christ on the lips of people to give men life and faith.
2. The Scriptures set forth God's plan in Christ and hence are the primary source and shape of the message.
3. The people who have come to faith in God through Christ are His church and need to receive and to give His Word for their life.
4. Every stage of preparation for preaching, as well as preaching itself, requires that the preacher be equally concerned for the Word from God and for the people to whom the Word must come.<sup>2</sup>

It is particularly this last axiom that causes Caemmerer to seriously consider the construction of the sermon in light of the listeners who hear it. For Caemmerer Christian preaching, as the Word of God, not only is God talking but is God talking to people. Realizing then that preaching is God's Word at work with people, Caemmerer concludes that the preacher

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<sup>1</sup>Richard R. Caemmerer, Preaching for the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), p. xi. Dr. Caemmerer is professor of homiletics of Concordia Theological Seminary.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. xi-xii.

is speaking so that men change and move into the direction that God wills. This he sees as the art of persuasion.

Since preaching employs human language and directs itself to human nature, it shares the properties of all good public address. Already the ancients discussed the art of influencing a person to action and called it persuasion. That is the psychological counterpart of what in theological terms we have been calling preaching to repentance--working a change in the hearer.<sup>1</sup>

The particular emphasis that Caemmerer stresses in persuasion, as far as the message is concerned, is "the preacher must make sense" through words. This particular tool in communication is so critical since not everyone associates the same meanings with given words:

People do not automatically understand the preacher's words in the same way he does. His message is the end of a long period of preparation, the result of his own battery of skills and mechanisms of handling language, the product of his own insights into theology and human beings. Any group of hearers, even of professionally trained preachers, is composed of individuals with varying insights into Bible or people, manifold mechanisms of thought and speech. We often observe, while conversing with individuals, how words which we thought expressed our idea precisely meant to them not at all what we intended or perhaps nothing. That situation triples in difficulty when we talk to three people.<sup>2</sup>

The spoken style requires that the speaker has to keep the hearer with him, and, therefore, necessitates certain requisites:

The first . . . is that the preacher takes nothing for granted, that he patiently defines his terms, illustrates his concepts, sets up simple and tangible analogies from daily life to clarify them. Next he must carefully whittle away at his body of fact so that he doesn't offer the hearer too much at a time and yet enough that he doesn't sound plodding or repetitious. Third, he must

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

summarize periodically, help the hearer see where he is, keep the over-all and central purpose of the discourse before him.<sup>1</sup>

In so doing, Caemmerer believes the "preacher makes meaning as the hearer thinks about himself."<sup>2</sup> Only then is the preacher speaking for God, and only then is God speaking through and to man.

### Donald Macleod

Donald Macleod in Word and Sacrament defines three movements that together constitute the modus operandi of all good preaching: historical, exegetical, and interpretative.<sup>3</sup> This threefold knowledge that must be gained by the preacher is the understanding of the historical tradition of the text, the exact language used, and the claim the writer's message makes today. Background assumptions in Macleod's discussion are that the Bible is always "the chief nourisher of all true Christian preaching" and that "the preacher is to interpret the Holy Scripture to his people." Regarding the first assumption he states

It (the Bible) contains the record, and in dependence upon it the preacher has the best assurance and guarantee that the what of his communication in preaching will be nothing less than the amazing truth that God acted "for us men and our salvation" in Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>3</sup>Donald Macleod, Word and Sacrament (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1960), p. 34. Dr. Macleod is professor of homiletics at Princeton Theological Seminary.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

Regarding the second assumption he states that the preacher

must discover what is God's Word in a particular text or passage and bring it to bear with a mood of concern upon some need or problem among his people. He must not begin with the problem, because then his preaching will lose the element of proclamation and will have a range no greater than the gamut of the human ills the preacher himself knows. He must begin with the Word and allow its white light to shine upon the common scene where it will expose our frailties and relate its redemptive power to them. It is in this act that the interpreter's genius comes to its fruition. This will the preacher ultimately offer to God and to his people within the context of the act of common worship.<sup>1</sup>

Regardless of the sequence of the modus operandi cited here, it is to be observed that Macleod is vitally interested in relating the message to the actual needs of the audience.

### Charles W. Koller

Charles W. Koller in Expository Preaching Without Notes sees in the audience the capability of altering the message, primarily with regard to the form the message takes.<sup>2</sup> The various advantages that Koller finds in preaching without notes are that it is more spontaneous in nature, is conducive to better delivery through increased audience eye contact, and a personal freedom and thrill that is derived by the speaker. Such message construction is dependent upon three factors: saturation, organization, and memorization. Following careful study (saturation) Koller recommends making a carefully prepared outline. From the outline, note cards are made (if

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Koller, Expository Preaching Without Notes (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962). Dr. Koller was at the time President of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary and professor of preaching.

needed). In making the outline Koller suggests the use of "visual aids": indentation, underscoring, numerals, points, and cues; also suggested: brevity of statement, parallel point, minimum number of points per series, and observance of the natural laws of memory (impression, association, and repetition). Koller suggests that if the structure is simple and natural that it will be relatively easy for the preacher to commit to memory a progression of thought (rather than words or phraseology). In terms of time and effort Koller indicates his "formula" will mean "half of the total effort is expended in saturation; another forty per cent in organization; and a final ten per cent in memorization.

### Whitesell and Perry

Believing that biblical based preaching allows for "a wide variety of methods and emphases," Faris D. Whitesell and Lloyd M. Perry wrote the text Variety in Your Preaching.<sup>1</sup> They judge one of the greatest advantages of their thrust is the maintenance of audience interest.

Bible preaching is the most exciting venture men can undertake, but they must not conform it to a single mold, thus making it tedious and uninteresting. Knowing that certain preachers preach the whole counsel of God faithfully but follow an unchanging pattern; and that other men believe the whole Bible, and intend to preach it, but incline to emphasize only certain doctrines, books and passages, commonly called "hobbyriding," the authors seek to show the value of using all the emphases and parts of the Bible.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Faris D. Whitesell and Lloyd M. Perry, Variety in Your Preaching (Westwood: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1954). Dr. Whitesell is professor of homiletics at Northern Baptist Seminary and Dr. Perry was at Gordon Divinity School. The book is a currently used text.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

They see the additional advantage in "variety in preaching" as developing the preacher intellectually. In summarizing their philosophy, the authors state

Biblical preaching should be characterized by a wholesome variety which utilizes all modern rhetorical and homiletical possibilities to their maximum.<sup>1</sup>

Specific areas for variation are: aims, content, subjects, themes, titles, propositions, key words, transitions, supporting material, illustrations, arrangement, conclusions, introductions, and the overall year-long teaching program. Although this book is based on the steps inherent in message preparation, the audience factor is kept in mind in the stress on variety. The encouragement to utilize a variety of arrangement patterns for the same text is, when compared to Davis, however, a definite violation of the substance-form inter-relationship stress.

Brown, Clinard, and Northcutt

Steps to the Sermon by H.C. Brown, H. Gordon Clinard, and Jesse J. Northcutt seeks its justification in a basic chronology of the process of sermon construction.<sup>2</sup> The authors have noted the obvious

There are nearly as many methods of preparing sermons as there are preachers, and almost as many theories and

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>H.C. Brown, Sr., H. Gordon Clinard, and Jesse J. Northcutt, Steps to the Sermon (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1963). The authors teach homiletics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. This is a currently used text.



systems of homiletics as there are teachers of homiletics and books on homiletics.<sup>1</sup>

They believe, however, "as the process of sifting and refining continues" new insights emerge. They judge their own sequence of sermon parts as enabling the preacher to not only understand "what he is doing and how he is doing it, but he understands when he should do it."<sup>2</sup>

They list six steps in developing the message. Step one is discovery of the sermon idea, meaning "an insight into a truth as it relates to life experience."<sup>3</sup> This step includes the relating of the idea to a text. Step two is interpreting the text to the extent of stating its truth in one sentence. Step three is gathering material including illustrations. Step four, maturing the idea, suggests ways of utilizing the subconscious, "seeking divine leadership," and using time creatively. Step five, which is formulating the structure, refers to a process step that sounds Davis-oriented:

Form and content are vitally related in any piece of writing. When they are correctly matched, they are so harmonious as to be virtually inseparable. Like an architect planning and building a house, the preacher plans and builds his sermon so that his message attains a perfect blending of form and content.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid... p. vii.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid... p. viii.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid... p. 30.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid... p. 95.

The final step concerns the importance, the elements, and the development of effective style. When compared to Davis' theory, these steps constitute a more detailed and specified sequence of sermon preparation. Although the book is message-oriented there are reminders of the need to have an audience-related message. In "understanding the task" the authors suggest that the total objective of preaching is to bring life to the people; that major objectives (in terms of the listeners) are evangelistic, devotional, doctrinal, ethical, consecrative, and supportive; and that specific objectives need to be formulated directly to "one aspect of one major objective in one sermon to one audience on one occasion."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, preaching is referred to as communication with this generation, and relevance is viewed as a matter of style which speaks the language of today.<sup>2</sup>

### Roy Pearson

In a course in "Biblical Preaching" H. Grady Davis lists in the reading syllabus one additional book on homiletics other than his own: The Preacher: His Purpose and Practice by Roy Pearson.<sup>3</sup> This book, like those being considered in the latter part of this section, discusses the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 143-144.

<sup>3</sup>Roy Pearson, The Preacher: His Purpose and Practice (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962). Dr. Pearson was then Dean of Andover Newton Theological School.

message with an awareness that the message is to be audience-related. Pearson's guidelines for use of the Bible in preaching are:

1. The Bible is an instrument and not an idol.
2. The Bible is a telescope and not a club.
3. The Bible is a seamless robe and not a box of trinkets.
4. The Bible offers not peace but a sword.
5. The Bible is the place where preaching begins.
6. The Bible is also the place where preaching ends.
7. The Bible yields its treasures only to its lovers.<sup>1</sup>

Suggestions five and six above may be inverted, however; the sermon may begin with the "foundation of faith" and then turn toward the world or (in terms of technique) start with the world and move toward the Bible. Pearson further offers principles for testing the choice of sermon ideas:

1. Are the ideas unquestionably true?
2. Are the ideas authentically Christian?
3. Are the ideas desperately important?
4. Are the ideas intelligently cumulative?
5. Are the ideas firmly constructive?<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Pearson regards the preacher meriting a place in the pulpit if these questions are affirmatively answered. Moreover, the sermon ideas must be developed according to standards.

1. The material must be clear . . . Let the preacher force himself to test each sermon thus: Can I state its purpose in a single declarative sentence unencumbered by subordinate clauses or co-ordinating conjunctions? Can I state its contents in a similar sentence? Can I mark its progression by a straight line that runs without deviation from the first word to the final word?
2. The material must be interesting.
3. The material ought to be controversial.
4. The material must also be manageable.
5. The material should be convincing.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 126f.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 161f.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 179f.

If these standards are applied, Pearson believes the sermon will be one that will hold also the attention of the congregation.

### John Knox

John Knox in The Integrity of Preaching views a sermon as an ellipse of two foci: the Word of God and the contemporary situation.<sup>1</sup> With either lacking, it is not a sermon. Knox's study states that to understand the original meaning involves a lively sense of its present relevance. If one fails to hear the text speak to contemporary man, then one has not caught the original message. A valid sermon, he judges, is both biblical and relevant: "Only authentically biblical preaching can be really relevant: only vitally relevant preaching can be really biblical."<sup>2</sup> By biblical preaching, Knox means something more than just having a text or even the Bible for subject matter, but rather

First, we may say that biblical preaching is preaching which remains close to the characteristic and essential biblical ideas . . . not as mere ideas--not as broad general conceptions only--but rather in the concrete context of the church's tradition and life. Biblical preaching is not concerned with abstractions. It was "existentialist" long before the philosophers began to use that word . . . Secondly, biblical preaching is preaching concerned with the central biblical event, the event of Christ . . . In the third place, biblical preaching is preaching which answers to and nourishes the essential life of the church . . . preaching is an ellipse moving about two foci of the ancient event and the always new life of the Spirit . . . To hold the two elements together

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<sup>1</sup>John Knox, The Integrity of Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957). Dr. Knox, whose view is utilized by both of the subsequent theorists, is professor of literature at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

in their full integrity and distinctive force . . . is the basic problem of preaching. Finally, biblical preaching will be preaching in which the event in a real sense is recurring. The God who acted in the events out of which the church arose acts afresh in the preacher's word.<sup>1</sup>

Knox would have the historical interpreter and the modern analyst see their mutual interdependence. He would have today's preacher realize that he cannot really understand what the Bible said to its own age if he is failing to hear it speaks to his own.<sup>2</sup> In terms of sermon preparation procedure, the preacher as a scholar must first endeavor to know what the text meant to its writer and what the writer intended it to mean to its first readers.<sup>3</sup> His concern is to obtain as clear a grasp as possible of the original meaning by a study of the linguistic, historical, and cultural context. But the "original sense" means more than logical relations within sentences, paragraphs, and chapters; it is the actual life of that religious community in which the text was first proclaimed. The preacher's next endeavor is to hear the text speak today. Knox illustrates with the story of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar, who cried out to Jesus "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" and whom Jesus healed. Knox notes that one sermon might find in this story proof that Jesus was the Messiah with the sermon purpose to convince that Jesus was the Christ. Another sermon might emphasize Jesus' compassion

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 15f.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

with the purpose to stimulate similar sensitivity. But a third sermon (which Knox regards as the reason why the story was recorded) treats the incident not as a past event but as an event in current history.

We are blind Bartimaeus. Christ calls to us, "What do you want me to do for you?" It is we who answer, or would answer, "Master, let me receive my sight." And in the measure of our faith we are brought out of our darkness into his marvelous light. It is obvious that only when the text is understood in some such way is it deeply relevant.<sup>1</sup>

Authentic meaning of the text, according to Knox, is the meaning it had and has. Understanding of the "original sense" calls for an imaginative use qualified by "intelligence, integrity, and good taste."

The above approach to the message is quite similar to that of Davis and Miller, although Knox's stress of "the always new life of the Spirit" seems to be stronger. Knox's model of the ellipse of two foci does seem to give elaboration and verification to Davis' emphasis on the present tense and the indicative mood. Knox, however, disagrees with Davis when he seeks to show that preaching is teaching. Knox doubts whether the functions of preacher and teacher were actually separated in the early church. He also argues that the teacher cannot interpret the meaning of the Christian life without reminding one's hearers of the central event of Christ (the activity inherent in preaching). He states that "unless preaching is teaching, it is not preaching," and that preaching is "a highly distinctive teaching" due to its content,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

worship setting, appeal to the will as well as to the intellect, and the preacher's addressing himself as well as the listeners.<sup>1</sup>

A further emphasis found in Knox is that preaching is to be personal: an expression of a man to men. Because occasions differ, language and form and substance also vary. For the sermon to be relevant it has relevance to the personal life of the hearers. Thus,

The individual hearer, in his own personal situation, is the necessary focus of the preacher's attention. He must be acquainted, to be sure, with contemporary literature, with contemporary scientific developments, with contemporary theological and philosophical thought. He must understand, as far as possible, the spirit of his times. But this is true only because his people are personally and individually affected by these factors. Quotations from literature, allusions to technology, even theological discussions are irrelevant, and therefore worse than useless, unless they illuminate the personal situation of the hearer, helping him to understand himself better, to see his duty more clearly, to know more truly the meaning of the gospel, actually to grasp the help God offers in Christ.<sup>2</sup>

### James T. Cleland

In Preaching to Be Understood, James T. Cleland emphasizes "bifocal preaching," which is in essence similar to Knox's two foci.<sup>3</sup> The issue for Cleland is not to be Bible-centered or man-centered in preaching:

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 71-72.

<sup>3</sup>James T. Cleland, Preaching to Be Understood (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965). Dr. Cleland is professor of homiletics at Duke University. This book contains his Warrack Lectures on Preaching.

A sermon is not a circle but an ellipse. It does not have a single focus but two focuses . . . It is the conscious, careful recognition of both the historic faith and the folk in front of the pulpit. There are always two centers of interest in a sound sermon--the historic faith and the present day. Which is more important? The answer is: Which focus is more important in drawing an ellipse? Both are indispensable. Together they form the Word of God.<sup>1</sup>

In understanding "bifocal preaching" three terms need definition as used by Cleland: Good News, the Contemporary Situation, and the Word of God. Good News means

From Genesis to Revelation God sought to bring man into such a relationship with God that man would seek to express that relationship by loving God and by loving his neighbor as himself. But it is important for us to notice that the Good News is also found elsewhere. It is expressed in the creeds of the church, in the confessions, in the catechisms, and in the articles of religions.<sup>2</sup>

He also notes that secular literature can serve to illustrate and illuminate Good News in the scripture. The second term, the contemporary situation, includes all that "impinges on our parishioners" which in turn concerns the preacher's business of the care and cure of souls.<sup>3</sup> The next term, the Word of God, is the circle which brings together Good News and the Contemporary Situation: "The Word of God is the name for the ellipse drawn around the focuses."<sup>4</sup> The Word of God consists of "Good News poignantly immersed in a local situation."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 43-44.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 46.



Bifocal preaching, which "has its head in the heavens, but its feet on the ground," also views preaching as teaching or doctrinal since it has both a subject taught and a pupil taught. Cleland uses the analogy of the doctor of medicine who must know both his medical Bible and his patient.

He has mastered the scientia of medicine, and he is well acquainted with people. He brings the two together for a healthy, a saving, purpose. As doctors of theology, our objects are also two: the Good News and the people--never one without the other.<sup>1</sup>

Some specific homiletical suggestions grow out of Cleland's "world-view." The Bible, the primary source of the preacher's knowledge of God and of his plan and will for man, is to be explicated by the preacher in three stages.<sup>2</sup> The first stage of sermon preparation is investigation of the historic Word of God (which will likely be the scriptures, but can be a hymn, a creed, a saint or any other point where Good News has been immersed in a historical situation). Leading key questions that can be used to find the meaning for that particular time include: Who was the author and had he a right to speak for God? Where did he speak? When did he proclaim? Why did he speak as he did? How did he transmit his message? What was he actually saying to his contemporaries? What was the gist of his message for his own time? Such inquiry demands the use of linguistic, literary, historical, and theological tools. The fruition of this first stage is the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>By way of summary, Cleland is using "exposition" to mean: "the understanding of a Word of God in its original and eternal meanings and the immersing of the discovered Good News in a Contemporary Situation." (p. 72).

writing of a textual proposition (a confident assertion-- sentence or paragraph--of the Word of God found in that specific environment and setting.

The second stage is interpretation or exposition of what is valid for all times in the textual proposition.

Here we lay possessive hands on the unchanging, ever-old, ever-new, divine Good News which is still true when removed from the chronological, geographical, cultural surrounding in which it was originally found. For this stage we must needs know the whole history of the church, especially that aspect which is called systematic theology.<sup>1</sup>

The result of the second stage is the refinement of the textual proposition into an eternal proposition (a confident assertion of the Good News in the text which is true for all times and places).

The final or third stage is application of the eternal Good News to the Contemporary Situation. That which was taken out of the temporary and inserted into the eternal (the two steps discussed above) has its sequel by being placed into the contemporary. The stage of application "is the relating of the eternal truth, discovered by investigation and elucidated by interpretation, to the environment of the congregation."<sup>2</sup> The result of the third stage is writing the final proposition (the eternal proposition made incarnate in the life of one's own day). The stages of then, always, and now are illustrated with the threefold task of a diamond: of chiseling it out of the rock in which it is found (investigation),

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

of polishing and cutting it so that its glory is revealed (interpretation), and of placing it in a contemporary setting of a ring (application).

Additional homiletical counsel that Cleland gives in "preaching to be understood" is the developing of a general end which reveals the minister's purpose (such as, those found in Principles and Types of Speech by Dr. Alan Monroe: entertain, inform, stimulate, convince, and actuate, with the exception of the first); and the developing of a specific end which reveals the listener's role in implementing that purpose. Cleland recommends that

An intelligent use of the general ends and the specific intents will keep us from drawing a bow at a venture. We shall aim at Ahabor, his cousins, his uncles, and his aunts. We may even hit more than one of them.<sup>1</sup>

The development of a "controlled plan of development" follows as another sermon preparation step. Like Davis and Ferris whom he quotes, Cleland wants a pattern that has "perfect balance between significant content and effective form."<sup>2</sup> A verbal style that is oral (short sentences, many principal clauses, simple words, key terms defined and repeated, rhetorical questions) and picturesque is used. Illustrations that are valid (an essential relationship with the subject matter), pertinent (understood by the congregation), and varied (touching different ages, sexes, and interests) are sought.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

Moreover, Cleland emphasizes that a sermon is truth plus preacher plus style:

The truth comes to life for the congregation where the committed and prepared preacher, en rapport with his people, makes use of a mastered style to transmit the Word of God . . . the difference between a B and an A student is seldom a knowledge of facts, or ideas, or principles. The difference is usually in the way in which each makes use of words to express the equally known data. This is also true of preaching. The pitcher must throw the kind of delivery, which he has mastered, in such a way that the catcher can handle it.<sup>1</sup>

An earlier book by Cleland, The True and Lively Word, contains similar but less developed concepts of the sermon idea, its development and form, and style.<sup>2</sup> Regarding sermon ideas, Cleland states that there is but one theme to preach on: that God sought and seeks men in order that they may be in right relations with Him and with one another. Cleland sees this theme at the heart of the Bible with God seeking "to bring man into such relations with Himself that He and man may be on friendly terms and that man may be spiritually healthy."<sup>3</sup> It is this "biblical World-view" that is the concern of sermons. This theme which constitutes the Word of God is not limited to the biblical pages but includes "that redeeming activity of God which is contemporaneously perpetuated by the work of His Holy Spirit in the believer

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>2</sup>James T. Cleland, The True and Lively Word (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954). This book (Daniel Weiss study) was being used as a homiletics text in 1962.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

and in the community of believers, the Church."<sup>1</sup>

The underlying supposition of sermon ideas, according to Cleland, is that the Christian faith is "a religion of revelation whose origins have been preserved for us in the pages of the Bible."<sup>2</sup> Discovering this revelation means discovering the linguistic, literary, historical, and tendency writing facts (the latter being an awareness that behind the books are men and women who have enthusiasms, prejudices, and partialities). Discovering this revelation also means that the eternal Word of God is "always cabined, cribbed, and confined by the temporal and material facts in which it reveals itself" with the temporal conditioning the eternal and concealing the Word as well as revealing it.<sup>3</sup> Important in studying the meaning of a section of Scripture is to underscore the event, not the account, and to understand the account in such a way as to recover the event.<sup>4</sup>

Sermonic ideas are also dependent upon understanding the "word of American world." This particular word, Cleland sees, comes in the form of a creed: pragmatic assurance, general neighborliness, or ultimate anxiety. These currently held creeds require that the preacher, who communicates the Word, use an effective style characterized by understandable language, informal and conversational style, and picturesque words.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

Ronald E. Sleeth

Proclaiming the Word by Ronald E. Sleeth is, according to the author, an attempt to relate the Word of God to people in the pew and to the culture they represent.<sup>1</sup> Sleeth sees this book's substance then as being about the communication of the gospel.

This concern for communicating the gospel rests upon the theological assumption that revelation is situational. If the Incarnation is to have meaning, then it has meaning at the point of making it relevant to man in his setting.<sup>2</sup>

The basic concern in this book is with sermon content, and the basic thesis is that Christian proclamation is biblical. An additional theme is that the preacher preaching is still the primary way of mediating God's truth, of extending the Incarnation. Regarding the main theme, Sleeth first develops a theory regarding "proclaiming the Word within the Bible." In this theory the preacher comes to a "theological understanding of and a confrontation with" the Bible, including awarenesses of the central core of the message: "what God has done and is doing through the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."<sup>3</sup> This understanding sees revelation as situational, that God continues to reveal himself in history, and preaching, as

<sup>1</sup>Ronald E. Sleeth, op. cit. Davis considers this book's position as being close to his own (Interview, March 15, 1964).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

proclaiming the revelation "in the context of events to which the preacher must address himself."<sup>1</sup> Preaching is, quoting Paul Tillich, "to correlate the questions implied in the situation with the answers implied in the message."<sup>2</sup> Sleeth views the preacher then with "one foot in the realm of the gospel and one in his contemporary world" with his task being both kerygmatic and relevant.

Sleeth would have the biblical preacher see the Bible as the Word of God "in a dynamic way" in which it is viewed not as science, literature, or history, but as a book of faith.<sup>3</sup> Rather than being concerned with a rationalistic view of the scriptures the preacher is concerned with Heilsgeschichte (salvation history). The Bible is thus viewed as a "book of faith for covenanted people--then and now."<sup>4</sup> Sleeth's "theory" of proclaiming the Word within the Bible would distinguish between word and Word with the latter being conceived of as conversation between two friends where the person and idea transmitted are more important than the language. Moreover, his theory views the Bible "arising in historical situations where God addressed men" and where men were grasped by God's claim upon them.<sup>5</sup> The Word of God then is the Word behind

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 34-35.

the words which speak of the creative acts of God. Sleeth indicates also that the Word is found when it claims contemporary men in a personal, existential way. The sermon thus understood is a communication of the Word found in the Bible given to a congregation for the purpose of becoming personal history.

When Sleeth examines prevailing pulpit practices, however, he discovers much violation of this biblical view. There are "topical" preachers who speak on subjects that do not grow out of a passage of scripture. A text may be used but "the points of the outline were not derived from the passage."<sup>1</sup> The "topical-biblical" preachers, those claiming to preach only the Bible, tend to use passages to proof-text their own statements. Again, according to Sleeth, the main insights are not biblically derived. A third violation to biblical preaching are those who preach "biblical ideas." This preaching

is deductive, moving from a theme, albeit biblical, and then seeking--if at all--some biblical materials as examples to illustrate the theme.<sup>2</sup>

A definition of what biblical preaching is is given by Sleeth as follows:

Biblical preaching is the proclamation of the kerygma (either explicitly or implicitly) through the exposition of specific scriptural material directed to contemporary life.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 42.



Affirmations growing out of this definition regarding biblical sermons are three:

1. The biblical sermon should proclaim the kerygma either explicitly or implicitly . . . the underlying assumption of every sermon, and the raison d'etre for our calling.
2. The exposition of specific scriptural material. Whereas preaching biblical ideas is deductive preaching, true biblical preaching is inductive. It begins with specific scripture and finds there the source of the sermon . . . this method really examines the scripture passage . . . this method lets the sermon develop from the passage studied . . . It takes the Bible seriously as the data for our faith, beginning with its words, letting the Word speak through them, and moving in concentric circles right into our present lives.
3. Biblical preaching is directed to meeting the needs of contemporary life . . . the gospel is contemporaneous . . . the gospel is incarnational . . . It is present history, and so must be adapted to meet the needs of our time . . . The Bible is concerned exactly with interpreting God's will to the present day--then and now.<sup>1</sup>

Sleeth's theory is that the preacher's content begins with an attempt to open the pages of the Bible to the twentieth century in a confrontation of modern man with the gospel through the source--the Bible.

Sleeth also suggests an exegetical method for proclaiming the Word within the Bible. First, the preacher endeavors to see what the writer intended to convey. A lexical study of words is made, an examination of the word in the sentence is conducted, and the words in their context and the passage in its historical setting are studied. The passage is further viewed, moreover, in terms of the total biblical viewpoint. Having paid the price of dedicated study, Sleeth

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 42f.

now sees the preacher as being ready to ask the question of relevancy of the passage for faith and life today. Another part of the creative task of the preacher is "to develop, unlock, or see the form take shape as he wrestles with the passage and its idea."<sup>1</sup> Although Sleeth believes, like Davis, that biblical material has locked within it its own form and outline, he gives, nevertheless, examples of how materials may develop. These examples include a three point pattern of setting, meaning, and relevance, and a parallel development of a then-and-now manner. Sleeth would permit textual sermons as long as the arrangement of ideas grows and develops from the passage. Sleeth, it would appear, would permit an occasional sermon that was Christian although not biblical. Since people seek to understand their faith, Sleeth underscores the necessity of proclaiming the Word through the doctrines of the church.

Since sermons are to be relevant and because ideas often become abstract, Sleeth sees as crucial the coming "to terms with language," the preacher making "sure that his language is a fit vehicle to carry its theological load."<sup>2</sup> The real test of words must be in terms of meanings, of how real they make the material to the listener.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

The proclaimed Word must be biblically based and doctrinally sound and person-centered. Sleeth traces the "life-situation" preaching movement from the revolt from a "wooden-expository method of preaching" which lacked relevance. Sleeth, however, does not see life-situation preaching as a type of itself but rather as an example of topical preaching. He views with alarm the ease with which "life-situation" or "project method" preaching tends to solve problems on the human level through secular disciplines and its failure to confront people with God. Moreover, he notes that most topical sermons "use the Bible rather than letting the Bible use them."<sup>1</sup> However, life-situation preaching is recommended when it is used as an approach in the sermon rather than the substance of the sermon. Its form can permit a Christian message to come to people in need.<sup>2</sup>

Sleeth does not view biblical preaching and life situation preaching, however, as being in antithesis.

True biblical preaching moves out from its source, and is concerned with meeting the needs of contemporary life--people. Indeed, it is the only valid way of doing so to make sure the gospel is proclaimed and that the Word heard in the final analysis is not a human word but the saving Word.<sup>3</sup>

Sleeth would prefer, however, to let the Bible speak to the real questions of man:

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

Its dynamic and concrete way of dealing with man's deepest questions is much more effective than dependence upon our own--or others'--ideas of man's needs. One of the greatest contributions of dialectical theology has been at this precise point. It reminds us that the gospel speaks to our needs whether we see them or not--or, indeed, whether we want to see them.<sup>1</sup>

To say, as Sleeth does say, that an effective sermon is one which is biblically based, doctrinally sound, and has a life-situation thrust to it is also to say, in the context of Sleeth's emphases, that the sermon is an exposition of specific scripture directed to the meeting of needs in contemporary life. His emphasis is similar, if not identical, to Davis' concern to make "the text come alive from a basic statement of truth about God to a living existential person-to-person relationship."

### Summary

Homiletics, as well as classical rhetoric, has emphasized the message-construct, stressing the elements of invention, arrangement, and style. Variations in these characteristics have occurred in American Protestant homiletics, from the rise of an authoritative, doctrinal, and personal salvation message prior to 1860 to the two divergent trends in the period of 1860 to 1940, one of a largely social and topical message, and the other a more elaborate structure. This chapter, seeking to explore the contemporary understanding of the message-construct within American Protestant homiletics, has concentrated on the work of H. Grady Davis, Professor of Functional Theology at the Chicago Lutheran School of Theology,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

and author of Design for Preaching, the text most frequently used in homiletics courses in 1962.

Although Davis' theory covered the traditional canons, his treatment was unique; in lieu of a study of the forms as forms, Davis advanced the thesis that substance and form are an organic unity. His discussion of the inseparability of form and content in the design of a sermon is a point that was said well and interestingly. "A sermon should be like a tree . . . should be a living organism: with one sturdy thought . . . with natural limbs . . . deep roots . . . branches that thrust out by the force of its inner life . . . bear flowers and fruits" is a philosophy that speaks both to the what and the how of preaching. At a time when biblical theology is calling preachers to preach the Word, Davis has avoided the extreme positions of saying it is all in the art and science or it is only content that matters. He has not only emphasized both, but he has made them interdependent and inseparable. He has shown by example sermons--both those of others and his own--that his thesis works. The study of a particular sermon, "The Autocratic Goodness of God," likewise is an example of how his theory works, as well as giving additional illustration of his theory. When examined in the light of the biblical theology and the "new hermeneutic" thrusts, it was discovered that Davis utilized contemporary interpretive principles, viewing the scriptures as a book of faith which when so proclaimed speaks to the contemporary existential needs.

To complement the Davis case study, the top seven texts in current use and the top nine theorists (as per

Daniel Weiss study) were surveyed. Almost all of these, with the exception of Miller and Forsyth, stressed the discipline of homiletical forms, particularly outlines. Davis most clearly presented the thesis that content and form are inseparable elements of the same thing, and that form reflects and affects the content. An approximate twenty-five additional theorists whose books are currently being used or who are contemporary theorists teaching at seminaries in the American Association of Theological Schools were also consulted. Among these were those who emphasized various skills, such as arrangement so that preaching can be without notes. To the "right" of Davis was Dietrich Ritschl, who placed stress on content and little, if any, on arrangement and style. Perhaps to the "left" of Davis is Cleland, who most strongly saw the source of the preached Word as not necessarily coming from the scriptures but from wherever God is at work. A significant number of the theorists (including Miller, Cleland, Sleeth, Knox) were affected by the biblical theology emphasis and agreed with Davis in viewing the scriptures as a book of faith that deals with continued and contemporary concerns, with the preacher's task being the exposition of the Word so that it can speak to contemporary needs. With few exceptions (including Blackwood, Jones, Luccock, and Sleeth) very little attention was given to a study of the audience in the invention and arrangement phases. A few more saw an opportunity of achieving relevancy or audience-relatedness in verbal style. During the early part of the contemporary period

(1940-1965), theorists like Jones, Blackwood, and Luccock were quick to emphasize the topical sermon. During the latter part of this period, however, many theorists, including Davis, tended to look askance at the topical sermon and, instead, applauded the expository biblical sermon but phrased in the present tense and in the indicative mood with an accent on contemporary relevancy.

All of the theorists here consulted, and especially Davis, were primarily, if not exclusively, concerned with the message-construct and in particular the classical canons of invention, arrangement, and style. "Message" for Davis, and most of the theorists, was defined as "God's Word." With minor exception both substance and form were "designed" and developed apart from considerations of the specific audience. Utilization, however, of the "new hermeneutic," of "bifocal preaching," of the "ellipse of two foci," and of the emphasis on the relational vs. the factual knowledge, will (quoting Dr. Davis in a course entitled "Biblical Preaching," July, 1965) "never leave preaching the same as it was the last twenty-five years." There were theorists who viewed words as symbols which point to the reality rather than constituting that reality. There were fewer individuals who were explicit in viewing words as a code which when decoded by the listener serves as a stimuli to call forth similar thoughts and feelings as those held by the one preaching.

It can be concluded by this writer that the strong emphasis of Davis' text (along with its adoption) and the

preponderance of literature of the other theorists indicate that the message-construct is central in contemporary American Protestant preaching. This stress is consistent, although it may be refined and refocused, with pre-contemporary homiletical theory, and with much of rhetoric.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE CONGREGATION

Not since Bible days has any writer paid sufficient heed to the hearer or the message, who is certainly of equal or even greater importance than the preacher or his sermon. A wise man enters the pulpit to glorify his Maker, not by calling attention to the speaker or the sermon, but by guiding the hearer in doing the will of the Heavenly Father . . . Over the years, many teachers have tried to give the hearer of the sermon his due. This part of our teaching we have found most difficult.<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

The art and science of preaching is approached by many contemporary theorists from the viewpoint of the congregation, rather than from the message or the preacher. The importance of the congregation in preaching is stated by Bryant Kirkland, minister of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City, who writes that preaching must do more than just present truth for people:

There is another alternative--that is for them to understand the love, mercy, and wisdom of God . . . truth needs to be exchanged with another person in the depth of personal communication where it is verified by human response.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Andrew W. Blackwood quoted on the cover jacket of The Preacher and His Audience by Webb B. Garrison (Westwood: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1954).

<sup>2</sup>Bryant M. Kirkland, op. cit.

Similarly, Maxwell V. Perrow, in a discussion of Christian communication, notes that the communication process involves not only a sender and a message but also a receiver, and that the field of experience that surrounds both sender and receiver (italics added) determines the nature of the message. He further states that "the selection of a communication tool is determined by the nature of the receiver."<sup>1</sup>

As noted in Chapter One in the Lambertson and Abernathy studies, pre-contemporary American homiletics concerned itself with the receiver-context primarily through the development of sermon illustrations, considerations of sermon length based on audience attention and interest, and concern that the sermon content be relevant to the listener. As has been also noted, rhetoric's understanding of the psychological elements in persuasion includes significant factors about the hearer in the communication process--his knowledge, experience, feelings, attitudes, emotions, reasoning, communication skills, and positional-cultural role.

This chapter examines the theoretical assumptions of the congregation within contemporary American Protestant homiletical theory. Dr. Merrill R. Abbey, whose Preaching to the Contemporary Mind<sup>2</sup> approaches homiletics from the

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<sup>1</sup>Maxwell V. Perrow, Effective Christian Communication (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963), p. 37. Receiver, audience, and congregation are used interchangeably throughout the chapter.

<sup>2</sup>Merrill R. Abbey, Preaching to the Contemporary Mind (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1963). Dr. Abbey is a graduate of Hamline University and Garrett Theological Seminary. He has taken graduate work at Northwestern University and was

congregation, provides the case study. His theory is based, in part, upon a study entitled "Axioms for the Modern Man," prepared for the World Council of Churches; these imply that an individual's thinking is determined largely by inner convictions taking the form of axioms of contemporary proverbial wisdom that are often at odds with Christian assumptions. A subsequent book on preaching by Dr. Abbey, Living Doctrine in a Vital Pulpit, is also audience-oriented, even though the title suggests the centrality of the message.<sup>1</sup> These books, classroom lectures, a sample sermon, and interviews with Dr. Abbey are examined. Several additional contemporary theorists, selected on the basis of their teaching at one of the schools affiliated with the American Association of Theological Schools, plus other writings which have considered preaching primarily from the concept of receiver in the communication process, are also examined.

#### A Case Study: Preaching to the Contemporary Mind

Abbey's concern is to approach preaching from the viewpoint of the audience. Two questions are vital: How does one get inside complex contemporary minds? and How can the vital heart of the Christian message be conveyed to contemporary

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awarded his D.D. degree by Hamline University in 1942. He is professor of preaching at Garrett Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois.

<sup>1</sup>Merrill R. Abbey, Living Doctrine in a Vital Pulpit (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964). The theoretical assumptions of this book will be examined later.

man where he is? In attempting to provide an answer, Abbey utilizes both traditional homiletical texts and material from the behavioral sciences, including works by Carl Hovland, Irving Janis, Harold Kelley, Rollo May, Lewis Mumford, and Alfred North Whitehead. Additional references include Hendrick Ibsen, H.L. Mencken, Jean-Paul Sartre, Dorothy Sayers, Arthur Miller, Winston Churchill, and Aldous Huxley.

### The Mind in Today's World

The first of four concerns advanced by Abbey as crucial to religious communication is the achieving of "a meeting of minds." The meaning of the words themselves can no longer be taken as a common basis of communication, he contends. It is imperative, therefore, that the communicator study meanings and attitudes already established in the minds of those to whom he speaks. Abbey regards this principle as analogous to the one employed in biblical interpretation. To grasp the meaning of the Letter to the Hebrews, for example, one must know the presuppositions in the minds of the intended readers regarding Judaic doctrines and practices associated with the atonement. Abbey's keypoint is that a "meeting of minds" can occur only when preachers and teachers "understand the minds they must currently reach and find words and symbols adequate to convey the gospel meaning to them."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Abbey, Preaching to the Contemporary Mind, p. 15.

Relying upon experimental data in communication, Abbey proposes that the listener must be made a partner in the communication process. More specifically, this means communication is enhanced by verbalization on the part of the hearer, that more change of opinion is possible in discussion (mental or verbal) than in passive listening, and that attitude change is advanced when the audience can assume an active part. An audience-centered preacher must engage the listener's mind in "an active project in co-operative thinking" in which

The speaker raises questions which require answer; anticipates the listener's objections, putting them more cogently than he himself could; and states the case not as an ultimatum handed down but as an insight at which speaker and listener arrive together.<sup>1</sup>

As the sermon so engages the listener's mind, Abbey sees the sermon taking on certain characteristics of group counseling, particularly influencing through empathy. Abbey also believes that the insight from contemporary psychology of "feedback" is demonstrated in the preaching of Isaiah:

Come, now, let us reason together, says the Lord; though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. (Isaiah 1:18-20)

In the "let us reason together," Abbey sees the possibility of correction of error through dialogic exchange.

If meeting of minds occurs, the preacher or communicator, according to Abbey, must be a listener.<sup>2</sup> He listens to

<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>In a lecture in "Biblical Preaching" at Garrett Theological Seminary on June 22, 1965, entitled "The Miracle

the questions and assumptions of the people as intently as he does to the voice of God heard in prayer and Bible study. The time-tested advice to "preach the great themes of the Bible" needs to be qualified by relating the great themes of faith to the central questions men ask. It is Abbey's belief that all speakers can and must learn to identify the crucial issues of their time and to address the basic affirmations of their message to these questions that men are struggling to decide. This listening, for example, will determine the preacher's reading; philosophy and history will be read to find the questions which men have traditionally asked. Similarly, the preacher will listen to the contemporary voices:

Let him read the thinkers of his own time not alone for what they say that can reinforce his message, but to understand the problems with which they grapple, the difficulties, they see, and--where they take issue with the faith as he knows it--the deep reasons for their divergence. Let him expose himself to the mass media not merely to follow their everchanging image of his time, but to understand, if he can, what they take for granted and what that tells him about the unspoken assumptions of the mass audience they attract.<sup>1</sup>

An effective minister, Abbey believes, must have a clear and current understanding of the questions his particular

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of Hearing" Dr. Abbey stated that a basic assumption in preaching when saving activity occurs is that it is a deed in which God who is present is acting. But, he emphasized, if hearing is understanding, the congregation must receive more than just words: they must understand what the words represent. This means, he insisted, that the preacher must meet the congregation where they are concerned, not just where he is concerned, and that only when that happens can God's activity (the Word) take place.

<sup>1</sup>Abbey, Preaching to the Contemporary Mind, p. 20.

audience asks, the issues with which it wrestles, the temptations it meets, and the pains it bears. One method of "listening" is to set down on paper, at the beginning stage of sermon preparation, the initials of a dozen members of the audience and a sentence summary of each one's tension, challenge, or anxiety.

An additional factor contributing to a meeting of minds is the communicator's understanding of the moods of the age. From contemporary literature and the Amsterdam Assembly Series of the World Council of Churches, Abbey lists five underlying moods: salvation by survey (everybody does it), retreat from idealism, the end justifies the means, fear (of communism, of other races), and the painful sense of having lost identity. It is Abbey's conviction that the preacher will seek to show in his preaching how each of these moods is met in the cross.

### Authority and Communication

In addition to a meeting of minds, there is a second principle for getting inside of today's complex minds: discovering the theological bond between authority and communication. What Abbey deals with here is the "paradox of preaching," which

centering on communication to the neglect of authority, fails to communicate; majoring in authority at the cost of careful communication, ceases to be authoritative.<sup>1</sup>

Abbey contends that authority and communication have become separated; he would have them combined. "Truth through

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

personality" has frequently become personality with a small accent on truth, with such consequences as humanistic nationalism, generalized religiousness, and spiritual amnesia. Abbey also discovers, on the other hand, a current emphasis on proclamation stressing biblical truth and announcing in the indicative mood the mighty acts of God in Christ. The danger which Abbey sees in this particular trend is its indifference to

the agonizing responsibility to get the message planted deep in the motivating centers of men's lives--a responsibility calling for craftsmanship in communication won only at painful cost.<sup>1</sup>

The result, he notes, is content centered-preaching that becomes authoritarian rather than authoritative. Coercive insistence on the part of the preacher wins very little real response; genuine and deeply persuasive preaching come instead from an audience centeredness which understands the conditions of communication necessary to win response. This preaching, Abbey believes, involves communicating the message with the force of a listener's own awakened insight; the listener responds not so much to a voice without, as to something newly formed within.

For Abbey, authority and communication are reconciled when the sermon is "something done rather than something said," when it is more God's act than man's. This conviction would have the preacher view his communicative act as God's encounter with men. Preaching so described is event rather than argument.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 34.



Nothing will save real preaching for the man who has lost his distinctive thrust through preoccupation with communicative techniques short of the realization that he participates in this divine event.<sup>1</sup>

This idea of participation in the divine act means that the preacher believes seriously that what is revealed is not a set of propositions about God, but God himself. Using the analogy of the psychological phenomenon of "no sound unless there is an ear to hear," Abbey argues that there is no revelation unless there is appropriation by the receiver.

If preaching participates in God's work of revelation, so understood, is it enough that weighty things be said unless the saying so fits the necessities of mind and emotion that the way is open for appropriation and response?<sup>2</sup>

Abbey asserts that history (the acts of God) is not revelation unless it is appropriated as personal history. Doctrinal statements can remain incomprehensible even though they are theologically sound. Doctrine or the symbols employed to express the doctrine must "penetrate beneath formulated doctrine to the experience on which it rests." Consequently, Abbey argues that when the preacher communicates what might be called firsthand vision, he must provide more than content and ideas. He must provide "a kindling vision with his inner eye and to body it forth in kindling form." Like a poet, the preacher returns to a fresh appropriation of the experience from which the doctrine came and thus "provides a luminous

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

capacity to help others see and receive as their own what is being talked about."<sup>1</sup>

Abbey, as noted in the above discussion, has been saying that the authoritative event, the conviction that God is at work encountering men, is distinctive in preaching and is something other than artful speech. At the same time he has insisted that only the fulfillment of person-centered conditions of communicative speech makes it possible for authoritative content to awake "the shock of recognition and the surrendered response which give it real authority."<sup>2</sup> His final step for authority and communication to meet is the "double analysis" of the scriptural text. A single analysis draws a circle around exegesis of a biblical text or a contemporary need; double analysis is an ellipse drawn around two foci: one in the text and one in a current human situation. He suggests that if preaching is to be "luminous event" with the Bible as the source and center of thought, the first step is to make a careful, critical-exegetical study of a passage of scripture in its context. But the second step, equally important, is to observe where this truth meets the life of contemporary time and people. The preacher does this through an understanding of "his time through its literature, its thought and science, its public affairs, and most of all through his own people."<sup>3</sup> The greatest possibilities of a

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 42. In an earlier discussion "Authority and Communication: A Preface to Preaching" (The Garrett Tower,

message emerge, therefore, by an analysis of both text and contemporary life. These two Abbey sees as standing in mutual support.

### Dynamic Encounter

Abbey believes preaching fulfills its function when men are "precipitated into a state of 'ultimate concern' in a real encounter with God."<sup>1</sup> This definition indicates that preaching is concerned with the effect of the proclamation, with bringing men face to face with God, and not only content. Both poles, source and outcome, are necessary to preaching; between both "the dynamic of the encounter flows." Keeping in mind that both source and outcome witness to God's unique action in Jesus Christ (the reconciliation realized for contemporary man), Abbey gives the following working definition of preaching:

a divine-human act in which men in their lostness are summoned to a saving encounter with God's Word through the spoken words of a convinced witness.<sup>2</sup>

Man's condition, he notes, is something other than God's design; it is a life in tension. Preaching addresses

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Volume 36, Number 3, June 1961, p. 3), Dr. Abbey states "In much contemporary preaching two elements which belong organically to each other have come apart. There is no dearth of preaching brilliant in its mastery of the communicative arts but without a convincing ring of authority, nor are preachers wanting who speak with material-centered impressiveness but without depth of communication to the hearer. What is commonly wanting is the capacity to bring these vital factors together."

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

itself to this tension and may on occasion heighten it.

To meet with God in Christ is to be confronted by deep and costly challenge; in aspects of our own existence, in awareness of human need, in issues with the world around us, to be involved with anxious concern. To the degree that we have died to the world, we live with Christ. We are born into new life by the dynamics of this costly encounter.<sup>1</sup>

Abbey discusses H. Richard Niebuhr's five forms of the dynamic situation in which the religious communicator participates: Christ against culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture, Christ the transformer of culture, and Christ of culture. The last one, Abbey finds, is idolatrous, in that it is an attempt to reduce the encounter of man with God by assimilating Christ into society as man has made it. In essence an accommodated Christ is substituted for "the saving encounter." Moreover, Abbey sees this view as needing an encounter with the gospel. The needed encounter, he believes, would reveal the pseudotherapy of the role of Christian faith to health, the social inadequacy, a philosophy of life which falsifies the realities that must be faced, a religious view that does not call for depth repentance of a total reorientation of life toward the purposes of God revealed in Jesus Christ, and the avoidance of man's need of a new relationship. The needed dynamic encounter, then, is preaching in which men in their need (lostness) are summoned to an encounter with God's Word through the spoken words of convinced witnesses. It is a saving encounter that reveals a Christ that in turn shows man his conflicting culture.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

### Challenging an Axiom

Attention is turned to specific disciplines by which the preacher can make his message an instrument of realistic encounter with the minds he is sent to challenge, those areas of society which are at tension with the gospel. The point of contact is discovered generally at some point of conflict. This communicative assumption does not endeavor to establish credibility of message by finding common ground, but rather to correct and complete the axioms or attitudes of the hearers in the light that comes from Christ. Even the Christian listening needs to have his axioms challenged, since he is called to a growth in thought and life. The "dynamic idea" for both believer and nonbeliever, therefore, must express some form of tension. The preacher, himself, will undergo a challenge of his own ideas and attitudes as he endeavors to formulate the core of his message. The point of challenge is present both in interpretation and in communication.

When deeply understood, the Bible speaks in terms of life situations so like our own that the key to incisive interpretation of the text generally lies in the discovery of the point of its challenge to the men of its own time and of ours.<sup>1</sup>

Abbey regards the disciplines necessary for effective focus (the point of conflict between the gospel and the assumptions of the contemporary mind) as keys essential to preaching power. One of these disciplines is to narrow the subject by bringing some aspect of the gospel in contact with a need

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

it fulfills or an idea that it contradicts so that the two "speak to each other." This struggle of defining the theme, or of narrowing the subject, Abbey observes, is one shared also by the artist as illustrated by Michelangelo who asked himself many questions before he set chisel to stone. Abbey also illustrates how Peter's preaching at Pentecost reveals that the point of contact is a point of conflict requiring a subject sharply narrowed and defined. Peter, who sensed that the bystanders had leaped to a mistaken conclusion about the excited behavior of the Christian company, used this as a point of contact: "These men are not drunk as you suppose," Acts 2:15. From this Peter challenges familiar axioms of his listeners by showing them an event in which they were involved. The result was that Peter met the hearers where they were, making contact with their minds through symbols and ideas already familiar to them. Accordingly, he created an encounter of his hearers with God by challenging them at their motivating center of thought and life rather than confirming them in their present thought forms.

Thus the narrowing of the subject and the work of defining what the sermon will predicate about it must depend on the degree of accuracy with which the preacher locates the lostness of those to whom he speaks.<sup>1</sup>

Another discipline in creating points of contact, in addition to focusing a biblical truth upon an audience need, is to develop a challenge to the axioms of man's everyday wisdom. In the World Council of Churches study, Abbey notes that

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

man's thinking is determined largely by inner convictions not consciously thought through and often expressed in the form of axioms of contemporary proverbial wisdom.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, these axioms are frequently at odds with biblical motifs. National delegations, for example, who were present at the Amsterdam Assembly attempted to crystallize axioms taken for granted in their own countries; from this they discovered the state of mind to which the Christian message must be addressed. Almost all of the items, they discovered, are half-truths which question affirmations in the Christian faith. The axioms from America are:

1. Truth is established only by proof, and ultimate truth is unknowable.
2. Look out for yourself. If you don't, nobody else will.
3. Human nature is fundamentally sound, but needs guidance and correction to achieve its fulfillment. "Sin" is just another name for ignorance and correctible imperfection, or biological lag.
4. There is progress in history, but society may yet destroy itself if the discoveries of science are not controlled.
5. There always have been wars and there always will be. You can't change human nature.
6. "God" is really a projection of man's ideals.
7. A man's religion is his own business and every man has a right to his own belief.
8. Other-worldliness is dangerous because it distracts attention from the effort to gain freedom, security, and justice in this life; and anyway we know nothing about what happens after death.
9. Jesus was a good man. What we need are a lot more people like Him. Now, take Lincoln . . .
10. Do a good turn when you can--but don't be a sucker.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This study is recorded in The Church's Witness to God's Design, Vol. II of Man's Disorder and God's Design ("Amsterdam Assembly Series," New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1949).

<sup>2</sup>Abbey, Preaching to the Contemporary Mind, p. 72.

These are the points of contact a sermon must make. Whenever a scripture passage (for basic insight) is combined with a statement of some contemporary hunger that needs answering or some current attitude that needs to be questioned, the result, Abbey believes, is powerful preaching. To develop these two disciplines, Abbey recommends the keeping of a notebook in which

Out of the encounter between the Scripture and the need--of which one or another of the axioms may be a pointed expression--a narrowed subject should be formulated, followed by a paragraph or two in which the possible beginnings of a message are briefly sketched.<sup>1</sup>

To illustrate further these disciplines, Abbey gives eleven sketches of "a notebook dialogue with contemporary axioms."<sup>2</sup> Here he seeks to show the significance of challenged axioms which "engage the contemporary mind in fruitful dialogue." These "sermon starters" are based on the eleven "Axioms of the Modern Mind" composed by Emil Bruner for the Amsterdam Assembly.

1. Everything is relative.
2. What can't be proved can't be believed.
3. Scientific knowledge is certain and the standard of truth; matters of faith are uncertain.
4. Beyond death nobody knows.
5. "Real" means seen and handled.
6. The big things are the great things. Because man is so small in this big universe he is so little.
7. I cannot help being what I am.
8. Freedom means doing as I like.
9. Justice means equality.
10. To put religion first is religious arrogance.
11. Laws of nature determine everything.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 159-187.



Respectively, Abbey entitles these discussions: Frontier of Relativity, Realities We Do Not See, Adventure in Certainty, Robbing Death of Absurdity, Defying the Tyranny of the Tangible, Pawns--or Heirs?, Circumstance--and the Grace of God, Wearing Freedom's Yoke, When Justice Learns from Grace, Paradox of Christ's Intolerance, and When Spirit Breaks Law's Chain.

A third discipline is to supplement the axioms (the locations of the points of conflict of modern mind and the gospel from which the dynamic encounter can begin) by the preacher's own reading of assumptions of his contemporaries. Abbey believes this supplementation is necessary because axioms are not static; times change, minds come under new axioms, and geographic areas differ. Each generation, each area, and each speaker must make its own search for the axioms of the listener. He believes that this search of keeping abreast of the developing attitudes is best undertaken through the mass media, not just to discover what is said but rather to identify those things which are taken for granted concerning the readers or hearers by the publisher and writer. He sees the mass media as having its own "personality" and attracting an audience of those who have congenial personalities.

If one can read not only what it says but what it takes for granted, not only its reports but what it regards as worth reporting, not only its facts but its implications, he may arrive at a reflection of its basic assumptions about its readers--assumptions on which it has gambled and won its considerable following.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

This periodic study of the reflection of the current mind as mirrored in mass media, Abbey believes, will provide the guidance necessary for locating the areas of conflict significant in presenting the message, for pinpointing the lostness of men, and for discerning an effective means of speaking to the people where they are.

A fourth discipline for challenging contemporary axioms lies in discovering principles that help the preacher deal with controversy, since the point of conflict usually involves dissent. The contemporary preacher, as well as Hosea, cannot by-pass the issues: "Hear the word of the Lord, O people of Israel; for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land."

Abbey advances seven suggestions from Ernest Fremont Tittle, late pastor of the First Methodist Church, Evanston, Illinois, and lecturer in homiletics at Garrett Theological Seminary, which enable a preacher to be relevant and at the same time maintain a bond of love and influence with his hearers:<sup>1</sup> 1) "Always speak from a religious standpoint. Take a text." The relevance of this principle is that the congregation, by expecting the minister to interpret the Christian message, will more readily receive it if the message has a biblical premise. 2) "Put yourself in the place of the opposition." Abbey believes the bond between preacher and listener is maintained if the disputed matter is looked at from the opponent's point of view. 3) "Praise more often than blame;

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 75-80.

be affirmative." A prophetic preacher need not scold. 4) "Speak the truth in love." The people should know their pastor as a loving pastor. 5) "Don't offer opinions if you don't have the facts to back them up, or in areas where you have no technical knowledge." 6) "Give attention to the matter of timing." 7) "Familiarize yourself with recent church pronouncements on controversial issues." Applying this principle makes it clear that the minister speaks for the church at large and that the idea is something more than a whim of one person.

#### Strategic Pivot Points in Winning the Contemporary Mind

Abbey's methodology for "getting inside" contemporary minds, as considered, includes four factors: 1) a meeting of minds by taking seriously the understanding and moods of the listener, and by engaging in a dialogical relationship with the audience; 2) reconciliation of authority and communication through double analysis of the text and the contemporary need; 3) a dynamic encounter of Christ and culture; and 4) the challenge of identifying a need or an axiom, indicating the point of contact and conflict.

In this context, Abbey develops four areas of "strategic pivot points" in the winning of the contemporary mind by the gospel. In them, he endeavors to relate in sermons the gospel to the modern mind.

The first "pivot point" is when "faith confronts the secular mind."<sup>1</sup> Secularism is defined as the organization of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 85f.

life as if there is no God. Its expression in business is "whatever gets results is good" and in morals, "everybody does it." In politics it emphasizes a separation of church and state with a corollary lack of relating the affairs of this world to God. Secularism is also education making man an end in himself. It is the conviction that science can manage both the means and the ends in a good society. In a secular situation, Abbey observes, man regards himself as "a thing among things" and regards others as enemies--as illustrated by continuing wars.

As an example of the "encounter" between faith and secularism, Abbey suggests that "in its conversation with scientism, Christian faith makes three assertions:"

The claim to deal with issues "objectively" without reference to metaphysical suppositions is impossible to fulfill . . . second, faith admonishes, that scientism commits the fallacy of treating man experimentally as if he were only another aspect of mechanistic nature--and the concluding, beyond its data, that in fact that is what he is . . . third, faith concludes, that far from existing as an independent savior in its own right, science is deeply dependent on its cultural heritage from the Judeo-Christian tradition.<sup>1</sup>

In this confrontation of secularism, the preacher must "stress what secularism denies," the providence of God "to meet the mind . . . at the point of its respect for the uniformities of nature--the 'natural law' around which much of our thought is formed."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 93-94.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

The claim of stewardship should be another important stress in preaching to the secular mind. A "double analysis" of Deuteronomy 8:7-20, Abbey believes, could show that instead of "this world with its hypnotic demands" and its employment "for self-serving ends" there could be the conviction that this world is not an end in itself, but rather that it is instrumental and that earth's blessings imply obligation, thus making stewardship "a discipline that saves by putting things to their intended uses and a philosophy that gives meaning to existence."<sup>1</sup>

A second area in which the gospel can be related to today's mind is in the encounter between "the gospel and the crisis in character." For Abbey, the secularization of life takes its toll in a crisis of character: rape, theft, illegal liquor, gambling, and mail frauds. Emphasis on acquisition, unprotesting acceptance of whatever comes, "other-direction" concern, and "loss of a center of personal existence" are all manifestations of this character crisis. Abbey believes that contemporary preaching can address itself to particular problems with "unique power to heal." He suggests that preaching,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 96. For further study, Abbey suggests: Taking one or more of the approaches to preaching suggested in this chapter, begin to develop a sermon plan for each in your notebook. Be sure to make the message your own by a) firsthand study of the context and exegesis of the suggested Scripture, checking the best commentaries at your disposal; b) setting down the names of persons you have dealt with this week, noting the needs to which this sermon should speak; c) noting axioms of the modern man, either from the lists . . . or from your own investigation of mass media, that seem to have a bearing on the subject; d) your own extension of the double analysis in the light of these steps (p. 100).

by offering personal interest and concern, can deal in an effective way with ultimate issues which man alone faces before God. Moreover, the gospel can challenge irresponsibility and "other-direction" and can call for courageous challenge. Also, preaching can appeal to the power of "unseen companionship" and to the concept of the Church as the light in which men can discover they are not alone.<sup>1</sup>

A third area for relating the gospel to today's mind is found by asking, "Who Speaks for Freedom?" Aware that the battle of man's freedom in Christ has been won, Abbey also calls attention to the necessity of other advances that follow and of spiritual freedom's corollary that man cannot be held in any kind of bondage or system. Someone, he concludes, must speak for God, for man, and for freedom. Although an assault on freedom can be traced easily to communism, Abbey indicates that tyranny and bondage have many guises, brainwashing, distatorship, control of opinion, and hidden

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<sup>1</sup>Abbey suggests a basic principle of doctrinal preaching which emerges from his discussion: Valid and effective preaching of doctrine begins with a need and brings the resources of a major Christian teaching to bear upon it. We have observed that a great conception of the church can speak powerfully to the crisis in character. This will be most likely to occur when the sermon starts, not with the doctrine of the church, but with the need. With the congregation, face the inner loneliness that makes us huddle into conformity to what others are doing and the tragic consequences that ensue. What will give us resources that liberate? Vast numbers of Christians find them in the Church? What kind of church? From this can proceed the presentation of insights from Scripture and doctrine, returning in every division of the sermon to the central thesis that this community of concern can liberate from loneliness and conformity by the strengthening bond of a larger fellowship which we meet a divine Presence (p. 118).

persuaders which also exist in our society, and that a trend in history is evident which creates a climate for repressive developments.

The manipulation of the mind by forces of blind emotionalism and irrationality has precedents in the Know Nothingism of an earlier period, and in the Ku Klux Klan outbursts, the McCarthyism, the John Birch Societies, and the irregularities of the House Committee of Un-American Activities in more recent times.<sup>1</sup>

The problem of freedom is further illustrated by those who do not allow for "a free market of ideas" and by those that assume that freedom is an illusion, that man cannot choose responsibly. The "theology of freedom" which Abbey recommends is "a sense of belonging to a Purpose beyond one's own purpose, which invites loyal obedience" which "can ultimately underwrite freedom."<sup>2</sup> Abbey sees in Romans 8:28-30 that which grants a relation "which does not stifle the free action of men in response to God," in that man can choose either to love God or not to. Man can choose whether he will work at tasks in which God works with him. Like Paul, contemporary Christian man is convinced that "he is chosen" and "transformed" and also that he must act responsibly. The theology of freedom recognizes the call to a voluntary response. By "double analysis" Abbey proposes three sermons that should "come to life": one saying that man does have an identity (Romans 8:15-16), a second which assumes a right to command which rests with a divine order above all human orders

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

(Exodus 5:1), and a third which is "a word of judgment without which freedom always lives a hunted life" (Isaiah 3:13-15).<sup>1</sup>

A fourth encounter for the gospel and the modern mind is when "Creative Christians Confront Crisis." Referring to contemporary history as "apocalyptic frightfulness" and noting that crisis is a continuous threat (disabling sickness, atomic energy, nuclear attack, and book titles as Two Minutes Till Midnight and Wake Up or Blow Up), Abbey reminds the preacher that he has an "unshakable certainty in the midst of our shattered securities":

We may not have proof, but faith stands on solid ground when it nails to the mast the conviction that God has the final word over death and evil, not only in this world and within the limits of time, but in all worlds and eternally.<sup>2</sup>

Abbey, therefore, encourages the preacher to confront all crises with a creative and confident hope that God's "creative act underlies the human enterprise; his sovereign rule decrees that evil shall not finally have its way."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Abbey makes additional suggestions in the preparation of a sermon on freedom: The distinctively Christian word on freedom has a courageous forthrightness, but it has a dimension of depth that takes it far beyond exhortation. Be sure you capture that distinctively Christian word--which means your message must be carefully grounded in Scripture approached 1) by diligent exegesis, and 2) by alert double analysis. It also means that your work with the Scripture must be paralleled by the statement of the sermon's central idea, or proposition, in a single sentence which relates freedom to the good news of God (p. 137).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 143-144.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 154.



The particular challenge in preaching is to make creative use of crisis by aiming messages at problems which threaten individual comfort, rather than just trying to provide individual comfort. Moreover, the Christian preacher has theological grounds for speaking on issues as war (particularly, faith in "God the Father almighty" and commitment to "Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord"). Noting that Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan elevates the needs of another man to a place of central concern, Abbey says preachers ought to respond to the "calls for full participation in the risks of action aimed to promote the emergence of a more ordered world."<sup>1</sup> Such preaching, he believes, supports all efforts to make the United Nations a fully effective instrument of world order. Moreover, he discovers a core of biblical truth on race and human rights that must be applied to today's crisis.<sup>2</sup>

Critics have noted both value and strength in Abbey's audience-centered theory in Preaching to the Contemporary Mind. As a selection by the Religious Book Club, this volume

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>2</sup>Abbey lists twelve sources for additional study for the preacher to become informed in questions of armaments and their control and of race relations. In the preparation of sermons he offers these additional suggestion: "From the vistas of thought and investigation suggested in this chapter, select a subject for one of these special days, make your double analysis of a scripture text, formulate a proposition, and develop a sermon. Remember, as you do so, that one cannot say anything worth saying in these areas without involving himself in what will be controversial for some part of his congregation. Consequently it will be important to bear in mind the principles for preaching on controversial issues as you work out this sermon" (p. 157).

was reviewed with the conclusion that its greatest merit was its cognizance and handling of the two approaches in contemporary preaching (the communication approach and the proclamation approach).

It provides both penetrating insight and practical guidance for bringing the two approaches together. The result is a book which has the distinctive and authentic ring of the historic Christian Gospel and also finds people in the world of their own experience.<sup>1</sup>

This same review further regards "the most revealing thing" in this book as the contrast drawn between the secular mind and the life-attitude of the Gospel. It notes that Abbey's treatment of the axioms listed in the Appendix are the result of a "double effort to be faithful to the content of the Gospel and to do so in a way that makes the listener see that the message speaks realistically to his condition."<sup>2</sup> Another reviewer, William A. Sadler, Jr., believes Dr. Abbey's most helpful contribution is his

analyses of our age which illumine the axioms people carry in their minds; these are cherished assumptions, many of which stultify spiritual growth and which must be challenged and confronted with the Christian alternative.<sup>3</sup>

Contrasting Haselden's book, The Urgency of Preaching, with Abbey's Sadler states "Haselden would convert the preachers, Abbey the hearers."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Religious Book Club Bulletin, Vol. 36, No. 5, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>William A. Sadler, Jr., "Criticism in the Christian World--Books," The Christian Century, Vol. LXXXI, No. 18, April 29, 1964, p. 582.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

### Living Doctrine in a Vital Pulpit

An additional examination of Abbey's concern for getting "inside the contemporary mind" is found in Living Doctrine in a Vital Pulpit.<sup>1</sup> This writing is regarded as a continuation of Preaching to the Contemporary Mind (which focused on men in their situations being guided over the route of double analysis to biblical and doctrinal insight):

We are no less concerned to relate human scene to spiritual resource. For purposes of clarity in consideration, we direct attention to traffic flowing in the opposite direction on the same highway.<sup>2</sup>

Abbey believes that it is "the flow of traffic on the thoroughfare between doctrine and life situations" that gauges vitality in preaching:

Sermons which confront human affairs as if they had no roots in doctrine shrink to cozy chats on small matters. Dealing in doctrine not newly challenged by the living human scene, they become arid. Holding the two elements together, preaching grows prophetic.<sup>3</sup>

The task of the preacher in doctrinal preaching is to confront the central emphases in Christian doctrine and formulate them into sermonic ideas. This book attempts, therefore,

to relate the central doctrinal core of the church's faith to the needs of a moving pulpit message by indicating how doctrines can be made clear and relevant to the lay mind, by appropriating the religious experiences great doctrines express, and by showing how their resources can be released to meet individual and social need.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Abbey, Living Doctrine in a Vital Pulpit. Because doctrinal preaching is often regarded as the opposite of life-situation preaching, any emphasis upon the audience in the preaching of doctrine will be of significance.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

To do this, Abbey would first examine "the foundation of the structure of Christian doctrine," the kerygma. In discussing "a centered gospel for a world off center" he alludes to H.L. Mencken's metaphor of man as a sick fly riding the giant flywheel of the cosmic universe. To restore to health and wholeness "man as a sick fly," Abbey states that preaching must itself be centered in its proclamation. Four subpropositions amplify this view: 1) the world must be re-centered if saved; 2) a centered gospel is needed (meaning information "for whom Christ died," and not mere inspiration); 3) rival doctrines bid for the "center" (including racism, communism, and sex); and, 4) vital centered doctrine alone can meet today's needs. This "doctrine" can be pastoral ("On Being Who You Are"), prophetic ("sector" preaching which includes circumference but goes to the center), and evangelistic (based on a doctrinal substructure including themes as sin, grace, atonement, forgiveness). Abbey believes that all preaching which would "recenter man" to wholeness must tell, with the telling "centered in the core of what God has done for us in Christ, as the great doctrines of the church bring that home to us."<sup>1</sup> Doctrinal preaching so understood is not, however, mere recitation, but

living confrontation, intimately related to men's affairs and dilemmas, rising from human experience and returning constantly to experience to throw light on the issues with which men grapple in their daily decisions.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Abbey regards the call to preaching to be that of winsome teaching. Power in a teaching pulpit will occur, he stresses, if the preacher assumes leadership in "thinking through the meaning of the gospel in its dialogue with emerging issues, strange thought forms, and new areas of concern that erupt with new times."<sup>1</sup> For lay self-understanding and commitment as well as for lay-witness, the preacher as teacher will "teach with continuity" by planning ahead for fifty Sundays. Such planning and continuity are needed because:

First, the regular churchgoer has a right to a ministry which in the course of the year develops meaningful progression and cumulative power . . . Second, the gospel deserves a hearing in something approximating rounded wholeness . . . Third, strong preaching can be sustained most dependably when the individual sermon comes as fruit of long growth rather than as product of quick assembly . . . Fourth, in a ministry growing in these silent, orderly ways, the preacher can render fullest stewardship of his powers . . . Fifth, only by adequate planning can the preacher make the fullest use of the unparalleled opportunity for adult education which the pulpit puts within his reach.<sup>2</sup>

The preacher's serious response to the call to teach also "plunges him into a thrilling dialogue between biblical doctrine and his people's need."<sup>3</sup> This "plunge" is best experienced if the preacher maintains a notebook wherein he records the treasures of his devotional life. A minister's devotional life, Abbey suggests, is more than "sentimental brooding over the text"; instead it is a serious study using

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 39-40.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

the critical tools. In addition to an analysis of the biblical material, the "devotions" also ask

What does this mean to me? Being who I am, where I am, with my temptations, sins, burdens, handicaps, opportunities, talents, what response does it ask of me?<sup>1</sup>

From this record of "his own life renewed" the preacher has a "deposit" already made for future sermons. The other side of the dialogue, in addition to biblical interpretation, is planning that gives attention to the congregation's needs.

So the minister will have his people constantly before him as he lays out the plan for the year's preaching. He will think about individual parishioners and the peculiar circumstances that weigh upon them. He will think of groups in the church and what has been happening in their discussions and ventures in service--or their withdrawals from venturing. He will think about the total life of the parish and what its objectives need to be for the coming period. He will look out on the community and the nation and do his best to peer into the issues that bid fair to emerge in the next twelve months, keeping the focus on their demands and impingements upon his people.<sup>2</sup>

Abbey notes that great preachers have been known to have two sources of preaching insight--in the library and in the parish. The ideal preacher, he suggests, lives at the crossroads where two streams of traffic meet:

the one flowing from his Bible and his reading, the other from the life of his people. Watching the intersections of that traffic, he will struggle to formulate into challenging themes the clashes and tensions, the questions and answers, the offers and responses, the needs and fulfillments he finds occurring between God's Word and men's minds and affairs.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

As the themes are allocated for the coming year, the preaching-teacher develops a worksheet for each Sunday with seven steps for "closing in on the central idea": 1) In "diagnosis" the preacher

sets down the initials of at least a dozen persons with whom he has had pastoral dealings in the preceding week, setting opposite each some situation or need confronting that individual. Here a grief, there a temptation, a burden carried, a choice to be made, an opportunity hanging, an insensitivity in human relations, a frightening loneliness--the list grows before the minister until he sees sharply delineated a cross section of the congregation.<sup>1</sup>

Abbey notes that such a procedure is far different from generalizations about man's needy condition in that it is a first-hand perception of the people with whom he will "do business".

2) "Prescription" visualizes what the gospel might bring to each of the personal needs listed in diagnosis. In this step the preacher writes a brief statement "of some step in healing or growth that might emerge if this circle of friends could share a quiet talk together."<sup>2</sup> 3) "Exposition" re-probes the text in the light of the first two steps. 4) "Experience" is a review of the preacher's own experience with the text. 5) "Program" is a clarification of some specific, desired outcome of the truth in the lives of the congregation. 6) "Purpose" is a determining of the course "among the rhetorical possibilities": instruct, convince, motivate, persuade, inspire. 7) Proposition is the whole sermon idea in one clear

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

sentence, "the one central affirmation from which all else stems and which every paragraph will in some way clarify, explain, develop, or support."<sup>1</sup>

"Words in search of a meaning" is the title given to a discussion of how words and meanings are "linked in living experience to bring saving doctrine to a vital pulpit."<sup>2</sup>

Abbey understands the relationship of words and experience in this way:

Words are not meanings in any constant sense, like coins which pass from hand to hand with unaltered value. Possessing no independent existence, they point to what lies beyond them. Experience provides the "story" of which words as "actors" seek to bring the meaning to the stage. It need astonish no one that they fall short of adequate portrayal of the real-life drama.<sup>3</sup>

The preacher is advised to use words as tools with which he opens doors to experience:

Words in search of a meaning, meanings in search of a word, this troubled commerce of words with meanings comprises his daily field of labor.<sup>4</sup>

Abstractions tempt the preacher to "violate the pact between words and experiences." The favorite generalizations (grace, salvation, justification, resurrection, etc.), Abbey warns, "manifest no action to the listener" unless they are drawn from experience.<sup>5</sup> He remarks that although "technical

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



language is professional shorthand among the initiated"  
 theology is not books but life:

New Testament truth is what men do in the life from which the words are abstracted, and we do not know our theology if the words hold us captive, helpless to find our way back to the living experience and say the thing in our own way in the salty speech of common man.<sup>1</sup>

Preaching, then, calls for language that points to crucial experience. In indicating the relationship of experience to doctrine, it is necessary to bring into view "the experience from which it arise, for valid doctrine is a way of reporting experience and guiding others to share it."<sup>2</sup> Language in preaching should penetrate abstractions to "the operational referent."<sup>3</sup> When distinction is made between description and inference and when one pushes past labels to persons, doors of mutual understanding open. Related to preaching, Abbey asserts that the sermon will glow with vitality "when the Bible is seen not as a compendium of abstract ideas but as an avenue of encounter with living experience."<sup>4</sup> Referring to Ian Ramsey's insights, he notes that just as scientific language is based on mathematical models so religious language rests on models of concrete personal relationships. Moreover, the Bible as an avenue of encounter of living experience is more than once-upon-a-time report but rather a report of truth which "makes contact with what is true always and everywhere":

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

Through the text as interpretive symbol the hearer can grasp meaning and potential in his own experience and the invitation to make that adventure is the purpose of the scripture and the point of the sermon.<sup>1</sup>

Abbey illustrates this theory with the doctrine of justification. The word means to restore broken relations. But the people who need healing need not that which comes from intellectual belief but that which comes as a total response to God's acceptance evidenced in Christ, the One who represents life in its totality and the one who accepts and restores broken relationships. Moreover, God speaks not only to man's thinking only but to his whole person including his capacities to will and act. And these capacities, in order to be sustained, require the guidance and motivation "drawn from insights conveyed by doctrine."<sup>2</sup> This continuing relationship of language and experience is expressed in the old maxim: doctrine preached practically, duties preached doctrinally.

"Kerygma, creed, and Christian year" is a chapter pointing out that if vital doctrine is to serve as distilled experience to which one can point another person or generation, that a referent needs to be found. Nothing that God is known by his acts, that biblical revelation unfolds through historic event, and that theology is a recital of what God has done in history, Abbey infers faith's essential referent in that Word

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

given by God in Jesus Christ, and that the living experience of encounter with this Word provides the gospel's dynamic center. He cites studies that show the apostles' preaching, the "original testimony," is a dependable body of concrete experience and that which serves as the "operational referent" of the gospel. As the central biblical message, it is not to be viewed as a body of theory but as a recital of God's deeds. Accordingly, the kerygma of the New Testament is viewed as embodying

that central core of memory which assures the integrity of the church's theology in a continued self-identity yet permits that identity to meet new situations with fresh understanding and creative adaptation.<sup>1</sup>

Using the semanticist principle, Abbey encourages penetration of the mere recital of past event "to arrive at present illumination and decision" and to experience the growth and creativity which the kerygma allows.<sup>2</sup> This kerygma (as well as the Apostle's Creed) serves the preacher as a "guiding star to keep him on the track of the gospel." Kerygma preaching, moreover, is not setting forth a particular element of apostolic preaching, but rather discerning

the essential gospel in any text by "sightings" from this compass which points to the scenes of the nativity, crucifixion, and resurrection of our Lord; or, to change the figure, by taking seriously the "travel reports" of those pioneer "voyagers," the apostles, whose experience and witness most clarify the revelation for us.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid... p. 78.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid... p. 79.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid... p. 81.

Thus, kerygma is the meaningful way of understanding the Christian year as a guide, as well as a drama, to a balanced emphasis of the gospel in which men can meet the living Christ, the eternal contemporary who can restore the world to its lost center. Six subsequent chapters develop the "living essence" of the preaching message; the subthemes of these chapters suggest the application of the "double analysis" (of doctrine or scripture and need) as well as exemplify possible sermon titles: Ambassador or Paid Guest Speaker?, Specific Reform and Total Renewal, Oriented on Reality's Map, Teaching Men to Die, When the Bells Ring on Sunday.

A Case Study: "Hope of Mankind's Broken Home"

An analysis of a sermon by Dr. Abbey provides a more explicit presentation of his central homiletical concern.<sup>1</sup> In addition to rhetorical outlines of the sermon, an interview, a taped recording, personal observations of audience reaction, and a tabulation of audience response have been employed. Specific judgments can be made on the basis of the following questions which Abbey considers essential in preaching. Does the preacher take the audience's meanings and moods seriously enough to provoke a "meeting of minds"? Are authority and communication reconciled through double analysis of the text and the contemporary mind? Are the person-centered conditions of communicative speech met? Is there a dynamic encounter of Christ and culture? Is there a challenge to complete a need or correct an axiom?

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<sup>1</sup>Delivered by Abbey at the Lombard Mennonite Church, Lombard, Illinois, March 1, 1964. See Appendix 3 for complete sermon text.

The substance outline of the sermon follows:

Introduction: Adam (an everyman story) hides himself.  
 "The Solitude of the Soul" suggests our trying to find each other.

I. Earth is a story of brokenness.

A. Universal disruption exists from the beginning.

1. of God-man relations
2. of man-wife relations
3. of earth-toil relations
4. of brother-brother relations
5. of language conveying-concealing relations.

B. Brokenness is a continued story.

1. in a need for protection from each other
2. in hatred that is spread
3. in prejudice and its cost to everyone
4. in areas of democracy, respect, and dignity.

II. Earth can be a home again.

A. God achieves oneness in Christ.

1. He loves and forgives.
2. Belonging to God, we belong to each other.

B. The brokenness of life that can be healed is symbolized in Peaceable Lane.

1. The nature of our tragedy in community
2. The root in our rebellion
3. The reconciliation in someone's representative suffering.

Conclusion: Our glorious privilege is the good news of belonging and of brokenness bound up again. This love demands our response.

Are authority and communication reconciled through double analysis of the text and the contemporary mind? Both Old and New Testament lessons were read in this sermon (Genesis 3:8-14, 17; 4:8-10; Ephesians 2:13-16); they provided the framework as well as the source for the sermon problem (the broken home) and the solution (Christ's broken wall of hostility). The Genesis account is given a relevancy by interpreting it as an every-man and as an every-where story. Citations, examples, and incidents drawn from the biblical materials: direction quotations from Adam, Cain, Paul, Jesus, references and descriptions of Christ's suffering, God's word of

love and forgiveness, and the murder of Abel are both illustrative and substantive. Materials from "man's world" are taken largely from the novel by Keith Wheeler, Peaceable Lane. It buttresses the biblical materials with the analogy revealing the nature of man's brokenness, the root of man's rebellion, and a parable of the solution. Because this book deals with a suburban community of Junior executives "in a nice community with a lot of children" and a community which ultimately must face the problem of integration, it decisively addresses itself to the mind of the audience. Coming on a Sunday following Brotherhood Week and as the first Sunday of Lent, this sermon both reviews racial concerns and speaks to the issue of suffering and its significance for "salvation." Other materials from man's world are also utilized in the sermon in a functional, advantageous way. In the introduction, a piece of sculpture in the Chicago Art Museum is used to illustrate the sermon thesis; it is quite possible that a number of people in the audience had seen it. The "Mr. Stranger-Danger" brochure, although possibly not familiar to the audience, would communicate to the family-centered audience. References to Life magazine are used to advance the concept of brokenness; citing the year and month of the issue as well as giving the name of the psychologist provides a sense of authority and authentically relates the sermon to this world. On the basis of the materials indicated, it is evident that Abbey illustrates in practice what he means in theory about an ellipse drawn around two foci: one in the text, the other in a current situation; with the two analyses speaking to

each other with a resultant theme and message. In this manner, Abbey reconciles authority and communication through double analysis of text and contemporary need.

Does the preacher take the audience's meanings and moods seriously enough to provoke a "meeting of minds"? Before coming to Lombard, Abbey was aware that he was to address a suburban audience which desired to be Christian but nevertheless, by location, encountered difficulties in race relations. He also was aware that he was to preach a sermon in Lent clarifying Christ's accomplishments for men. By examining the sermon materials, it appears that Abbey understood and addressed himself to the needs, hopes, fears, and desires of the congregation. Some of the communication stimuli of acceptance and companionship with God and with one's fellow man follow. The story of Adam with its disruptions in man-wife, God-man, brother-brother, earth-toil, language-concealment; the artist's sculpture of "The Solitude of the Soul" of figures unable to touch fingertips; and the Peaceable Lane story, which form a large part of the materials in the sermon, all speak of man's experience in the motive areas for acceptance and companionship. Pride, too, finds its appeal in references that suburban communities can obtain beneficial results from group experiences and that they can work together for good ends. Conformity and change are appealed to, especially change in showing that adoption of certain attitudes of the Negro or the "faceless, nameless" person in the assertion that man's ability to find the solution to his broken home has

community and world-wide implications, such as, the bomb, hatemongers, presence of "Mr. Stranger-Dangers" in the city. Altruism, as Matt Jones in Peaceable Lane experiences that he has done something most worthwhile for the street, is also illustrated. The fear motive is also present in the Mr. Stranger-Danger story; this same story also solicits children-interest.

Are the person-centered conditions of communicative speech met? The hearer is made a partner in the communicative process through devices of composition, particularly in the use of the questions: "Will you look with me at the brokenness of the life we share?" "What will it do to this community?" "Will you go on with me to see not only the nature of this tragedy, but the root in our rebellion?" "Is that the story of us? Is that our story?" "Have we lost our identity and in rebellion are we needing to be restored?" Narrative material is utilized six times, three from the Wheeler novel. Three times descriptive materials are given. Structure and reasoning also add to the "partner" approach. Inferences are drawn repeatedly and inductively, thus, permitting the individual himself to arrive at the conclusions or to be ready for them when restatement is made (a technique used at the end of each subpoint). This procedure should also have tended to disarm the racist and overcome the indifferent. The "we have a problem" and "how can we get a solution?" organization provides a "person-centered" approach and contributes to making the hearer a partner and the sermon a co-operative dialogue.



Word-symbols that pointed to human experiences were possible as stories from literary and actual life were related and then "sign-symbols" applied.

Two other aspects of Abbey's homiletical theory concern a dynamic encounter of Christ with culture and/or the challenge of an axiom. The materials of this sermon show a need to be met or fulfilled rather than an axiom to correct. All materials seem to "work" for Abbey as he seeks to lead the audience into believing and behaving his thesis, pointing to the theme of God's word (in Christ's cross) breaking down the walls that have evolved in the problem of man's brokenness. Through the use of a question regarding Matt Jones' untimely death, suggestion is made regarding the fundamental point of Christ's death as achieving a community (or worldwide) salvation. The proper regard for individuals heretofore unliked is suggested: "So they suddenly realize this man is no longer just a Negro." New and proper community attitudes are also suggested as when Abbey lists possible alternatives that Peaceable Lane residents might take: "So they could as some other neighborhoods have done . . ." Audience-orientation by dynamic encounter in an unmet and unfulfilled need is also evident in the organization as Abbey goes from problem to solution and reiterates three times the movement from Bible-treatment to Peaceable Lane-treatment. In terms of a dynamic encounter Abbey did offer a theology of relationship for the meeting of a human situation at the level of its deep needs.

Since Abbey's theory and his actual sermon are audience centered, the congregation's appraisal seems especially

justified. The following tabulation of audience response is based on the answers of 34 persons who remained for a discussion hour following the sermon.

	<u>Strong- ly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>No Opin- ion</u>	<u>Dis- agree</u>	<u>Strong- ly Disagree</u>
The theme was of vital concern	16	16		1	1
The sermon thoughts were easy to follow	15	18	1		
The scripture used shed light on the subject or problem being discussed	6	22	5	1	
The sermon gave answers (what-to-do-about-it) to the problem or subject	1	23	8	2	
The illustrations reflected my personal world	4	20	8	2	
The words used in the sermon got through to me	10	23	1		
The sermon spoke to my needs and predicament <sup>1</sup>	2	19	7	2	
My attention was maintained throughout	7	22	5		
The preacher's eye contact indicated interest in the audience	12	20	2		
The preacher showed confidence	16	18			
The preacher was sincere	18	16			

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<sup>1</sup>In the item "The sermon spoke to my needs and predicament" it is noted that those who have "no opinion" comprised almost one-fourth of those responding. Several persons indicated that they did not know the meaning of "predicament."

	Strong- ly Agree	Agree	No Opin- ion	Dis agree	Strong- ly Disagree
The preacher had the con- gregation's interest at heart	13	17	4		
The preacher's use of voice made it seem as if he were conversing with me	8	22	4		
The sermon seemed like a good conversation between preacher and people.	8	22	4		

Other evidences of audience response were the questions that were asked during the subsequent discussion hour following the sermon, the audience's strict attention to the speaker as he went from the problem to the solution and from the story to the scripture, Abbey's own remark that "This was a satisfactory communication experience," and the spontaneous action of one member by providing for the church library a copy of Peaceable Lane which was checked out continuously by nine families in a three month period following the sermon.

#### Additional Contemporary Theorists on the Congregation Construct

As explained in the Introduction, the second basic methodology employed in Chapters II through V is to review and collate contemporary homiletical literature and research (other than, and in comparison to, the theories in the case study). Homiletics texts were chosen primarily on the basis of the frequency with which they are used in the teaching of preaching in the American Association of Theological Schools. Texts by contemporary theorists currently teaching in the area

of homiletics or in the "Practical (or Functional) Department" of theological schools were also included.<sup>1</sup> Several other theorists who have written specifically on congregation-oriented preaching are examined also. Additionally, interpretative material and analysis are based in part upon public lectures by homiletical theorists and upon personal interviews with several of the theorists.

### Halford E. Luccock

Several men, who have already been considered in Chapter III, will be re-considered on their basis of approach of the audience. Halford E. Luccock in his In the Minister's Workshop contributes a rationale for audience-oriented preaching.<sup>2</sup> Like Abbey, Luccock sees preaching as needing to meet people at their point of experience. He points to Harry Emerson Fosdick's "What is the Matter with Preaching?" as

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<sup>1</sup>Several things have already been stated in the previous chapter on the message construct that are applicable here. In examination of such theorists as Blackwood and Jones it has already been noted that they start sermon preparation with an awareness of some audience need. Blackwood, in fact, recommends seeing some need before seeing some text. Moreover, several of the biblical message oriented men, such as Knox, Cleland, and Sleeth, like Abbey had some device whereby they drew an ellipse with two foci: one the Word and the other the contemporary situation. Also, these men along with other theorists including Davis, Miller, Macleod, etc., emphasized that if the scriptures were rightly opened up they would have a relevancy, that is, "they would come out of life to go back into life" both because man's spiritual and moral problems continue similarly from generation to generation and also because the Holy Spirit would cause revelation or understanding through the sacramental or re-incarnation nature of the preaching event. Present tense and indirective mood are likewise recommended by this group of theorists.

<sup>2</sup>Luccock, op. cit.

the best advice for preaching which originates in the experience of the people to whom it is preached. This approach to preaching is regarded as differing with the type that begins with an idea but arrives at persons as its destination. It preaches to an object and not on a subject, and thus cuts across the traditional classifications of doctrinal, biblical, ethical, or topical. In the audience-centered approach, the Bible is employed as a means of making life more abundant, and not merely for its own sake. When doctrine is to be preached, it is to be picked up at "its preaching end."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, audience-oriented preaching incorporates habits held by Fosdick who would re-think his sermon as if the congregation were before his eyes, picking out individuals or characteristic groups of individuals, and imaginatively trying his thought upon them. It is a procedure that caused Fosdick to omit sermon paragraphs he liked; it required "rearrangement of order of thought in the interest of psychological persuasiveness."<sup>2</sup>

Lucock cites some of the resources he considers useful for preaching to life situations. "A cloud of witnesses" are the people in real life experiences, as found in fiction,

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<sup>1</sup>Lucock states that the traditional pedagogy of Hebart (preparation, presentation, comparison, generalization, and application) is replaced by the educational theory of Dewey (a felt difficulty, location and definition of the difficulty, suggestion of possible solution, development of solutions, and further exploration leading to acceptance or rejection). The latter method capitalizes on man's attention span" it brings in the application before alertness is lost.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

drama, biography, and history. Psychological literature which describes the way in which the mind and the emotions of the people work, such as that written by W. W. Allport or W. H. Burnham, is available. Moreover, sermons that have arisen from experiences in life can be studied. Live people are sources also for sermons, providing "the flavor evident both in the inner spirit and in the visible and audible works."<sup>1</sup>

Luccock also sees potential drawbacks in life-situation preaching. There is the danger of "slurring two major things in Christian preaching"; the presentation of God and of communion with God as life's greatest experience and the compulsion to become a co-worker with God in his kingdom on earth.<sup>2</sup> It is possible also to fail to confront man with the social implications of the Christian gospel. Moreover, the preacher may also unconsciously substitute psychology for religion. These potential disadvantages, however, do not discourage Luccock from recommending a preaching method which originates in the experience and needs of the people to whom it is preached.

### Ronald Sleeth

In Chapter III it was noted that Ronald Sleeth in Proclaiming the Word recommends a sermon that is "biblically based, doctrinally sound, with a life-situation thrust to it."

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

By the latter concern, Sleeth means that the gospel needs to become meaningful for the listeners. Although life-situation preaching is considered as an approach, as opposed to sermon substance, he emphasizes that true biblical preaching does meet the needs of contemporary life, that is, the Bible's questions are man's continuing questions. Although his considerations, as examined so far, are clearly message-oriented, there are some concerns that he has that may be classified as being audience-oriented. An example of special concern with the audience is the discussion of "proclaiming the Word in controversy." Of the two approaches in preaching on controversial subjects, direct and indirect, he seems to prefer the "direct" approach, calling it "the honorable way." Sleeth warns the preacher, however, that direct preaching should be more than mere rational assertion or acceptance of an idea.

Preaching must reach people emotionally and volitionally to effect change, and the direct approach may not reach these levels . . . People do not sit in congregations with dispassionate and open minds, waiting to be convinced with logical and rational arguments of the truth of a case. They sit there with prejudices and emotions and fears and frustrations and minds--to be sure--all wrapped up together. The preacher who tries to reach them on only one level--the rational--may not even communicate, let alone motivate.<sup>1</sup>

Having indicated that the "frontal assault of the absolute candor method" could ignore the fact that people are motivated by emotional persuasion as well as mental, Sleeth calls attention through a footnote to "an extended discussion of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 111-112.

relation between persuasion and homiletics" in his earlier book.<sup>1</sup> Various principles for either the indirect or direct method include: placing the material in the context of the gospel, the greater the controversy the more the church's answer is needed, being positive, recognizing honest difference, and speaking the truth in love.<sup>2</sup>

Sleeth's second concern for an audience focus finds expression in his assertion that the pulpit and the entire church take its culture seriously, remembering that the church is part of the culture also. Analogizing that just as one cannot address a letter without knowing the recipient's name, Sleeth infers that one cannot preach to a culture that he does not know. Agreeing with Paul Tillich's method correlation (already referred to as the gospel providing answers for the questions that culture raises), Sleeth urges the preacher to identify the questions which culture raises. If preaching is to proclaim the Word so that it meets the needs of today, he regards it as imperative that the speaker know the contemporary scene. Modern literature is viewed as one source through which the preacher can acquire an understanding of "his cultural milieu":

First, the preacher should be interested in modern literature for the aesthetic reasons . . . he should be concerned for the beautiful as over against concern only for the moral and the useful . . . The richer his life, the broader and better his tastes, the more sensitivity

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<sup>1</sup>Ronald E. Sleeth, Persuasive Preaching (New York: Harper and Row, 1956).

<sup>2</sup>These principles, it will be observed, are similar to those offered by Abbey--both men express indebtedness and reference to Ernest Fremont Tittle as a master of handling controversy.



he has, the better will be his preaching . . . The wider his interests and knowledge the stronger his ethos (his ethical persuasion--that arises from his character (itself)).<sup>1</sup>

A second reason for studying modern literature is for theological insights.

If preaching is concerned with "meeting the needs of the day" . . . then he should be anxious to delve in to a medium which those needs are graphically mirrored . . . many of these writers lay bare the nature, fears, dreams, and aspirations of modern man in a more vital way than do pulpits.<sup>2</sup>

Sleeth warns preachers not to expect sermons from novelists. Although some preachers shun modern literature because it is too "naturalistic," Sleeth believes that the writer, through naturalism, paints life as it is.

He dramatizes the idea, and the listener or reader participates in it himself through empathy and sympathetic attraction . . . In a real sense it (the language) has similarities with Kierkegaard's concept of indirect discourse. The audience is talked to or "gotten through to" indirectly. Directly, they are being confronted by a pictorial slice of life. Indirectly, they are being confronted on the deepest levels of their own existence. It is more than just representational writing; it is impressionistic and realistic all at the same time.<sup>3</sup>

Sleeth calls the third reason why the preacher should be concerned with modern literature a pragmatic one.

The materials he reads . . . will help him in his understanding of the culture to which he addresses himself; and it therefore follows that much of the material he reads will get in to his sermons as illustrations, as background, or as a springboard for his sermons.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sleeth, Proclaiming the Word, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 126-127.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

Sleeth believes that if the preacher defines "religious" as asking such ultimate questions of life and death as Why are we here? Where are we going?, much of the modern and secular literature will be rightly also called religious.

Sleeth also sees a fourth consideration for literature-concern in the apparent correlation between literature and religion trends, noting that "one could draw in many instances parallel lines--one showing literature and one theology--and the undulations of both would be similar."<sup>1</sup> Motifs permeating both traditions include:

the conflict between good and evil; man at war with himself; the use of existential categories, including the probing of the psychological depths of man; the dynamic relationship of human beings; and the use of symbol and myth as conveyors of truth are the dominant themes which are the concerns of both religion and literature of the present day.<sup>2</sup>

Having devoted most of his attention to the biblical message, having warned against trying to figure out Man's contemporary needs, and having referred to "persuasion" only as applicable to controversial subjects, Sleeth surprises his readers by using the last two paragraphs of his book to justify an audience-oriented message not unlike that of Abbey's basic concerns in Preaching to the Contemporary Mind. Regarding the values of being a student of the culture he states:

The preacher lives in a world of culture which he ignores at his own peril. He can become the model of irrelevancy by ignoring such fields as modern literature.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

This material will be familiar to his people. The concerns of his congregation may be mirrored for him in such writings. To know their questions, he must be alert to those who reflect our times. But more than this neutral concern, he will find gropings--and indeed affirmations--being made which in themselves may be the vehicles for transmitting the gospel . . . As he stands in two worlds he will be trying frantically to join the two, as he sees the crying need to relate man's need to God's grace.<sup>1</sup>

Also affirmed is Abbey's view of understanding audience needs, moods, and psychological realities so that the message can be related to those meanings:

The gospel becomes gospel only when it is heard and received . . . We need to know our culture, realize we are a part of it, and use its language and forms to enrich our lives, our pulpits, and make effective our evangelism.<sup>2</sup>

Sleeth, who has strongly insisted that preaching is the proclaiming of the Word through Scripture, is insisting here also that preaching is "directed to meeting the needs of contemporary life" and that the Word continues to become flesh to those who hear the Word made meaningful to them, where they are, and in categories they understand.

In Persuasive Preaching Sleeth expresses his belief that an understanding and application of persuasion would help the preacher get the response or commitment he seeks to the claims of the Gospel.<sup>3</sup> Noting that persuasion is the process

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 137-138.

<sup>3</sup>Sleeth, op. cit., pp. vii-viii. This book was written eight years before Proclaiming the Word.

of influencing belief and behaviour by the use of various appeals in order to win a desired response, Sleeth predicts the success of the preacher as being dependent upon how well he understands and uses persuasion in motivating the audience to respond in the desired way. No special areas for the use of persuasion are singled out in this volume however, as was the case eight years later for controversial sermons; no hesitation or concerned caution is evident in his words:

Any uniqueness this book may possess lies in the application of these principles to the theory of preaching . . . If . . . the preaching of the Gospel can be made more meaningful, more moving, and more alive through the application of persuasive principles, then the purpose of this writer will have been accomplished.<sup>1</sup>

Factors of persuasion helping the preacher to communicate to his audience are itemized. Basic is the needed pre-occupation in who is present in preaching; the listener is all important. Since the persuasive preacher is concerned to find how to best make the gospel relevant to audience needs, he must employ an objective approach which is "to stand outside himself and see how he can adapt the Gospel to the needs of his congregation."<sup>2</sup> Specific aspects to keep in mind include: the purpose and tone of the occasion, the time limits and physical setting (including acoustics, pulpit or lectern, pulpit Bible), the audience age, sex, occupations, affiliations,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. viii. Speech theorists James Winans, Charles H. Woolbert, and Lew Sarett are cited as those who have contributed to the understanding of principles of persuasion which can be utilized in preaching. Three teachers to whom indebtedness is given are rhetoricians, a fourth is homiletician Luccock.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

educational background, and interests. The preacher attempts to discover whether an audience can be characterized as believing, doubting, or hostile. He utilizes particular skills for various audience needs, such as, using authority, evidence, logic, reasoning for overcoming a belief for which there is doubt or hostility, or for intensifying one that is mild, or revitalizing one that is dormant, or activating one that is static. He knows how to intensify basic or primary drives, such as, self-preservation, sex, ego, strength, and altruism, as well as other typical needs: safety-risk; pugnacity-peacefulness, acquisitiveness-dissipation, curiosity-contentedness. In using all this knowledge, the preacher

attempts through persuasive preaching to motivate the congregation toward some desired end. He needs to know the congregation as individual persons, to adapt to them, and to present the Gospel in a challenging way to elicit acceptance. All Christian ministers are trying, on the deepest level, to motivate acceptance of the Gospel. Beyond that general good, in any specific sermon they may have in mind specific responses . . . Preaching with a goal gives directness and force, but it calls for sensitive understanding of those who sit in the audience from week to week. Such understanding is not too much to ask of the preacher if he is to be persuasive. Yes, if he is to be a good minister of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Sleeth's emphases in achieving persuasive preaching are consistent and parallel with the persuasion insights of rhetoricians. Both view persuasion by the total impact of the speaker's character, competence, good will, and healthy self-attitude; by arousing and maintaining attention and interest with a strong beginning and a fitting conclusion; by reasoning through a clear purpose and thesis; and a message

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-21.

characterized by unity, coherence, and emphasis; by appealing to the emotions and the feelings which in turn are at the center of volition; by rationalization and suggestion for creating positive responses; by dramatizing an idea and effectively using illustrations; by judicious use of language; and by delivery as it moves an audience to believe and behave the idea. When compared to Abbey's concerns, this book both complements, as well as explicates methods and techniques for achieving his concerns.

### Roy Pearson

Roy Pearson (whose homiletical theory on the message has already been considered) in discussing the nature of the congregation in The Ministry of Preaching, remarks that a good pastor may be a bad preacher simply because he keeps his pastoral insights and his homiletical purpose in two separate compartments.<sup>1</sup> By this, Pearson means that as a pastor he gives evidence of knowing his people and of knowing their needs as individuals, but as a preacher he appears as a stranger with no prescription but only a patent medicine and often with an analysis in which the remedy suggested and the disease of the particular patient are not the same.

Although no two members of a congregation are alike, they, nevertheless, have similarities which need to be understood

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<sup>1</sup>Pearson, The Ministry of Preaching, p. 39. This same discussion also appeared under the title "Preaching and the Understanding of the Congregation" in Pastoral Psychology, March 1959, Volume 10, No. 92; p. 37f.

since they make a congregation what it is. First, the hearers are characterized by ignorance about the Christian faith. Second, in the congregation are persons suffering from a pathetic hunger for an answer to the world's problems without an awareness of the possible answers, or ability to find the necessary "food." A third audience attribute is dismemberment, an assembly of specialists and fragmented parts. A fourth characteristic of the contemporary audience is rootlessness both as to physical real estate and as spiritual orphans. The problem of evil, and the failure of its recognition as the problem, is an additional description of the congregational needs. The preacher is also faced by those who claim an ecumenicity of which they are basically ignorant and in which they want no actual responsibility. There is a seventh group, the Christlike Christians who are informed, committed, united, secure, and forgiven, but who are without assignment.

Pearson regards it as a "strange" ministry which fails to recognize these elements among the hearers; it is one unlike that of the Apostle Paul's which had as its goal to become all things to all men that by all means some might be saved. Because audience-knowledge is often lacking

some ministers ask too much of their congregations, but others ask too little. Some over-estimate the Christian achievement of their people, but others under-estimate it. And a sermon fails in one of its principle functions if it does not call the strong to battle at least as frequently as it restores the weak to strength.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

Pearson's later book, The Preacher: His Purpose and Practice, also focuses concern on the congregation.

One of the commonest sources of failure in the pulpit is the preacher's ignorance of the people to whom he preaches. He has never seen through their pretenses, never penetrated their disguises, never come face to face with the souls that lie buried in flesh and politeness. Standing in the pulpit, he sees a congregation, but he does not see people; or seeing people, he recognizes a collection of bodies, but he does not recognize individual persons; or recognizing individual persons, he runs out of knowledge at the epidermal borders that means so little in the total personality.<sup>1</sup>

As in the earlier writing, characteristics are cited that pervade today's culture and that will be present in the typical congregation. There are those who feel trapped, caged, imprisoned, immured, or entombed. There are those who are confused about the meaning of life itself, about Christianity, about the church, and of himself. Some feel guilty about their good fortunes and the bad fortune of others; others about their lack of will to use their skills and opportunities to build God's Kingdom; still others about the "war" of their scruples and their interests. The pew's predicament is also that its members are afraid--of the bomb, of change, and of the lack of foundation in their own faith due to the scientific-knowledge explosion. The congregation is made up also of those who are pathetically wistful, people who want life's deepest meaning and who want life's satisfactions without a life that is good. There are also those who are gullible, those for whom the pressures have so developed that they believe the fantastic and pour out their life energy for worthless

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<sup>1</sup>Pearson, The Preacher: His Purpose and Practice, p. 11.



causes. Moreover, the man in the pew has a suspicion that the church may not be an adequate channel of his service.

To him the church has frequently seemed more interested in winning converts than in helping people, more occupied with symptoms than with causes, more concerned about minor morals than about basic attitudes. What the church was trying to do did not appear to be worth doing, and what was worth doing the church could not do.<sup>1</sup>

Pearson would have the pulpit take its own proclamations seriously, make its abstractions concrete, translate the Word into meaningful words, have the church confront itself with feasible commitments, and endeavor to practice what it preaches. Moreover, he would have the preacher realize that in light of the predicament in the pew the pulpit has purpose and justification. It is of interest to compare Pearson and Abbey. Both stress the need to understand the mind and mood of today's mind. Both see the one in the pew as having needs to complete and axioms to correct.

### Ralph Sockman

Ralph Sockman, former professor of homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, New York City, and minister of Christ Church, New York City, says in his Lyman Beecher lectures that it is necessary, inevitable, and fruitful to preach to life situations.<sup>2</sup>

Like Abbey and like Sleeth, Sockman encourages reading literature. In "A Statement of my Method" he indicates his

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Sockman, The Highway of God, p. 118.

general reading includes biography, devotional literature, and fiction.<sup>1</sup>

The Lord's roadmaker who watches and works for openings into the hearts of his people will naturally find that concern conditioning his messages. He will prepare his sermons with the needs of his people in mind. He will visualize individuals whose secret cares have been revealed to him. His messages will grow out of life situations.<sup>2</sup>

Preaching also requires the deepest roots, resulting from the preacher having the people both on his mind and on his heart. Preaching themes "must be secured from quests and not from questionnaires. The sermons must be written not merely in ink but in blood."<sup>3</sup> Such sermons, Sockman believes, are life-situation sermons striking "a responsive chord" both in pastor and people precisely because of their realism. This approach, however, may result in sermons made up of incidents limited to the minister's experience, or too introspective and self-centered. To combat this, he indicates that the minister's experience be extended through reading and that "the sermons be not only true to life but as large as life." Although an adequate life-situation sermon is a blend of biblical exposition and doctrinal teaching, it should not "deteriorate into an impersonal topical discussion of or defense of doctrine."<sup>4</sup> The final test of a sermon not having

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Macleod (ed.) Here is My Method (Westwood: Fleming and Revell Co., 1957), p. 181.

<sup>2</sup>Sockman, The Highway of God, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

missed its aim is when the listener leaves the church saying to himself that the service was meant for him. The best aimed and satisfying sermon, Sockman believes, will start with situations where men live and then will lead to doctrinal and biblical sources.

Instead of the traditional expository type of preaching which spends the first paragraphs explaining the Hebrew and Greek roots while the listeners' minds rove over greener pastures, the sermon will arrest the attention of the hearer with a real issue and then direct the quest to the ever-satisfying Scriptures.<sup>1</sup>

Sockman calls life-situation preaching the project method applied to the Bible, because it combines the teaching quality with the intensely practical. Having used this approach in his own preaching, he found it useful for dealing both with social concerns and personal needs. Sockman's considerations for the audience in preaching places him somewhere between Fosdick and Abbey; all three of them are homileticians, as well as practioners, of "creative compassion" for the audience. Similarly they emphasize that preachers be more curer of souls than couriers of messages.

### George A. Buttrick

George A. Buttrick, who teaches homiletics at Garrett Theological Seminary had already written on the audience-construct before 1940 (the period referred to in this study as pre-contemporary homiletics). In his 1931 Lyman Beecher Lectures he asserted that often the modern mind is not an

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

ordered intelligence: it is a prejudice, a vague desire, a mood, a temper."<sup>1</sup> Referring to the mind of that day, he observed that it was revolting, scientific, and skeptical. In 1940, in another series of Lyman Beecher Lectures, he continues the audience emphasis, noting that Jesus' teaching was not in principles or at "stellar distance from actuality" but rather it was "a grappling with the immediate instance. It was truth applied to circumstance."<sup>2</sup> In asking the question, How to preach the whole gospel?, Buttrick's reply is that the preacher is always to "stay close in comradeship with the folk to whom he preaches" and that the message relate to their individual needs as well as to their social needs.<sup>3</sup> Twenty years later Buttrick reveals a continuing concern for the audience; preaching, he notes, is to appeal to "the willed drama" of man's daily history:

Preaching is never to people in general or to crowds at large, but an individual group or church. Only the pastor, or a man with pastoral imagination, can preach. Thus, though a true sermon may be in measure tried anywhere, it is most centrally and sharply true in the congregation for whom it is prepared.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>George A. Buttrick, Jesus Came Preaching (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), p. 60.

<sup>2</sup>George A. Buttrick, en al., The Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale University: Preaching in These Times (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>George A. Buttrick, Sermons Preached in a University Church (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 7. Buttrick justifies the title of this book and indicates it is by "deliberate intent" on the basis that sermons are given to particular audiences.

Moreover, he notes there is "particularity of time" in the sermons. The false norms of success and the dilemma of today's generations, for example, affect these sermons. "All are for a particular congregation in a particular crux in history. This particularity must mark any worthy preaching of the gospel."<sup>1</sup> He insists also that the sermon is made almost as much by the congregation as by the preacher.<sup>2</sup> His concern for the audience finds further expression in his course, *New Testament Preaching and Modern Thought*; in it, he encourages today's preacher to know thoroughly contemporary existential moods and the philosophical concerns of theoreticians, of history, man, and faith, and suggests that these in turn be viewed as part of the mental framework in relevant preaching.

#### Walter Russell Bowie

Walter Russell Bowie, professor of homiletics in the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in Virginia, declares that the preacher should not be like a boy in school standing up to speak a piece who

has prepared something sitting down in a room by himself on a weekday, surrounded, perhaps, by commentaries and books of various sorts, while he labored to put in some kind of formal shape a notion which he had picked up somewhere as a proper pulpit subject. The fact is that "preaching a sermon" may be a calamitous phrase . . . it bristles with didacticism. It suggests someone standing off at a distance and hurling rounded periods like cannon balls at submissive listeners.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Buttrick's awareness of the audience is further evident in his noting that his "reading audience" is different than the one for whom the sermons were originally given.

<sup>3</sup>Walter Russell Bowie, Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), p. 27.

Recommending instead imaginative brooding over the congregation, Bowie suggests that during sermon preparation every thought that passes the preacher's mind ought to recall the people who may be present. He suggests also that the minister go to church and kneel in some of the pews remembering those who will be sitting there. The result of such a sermon is a living communication that glows in the congregation's mind and heart. If a sermon is to be "one man speaking intimately to another" preachers must be pastors:

Real sermons do not grow out of academic air any more than roses will bloom cut off from their roots. A man may give his people learned doctrines and even bright theological and ethical curiosities for their intellects to play with if his preaching comes out of his own unrelated life; but if he is to feed their souls, he must preach out of an awareness of the everyday living which he has seen and shared with them.<sup>1</sup>

As to sermon content, Bowie writes that in every sermon, if it be enriching, two realities must be married: God's truth and man's need.<sup>2</sup>

### Robert E. Keighton

Robert E. Keighton, professor of preaching and worship at Crozer Theological Seminary, states that preachers should remember that their sermons are not defined by written notes or manuscript or even what is said and done in the pulpit, but

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

rather by what takes place in the lives of the hearers.<sup>1</sup>

G. Ray Jordan

G. Ray Jordan, professor preaching at Emory University School of Theology, discusses imagination as an indispensable talent for preaching.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, he, too, recommends going into the pulpit at least once during the week and by vivid imagination plan how to speak best and most effectively to the people. This same need is required elsewhere, such as at the United Nations where each country makes an honest effort to understand each other's history, background, milieu, as well as all the contemporary circumstances which seriously affect lives. Agape love is the capacity to put oneself in another's place and the action that bridges the chasms that separate persons and groups from each other. It is evident from Jordan's eight sermon types that the audience has remained in focus:

1) the thematic sermon, built entirely around one central theme, usually announced in a biblical text and developed from various angles, all of which illuminate its meaning for a life-situation;

2) the counseling sermon, based on the personal needs of individuals and using psychological insights for reinforcing the message of the gospel;

3) the theological sermon, aiming to help people arrive at firm convictions about the ultimate meaning of life and man's destiny in the universe;

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<sup>1</sup>Robert E. Keighton, The Man Who Would Preach (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>G. Ray Jordan, Preaching During a Revolution (Anderson: Warner Press, 1962), p. 36.

- 4) the sermon designed to show the reasonableness of Christian faith in general or some particular aspect of it;
- 5) the sermon or propaganda, cultivating an attitude to the Christian way of life and the values and good causes that the Church represents;
- 6) the sermon that dares to present an unpopular truth, at the risk of offending some parishioners;
- 7) the sermon that shocks, stirring people out of a comfortable complacency with things that Christians ought not to accept;
- 8) the evangelistic sermon, definitely intended to lead people to act upon the Good News and to make a decision for Christ.

David H. C. Read

David H. C. Read, instructor of homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, New York, and Senior Pastor of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, also sees two constant factors in all Christian preaching: "contact with the Word and contact with the world in the context of the Church."<sup>1</sup> He suggests that contact with the world results in shaping the sermon not according to "some admired model, by some ideal conception of a masterpiece of preaching" but by a knowledge of the minds and needs of those who will be listeners.<sup>2</sup> The primary way that such audience-sensitivity will affect the message, according to Read, is in making it "as direct and realistic as possible."

The shape of our sermons will be determined by a ruthless honesty that continually asks: Is this the kind of thing that I would say to Bill in this way, and would be

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<sup>1</sup>David H. C. Read, The Communication of the Gospel (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1952), p. 86.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 89.



prepared to defend it man to man? (And a useful supplementary question is "Have I put in this illustration because it really lights up the difficult point I'm making or because I can put it over with dramatic effect?").<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, such contact with the world means intellectual effort:

The preacher ought to be reading the books and poems, seeing the plays and films and paintings, hearing the music of the present day to the limit of his natural capacity.<sup>2</sup>

If such contact were the case, the tension and confusion in the world would be reflected in the pulpit, and therefore would give a needed encounter with the "Christian answers." Anything less is an attempt to avoid Gethsemane.

Read further sees contact with the world as affecting the use of words. Preaching, he believes, must reflect "the real language" of today.

I say the real language for there is a pulpit jargon that passes for genuine speech, but consists of phrases and even words that no one but a preacher would use.<sup>3</sup>

Unless a word is a vehicle of personal communication it is but an empty sound.<sup>4</sup> The Bible, itself, stands as an example of the living Word clothed in contemporary words. If vital contact with the Word spoken in Christ with man is to continue, it means a clothing of that Word in concrete modern terms. This concern of Read for modern man to hear another speak of God in an idiom not foreign to him is not unlike Abbey's.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

William Thompson

A specific audience study is the doctoral dissertation of Dr. William Thompson, associate professor of homiletics at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary.<sup>1</sup> Thompson's concern was to discover by empirical evidence the substance of what church audiences bring with them in knowledge and attitudes. He desired also to devise a method of analyzing audiences. Moreover, he sought to determine if the minister's knowledge of his audience is faulty. Ministers were asked to predict the responses of their congregations on their motives for attending church, socio-economic data, Bible knowledge, sermon preferences, problem areas in their lives, comprehension of theological terms, knowledge of denominational beliefs and practice, attitude toward the Bible as a source of authority, and social attitudes. The minister's predictions were then compared with the scores actually made on the "audience profile on religion."

Thompson found that ministers rated their audiences as having more information about the Bible and the church than they actually possessed. Ministers assumed their members understood theological terms more than was actually the case. Moreover, they believed the congregation respected biblical authority more and that their social attitudes were more Christian than they really were. Thompson also found

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<sup>1</sup>William David Thompson, A Study in Church Audience Analysis (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Northwestern University, 1960). Dr. Thompson has served as chairman of the Speech Interest Groups for Religious Workers of the Speech Association of America.

that people claim to attend church out of a deep urge to worship God; that they prefer doctrinal and personal-devotional topics to sermons on historical and social topics; that they are more greatly frustrated by their educational level, their bad habits, their understanding of the Bible, their use of leisure time, their ability to mix with people, and their experience with prayer. These people seemed to be more opposed than expected to conscientious objectors, the United Nations, racial integration, and provision for foreign refugees.

He discovered a positive correlation (.43) that the greater skill of the minister in audience analysis, the more highly regarded he was by his congregation. A possible cause for failure of communication between pulpit and pew, he believes, lies in the assumption by ministers of a "greater sophistication for their audiences than the facts warrant."

Thompson's A Listener's Guide to Preaching is written from the congregation's viewpoint.<sup>1</sup> Seeing the pew-sitter's ineffective listening at fault "when preaching fails," the author shares with the laymen what principles and techniques researchers in the behavioral sciences have discovered . . . "that help us understand the dynamics of communication."<sup>2</sup> This "listener's guide" defines preaching and discusses the nature, responsibility, preparation steps, listening requirements, and appropriate congregational responses in preaching. While helping the laymen to understand "what happens when people talk to each other," Thompson has given also the preacher a perspective of audience concern in the art and science of preaching.

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<sup>1</sup>William D. Thompson, A Listener's Guide to Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

Webb B. Garrison

Webb B. Garrison, whom Dr. Thompson cites as one of the few who have written theoretically about the church audience, gives special attention to the role of the listener.<sup>1</sup> His stated goal is to transform the passive listener to an active one. Garrison's study includes the concepts of attention, persuasion, style, and illustration. Numerous charts are provided to test if the preaching is listener-centered rather than sermon-centered. Good listening is seen as being aided if, like apostolic preaching, it begins with the needs of the audience. Throughout the sermon, however, the preacher must both "stab the listener's minds awake" so that they love God with the mind, and also appeal to the emotions so that the listeners respond in ultimate surrender.

In a later work Garrison reiterates the primacy of the audience in preaching through the means of illustrative material and word choice.<sup>2</sup> He doubts the effectiveness of material which was once dynamically used for another audience. Anecdotes from Lord Shaftesbury's funeral, Voltaire's attacks on the Bible, G. Campbell Morgan's encounters with skeptics, he feels, are apt to fail in making contact with persons whose interests are different.<sup>3</sup> Everything that is used in a sermon,

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<sup>1</sup>Webb B. Garrison, The Preacher and His Audience (Westwood: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1954).

<sup>2</sup>Webb B. Garrison, Creative Imagination in Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

"if it is to ring true," must be judged for its effect upon a particular audience.

Effective preaching material must be discovered, selected, and adapted to communicate with those who make up a specific audience. Classical and academic allusions, readily utilized by the reader, are not so readily received by the listener. Comparatively trivial experiences out of everyday life are more likely to make effective contact with listeners than are accounts of world-shaking events not linked with here and now.<sup>1</sup>

Garrison calls attention to the J. L. Hudson Company, a large department store, which has its advertising experts have on their desks a small wooden figure representing "Mrs. Murphy," the depiction of a typical housewife to remind the "word users" that communication means talking with her. The role of the listener in preaching, he regards, is equally important as in advertising.

### Alfred Nevin Sayres

Concurring with Thompson and Garrison in the primacy of the audience in preaching is Alfred Nevin Sayres, professor of practical theology at Lancaster Theological Seminary for fifteen years.<sup>2</sup> Through a mythical personage, Timothy Lehman, known as a typical layman, Sayres sets forth a preaching rationale from the congregation's point of view. His goal is wanting ministers to "listen to their own sermons with the ears of a layman and from the habit of preparing their sermons to be heard by laymen."<sup>3</sup> Such a sermon is one that "can be

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Alfred Nevin Sayres, That One Good Sermon (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1963).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

heard . . . has one big idea . . . keeps moving . . . matters to the man in the pew . . . the preacher means it . . . rings true . . . the man behind it is humble, considerate, dedicated, and truly religious." Elsewhere, the criterion of an effective audience-oriented sermon is specified with the words "personal stake"<sup>1</sup> which "Lehman" found present in a Youth Sunday sermon he was going to sleep through entitled "Preparing for Marriage." But the sermon's ideas touched everyone present; marriage was a community enterprise including parents, those witnessing the ceremony, and those who although not present nevertheless help or hinder the marriage. The personal stake "Mr. Lehman" found also in a sermon on "The Gospel and the World of Work" in which the problem of covetousness was considered:

So it turned out that the gospel for the working world was for little fellows like me, as well as for Bethlehem Steel and General Motors and the AFL-CIO. After that I never went to church again with the easy feeling that I could let the sermon go in one ear and out the other without missing something important. I know now that what our pastor has found in the Bible to talk about each Sunday will matter to me. It will be heard right into my life . . . the sermon in our church never gets bogged down in ancient Palestine or Babylon or Macedonia. Before you know it this old story is barging right into your living room or bearing down on a hot issue in your community or saying something about your personal problems.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Lehman "presumes" that the reason that his preacher's sermon reaches him where he is must be "because he's been there with us. He knows what's troubling us; he knows our weak points and our strong points; and he can speak to our

<sup>1</sup>Ibid... p. 52.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid... p. 53.

condition."<sup>1</sup> Concrete words and concrete ideas permit "Lehman's" pastor-preacher to show "that's what it means to be a Christian."

Charles F. Kemp

The contemporary homiletical period under study appears to be characterized by, and indebted to, the pastoral psychology approach to preaching.<sup>2</sup> The literature not only reveals that preachers and homileticians have gone to the behavioral sciences for further insights into the communicative process but also that those in the fields of counseling and other pastoral services have shared from their disciplines that which they see as relevant for preaching. The discoveries and contributions noted here are those apropos to the audience-construct. The first theorist consulted, Charles F. Kemp, professor at Brite College of the Bible, discusses in Pastoral Preaching the relationship of preaching to pastoral care.<sup>3</sup> He presents an enthusiastic call for preaching that is audience-centered, preaching that "grapples with real issues in the story of man's humanity." He asks the pastor-preacher to address himself to every degree and facet of social gradations,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>The Niebuhr report on theological education indicates that the pastoral psychology movement has been one of the most influential movements within the church and theological education. Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson, The Advancement of Theological Education (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1957), p. 122.

<sup>3</sup>Charles F. Kemp, Pastoral Preaching (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1963).

to preach "with meaning and power" to the "confusion of youth, the disillusionment of the middle-aged, and the perplexity of the elderly," to cope with the victims--and the victors--of a changing society, and to treat all levels of society including soldier and civilian, rich and poor, retarded and brilliant, student and laborer, the content and the contented.

Kemp agrees with Brooks that the pastor and preacher are two things that are one. He feels that pastoral preaching is not distinct from expository, doctrinal, ethical, and evangelistic preaching. It is rather "an attempt to meet the individual and personal needs of the people by means of a sermon."<sup>1</sup> In this definition Kemp sees all sermons as potentially pastoral. Pastoral preaching for him is a "point of view":

It is an attempt to take the needs of the people in one hand and the truth of the Christian gospel in the other and bring the two together by means of the spoken word.<sup>2</sup>

Pastoral psychology, according to Kemp, has made two marked influences on preaching.

It has made preachers aware of the needs of people. The very rapid development of the social and psychological disciplines has given us an understanding of human behavior that was not available to any previous generation of preachers.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 13.



The second influence is recognition and development of a professional and trained institutional ministry, such as, the chaplains in hospitals, reformatories, schools for retarded, and homes for older persons.

The pastor-preacher has a unique opportunity to establish a precounseling relationship as well as to deal with the issues of life. During the sermon, the congregation comes to know something of the pastor's attitudes, point of view, and personality. This acquaintance can, of course, be disadvantageous:

The pastor's preaching can operate in reverse. It may keep people from coming to him; it may cause people to lose confidence in him. If the preacher is too judgmental, if he lacks sympathy and understanding, if he is too trivial, or if his messages are unrelated to life, then the results can weaken the relationship.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the pastor's attitude, tone of voice, and message can give the congregation the impression that he understands and loves them. The unique opportunity of preaching is viewed, then, as a complementation to his work in the office:

There he permits the people to drain off their emotions, to come to some understanding of their difficulties, to think through some of their choices. In the pulpit he provides them with the resources of the Christian faith and life which enable them to withstand some of their difficulties, to continue with some of their decisions in spite of discouragement.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 37.



Thus, Kemp relates the two functions, preaching and listening, proclaiming and counseling, each strengthening and supplementing the other.

Kemp emphasizes also that pastoral preaching has a "background" by which he means that a preacher cannot speak to people's needs unless he knows what their needs are. He states

You cannot know what their needs are unless you go where the people are. You cannot share people's lives from a distance. You cannot understand their needs unless you have time to listen when they come to discuss some of their most perplexing problems and deepest needs.<sup>1</sup>

Pastoral preaching, he sees, has a background that is based upon and grows out of such a concern for persons that the speaker is moved with compassion and with desire to share his life as well as to study the needs of others. A second kind of background is based upon theology and scripture. As a theologian who is familiar with Christian thought and experience, he gives himself to the interpretation and translation of such words as grace, sin, forgiveness, love, redemption, and salvation in language the audience understands. In studying the scriptures, he

attempts to understand life and its meaning. He needs to study the Bible so that he will know what it has to say to men who are haunted by a sense of guilt, troubled by doubt, confused about the meaning and purpose of life.<sup>2</sup>

In the study of scriptures, he "saturates his mind and thought with the truth found there, so that when he attempts to deal

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 43-44.

with some need, the texts are at his fingertips."<sup>1</sup> A third type of background is based upon being a student of human nature:

Psychology is nothing more or less than a study of behavior. The minister must be selective, if for no other reason than the limitation of time, but he dare not neglect any area that will give him a greater understanding of life and the people to whom he must minister.<sup>2</sup>

Kemp believes that the best way to study preaching is to study sermons. Accordingly, he includes eighteen sermons. With three exceptions (sermons by Harry Emerson Fosdick, Horace Bushnell, and Washington Cladden) all of the sermons are by contemporary preachers. Three of the sections are sermons prepared for specific congregations, sermons by men who have specialized in pastoral care, and sermons prepared for ministers themselves. The sermon titles, themselves, illustrate Kemp's concerns for pastoral preaching:

Handling Life's Second Bests, In the Meantime, Six Facts About Forgiveness, An Exceedingly Good Land, Overcoming Emotional Depression, How to Handle Your Load, Faith for a Time of Crisis, The Need for Roots, Out of the Ordinary, The Little Man Jesus Liked, The Miracle of Adequacy, Every Man's Life a Plan of God, The Education of Our Wants

In an earlier book (which also has sermons by masters of life-situation preaching, including a brief biography and an analysis sketch of the preaching approach), Kemp analyzes the purposes of "life-situation" sermons.<sup>3</sup> He regards pastoral

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>3</sup>Charles F. Kemp, Life-Situation Preaching (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1956).

preaching as being synonymous with life-situation or therapeutic preaching. His main stress is that preachers recognize that people come to church to find help and that only if the life-needs of the people are met is the preacher fulfilling his significant function.<sup>1</sup> Kemp suggests that Jesus, himself, was speaking to life situations:

Much of his preaching grew directly out of a practical life situation. That certainly was true of the story of the good Samaritan and that of the prodigal son. Some of his most spiritual statements were made to meet the life problem of one man or woman, such as Nicodemus or the woman at the well.<sup>2</sup>

Kemp sees pastoral work as a great contribution to preaching. Being among the people the preacher discovers themes on which to preach. Preaching, moreover, becomes an extension of his relationships with people. Having been available during the week to relieve tensions, restore confidence, help with human relationships, the congregation listens with new earnestness when he speaks on Sunday. Similarly, when the congregation comes to the conclusion during the sermon that their pastor understands, accepts them and life, they will feel that he is one to whom they can share their problems and needs. Moreover, life-situation preaching does not minimize the Bible; on the contrary

it means that the preacher must return to his Bible with a new earnestness as he attempts to use it to interpret life and to give meaning to human experience.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

Robert McCrackin

Robert McCrackin in The Making of the Sermon concurs with his predecessor at the Riverside Church, Dr. Fosdick, who in his article to Harper's Magazine "What is the Matter with Preaching" indicated that sermons need to start with a sketching of a practical, living, urgent problem.<sup>1</sup> McCrackin sees this approach as relevant to all kinds of subject matter:

Yes, whether expository, ethical, devotional, theological, apologetical, social, psychological, evangelical, topical, bring preaching close to life.<sup>2</sup>

He considers life-situation preaching to be the most common type used today.

Seeking to avoid the remoteness and irrelevance, not to say unreality, which are the bane of much biblical exposition, it starts with people where they are, which was what Jesus did over and over again. The point of departure is a live issue of some kind. It may be personal or social; it may be theological or ethical. Whatever it is, the preacher makes it his business to get at the core of the problem, and, that done, he goes on to work out the solution, with the biblical revelation, and the mind and spirit of Christ, as the constant points of reference and direction.<sup>3</sup>

David MacLennan

David MacLennan, former professor of preaching and pastoral care at Yale University Divinity School, warns against

<sup>1</sup>Robert J. McCracken, The Making of the Sermon (New York: Harper and Bros., 1956). Dr. McCracken teaches homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, New York City.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

preaching that contains little mention of the immediate surrounding.<sup>1</sup> Regarding Christ as having spoken to man's true condition, MacLennan encourages preachers to speak as Christ did, keeping the offices of pastor and preacher together. The tests of such preaching are relevancy, reality, and Christ-centered content.<sup>2</sup> Whether the sermon be doctrinal or ethical, he notes, the pastoral touch is indispensable to effective communication. When preaching doctrinally, the preacher

knows his people and knows how to use a transformer so that the high voltage of the original current can be stepped down to light their lamps of belief.<sup>3</sup>

When preaching ethically, the pastor-preacher knows what truth has been resisted and what has been accepted; moreover, he

cares deeply for what impersonal systems do to them. He strives always to treat the hurt of God's people, not lightly but tenderly . . . Trusted and loved by his people, and loving his people in spite of what he knows, he can speak the truth in love, thereby assuring that it will be heard, received, and not infrequently acted upon.<sup>4</sup>

Thus MacLennan defines pastoral preaching as "the communication of the good news by one whose relationship to persons is that of shepherd of souls" rather than as that concerned with edifying the saints or that which is distinct from prophetic, ethical, doctrinal, evangelistic, or devotional preaching. The importance of the audience construct for

<sup>1</sup>David MacLennan, Pastoral Preaching (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

preaching is explicit for MacLennan: "Christian preaching is the communication by a man in Christ to individuals in their known needs (italics added) to the end that by God's grace they may experience newness of life within the community of the Holy Spirit, the Church."<sup>1</sup>

Edgar Jackson (and Harry Emerson Fosdick)

Edgar Jackson in A Psychology for Preaching endeavors to speak to the "concept of meaningful communication between the man in the pulpit and the congregation."<sup>2</sup> Veteran audience-centered preacher Harry Emerson Fosdick remarks in the Preface that Jackson's idea of preaching is "guided and enriched by the new psychology" so that its purpose is viewed as coming "to grips with the real problems of real people."<sup>3</sup> Fosdick comments further regarding the basic requirement of a true preacher:

Insight into the real problems of his listeners, clairvoyance into their needs, sensitivity to their hurts, capacity to feel with them and for<sup>4</sup> them--this is the basic requirement of a true preacher.

In a chapter entitled, "Engaging the Mind," Jackson echoes Abbey's concern for getting inside of contemporary

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Edgar Jackson, A Psychology for Preaching (Great Neck: Channel Press, 1961).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



minds. Referring to educational psychology, Jackson notes that "people accept more readily whatever has been actively related to their field of learning."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, preachers should endeavor to reach their congregations through a constant awareness of their interests. Noting that a preacher is interested in seeking conviction, it is essential to get an "intellectual toe into the door of the mind of his listener."<sup>2</sup> Essential for achieving this is to have opening sentences that make the hearer feel involved, starting where the listeners are rather than where the preacher is. Based upon cited experimental evidence, Jackson infers that if opening material is weak listeners lose interest, and that if it is strong the listeners "help to furnish their own climax."<sup>3</sup> Jackson is cognizant also of the place of attention in engaging the mind.

Getting the attention of a congregation is like wooing a girl. You must keep working at it. You can't get her attention and then forget all about her. Even presenting the strongest point first doesn't solve the problem of keeping attention through the rest of the sermon. Since our thoughts tend to wander, it's good strategy for a preacher to use a graphic illustration, a bit of humor, or a series of questions every few minutes to "jerk back the attention" of his listeners.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Jackson is also concerned that the body of a sermon be audience-centered. To assure this he suggests that the preacher listen to his sermon with these questions:

Do ideas develop logically? Are points made with clarity? Is there extraneous and unimportant material? How could I improve the rate of speech? How could I bring more life and vitality to what I said? Did I close when I should have? Was presentation varied or monotonous? How would I rate the sermon if someone else preached it?<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, a sermon's conclusion is to be judged also as to how well it sustains attention.

In an earlier work, Jackson stresses that it is necessary in sermon preparation to visualize the congregation if one is to preach to human needs.<sup>2</sup> He cites a study in which one half of the four thousand replies expressed their major problems to be

futility, insecurity, loneliness, marriage problems, sex, alcoholism, false ideas of religion and morals, inferiority, suffering, illness, frustrations, and guilt feelings. Nearly a quarter of the persons were concerned about family problems, child training, infidelity, separation, divorce, poor adjustment to marriage, religious differences in the home, and other problems that are symptoms of personal problems as they touch the lives of others. The remaining fraction were concerned with social, community, and national problems.<sup>3</sup>

Preachers who see their people in terms of these needs have taken "the first steps toward preaching with soul-healing power." Jackson suggests that in a congregation of five hundred people that a preacher could assume the following needs: that one half would be feeling an acute sense of loss from bereavement, a third of those married facing personality

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>2</sup>Edgar Jackson, How to Preach to People's Needs (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

adjustment, one half having problems of emotional adjustment either to school, work, home, or community. Others would likely have neuroses due to alcohol addiction or other obsessions. An approximate fifteen would likely be homosexually inclined and twenty-five depressed. An approximate hundred would likely suffer from deep guilt feelings.<sup>1</sup> A preacher ought to realize, therefore, that in the congregation are persons actually "burdened with sin, fearful of life and death, injuring themselves by pride and jealousy, or making life miserable for others through resentments and masked hatred."<sup>2</sup> These same people seek forgiveness, a living faith, a self understanding, and a basis for good will. Moreover, the minister is to remember that his sermon may be soul-healing and also soul-injuring, the latter being the case if it sets false goals, stimulates unhealthy resentment or promises a security that is unreal or encourages a submissiveness or aggressiveness.

Jackson sees his position as similar to Fosdick's which is to help the listener view himself as a part of the solution instead of as a part of the problem. The hearers through preaching are to be aware of themselves as a part of something beyond themselves. So viewed, Jackson believes, preaching looks at a congregation not as something to be judged but as persons who "injured, scarred, or frightened by the experience of life" are to receive God's healing. The preacher

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

then realizes that the congregation comes not to hear him but God through him. Moreover, the preacher no longer asks "What am I going to say?" but "To whom shall I be speaking?" "What is his greatest need?" "In the time he gives me, how can I best meet that need?"<sup>1</sup> Specific areas that Jackson covers in illustrating preaching that addresses itself to people's needs include: preaching to people who are guilt-laden, sorrow-filled, fearful, bothered by alcohol, insecure, lonely, defeated, angry, doubting, tense, sick and shut-in, feeling inferior, gripped by injurious habits, aged, immature, and who have family problems.

### Earl H. Furgeson

Pastoral theologian-homiletician Earl H. Furgeson views the use of sermon language from the viewpoint of the audience in his study on "Abstractions in Preaching."<sup>2</sup> He regards "falling asleep during preaching" as a symptom of failure in communication.

When the meanings begin to blur, the listener's attention fades and, like a driver overcome by the monotony of the road, he gives up. Irrelevance, or the failure to convey significant meaning, is a prime factor; and the analysis of this factor leads out in several directions, some of them oratorical, some homiletical, some psychological. Perhaps the most interesting . . . is an analysis of the interdependence of homiletical and psychological factors as they bear on the process of communication.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Earl H. Furgeson, "Abstractions in Preaching," Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 14, No. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

Furgeson, who regards the study of homiletics as being "traditionally wedded" to theology, rhetoric, and oratory, recommends that it be advanced by taking psychology "as a fourth spouse." He also believes that "a sober research on the subject of the psychoneurotic coefficients in homiletical productions" would

cover the problem of the specific meanings of the general concepts used by the preacher in his preaching and particularly the inability of either the preacher or the listener to identify the specific meanings associated with general concepts, that is to say, the problem of abstraction.<sup>1</sup>

Furgeson, who regards abstract language as concepts divorced from the particular experiences from which the concepts were derived, considers the fallacy of abstraction in preaching as being the inability of preacher or listener to "supply the particular meanings or specific references." He regards, therefore, the cause of contemporary irrelevance in preaching to be inability of the preacher to "save the key words" of Christianity. These questions are raised:

What would a content analysis of the spoken words of the sermon . . . reveal? How much of the Word gets into the words? To what extent does the word spoken mean the same for him who speaks and those who listen? And to what extent does the speaker know the meanings of the words he speaks? Can he give an operational translation of his general terms?<sup>2</sup>

Preachers need Luccock's reminder to "discocoon" themselves; they need to turn the ear into an eye so that the listener can see the living experience behind the terminology. Moreover, preaching students need to learn to give operational translations

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

of terms like God and faith; otherwise these terms are treated as if they were too sacred to have any specific meanings, and in the place of any informative communications on the subject we get patriotically pious declamations replete with genuflections before the term itself, as if it had magical powers in its own right to put to flight the armies of the aliens by the mere utterance of the word.<sup>1</sup>

Since God does not come to people through abstractions but through concrete situations, preachers could learn with profit from poets who translate concepts into specific imagery. Because abstract terms are concepts which often overlook the specific instances and particulars, the preacher

must be ready on demand to produce the empirical content of his abstractions; he must avoid the pitfall of treating his concepts as if they were things in themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Furgeson illustrates his theory with the concept of sin, showing that it is not a thing in itself or a possession that a man has, but rather that there are only persons sinning and that they sin in particular.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, he calls attention to commitment, consecration, faith, forgiveness, hope, love, mercy, and self denial, stating that they

are in reality not nouns at all; they are adjectives describing the quality of certain activities or attitudes; they are nominal in form but descriptive in function. The problem is always that of discovering the operational content, or the adjectival reference, of the abstract noun.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



Similarly, the "currency of philosophy" (such concepts as being, God, man, salvation) are regarded as worthless unless "their precise value can be known."

The distinctive work of preaching is the translating of religious concepts into living realities. Inability to translate abstract terms is due, however, both to the way concepts are formed and used. Preachers "mint" words according to their own needs rather than according to the audiences':

Our religious concepts are the tools by means of which we think about our religious experiences and the coins we use in the communication of our thoughts. But these coins are minted in the laboratories of our own needs and these needs may be normal, neurotic, or psychotic.<sup>1</sup>

These abstractions may then serve as instruments of concealment or of revelation. Moreover, the more abstract the term the more private the meanings.

Furgeson is aware, however, that abstract words can communicate, particularly if

they invite sympathetic responsive vibrations in the listener of a kind similar to those in the speaker when the listener is tuned to vibrate on the same frequency as the speaker . . . some preachers can preach effectively before some groups and in certain areas but not in others. They are en rapport with the unconscious, nonverbal ends of those who give them a favorable hearing.<sup>2</sup>

In this situation, abstractions are understood as "a mating call" which is received by another whose "emotional needs and patterns are congruent with those communicated."<sup>3</sup> When the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 16.



referent relates to private meanings of which the user is unaware, then the process should be called metacommunication, which is the relationship between persons who are communicating and their relative unawareness of each other's perception. It is also the language used when the speaker doesn't know precisely what it is he is talking about.

Elsewhere, Furgeson writes that the essence of communication is the inter-personal activity in which there is an exchange of meanings achieved by a preacher and people relating to each other in terms according to the predominant psychological realities of their own personal situations.<sup>1</sup>

#### John L. Casteel

John L. Casteel, while professor of speech at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, sought to answer the question, What rhetorical and homiletical resources are available to the minister who wishes to make his preaching a significant part of his pastoral ministry?<sup>2</sup> Having ranked contemporary public speaking textbooks which build upon the principles and insights provided by contemporary psychology as superior to preaching texts, he recommended that the following principles be considered in a revised theory of homiletics as based upon pastoral counseling: 1) that preaching is creative in its nature; 2) all public address is potentially therapeutic;

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<sup>1</sup>Earl H. Furgeson, "Editorial: Psychology and Preaching," Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 14, No. 137, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>John L. Casteel, "Homiletical Method for Pastoral Preaching," Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 6, No. 58.

3) that preaching with a therapeutic intent is evocative in purpose and character--providing suitable channels for release and response as required by the needs of the listeners;

4) be authoritative without being authoritarian; 5) speak as a representative for the congregation "to set forth with accuracy, vividness, and power their condition, need, desire and hope, and to open to them the possibility of adequate resource and fulfillment of these"; as a representative the minister

speaks for the people; but he does not limit himself simply to what they would say if they were speaking. Rather, he must try to express what they would say if they were conscious of, and articulate in formulating, what they feel, think, wish, need. He does not merely begin where they are, because often they are not aware of being anywhere in particular. He begins where they would know themselves to be if they were awake to their own situation.<sup>1</sup>

Casteel suggests that the preacher describe the lives of the congregation as the members themselves would see them if they had insight into their manner of living. He notes that the preacher must try to "epitomize their need and experience within the compass of the sermon" so that he can

penetrate the situation in which his people are living, whether in terms of their individual and private problems, or of their involvement in the crises of our world and time, and set their condition before them in such terms that they are led to self-recognition and to a breaking through into a new level of living.<sup>2</sup>

The basic pattern required for preaching as here described proceeds, he notes, with the same pattern and outcome as

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 14.



sought in counseling including

1. Rapport: The establishment of proper rapport between minister and congregation. 2. Description: The objective description of the problem with which the sermon is concerned. 3. Recognition: The recognition by the congregation of this problem situation as being essentially their own. 4. Insight: The setting forth, on the basis of this recognition, of the implications of the situation and the available alternatives for meeting it. 5. Motivation: Stimulation of the listener to act upon the new insights which he now has and encouragement to continue in the process of working out his problem.<sup>1</sup>

Elder. Oates. Teigmanis

Other pastoral counselors also view preaching as allowing for an alteration of personality from within, not unlike pastoral counseling. James Lyn Elder refers to the

response of the hearer in terms of embracing movement toward the ideal, translating the Christian idea into his own personal idiom, and giving it expression in terms of his own life situation.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Wayne Oates refers to "therapeutic preaching," interpreting human experience in light of biblical truth as contrasted to exhorting people to observe certain moral precepts.<sup>3</sup> Halford Luccock and David MacLennan refer to pastoral preaching as that which guides spiritual growth and as

the communication of truth in love by a man committed to the Gospel to individuals in their known needs, that such individuals confronted by the good news of God in Christ may be enabled by God's Spirit to grow into fullness of life within the community of Christians.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>James Lyn Elder, "The Communication of the Gospel," An Introduction to Pastoral Counseling, Wayne Oates, (ed.), (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959), p. 203.

<sup>3</sup>Wayne Oates, The Christian Pastor (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1951), p. 67.

<sup>4</sup>David MacLennan and Halford Luccock, "Can Preaching Be Non-Directive?" The Application of Psychology to Preaching (Great Neck: Pastoral Psychology Press, 1952), p. 59.



Arthur L. Teigmanis notes that authentic preaching is "an art of mediation between God and man, between the needs of the soul and the reservoirs of spiritual supply."<sup>1</sup> He notes that although authentic preaching is objective proclamation it is also "celebration of God-given victory over the crises of life--be they crises of sin and separation or the crises of failure, suffering, and loss."<sup>2</sup> Believing that preaching is addressed to personal needs, Teigmanis discusses preaching to various life crises: death, grief, physical sickness, emotional illness, loss of self-esteem, marital distress, handicapped living, and problems of retirement age. Other subjects considered are ministering to spiritually isolated, wrestling with community problems, and personal growth. He indicated that since people are concerned with "living meaning" they are anxious to hear sermons on religious language and communication as well as the meanings inherent in such terms as God, prayer, hell, and eternal life.

#### Summary

According to the Lambertson and Abernathy studies cited in Chapter One, pre-contemporary homiletics gave prime consideration to the message construct; minor concerns were developed, however, for audience analysis, adaptation, and motivation, including the emergence of life-situation preaching

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur L. Teigmanis, Preaching and Pastoral Care (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

which utilized materials coming from the pastoral round as well as literature. Classical rhetoric, as observed also in Chapter One, with its basic philosophy coming from Aristotle, not only recognized the audience as one of the four component parts of the available means of persuasion but also dealt with the listener's basic emotions. Contemporary speech theory, moreover, further clarifies, and insists, that a speaker's message, including subject selection, thesis formulation, material selections, arrangement pattern, and word style, is prepared and presented with an awareness of the audience. The attitudes, experiences, intelligence, emotions, and psychological realities of the listener are regarded as basic factors in determining the actual response of a message.

This chapter has investigated the concerns of contemporary homileticians regarding the place of the congregation in preaching. As a central figure of the congregation construct in contemporary homiletics, Merrill Abbey views the congregation as the key factor in developing communication, the point against which subject matter and devices are to be judged. The preacher's role is to get inside the mind of his listener by taking his needs and meanings seriously, by reconciling authority and communication, by stimulating tension with an encounter between Christ and culture and thus fulfill some need by the gospel, and by challenging the congregation to disabuse itself of a faulty axiom. Abbey's chief concern is to center the sermon on the needs of the congregation, and to address the congregation in the intellectual and social milieu in which it exists. Regarding style, Abbey stresses using

terms that are understood by the listener and that symbolize meanings which the preacher hopes to communicate. A sermon by Abbey that was examined using his criteria was illustrative of both his concepts regarding preaching as well as of their application in communicating to a particular congregation.

The survey of other contemporary homileticians indicates the centrality of Abbey's theory in the modern approach to the congregation, concentrating on the confrontation between gospel and culture. These other theorists viewed the audience as a necessary homiletical focus in life-situation preaching and in controversial preaching; additionally, they viewed a study of literature, an immersion in culture, as an ideal method for defining the contemporary mind and for developing channels of access to it. Several theorists specialized in defining congregation make-up and reaction tendencies. Another group, the pastorally trained, viewed the psychological and spiritual realities of the listener as the primary concern. Focus was not only upon the audience as it was, but upon the audience as it could become with preaching providing the therapy and cure. The role of pastoral insight for getting behind the labels or abstractions to the living experiences, and for preparing and arranging sermons holding audience attention, were likewise considered.

On the basis of this examination, it is apparent that contemporary homiletical understanding of the audience has built upon classical rhetoric and precontemporary homiletics (as discussed in Chapter One) with socio-psychological and





pastoral behavioral insights. This construct now has a body of literature, both theoretical and experimental, as evidenced by the writings of Abbey, Jackson, Thompson, etc. Pastoral counseling, it appears, has been largely responsible for appreciating the psychological realities of the message receiver. It would seem from the interpretations of the literature described in this chapter that the homiletical theory of the congregation-audience construct has made rapid strides from the pre-contemporary period and is on a commensurate level with contemporary rhetoric theory.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PREACHING SITUATION

Easily ninety-five per cent . . . indicate that their greatest frustration and area of need is communication. Our aim is to help them understand and employ dialogue as the principle of communication which is basic to all the functions of ministry such as teaching, preaching . . .<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

In no area of contemporary homiletics, as shall be discovered in this chapter, have the insights of rhetoric and the behavioral sciences, particularly those developed in the context of pastoral psychology, made as great an impact as upon the construct of occasion-contextual relationships-preaching situation.<sup>2</sup> This concern with the process of religious communication in its social, intellectual, and historical setting is essentially new to homiletics. Lambertson's study of American protestant preaching up to 1860 indicates that occasion was not a developed concern of homiletics; Abernathy's

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<sup>1</sup>Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, "Purposes of the Institute," June, 1965.

<sup>2</sup>These three terms will be used interchangeably in this chapter, although occasion is the more standard rhetorical term, contextual relationships the description in contemporary communication theory, and preaching situation the homiletical label.

discussion of homiletics up to 1940 indicates that the construct of occasion was restricted primarily to such considerations as the calendar and the church year.<sup>1</sup> Although occasion was included in the four constructs of classical rhetoric, its definition was frequently limited to situational factors such as room size, seating, ventilation and, more recently, the use of microphones and public address systems. It is in contemporary rhetoric that new concepts of occasion have emerged; instead of referring to the speaking environment, contemporary rhetoric stresses the speaking situation in which participative and responsive relationships develop in a dialogical, co-acting context when speaker, message, and audience are brought together. The reciprocal interaction and interdependence in the speaking situation are often labeled "feedback" or "re-coding."

Contemporary homiletics has drawn heavily upon these developments in examining the role of occasion in religious communication. In recent years, outstanding theorists in the fields of personality dynamics and pastoral counseling have attempted to relate their disciplines to the field of preaching; in most seminaries, behavioral science subjects and homiletics are taught in the same department, in some instances by the same person. This infusion of occasion with a new homiletical importance is represented in the work of Dr. Charles R. Stinnette, Jr., who provides the basic case study of this chapter. Stinnette, who brings a thorough grounding

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<sup>1</sup>As noted in Chapter I.

in psychiatry to the problems of homiletics, emphasizes the receiving and sharing community; his book Faith, Freedom, and Selfhood, other writings and public lectures, a representative sermon and personal interviews are employed in an examination of his theory.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, a survey of other homiletic theoreticians provides an indication of the new role the construct of occasion has assumed.

A Case Study: The Sharing Community of Faith--  
A Communication-Receiving Context

Stinnette's discussion of the interaction which occurs when the preacher, his message, and the congregation are brought together includes several major concepts. His consideration of these interacting elements is made from the

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<sup>1</sup>Charles R. Stinnette, Jr., Faith, Freedom, and Selfhood, subtitled, "A Study in Personal Dynamics" (Greenwich: The Seabury Press, 1959).

Dr. Stinnette holds a B.D. degree from Union Theological Seminary, an S.T.M. from Hartford Seminary, and a Ph.D. from Columbia University. He received the first certificate in Applied Psychiatry for the Ministry given by the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry in New York and served as an Assistant Faculty Adviser in the program of the Institute. He has been assistant rector at parishes in Hartford and New York City, Chaplain of the University of Rochester, the Rector of Ascension Church, Rochester, and Associate Warden of the College of Preachers, Washington, D.C., 1952-1956. Dr. Stinnette was Professor and Associate Director in Union Theological Seminary's (New York) Program in Psychiatry and Religion, 1956-1963; he became Chairman of the Department of Personality and Religion of the Divinity School, University of Chicago in 1963.

perspective of contextual relationships developed in a worshipping congregation.<sup>1</sup>

### The Locus and Roots of Freedom

It is the occasion of the community-in-sharing which provides the locus and roots of "freedom," which Stinnette sees as the goal of preaching. The preacher, he notes, along with the teacher, counselor, and theologian, all dedicate themselves to helping man overcome insecurity so that he may be free to enjoy his freedom. Stinnette blames modern society for alienating man from genuine community, with the resultant sense of aloneness, anxiety, and loss of freedom and personhood. He prescribes the answer for ridding oneself of anxiety and regaining of personhood as lying in the self's genuine meeting and genuine giving in a community of faith. He states, "It is in genuine meeting that man becomes man. It is where one person gives himself to another."<sup>2</sup> This community, he notes, has both vertical and horizontal dimensions. On the one hand freedom is found in casting oneself upon the mercy of God and finding therein the power and heart of

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<sup>1</sup>It may appear to the reader that in this chapter the concepts of occasion or contextual relationships are similar to the concepts of audience emphases. It is granted that the occasion includes the audience (Eisenson, Auer, and Irwin note in The Psychology of Communication that "the situation very importantly involves the other fellow, the second participant in the communicative effort." p. 139) but likewise it includes the speaker and the message. Occasion, therefore, is here understood when the three are brought together, much as an encompassing circle encloses the three points of a triangle.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. ix.

self-realization; the converse likewise is true:

Man's slavery results from his efforts to find a center for his life apart from God. For in that very act man becomes separate in pride and self-assertiveness as opposed to self-affirmation in humility; and alienation becomes the mark of his existence.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the locus of freedom has its roots in the context of the community where "all things are yours and you are Christ's," where real meeting is gift-giving.<sup>2</sup> In this respect, Stinnette views man's being as contained only in community, in the unity of man with man.

The search for that adequate community which embraces both the unity between man and man, and yet provides for the unique difference between I and thou, is still going on.<sup>3</sup>

It is the good news of man's freedom--the possibility of faithful trust in God whose service is perfect freedom--which Stinnette views as the fruit of community. He observes that

a remarkable rapprochement is developing between social scientists and religious thinkers in their common concern with community. The conviction is growing that freedom is realized only in common life--only in the presence of, and in communication with, other persons.<sup>4</sup>

If, however, genuine meeting and the resultant community are absent, two of man's vital needs remain unmet:

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

The first is his need for relevance and concrete relatedness to his own moment in history--i.e., participation; the second is his need for identity which is rooted in a common but transcendent life which finds expression in adequate symbols--i.e., communication.<sup>1</sup>

The concerns of the behavioral sciences and those of Christian faith intersect in defining the fundamental fact of human existence as the relationship of man with man: the essence of human life as being what happens between men in community, the nature of reality as social, and the characteristic of human existence as essentially that of dialogue. Stinnette observes, for example, that modern literature, ranging from Dostoevsky to Faulkner, reflects man's struggle to find himself again in community. George Herbert Mead, the social psychologist, and Martin Buber, the theologian, both affirm that man is not man until he enters community and finds himself in communication with others. Kurt Lewin's works in human relations are also cited as being significant to the church--in that he notes that in every interpersonal relation and in every group a set of relationships or a field of dynamics is taking place.

#### Identity Confirmation

As Stinnette further considers the need for the selfhood and freedom message, he amplifies the concept of the sharing community of faith as the matrix of identity confirmation, which is "man's basic need . . . life depending

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



upon response--given and shared."<sup>1</sup> Man must be restored to himself; he must discover his own inner integrity and capacity for self-direction. His ability to say "I am" or to ask "Who am I?" are prerequisites to self-consciousness. Stinnette agrees with Harry Stack Sullivan, who views the personality as organized "around interpersonal events rather than intrapsychic energy" with the self developed as a differentiation of its field, conceived as an organismic whole or a Gestalt.<sup>2</sup> Various dimensions of this self-organization include self-awareness, self-integrity, self-knowledge, and self-transcendence. The church in its communication aims to provide a perpetual and concrete reminder of man's identity under God by opening a person to revelation in every aspect of his life.

"The self and I" has its sequel in "the self and Thou." Stinnette refers to Soren Kierkegaard, the 17th century Danish theologian and existentialist who wrote that the self is "a relation which relates itself to its own self, and in relating itself to its own self, relates itself to another."<sup>3</sup> There are two ultimate dimensions of self consciousness, therefore, according to Stinnette, that of being known and coming to oneself through commitment, and through the awareness of other selves in communication. Thus, being able to answer "Who am I?" requires both the organized self who asks, and another self in relation to whom the question is asked. Identity

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

confirmation, he believes, requires always the confirming response of another.

Identity, we have held, is discovered in the dynamic tension between being and becoming. It requires action in which one is committed, and the confirming response of another, as well as the knowledge that every man is brought into judgment under God. Identity, in this view, has some reference to a common life--a brotherhood whose members share one origin and one destiny.<sup>1</sup>

Stinnette substantiates by reference to clinical observation the contention that troubled persons suffer from an impoverishment of the kind and quality of response which evokes selfhood. Autonomy is regarded as being forever in need of qualification by the necessity of other selves who provide the necessary response which can call a person into being. Selfhood requires the other.

Stinnette sees six dimensions of this self-other relationship. 1) "Self and other" refers to the self's capacity to be object to itself, a "self reflexivity" (George Herbert Mead) activity which "arises whenever the organism encounters the world of 'not-me'."<sup>2</sup> Based upon understandings of Margaret Mead, Solomon Asch, Sigmund Freud, and George Herbert Mead, Stinnette concludes that the self is the product of a dynamic interaction between the "I" and the social "me," that selfhood development is predicated upon the presence of, and interaction with, other selves.

2) "Language and Identity" refers to the means and ends in the encounter between the self and another. Visual

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

and verbal symbols evoke a dependable response in which self is mirrored; thus, language provides both the means of communication and the structure for participation in social wholes.<sup>1</sup> The importance of the language of gesture is also underlined as the primary mode of human communication, an actional mode that is shorthand for the longer processes of cognitive thought.

3) "The Prior Community" refers to the "I-self" sustained only in a community of "thou-selves," and to the ability to say "I" because of a prior responding "thou." The first part of this concept is that the self and its freedom are "possibilities becoming actualities" in the response of others. Building upon Martin Buber's phrases that "all real living is meeting," Stinnette indicates that the primary reality of life is in-betweenness, between man and man.<sup>2</sup> The other part of this self-other relationship is that a triadic interpersonal relation exists in preaching: The Spirit (or eternal thou) is the relation which dwells neither in the "I" nor the "thou" but between them. This "true community" is dependent not upon the feelings people have for each other, but upon the living center--the eternal thou--which they share. It is a community to which man responds rather than which he makes, the proximity of neighbor being an evident gift of the community that is there. The Gestalt theory, which Stinnette adopts,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

emphasizes response to a genuine community. It is:

a function of the dynamic interaction between "I" and "thou," individual and group, part and whole . . . that psychic events are differential and explicit expressions of the interacting whole. Hence the person cannot be understood simply as a bundle of reflexes, nor as an inner mirror of the culture, but as a unique self whose every action becomes a part of the total field of forces in which he lives and to which he responds.<sup>1</sup>

Agreeing with Reinhold Niebuhr that "the self sees the other as an instrument for its purposes and as a completion for its incompleteness," Stinnette asserts that true individuality is possible only through a prior community in which reciprocal relationship is to some degree a reality.<sup>2</sup> The uniqueness of biblical religion is that the individual is called to a life in community where both personal uniqueness and shared humanity find their fulfillment "in a city gathered not by the hands of men but by the purpose of God."

4) "Freedom and Responsibility" refer to the reality of self-determination or the openness to response. Although freedom is found in responsibility, it is also restricted in responsibility. The expectations and responses of others are a factor in realizing freedom. Both spiritual determination and responsible freedom determine a person's action in any given moment.

5) "The Eternal Thou" refers to every I-Thou relationship as revealing both one person to another, and the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

eternal thou to each. The encounter or the disclosure of the Word of God to man may elicit faith or despair, trust or hopelessness. It is God's activity, however, that opens man to truth and freedom. The Hebrew-Christian faith proclaims truth not as an abstracted propositional formula, but as God's living Word forever invading the closed world of men and opening it to new revelation, and that truth comes alive and true community is born in the God-man meeting.

6) "The Self is Gift in Response" refers to the self as enabled to give gifts to another, or giftgiving as an empowering of selfhood. The self is not a gift to be hoarded but nourished as it is shared in the community. The self-life-style is essentially to be man's response to God and others.

### Participatory Knowledge

Several biblical definitions are used to help explain Stinnette's concept of participatory knowledge, the third major result of man's worshipful entrance into the context of the community of faith. Koinonia means to come into communion or fellowship, into participation and communication.

In the early church the "heart of this shared life in the Holy Spirit was its profound sense of communication with one another and its charismata--the fruits of the Spirit."<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew verb "to know" means an experience of that which is known, involves "a depth and dynamic in knowing commensurate

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

with that experienced in the sexual relation," the phrase "to know another" frequently used for the sexual act.<sup>1</sup> St. Paul emphasizes participation to the congregation at Rome: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." The method and spirit of participation, Stinnette believes, is crucial to any setting where the Gospel is to be presented, even in responding to the radical questions of the critic. Stinnette also suggests that art offers a perspective from which to view participatory knowledge, and that the artist's work provides a means for both participation and communication. Even as the artist expresses himself in color, light, words and rhythms, sounds and expressions, man employs symbols and analogy as his means of expression. He learns there is no way to express reality except through analogy which must find expression in adequate symbol.

Accordingly, Stinnette views the symbols of religion as enabling man to express the meaning in reality. They are parts of a participative structure representing action rather than precise tools for measuring reality. Every symbol is inadequate to express the reality of that toward which it points (such as, the word "God"). The two positive assertions he makes with respect to symbols are:

- 1) What we know as empirical reality is communicated to us through participation in symbols. There is an intrinsic relationship between our experience of a symbol and the reality which it symbolizes.
- 2) Every symbol is approximate; it is neither a substitute for, nor a satisfactory description of, that which

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

it represents. In his use of symbol man finds a way of relating his partial and infinite experience to that which is whole and infinite. The symbol becomes a channel, a means whereby man is grasped by reality which is beyond his grasp. His entry is through participation, faith, insight, and that totality of response which involves his whole being.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, Stinnette sees the most effective symbols as those which are operational in origin, which emerge spontaneously as the working solution to life's problems. The sacraments and the "recital theology" are illustrations of what he means by event-symbols. Reality as drama also illustrates the function of participatory symbols. Drama can provide participation in a given original revelatory event. In the case of God's intervention in history, the Christian who is caught up in that original event again through participation in personal commitment finds a significant means of discovering the meaning of his own experience of reality. Because reality is experienced as drama rather than as abstractions about reality, knowledge is participatory. It is only secondarily organized formulation. This view he sees illustrated in biblical terms:

. . . the question of Christ to his disciples, "But who do you say that I am?", requires for an answer, first, that we know ourselves to be addressed, and, second,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 116. From this explanation there would seem to be a high correlation of the SMCR model (considered in Chapter I) now utilized in contemporary rhetorical theory with Stinnette's emphases. Elsewhere Stinnette has elaborated how the symbol could be either visual or vocal. It is to be noted, however, that Stinnette's perspective is that of the participative relationships or the "response" in the occasion of the coming together of source, message-channel, receiver, and God.

than an answer is required in this moment of us. Our confession of the Christ precedes our christological formulae.<sup>1</sup>

The liturgical worship of the Christian Year becomes another way of identifying oneself through participation in specific actions which proclaim God's redemptive actions.

The function of participatory symbols, Stinnette believes, is complemented by the function of participatory worship. The words, for example, "Who service is perfect freedom," of a familiar prayer, denote worship as an act whereby one affirms the worth-fulness--the deepest meaning--of his life. This prayer represents man's capacity to consecrate his life to the service of his deepest loyalty, and to lose and find himself in relation to the source of existence. Because worship is primarily opening oneself to God, its mode is that of participation rather than individual reflection. "In Spirit and in Truth" denotes worship--truth as active and personal, something done rather than something thought. It means worshiping in the community which is disciplined by truth as a requisite for knowing truth.

Revelation, however, is communicated through dramatic action rather than in propositions or ideals. "Revelation and event" belong together since revelation is incarnate in history, since knowledge is to enter into communication with that reality as empirically and immediately present. Knowledge of God, then, is derived from God's actions, from "recital theology," with reality encountered in concrete

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 118.



phenomena. Because participative action is implicit in making revelation contemporaneous, revelation involves a means as well as a message. Content and conveyance, Stinnette stresses, cannot be separated. The communicator must learn both the message and the ways of participating in the "agonizing uncertainty" of the questioner if revelation is to be communicated in such a way as to speak to the questions which are asked currently.

The nature of the gift requires the giver as well. The bearer of the Word must himself enter into the pain of the perplexed. Message and means must meet in the person of him that brings good tidings.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, Stinnette believes that the listener deserves more than "stones of abstract doctrine." The participative-action point of view implies listener involvement in the biblical message. The listener is confronted as was David before Nathan: "Thou art the man!" The "insistent present" (Stinnette borrows this term from Alfred Whitehead) connotes the biblical emphasis of time, of crisis event in God's act in Jesus Christ and in the crisis in the individual who is caught up in that act and who must make a decision.

Stinnette sees the nature of the biblical covenant and community as significant in understanding participation. He views God's action in inaugurate a people with an awareness of themselves as rooted in the Old Testament and continued throughout the scriptures. God's activity is specific in calling into being a new Israel in which He would abide and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

be made known to His people. This "Christian brotherhood" is a reality created by God in Christ in which man may participate. Therapists, Stinnette observes, likewise know the necessity of establishing communication and conveying meaning in a relationship of community where persons are "being present" and giving attention to each other. Stinnette regards such participation as a significant means of communication. It is an "actional identification" and a mode of "empathetic participation" found both in the Bible and in contemporary therapy.<sup>1</sup> It is a reciprocal relation in which those who have gathered together in Christ's name give attention to the nature of their gathering:

Their hearing and their seeing each other, their gift-giving to each other in respect and shared thinking, and their attention to the fruits of their life together, not alone as a quantity of good works but also as a quality of life between the members.<sup>2</sup>

In these concrete acts the individual remembers that he, himself, is called to respond within that community, and that community response does not substitute for his own. Stinnette's foundational consideration in understanding man's freedom to respond and participate is the covenant relation between man and God, whereby man is addressed in such a way that response in freedom is expected.

The concept of the church as "kerygma in action," is another aspect of participation. The church is the bearer of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

the message by its witness in koinonia (fellowship) as well as by its proclamation of the gospel. Without the church witness in koinonia, its kerygma (proclamation), Stinnette believes, is not "heard."<sup>1</sup> The congregation, according to this view, proclaims by action that from Advent through Trinity its life "is one of promise and fulfillment wherein torn humanity is healed and the prodigal is restored to his father's mansion."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the church is also the means of the mission wherein Christ is currently present both through words and by Spirit-filled community life and work. Thus the church is kerygma in action only when its life is the expression (or the "liturgy") of its ministry.<sup>3</sup> Stinnette views liturgical acts as describing the identity of the church both dynamically (beyond words) and empirically in a shared faith. The meaning of the faith is also acted out in relationships (sacramental action), according to Stinnette. Because the sacraments "participate" in the revealing events of God which they represent, he sees them as constituting both a biblical mode of communication as well as providing a means of man's appropriation of divine action by faith and participation.

For Stinnette, participative action lies at the heart of the biblical mode of communication. It is "the genius of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 144.

event" (italics added) in that "it draws the spectator into participation."<sup>1</sup> It is a participation which enables man, in the events of the divine-human encounter through the various communication symbols, to come to know who he is and to claim his freedom and selfhood. Stinnette has developed the concept that participative action is "the primary modus operandi by which grace is communicated" (from God's side a completed action in Christ; from man's side, a being and a becoming).<sup>2</sup> Participative action, whereby one is "caught up and renewed by faith," is for Stinnette a corporate life rather than the "extracted word" or "individual formulations of the faith."<sup>3</sup> Thus, participation is regarded as the primary means of receiving the communication of Christ's freedom.

A Case Study: The Sharing Community of Faith--  
A Communication-Giving Context

As man enters worshipfully into the sharing and "disciplines by truth" community of faith, he finds the context and means for obtaining "the locus and roots of freedom," "identity confirmation," and "participatory knowledge." These considerations have revealed that "freedom" is realized only in the presence of and in communication with other persons. Stinnette is equally concerned with those factors which

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

make the sharing, disciplined community of faith a communication-giving context. These factors are, indeed, subsequent to having achieved a degree of freedom. After realizing a "relationship of trust at the core of man's being in which he is enabled to affirm himself and his destiny under God," the Christian--and the Church--devote themselves to the communication of that freedom.<sup>1</sup> Stinnette believes that it is the communicating or proclaiming of freedom that further enables man to make use of his liberty. Moreover, he views "the dynamics and process of communication itself in an effort to see more clearly how freedom is nurtured in faith."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, according to Stinnette, "Freedom and the communicability of freedom are inseparably bound together."<sup>3</sup> They exist as mutually dependent factors in the dynamic process of bringing freedom to life. A free person is considered as one who communicates freedom in his relations to others. This freedom must be lived; it must be affirmed through being shared.

#### By Relatedness

Stinnette postulates four communicative factors by which the fullest realization of freedom and the greatest communication between people can be achieved: relatedness,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

language, dialogue, and empathy. Relatedness assumes communication as a function of interpersonal relations; the problems of communication are basically those of human relatedness. Stinnette notes that Jurgen Ruesch and Gregory Bateson in Communication--The Social Matrix of Psychiatry emphasize that the phenomena included under the heading of psychopathology are disturbances of communication, and that psychiatric theories are theories of communication.<sup>1</sup> The view of communication problems as problems of human relatedness, he notes, is also demonstrated in the field of dynamics of small groups. Accordingly, he defines communication

as the capacity which enables two or more individuals to share a simultaneous focus of attention in each other or toward a common object . . . the ability of persons to give attention to each other.<sup>2</sup>

The bars of "our incommunicable prison" can become broken, therefore, only when another truly gives his attention.

Stinnette's theory of communication has significance, however, for the human dilemma. He notes that communication, which is a human process, frequently fails because of interpersonal conflict. Harry Stack Sullivan's studies are cited as an indication that anxiety is the chief handicap to communication, and that the presence of anxiety is an indication of one's self-esteem and self-regard being endangered. For Stinnette, this phenomenon of anxiety acting as an obstruction to freedom is at the core of man's being and becoming, and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

that the deep-seated ambivalent attitudes toward the self are similar to the biblical picture of man's tendency to fall into sin. Man--who is in the grip of anxiety--as verified and interpreted by psychiatry and religion--experiences both loss of freedom and inner conflict as well as an impairment of communication. Sin, he suggests, separates man from a freedom-bestowing relationship to God and his neighbor. The distortions of self-exaltation and self-debasement are paradoxical dimensions of the same act: man's rebellion against God and rejection of his own God-related being.<sup>1</sup>

Communication, however, provides a perspective of unusual directness to view the dilemma that man is to himself. Communication's capacity is its service as a link between man's relation to himself as a psychophysical being and his relation to another. To hear another meaningfully he must be related.

Otherwise sounds make nonsense . . . man's hearing involves the integrity and self-transcendence of the self which is neither exclusively an ear or a detached receptor. In order to communicate, he must hear himself as reflected in his relation with others.<sup>2</sup>

Kierkegaard's statement about the self, Stinnette notes, states that "the human self is a relation . . . which in relating itself to itself relates itself to another" and thus the bearer of a relationship which includes the other.<sup>3</sup> The ultimate discovery is that man is already related to the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

eternal thou, that the image of God in man is the spiritual reality of his relation to himself and to others. The self then is a relationship in trust maintained in faith. In essence, Stinnette says it is a selfhood realized through communication. He, therefore, concurs with Hendrik Kraemer, who in The Communication of the Christian Faith views communication as the fundamental human fact in that God created man to be his ally and partner in living communion and communication, and consequently with his neighbor.<sup>1</sup> The biblical symbols of "disruption and healing" in the accounts of the Tower of Babel and of Pentecost illustrate respectively, Stinnette comments, whether communication is rooted in or out of God.

Stinnette thus sees man, himself, as the most crucial barrier to communication. Observing that modern technology has removed physical distance but that the social, psychological, and spiritual distances remain, he infers that communication ultimately is "dependent upon the quality of human relatedness."<sup>2</sup> Even though Lewis Mumford and Erich Fromm consider man to be human and reasonable, both fail, he says, to deal with the inescapable disturbances in man's heart resulting from his encounter with the anxiety of freedom. They fail to admit

that the most ineradicable hazard to communication lies within man himself; in his incapacity to affirm himself apart from a community of faith and in his inveterate

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 160.



tendency to prefer idolatry and its consequence, alienation, to a relationship in trust in which his absolute autonomy is qualified by responsible freedom.<sup>1</sup>

When man is drawn into a relationship of mutual trust requiring some surrender of himself, he discovers anew his real life in communication.

According to Stinnette, the relevance of biblical faith for communication involves first a searching grace and then a response in thanksgiving. Faith in hearing the effectual message of Christ, which he equates as the language of relationship, is the means of identifying oneself in relation to the whole of reality. It is knowing truth participatively as one enters worshipfully into the community of the spirit which is "disciplined by truth." It is knowing Christ and having "a loving relation with him." Stinnette also states that hearing is doing, as illustrated by the Good Samaritan who heard the anguish of a lacerated stranger, and who communicated healing by loving-care. Hearing thus becomes a means of entering into the redeeming act of God, with faith becoming a communicative response by which that action is extended in obedient living.<sup>2</sup>

#### By Language

Relationship or identity must be expressed in language--Stinnette's second communication factor. The language

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 164.

of both the eye and the ear are viewed as means of participation and sharing, the bearers of sacred communication to man. Language is seen as meaningful communication of physical stimuli which is "shaped by the spirit of man." As such, Stinnette sees language as a testimony that man is a psychosomatic whole, the bearer of his being, both spiritual and physical at the same time. But while language may communicate human identity and relationship, he observes that it may also obscure identity and prevent communication. In application of this principle in religious communication, dogmas are meaningful only as long as they provide a means of communication and participation. Dogmas need, Stinnette believes, "the enlightenment of living and continuous contact with their source."<sup>1</sup> God's Word is the means whereby His creative will is expressed: "It is the effective instrument of his being and is, therefore, a wedding of language and reality."<sup>2</sup> Language, moreover, is a means of man's participation in action which itself is an invitation to dialogue.

### By Dialogue

Dialogue, a third communication factor, lies at the heart of communication in the biblical view. Revelation, Stinnette says, is based in the fact that God not only speaks but hears. "It is in and through dialogue that man's freedom

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 169.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

and distinctive selfhood are called into existence."<sup>1</sup> As noted, Stinnette views the dimensions of responsiveness and responsibility as essential to the emergence of the distinctive person; man discovers himself only in relation to another in the experience of mutuality and reciprocity. Findings in psychiatry also confirm, Stinnette asserts, the conviction of biblical religion that man requires the resistance of others as well as their acceptance in order to become himself. Every meeting between human beings offers the possibility of calling the self into existence through mutual exchange and genuine communication, or the opposite possibility of individuals being crippled and impoverished.

Dialogue, moreover, is at the heart of communication of faith to others. Attention must be paid to the listener as well as to what is said. Faith does not develop through a one-way channel, but rather in and through dialogue initiated by the word of God. Since faith comes by hearing, biblical communication is internal as well as external; it is communication "between" as well as "of." If the listener is to be heard, Stinnette sees contemporary social science as having much to say to the preacher. A specific application is the concept of "feedback," which he notes is an expression used in ballistics

where radar readings taken in the nose of a missile are communicated to the guiding mechanism and serve to correct any flight error and to keep the missile on target.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 172.

The analogous skill in communication is to recognize feedback clues, the development by the Christian of a sensitivity to

the internal language between himself and his brother. That language is dependent upon a two-way relationship of mutual participation. This means that the hearer is also a communicator and that the communicator must also be a hearer.<sup>1</sup>

Stinnette feels the average minister fails to discern the real concerns of his listener. Regard for the listener or hearer, he believes, involves both

participation in his concerns as well as attention to the process which is the vehicle of our relationship to him. If the motive for "process awareness" is understood, not as a device for the manipulation of human puppets, but as an opportunity of entering into fuller communion with others, much of the objection to "process concern" in theological writing would seem to be avoided.<sup>2</sup>

The paramount need in dialogue, therefore, is listening, which as a symbol is like other symbols in that it is taken from the world of finite relations and points also beyond itself to the ground and meaning of all communion and communication. As a symbol of what God is like, it is itself more than a sign--it is a means of participating in God's action.<sup>3</sup>

The potential of communication is that "the deaf may hear and the dumb speak." This, Stinnette exclaims, is the record of the miracle of Christianity: "as if for the first time," Christians have been enabled to see the world

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 174.



and to participate in "the joyousness of creation."<sup>1</sup> Such was the discovery of Helen Keller when she discovered that everything has a name and that relationships were possible within "the mystery of language." The language of touch by which Miss Keller perceived the world of meaning and relationship also reminds Stinnette that communication is grounded in human perception and cognition. To realize that everything has a name is to be introduced into a relationship with every object by way of names whose meaning is shared with other human beings. The biblical attitude asserts further than man cannot know himself immediately and directly, but only as he reveals himself to others. Stinnette observes that "knowledge in this sense, then, is existential. It is pervaded by personal involvement and identification through commitment."<sup>2</sup> The biblical view of knowledge, he notes, also emphasizes the whole: at times requiring more perception or sensation so that it becomes meaningful in reference to a larger scheme and purpose; and at times requiring more hearing and a revised attitude toward the hearer so that communication is restored and renewed.

Listening with an attention born of the Spirit is possible in communication. It includes but goes beyond a sensitive "listening with the third ear" (as described by Theodore Reik). Stinnette suggests that revelation is the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

most apt term to describe this kind of listening.<sup>1</sup> It is not, however, to be regarded as another form of communication, but rather as making known the unity and the meaningfulness of reality in such a way as to enhance the importance of all communication. The proper attitude toward such revelation is viewed as response. He notes that since revelation is God's self-disclosure, man becomes what he is meant to be in response to that prior action. Similarly, response and response-ability are the proper framework for man's freedom and communication. "Response is a live option only where a negative as well as a positive answer is a possibility."<sup>2</sup> Stinnette further states that the biblical mode of historical and existential revelation belongs to a covenant community. In communicating the relevancy of faith, therefore, response and responsibility must be present. Dialogue thus involves both hearing and giving attention as aids to communication as well as attitudes of "expectancy" which prepare the way for continuing revelation.

#### By Empathy

Stinnette's discussion of communication is based upon the assumption that God's people were meant to see and hear each other. In facing the problem of how man can get the capacity that seems to be God's alone--to really know another human being--he suggests a fourth communication factor:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

empathy and transfiguration are united in Christ in such a way that his entering into our existence as hidden God so transfigures our capacity to share lovingly in the experience of others that we know the power of love beyond human accounting . . . Empathy refers to the experience of being "in touch" with another personality. It is an imaginative projection of one's self into the being and consciousness of another. It is symbolically to fill another's shoes while still standing in one's own.<sup>1</sup>

Empathy, therefore, describes the deliberate effort of a counselor to help another by actively experiencing his feelings. It is a primary means of communicating emotional states between mother and infant, and consequently, a crucial factor in the development of the individual's self-image. Moreover, empathy provides a means of viewing man's participation in God's transfiguring work: God's self-revelation being an empathetic action which quickens man's response, enabling him to hear the significance of that action and to respond by entering into its saving work, which is to love back in response to God's empathic identification with man in Christ.

This experience of transfiguration enables man to also participate empathically with another man.

To listen attentively to another human being, to enter his experience and to give oneself to his concern is an act of self-transcendence impossible for one still locked in the chamber of his own self-centered world. Empathy, therefore, is not a tool! It is not something we do, but something we are and become . . . requires mutuality in which each participant is committed, not only to each other, but to a common outcome . . . the change which comes about is a dynamic, on-going process--affecting all who have a part.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 185.



Stinnette emphasizes that "a direct relationship between man and man is possible only when both are related to a common center" (God), and that empathy is "the fruit of our living and beholding in the community of transfiguration."<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, he views sacrament and liturgy as actional expressions of transfiguration whereby an individual may identify and commit himself through specific acts which enable wholeness. This recovery of self, he states, cannot be "accomplished apart from Christian commitment and communication."<sup>2</sup> These specific acts, however, are not just a matter of process between the individual and God but rather an occasion of the community of faith.

The sursum corda of the Church includes the multitude of saints in whose fellowship one is compassed about with a cloud of witnesses. Hence, the individual finds his true identity, and most profoundly expresses his freedom, by giving himself to the community which lives by recalling and re-representing the event of Christ in action.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, Stinnette reiterates his theory of the church's justification: that it exists for its communicative participation wherein individuals offer gifts and receive true identity (with Christ and with the Christian community). The dynamics of "faith, freedom, and selfhood" are the context of the community of participants (both pastor and people, their language symbols or message, and the revelatory God). The

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 187.

Christian who is both giving and receiving in such a context is realizing his true identity and participating in a community whose function and existence is "true communication."<sup>1</sup>

### Principles of Sharing

Two other sources augment an understanding of Stinnette's communication theory. In a discussion of "Theology in Pastoral Counseling," Stinnette views counseling as "a special focus within the ministry in order to fulfill a particular need" and as one aspect of the minister's task in which he must communicate to someone a given message in an occasion of "sharing."<sup>2</sup> The first of three principles which he views as essential to the sharing experience is the "communication of care." He sees communication here as that which "prepares the expectation of acceptance and opens the person to change." It is an attitude rather than a technique, a revelatory "inwardness" which leads to an open acceptance of the other person's entire personality. Communication, according to Stinnette, requires also "a community of shared meanings," in that the communicator speaks not just for himself but for a larger community of faith. The second principle essential for "sharing" is the participant-pastoral relationship.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>This was a major address at the Seventh Annual Pastor's Retreat, sponsored by the Church Federation of Greater Chicago, McCormick Place, Chicago, September 28, 1964, on the theme "Dynamics of Christian Counseling for the Urban Community."

The pastor lends his own strength and judgment for a while as a means of helping the counselee to come to himself and to take responsibility for himself in the crises of living.<sup>1</sup>

Stinnette observes that this aspect of the pastor's role highlights the importance of the kind of relationships which he is able to establish through responding and listening. As a participant in the counseling relationship, the pastor can assist in clarifying the problems which are brought to him as well as "to serve as a mirror or reality." The third perspective is the goal of recovering self-responsibility in the counselee himself. The counselor's objective, according to Stinnette, is to help the learner learn for himself, and to develop his potential. Stinnette regards the "eductive" process as the heart of counseling:

It leads the counselee through the tortuous path of gaining rapport, clarification, problem-solving, insight, and supportive re-learning, but it is more; it also aims to assist the person in the recovery of his own counsel which in its depths reveals that he is one made in the image of God and intended for freedom.<sup>2</sup>

The aim of the pastor's communication in counseling, therefore, is enabling another person to achieve "a recovery of self-responsibility through the recovery of one's own counsel." Appropriate care in the pastoral relationship opens a person to his "own depths again."

Stinnette's concept of the occasion as a communication situation in which individuals "hear" one another finds

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

additional expression in Grace and the Searching of Our Heart:

The surest sign of well-grounded identity is the capacity to see and hear another. He who has a self to give is able to give it in the freshness and wonder of new creation.<sup>1</sup>

Stinnette, who sees the Christian community as an occasion for receiving faith, hope, and love, and as the occasion for gift-giving and receiving, regards the family as the first church where one can discover his "primary identity in the quality of response that greets and calls us unto being."<sup>2</sup> The basis for giving and receiving freedom, however, lies not only in being persons relating to one another, but in being persons relating to the Ultimate Person, who more than any other human person "hears" us. This ultimate freedom by being heard by the Ultimate Person is not, however, an "automation in freedom." Stinnette believes rather in the necessity of assuming responsibility for personal choice, stating that "belief in God is an occasion not for infantile dependency but for responsible freedom."<sup>3</sup> Responsible freedom requires both response to a person and then employment of self direction within the confidence of that relationship. Although this freedom is to discover oneself "in the eyes of God," it is not a freedom of the isolated individual but rather "his

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<sup>1</sup>Charles R. Stinnette, Jr., Grace and the Searching of Our Heart (New York: Association Press, 1962), p. 180.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

characteristic posture is one of forgiving and being forgiven, within the community of faith."<sup>1</sup>

A Case Study: "The Ministry Which We Share"

An analysis of a representative Stinnette sermon, "The Ministry Which We Share," provides a more explicit presentation of his central homiletical concern.<sup>2</sup> In addition to a substance outline of the sermon, personal observations of audience reaction and a tabulation of response have been employed. It is helpful to bear in mind those particular elements which Stinnette considers essential to the receiving-sharing community of faith in its communication of freedom: (1) the occasion serving as a context for the locus of freedom (of experiencing being and becoming), for the confirmation of identity (for another's response and actual meeting, including the triadic relationship of self-others-God, and the opportunity for self determination), and for participative knowledge (responsiveness in personal commitment; and (2) the occasion serving also as a context for communicating freedom by relatedness, language, dialogue, and empathy.

From the abbreviated substance outline of the sermon given below, several observations are made as to the correlation between the sermon content and Stinnette's theoretical concerns.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>2</sup>Delivered by Stinnette at the Lombard Mennonite Church, Lombard, Illinois, April 19, 1964. See Appendix 4 for complete sermon.

**Thesis:** Four things need to be "heard" in the ministry of servant-hood which all Christians share.

- I. We need to hear the meaning of priesthood.
  - A. For what is worshipped creates the quality of community
    1. since idolatry (wrong worship) results in slavery
    2. since God worship results in freedom.
  - B. For we live in both kingdoms
    1. with the God Kingdom as gift receiving
    2. with the Idolatrous Kingdom as an inverted worship that destroys personal relationships.
  - C. For we are to enter the community of concern
    1. of which priesthood is the answer
    2. of which forgiveness of God is the basis even though it is a corporate function.
- II. We need to hear the meaning of liturgy.
  - A. It is a way of life and a mode of action heard and seen by the world.
  - B. Congregations are to find ways to improve the liturgy so that the world is not manipulated but loved.
- III. We need to hear the meaning of communal life.
  - A. Contemporary literature indicates hopelessness and meaninglessness.
  - B. Christians are to accept the reality of communal needs.
- IV. We need to hear the meaning of work.
  - A. God brings freedom through his workmen.
  - B. Shaping life after the mode of heaven includes Chicago and the nation.

An examination of these concepts is made first against the theory of the receiving of freedom. A quotation from Dostoevsky illustrates the locus of freedom, Stinnette's first main point of priesthood:

All men need to find that which they can worship, but not only to find that which they can worship, but to find that which they can worship in community with one another, because the worship creates the communities which we live in, and whatever it is we worship creates the character and quality of that community.

The freedom roots are also indicated in a kingdom parable which focuses on the concept of the community as an occasion for receiving freedom. In Stinnette's parable there is a kingdom of idolatry, in which despite an apparent external order there is a disintegration of personal relationships. Men and women demand things but have no motive to give. In contrast to the god who makes slaves, the true Lord both requires that men be servants (by being priests to one another) and also enters himself into the meaning of servanthood, giving himself for "both the service and the freedom of mankind." Identity confirmation ("restored to oneself . . . in the confirming response of another . . . discovering one's own inner integrity and capacity for self-direction") is amplified in Stinnette's appeal to worship and serve the true God:

You and I live in the Kingdom which is established by God and Jesus Christ. We also live in this idolatrous Kingdom and sometimes we don't know where we really belong . . . when we come to church, when we say our prayers, when we read the Bible, we act at least as if we believe in God, that although he requires service of us, also bestows freedom upon us. In a sense we take the gifts of God and invert them from their main purpose . . .

Stinnette illustrates further from family life, where in a priesthood role the parents show forgiveness by gestures and non-verbal communications to children even before they have learned to use the words, that similarly forgiveness (and freedom) is realized in the Christian community where both "personal uniqueness and shared humanity find their fulfillment in a city gathered not by the hands of men but by the purpose of God."

Participative knowledge manifests itself in the use of "operational symbols" in the sermon's key words: priesthood, liturgy in action, communal life, work in the world, and servanthood. "Revelation as dramatic action" is evident in the sermon's concern that "the bearer of the Word must himself enter into the pain of the perplexed."

The Christian community must also accept in all of its brutal facts the pathos, the hopelessness and the meaninglessness of this life . . . he comes into our lives . . . as we respond to His love and His care in the midst of the life we know and all the places in the world where we live, and we express ourselves as fellow priests, one to another, as we find ways of making effectual in our lives the witness of our faith as we take with our hands again, and shape and form the world after the grace of God.

Frequently the sermon calls the listener to participative acting (as Stinnette in his theory explains, "both hearing and doing"). An example is the statement following the story of a West Indian Negro dying of tuberculosis on a ship with everyone aboard participating in the pathos of his dying:

The community established by the Christian church . . . is rooted in a priesthood of care. It is expressed in a liturgy of action in the world. It is commemorated by a community of love and it is expressed in the kind of way we find working in this world.

The relation of freedom to participative action is particularly clear when Stinnette elaborates on the meaning of work.

There is some work to be done in this world . . . work to be done by those who are consecrated to the true God; who bring freedom by their life and by their work. There are some people out there in the ditch and you are to go out and minister to them in the name of Christ who through you and in you expresses his spirit and his love in the world.

The context of the "triadic relationship" (pastor and people and their means of relationship--their language or



message, and the gift-giving God) permits not only a communication-received but also a communication-given. The relevant question that is of concern is, How does Stinnette's philosophy of "communication-given" find illustration and clarity in this sermon? Are the communicative factors of relatedness, language, dialogue, and empathy evident? Illustrations of these can be found in both Stinnette's explanations as to how his listeners are to serve today, and in his own act of serving (preaching) his listeners. "Relatedness" is viewed with Stinnette's definition of communication as the capacity "which enables two or more individuals to share a simultaneous focus of attention in each other or toward a common object." In his theory Stinnette called for a relatedness of the self to itself, to another, and ultimately to the Eternal Thou. The concluding prayer, for examples, specifies relatedness to these referents ("I-Thou-You").

Almighty God, who has set us in the midst of this, thy family of thy church, we remember this day all those who are in darkness . . . they and we may walk in thy light, and go our way rejoicing to Jesus Christ our Lord.  
(italics added)

"Language of both the eye and ear," according to Stinnette, is effective in religious communication if it expresses God's creative will, if it is wedded to reality, if it is a means of participation in godly action, and if it is an invitation to dialogue. This "order" is a large one to fill, particularly if the sermon, as this one, contains old and religious terms, such as, servanthood, priesthood, liturgy, communion, idolatrous, Kingdom. It is in the utilization of contemporary literature that Stinnette achieves "a

wedding of language and reality." That he believes literature "speaks" and serves as a "structure of participation" is verified in the sermon:

I wonder if you have been struck as I have, about the contemporary literature of our day. It, too, is searching for community. And what is it rehearsing at its heart? It is rehearsing a kind of hopelessness at heart. It is a community which gathers in all these theaters of the absurd, the drama of our life and says: this is what it's like to be a man, to have no meaning and to wait.

Becket's play, "Waiting for Godot," Arthur Miller's "The Crucible," Conrad's "The Nigger of Narcissus," references to Thornton Wilder's "Mrs. Atrebus" and a poem of Charles Williams are examples of this use. In addition, the language of the religious classics, including Augustine and Luther, the biblical Samaritan story, and a hypothetical kingdom parable are employed. Concrete expressions used include "living in Lombard," "in downtown Chicago," "the automobile . . . the buildings of your life, the grounds of your life, the instruments of productivity." That language is to be of both the eye and the ear is also illustrated in the sermon:

Most of the psychologists talk about the early childhood say that children need to learn how they can find forgiveness with their parents by gestures and non-verbal communication. The mother that learns how to ask forgiveness of her own child and at the same time to give forgiveness has opened up a new dimension of life to her child.

Stinnette further suggests that language is meaningful communication when it is shaped by the spirit of man. Accordingly, he has identified himself with his speaking occasion: "our living in Lombard," "those who walk in darkness," "they and we may walk in thy light, and go our way rejoicing."

"Dialogue" as hearing and giving attention is evident in the many asking and answering of questions in this sermon which have allowed both "response and response-ability" for developing of freedom as well as "divine disclosure." Examples of this hearing and giving attention which further augment dialogue are his questions about how to witness in Lombard and the nature of proper response to the ministry we have. Listening as a means for providing "an opportunity of entering into fuller communion with others" may be further appraised in the audience index of estimation given below. In the question period that followed the sermon it became obvious that members in the congregation had developed a sense of his interest in their welfare and they in turn of their willingness to ask some depth concerns. Although it may not merit being labeled a "depth question," an illustration of the freedom in the "feedback" in the discussion hour was this question (coming from an unaffiliated member with "free-church background" addressed to an Episcopalian), "Do you think Catholics are Christians?" In "last minute checkings" before the service began, Stinnette gave evidence of looking forward as well as being "at home" with an allocated time for feedback.

"Empathy" as actively experiencing another's feelings finds illustration in the number of identifications of speaker with audience. Approximately eighty times in the sermon the first person plural pronoun "we" appears, in addition to frequent use of "our" "you and I" and "us." To prevent manipulation, Stinnette recommends that empathy be qualified with

"transfiguration" by keeping in mind God's transfiguring work of love and identification in Christ. This he expressed in the sermon in verbalized statements, in evident friendliness and occasional smiles, and also in using "the gifts that have been given by giving them again" to others in this sermon (his own gift-giving on this occasion).

The index below completed by twenty-eight members that met following the sermon as a discussion class registers an audience view of Stinnette's application of the various communication factors in his sermon. The latter five questions bear most directly on "occasion" of contextual relationships.

	<u>Strong- ly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>No Opin- ion</u>	<u>Disa- gree</u>	<u>Strong- ly Disagree</u>
The theme was of vital concern	15	11	2		
The sermon thoughts were easy to follow	10	18			
The scripture used shed light on the subject or problem being discussed	6	17	1	3	1
The sermon gave answers (what to do about it) to the problem of subject	2	15	4	7	
The illustrations reflected my personal	4	17	5	2	
The words used in the sermon got through to me.	5	20	1	1	1
The sermon spoke to my needs and predicament	3	17	5	3	
My attention was maintained throughout	9	14	3	2	

	<u>Strong- ly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>No Opin- ion</u>	<u>Disa- gree</u>	<u>Strong ly Disagree</u>
The preacher's eye con- tact indicated interest in his audience	5	13	7	3	
The preacher showed confidence	20	8			
The preacher was sincere	17	11			
The preacher had the congregation's interest at heart	11	4	3		
The sermon seemed like a good conversation between preacher and people	2	13	11	2	
During a sermon people can feel interested--bored, challenged--puzzled, joy- ful--sad. Today, the minister seemed aware of and responsive to my feelings	3	14	7	4	
I felt as if I were a par- ticipant in the preaching of today's sermon	4	13	7	3	1
A sermon ideally ought to be an expression of the con- gregation both as their offering to God and as their witness to people. Today's sermon was such an expres- sion	3	18	6	1	

This sermon, as indicated by the audience itemization, illustrates both in content and in methodology the participative relationship in the preaching occasion that brings together the preacher, congregation, their symbols or message, and the revelatory God.



Other Contemporary Representative Theorists  
on the Preaching Situation

This section surveys additional contemporary homiletical thought bearing on the construct of occasion or, as defined earlier, the contextual relationships in the preaching situation. Collateral and supplementary materials were selected on the basis of currently used texts in American seminaries and theorists who teach at one of the schools affiliated with the American Association of Theological Schools. Several theorists whose major interests are other than teaching homiletics but who nevertheless have addressed themselves to the relationships of insights in behavioral science to the construct of the situation of preaching, and whose materials were found to be used as assigned reading material in current seminary courses, are also examined.

Davis et al

The seven most frequently used texts, as per the Daniel Weiss study in 1962, indicate two areas wherein the concept of occasion is considered. They are God's participative action in the act and occasion of preaching and particularly in the setting of the worship service, and, secondly, special occasional preaching such as at funerals, weddings, dedications, etc. The first of these theorists, Davis, does not deal with occasion. Broadus has a chapter in which he treats unique preparation steps of special types of sermons for funerals, academic and anniversary sermons, revival sermons, sermons to children, and sermons to special classes such as doctors, laborers, etc. Ilion Jones considers preaching





in the context of public worship and as its climax. Moreover, he sees preaching as an occasion for group pastoral counseling. Andrew Blackwood views the sermon both as an act of worship and as an activity wherein God can act. The adaptation of message for the occasion of children sermons is also considered. Halford E. Luccock's discussion is limited to the idea of God being behind the preacher and as achieving a recurring miracle of preaching in speaking through the preacher's personality. Sangster's concern is along the same lines. The difference between an address and a sermon, he notes, is that the former is man speaking to men and the latter a man speaking from God. And Donald G. Miller likewise views the occasion of preaching as that time when some portion of scripture becomes alive to the hearer as he is confronted by God in Christ through the Spirit in judgment and redemption. He views, as noted in Chapter Three, the end of preaching as being a situation which is transformed from a human encounter between the preacher and the congregation into a divine encounter between God, preacher, and people.

### Seward Hiltner

One major theorist who reflects Stinnette's stress on the contextual participative relationships in the situation of preaching is Dr. Seward Hiltner, Stinnette's predecessor as Chairman of Religion and Personality, Divinity School, University of Chicago. In his Preface to Pastoral Theology, Hiltner discusses "communicating" and notes that although "a sermon and a preacher are, relatively speaking, very easy to

study" that "a congregation and the relationship between preacher and congregation are, relatively speaking, very difficult to examine."<sup>1</sup> His discussion of the importance of studying the communicative act in context of an occasion including its interaction is similar in emphases to Stinnette's. Hiltner indicates there will be

little advance in our understanding of preaching as the relational process of communicating the gospel until inquiry is directed to the whole complex relationship and not alone to the sermon and its delivery.<sup>2</sup>

According to Hiltner, communicators of the gospel have been left without an adequate theory because of the failure to study the whole relationship.

Hiltner projects several general principles of communication. The first is that real communication takes place only in a certain kind of context or atmosphere. He observes that when there is acceptance, first by the leader and later by members, and as it proves to be genuine, both leader and members can communicate more of their deeper and more negative feelings, and can move forward in the same direction. The correlation here is with Stinnette's concept of relatedness.

Hiltner's next two general principles, which can be compared to Stinnette's concept of language, state that

<sup>1</sup>Seward Hiltner, Preface to Pastoral Theology (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958). Dr. Hiltner now teaches at Princeton Theological Seminary. He also serves as pastoral consultant of Pastoral Psychology magazine.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 178.

distortion of communication arises both from the absence of context and atmosphere and from the presence of the various private meanings. He further states that communication must touch the frame of reference of the person or group to whom it is addressed. If this internal contact is not made, the communication will be rejected or misunderstood. His fourth principle parallels Stinnette's concept of the dialogue principle. In quite similar thought, Hiltner affirms that communication must be a two-way rather than a one-way process. Otherwise, it ceases to exist, "communication as assimilation and reception of what was not previously possessed ceases."<sup>1</sup> He notes that communication cannot be a one-way process in which one's job is viewed as finding the proper technical means to "put it across." Only a two-way process is capable of transmitting the gospel. Hiltner writes that the Christian ministry becomes ultimately comforting and sustaining only as the minister is first open in full depth and intensity to the communication of his listener to him--whatever it is that he feels.<sup>2</sup> In the complex relationship of the worshiping congregation where the listener cannot tell the preacher then and there his ideas, the two way communication cannot be taken literally. Particular keen listening on the part of the preacher is regarded as necessary to those who are having difficulty receiving the gospel. Endeavoring to listen and understand the private world of the other is seen as both an act and an

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

attitude of respect and acceptance of the person to whom one is communicating.

Hiltner raises a question of concern over his normative and descriptive principle. He realizes that they could be used for exploitative purposes, such as, the "whipping up of prejudices." His answer is to add to his principles both the necessity of the integrity of him who would communicate and also genuine receptivity to the "return-communication" of the listener, which the communicator accepts but without necessarily agreeing with it. His answer, thus, again is most similar to Stinnette's concept of "transfigured" empathy, although it is not stated in quite as strong of a theological context as Stinnette's (as appears to be the case also of the other principles). Hiltner does not see the communication process for "sinner being essentially different than that for the Christian." The distinctions that are decisive regarding the reality of salvation are in persons. The three inter-related aspects of communicating the gospel is a matter of "going deeper": 1) Learning--Understanding--Instructing; 2) Realizing--Deepening--Edifying; and 3) Celebrating--Reminding--Commemorating.

### Reuel Howe

The next contemporary theorist considered in the situation of preaching or the construct of occasion is Reuel Howe, Director of the Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, and author of The Miracle of

Dialogue.<sup>1</sup> The Institute, which is designed to assist active ministers achieve a more effective pastoral ministry and which has had over 1,500 Protestant clergy enrolled since its founding in 1957, offers a program built on the construct of preaching as a situation for dialogical communication rather than monological.<sup>2</sup> Dialogical communication is regarded by Howe not so much as a method but as the principle of effective preaching. Its formulation is built upon the writings of the late Martin Buber, especially his essay on "Education" in Between Man and Man as well as Maurice Friedman's study, Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue. Buber's "I-Thou" relationship and "experiencing the other side" attitudes regard the persons in dialogue as "total, authentic, disciplined individuals" who while maintaining their distinct independence are yet capable of responding to others. Howe sees the major qualification for dialogue as mutuality proceeding from both sides. Accordingly, he defines communication as a meeting of meaning between two or more persons. He notes monological

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<sup>1</sup>Reuel Howe, The Miracle of Dialogue (Greenwich: The Seabury Press, 1963). Reviewed in the Quarterly Journal of Speech, Vol. L, No. 2., April 1964, p. 187. Harold Brack calls this "the most stimulating and exciting in its treatment of the problem of communication." This judgment coincides with that of Dr. William D. Thompson, Chairman of the Speech for Religious Workers Interest Group, Speech Association of America, who refers to this as "one of the keenest treatments of communication in recent years."

<sup>2</sup>The description and analysis are taken not only from this book but also from a series of lectures given at Bethany Theological Seminary, as well as lectures heard by this writer at the Institute and interviews in January, 1964.

communication is a common misconception of communication. Rather than allowing significant contact with another, it prevents this by telling others what they ought to know, presenting a given meaning as final and ultimate, and viewing others as existing to serve and confirm oneself. Dialogical communication, on the other hand, is seen as interaction, address and response, between persons who give themselves to each other as they are, daring to be what they are in relation to the other, inviting the other to be a partner in dialogue and be fully present as he really is, and accepting the resulting address and response as the discipline and task of communication.

Howe sees six meaning-barriers to communication:

(1) the limitations of knowing and being known through the use of words, (2) images which participants in communicating have of one another or of the subject matter, (3) respective anxieties which keep communication partners from speaking and responding to one another, (4) defensiveness exercised in the interest of personal well being, (5) holding of contrary purposes, and (6) psychological and emotional symptoms of the ontological concern for being.

Dialogical communication, however, pays the necessary attention to the meanings that people bring and is responsible and responsive to the patterns of experience and understanding in a particular situation. It takes the other communicative partner seriously and thus causes or permits the language to become the means of genuine meeting and thus the vehicle of re-creation. He notes that once dialogue is initiated, the

speaker is required to accept responsibility and readiness to be flexible since he faces the possibility that the questions or responses of the person to whom he speaks may change his own views. Dialogue also encourages the use of words that speak "truth with love" and with "openness" and which permit another to respond with a yes or no. With continuing dialogue, each partner increasingly regards the other as someone to be taken seriously, whose point of view must be understood, whose meanings must be examined, and whose language and concepts are to be brought under judgment of available truth. Moreover, images are broken through and displaced by the efforts to meet and see the other as he really is. This likewise diminishes anxieties, makes defenses less necessary, and leaves both sides open for a reconsideration of their respective purposes. The result, he sees, is a reciprocal relationship in which each party experiences the other side so that their communication becomes a true address and response in which each informs and learns. Thus, barriers are not avoided, but accepted as part of the communicative task.

The dialogical principle works at this communicative task through "correlative thinking," a thinking that looks for reciprocal relations between things, persons, meanings and truth, theory and practice, little meanings and ultimate meanings, meanings that come out of man's living in the world, and meanings that come out of the encounter between God and man in Christ.

Dialogue requires not only the language of words but also the language of relationships, which is a language of

mutual address and response, of trust and love. It is this language that achieves a fourth parallel between Howe and Stinnette, the prevention of manipulation. If dialogue is mutual and proceeds from both sides. Howe believes communication will become the means by which man finds himself in his relation with other men in a community of mutual criticism and helpfulness--rather than the means of manipulation.

Dialogical communication theory, which Howe views as being in conflict with standard homiletics, has particular applications in preparing, delivering, and following up the communicative act of the sermon. First it confronts the "disabling image of preaching" of a preacher as a performer, of the sermon as a performance, and the congregation as a receptive and attentive audience. Instead of preaching oriented to clergy it requires that preaching be regarded from the viewpoint of the congregation and that both congregation and preacher assume responsibility for it.

A further application is the minister's definite role in implementing dialogical preaching. The minister is to realize that he needs the meanings, thoughts, questions, understandings, interests, and encouragement of his congregation for both preparing and preaching sermons. He is to realize that his sermons are but a preliminary contribution to the sermons actually formed in the hearer as he reasons out of his meanings in light of the preacher's meanings. Accordingly, Howe sees the sermon as something born in the hearer and by him delivered in the world. In this light, the



clergyman's ministry is viewed as being only auxiliary to the ministry of the whole church. However, to be the most effective teaching preacher, certain qualities should be evident: 1) He is concerned about the principle of dialogue in all of his communicative acts; 2) He is alert to the meanings that are brought to the moment of learning; 3) He endeavors to help his listeners formulate their questions and meanings as preparatory for responding to the information and understanding he is presenting to them; 4) He recognizes himself as a resource person, one who uses his knowledge, wisdom, and skill to help the others correlate the meaning of their lives with the meaning of the gospel; 5) He creates opportunities for dialogical participation in symbolic expression; 6) He understands that implicit in dialogue between man and man is a meeting between God and man; 7) He is not defensive about the content he offers since it has been formulated out of life and is relatable to life; and 8) He departs from his plan without anxiety, trusting the working of the Spirit and the inner workings of the listeners. More specifically, the preacher asks What questions are they asking? What things are they doing? What issues are they facing? He avoids dead-end meanings (talking about love as if no one hated each other) and guards against being too formal and impersonal, giving too much analysis and too little answers, having too complex sentences and thought, having inadequate time to meditate, and failing to make each sermon a personal event with the delivery and presentation a response to that event.

The congregation's role, which is a further application, includes participating in discussion and study groups of the sermon passage, realizing their past week's experiences at home, work, and elsewhere provide the meanings which they bring to church and out of which they hear the sermon, and bringing to the preaching situation the necessary "audience tools" of a sense of expectancy, a questioning ear, and a correlating mind. Moreover, congregations should come to know that their attitude and response determine the extent of preaching power. Howe regards feedback, especially facial, as revealing the mind and heart of the listener. Small groups discussing the sermon enable the minister also to have a deliberate response to his message. That a congregation's response to the sermon is measured as it is expressed and delivered again out in the world is likewise similar to Stinnette's concept of the congregation's liturgy or mode of being read and recognized out in the world by society.

### Edgar Jackson

Another contemporary theorist, whose writings have already been examined in previous chapters, is Dr. Edgar Jackson. In A Psychology for Preaching, he, too, champions the situation of contextual relationships.

Sermons do not happen. They grow. They root in life, branch in experience, and blossom in that creative interplay of minds that is the ideal preacher-listener relationship.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jackson, op. cit., p. 30.

Jackson also emphasizes the possibility for realizing "identity and group relationship" through the words that are spoken.<sup>1</sup> He also uses the word dialogue to describe the interaction that can take place in the occasion of bringing together preacher-message-audience.

An effective sermon is in a real sense a dialogue. To be sure, the congregation cannot talk back--but where there is no chance to talk back, there must be created a special atmosphere where people can feel back.<sup>2</sup>

Also like Stinnette and others, he stresses empathy as a way of moving during the preaching situation "into their thoughts and feelings with a desire to bring peace and comfort as well as helpful insight."<sup>3</sup>

In a discussion of "The Framework of Preaching" he explains preaching as a special type of communication because it is framed in a service of worship. This framework, according to Jackson, meets several audience needs: bringing to life a healing perspective as immediate problems that otherwise seem so overwhelming are placed in a context where they can be seen differently; bringing a healing quality of appreciation to life by giving thanks and thus bringing life back into balance by weighing the blessings against misfortunes; and bringing a healing self-sight, enabling man to see himself as he is. In addition, it stimulates faith, generating the atmosphere for creative spiritual activity that can restore

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

sanity and guarantee healthful attitudes toward life and its problems. It is this occasion of the church as a worshipping body, declares Jackson, that gives the sermon its source.

Preaching likewise is regarded as part of the worship.

If we would understand the function of preaching as a healing word spoken to groups, we would seek to understand the effect of the setting within which that word is spoken.<sup>1</sup>

In discussing "group response" and "group dynamics," Jackson traces "clues" of the preaching setting. He notes that

Recent years have produced marked progress in the understanding of such matters as group identity, group dynamics, and group therapy. These may well become new tools for helping to give standards and measurements to the art of preaching. Buried in the dry and often seemingly interminable statistics of the research psychologist, there are insights into the needs of people, the power of words and the healing relationship that can be established between pastor and people.<sup>2</sup>

He observes that the application of these "clues" is person-centered preaching which creates the atmosphere that leads to effective pastoral care at all levels of parish ministry.

In addition to the unusual amount of psychological experimental research in a book on preaching, and in particular on the construct of occasion in preaching, this book is significant for its Preface, which is written by Harry Emerson Fosdick and in which he gives his view of Jackson's approach. He delights in Jackson's discovery of new techniques of intimate personal counseling "with all the insights

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 116.

that modern psychology has contributed," so that the old tradition of authoritative preaching can be qualified and that the sermon can come to grips with the real problems of real people. It is in the preaching situation, Fosdick states, that the preacher can exercise his art "to know by clairvoyant intuition what they are thinking and feeling back." Regarding the church as a worshiping body, Fosdick comments that the worshiping fellowship "can open doors to the preacher's message and can be used as a therapeutic and transforming ally." He hopes that pastoral insights available in counseling will not be kept in a separate compartment when preaching.

The insights of the new psychology involved in personal counseling can add immeasurably to the preacher's power; and his preaching, using the matrix of a worshiping congregation, can gain a penetrating quality so closely akin to personal counseling that its effect is much the same.<sup>1</sup>

"The matrix of the worshiping congregation," of course, is similar to Stinnette's sharing community of faith, for it too is a matrix that gives preaching its communication possibilities.

### Earl H. Furgeson

Earl H. Furgeson, Professor of Preaching and Pastoral Theology, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C., and member of the Editorial Advisory Board of Pastoral Psychology is considered next. Serving as Guest Editor of a special

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

issue of Pastoral Psychology, entitled "Psychology and Preaching," he indicates in an editorial that if preaching is to be persuasive it must utilize contemporary psychological insights and that these facilitate relational transactions when a person is addressing persons.

The new insight gradually developing in the theory of preaching is the insight that preaching is a form of communication and that the principles of communication are not exhausted by the principles of rhetoric. If the sermon is an oral discourse "with a view to persuasion" as Professor Austin Phelps said it is, then persuasion and communication inevitably open the door to psychological considerations. The essence of communication, says Paul Tillich, is participation and participation in an inter-personal activity in which an exchange of meanings take place between preacher and people. The sermon, and indeed the whole of the ministerial vocation, is a series of relational transactions each one of which is conditioned by the predominant psychological realities in the person of the preacher and in the persons of those to whom his communications are addressed.<sup>1</sup>

### Herbert H. Farmer

The Servant of the Word by Herbert H. Farmer emphasizes the construct of occasion by indicating that effective preaching requires that both preacher and hearer "clearly and deeply understand what is supposed to be happening when preaching is taking place and solemnly acknowledge their

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<sup>1</sup>Furgeson, "Editorial: Psychology and Preaching," Pastoral Psychology, pp. 5-6. Dr. Furgeson is in a unique position to utilize and integrate insights from homiletics and the behavioral sciences in theological education, such as pastoral counseling, since he teaches in both fields. It can be observed in this statement, however, that his view of rhetoric is limited when compared to contemporary rhetoricians cited in Chapter One in that he does not view it as an emerging body of theory utilizing all insights that contribute to the available means of persuasion.

responsibility in and for it."<sup>1</sup> Two main positions emerge from Farmer's discussion of preaching, the first being that God's approach to persons is through persons, that history is the sphere of relationship where decisions and choices are made in relation with other wills.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, Farmer views God's approach to persons (the saving activity and events of God) as not only being witnessed to in preaching but as coming through the situations of preaching. Preaching occasions, in other words, are part of the saving activity itself. The essence, as well as the necessity, of preaching is the situation and sphere of relationships. He notes

when God saves a man through Christ he insists on a living, personal encounter with him here and now in the sphere of present personal relationships. Preaching is that divine, saving activity in history, which began two thousand years ago in the advent of Christ and in His personal relationships with men and women, and has continued throughout the ages in the sphere of redeemed personal relationships . . . not focusing on me, confronting me, as a person indissolubly bound up with other persons at this present time.<sup>3</sup>

Preaching, however, is more than just mere telling, according to Farmer, since it is God probing and challenging man's will for decision and offering help "through the only

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert H. Farmer, The Servant of the Word (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1942), p. viii. This book was republished as one of the "Preacher's Paperback Library" by Fortress Press in 1962. Edmund Steimle of Union Theological Seminary calls it "the most rewarding book of preaching that I know" (p. vi). This book is currently used as a seminary text.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

medium which the nature of His purpose permits Him to use, the medium of personal relationship."

It is God's "I-Thou" relationship with me carried on your "I-thou" relationship with me, both together coming out of the heart of his saving purpose which is moving on through history to its consummation in His kingdom."<sup>1</sup>

Preaching, then, is "the whole historic saving purpose of God" temporarily focused in a particular situation of relationships in which God encounters human souls. Farmer underscores the "context of a Christian understanding of persons and their relationships with one another."<sup>2</sup> Humanity is so made, he declares, that God's entering into personal relationships with a man is always bound up with the personal "I-thou" relationship that one has with other persons. Love of God and love of man are viewed not as two relationships but as one personal continuum with two poles--the infinite personal and the finite personal. For these two to come into existence together, Farmer states, a historical process is required (such as the sphere of relationships in a preaching situation or occasion).

The second position that Farmer maintains has already been introduced. Not only is God's personal approach through other persons in preaching relationships, but this I-thou relationship is "a relationship between self-conscious, self-directing wills" which condition one another through "claim" and "shared meaning."<sup>3</sup> Using Martin Buber's model of "I-thou"

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 37.



relationships, as does Stinnette, Farmer delineates the three elements of will, claim, and shared meaning in the medium of communication. At the same time these three are viewed as a single, fused unity. Farmer sees at the heart of the I-thou communicating relationship the activity of one self-conscious, self-directing will being conditioned by that of another that both remain "free" in "a situation which is important and significant for both."<sup>1</sup> The listener's will remains free, however, when he is confronted "as an inescapable claim." A claim, however, conditions the listener's will only when it is being understood; he is free to accept or reject what the speaker sees to be of value only when it is comprehended. Both spoken word and gesture and facial expression are "immediate creations of the embodied will" whether it be the preacher's "call for attention" or the listener's answer.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the claim of truth is required of both speaker and listener:

If neither of us acknowledges the claim of truth, personal intercourse is in so far forth as impossible as if we were both stone deaf.<sup>3</sup>

Will and claim are always to be judged in relation to "the distinctive raison d'etre of speech" which is "to convey reasoned meaning, or meaning to reason and understanding."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 31-32.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Speaking or preaching, according to Farmer, is both the supreme and distinctive vehicle of ideas and judgments so that truth can be "held at arm's length and considered." He feels that speech's unique function, unlike that of painting or music, is its conveying "in the most explicit way possible the judgment of one self-conscious awareness to another in such wise that both are brought directly and inescapably under the claim of truth."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, communication is a method that

allows full exchange of meaning and yet respects the frontiers, the territorial integrity of the personality, namely the use of symbols, and particularly the use of speech which is a highly complex and refined way of signalling to one another. When I speak to a friend, I cannot thrust my meanings directly into his mind . . . I can only come so far as the frontier and signal my meaning, and the latter can only become his after he has interpreted the signals and taken up their significance into his own personal awareness.<sup>2</sup>

Farmer makes a number of applications for peaching from his two-fold position that God's relationship with man comes through man's relationship with his fellow man and that this man to man relationship is one between self-conscious, self-directing wills that are mutually conditioning through claim and shared-meaning. The direct encounter of will with will is hampered, he believes, when sermons are read, in passages that have the "purple tinge" suggesting "literary preciousity," overuse of quotations, and inadequate use of "you" which most strongly indicates directness. Regarding

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

claim, Farmer insists that a sermon should have the quality of a knock on the door which calls both for attention and for answer. He suggests further the necessity of claim by indicating that God does not come "livingly" to a person without making a demand.

To achieve the element of shared meaning in which speech as the medium or vehicle of personal relationship conveys meaning in such a way that the hearer is free to accept or reject it according to his sense of truth, Farmer underscores preaching as appealing to insight. The "hypnotic orator as a spellbinder" then is out of place in the pulpit since the "preacher must deeply reverence in his hearer what has been called the sacred power of rejection."<sup>1</sup> The particular "problem of feeling" is subservient to insight, he believes, if worship is objective, directed towards God, rather than subjective, directed towards one's own feelings about God. He writes

The prime function of speech between me and thee is to convey truth in such wise that it becomes really thing. It can . . . do other things, stir feelings, evoke aesthetic satisfaction by its beauty and order of conception and form, impart worthy suggestions which may later bear fruit almost without the hearer knowing it . . . but its prime function is to help a man to see. It is the sermon, therefore, which can do more than anything else, under God, to keep the whole transaction of worship . . . on the highest level of personal relationship making it clean and objective with truth and bringing the whole thing to a focus in the response of the will to the will of God.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

The particular problem of the authority of the preacher in Farmer's position of preaching as personal encounter is also considered. On the one hand he sees the necessity of authority, that man's need calls for firm direction and that Christianity is a message of declaration that "God has met the darkness of the human spirit with a great unveiling of succouring light and truth. On the other hand Farmer is aware of the tendency of dogmatism, "a like depreciation and suspicion of the individual judgment, a like 'take-it-or-leave-it' attitude, anyone who elects to leave it being set down either as willfully recalcitrant, or more likely as still hopelessly lost."<sup>1</sup> The problem, he notes, is not that the listener walks by his own insights but that he walks without humility. The cure, he sees, is to teach him to walk with humility, setting his feet in a larger room, being released from himself and his narrow horizon of history which has been under "the distorting influence of subconscious fixations and inhibitions."<sup>2</sup> The question of authority becomes

How may we have within ourselves . . . the conviction and confidence which lacks neither a proper respect for the hearer nor the humility of a sinful man, which is neither overridingly dogmatic nor weakly diffident and hesitant?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

The correctives that Farmer suggests are viewing a given sermon in the perspective of the total ministry, including the total preaching program, and in viewing the total ministry as a part of the total witness of the Christian church. Here, it can be noticed, Farmer relates the immediate dynamics of a preaching situation or occasion with the dimensions of a sermon in the context of the service itself and in the context of the "universal and age-long Church." Accordingly, preaching is not "self-contained or self-maintained" but rather "it comes into being, and is maintained in being, by its participation in an organic continuity of Christian experience and history."<sup>1</sup>

A further area of application, particularly that of God's saving approach as being through persons in relationship, is to view preaching as a pastoral activity with all of its implicit personal relationships. In this "context of direct personal relationships" characterizing preaching, both preacher and congregation are responsible for the sermon since both are "part of the system of personal relationships in which the sermon is, as it were, a focalization and by which it is carried."<sup>2</sup>

The preaching situation as a sphere of personal relationship through which God speaks warns, moreover, "of the necessity for concreteness in our preaching." Farmer

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

states that "God comes at people not through abstractions at all, but through persons and through the concrete situations of day to day personal life."<sup>1</sup> Abstract ideas, he believes, screen the participants of preacher and hearer from the living God. Moreover, abstract words are viewed as lacking "a certain tang and flavour of the real historical world where we see and hear things and where we have above all to do things."<sup>2</sup> Concreteness, he notes, is applicable not only to phraseology but also to content and presentation of the message. If, for example, a preaching situation is to have the I-thou nature, it must be worked at with a "deliberate intention" and "deliberate effort" in order to "bear the truth into the actual life-situation" so that listeners can see their own world coming through the message.<sup>3</sup>

In a given preaching situation, therefore, men are to be confronted by the Living God "who speaks through, and asks their obedience in, this present world of automobiles, aeroplanes, radio, cinemas, big business, machine industry, mass democracy, and totalitarian war."<sup>4</sup> This means that the message is not to be oriented to the occasion of "a remote past and a distant and strange world of men and women who speak another language, think in other categories, face other problems" or to "the pictures of Biblical scenes with which

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 73-74.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

we adorn our Sunday Schools" uttered in "that unnatural, pulpit voice which some ministers assume as soon as they enter the pulpit."<sup>1</sup> Today's world will be reflected and the contemporary context of life will be evident if the preacher keeps contact with concrete actualities and if the church, in its message, endeavors to meet both man's immediate external setting as well as his permanent and universal troubles. If God is to enter the preaching situation in the sphere of personal relationships, Farmer insists getting on "the right wavelength" by allowing the unchanging gospel to be "determined by the situation, the mental and spiritual situation" as well as the spirit of the times of today's listeners and world.<sup>2</sup>

When Farmer is compared with Stinnette, it can be noted that their basic thrusts of the preaching occasion as a sphere of participative relationships are similar. Both have expressed indebtedness to Martin Buber's emphasis on the I-thou relationship. Both have expressed concern that in the occasion of preaching the participants remain free and non-manipulated.

### Wayne Oates

Various theorists considered up to this point have in common an orientation to the behavioral sciences, particularly those teaching seminary courses in counseling and personality. Examination of a number of the reports of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 76-78.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

biennial meetings of the Association of Seminary Professors in the Practical Fields reveals that the dialogue of homiletics and psychology theorists is evident. For example, Dr. Wayne E. Oates, who has also addressed the Speech for Religious Workers Interest Group of the Speech Association of America, notes that counseling is an interpersonal pilgrimage by two people in which there is communication of their real selves to each other. Specific lessons in communication that he has observed are as follows:

Communication is radically affected from the outset by the social role which both counselor and counselee have in life . . . the social role we fill in society invests us with authority . . . the social roles of people cause us to stereotype each other and to "over-classify" each other . . . (communication) is the breaking through of social roles, over-classified stereotypes, and ingrained distortions of perception . . . to a wide clearing of existence as persons who know each other as persons, not as objects, means, or things . . . this experience is a reciprocal experience of understanding and acceptance . . . A final lesson we learn about communication from experience in interpersonal relationships of personal encounter is . . . communication is rooted in the character and nourishment of the community as a community . . . The interpersonal relationships which pastoral membership seeks to establish are avenues of communications.<sup>1</sup>

Several years later Oates indicated that ideal spiritual conversation between pastor and parishioner is a two-way conversation but that "oratorical schools of the Western world" made Christian preaching "something vastly different."

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<sup>1</sup>Wayne E. Oates, "Counseling and Communication," Report of the Third Biennial Meeting of the Association of Seminary Professors in the Practical Fields, 1954, Harry DeWire Editor and Publisher, pp. 14-17. Dr. Oates is Professor of Psychology and Religion at Southern Baptist Seminary.



Oratory tended to take the place of conversation. The greatness of the orator took the place of the astounding event of Jesus Christ. And the dialogue between speaker and listener faded into a monologue.<sup>1</sup>

### Arthur Teigmanis

An additional effort in integration of homiletics and pastoral care is one of "The Successful Pastoral Counseling Series," Preaching and Pastoral Care. In this book, Arthur Teigmanis sees dynamic preaching as a context of interpersonal participative relationships. In this preaching situation

worshippers in the congregation respond, sometimes with smiles and then again with tears, sometimes with excitement and then again with deep reverence, sometimes with quiet thoughtfulness and then again with a challenging disturbance. The preacher who is also a pastor is bound to notice such reactions and respond to them without a red-pencil mark in his manuscript. Such creative and redemptive experience in the service of worship is mediated only by the preacher who knows his people and their needs, whose heart is filled with empathy, love, and understanding, who knows the true meaning and significance of preaching.<sup>2</sup>

Teigmanis, who views preaching and pastoral care as an inseparable relationship, notes that the gospel is communicated by "convictions rather than condemnatory judgments, by indicatives rather than cold imperatives, by admiration and wonderment rather than compelling exaltations."<sup>3</sup> Such counseling-

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<sup>1</sup>Wayne E. Oates, Protestant Counseling (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 167.

<sup>2</sup>Arthur L. Teigmanis, Preaching and Pastoral Care (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 21. This is one of eighteen volumes.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

preaching has as its aim to help an individual to see both man's lostness and God's salvation. Teigmanis emphasizes also "making way for dialogue" stating that a congregation is reached only by "heart-to-heart, mind-to-mind, soul-to-soul search, communication, and dialogue."<sup>1</sup>

Teigmanis calls attention to an aspect of the preaching situation which is also shared by other theorists, namely, the reciprocal, sequential relationship of preaching and counseling. The interpersonal relationships established in preaching can create the conditions that lead to future counseling, particularly if it is a type of preaching

that evidences our love for people, our respect for their otherness, our understanding of their problems, predicaments and emotions, our insight into the dynamics of personality (with all the intricacies of ego defenses), our sincerity, and our confidence in the love of God.<sup>2</sup>

#### Brack, et al

Traditional definitions of occasion include audience mood in light of that particular speaking event, the life of the institution providing the speech opportunity, the place of speech in the program, appropriate conduct and speech, and other situational factors as room size, lighting, ventilation, and arrangement.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, David H.C. Read in The Communication of the Gospel refers to the context of the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>3</sup>Brack and Hance, op. cit., p. 140.

Church as important for preaching. He regards the revival of preaching and that of church-consciousness as mutually effective.<sup>1</sup> The church-consciousness implies for Read that preaching is not a solo affair but that it includes a fruitful relationship between the sermon and the fellowship. It is always as "one of this vital fellowship that the preacher will declare the Word."<sup>2</sup>

Roy Pearson in The Preacher: His Purpose and Practice gives further consideration of the sermon's place in worship. He notes that the sermon depends on worship and that worship depends also on the sermon. In discussing the former, he states the following factors about worship: its central reality is God, its flow is in two directions--creatures addressing their Creator and the Creator responding to the creatures, it is an active rather than a passive experience, it is an act of rich variety, and a worshipping congregation is more than a congregation of individual worshippers in that a given collection of individuals represents a special existence or unique preaching situation. In this situation creatures meet their Creator. The latter concept implies that worship needs preaching and that the sermon is worship's interpreter. Pearson concludes

So preaching and worship belong together, and perhaps the best summary of their interdependence is simply to say that worship makes preaching defensible and preaching

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<sup>1</sup>Read, op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

makes worship responsible. Without worship, preaching has no warrant. Without preaching, worship loses relevance.<sup>1</sup>

Joseph Sittler also stresses worship in the preaching situation as "the rich and allusive theatre within which Christian affirmations are made."<sup>2</sup>

James Cleland in his Warrack Lecture, Preaching to be Understood (referred to in Chapter IV), emphasizes not only the factor of preaching as worship but also that of a sermon as "a united effort, a joint piece of work, a constant partnership, a mutual participation."<sup>3</sup> A sermon is to be thought of as the combined effort of preacher and parishioner, "the mutual enterprise of the beloved community, the harmonious battery of pulpit and pew."<sup>4</sup> Dialogue rather than monologue, Cleland feels, can be viewed as an analogy of the pitcher and catcher in the game. The catcher is in the pew and the pitcher in the pulpit, and together they pass the ball (or message) back and forth. Preaching, therefore, is both a worship and an active experience. Thus preaching is characterized by mutuality and has the colloquy nature of a dialogical relationship.

<sup>1</sup>Pearson, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Sittler, The Ecology of Faith (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1961), pp. 45-47. These pages represent the Lyman Beecher Lecture of 1959.

<sup>3</sup>Cleland, op. cit., p. 112.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

Clyde H. Reid

Clyde H. Reid, professor of speech at Union Theological Seminary, New York, in discussing "Preaching and the Nature of Communication" regards the dialogical contextual relationships in the preaching situation as a major preaching element.<sup>1</sup> Reid takes the position that today's deplored preaching is rectified not by "beefing up the theology of the modern clergy" but that preaching as communication must be subjected to the laws of human communication. The next and natural step, he sees, is "to turn to the fertile field of communication research and theory in an effort to understand how preaching can be more effective communication."<sup>2</sup>

Borrowing an insight from Wilbur Schramm, Reid notes that communication is endeavoring to establish a "commonness" with someone in regard to an aspect of the Christian faith. He cites 1950 as the time when communications researchers began to think of communication as a two-way process.

Since 1950, however, there has been an increasing tendency to regard communication as a more complex, dynamic two-way relationship, modified by many situational factors including primary group relationships, opinion leaders, and other variables.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Clyde H. Reid, "Preaching and the Nature of Communication," Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 14, No. 137, October 1963.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. There are homileticians who would challenge Reid's observation, or at least modify it, by noting that Aristotle, for example, also viewed communication as being composed of several elements, speaker, speech, audience, and an occasion in which attitudes of speaker and audience are formed. This qualification, however, does not contradict Reid's view that new and fresh ways of approaching preaching are possible because of contemporary research.

Prior to this time the one-way process was a communicator transmitting a message to an audience with a particular effort. The "two-way" theory, however, means that the receiver in responding to the message is perceiving it in a situation. He concurs with DeFleur and Larsen's study that communication occurs when two interacting parties are understanding each other's point of view as well as identifying with each other's meaning, and are permitting a transfer of meaning that affects conduct.<sup>1</sup>

The seven phases in influencing conduct, according to Reid, are:

- 1) Transmission occurs when the communicator presents his message . . .
- 2) Contact occurs when the listener has heard the message.
- 3) When the listener is allowed to ask a question, make a comment, or otherwise express himself, concerning the content of the message, feedback is established and there is a potentiality for dialogue.
- 4) Comprehension. Having clarified his understanding of the message, the listener now comprehends what it is the communicator is trying to say to him.
- 5) Acceptance. Having understood the message, the listener now accepts, ignores, or rejects it. His prior beliefs and attitudes, his relationships with influential persons, and his primary group relationships may modify his acceptance or rejection of the message.
- 6) Internalization. Beyond simply accepting the message intellectually, the listener internalizes it when it becomes his own, a part of his own being, and it begins to influence his behavior.
- 7) Complete Communication. At this point the communicator and listener (who also has become a communicator in the two-way process) have a common, shared understanding and are acting on the basis of this understanding. "A transfer of meaning has taken place which influences conduct."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Reid sees communication research pointing increasingly to feedback "when we expect comprehension, acceptance, internalization" when communication is taking place. Referring to the writings of Wayne E. Oates and Reuel L. Howe, Reid asserts that preaching fails because of lack of feedback and being "caught in the one-way street of monologue." With monologue, communication is short-circuited and incomplete.<sup>1</sup>

Reid offers seven suggestions for making preaching a dialogue. 1) An ineffective but nevertheless an existing method is facial expression feedback cues. 2) Dialogue is augmented if the minister anticipated the questions the congregation would ask if it could. 3) A dialogue sermon using two persons has limited possibilities. 4) The sermon clinic idea using a small group of lay people permits critical and creative analysis giving it a "reality orientation." 5) Small groups meeting for Bible study, prayer, and discussion are viewed as providing an indirect form of feedback. In his own study of "Two-Way Communication through Small Groups in Relation to Preaching,"<sup>2</sup> the results show that participation in the small groups has a direct relationship to responsiveness in preaching. He notes further

Preaching as an isolated event in itself is an insufficient vehicle for the communication of the gospel. It is incomplete, one-way communication that does not involve the listener in an active-dialogical relationship. Preaching should be properly understood not as an

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid... p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Th.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1960.

isolated event sufficient unto itself, but as one element in a communications context which includes personal contacts and small group relationships.<sup>1</sup>

6) Reid offers an additional qualification of preaching's effectiveness, namely, that even though preaching become a dialogical process, it is still not necessarily an authentic mutual witness. He regards the paid salaried minister as having built-in problems, such as, the laymen depending upon the professional minister to do his witnessing, studying, and praying for him. Reid wants all members to regard themselves as ministers of the gospel. He believes that when a congregation relies totally upon one man, the minister's witness becomes formal and artificial. Moreover, the one preacher per congregation caters to preacher-artists. 7) The only solution that Reid offers to eliminate the problem of preacher-worship instead of God-worship is returning to what he believes is authentic New Testament preaching, that of mutual witness of all the people of God. A change of structures, he feels, is ultimately necessary in which small groups become more characteristic of communicating the gospel than that of the preacher or sermon-centered church.

#### Theodore O. Wedel

Similarly, Theodore O. Wedel in an article, "Is Preaching Outmoded?", gives an analysis of "the right setting" of the sermon.<sup>2</sup> Wedel takes note of the sermon appraisal of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>2</sup>Theodore O. Wedel, "Is Preaching Outmoded?", Religion in Life, A Christian Quarterly of opinion and discussion, Autumn, 1965, Vol. XXXIV, No. 4. Dr. Wedel is warden emeritus, College of Preachers, Washington Cathedral, and lecturer in homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, New York.



homileticians Donald Macleod, Ralph Sockman, and Merrill Abbey, who have observed some of the public disdain of the sermon. Wedel weighs also the competition of mass communication media to the preacher and sermon. It is the emergence of the communication by "the small group movement," however, that he sees as the apparent formidable challenge. Nevertheless, he believes homiletical literature has not seriously dealt with the "from monologue to dialogue" movement. The emphasis of the congregation without the pulpit, rather than the stereotype of a congregation gathered around a pulpit, presents, he believes, a false set of alternatives. Wedel grants the necessity of dethroning the "idolization of the sermon as possessing monopoly rights in the communication of the Christian faith."<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, he underscores the awarenesses that the church witnesses to the gospel by the fellowship life of the Christian community itself as well as by the witness of services. He further grants that the priority of effectiveness of either of these two methods or that of the third, proclamation of the gospel by the sermon, shifts. Whatever is the shift of emphasis at a given time in a given setting, Wedel regards the presence of the preached gospel as an issue, indeed, even as an ultimate priority.

"Congregation Without Pulpit"--this could prove acceptable in church renewal movements not afraid of new ventures in communication if by pulpit is meant the architectural symbol towering over a cluster of pews.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 538.

It could even involve the surrender of the pomp and circumstance which has come to surround the pulpit and which has contributed toward the clericalization of the church and to the schism between clergy and laity. The pulpit as such is not the issue, nor even the sermon as an art form or a platform oration. But the preached gospel is.<sup>1</sup>

He approves of the emphasis of homiletics books, such as, Herbert H. Farmer's The Servant of the Word (earlier cited), which underscore that the gospel means good news that must be declared or delivered.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, church history has shown, especially that of the Reformation, that a congregation is faithful when the Word of God is preached. In this preaching, in comparison to the small group, there is a presentation of the salvation-event as a demand for faith in the decisive present. Wedel seeks to illustrate further the "congregation without pulpit" by referring to a discussion group devoted to a concrete community legal issue with "a master of the law . . . present as competent expert or conferencier" as contrasted with a courtroom where the same master of the law now wears the judge's symbol of authority, the robe. Similarly, the sermon, in contrast to the discussion, is presented by the authority of the one who is called and so recognized, to proclaim the Word.

A final consideration that Wedel attributes to the preaching "setting" is by noting the distinction between preaching and scripture reading. In answering why the pulpit

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 540.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

must replace the lectern, why the read gospel must be transformed into a preached gospel, he states

The sermon, if true to its calling, performs a kind of transubstantiation miracle--a transubstantiation in time though not in space. The sermon contemporizes the gospel--a gospel which, as merely read gospel, might have remained safely entombed in the church's historical archives. From a then, or "once upon a time," it confronts the hearer with a now.<sup>1</sup>

In a given "contemporization" Wedel admits that "a hearing of the gospel may have to await God's breaking the pride of this modern man come of age."<sup>2</sup>

In discussing the context of communicating the gospel, as set forth by Wedel and Reid, Reid has noted the importance of the dialogical relationship both for preaching and for small groups, with a bias for the latter, whereas Wedel has viewed the dialogical relationship primarily as a method for small groups rather than as a principle for preaching. Wedel has also defended the sermon method against the small group method of communication.

#### Chicago Theological Seminary Faculty

Another illustration of homiletical search for viewing preaching from the stance of the participative relationships inherent in the preaching situation is the discussion of the Seminary Faculty of Chicago Theological Seminary of preaching October 18-20, 1962. Among the presented papers were those on the relevance of contemporary communication theory for the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 545.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 546.

teaching and study of preaching. The faculty consensus included the following points:

The student should come to understand the nature and functions of Christian preaching in the life of the church as a learning community. The student should be helped to develop a capacity of dialogue--both for listening sensitively to the situation and the response of his hearers and for helping to effect a creative interchange in which communication is seen to involve a two way circuit, not a one way transmission of information. The proper image for communication in preaching is the circle not the arrow.<sup>1</sup>

In discussing ways in which these goals could be implemented in preaching instruction, the faculty agreed further that "new and fresh ways of approaching the teaching and study of preaching must be developed."

#### Lawrence L. Lacour

Lawrence L. Lacour in "If Aristotle Could Hear You Preach" sees these "new and fresh ways of approaching the teaching and study of preaching" coming from the insights of the behavioral sciences:

When we make some of the same strides in understanding the dynamics that occur in the preaching event that we are making in the dynamics of counseling, of the group, and in the recovery of the content of the message, we will recapture new power in the pulpit.<sup>2</sup>

He acknowledges that social science enables understanding the cultural factors that condition an audience and that

<sup>1</sup>The Chicago Theological Seminary Register, Vol. LII, No. 10, Nov. 25, 1962, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Lawrence L. Lacour, "If Aristotle Could Hear You Preach," Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 16, No. 157, October, 1965, p. 9. Dr. Lacour, a graduate of Northwestern University School of Speech, is Director of the Department of Preaching Evangelism, Methodist Church.

personality sciences offer clues to more effective communication. Aristotle, Lacour notes, views communication as being composed of several elements, the speaker, the subject, and the persons addressed. Lacour also regards communication as determined by how well there is adaptation to the occasion. He observes that a crowd situation, as contrasted with personal counseling, can cause an individual to become his most uninhibited self either to become more identified with the group or to transcend the mores represented by the majority of those present. He sees the situation also as the time when attitudes of speaker and audience are formed.

#### Henry Babcock Adams

Henry Babcock Adams in a study of homiletic feedback sees clarity in preaching being affected not only by the variables of dissimilarities of a congregation and the personalities of pastors but also the varieties of relationship established between a pastor and members of his particular congregation.<sup>1</sup> Although Adams sees value in theoretical studies that explore the way in which feedback functions as an aid to effective speaking, he regards the greater necessity as being "pragmatic exploration of methods by which feedback can be maintained in ways appropriate to the changing structures of relationship found in different kinds of churches."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Henry Babcock Adams, "A Homiletic Feedback Study" delivered at the Speech Association of America, Chicago, December 29, 1964. Dr. Adams is professor of preaching at San Anselmo Theological Seminary, Santa Barbara, California.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Preaching skill, he believes, like the practice of medicine learned at the bedside, is learned best under "real" and "live" conditions which are subject to controls that can be measured and thus the effects of various efforts assessed. Adams assumes that if methods can be found whereby the effects can be measured, the preacher will learn to increase his clarity of utterance. The hypothesis for his own study was as follows:

When a substantial number of listeners formulate their understanding of the heart of the sermon in three rhetorically significant sentences each Sunday, and when a preacher compares these formulations to the formulation of what he intended to convey, there will be concomitant increase in the clarity of communication.

The written ballots given both to pastors and "respondents" requested three sentences each in distinct grammatical form:

First the problem or need with which the sermon was concerned, worded as a question. Second, the truth developed in the sermon in answer to that question, worded as an assertion. And third, the response to the truth which the sermon advocated, worded as an invitation.

The pastor-intentions were to be written before the sermon was given and the listener-perceptions were to be written immediately following the service and without another's help.

Adams regards these three assertions as being both rhetorically and liturgically significant. Commenting upon the former, he notes that

Rhetorically, the question focuses upon the relevance of ideas under discussion. Answers offered for questions no one is asking, or solutions offered to dilemmas no one feels are important, appear irrelevant and so are inhibiting to attention. The assertion expresses the central idea in a way that permits it to be supported, proved or disproved, and allows listeners to agree or disagree. It is right or wrong; it answers the questions or solves the problem, or it does not. And the invitation focuses upon

a response appropriate to acceptance of the assertion as a solution to the direct or indirect, is central in advocacy.

When related to worship

the question focuses upon some human need or inadequacy, which has a parallel in confession of sin. The assertion declares what God is ready to do to meet that need and parallels adoration which celebrates God's goodness. And the invitation calls men to an appropriate response to God's goodness in self-giving, which has a parallel in oblation.

Using a six-point scale with numerical weightings, a judge who was not present at the service rated the correspondence level between pastor and listener formulations as follows: completely different (1), slight similarity (2), related in subject (3), fractional equivalence (4), essential equivalence (5), and verbal correspondence (6). Results showed a general upward trend over the series of five sermons studied. Adams feels that using pastor-intention and listener-perceptions as a measure that feedback contributed to improved communicative clarity. He cited the two pastors' experiences as confirming the above finding:

One said, "When I knew people were looking for some issue, some particular problem with which my sermon would wrestle, I found myself making a special effort to delineate it for them." The other said, "Because this was a cooperative venture with my people, the attention I gave to these central matters was consciously greater than ever before."

Other results of the study, cited by Adams, include the awareness that methods need to be found of obtaining feedback "from those people which ordinary channels of interaction do not supply" such as those persons not represented in leadership groups. Adams asserts that from this study it is clear

that empirical investigations are not only necessary to learning preaching but that they must take "into much greater account the complex structures of relationship which now make up the context of such speaking."

### Summary

As was noted in Chapter III, H. Grady Davis stated that the message construct will never be the same as a result of the insights from the new hermeneutic of viewing the Bible as a book of faith. Similarly, it can be said that the homiletical construct of occasion will never be the same as a result of the insights from the behavioral sciences, particularly that of pastoral counseling. To permit a close-up study of contemporary theory of occasion, the communication theory of Charles Stinnette was examined. Stinnette proposed that the contextual situation of the worshipping community be viewed both in its sharing and receiving aspects. In viewing the sharing community of faith as a communication-receiving context of freedom, Stinnette showed that freedom is realized only in the presence of and in communication with other persons. Entering this community provides the context for the locus of freedom (of experiencing being and becoming where one can give himself to another), for identity confirmation (for another's response and actual meeting--including the triadic factor of interpersonal relations with God, as well as opportunity for self determination), and for participative knowledge (responsive-ness in personal commitment occurring in the corporate life).



In an analysis of the sharing community of faith as a communication-giving context of freedom (having achieved a relationship of trust at the core of one's being in which man is enabled to affirm himself and his destiny under God with other people) Stinnette sees the proclamation of freedom as an additional dynamic process of bringing freedom to life. The fullest realization of freedom as well as achieving the greatest communication between people involved four factors: relatedness, language, dialogue, and empathy. Relatedness is a capacity that permits persons to share a focus of attention in either each other or toward a common object. Relationship must be communicated, which is the primary function of language, the second communication factor. Language is regarded as meaningful stimuli shaped by the spirit of the source. Dialogue, the third factor, is regarded as at the heart of communication of faith both with speaking to and hearing God as well as with others. Listening is paramount in dialogue since it means that the communicator is cognizant of feedback, the internal language between oneself and his brother, the language dependent upon a two-way relationship of mutual participation. Empathy and transfiguration, the fourth communication factor, is the capacity to know another human being by actively experiencing his feelings or emotional states. To enter another's experience and give oneself to his concern is an act of self-transcendence, a "fruit" that takes place in the occasion of the community of faith (pastor and people and the revelatory God). Other writings by

Stinnette develop further the Christian community as an occasion for both receiving and giving.

In consideration of other representative theorists on the occasion construct, it became evident that "the seven most frequently used texts" gave limited scope to the occasion concept. The most obvious thrust was that preaching is a situation that is transformed from a human encounter between preacher and congregation into a divine encounter between God, preacher, and congregation in the worshipping situation. Also discussed was occasional preaching, such as at funerals, weddings, dedications, preaching to children, etc. Some texts said nothing at all on this construct. A large number of theorists whose interest is also that of pastoral counseling, as is the case of Stinnette, stressed the contextual participative relationships in the preaching situation. Seward Hiltner, Reuel Howe, Edgar Jackson, Earl Furgeson, Herbert Farmer, Wayne Oates, and Arthur Teigmanis complement Stinnette's theory. Their discussions of the importance of studying the communicative act in context of an occasion including the interaction and relationships of the preacher, congregation, message variables in a situation are similar to Stinnette's concept of communication. Feedback or stimuli given from the hearer-become-speaker and then again by speaker-become-hearer is predominant in these theoreticians. Communication was also viewed as being affected by the social roles which the speaker and hearer have or conceive of one another having. Relationships of the preaching occasion to that of the counseling occasion were also noted. The church context and the

worshipping community were underscored as significant factors of the occasion. Dialogue was analogized by one homiletician by referring to the pitcher and catcher who pass the ball (message) back and forth. Several theorists, trained in oral communication theory, stressed the "two-way" theory of the receiver responding to a message perceived in a situation. Communication theory, as applied in preaching, included such phases as transmission, contact, feedback, comprehension, acceptance, internalization, and complete communication (a transfer of meanings). The use of the small group both as a supplement to preaching and even as a replacement were considered. The faculty of one seminary concurred, it was noted, to discover "new and fresh ways of approaching the teaching and study of preaching" so that the student could be helped to develop a capacity of dialogue, for listening sensitively to the situation and the response of his hearers, and for helping to effect a creative interchange in which communication is seen as a two way circuit. One empirical study on feedback underscored the significance of "learning preaching" by taking into account the complex structures of relationships inherent in the preaching occasion.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study defines the current status of communication constructs in American protestant homiletics. With two earlier studies, it completes a broad description and analysis of American protestant preaching from its beginnings to the present day. An introductory chapter exploring the interrelationships of preaching and rhetoric, the emphases in pre-contemporary American homiletics, and contemporary trends in rhetoric and public address has provided a frame of reference in which current homiletics is examined. Based upon the concept of communication elements presently employed in rhetoric and public address, separate chapters have been devoted to the four constructs as they appear in contemporary preaching. Changes in the methodology of preaching since 1940 have been reviewed and compared with pre-contemporary homiletics and contemporary rhetoric.

Two basic methods were used. First, leading homiletical theorists were examined in case studies, with an emphasis on published work, personal interviews, and representative sermons. Secondly, a substantial body of current homiletical literature and research was reviewed, collated, and compared with the theories considered in the case studies. This additional literature was selected primarily on the

basis of the frequency with which it is now used in the teaching of homiletics; material was also selected from theorists currently teaching in institutions affiliated with the American Association of Theological Schools. What remains in this chapter is to summarize the existing status of preaching theory; review its relationship with pre-contemporary homiletics and other disciplines; and consider specific recommendations implicit in the study as a whole.

### Contemporary Theory: Trends

#### The Preacher

Contemporary homileticians concerned with the speaker construct emphasize the need for a preacher to have confidence in the oral medium, in the urgency and relevancy of his message, and in his own capabilities. Homiletics stresses that loss of confidence in the power of the spoken word can be rectified by an active cultivation of oral skills on the part of seminary homiletics departments, homiletics students, and preachers themselves. A recapturing of the vision of peril, promise, and alterant as basic biblical motifs in human experience and the gospel can help restore confidence in the urgency of the message. Confidence in the relevancy of the message can be renewed by the preacher as he assumes the roles of craftsman, in his compositional techniques; of pastor, in his empathy with parishioners; and of prophet, in his grasp of the problems of human experience. The rediscovery of the call to be totally involved in the will of Christ and under the authority of Christ in preaching the Word can regain the

preacher's loss of confidence in himself. Homileticians trained in the discipline of speech theory provide specific exercises and methods for developing confidence in the oral medium. Those trained in pastoral psychology emphasize the development of a full and healthy personality as an integral part of increasing the effectiveness of preaching. The psychologically oriented theorists conceive of the preacher as speaking in two languages, one verbal and the other non-verbal, one heard and the other felt.

In relationship to pre-contemporary homiletics, current theorists have built upon the foundation of Brook's "truth through personality" and Fosdick's non-authoritarianism. There is a greater appreciation of the nonverbal communication of the speaker; more explicit, practical concern for the development of vocal aptitude is likewise evident. Contemporary homiletics shares with contemporary rhetoric the concern that the communicator possess competency, character, and good will. Both disciplines utilize and apply sociological and psychological insights to achieve a fuller understanding of the speaker-source-preacher construct. Contemporary homiletics, however, is neither as articulate nor definitive as rhetoric in appreciating the factors of the source's knowledge, past experience, feelings, attitudes, and emotions, together with their interplay in encoding the message. Unlike rhetoric, homiletics by its very nature continues to carry a strong emphasis upon the relationship of God to and through the speaker.

### The Sermon

As in the past, the sermon construct continues to receive major attention in contemporary homiletical theory, with the focus on the sermon thesis and its development, arrangement, and style. Although there is considerable divergency in point of view and emphasis within the construct, certain trends stand out. Contemporary theorists continue to emphasize the Bible as the source of preaching; but with the introduction of "the new hermeneutic," the scriptures are viewed as a book of faith dealing with continued and contemporary needs; the preacher's task becomes the exposition of the Word so that it can speak to contemporary man. In developing a sermon idea at once relevant and powerful, the preacher seeks out a parallel between biblical and contemporary situations. Accordingly, recent theorists de-emphasize topical sermons and stress, instead, the expository biblical sermon. Sermon ideas derived from the tensions between past and present are considered by contemporary theory as existential, in that they reflect both an original encounter between God and human existence, and a contemporary encounter. This kerygmatic approach to the sermon idea affects the form of the sermon by substituting indicative modes of speech for imperative or conditional modes, and by expressing ideas in the present tense.

Another important contemporary trend is the emphasis on the inseparability of form and substance, and the conclusion that they must be studied together. In particular, contemporary homiletics emphasizes that the "vital idea" should

be a single biblical thought consisting of a specific subject and an inclusive verb; the central thought needs to be expanded and developed into two to five points; materials and structure are determined by the purposes of communication--persuasion, information, stimulation; the message should be organized with a beginning, a body which shows both continuity and progression of thought, and an ending; the process of amplification-interpretation includes description, causation, and recommendation; forms of development include illustration, explanation, restatement, testimony, evocative particularity, and generalization; an oral style must be clear, concise, interesting, and designed specifically for the ear. Although the concept of a proclaimed message is strong, several theorists recommend preaching on social issues, with God's word and the human situation intersecting.

As noted, contemporary homileticians share with their predecessors in emphasizing the sermon in preaching. A new tack has been taken, however, in the insistence that form and substance be mutually dependent. Rather than make applications from abstract principle, biblical interpretation views the Bible as a book of faith addressing man in the present tense and the indicative mood, demanding a response. Rather than depending upon a text for the sermon, or using a scripture as a resource, the contemporary biblical approach seeks to define the intent of the text both in the past and the present. As a whole, the message-centered homileticians have developed their concerns for the sermon with minimum attention to the needs of the listeners. When compared with rhetoric,



contemporary message-centered homiletics appears to have less concern for the specific receiver or congregation. Rhetoric has also perceived the message as a stimulus calling forth a response, made up of ideas that have been encoded by the speaker that have to be decoded by the listener.

### The Congregation

Contemporary congregation-centered homiletics judges the effectiveness of preaching on the basis of how well it enters the complex contemporary mind. It postulates four methods of achieving this penetration: 1) There is to be a "meeting of minds," achieved by taking the meanings and moods of the listener seriously and by making the listener a partner in the communication process. 2) There is to be a reconciliation of authority and communication through a "double-analysis" of the biblical text and an audience concern, with the various person-centered conditions of speech being met; 3) There is to be a dynamic encounter of Christ and contemporary culture, stimulating tension and listener awareness. 4) There is to be in preaching a challenge to the listener, enabling him to complete a basic need or correct a false axiom.

All congregational theorists confirm the need for a confrontation between gospel and culture, for the challenging of axioms and for the employment of the double focus method of analysis. Particular focusing on the audience is viewed as essential in life-situation preaching, where audience needs are primary, and in controversial preaching, where persuasion depends upon it. Literature is considered an ideal source for

both an understanding of the modern mind and the materials whereby the message is conveyed to the listener. Several theorists stress the necessity of understanding the audience's make-up and reaction tendencies. For pastorally trained theorists, the psychological realities of the listener are a prime concern; the focus is on the audience not only as it is, but as it could become, with preaching providing therapy and cure. A pastoral concern for digging behind labels and abstractions to living experiences, and for preparing and arranging sermons to hold the attention of the audience, is also emphasized. The response of the listener is considered dependent upon his attitudes, emotions, intelligence, roles, and psychological realities.

Contemporary audience-oriented homiletical theory, while sharing the pre-contemporary concerns with audience analysis, adaption, motivation, and life-situation preaching, has pushed ahead strongly to meet Paul Tillich's suggestion that the gospel should provide answers for the questions that culture raises. These advances are most sharply seen in the utilization of modern literature for both understanding today's mind as well as communicating with it; the concern for audience reaction tendencies and psychological and social realities; the intentional effort to transcend abstractions and get to the roots of living experience; and the audience-focusing evident in life-situation preaching, and controversial preaching. The status of homiletics in this area compares favorably with that of current rhetorical theory, which details the elements of the decoding process as speaking,

listening, and reasoning skills, attitudes, knowledge level, socio-cultural roles, and expectations. However, homiletics, once again by its very nature, maintains its emphasis of the double focus in which God's Word and the predicament of the world meet in a dynamic encounter.

### The Preaching Situation

The leaders of situational theory in contemporary homiletics emphasize the importance of contextual relationships, and they view preaching as a communication-sharing and receiving situation. They stress the realization of Christian freedom in the presence of, and in communication with, other persons. The sharing community of faith as a communication-receiving context provides the ground for the locus of freedom (of experiencing being and becoming, where one can give himself to another), for identity confirmation (for another's response and the experience of actual meeting, including the opportunity for self-determination), and for participative knowledge (responsiveness in personal commitment within the corporate life).

As a communication-giving context, the sharing community of faith includes within it the dynamic process of bringing Christian freedom to life, as well as achieving the greatest communication between persons. This communication-giving context involves the factors of relatedness, language, dialogue, and empathy. Relatedness is the capacity which permits persons to share a focus of attention either in each other or toward a common object. Language is meaningful stimuli shaped by the spirit of the source and interpreted

by the spirit of the receiver. Dialogue is at the heart of the communication of faith, in speaking to and hearing both God and other persons. Listening is crucial to dialogue, providing the communicator with feedback and creating an internal language dependent upon mutual participation. Empathy and "transfiguration" are viewed as the capacity to know another person by actively experiencing his feelings and emotional states; this entering another's experience and giving oneself to his concern is an act of self-transcendence which occurs in the communicating situation.

The literature on the construct of occasion-situation in standard preaching texts gives little evidence of the above concerns, limited usually to a discussion of "occasional preaching," such as at dedications and funerals. A few of these theorists view the situation of worship as transforming the encounter between God, preacher, and congregation. Additionally, those theorists with a background in pastoral counseling stress the participative relationships in the preaching situation; they recommend studying the communicative preaching act in "context" with attention to the interaction and relationships of preacher, sermon, and congregation. The social roles which speaker and listener have of themselves, and those which they see one another as adopting, are considered an important element of the preaching process by these theorists. A major concern of the behavioral oriented theorists is feedback, the exchange of stimuli from the speaker-become-hearer and the hearer-become-speaker. Those theorists trained

in oral communication theory likewise stress the response of a receiver to the message; they use such terms as transmission, feedback, acceptance, internalization, and transfer of meaning.

The contemporary approach to occasion-situation in homiletics has experienced a substantial growth over pre-contemporary theory. The development of concern went from total disregard of occasion, to an awareness that preaching could follow the church and calendar year, to a conviction that God was present to make out of the human occasion a divine occasion. The contemporary period has further explored the church year concept, the requirements of occasional preaching (children's meetings, funerals, weddings, installations), and the biblical theology of God addressing persons through a convinced witness in the context of worship. In the last decade, pastoral communication-minded homiletical theorists have developed the implications of a preaching situation in which the various homiletical elements interact. The response in this dialogical context is referred to in a number of ways, most frequently as feedback. This creative interchange now seen as a potentiality of the preaching situation may be regarded as nothing less than a revolutionary step when compared with pre-contemporary theory.

Contemporary rhetoric also has moved to a greater awareness of the communication context and views the occasion as a dynamic environment in which "recoding" can occur, where the listener becomes the speaker and the speaker becomes the listener. The homiletical approach to occasion, however,

includes the variable of God's participative involvement in the context of preaching.

### Summary

Three observations can be made from the above assessment of the trends in contemporary homiletic thought. First, definite growth and refinement are evident when compared with pre-contemporary theory. Second, homiletical theory has experienced an infusion of insight and methodology from contemporary communication research. Both disciplines, homiletics and speech communication, make use of the psychological and sociological insight of interpersonal relationships; both consider the audience an active and integral partner in the communication process. Both have been concerned with developing more effective means of persuasion through message stimuli, and both have built upon such insights of learning theory as reinforcement and stimulus-response. Third, the above discussion reveals that the refined homiletical constructs of the contemporary period are, for the most part, treated as being mutually exclusive. Much of the homiletical literature, for example, considers preaching as being based upon one of the emphases without the others. Moreover, homiletics has thus far failed in considering adequately, on a theoretical basis, the interaction of the constructs in the communication process. Homiletical literature is largely silent on the view of preaching as a unification of the preacher, sermon,

and congregation brought together in a preaching situation.<sup>1</sup>

### Contemporary Theory: Recommendations

The following recommendations are concerned with both the pragmatic and scholarly future of American protestant homiletics. They derive directly from the material dealt with in this study.

#### Preaching as a Communication Process

The first recommendation is the utilization of the holistic approach to learning and teaching preaching, the viewing of all four preaching constructs (as emphasized by Haselden and others on source-preacher, by Davis and others on message-sermon, by Abbey and others on receiver-congregation, and of Stinnette and others on contextual relationships-

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<sup>1</sup>Lawrence L. Lacour, to whom reference has already been made, in a two-part paper, "If Aristotle Could Hear You Preach," Pastoral Psychology, October and November 1965, fails to give either a discussion of the context of preaching (although excellent treatments of the preacher, congregation, and message are given) or of all four elements--or even of the three--as a process.

Ronald E. Sleeth speaking at the Speech Association of America in New York City, December, 1961, as reported in May 15, 1962 Speech for Religious Workers Group Newsletter, gave six reasons why theologians hold communication suspect. In his paper, "Theological Criticisms of Contemporary Speech and Communication Theories," Sleeth observed that theologians may ignore communication theory, regard communication theorists as elevating the human factor, believe that communicating is to be seen in light of God's creative Word, suspect apparent pragmatic use of the message, think communication theorists as ends rather than means. Sleeth calls upon those who teach communication to religious workers to be theologians themselves and to "concentrate on a philosophic, and unashamedly theological, basis" for their work. Sleeth's writings, as considered in Chapters III and IV, reveal, however, that contextual relationships in the preaching situation and preaching as a communication process are slighted when compared to contemporary rhetorical theory.

preaching situation) as an integral, unitary process. Homiletics is presently not doing this; the holistic approach is not evident in the examination and analysis of contemporary theory in this study, except partially by theorists who stress the double foci or intersecting of biblical truth and audience need. However, no one treatment of contemporary homiletical theory here examined viewed preaching as a science or art that incorporates the collective insights of such representative theorists as Haselden, Davis, Abbey, and Stinnette.

An adequate preaching model requires a new construct or approach that uses and dynamically relates the insights of all of the current constructs. This recommendation is important because preaching does take place in a situation containing all four elements of preacher, sermon, congregation, and situation, and because it is the aim of preaching for these four constructs to fully interact. An example of how preaching could be viewed as an interacting whole is illustrated in contemporary communicative theory.<sup>1</sup>

### Dialogue with Related Disciplines

The second recommendation concerns the stance from which homiletical considerations best continue their development. If homiletics is to contain all available insights

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<sup>1</sup>See "American Rhetoric" in Chapter I. Gerald Miller writes in Speech Communication, A Behavioral Approach (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966), p. 41, that "the notion of process hinges on the two key concepts of interaction among variables and of changes in the values taken by these variables." He, as other behavioral oriented theorists, stresses that speech communication is a dynamic, ongoing, and ever-changing process.



profitable for communication of the Christian gospel, it of necessity must be in dialogue with related disciplines.

In the discussions of this study it was noted that the nature of communication, the make-up of the congregation, and the environment in which communication occurs, have dramatically changed since the time of Aristotle and Christ. The most obvious example is the presence of new and mass media. Marshall McLuhan explains that these media are not just bridges between man and nature, but are nature. His basic thesis is that a new "brain" is being produced by electronic communications, that man's world is constituted by these electronic communications.<sup>1</sup> If, as Ross Snyder suggests, electronic stimuli constantly stab man's senses like a cloud of arrows from all directions, today's Christian communication must ask "what style of communication do we now put together?" This inundation by mechanical sound, determining the shape and dynamic of today's mind has made it more difficult to communicate orally with modern man. Homiletics, therefore, needs all the insights it can gather--whether from the behavioral sciences, such as, sociology, psychology, social science,

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<sup>1</sup>Edmund Carpenter and Marshall McLuhan, edited by, Explorations in Communication--An Anthology (Beacon Press: New York, 1966).

<sup>2</sup>Ross Snyder, "Mankind is Making a New Mind and a New Mode of Being In-the-World," The Chicago Theological Seminary Register, Vol. LVI, No. 6, March, 1966, p. 21. Snyder, Professor of Christian Education at Chicago Theological Seminary, answers this question by stating that a beginning step is to master McLuhan and then "help people learn how to digest and interpret the tremendous input of electronic communications that flood them daily."

social psychology, anthropology, oral communication, mass communications, linguistics, literature, education, or from the many disciplines within the seminary, pastoral counseling, biblical studies, as well as classical homiletics.

As discovered in this dissertation, homiletics, to perform its function effectively, has in the past twenty-five years had some dialogue with related disciplines. Theorists considered in this study came from many disciplines, pastoral counseling, biblical studies, speech, the active pastorate, and homiletics. That dialogue exists with rhetoric and public address is evidenced by the special interest group in the Speech Association of America called "Speech for Religious Workers Interest Group." This dialogue includes publications, research, and co-sponsored programs with other "secular" interest groups at the annual meetings. The most evidence of dialogue that has occurred in contemporary homiletics are the homiletical insights stemming from research in the behavioral sciences.

#### Additional Needed Research

A third recommendation follows closely the other two: engaging in further research of contemporary homiletical theory and preaching. As noted above in appraising the contribution of other disciplines to preaching theory, additional research would accelerate also the infusion of knowledge into the practicalities of preaching. Additional testing of theory and practice of the "new" construct of preaching as a

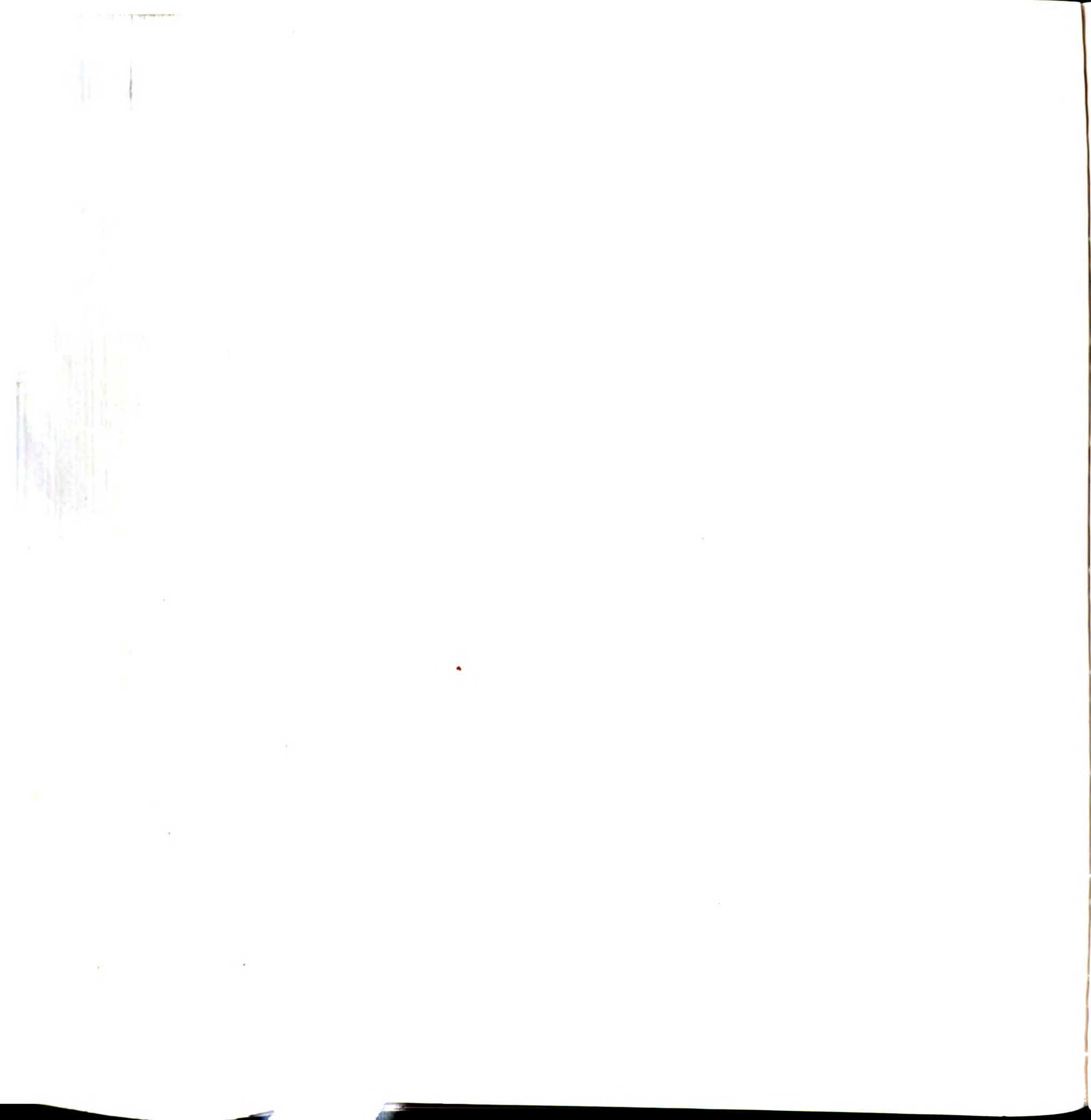


communicative process, of interaction among the standard elements,<sup>1</sup> as well as in the standard constructs of preacher, congregation, message, and situation, are needed.

Due to the design of this particular study, certain areas were necessarily excluded. One such area is to discover the contribution of non-American theorists to the American conceptual understanding of homiletics. A beginning list of theorists would include Swiss (or world-wide) Karl Barth in his Proclamation and the Word, Swiss Jean-Jacques Von Allmen's Preaching and Congregation, Swedish Gustaf Wingren's The Living Word, French Pierre Marcel's The Relevance of Preaching, German M. Reu's Homiletics, and the several persons already referred to in this study such as English W. E. Sangster's The Craft of the Sermon, Leslie Tizard's Preaching, The Art of Communication, and James Stewart's A Faith to Proclaim. A second area is an appraisal of the contribution of other fields or disciplines to preaching theory, both in seminary and in the university. This list of disciplines with implications for homiletics would include sociology, small group communication, mass communication, rhetoric and public address, psychology, biblical literature, educational theory, and pastoral counseling. A third research area is to discover how the contemporary American homiletical theory of Roman Catholics affects, and is affected

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<sup>1</sup>Research of this kind has been approached by Adams and Thompson as cited in Chapter IV. Additional research possibilities of the process approach (from the field of speech) are suggested by Gerald Miller in Speech Communication, op. cit., pp. 54-57.



by, contemporary American protestant homiletical theory. The relationships existing between the Catholic Homiletics Society and the protestant corollaries provide a beginning point for such considerations. A fourth area is to discover what is actually being taught in the protestant seminary, as in relation to the text books used. Several schools, for example, do not use a text book but only a reading list. A fifth area for further research is to find out what correlation exists in actual preaching practice as compared with the theory in the literature and that emphasized in the classroom. A corollary investigation would be to discover whether a new theory is being formed in homiletical address or if an old theory is being refined. A final area, echoed by at least three theorists considered in this study, is the necessity of not only learning preaching but learning what to teach about preaching (the parallel of speech education), through experimental and empirical research.



## APPENDIX 1

### A SERMON ON RACE RELATIONS<sup>1</sup>

I appreciate the very gracious welcome which I have received this morning to your church and to this service. And, I assure you it is a joy to participate in this service of worship on Race Relations Sunday. This is a tremendous subject which is before us this morning. The racial problem is the oldest of American problems. It began in the year of 1619 when the Dutch Frigate in distress put in at the Jamestown Harbor. This frigate had on board nineteen Negroes who had been captured from a Spanish frigate. And since the Dutch sailors were running out of food they swapped the Negroes for food. And that's in the year 1619, the year that the racial problem started in this country.

The second oldest problem is the problem that we men have with women. Because in the year 1620 the first women were brought to this continent, the first white women were brought to this continent. It seems too bad that we had two problems introduced so close together, doesn't it.

The racial problem entered into several streams of American life very rapidly. It entered into the stream which we might call the stream of jurisprudence, the stream of law, in a very interesting way. The question as to whether or not we could hold slaves legally was settled in a rather peculiar case. One of these nineteen Negroes who had landed at Jamestown was named Anthony Jackson. He was a very ambitious, hard working man, and he soon earned enough money to purchase his freedom, and to buy himself some land and to buy himself a slave. The white people contended a Negro had no right to hold a slave and so there was a trial. And the right of a Negro to own a Negro was granted by a white jury--a very interesting fact. This problem entered into jurisprudence in this way. Sometime after that, only a few years after that, because of a relationship of a white man with a Negro woman

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<sup>1</sup>Given by Dr. Kyle Haselden at the Lombard Mennonite Church, Lombard, Illinois, February 9, 1964.





who had been imported, this problem entered into the stream into morality. The white man was found guilty of offending God and of offending his race and he was whipped and was forced to apologize to his community. And not too long after that the white man had discovered that he had two crops which he could raise very profitably with menial labor and particularly with slave labor--tobacco and cotton. So it became for the white man sort of an economic necessity. So very rapidly this problem entered into law and into questions of morality, and it entered into economy of the country. Now it is several centuries later, and it is still a legal question, it is still a question of morality, and it is still a question of exploitation.

It is an interesting fact that the prejudices against the Negro on the basis of anthropology, for example, or prejudices, are supported by quotation from the Bible. These were all an effort on the white man for his enslaving another man. They were an explanation, in other words, for his exploitation. They were a defense, a rationale, an apology for his enslavement of another man. And most of the boweries which exist today against the Negro remain the same reason so that we white people can exploit the other man. Now this brief introduction suggests that this is a historical problem. But I want to say to you on this Sabbath morning, that I have not come to you as a historian. This is quite obviously a sociological problem, but I have not come to you as a sociologist. It is an economical problem, but I am not an economist. It is a political problem and I am not a politician, which is to say that I want to view a segment of this problem--it is too big to take the whole round of it--I want to view a segment of it, and I want to do it as a Christian. I want to do so from a Christian point of view and I want to do from Scripture. And it is this segment that I want to think about. You will realize, of course, that I know how vast and how intricate this problem is. I certainly do. But I know also that in a half hour we cannot deal with its vastness and its intricacy. So I want to talk to you about these Negroes who in various parts of the country are now knocking on the doors of white churches. And I want to ask what this means, what it means to them and particularly what it can mean for the white churches. And I want to suggest, indeed, I want to express the hope, that if you haven't as a church faced this opportunity that you will be facing it soon. Sociology gets into this because segregated communities prevent integrated schools, and prevent integrated church. I live in a suburb so I am not casting stones at you any more than I am casting them at myself. You, therefore, may not have the opportunity of dealing with this problem. I hope for many reasons that you do.

I begin, therefore, with scripture and I begin in the Old Testament with a scripture from Isaiah. "Thus says the Lord who makes a way in the sea, a path in the waters, behold I am doing a new thing, now it springs forth. Do you not see

it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Isaiah is here making two declarations about God and he's making one intimation about man. God being the creator, he says, is always doing a new thing. He tires of repetition. He breaks the old molds. He fashions new patterns. He is always doing something novel. God does not run out of ideas. He is always doing something unprecedented. He is always bringing firmament out of chaos and he is always bringing newness out of nothingness. And second, God being inscrutable, being mysterious, always does this new thing in a strange way. God is full of surprises. He makes, the scripture says, he makes a way in the sea; that's a peculiar place for a way. He makes a path in the mighty waters; that's an odd place for a path. So God is always engaged in doing something new and he always does it in a strange way. You cannot guess what he will do next. Nor can you guess how he will do it. Now these two declarations about God: He is a God who does new things-He's a God who does it in strange ways. These two declarations about God require an intimation about man. Because when God acts in this strange way, since man is so dense, God calls man's attention to what he's doing. For man, if he thinks about it at all, concludes God doesn't do anything new. He's already done it, you see. He wound up the universe and he set it over here and he's letting it unwind. It's all been done; God isn't doing anything new, so man concludes. And man also concludes if God does anything new, if He intervenes in any way in this process which he's set in motion, he'll do it in a customary way. There won't be any miracles, there won't be any mysteries. God won't do anything contrary to man's expectations. This is what we say. He will not do anything contrary to man's common sense. Therefore, the creator of these new things in strange ways repeatedly alerts man to what he's doing. God is repeatedly saying to us, "I am the Lord. I am the holy one, I am the Creator, I am the King. Look at me. I am doing something new. Don't you perceive it? Don't you realize it?"

Now obviously Isaiah in this passage of scripture was not concerned about the creative activity of God in the desert or in the sea. He was not thinking about the kingdom of nature, but he was thinking about another kingdom, Israel, God's people, God's church. And he was saying that God is always doing a new thing with his people. He is always bringing them out of Egypt. He's training them in the wilderness. He is leading them into a promised land. He is sending them into captivity and then rescuing them. And bringing them back from Babylon, he gives them a saviour. He welds them into a community. He takes them across mountains and seas into a new home in a strange land. God doesn't let his people settle down too long. He stirs them up, he shakes them out of their nest. There's always the danger that necessary rest will become wasteful relaxation. And so God does these strange things with us: he stirs us up. Now I think this is true, I think that God is always doing something new with his people. And

I believe he always does it in a way that we don't expect him to. And this means he always has to say, "Now look here, I'm God. I'm doing a new thing with you and for you. Look at me; pay attention. Don't you perceive what I'm doing?"

And I suggest that we ought to look at every strange thing in our nation today, and particularly at every strange event occurring in the church. And we ought to ask ourselves, what is God doing to us and with us in this event? He's doing something, what is it? We ought to listen with ears that hear the rumblings in the church and under the church and over the church. We ought to ask ourselves, what is God trying to do to us and for us and with us in this event? And I see several things, and I'll probably have time to mention one or two. I want you to consider first of all the fact that the Christian church in all its history continues not only through its heirs, its own children, but it also increases and is renewed by its adopted children. This has always been true of the church. This is a way of saying that the church has its continuity through the descendents of its own families. As the scripture puts it, it is kind of a Lois to Eunice to Timothy progression.

And frequently the church has its revival, its renewal, its coming into new life and new being, through its acceptance of its previously rejected neighbors. In the first century a Jewish Christianity was in danger of becoming an obscure little cult within Judaism. It received a powerful impetus when Paul and his companions took the Gospel to the Greeks, the Greeks to the Romans, these Gentiles to the Barbarians. And the Church became the Church, it got its renewal, it received its light when Peter, at last converted, approved the mission to the gentiles. And later on, three or four centuries when Rome was falling and it seemed to the wisest people of the day that the church was going to fall with Rome, what happened? The Ostrogoths were converted to Jesus Christ, and they came into the Church, and they revived the Church, and they saved the Church. Now this has been the story all along. The Church has progressed, the Church has periodically risen to its new life, not by a kind of purest exclusion of others, the different, the gentiles, but by receiving the others, the aliens, the gentiles, into its own body. It is the gentile, and by gentile I mean the other, the different, the aliens, the ones out there, the ones we don't want. It is the gentile who converted to Jesus Christ has periodically revived and saved the Christian Church. And so the Church must evangelize beyond its own kith and kin. It must give admission beyond its own families, beyond its own nationalities, beyond its own ethnic groups, beyond its own color, or surely it will die.

We protestants have been asking ourselves, what can be done to save white Anglo-Saxon American protestantism? Believe it or not, it is in trouble. And what can save it? What can free it from its middle class prison? What can save it from its suburban captivity, its suburban slavery? What



can save our churches from their stifling genteel mentality and from their superficial moralities? Well, the answer is the gentile, the other, the one we don't want, the one to whom we say "Stay out!" That one can save the church. That one, the other, the alien, the gentile, has saved the church in ages past. And for white protestantism, the gentile is the Negro. And maybe we don't like this. Maybe we don't want to be saved this way. Maybe we'd rather not be saved at all if we have to associate with the other, with the gentile. But for white Anglo-Saxon American whites, the other, the alien, the gentile, the hope, is the Negro. His coming to us, his coming to our churches, will make for a revival and a renewal of the life of our churches, will drive us back to consider what the purposes of the church are after all, what is the meaning and mission of the church. And I have to add, since I'm particularly interested at the present moment in the Spanish Americans, and since this year one of the studies of the National Council of Churches will be on Spanish Americans, I have to add, for the Negro churches and for our white churches, the gentiles, are the Spanish Americans. There are, believe it or not, four million Spanish Americans in the United States who are totally unchurched, four million! We talk about missions to Africa and Asia, here are at home four million unchurched people. But we don't want them. Most of our churches don't want them. They're not our ethnic group, they're not our color, they don't speak our tongue very well, they are hopeless. There is a basic religiosity, a sensitivity to the religious faith of these unchurched people, which would renew the spirit and vitality of our protestant churches. They're available and we need them.

Now the second thing that is happening, and I have just the time to mention it, and there were three or four that I wanted to mention! I believe the coming of the Negro into our white Anglo-Saxon protestant churches will cause a painful but beautiful and healthful restructuring of the centers of our protestant church life. Now let me explain what I mean by that. One of the cherished aspects of our protestant church life is the familial character of our church life. This is a beautiful thing. We are a family. I feel this way about my church life and you must certainly feel this way about yours. The first family, the home: father, mother, and children. The second family is the church. Well, this is beautiful and I would do nothing to destroy it. But at the same time it can become a liability. It can transgress against the will of God for the church, and having said such a thing as that I need to explain what I mean. What I mean is, that there is nothing wrong with this family characteristic of protestant church life. It is beautiful in itself, but we are as protestant church people bound together by the wrong kinds of glue. We have our family life in the church from the basis of the wrong kind of cohesiveness. We love each other for the wrong reasons. You go into almost any kind of protestant church in the country and you find that the people are from the same class, the same race, generally, the same educational level,

usually the same political party. We have these affinities for each other. These aren't bad relationships, you understand, but they are not the basis by which we have oneness with each other. Our oneness as Christians is in Jesus Christ, not in the fact that we are Republicans or Democrats or what not. I have a friend in Minneapolis in a great church there who many a Sunday morning addresses his congregation by saying, "We Republicans," or "We Democrats," or "we what-nots." We--we--we--this we has its oneness in Jesus Christ. Its validity is in Jesus Christ. And if the coming of the Negro into the white church will help us to reorient ourselves and will give us a sense of the real cohesiveness of the making of us one, then good.

Now what is the real cohesiveness? I think that P.T. Forsyth settled this for us a long time ago. P.T. Forsyth said, "Sacraments, not socialities make the center of our church life and our social unity." Perhaps, you don't use the word sacraments, we Baptists don't, we speak of the ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Let us say the ordinances make, and not socialities, the center of our church life and our social unity. In other words we find our oneness not in the fact that we are washed the same culture, not by the fact that we are washed by the same color, but by the fact that we are baptized in the same baptism. And we have our commonality as a Christian people not in the fact that we belong to the same party or the same club or the same social strata, but in the fact that we have one table, and that this table recognizes none of these differences, none of these superficial distinctions of which we make so much.

Now this exhausts my time, but this is a way of saying that everytime a Negro comes to a white church, everytime he's arrested at the steps and taken away, because he wants to worship God with white people we ought to say to ourselves, what strange things is God trying to do to us, and with us, and in us in this event? Is this his way, as I believe it is, to save and to renew us and to remind us of the fact of our oneness is in his son?

May we pray. Our gracious heavenly Father, we life our hearts unto thee, mindful of the fact that we have been thinking this morning of one little aspect of a tremendous problem. We pray thee, that we may begin in our individual and collective Christian lives solution of this problem. Help us one by one to do what we can to make thy kingdom reign among men. Help us as churches to proclaim thy word of love for all men. Forgive us we pray when we offend one of thy creatures. In Christ's name. Amen.





## APPENDIX 2

### THE AUTOCRATIC GOODNESS OF GOD<sup>1</sup>

And on receiving it they murmured saying these last worked only one hour and you have made them equal to us who have born the burden of the day and the scorching heat. But he replied to one of them, Friend I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius, that is in rough measure a dollar--a dollar a day was good wages then--didn't you agree with me for a dollar? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me. Or do you begrudge my generosity?

In this parable, the laborer and the wages, our Lord Jesus Christ draws us a picture of the goodness of God in action. Jesus makes it very clear in telling this goodness of God, as we might not have expected, is not always pleasant in the eyes of human beings who see it. In fact this goodness of God appears like something else often, too often, in the human eyes that see it. Because our eyes are not God's eyes and the eyes are in the heads of people who are sometimes a little self centered--a little too self centered to be impartial about any partial goodness, and a little too inclined to be jealous about the goodness that we see someone else having. A little inclined to be jealous so that we can't see the good that's in the good the other fellow has. So let's do this in the very beginning and get on. Here we have to try to do the impossible. We have to try to put ourselves back in the condition, economic and social conditions, of the people with whom Jesus was talking. Here are laborers, existing in the primitive economic situation in a poverty that you and I can't imagine at all, in a poverty so close to actual hunger that a single day's wages--receiving this day's wages this day--might make the difference of going to bed hungry and my wife and children going to bed hungry tonight and not going to bed hungry. I say we can't imagine that, but that's the situation. Plenty of people--plenty of millions of people today--can imagine that but you and I can't. But this is what it is.

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<sup>1</sup>Given by H. Grady Davis at the Lombard Mennonite Church, Lombard, Illinois, March 15, 1964

And here's a gentleman farmer that's so much better off that he can give a full day's wages to men who work only one hour for it. Now Jesus does not tell us that the householder could really afford to do this. Certainly he does not suggest that it was to the advantage of the householder to do this. The point is precisely this, whether he could afford it or not, whether it was to his advantage or not, the point is precisely whatever it cost him, he chose to do it. He didn't have to do it. I choose to give unto this last even as unto you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?

Now think about that. Jesus puts these people together in his story and he says the Kingdom of God--he says that God's rule, God's administration, God's management of his own affairs where he gets his way--the Kingdom of God is like what this vine keeper did. The self willed action of this farmer--self willed--is like the goodness of God. And it's like the goodness of God because it is self willed, because it is imperious--what other words can we use here, because it is arbitrary, because it is autocratic.

And we don't like it much, do we? We don't like the words much--these are disagreeable words. But they accurately describe the householder's action, and they accurately describe God's goodness--one phase of his goodness. We Christians, I suspect, don't like this any more than other people--I am afraid we don't; maybe that's why we do such a bad job interpreting it. But you see we can't possibly in honesty make the parable mean anything less than this, and we can't make it mean anything else but this--not honestly and maybe not even logically. For example, this parable can't possibly be taken as a description of an ideal business policy. It can't be taken as an essay in economics. Of course it has been taken that way ten thousand times. About a hundred years ago, John Ruskin made this parable the center of his economic theory and he published the famous book under the title Unto This Last. And he quoted that parable of course--that title--from this parable. I choose to give unto this last. But this is clearly no way to run a business in either a capitalistic society or a socialistic society--it's no way to run a business, as everybody who tries it finds out soon enough. And neither is it a successful way to operate a vineyard in a world of primitive economics. Let's face it now; put yourself in a place of these workers once, will you? I have and I have decided this householder's policy wouldn't want me to work for him. The householder's wage policy didn't promise success in a profitable operation of his vineyard. And Jesus does not say it did. The employer's action was condemned then as vociferously as it would be condemned now. That's the point. To pay the same wage for an hour as for a day might have gotten the farmer a reputation for generosity and being a little soft in the head--and a great deal softer in the heart--it might have gotten him a reputation for that.

But I do not think it would have made these men or any men eager to work for him hard the next year. This policy did not help him run a vineyard successfully any more than it would assure the popularity of a Republican platform or a Democratic platform. Or daren't we think of it in connection with these things? This would not have helped this man run his vineyard any better than it would work here--not any better than it would advance a five year program of the Kremlin or of the Chinese Communist--it wouldn't advance a five year program of that--they're finding that out. And it wouldn't advance a twenty year plan of General Motors. In order to afford such a policy, a householder, or a corporation, or a government, would have to own the entire world and have a perfect control of all of its resources. And then maybe it could be done, I don't know. That's not the point.

But if the parable is not economics, what is it then? Neither is it a theory of justice. The very concept of justice is that men should not all be treated alike but that each one should have given to him what is due him, what he has deserved, no more no less. Not all alike, this is the very concept of justice, isn't it? So this householder's action is not a refinement of a human ideal of justice. It is in contradiction to the human ideal of justice, isn't it? It's a violation of that ideal. Please consider this parable. Note that neither Jesus nor the householder attempts to square this action with justice. It is objected to as unfair, and the only defense it gets is to say that it is not unfair. It doesn't say it's fair, it doesn't say it's just. No claim is made that it is fair, only that the treatment of the all day workers was not unfair because of the bargain they made was kept. But the act is not justified on the ground that it is just, fair. The point once more you see lies in the fact that the action is arbitrary: that's the point. I choose to give to this last just as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? The act is not justified and is not defended. The act is admittedly willfull and autocratic and that's precisely the point of it. That's why we don't like it. The act is not called just in the parable but it is called good. I don't believe in the translation. Is this the New English Bible? Beautiful, but I don't believe the adjective goodness is there, but it is in the Revised Standard and it is in the Greek. It is called good: Is your eye evil because I am good? Ah, that's the point. The act might have been defended on the ground of its goodness, the act might have been defended and might be defended, and I think I could on the ground that it is good, that it is better than justice, but that's not the point this morning. The point here is that it wasn't even defended on the ground of justice--it wasn't defended at all--this action. It could be defended on the grounds that it's merciful, it was merciful. It's merciful to give a full day's wage for an hour's work in a situation where without the dreaded day's wage the worker and his family would probably go to bed hungry

that night. This changes the situation but it doesn't make it good business, and doesn't make it justice either. It may make it something else: we need to find out what it makes it. But please note that it wasn't defended on the ground of its goodness. It was a sheer act of will by one who was in the position of an autocrat, who had the right and the power to override all considerations except what he wanted to do. Is that right?

At this point, if we agree that the parable is neither economics nor an ideal of justice, we may conclude that it is an ethical ideal for us to imitate. Is that so? Does it point to an ethical ideal that we can follow and should? Is this Jesus' way of teaching the virtue not of justice but of magnanimity? Is he offering this as a pattern for our dealings with one another; is this the way we ought to treat one another amid the relativities of our existence? Is he teaching then that men ought to be arbitrary, ought to be self willed, ought to be autocratic in the practice of goodness as they see it?

To ask such questions is to answer them in the negative, of course. The fallacy of reducing Jesus' message to the dimensions of the world we know makes Jesus a great deal less than the world's greatest teacher. If the householder of this parable represented you or me or even an absolute monarch in the world or a government or if he represented big business, then his example of overriding common justice and all other considerations except his autocratic will would mark Jesus not as a greater, but a smaller Machiavelli, as the poor man--Machiavelli. It wouldn't make him a great teacher, it would make him a very doubtful teacher. No, this parable is not a parable how we ought to act, it's a parable of how God acts. It is a disclosure of the heart of God, of the purpose of God, of the goodness of God which looks arbitrary and despotic to us because it is the goodness of a sovereign--and we don't like sovereigns. We don't want anybody to be sovereign, except ourselves, and that's why we don't like it. The parable's relevance to us then is the appropriateness, the application to us is not that of an example, for mankind is not God. This is the parable of the Kingdom of God, Jesus says, not the kingdom of men. It is the picture of what God would be doing even in our world if he had control of it--if he had the control of this world and all that is in it that you and I and all mankind have conspired to usurp from it, control it.

If we look more sharply for what this parable is saying to us, then, I think we shall find it in two things: it is first, judgment, and it is second, promise. It means judgment first: let's make no mistake about that. It means judgment first--the disclosure of God's goodness is always met by the stony glare of an eye that shows itself evil. Just because God is good, it shows itself evil. We cannot suppose

that these grumblers were either convinced or silenced by the householder's words that night can we? Can you imagine them going home as they go home--you know when they get out of his presence. You see, oh, they shut up before him but when they get out of his presence now, we cannot suppose they were satisfied or even silent--they as sure as you were born went home jealous and bitter and they rehashed this whole business with their wives no doubt. And if they had been Americans they would afterwards have called a meeting and organized a movement to resist any such unfair wage policy as this.

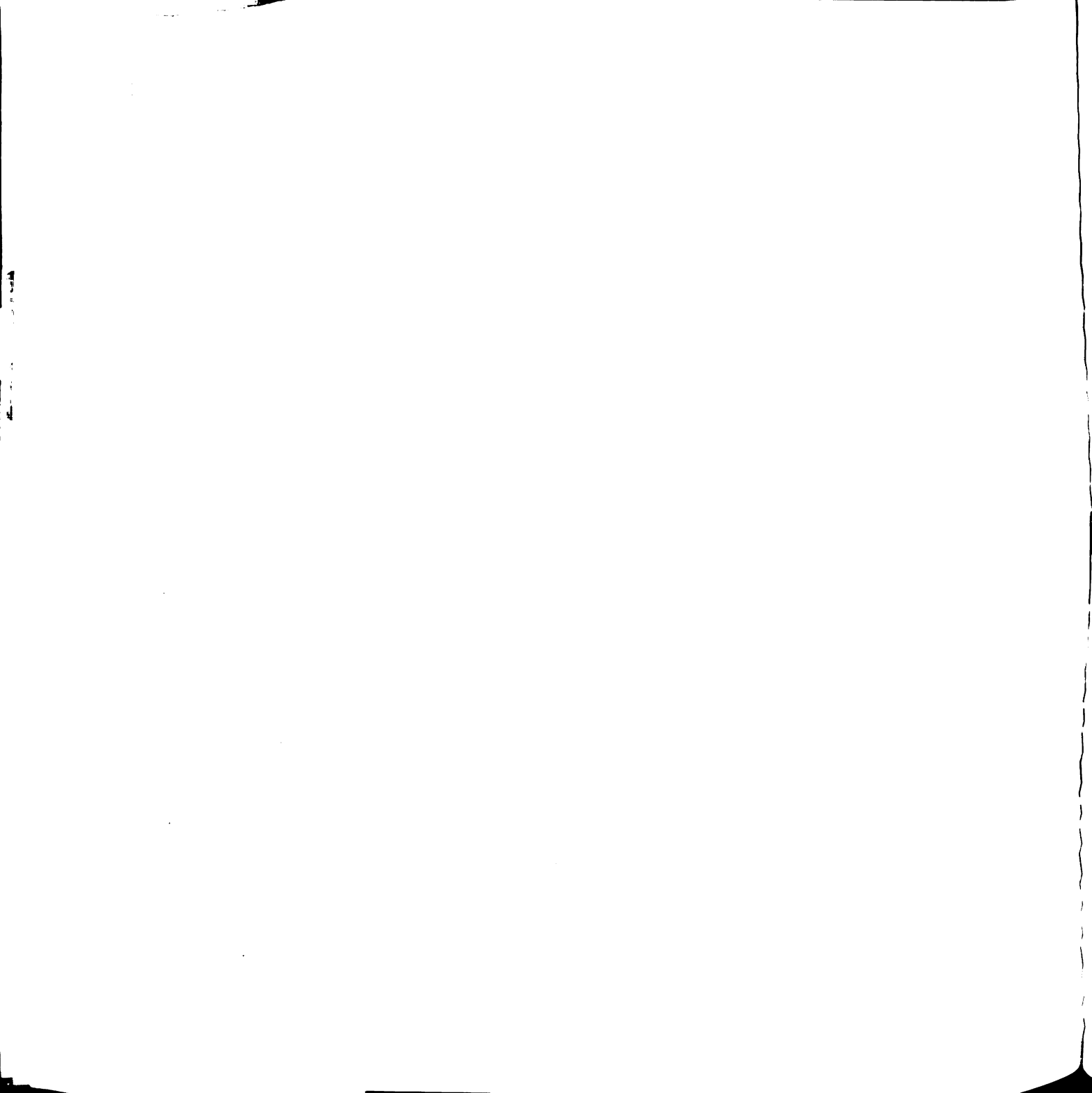
Life is not so simple and sensible that the goodness of God can have it way and everybody live happily ever after just as they were before. God is in conflict with men because men are in conflict with God. God is in conflict not only with our animal impulses--let's forget that rubbish--God is in conflict with everything that most men call reasonable and fair, such as human sense of justice, God's in conflict with it. God is in conflict precisely with those higher faculties which we men use to ape God and to usurp the place of God--the higher faculties, the brain, the cunning brain. This means judgment. Our parable brings under the judgment of God all the ordinary and reasonable ways of men--all the common patterns of human culture and civilization it brings under the judgment of God. Can't you hear us complaining: us? These men have worked only an hour and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day. Can't you hear us? This is the way we whine and complain all the time, every time we get a chance about anything; isn't it? Is this somebody else, or is this us talking here? Can anyone who hears this parable today fail to agree that the logic of these dissatisfied workers is exactly the logic on which our business and our commerce and our industry and our politics are founded? Well then, the whole pattern of our life is under the judgment of God's autocratic goodness and his uncalculating love--all of it. If it is true that in no human society on earth, as we know human society, could a corporation or a government afford to act as this householder acted, is that not a judgment of all human society that we know? Why couldn't a man act this way in a world we know? Because the world we know is not the world that God wants. Well then, our boasted human enterprise, the whole of it, is under judgment before the goodness of God. It stands revealed not as an innocent venture but as a conspiracy and it can't succeed. Why? Because it's against God. We should not labor under any delusion that we shall win our quarrel with God Almighty on these matters though all the world were on our side.

This parable is a judgment upon us and it is a call to repent of what we are as persons, and to repent also--and especially--of what we have made of the whole human enterprise, by our selfish and acquisitive motives, by our fear and jealousy and envy of one another, by our love of the world God created and the things in it, and by our treason against Him.

But we must not stop with a selfish repentance of our private, individual faults and wickedness. We must go on and repent with what we have done with our culture, with our politics, of what we have done and are doing with our commerce and with our industry. And we must repent especially with what we have done and are doing with our knowledge, with our science--not for having it but with what we are doing with it, we must repent.

But secondly, and this is the glad news, this parable is a promise and an affirmation that there is a goodness above all human thought, a goodness. If there were no goodness like God's, we would not be judged. Therefore our judgment itself is a blessed assurance that His goodness is there. The will of the eternal God is not compliant and politely wavering. The will of the Holy God is not easily accomodating. It's firm and true: thank God. God will not change his mind to please us nor will He change his purpose and lose us since it is his holy will not to lose us. He will not let those perish who put their trust in him. The goodness of the Eternal is not remote and aloof from the agony of the human struggle that we see here; it is right down the middle of the human struggle where there is hunger. God is in the midst of that struggle. He is in the middle of the struggle for everybody to see who has an eye to look--on a Cross since that's where we put Him, but alive and present for faith to know. And though the swollen egotism of our rebellion go off at last with a bang that wrecks the world he made. This could happen, and though it happen, though it does happen, or when it happens, the atoms of our bodies are blown through the empty spaces we could not conquer, even there his hand will guide us and his right hand will hold us.

Blessed be God that his goodness is autocratic, that it is arbitrary, that it is self-willed, that it is unreasonable, for otherwise there couldn't be any real goodness anywhere. Blessed be God that with God there's mercy and with Him there's plenty of redemption. Blessed be the arbitrary goodness of God because it pulls down the mighty from their seats and exalts them of low degree. Blessed be His goodness for he fills the hungry with good things even if the rich go empty away.



### APPENDIX 3

#### HOPE OF MANKIND'S BROKEN HOME<sup>1</sup>

Dear friends in Christ. It's typical of the gracious spirit of your pastor in that he's made the visitor at home by singing of these Wesley hymns. I've greatly appreciated his hospitality in that and in many other regards. And the singing of these hymns is a symbol of how much your tradition and ours have in common as we share together in the service of our Lord. It has been a delight to know your pastor who has honored us from time to time in some of our courses at Garrett. And it has been my privilege to have him in my summer classes a year or two ago. I don't know whether he took much away from the class or not but he left much with us. And we were all enriched by his presence.

You have heard read out of the Scripture this morning a word to which I would call attention again. But the Lord called to the man and said, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself." This, of course, was not written about one man but about every man. The very word, Adam, is, as you will remember, the Hebrew word for man. And here we do have a once-upon-a-time story, but always an everywhere story. In the main entrance gallery of the Chicago Art Institute there is a piece of sculpture that is reminiscent of this story. The artist called it, "The Solitude of the Soul." Out of one large block of marble are carved a series of figures in relief against the marble background. All of them with their backs to the stone on its many faces. All of them reaching around the corners trying to make contact with their neighbors, but each of them in his outreach barely able to touch fingertips. Not seeing each other, they yearn for each other and reach for each other but are alone. Perhaps the artist was trying to say something not too dissimilar from the words from this text: the man afraid, naked, exposed, defenseless, hiding from God himself.

The story, you will remember, is a story of universal disruption. These people are disrupted from God Himself. The man in making his excuses to God throws the blame first of

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<sup>1</sup>Given by Dr. Merrill Abbey at the Lombard Mennonite Church, Lombard, Illinois, March 1, 1964.



all on God as he says, "The woman whom Thou gavest me. She gave me fruit of the tree and I ate of it." So it's God's fault in the beginning. He started it all. There's disruption of the basic human relationship between the man and his wife. There's disruption from the earth, and from this fundamental of our life, our toil. So God says to the man, "Cursed is the ground because of you. In toil shall you eat of it all the days of your life." There's disruption of the brother bond as these two brothers locked in feud spill brother's blood upon the earth. There's disruption of the fundamental bond of language itself. As Cain replying to God's questions says, "I don't know where my brother is. Am I my brother's keeper?" So language that was intended to convey meaning is here used to conceal. One gets the picture here of the vast brokenness of earth: mankind's broken home.

I suppose this is not just an ancient story. A few days ago the mail brought a brochure from the Chicago Police Department. A folder intended for parents to use in training their children to protect themselves against child-molestation. A sad commentary upon our modern life that we should have to organize that kind of campaign. The folder is put together in such a way for children to read. On each page a large line drawn, on each page only a few words. The text begins with the line drawing of a great hulking figure, and it reads, "This is Mr. Stranger. He can be called Mr. Danger. Let us call him Mr. Strainger-Danger." Then a little later on it is saying, "Mr. Strainger-Danger is like a strange dog. He is not your friend and he will hurt you." What a picture of our life. I'm not talking about this to criticize the Chicago police. They're doing apparently what they must do. But now we are thrown in a position that we feel compelled to teach our children to associate the two words--stranger-danger. In a world where we have so long yearned to teach our children that all people are their friends and that the stranger is one to be treated with hospitality and brotherhood. "This is Mr. Stranger. He can be called Mr. Danger. Let us call him Mr. Stranger-Danger." Presently this ripens, of course, in our life into relationships on a world scale that become dangerous in the extremes. You will remember the feature in Life magazine a few weeks ago on the fear mongers, which told in some detail of twelve hundred organizations in our country now devoting themselves to the spreading of hatred. With large sums of money at their disposal to spend on their so-called educational enterprise, spreading hatred, disruption, this becomes very costly to us. Just in money alone it is costing. The President of the Wieboldt stores announced a year or so ago that our prejudices cost us economically five billion dollars a year in the load they lay upon our economy. It's costly to our democracy which depends upon, in some degree, mutual respect and understanding and willingness to trust each other in our common life which is now disrupted by the organized spreading of hatred. And it's costly, most of all, in the undermining of human dignity. So we have this picture before us of the broken home of earth.

But the answer, of course, is also in the Scripture. And is in that glorious reading that Mr. Kennel shared with us from the Epistle to the Ephesians. "For he is our peace who hath made us both one and has broken down the wall of hostility by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the Cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end." So says the Scripture: earth can be a home again. God has shown himself in love and forgiveness supremely in the Cross of Christ. We all belong to God as we know him in Christ, and belonging to Him we belong to each other. What a story this great good news brings to us!

Will you look with me for a moment at the brokenness of the life we share. Keith Wheeler, publishing a novel called Peaceable Lane has painted it in symbolic form. Peaceable Lane is a quiet suburban street. The homes on the street are rather select, mostly inhabited by junior executives. The neighborhood is friendly for the most part, the people have a good deal in common. Down on the corner, however, there's one man, Bronson, who holds apart--he keeps apart from the rest. He carries on an everlasting grudge-feud with the neighborhood in general. He has nothing to do with it. A long time he has wanted to move away, but he hasn't been able to sell his house since he held the price too high. But now on a day the news runs like fire up the street, the rumor that Bronson has found a buyer who will pay the price he's asking--a Negro. This strikes horror into the life of the community--a Negro moving in. What will it do to this community and to our choice homes? They know nothing about the proposed buyer, not his name, not his occupation, not his reputation, nothing about his tastes or character; they only know that he's a Negro but that's all they need to know.

They come together in a neighborhood meeting to try to decide what to do in this emergency. Of course, it's perfectly possible that they would arrive at the solution that some other neighborhoods have. They could agree among themselves that this is a good neighborhood and will continue to be a good neighborhood--the coming of one family will make little difference whatever that family is like. It is not the moving in of a Negro family but the moving out of every body else that depresses real estate values and does the other harms we dread. So they could, as some other neighborhoods have done, agree to stay, perhaps putting up signs that they have agreed to stay and their liking of the community, and taking in the new neighbor as neighbor. But these people cannot do this because they do not trust each other. Suppose they should make such a pact. How can they be sure that the others in the group will keep it? Perhaps someone will secretly negotiate a deal and sell it at a high price and get out while he can. And so they won't hold the neighborhood after all. So, not trusting each other to act in this way, they finally propose a solution that no one of them can

afford. They will pool their resources and buy Bronson's house a price higher than the now proposed buyer is offering for it. They don't have the money, most of them. They'll have to borrow it; they can scarcely afford this additional debt. But they decide to do it. And so after a period of negotiation and violence, they enter into the pact and make the purchase. As Mr. Wheeler brings the story to this point he makes an interesting observation. He says about this people that they have planned together, they have sacrificed together, they have acted together, but it has not brought them together. Indeed, the day after the deal has been consummated, these people are more aloof from each other than ever before. They keep within doors as they are a little ashamed to meet each other. And so you see the disruption running deep in their own life.

What a picture that is of our disrupted life in the whole we share together, a disruption which ripens into segregation, cold war, armaments race, and all the multiplied troubles that the newspapers spread before us, day after day. Bertrand Russell once ventured to write the history of the world in a single sentence. If you were to write a one sentence history of the world, how would you write it? Well, Bertrand Russell put it this way, "Since Adam and Eve ate the apple, man has never refrained from any folly of which he was capable--the end." But now you see our capability runs to new depths of tragedy, now if we go on with this disruption we have within us the possibility of mutual extinction in the kind of world we've made, with the kind of weapons we now possess. This broken home of earth has come to ultimate decisions.

Will you go on with me to see not only the nature of this tragedy but the root in our rebellion. In the Garden of Eden one sees the basal act that produced this disruption, an act of rebellion against God. God had decreed that man should not eat the fruit of the tree, lest they be like God. And the serpent offering the temptation said, "You will be like God, knowing good and evil, knowing that is, not with an obedient but with a controlling knowledge." This is the thing that man was reaching for in the garden; this is the thing we continually reach for: control, power. Knowledge we say is power. So we want knowledge, not with obedience but with control. Something of this rebelliousness appears in the story of Peaceable Lane. As the neighbors gathered together, are making their basic decision of the purchasing of Bronson's house, they don't take a vote by everybody saying "I" or everybody raising his hand. The vote goes around the circle and each in turn has to stand on his feet and give his answer. As it comes to Dr. Abram, a Jew, he gets on his feet and tells of the suffering he has gone through in Vienna before coming to America. He says in his short, emotional speech, "This thing we are about to do is repulsive to everything Jewish in me. It's a violation of every Jewish conviction for which I stand, but I've suffered in Vienna and I do not have courage to risk suffering again. I vote yes."

And Ostell Otterbridge, a Christian, protestant, gets on her feet, and says significantly, "Can we refuse this man whoever he is, sight unseen, close our doors against him, and ever again enter a church without guilt?" But in the end she and her husband vote yes. So here are these people with conscience and everything basic to God as they understand him pulling in one direction, but their fears and the disrupted brokenness of their life pulling in another direction and in a fundamental rebellion against God as they know him. They take the action. Is that the story of us? Is that our story? The Life magazine article about the fearmongers contained as a companion feature a study by a distinguished psychologist as to why we act as we do in this fear ridden, hate ridden country. The psychologist traced the matter back to a basic rebellion against our fathers, he says. The fearmonger, the hate-filled person has a basic hatred of his father, says the psychologist, maybe not consciously, maybe somewhere below the level of consciousness, but a hatred of his father. And because he's his father's son and because there's so much of his father in himself this becomes the root of the hatred of himself. But you can't live hating yourself. So to take the load of the hate off himself, said the psychologist, the fear-monger begins to find other hate substitutes. So going back to that basic rebellion--we hate. Is it at last a hatred of God himself, the basic ground of our being? Have we lost our identity and in rebellion are we needing to be restored?

Now we come to the last step--to recognize in what a deep and wonderful sense the Lord Christ brings the reconciliation of our rebellion against God and against each other, to bind us up again. Hear Paul, "He is our peace, who has made us both one, and broken down the dividing wall of hostility." All, of course, writing to two groups of people, separated from each other in that first century world, the Jew and the Christian. And he was saying to both, "We belong to each other for we belong to God. Jesus was a Jew, and we Christians have every reason to love Him. So Jew and Christian alike we belong to him, and he breaks down the wall of hostility and binds us together," says Paul. If I may illustrate once more from the novel, Peaceable Lane, there's a beautiful symbol of this, when these neighbors have agreed to buy Bronson's house, they deliver the money into the hands of Matt Jones, one of their number, a young advertising executive. Matt Jones is to make the deal for them. He is to buy the house from Bronson and sell it at a price to get their money back for them. Jones makes the purchase, but as he makes it he discovers who the buyer, who Bronson's prospective buyer was; he hadn't known before, just a Negro you see. But now suddenly this man has a name, an identity; he's Lamar Winter whom Matt Jones knows well in the advertising world, a young genius of an advertising man, an artist of rare ability, a man with whom Jones has much association in the business world. They lunch together frequently, they talk long together over their coffee, and now this man they're treating this way because he's Negro--is no longer just a Negro, a faceless, nameless person; he's Lamar Winter.

Matt Jones can't live with that reality so he sells the place to Lamar Winter after all. The neighborhood is shocked as Winter moves in. The rest of the story is how Matt Jones tries to make a place in that neighborhood for his friend, Lamar Winter, inviting him to dinner, taking him to the country club, doing all sorts of things that outrage the neighborhood. And what did the neighborhood do? They didn't open their doors to Lamar Winter; they just shut out Winter and Matt Jones too. But at last Lamar Winter hears of a still greater danger. There was no particular danger in his coming into the neighborhood: it was not a block busting operation. But now a real estate dealer is getting into the act to do a real piece of block busting and he's found one family that's willing to sell and he starts the process. And Lamar Winter, hearing this, rushes off to the nearby city, makes the necessary financial arrangements, and, at considerable and sacrificial cost to himself, buys the house in order to hold it for the kind of neighborhood it has always been. And as he drives home at the end of the day, happy, having done something for the neighborhood, he drives into Peaceable Lane in his sports car, driving too fast. And as he comes around the corner, here right in front of him, too near to make stopping possible, are two children playing in the street. Knowing he can't stop in time, he swerves and hits a tree and dies. Now the neighborhood comes together. Everybody turns out for the funeral, people who would not take in Lamar Winter and his family while Lamar was alive begin to be concerned about Lamar's widow and his orphan child. And as the book closes you get an intimation at least that in the death of this man there has come a kind of salvation to the neighborhood that binds them together.

Is this a little intimation of what God has done for us as he so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son? This Christ who belonged to Jew and Gentile, who belongs to all men, so that whoever we are and whatever color that we feel he's one of us. This Christ who takes us in with his love and gave himself on a cross. As we see him there we know instinctively that this is not just a sacrifice of a man, that here's the highest we can ever know about, that this is not man reaching up to God; this is God coming down into our life. And as on the Cross we hear the words, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," we are assured this is God's word for us. And we are bound together. Our rebellion is broken down. We are reconciled to the Father. And we are brought again to each other. What a glorious privilege thus to belong, to have our broken home of earth bound up again.

And this morning we give ourselves anew to Him who thus gave Himself to us, saying, "Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all."

## APPENDIX 4

### THE MINISTRY WHICH WE SHARE<sup>1</sup>

I have a deep sense of participating in history as I share with you your worship today. I have reason to be grateful to your tradition for several men who were shaped and formed by it who have given to me and to my own church a warmth that it did not have, a direction and a concern that it did not have had it not been for them. I want to talk to you this morning about this ministry which you and I share. The word ministry is servanthood. It means to be a servant. I want to say four things, that in order to know and to understand and to respond to this ministry today, we need to re-discover what we mean by the Priesthood of all believers. But we need to re-enter into what we understand by the word liturgy, that it is not simply what we do in church, but what we do in public as a way of manifesting our belief, something which I believe the Mennonite tradition knows and has done. Then we need to rediscover the meaning of communal life together, and that we need to re-fashion our understanding of what work is in this world. And these four things are at least required in order to fulfill this ministry which we share today.

Dostoevsky in one of his novels puts in the mouth of one of his characters these words; he say, "All men need to find that which they can worship, but not only to find that which they can worship, but to find that which they can worship in community with one another, because what they worship creates the communities which we live in, and whatever it is we worship creates the character and quality of that community." I want to start with a parable. There are different kinds of gods in the world, and idolatry is to worship the wrong god, that is the god who does not give freedom, but keeps us in slavery. You remember that Luther says the Christian man is the most obedient slave of all, and the Christian man is the most free person of all. The idolatrous god always keeps us in slavery, and all gods require some degree of servanthood, some degree of service of human beings. But the uniqueness of God that we know in Christ is that having led captivity captive, he gave gifts to men. He gives us freedom. Our way of worshiping God in our community is a way of achieving

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<sup>1</sup>Given by Dr. Charles R. Stinnette, Jr., at the Lombard Mennonite Church, Lombard, Illinois, April 19, 1964.

our freedom. This is the uniqueness, this is the glory of the Christian message. Now imagine yourself to be living in a kingdom not presided over by the true God, but the God who always makes men slaves. Suppose that we had a kingdom--sometimes the children enjoy kingdom stories about a kingdom far away--suppose this kingdom were set down in the midst of this world, but it is a kingdom of idolatry rather than a kingdom of freedom and of grace. Suppose we lived in such a kingdom as this. What would it be like? Well, in the first place, even though it is a kingdom of idolatry, and its order would be rooted in a kind of fundamental disorder, men would not know this at first because the god who presides over this kingdom and the kind of relationships that are produced by this kind of idolatry would not immediately be apparent. The trains would run on time, probably. All the outward manifestations of life probably would be the same. The only place that we might begin to discover the community disintegration because of the root of its worship would be in personal relationships. That is, in such a kingdom, promises would no longer mean anything, because promises point not only to the order of life, but to the kind of God in relation to Whom we ultimately are able to trust one another. So it would not be a covenant community in that sense; it would be a community of slavery, in which all relationships are from the top down. Personal relationship, therefore, would be the first place we would begin to see disintegration. We would find that in their personal relationships, men and women would be able to demand things from each other, but not to give things to one another because they have no motive to give. As I say, promises would not be kept, nor would they be made. You remember in Thornton Wilder's play Mrs. Atrebus speaks at one point to her perennially straying husband, and says to him, "You see this ring on my finger. This ring means that you made me a promise, and the ring I gave you means that I made a promise to you." Two imperfect people made a promise and got married. It was the promise that made the marriage. A community which is not a disintegrating community is built upon such promises--not that we don't break these promises, but that we have some way of accepting the fact that we have broken the promise and we try again. Community is always built upon promises, but an idolatrous community is built upon the fact that promises don't mean anything. Personal relationships would reflect this. People would talk about shame--that is being found out, but not about guilt--that is deeply and truly in their heart they feel they have broken their relationship with another human being. All the way through, therefore, we would see the meaning of this idolatry not in its outward manifestation, because it might raise great roads, put bridges across chasms. It might do all the magnificent and powerful things in the world, but at its heart, there would be an idolatry at heart and roots.

What happens, therefore, when the true Lord stands at the gate of the city and demands acceptance? The ruler in the heart of men who worship the idolatrous god--the ruler

will not give way until the true Lord stands--one who is willing not only to require of men that they be servants, but who Himself is willing to enter into the meaning of servanthood itself and to demonstrate in his own life, even to the extent of his death to give Himself for both the service and the freedom of mankind. The idolatrous king, therefore, does not break until this King stands there. One can almost imagine you hear at this Kingdom at the gates He has scattered the crowd and the imagination of their hearts. He has visited and redeemed His people. You and I live in the Kingdom which is established by God and Jesus Christ. We also live in this idolatrous Kingdom and sometimes we don't know where we really belong. Sometimes we act as if we somehow belong to the kingdom in which we serve the God who is going to destroy us at our hearts, although we don't know it. And other times, when we come to church, when we say our prayers, when we read the Bible, we act at least as if we believe in God, that although He requires service of us, He also bestows freedom upon us. In a sense we take the gifts of God and invert them from their main purpose, that is that we may use them to worship God and we use them to worship a god that somehow destroys the very meaning of our life together.

St. Augustine once said, Thy works praise Thee that we might love Thee, and love Thee that thy works may praise Thee. Do you use the automobile, do you use the buildings of your life, the grounds of your life, the instruments of production to worship God?

Thou shalt love Thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Our ministry therefore is premised on the basis that we worship God. It is also positive on the basis that all men, as Dostoevsky said, must find that which they can worship and must find that which they can worship in a community together. Therefore we need to know how we enter in this community of concern and thought for one another. This is exactly what the word "priesthood" means. The word priesthood points back to one who is concerned with care. We know a great deal about taking care of people in this culture. We have almost developed a kind of care-taker culture, but we have lost the meaning of caring because caring is always a one to one personal act and there is a great difference between care-taking and caring, and caring is at the heart and root of all priesthood. This is what we mean by priesthood. The priest in any community, which may be a family or may be a larger community, always represents the fact that this community has a way of forgiveness, of restoration; that this community assumes, whether it be a family or a larger community, that men are not boards, straight always; that they are broken, that they are lost; that they need to be forgiven; to be restored. Therefore husbands and wives must act as priests to one another in the sense that they forgive each other. I am very much interested in the whole area of children



and their development. I have to be since I have been involved in this area for a number of years now, and I'm amazed by the way in which most of the psychologists talk about early childhood say that children need even before they can learn to use the words, children need to learn how they can find forgiveness with their parents by gestures and non-verbal communications--the mother that learns how to ask forgiveness of her own child--and at the same time to give forgiveness--has opened up a new dimension of life to her child. Now this is the priesthood function of life and this is the task which all of us need and depend upon in our own life, but what happens in our life together? We tend to have lost the basis of finding forgiveness.

I noticed in the New York Times recently that Arthur Miller's play, the Crucible, is being revised. Remember this play was about the witch hangings in Salem and Arthur Miller wrote this in the middle of the McCarthy period when we were doing a lot of witch hunting in this country and Miller was saying that when a people do not have a specific means of dealing with their own feelings of guilt, they usually pick some type of scapegoat. At that point it happened to be people who in one way or another seemed to be related to the Communists. But the religious function of finding a way of handling our own guilt always moves in some direction and if we do not have it in a creative direction and related to the God that forgives us, by His very act and life, we tend to pick out a few people to visit our own guilt and lack of forgiveness on. Some people lay claim that the reformation did away with the whole concept of priesthood, but I don't believe it. What the reformation did was to say, the priest does not belong with that man up there alone, who is a bishop or minister--the priesthood is a corporate function of all life. George MacLeod said, what we did at the reformation was to take our candles into the great cathedral churches that were dying because they were no longer serving the function of the people and light those candles and take them to a thousand homes and there set them on the hearth as a reminder that our prayers and priesthood are together. This is what happens in the recovery of the meaning of priesthood at the reformation. This, I say, is a needed recovery in our own day.

Certainly in addition to this we need to recover the meaning of liturgy and by this I do not mean simply getting up and down or singing in the church, all these are a part of the liturgy but to recognize the fact that the Christian life is not simply an idea but it is a way of life--that our moral life is not a state of mind but a mode of action and this mode of action is our liturgy in the world. I suspect that many people today, who because of their conscience, believe that they must stand on the picket lines where they try to witness for the dignity of man and against the indignant way in which human beings are treated are expressing a

Christian liturgy. They are marching as Christian soldiers to express what they believe and what they believe about God's act in freeing all men to be equal and to be right before God. That is we need to find ways in which our Christian liturgy is expressed in our life together and this is a constant responsibility of the Christian church.

What way and in what means can this congregation express its deepest concerns--not alone by words but by action. I know something of the work you have done in establishing mental hospitals for people across the country and manning these hospitals, not by pay in the sense that it be done but in doing it ourselves. I suppose one of the deepest problems in a middle class world, and this is what we ought to hear about the Communists, they are criticizing us because they are saying when you get an entirely capitalistic world, you create a lot of goods and technology which separates or alienates man from himself. What happens in this kind of world is said that we approach this world not in a sense of reverence which the Bible talks about but with a sense of kind of content. In one way we might say that insofar as we live in this kingdom of the world rather than the kingdom of God, we approach the world with contempt, to be used, to be manipulated, rather than being a means of expressing our love of God. You will remember in Genesis God reminds us that we are to enter into the world and have mastery over it as a way of expressing our love to Him. But increasingly we tend to become absentee lords of this world, wanting to clip the dividends but not to be in on the work, not to be good husbands to this world. We must not only express our concern but be there and express our concern in this world in all ways.

We need to rediscover the meaning of community. All men search to find that which they can worship. All men search to find that which they can worship in community. I wonder if you have been struck as I have, about the contemporary literature of our day. It, too, is searching for community, and what is it rehearsing at its heart? It's rehearsing a kind of hopelessness at heart. It is a community which gathers in all these theatres of the absurd, the drama of our life, and says: this is what it's like to be a man--to be alone, to have no meaning and to wait. In Becket's play, two creatures are set on the stage and what they do is wait and rehearse with pathos the meaning of what it means to be a human being and at the end of the play finally, they have been waiting for this creature called Godet, one of them says to the other, "Well, shall we go?" and the other says, "Yes, let's go." But they don't move, they stay on the stage.

Now this is one kind of community. The Christian community must also accept in all of its brutal facts the pathos, the hopelessness and the meaninglessness of this life. Mr. Conrad wrote a novel once called, The Nigger of Narcissus, which is a story about a West Indian Negro dying of TB on a

ship. Narcissus was the ship and all his shipmates in a sense established a community with his dying. They all participated in the pathos of his dying as he himself cursed the world and his existence and all the things he had gone through and finally when he died, a part of every other member of that crew died also. Now this is one kind of community and we always can establish communities in which we simply rehearse bitterness and frustration of life. All men must die. All men and women must suffer. There is no way of escaping it and the essential question is the one which Paul raised: whether we live we are the Lord's, whether we die we are the Lord's, whether we live or die we are the Lord's. This is the community established by the Christian church and it is rooted in a priesthood of care. It is expressed in a liturgy of action in the world. It is commemorated by a community of love and it is expressed in the kind of way we find working in this world.

Certainly we need to revive or restore some meaning to this concept of work. There was a time when we could say our life was made up of three things: worship, work, and play. We meant by work, something that we do with our hands, but most of us do not do these things with our hands anymore. To touch an instrument is no longer much reality; we merely touch an indicator with the rest of reality. I think in some way we need to regard our work, that is the expenditure of our body in work, as a way of begetting, of bringing life into the world rather than just spending a certain amount of time. We have gotten to think of work primarily in terms of time sequence, and not in terms of its begetting, not in terms of its travail and bringing forth new life, in the sense that the artist brings forth new life. Now there is a job to be done by Christian artists in the world who participate in community. I rather imagine that the good Samaritan was a good Samaritan not because he saw a dirty tramp beside the road as did perhaps the priest, the Levite, but because he saw the figure Christ there, broken and hurt and gave him his life again. There is some work to be done in this world--work to be done by Christians--work to be done by those who are consecrated to the true God who brings freedom by their life and by their work. There are some people out there in the ditch and you are to go out and minister to them in the name of Christ who through you and in you expresses His spirit and His love in the world.

We witness together, not because we want to talk about the frustrations of our life, we do have these frustrations, but we worship together in order that we spin while we sing and we plow while we sow and all these things we do in the name and way of expressing our love of Jesus Christ and the question which we ask ourselves is not the question Becket is asking in waiting for Godet, although we have to go through that kind of waiting. The question we ask is: traveller, tell us of the night, what signs of hope and promise there are? Christian, darkness takes its flight. Lo! the Prince of Peace

He comes. He comes into our lives not as a magic answer, but as we respond to His love and His care in the midst of the life we know and all the places in the world where we live, and we express ourselves as fellow priests, one to another, as we find ways of making effectual in our lives the witness of our faith as we take with our hands again and shape and form the world after the grace of God.

Charles Williams in one of his poems says that repentance is nothing more than a passionate intention to see and shape the world after the mode of heaven--to see and shape the world after the mode of heaven. This means to me that in our families, although we constantly fail, it is our intention to see and to shape our families after the mode of heaven; constantly failing yet never giving up our hopes. It seems to me that in our communities that we strive not to let our living in Lombard mean that we don't know what is going on in downtown Chicago--that we weave ourselves into that life and its embarrassment and its hurt in such a way that that hurt touches our lives; that we weave ourselves into this nation in such a way that it never forgets that it is a nation under God, and that its freedom shall constantly have to be a new birth of freedom or else it becomes a community of idolatry. This is the witness of the Christian faith in our world--a witness which will not permit itself to become isolated and simply another way of another refuge from a real God who judges us and gives us His grace.

When Christ ascended on high He left captivity captive and gave gifts to men, and our response to that gift is to give gifts, ourselves, out of the richness and fullness of His grace and as an expression of our ministry to God.

Let us pray: Almighty God, who has set us in the midst of this, thy family of the church, we remember this day all those who are in darkness, who are set apart because of their embarrassment and their hurt, those who wait long for justice, and truth, and mercy, acquaint unto them, O Lord, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness that beyond this dark night of uncertainty, they and we may walk in thy light, and go our way rejoicing to Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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