ABSTRACT

A RHETORICAL STUDY OF THE PREACHING AND SPEAKING OF BATSELL BARRETT BAXTER

by

John R. Butts

Batsell Barrett Baxter, contemporary preacher and educator, functioning in the religious culture of the Churches of Christ, is attempting to promulgate his ideas, beliefs, and values through several potentially far-reaching avenues of communication: (1) the pulpit of the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee; (2) the chairmanship of the Bible Department at David Lipscomb College, Nashville, Tennessee; (3) the brotherhood publications of the Churches of Christ; (4) the mass media of radio and television programs produced by the Herald of Truth; (5) the cooperative evangelistic campaigns sponsored by Churches of Christ; and (6) the narrating of messages on record albums for the Foundation of Human Betterment.

This study attempts to apply the principles of rhetoric to Baxter's speaking career for the general purpose of determining his competence as a practitioner of public address. Rhetoric is defined as pertaining to the accumulated body of knowledge concerning man's attempt to utilize his mind, voice, bodily actions, and other available resources to publicize and propagate ideas, concepts, attitudes, information, knowledge, etc. Specifically, the research project seeks to describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate related factors such as: background influences; personality; cultural environment; the materials, ideas, and proposals in messages; elements of preparation, organization, and delivery of speeches; and the interaction of the speaker and society.

The investigation consists essentially of discovering answers to the following questions: (1) What are the significant factors related to Baxter's development as a speaker? (2) What information is available concerning the cultural environments in which he functioned? (3) What is Baxter's interpretation of the world in which he lives? (4) What facts and information are

available concerning Baxter's knowledge and use of rhetorical theory and skills? (5) What influence has Baxter had upon society?

The study is divided into the following chapter titles: (1) "Molding of a Personality," (2) "Background of Religious Cultures," (3) "Baxter and the Hillsboro Church of Christ," (4) "Baxter's Interpretation of the World," (5) "Practitioner of the Art of Rhetoric," and (6) "Summary and Conclusions."

In selecting guiding principles for assessing Baxter's competence in the art of public speaking it has been recognized that modern scholars of rhetoric have made substantial contributions to the body of classical rhetorical theory which originated with Aristotle's works during the ancient Greek period of civilization. Admittedly, one immediately faces a problem when he attempts to set up norms or standards for appraising public address due to the fact that rhetorical theory continually is subject to modification and change. Because of this phenomenom of an ever-changing theory this researcher has attempted to avoid any rigid formula, and has proceeded

with an awareness of a need for flexibility in the application of norms, with critical referents being defined as clearly as possible.

Findings as reported in Chapters I, II, and III reveal that Baxter derived basic religious values, attitudes, and beliefs during his formative years in a Christian home and sub-cultures which are closely related to Churches of Christ. His personality has been broadened through new concepts and values gained from graduate studies while earning the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Speech and the B.D. degree in religion.

Chapter IV examines five themes which appear with regularity in the larger context of Baxter's preaching during approximately two decades with the Hillsboro Church of Christ. The objective was to discover information relevant to Baxter's analysis and interpretation of the world's religious needs. Baxter's practices of sermon-building, style, delivery, etc. are investigated and evaluated in Chapter V. The final chapter of the study is designed for summarizing statements and the expression of value judgments concerning Baxter's competence as a speaker and of his impact upon society.

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By

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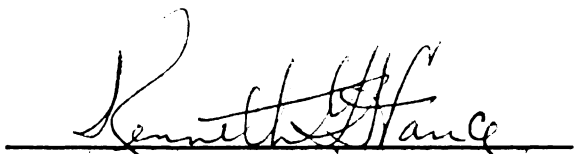

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PREFACE

> Time, which gnaws and diminishes all things else, augments and increaseth benefits; because a noble action of liberality doth grow continually by our generously thinking of it and remembering it.

The above words of the ancient writer, Francois Rabelais, seem best to express my feelings concerning this dissertation. The ordeals and anxieties involved have diminished, whereas the kindly beneficence of the good people who have helped me along the way are gratefully remembered. Especially, I wish to acknowledge the following persons:

Dr. and Mrs. Batsell Barrett Baxter, who humbly and graciously cooperated during correspondence, interviews, and telephone conversations.

Dr. Kenneth G. Hance, my major advisor, whose attitude of kindness and helpfulness has been so impressive that I shall try to emulate it as I continue my own work with university students.

To all the staff members of the Department of Speech and related departments whose classes helped

prepare me to perform the necessary functions required by this project; especially to those who have served on my guidance committee: Dr. David C. Ralph, Dr. Fred G. Alexander, Dr. Gordon L. Thomas and Dr. Walter F. Johnson.

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To Barbi Mel, who typed the final copy of the dissertation and made the final phase a pleasurable experience.

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John R. Butts

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INTRODUCTION

This study pertains to an individual, Batsell Barrett Baxter, who after earning a doctoral degree in Speech, distinguished himself as a classroom teacher, as Chairman of a College Speech Department, and as President of the Southern Speech Association. While still in demand as an educator, he chose to devote his principal endeavors to the work of preaching "the gospel of Christ" rather than to teaching the theories and practices of rhetoric. Personally, he had to wrestle with the problem of whether he could exert greater influence as a "teacher of speech," or as a "practitioner of speech" in areas outside the realm of education. Since 1956, when he relinquished the chairmanship of a Speech Department, he has been giving preeminence to preaching. Education continues to serve a secondary role in his life, but his endeavors are primarily in the area of teaching the Bible rather than Speech. He is currently serving as Chairman of the Bible Department at David Lipscomb

College, Nashville, Tennessee; and he considers it a secondary activity related to his first love--that of ministry to the Hillsboro Church of Christ in Nashville.

Some students in this writer's speech classes have commented that the majority of competent speakers on the American scene seem to arise from backgrounds other than the Speech field. They wonder whether concentrated studies in Speech really provide students with insights and skills whereby they may exert greater influences than would otherwise be possible. It is hoped that an investigation of Baxter's speaking career will provide helpful information concerning values which may be drived from thorough training in Speech.

Subject of Study

Batsell Barrett Baxter has earned four academic degrees, including the B.A. from Abilene Christian College, 1937; the M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Southern California, 1938 and 1944; and the B.D. from Vanderbilt University, 1957. He served as President of

the Southern Speech Association, 1952-53; Professor of Speech and Head of Speech Department, David Lipscomb College, 1946-56; and Head of the Bible Department, David Lipscomb, 1956 to the present. Among several publications in the area of public address and homiletics, two of his books: The Heart of the Yale Lectures and Speaking for the Master, were published by the Macmillan Company. In 1960, the Biblical Research Press initiated a series of books entitled Great Preachers of Today, which were intended to include collections of the best sermons of outstanding preachers of the Church of Christ. Dr. Baxter was selected for the first publication with the following note in the preface:

> The publishers are happy to introduce the series with the work of Batsell Barrett Baxter, since he is truly one of the outstanding preachers of this generation. In addition to his regular duties as Professor of Bible and Head of the Bible Department at David Lipscomb College, he is now in his tenth year as minister for the Hillsboro congregation of the Lord's church in Nashville, Tennessee.[1]

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[1] J. D. Thomas, Great Preachers of Today: Sermons of Batsell Barrett Baxter (Abilene, Texas: Biblical Research Press, 1960), preface.

Dr. Baxter is now entering his nineteenth year as the regular minister of the Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee. In addition to preaching and teaching in the Tennessee area, he has done extensive speaking in religious campaigns in the United States and in foreign countries. Apparently, he has successfully combined two very demanding careers--preaching and education. Preaching is undoubtedly his first love, and the demands for his services may well account for his decision to turn from general speech education to almost total attention to promulgation of "the word of God." Dr. William S. Banowsky, a former student of Dr. Baxter and also possessor of a doctoral degree in Speech, called attention to the primacy of preaching in Dr. Baxter's life:

> He has been a dynamic influence in the training of hundreds of young men for the ministry . . . . But Batsell Barrett Baxter is, himself, pre-eminently a preacher. His sermons from the powerful pulpit of Nashville's Hillsboro Church of Christ are regularly broadcast over radio station WLAC. He was a recent speaker at the Protestant Pavilion at the World's Fair in New York. Through evangelistic tours into more than 30 foreign nations, and through the wide exposure of national radio and television, the Herald of Truth program, he has perhaps preached to more people

> than any other advocate for restoration of the New Testament Christianity in the present age.[1]

Obviously, if this brief review of his accomplishments can be authenticated, Batsell Barrett Baxter has utilized his knowledge of rhetorical theory, principles, and skills so as to have had considerable impact on the contemporary social scene. The above testimony would suggest this to be true; nevertheless, the assertion is merely an hypothesis at this point.

Statement of Purpose

The general purpose of this study is to apply the principles of rhetoric to the speaking career of Batsell Barrett Baxter. The term "rhetoric" has had varying connotations since Aristotle, about the year 330 B.C., defined it as "the faculty of discovering in the particular case what are the available means of persuasion."[2] The

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[1]William S. Banowsky, "Introduction," Making God's Way Our Way, ed. B. B. Baxter (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1964).

[2]Lane Cooper, The Rhetoric of Aristotle (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1932), p. 7.

renowned Greek philosopher and scholar believed and taught that the efforts of successful speakers could be studied, and the principles of success could be methodized. Mastery of rhetoric, according to Aristotle, calls for: (1) the power of logical reasoning; (2) a knowledge of character (ethos); and (3) a knowledge of emotions (pathe). Depending on the degree of mastery, a speaker may: (1) prove a truth, real or apparent, by argument; (2) evince through speaking a personal character that will win the confidence of the listener; and (3) engage the listener's emotions.[1]

In a book recently published, Gordon F. Hostettler defined the term "rhetoric" as pertaining to the "theoretical considerations which govern the practice of public address."[2] He explained that "public address" refers to oral communicative situations which include not only the speaker-audience format, but also, the many occasions

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[1]Cooper, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.

[2]Gordon F. Hostettler, "An Overview: Philosophy, Objectives, Content," The Communicative Arts and Sciences of Speech, ed. Keith Brooks (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Books, Inc., 1967), p. 8.

involving groups of people who orally exchange ideas and information.

A more comprehensive definition has been set forth by Donald C. Bryant, who has described rhetoric or the rhetorical as:

> the function in human affairs which governs and gives direction to that creative activity, that process of critical analysis, that branch of learning, which address themselves to the whole phenomenon of the designed use of language for the promulgation of ideas, information, and attitudes. Though it is instrumental in the discovery of ideas and information, its characteristic function is the publication, the publicizing, the humanizing, the animating of them for a realized and usually specific audience. At best it seeks the "energizing of truth," . . .[1]

For purposes of this study, rhetoric will be perceived as involving the accumulated body of knowledge pertaining to man's attempt to utilize his mind, voice, bodily actions, and other available resources to publicize and promulgate ideas, concepts, attitudes, information, knowledge, etc. Rhetoric may be used to propagate

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[1]Donald C. Bryant, "Rhetoric: Its Functions and Its Scope," Quarterly Journal of Speech (Dec., 1953), pp. 412-13.

truth or falsehood; ethical or unethical materials and methods may be utilized; and "good" or "bad" motives may be involved. The body of knowledge now constituting rhetorical theory is regarded as being subject to modification and change. In agreement with Karl Wallace's conception of "modern rhetoric," the researcher proposes to include, insofar as possible, "whatever is essential to explain, to comprehend, and to criticize"[1] the speaking of Dr. Baxter.

More specifically, the study will attempt to describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate related factors such as: background influences; personality; cultural environment; the materials, ideas, and proposals in messages; elements of preparation, organization, and delivery of speeches; and the interaction of the speaker and society.

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[1]Karl R. Wallace, "The Field of Speech, 1953: An Overview," Quarterly Journal of Speech (April, 1954), p. 119.

Significance of Project

In selecting a contemporary speaker as a research area, the writer recognizes he is faced with a problem of limited perspective because of closeness in time; however, there are several advantages which seem to justify the study. Merits of research in contemporary public address have been cited by Wayne N. Thompson:

> The preparation of the thesis can be a rich educational experience, which (1) provides training in research methods; (2) requires the integration of the knowledge and the skills of several fields, such as classical rhetoric, rhetorical criticism, history of oratory, linquistics, persuasion, social psychology, history, political science, and economics; (3) makes the student an "expert" within a defined area; and (4) leads to conclusions regarding the theory and the practice of rhetoric in our own times.[1]

The subject of this study has gone beyond the realm of learning rhetorical theory and teaching the skills and techniques of speaking. He has attained prominence in at least one rather large subculture as a

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[1]Wayne N. Thompson, "Contemporary Public Address as a Research Area," Quarterly Journal of Speech (Oct., 1947), p. 279.

successful practitioner of the art. The experience gained through a thorough investigation of his life and works should help the researcher understand more fully the concepts involved in his major field of Public Address. Also, the finished project should be of significant value to researchers of future generations who may need to depend on the subject's contemporary critics for more accurate reporting, recording, and appraisal of his life and works.

As it deals with Dr. Baxter's religious background and beliefs, the study should provide significant findings regarding the idea of "church unity through restoration"; thus, it will supplement the project contributed by DeWitte Holland and others of the "Religious Workers Interest Group of the Speech Association of America" who compiled a recent volume entitled, Preaching in American History. The editor of the volume indicates a lack of coverage on some relevant issues:

> While this collection is unique, it does not purport to cover all the important issues of the American pulpit. Chapters on "Church Unity through Restoration" and "The Nature of the Church Reflected in Sect Polemics" were

dropped. Both of these are especially relevant to the unique experience of the church in America. Both are probably as important as some of those included, but time and space factors forced them out.[1]

Some distinctiveness may be added to the project due to the fact that no previous study has been made of Dr. Baxter's speaking career.[2]

Materials for the Study

One distinct advantage of using a contemporary speaker for study is the abundance of primary source materials at the disposal of the researcher. Also, in this case, there are significant secondary sources available for consultation. A definition is in order regarding source materials:

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[1]DeWitte Holland, "Introduction," Preaching in American History, ed. DeWitte Holland (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 13.

[2]Batsell Barrett Baxter, personal letter dated July 9, 1965 (Baxter states that, so far as he knows, no previous study has been made of his life or speaking.)

> We commonly distinguish between primary and secondary source materials, and emphasize the desirability of uncovering the former. Primary materials stand as first witness to a fact, and include speech texts, diaries, letters, contemporary newspapers and periodicals, and so on. Secondary materials are those in which one or more other persons come between the primary source and the researcher; a general history text or a biography falls into this category.[1]

This definition is considered acceptable except for qualifying "speech texts" as a primary source. Printed versions of speech texts do not always represent "first witness to a fact." Often the printed versions are drastically different in style from the actual speeches as delivered, depending on who did the revising. Regarding Dr. Baxter's sermon texts, he stated in an interview that the printed texts were revised by himself with a reading audience in mind.

Fortunately, however, an unusually large number of Dr. Baxter's taped sermons have been made available to the researcher. Concerning availability of materials, Baxter wrote:

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[1]J. Jeffery Auer, An Introduction to Research in Speech (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 29.

> I have three hundred-to-four hundred mimeographed sermons presented at the Hillsboro church over the past years. In addition, I have three books of sermons that have been published. We also have the radio tapes of the original drafts of most of the Hillsboro sermons. The mimeographed copy is a revised transcript of these sermons in most cases.[1]

Dr. Baxter and the Hillsboro elders granted the researcher the privilege of examining the entire collection of over two hundred tapes which are stored in the Hillsboro church library. They allowed him to select twenty-four tapes for study purposes. Selection was made on the basis of topics so as to obtain a representative cross-section of Dr. Baxter's speaking at Hillsboro. In addition to these tapes, the researcher has 127 mimeographed copies of sermons preached to the Hillsboro audiences.

Four books of sermons by Batsell Barrett Baxter have been published:

1. <u>If I Be Lifted Up</u> (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1956), collection of twelve sermons preached in the new multi-million dollar Municipal Auditorium in Lubbock, Texas, May 13-20, 1956.

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[1]Baxter, personal letter dated July 9, 1965.

2. Making God's Way Our Way (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1964), collection of ten sermons of the "South Plains Coliseum Meeting" in Lubbock, Texas, Oct. 4-11, 1964.

3. As A Man Thinketh in His Heart (Nashville: Washington Industries, 1966), a collection of twelve "favorite" sermons.

4. Great Preachers of Today: Sermons of Batsell Barrett Baxter (Abilene, Tex.: Biblical Research Press, 1960), a collection of thirty of Dr. Baxter's "best sermons" preached to the Hillsboro congregation.

Other materials may be categorized as follows: (1) copies of the lesson outlines used by Dr. Baxter for a course in Homiletics entitled, "Preparation and Delivery of Sermons"; (2) nine tape recordings of the "South Plains Coliseum Meeting" in Lubbock, Texas; (3) Dr. Baxter's own published works; (4) his private papers; (5) information from interviews and letters; and (6) references in periodicals, newspapers, and books.

In addition to the above mentioned materials, the researcher has had numerous opportunities to hear Dr. Baxter as an "on the spot" listener.

Limitations of the Study

This study will be limited primarily to Baxter's speaking career with the Hillsboro Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee. As the result of a developing interaction between the speaker and the congregation, avenues of communication other than the Hillsboro pulpit have become available; thus, Baxter's potential for influence has been greatly enhanced during his rather long span of eighteen years with the one church. It is pertinent, therefore, that the following areas also be included: (1) Baxter's teaching at David Lipscomb College; (2) his radio and television preaching with the "Herald of Truth" program; (3) his evangelistic campaigns; and (4) his work with the "Foundation for Human Betterment."

Plan of Research

Regarding methodology, the historical technique will be attempted, thus, calling for adequate investigation of: (1) Baxter's life in the formative years; (2) the cultures which have influenced his beliefs and attitudes; (3) his interpretation of the world in which he lives; and (4) his influence or impact upon society.

Essentially, the researcher will consider his responsibility as being that described by Baird and Thonssen in their discussion of "Methodology in the Criticism of Public Address." These authors describe the critic's responsibilities:

> The speech investigator, although not a biographer, will summon and test the facts concerning this orator's entire career; will have sufficient grasp of the immediate and surrounding data to interpret authoritatively that speaker's personality. The historiographer's skills in weighing the original documents, his caution in accepting hypotheses, his objectivity in fashioning complicated facts into relevancy, this maturity as a historian in interpreting the materials--these are the necessary equipment of the critic of speeches.[1]

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[1] A. Craig Baird and Lester Thonssen, "Methodology in the Criticism of Public Address," Quarterly Journal of Speech (April, 1947), p. 137.

Although Baxter is a contemporary speaker, much of his life and works may already be classified as history; also, current activities may be observed, described, and reported so as to serve in the future as source materials of history. In discussing the role of the historian, Auer makes some important points in this regard:

> The proper historian dedicates himself to what Allan Nevins calls the "spirit of critical inquiry for the whole truth." He searches endlessly for facts and statements accurately reporting, describing, or classifying, on the basis of personal observation or authentic testimony of others, some event, circumstance, or phenomena that has happened or is happening.[1]

Auer also explains that the research design in a historical study "is a plan for discovering, evaluating, and interpreting the documentary evidence pertinent to the hypothesis under investigation."[2]

In this study, the hypothesis under investigation consists essentially of discovering answers to the following questions:

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[1] J. Jeffery Auer, An Introduction to Research in Speech (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), p. 122.

[2] Ibid., p. 76.

1) What are the significant factors related to Baxter's development as a speaker?

2) What information is available concerning the cultural environments in which he functioned?

3) What is Baxter's interpretation of the world in which he lives?

4) What facts and information are available concerning Baxter's knowledge and use of rhetorical theory and practice?

5) What influence has Baxter had upon society?

The research problem, then, consists of searching for data and statements which accurately report, describe, or classify events, circumstances, or phenomena which are related to these questions.

Chapters I-V are devoted to the presentation of data pertaining to Baxter and his practices in the several areas of rhetoric. Chapter VI consists of evaluative statements organized in terms of the traditional constituents of rhetoric.

Plan of Organization

Chapter

I. Molding of a Personality

II. Background of Religious Cultures

III. Baxter and the Hillsboro Church of Christ

IV. Baxter's Interpretation of the World

V. Practitioner of an Art

VI. Summary and Conclusions

CHAPTER I

MOLDING OF A PERSONALITY

Role of Personality

Batsell Barrett Baxter made his first adjustments to the world in the home of a preacher and educator. At the time of his birth on September 23, 1916, the father, Batsell Baxter, was Dean of Cordell Christian College, Cordell, Oklahoma. Because he was the first and only child, an unusually close relationship developed between the son and his parents. This initial stage of his life possibly served a vital role in the molding of Batsell Barrett Baxter's personality.

As attested by Aristotle and other rhetoricians of note throughout the history of public address, personality contributes significantly to a speaker's effectiveness. Franklin H. Knower, in writing about psychology of communication and the behavioral sciences, states:

> Observation of man by the classical rhetorician led him to conclude that one of the sources of effectiveness in persuasion was a demonstration of character and good will. This was called ethos or the use of ethical proof. Early twentieth century psychologists experimenting with persuasive techniques called it prestige suggestion. More recent psychologists generally refer to this factor in communication as source credibility. A recent study of two hundred professional communicators, in which the writer participated, found that "personality" was the most frequent answer to the question "What is it about the way a person speaks or writes that makes him effective?"[1]

Re-enforcing this concept of the importance of personality is an observation from a contemporary widely-used speech text by Hance, Ralph, and Wiksell:

> The ancient Greeks knew, and all students of speaking since that time have known, that the ethos--the person of the speaker--is fully as important to the success or failure of communication as are logic, evidence, and development. Furthermore, research has shown that personal appearance, personality, character, age, competence, and related personal attributes or traits do affect the success of all efforts to communicate.[2]

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[1]Franklin H. Knower, "The Psychology of Communication," The Communicative Arts and Sciences of Speech, ed. Keith Brooks (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Books, Inc., 1967), p. 132.

[2]Kenneth G. Hance, David C. Ralph, and Milton J. Wiksell, Principles of Speaking (2d ed.; Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Co., 1969), p. 79.

David K. Berlo, writing on the determinants of effect in speaking, states:

> There are at least four kinds of factors within the source which can increase fidelity. They are his (a) communication skills, (b) attitudes, (c) knowledge level, and (d) position within a social-cultural system.[1]

The "social-cultural system" as described by Berlo offers a plausible reason for seeking knowledge concerning the development of the subject's personality:

> No source communicates as a free agent, without being influenced by his position in a social-cultural system. We need, of course, to take into account the personal factors in the source: his communication skills, his attitudes, his knowledge. But we need to know more than this. We need to know the kind of social system in which he is operating. We need to know where he fits in that social system, the roles he fulfills, the functions he is required to perform, the prestige that he and other people attach to him. We need to know the cultural context in which he communicates, the cultural beliefs and values that are dominant for him, the accepted forms of behavior that are acceptable or not acceptable, required or not required in his culture. We need to know about his own expectations and the expectations others have about him.[2]

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[1] David K. Berlo, The Process of Communication (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 41.

[2] Ibid., p. 49.

It is obvious, if one accepts these observations, that the personality of the speaker is an important factor to consider when attempting to understand and evaluate his speaking career. The extent of its importance is indicated by Albert J. Croft, who, in discussing the functions of rhetorical criticism, points out that the "principal difficulty of speech criticism is that we are not really able to evaluate a man's skill as a speaker apart from his ideas (his beliefs, attitudes, etc.)."[1] Another problem is that of determining the relationship of a man's beliefs and attitudes to his personality. What is meant by the term "personality"?

Definition of Personality

There are literally scores of definitions for the term "personality." Jon Eisenson, in the first edition of The Psychology of Speech, states:

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[1]Albert J. Croft, "The Functions of Rhetorical Criticism," The Province of Rhetoric, ed. Joseph Schwartz and John A. Rycenga (New York: Ronald Press, 1965), p. 411.

> A personality may be said to be the totality or pattern of the reactive possibilities of the individual. A personality exists only in relation to an organism behaving in an environment . . . . Our personalities begin to take form when we make our first adjustments to the world in which we are born.[1]

Several years later, Eisenson collaborated with J. Jeffery Auer and John V. Irwin in revising the text with a new title, The Psychology of Communication. Eisenson is credited with being responsible for the chapter entitled "Concepts of Personality." In defining the term "personality" he does not use the same definition as before; instead, he goes to considerable length explaining how the authors had experienced difficulties in finding a satisfactory definition. Numerous definitions were investigated including those cited by psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, linguists, philosophers, and semanticists. After considering hundreds of definitions, the authors agreed upon a comprehensive concept of personality which appears to be of great value to speech critics:

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[1]Jon Eisenson, The Psychology of Speech (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1938), p. 145.

> In our study of definitions, characterizations, and concepts of personality, there were two underlying aspects that emerged. (1) A personality is as the person does. (2) A personality is in large measure what the individual thinks of himself. The first aspect emphasizes the acting out, the behavior that is apparent to the reactors other than the performer himself. The second aspect emphasizes the self-concept of the individual, the thoughts and evaluations that determine what an individual does and what he refrains from doing . . . .
>
> Personality, as we will use the term, is an expression of many forces and influences, inherited and acquired, physical, environmental, and psychological . . . . Personality is the expression of the individual's values and attitudes that are modified if not initially shaped by interaction with a culture at large and a sub-culture in particular.[1]

One may readily see a certain continuity in this definition and the role of personality as indicated by the various sources already cited. By extending this definition, the researcher will attempt to answer the pertinent questions concerning the development of Dr. Baxter's personality.

It will be assumed that Dr. Baxter's personality did begin to take form in his infancy as he made his first

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[1]Jon Eisenson, J. Jeffery Auer, John V. Irwin, The Psychology of Communication (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), p. 333.

adjustments to the world. Possibly, through inherited traits, some factors of his personality were already determined at birth; however, this would be almost impossible to assess. There are many conflicting ideas about the relative importance of heredity and environment. Dr. John Furbay, philosopher and world-traveler, in one of his oft-delivered speeches, "Countdown for Tomorrow," summed up his conception of the two by saying, "Heredity is the most important thing in the world until you are born; then, environment is the most important."[1] The probable truth of the matter is that one cannot separate the two. In a recent textbook, Professors Murray, Phillips, and Truby use what they refer to as the "semantic hyphen" in discussing the term "inheritance-environment":

> If we do not find a way to connect inheritance and environment in our minds so that we do not split them erroneously, we are likely to begin to believe that the one can be affected without influencing the other. The best of scientific evidence indicates that, regardless of biological inheritance, the environment can drastically shape the life of the individual; yet, regardless of how nourishing the environment, the individual will

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[1] John Furbay, "Countdown for Tomorrow," Lecture Recording, Delta Record Distributors, 4304 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago, Ill.

> make no progress without some reasonable biological inheritance.[1]

It may prove somewhat profitable to keep this relationship in mind; however, no special effort will be made always to join the two terms with the hyphen as suggested by the above concept. Environment will be considered as surroundings, persons, ideas, and circumstances which influence a person after he is born.

To summarize the implications suggested by these kindred observations, three rather clear-cut tasks are necessary for adequate investigation and analysis of Dr. Baxter's development as a personality: (1) to examine his first adjustments to the world; especially, from the viewpoint of how attitudes, beliefs, and character were being formed and influenced; (2) to investigate the social systems in which he functioned; in particular, the church and educational institutions which were the principal cultural systems wherein he communicated his dominant beliefs and values; and (3) to study the behavior

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[1]Elwood Murray, Gerald M. Phillips, and J. David Truby, Speech: Science-Art (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1969), pp. 181-82.

of the subject and those being affected by his personality and speaking.

The Mold: Shaping of the Personality

First Adjustments

Batsell Barrett Baxter was named after his father and another educator, A. B. Barrett, who founded Abilene Christian College, Abilene, Texas. Giving their son the best possible education was clearly uppermost in the minds of the parents--and to them the finest education was Christian education.

In his lifetime, Batsell Baxter, the father, served as President of three colleges. He has been featured as one of the pioneers in Christian education in a special issue of 20th Century Christian, June, 1964. He was born in Sherman, Texas, November 17, 1886; baptized by T. B. Larimore in 1895; graduated from Nashville Bible School in 1911; began teaching career at Thorpe Springs Christian College; taught and served as Dean of Cordell Christian College, Cordell, Oklahoma; was President of

Abilene Christian College for eight years (1924-32); served as President of David Lipscomb College, Nashville, Tennessee during two periods (1932-34 and 1943-46); was the first President of Pepperdine College, Los Angeles, California (1937-39); taught on the Bible faculty at Harding College, Searcy, Arkansas for a short time; and later, functioned as Head of the Bible Department, David Lipscomb College until his death in 1956.

The father was described as firm in administration; yet, kind, pleasant, and thoughtful to assistants and faculty. In and out of classes, he enjoyed the companionship of young people, who found him a helpful and wise counselor with practical, down-to-earth guidance. The present Dean of Pepperdine College, who taught under his administration, writes of his influence:

> Batsell Baxter lives in the lives and memory of thousands of those who received their training under his teaching and administrative supervision. It would be a mistake to overlook the fact that Batsell Baxter was devoted to his family, both as a husband and father. By his counsel and personal example he exercised the care of a Christian father over his son, Batsell Barrett Baxter. Through the life of his wonderful son, he continues to influence hundreds of thousands as Dr. B. B. Baxter preaches the Gospel from the pulpit, over the radio and over nationwide television

> and as he teaches the Word of God as head of the Bible Department of David Lipscomb College.[1]

Another educator, Dr. Carroll B. Ellis, who is currently serving as Chairman of the Speech Department at David Lipscomb College, had the experience of being a colleague of both the father and son. He attributes the elder Baxter as having a great impact on the son:

> Batsell Barrett's father, Brother Baxter, had a tremendous influence on him. In his day, Batsell Baxter was the outstanding college administrator and one of the great preachers of the church . . . . One of the reasons Brother Baxter served, in addition to his ability and dedication, was a talent he had to pour oil on troubled waters. He was a man of peace, and one who made for peace and tranquility.[2]

When writing, teaching, or preaching, Batsell Barrett Baxter often makes references to the influences of his parents and his home life:

> Of the many memories of my childhood some of the happiest are of quiet evenings at home when my father would read to my mother and me. Sometimes he would read from the Bible; sometimes he would read from other materials. I remember his reading from the series of fine

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[1] J. P. Sanders, "Batsell Baxter," 20th Century Christian (June, 1964), p. 32.

[2] Letter from Dr. Carroll B. Ellis, David Lipscomb College, Nashville, Tenn., dated Aug. 9, 1968.

> "Scattergood Baines" stories by Clarence Buddington Kelland, which appeared in the American Magazine. Scattergood was the genial banker, merchant, businessman, in a little up-state town of New York, who was constantly serving as a kindly grandfather to the whole community . . . . Those evenings more than a quarter of a century ago are still vivid in my memory.[1]

In browsing through personal papers of Dr. Baxter, the researcher discovered a letter from M. Norvel Young, editor of 20th Century Christian, requesting that Dr. Baxter write an article about his mother, Fay Baxter, for a special issue entitled "Saints I Have Known." The editor explains that the article would reach 160,000 readers in the 40,000 copies plus reprints which are usually made of special issues. A carbon copy of the article which Dr. Baxter prepared was attached to the request. In the introduction, he admits the natural inclination which might lead a son to overestimate the virtues of his mother; but even allowing this, he emphasizes that he still believes he had an unusual mother. He supports his assertion with five reasons which are used as headings for the article: (1) she loved her son;

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[1]Batsell Barrett Baxter, "Homelife in a City," unpublished materials, Baxter's personal file.

(2) she loved people; (3) she loved the world about her; (4) she loved her husband; and (5) she also loved God. He explains that his mother was born in Sherman, Texas, of Scotch-Irish ancestry. His closing comment concerns her relatively short lifespan: "She lived only half a century, but it was a good half-century--one that will bear fruit for generations to come."[1]

The statement implies that his mother's life would bear fruit through his own life, but the tone of the total article is that her life touched many others. It is rather significant that Dr. Baxter points to his mother's love for her son as being the first reason for her being an unusual mother. It may be a meaningful clue to her influence on his character:

> She loved her son and never allowed a barrier to come between herself and him. Even when I had done wrong and needed to be disciplined, she stood <u>with me</u> and helped me fight against Satan and his temptations. I never felt the parent-child antagonism that often comes when a parent must say no to a child. She was always in my corner, helping me to fight the battle against my own weaknesses and faults. She placed such confidence in me

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[1]Batsell Barrett Baxter, "Fay Baxter," Baxter's personal file (carbon copy of article prepared for the <u>20th Century Christian</u>), p. 2.

> that it was actually harder to do wrong and disappoint her than it was to do right.[1]

Dr. Baxter believes that his mother had a certain attitude of mind which constantly rewarded her with new joys and insights:

> Perhaps that was why so many people sought her company. My childhood friends came not so much to play with me, as to visit my mother. Her stories were eagerly listened to by grown-ups, as well as by children. Her advice was sought by scores and even hundreds of college students--the boys as well as the girls. She was always interested in the problems and the successes of everyone . . . . She went out of her way to encourage young preachers and their wives, to visit the sick and the bereaved, and to help in training the young.[2]

Evidence does indicate that Batsell Barrett Baxter's mother, in word and deed, contributed ideas and impressions which caused the son to believe she was unusual. Some sources point to the likelihood of a special vow on the part of the mother regarding the dedication of her son's life to God. This introduces another possible influence which, if true, might be called a "divine influence."

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[1] Ibid., p. 1.

[2] Ibid., p. 2.

A Possible "Divine Influence"

There is no reliable way of documenting and proving providential influences in the life of an individual; however, in order to consider all possibilities, some attention should be given to available information regarding this factor. A "word-of-mouth" story has been in circulation that Dr. Baxter's mother, being barren before his birth, had prayed to God for a son. Much like Hannah of Old Testament history,[1] she vowed that, if God granted her desire, she would dedicate him to God's service. In researching for more information, the writer contacted Dr. Oscar W. Carter of Nashville, Tennessee, who is a medical doctor and specialist in urological surgery. Dr. Carter has had occasion to know Dr. Baxter well because of working with him in an organization called, "The Foundation for Human Betterment." The physician responded with a personal letter saying:

> The following information was given me by his paternal aunt, Mrs. Dan Hockaday, who lives at 2817 West End Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee. She told me that Dr. Baxter's father

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[1] I Sam. 1:10-11, Standard Edition.

> and mother were two of the most kind, loving people that she had ever known and that they loved each other with a devotion that is rarely ever seen. Dr. Baxter grew up in a home surrounded by love and this undoubtedly had a tremendous influence in the formation of his character.
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> Mrs. Hockaday also told me the following story. Dr. Baxter's father and mother had been married about four years and were childless during this period of time. Dr. Baxter's mother promised the Lord if he would send her a son that she would "give him back to Him." As a child Dr. Baxter was brought up with this in mind and I am sure that it had a tremendous influence on the formation of his character.[1]

This information corresponds to other testimony concerning the character of the parents and the environment which they created for the young Baxter. The parents were devout believers in God and His providence. As it turned out, Batsell Barrett was the only child born to this couple; consequently, one could well imagine that both parents believed that the mother's prayer had been answered and that God had a special work planned for their son.

Like the factor of heredity, the idea of a "divine influence" must be treated as an unknown element with

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[1]Oscar W. Carter, personal letter, dated June 30, 1969.

respect to personality. Whether or not there has been a real "divine influence" is not as important as the fact that people may believe that there has been. Insofar as the story is known and believed by Dr. Baxter's auditors, especially those of his own religious beliefs, one may assume that the idea itself has great potential for enhancing personality.

Educational Adjustments

At a very early age the young Baxter started experiencing the necessity of adjusting to new environments. In relating biographical information, Dr. Baxter reveals that his family moved from Cordell, Oklahoma, to Thorpe Spring, Texas, when he was one year old. After approximately one year there, his father moved the family to Abilene, Texas, where he joined the staff of Abilene Christian College. A few years later, in 1924, he was named President of that institution.

For younger children of the area, the college provided the direction and personnel for the "A.C.C. Training School and High School." The general philosophy of school administrators in the Christian colleges was

much like that ascribed to the founder of David Lipscomb College in Nashville, Tennessee:

> How Christians can commit children in the period of life which the mind and heart are receiving their mold for life to irreligious influences, or to associations favorable for the reception of erroneous religious sentiments has ever been a mystery to us.[1]

In the training schools and high schools, children were taught secular subjects, as were children in public schools; however, there was an additional subject which received greater emphasis than any other. The Bible, taught by teachers who believed it to be the word of God, was a regular textbook at every grade level. Teachers selected for guiding and molding the young souls were usually men and women of deep religious convictions who were willing to make sacrifices because of their love and concern for youth. The young Baxter received all of his elementary schooling and part of his high school education under the prevailing influences of educators who taught primarily out of devotion and love for young people. Along with the early influences of his devout

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[1]Robert E. Hooper, "David Lipscomb," 20th Century Christian (June, 1964), p. 11.

parents, this environment probably had a definite impact in the shaping of his personality.

Dr. Baxter, in a letter giving biographical information, sums up a period of his educational experience in a few sentences:

> In the depth of the depression in 1932, my father moved to Nashville and became President of David Lipscomb College. I attended Peabody Demonstration School that summer, for the first time being a student in a public school, rather than a Christian school. The following year I finished David Lipscomb High School, in 1933. After one year of college in David Lipscomb College, we moved again to Abilene where my father served on the faculty as a teacher. The last three years of my college work were done at A.C.C., where I majored in Education, graduating in 1937. Immediately I attended the University of Southern California, where I changed to the Speech field, taking an M.A. degree in 1938 and a Ph.D. degree in 1944.[1]

He was twenty-two years of age at the time of receiving the M.A. degree and was twenty-eight when he was awarded the Ph.D.

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[1]Batsell Barrett Baxter, manuscript of general information, dated August 1, 1968, p. 7.

Personality and Life Goals

From the time of his birth until his graduation from Abilene Christian College, Batsell Barrett Baxter was the product of three very closely related subcultures: (1) a Christian home; (2) the fellowship of Churches of Christ; and (3) Christian educational institutions. His environment had been controlled to a great extent by certain authority figures who believed their most important function in life was to teach the principles and ways of Christ.

This observation provokes a stimulating question. Can human beings be so controlled by their environment and teaching that their choices in life can be somewhat accurately determined? The question and answer might well have significant relevance to societal problems of our age. Already, it has been noted that Eisenson viewed personality as "an expression of many forces and influences" among which the environment was recognized as one of the strongest. According to this concept, Batsell Barrett Baxter's personality should be manifested by the expression of his values and attitudes which were shaped

and modified by his interaction with the cultures in which he lived.

Of all areas of choice, perhaps the area which would offer the best opportunities to observe expressions of values and attitudes would be: (1) selection of a lifetime marriage partner; and (2) the selection of a lifetime career.

Marriage and a Career

What type of person did Batsell Barrett Baxter choose for a wife? The researcher interviewed Mrs. Baxter during the summer of 1968. He found her to be gracious, unassuming, and refreshingly modest in dress and manner. At first she seemed somewhat shy and reluctant to talk. (The tape recorder may have been one influencing factor in this regard.) Once it was explained that the interview was to gain firsthand information about her husband's development as a preacher and the part that she may have played in it, she immediately displayed a vibrant interest.

After explaining that she had been reared in a small town and small church where her father served as an

elder, she related how she had often dreamed of growing up and marrying a preacher. In her own words she said:

> To be the wife of a minister and to live in the home of a minister would be just about as close to heaven as one could come. Now--of course--that is the idealism of youth--partially--and as time has gone on, I have come to see that perhaps preachers and their wives have as many, if not more, temptations and problems than some other people do--but, I'm still glad I married a preacher.[1]

For some moments, Mrs. Baxter seemed to relive her early life as Wanda Roberts, the small-town girl who dreamed of going to Abilene Christian College and meeting a young man who would develop into a great preacher. Her parents had planned on her going to "A.C.C.," as the college was called by those familiar with it; however, at the time of her graduation from high school, the depression years were upon them. Two years passed before the picture brightened financially to the point where Wanda's parents could send her to Abilene. Many Christian parents were willing to make extreme sacrifices in order for their children to have the wholesome environment of Christian campuses. There were unusual opportunities for a son or

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[1]Wanda Roberts Baxter, taped interview, August, 1968.

daughter to get acquainted with a member of the opposite sex who had a similar background and the same religious convictions. Enthusiastic supporters of Christian colleges would often point out how marriages occurring among their students were much more enduring than marriages on the whole. It did make a convincing argument and one which statistics have verified.

Wanda Roberts arrived at A.C.C. in time to have one year on the campus as a freshman during the same period which Batsell Barrett Baxter spent as a senior. By this time, he was preaching regularly[1] each Sunday for the Church of Christ meeting in Paducah, Texas.

Before he met Wanda Roberts, some directions for his career were already taking shape. He had experienced classes and well-planned courses on the Bible and related subjects throughout his educational career. Preachers and their families were frequent visitors in the Baxter home. Many of his teachers had been self-sacrificing ministers who taught because they loved young people.

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[1]Baxter preached his first sermon at the age of seventeen at the Chapel Avenue Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee (Manuscript of General Information, Aug. 1, 1968), p. 6.

Churches in the vicinity of Christian colleges had a general practice of using promising students as "supply preachers" when regular ministers were away for some reason. Through such arrangements Batsell Barrett gained considerable proficiency in the pulpit and a deep-seated respect for preachers.

Although neither Dr. Baxter nor Mrs. Baxter went into any details about their budding romance during the one year together at Abilene Christian College, it is apparent that they spent much time together. Dr. Baxter's biographical notes cover the period of their meeting and subsequent marriage rather briefly:

> We met at Abilene Christian College where she was a freshman the year that I was a senior. The following year she attended Pepperdine and when she was unable to return the next year we were married in December. She later finished her degree, partly at Peabody in Nashville, and took the degree from Pepperdine.[1]

The move of the Baxter family to Los Angeles could have been a rather serious predicament for young lovers; however, the solution seemed rather simple in this case. Batsell Barrett's father was assuming the

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[1]Batsell Barrett Baxter, manuscript of general information, dated August 1, 1968, p. 7.

Presidency of a very promising new Christian College which offered the promise of a Christian environment that was so important to Wanda's parents. Batsell Barrett would be nearby as he continued his education on a graduate level at the University of Souther California. Both parents cooperated, enabling Wanda to enroll at Pepperdine so that the young couple could be near each other as they prepared and planned for the future.

Mrs. Baxter explained that, before marriage, they often talked about what each wanted in life. Batsell Barrett was not at all interested in an administrative position. He had observed his father's involvement in the details of administration, problems of fund-raising for college developmental programs, and his limited contact with people in face-to-face situations. Batsell Barrett wanted to spend his life closer to people with more person-to-person contacts. Mrs. Baxter spoke of how she could recognize a particular quality or aspect of his personality which made people sense a genuine love, and she wanted this potential used to its fullest. Regarding potential she said he stressed preparation more than personal endowments:

> He felt that in order to serve the Lord best he should prepare himself to the very fullest of his ability. I knew that he came with good inheritance mentally and temperamentally. His mother was a warm outgoing person--very friendly. His father was warm and friendly, too, but not so much naturally so as she. I think that Batsell Barrett inherited this tendency of loving people and showing he loved them. Now some love people and it doesn't come through, but with Batsell Barrett, it does--he loves people and they know he loves them.[1]

Mrs. Baxter cited an example of a lady who heard him preach on one occasion and came to her saying,

> I felt while he was speaking that he had a special love just for me which would actually prompt him to help solve every problem I had; yet, I knew later that it was physically impossible for one man to help everyone.

Mrs. Baxter, seemingly in meditative thought, added an idea, "Maybe this is what people really need most to be helped--the assurance that someone really does care."[2]

Concerning his emphasis in graduate studies, Mrs. Baxter said that Batsell Barrett determined on his own that he should shift from Education to the area of Speech. Others in his family agreed with him:

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[1]Wanda Roberts Baxter, taped interview, August 5, 1968.

[2]Ibid.

> He wanted to go into speech--he discussed it with his parents--then with me. They felt speech was a field that would prepare him technically for the work he wanted to do--and that preaching was what he wanted to do, too.[1]

How much he understood about the importance of speech at that time cannot be determined; however, it is likely that he had already started forming attitudes as expressed in his book, Speaking for the Master, published in 1954. In the first chapter, he discusses the importance of learning to speak well, pointing out that this is an age when one of the basic requirements for success in any field is the ability to speak well. People who take the trouble to master the art of speaking are usually persons of influence and power. Places of eminence are attained because of the ability to talk and to persuade people to follow ideas and ideals. Then, he observes:

> Men in every walk of life find it necessary to have this same ability. "There is no other accomplishment," said Chauncey M. Depew, onetime president of the New York Central Railroad, "which any man can have which will so quickly make for him a career and secure recognition as the ability to speak acceptably." The executive, the banker, the doctor,

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[1] Ibid.

> men and women in business, all are called upon to express ideas effectively. It is important, therefore, in the most important work on earth--the Lord's work--that men and women be able to speak effectively.[1]

Refering to their planning and praying about his career, Mrs. Baxter pointed out how the parents and Batsell Baxter seemed especially mindful that the primary difficulty of Christian schools was that of keeping well-qualified personnel. She said, "Our schools have always needed so much men who are qualified, and yet, they have not been able to pay enough to keep the men who were qualified."[2]

Christian colleges had generally benefitted by being able to employ ministers, ministers' wives, and other dedicated people who were adequately enthused with Christian education to teach and work for very small salaries. Ministers were more suitable for arrangements of this type because they were usually paid substantial salaries by local churches. Churches in the area often consulted with the college administration when circumstances

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[1]Batsell Barrett Baxter, Speaking for the Master (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1954), p. 1.

[2]Wanda Roberts Baxter, op. cit.

called for employment of a new minister. Each supplemented the needs of the other; as a result, better-educated ministers were available for churches, and colleges functioned with a smaller payroll.

In answer to the question concerning the kind of person whom Batsell Barrett Baxter married, the interview and related materials reveal her to be one who: (1) shared his Christian ideas and ideals; (2) understood that his "first love" was for preaching the Gospel of Christ; and (3) was happily willing to look forward to a marriage which would require that she be the "second love" in her husband's life.

Things developed rather fast at this point. Batsell Barrett was graduated from the University of Southern California with the M.A. degree during the summer of 1938; started the 1938 school year at Pepperdine College as a member of the Speech Faculty; and in December, married Wanda Roberts. They were launched into a planned-for, combined career of teaching and preaching.

The well-planned course of events suggested that nothing was really haphazard or accidental in the development of Batsell Barrett Baxter for this particular way

of life. The mother, especially, must have felt a sense of achievement and satisfaction in viewing the direction being taken by her son.

Preeminence of Preaching

Although Batsell Barrett established the Ph.D. degree in Speech as one goal for his life, preaching was solidly the preferable ultimate aim. He lost little time in seeking out a challenge and opportunity in preaching. With a new wife and a new teaching position, he accepted employment with a recently-formed congregation of Christians as they started meeting in Whittier, California. Along with these responsibilities, he initiated his doctoral program at the University of Southern California. It was an unusually busy period for the young couple as Batsell Barrett attempted to manage a combined teaching-preaching career, a home, and a graduate program in Speech. Speaking of the period, Mrs. Baxter said, "During those first years, we were not able to have children so I was able to help a great deal in doing typing for him--and helped some in research."[1]

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[1]Wanda Roberts Baxter, op. cit.

It would be erroneous to give the impression that Batsell Barrett gave preeminence to preaching because of wanting to please his parents. In his class in homiletics at David Lipscomb College, when discussing the "call to preach,"[1] he presented students with a list of "wrong motives" for preaching. These were: (1) expectation of parents and others; (2) avoidance of military duty; (3) financial gain; (4) flattering attention; (5) inability to do anything else; and (6) love of a life of ease. He stressed that a preaching career must be motivated by an individual decision based on personal faith, and an understanding that the salvation of men's souls depends on preaching of the Gospel.

The writer, as a student in his homiletics class, remembers his admonition for the young men not to decide on a preaching career unless they felt a necessity to preach. To support his point, he quoted the apostle Paul's statement to the Corinthians, "For if I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."[2]

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[1]Batsell Barrett Baxter, Preparation and Delivery of Sermons (Homiletics course outline), Lesson II, p. 6.

[2]I Cor. 9:16 (Standard Edition).

At this appropriate time, he made reference to a statement which he said Charles Spurgeon and other prominent preachers often used, "If you can do anything else . . . don't preach." Dr. Baxter thought this was a "half-truth that might lead a person astray." It was intended to emphasize the importance of men's having an overpowering desire to preach--a desire which should be motivated by ideas taught in Biblical scriptures. The "call to preach" was not some mystical direct call by the voice of God from heaven; rather, it was an understanding of scriptural ideas which point to the need for preaching. He summarized his thoughts, saying, "The scriptures show the salvation of men's souls to be the primary motive for preaching."[1]

Dr. Baxter believes that all knowledge of the Bible was revealed by God to the writers of the Old and New Testaments. In a sermon on inspiration of the Scriptures, he reasons:

> One of the deepest and most fundamental of our convictions is the belief in the inspiration of the Bible. We believe that the Bible

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[1]Baxter (Homiletics Course Outline), op. cit.

> is a book which is from God and not from men. Although God used human writers as the medium of his revelation, the Bible is essentially a book from God. It is, therefore, an authoritative book.[1]

He believes, further, that insofar as a preacher correctly interprets and preaches the ideas, principles, and information of the Bible, his content will promulgate God's wisdom rather than man's wisdom. He conceives the preaching and teaching of this wisdom as being God's only plan for saving the people of the world. In one of his classroom lectures on the "Power of Preaching," he emphasizes:

> God chose to bring the world to salvation through the "force of ideas" rather than through the "force of might." . . . God chose to have as citizens of his Kingdom only those who could be won willingly--only those who could be won through preaching.[2]

In the context of the same outline Dr. Baxter cites a definition by Phillips Brooks: "Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men. It has two essential elements, truth and personality." To Baxter, truth meant the revelation of God's will for men as set forth in the Bible. The other element, personality, had

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[1]Sermon No. 380, preached by Baxter, Jan. 6, 1963.

[2]Baxter (Homiletics Course Outline), Lesson I, p. 3.

reference to the human being who delivered the message. He summarizes his thoughts on the importance of the personality by saying:

> Man is the channel through which the word of God flows into the hearts of men. We must keep the channel pure.[1]

Dr. Baxter stresses not only that the minister must live a pure life, but also that he must be a source of spiritual power for others to grow in purity. One of Dr. Baxter's favorite references regarding personality of the preacher is from Henry Van Dyke:

> It is only by dwelling with Him and receiving His character, His personality so profoundly, so vitally that it shall be with us as if, in His own words, we had partaken of His flesh and His blood, as if His sacred humanity had been interwoven with the very fibres of our heart and pulsed with secret power in all our veins,--it is thus only that we can be enabled to see His teaching as it is, and set it forth with luminous conviction to the souls of men.[2]

He reiterates the same idea with a quotation from William Fraser McDowell:

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Baxter (Homiletics course outline), Lesson VI, p. 17.

> You cannot give what you have not got. You cannot create consecration unless you have consecration. You cannot cause men to do their best unless you live at your best. Learning will not do it. Eloquence will not do it. Even brilliant deeds will not do it. Life giving is in the hands of life possessors.[1]

Dr. Baxter's use of quotations setting forth the ideas of prominent ministers from religious cultures outside his own background suggests that he was influenced by an enlarged cultural environment as he continued his higher education. However, it should be remembered that the references are part of a class outline in Homiletics taught by Dr. Baxter in a Christian college; hence, the more broad religious culture influenced the persons being taught in the limited sub-culture. This was not generally true in the schools related to Churches of Christ before Baxter and a few other Christian educators began to see values in degree programs offered by other institutions. Also, it should be noted that the ideas which Baxter recognizes in the life and works of great preachers in other cultures are actually ideas which are part of the Gospel of Christ. The major benefits from the enlarged cultural

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[1] Ibid.

background probably had to do with reinforcements of ideas already held, and more importantly, greater insights into rhetorical techniques which contributed to preaching effectiveness.

Enlarged Cultural Environment

The period after his graduation from Abilene Christian College had opened up a new cultural environment for Baxter. With his enrollment at the University of Southern California on the west coast, Baxter's world broadened beyond the sub-cultures previously provided by the Church of Christ and Christian educational institutions. Along with his interaction with a more general social culture he continued to function as a minister for a nearby church, and to teach Speech as a faculty member at Pepperdine College. Preaching was foremost in his thoughts, as indicated by his own brief summary of that period of life:

> After graduation in May, 1937, I went to Los Angeles where I preached for a period of six months for the North Long Beach church, then six months for the York Boulevard church in Los Angeles, after which I preached for

> four years for the new congregation in Whittier, California. This was followed by another four years with the Burbank-North Hollywood church, before moving back to Tennessee. My first year in Nashville I preached for the Belmont church while J. P. Sanders was on leave. The next five years I preached for the Trinity Lane church and then since June, 1951, I have preached for the Hillsboro congregation.[1]

One may well imagine that, as the young man initiated his program of higher education, he was anxious to learn about preaching and religious trends outside his own limited religious sub-cultures.

Some of his attitudes, interests, and emphases are reflected in his choice of a subject for the doctoral dissertation: The Heart of the Yale Lectures, which was later adapted into book-form and used by the author as a textbook for his classes in Homiletics. In the preface of the book, Baxter explains how the lectures originated in the mind of Henry Ward Beecher in 1871 and had continued through a seventy-seven year period to that present date. Plans called for places on the lectureship program to be filled from time to time by ministers who had been markedly successful in their special work of

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[1]Batsell Barrett Baxter, manuscript of general information, August 1, 1968, p. 6.

preaching the Gospel. Concerning distinctiveness of the lectures, Baxter states:

> Because of the eminence of the preachers who have been called to appear before the Divinity School of the university, this particular lectureship has achieved a distinction unequaled by other lectureships in the field of homiletics.[1]

He explains that the lectures fell into two distinct classes--one group discussing the content of preaching, and the other covering the technique of preaching.

By this time Baxter already possessed a firm conviction that God's Word should provide the basic content of preaching; therefore, he concentrated his study more on the technique of preaching. He explains:

> Those lectures on the content of preaching lay beyond the scope of this volume, for, although even in them there were found scattered suggestions on the technique of preaching, they dealt primarily with theological concepts rather than with the factors which determine skill in preaching. The material in this book is restricted to a study of homiletics; this is a volume dealing with the art of preaching.[2]

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[1]Batsell Barrett Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947), p. viii.

[2]Ibid., p. ix.

This quotation might imply that Baxter does not consider the content of preaching as a part of the "art of preaching"; however, in the ensuing paragraph, he clarifies:

> In failing to list the preacher's message as one of the most important elements in the art of preaching, I do not imply that it is less important . . . . Rather, the message is simply beyond the consideration of this book.[1]

Baxter's conclusions in the final chapter of the textbook indicate a rather thorough background in classical rhetorical theory. He uses the writings of well-known rhetoricians as a basis of comparison in making evaluations of the Yale lecturers:

> In order that these conclusions may be even more meaningful, a comparison with the principles of effective secular speaking is undertaken. The theory of persuasion set forth by the Yale lecturers is compared to the theory of persuasion set forth by secular rhetoricians both ancient and modern.[2]

The rhetoricians whom Baxter chose for a basis of comparison were: Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, George Campbell, Richard Whately, Arthur Edward Phillips, James A.

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[1] Ibid., p. ix.

[2] Ibid., p. 288.

Winans, William N. Brigance, Ray K. Immel, and Alan H. Monroe. Baxter views Campbell and Whately as being worthy of distinction for having formed a bridge between ancient rhetorical traditions and modern tenets.

After listing nine conclusions, Baxter notes that not a single persuasive technique or method of approach is unique--that each can be found among the secular rhetoricians. His general summary is:

> A comparison of the recommendations of the preachers who delivered the Lyman Beecher Lectures to the young men of the Yale Divinity School, with the admonitions of secular rhetoricians of all ages to prospective secular orators, leads to the conclusion that there is no distinctive set of rules which applies only to pulpit speaking. With but few exceptions, the principles underlying all effective speaking are the same. Certain modifications of the suggestions of the rhetoricians are sometimes made necessary by the peculiar pulpit situation and subject matter, but the basic principles remain the same.[1]

Regarding modifications, Baxter notes that the major difference is found in the pulpit's heightened demand for character and personal righteousness on the part of its occupant; also, he points out that there is usually a closer and more intimate relationship between the

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[1] Ibid., p. 306.

minister and his congregation than that which exists between the average secular speaker and his audience.

The final paragraph of the volume calls attention to the fact that the words of many eminent men have been quoted; then, an attitude is expressed by Baxter regarding the importance he gives to the Holy Scriptures:

> It seems fitting, however, that the final words should be those of the Holy Scriptures themselves.[1]

Two appropriate scriptures from the New Testament are quoted to climax the book.[2] Baxter's mother and father had taught him from infancy that the Bible should provide the "last word" when there are questions concerning authority for religious belief and practice. This same idea is fundamental with the religious and educational institutions which have predominantly influenced his total personality. While experiences in higher education and interaction with a broadened cultural environment have obviously given him new insights concerning speech, religion, and general knowledge, he still holds

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[1] Ibid., p. 308.

[2] Ibid., p. 308.

fast to the ideal that God's wisdom is superior to man's wisdom.

Thus far, the attention of this study has been focused on the more obvious sources of Baxter's ideas, values, and beliefs. Further investigations are in order concerning the Church of Christ and the Christian educational institutions wherein he communicated his dominant beliefs and values. The movement in America which produced the distinct sub-culture represented by the Church of Christ and related educational organizations can be traced as an evolving phenomenon prompted by the need of early American religious leaders to seek authority and guidance from sources other than the distant European religious cultures. The next chapter will concern itself with background religious developments as related to the Church of Christ and the idea of "restoration of the New Testament Church."

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF RELIGIOUS CULTURES

In the endeavor to understand religious developments in America, some meaningful insights may be gained by observing the factors which have influenced and shaped various churches into recognizably distinct bodies with common religious beliefs, goals, and practices. Churches seem to gain a certain "personality" or "character" much like that of an individual. While no true analogy may be drawn of the two, there are comparable environmental influences which should add interest to the study.

The term "church" has been defined simply as a "body or organization of religious believers."[1] Churches differ from one another in much the say way that individuals differ. Both seem to be molded into distinct entities by a vast interplay of forces. In the case of an individual, the parents perform a primary role in being the immediate example and source of ideas and

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[1] Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary.

values. Churches, for the greater part, seem to be the offspring of parent organizations which supply practices, ideas, and values. American churches were nurtured in their infancy by parent churches in Europe, but the distance and communication problems seemingly made it necessary for them to make adaptations which altered their features significantly. After several decades, the offspring of European churches multiplied; and in some religious families the progeny did not even resemble the parents in name, faith, and practices. One religious historian wrote of it saying:

> That complex and diversified phenomenon known as "American religion" is a product of the cultural heritage of Old Europe adapted and molded in the crucible of the American physical environment. The heritage is not only British but European, even Asian; not only of the sixteenth and seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but of twenty-five hundred years. Granted that the institutions of American religion are the immediate offspring of Reformation and Counter-Reformation movements, their roots, nevertheless, lie deeply embedded in the matrix of ancient Palestine, Greece, and Rome.[1]

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[1]Clifton E. Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960), p. 1.

This section of the study will attempt to examine materials which pertain to the development of churches in America, with particular attention being directed toward the growth of one specific religious body known today as the "Church of Christ." The following three stages of development will be noted: (1) the historical background of churches in America; (2) the development of the movement which resulted in distinctive bodies bearing the name, "Churches of Christ"; and (3) the birth and growth of the Hillsboro Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee.

The researcher will seek answers to several pertinent questions: (1) What is the cultural context in which Batsell Barrett Baxter speaks? (2) What are the dominant beliefs, values, and attitudes of his particular religious body? (3) What is expected of him in regard to behavior? and (4) What relationship does the Church of Christ have with other contemporary religious bodies?

Historical Background of Churches in America

Long before America was discovered, there were established churches in Europe with distinctive

characteristics and names. These European cultures were products of a rather strange combination of forces and influences:

> To a unique degree, medieval Europe had achieved a synthesis of Palestinian religion, Greek philosophy, and Roman law. In the first century, primitive Christianity had ventured out into the Graeco-Roman world, a pure and undefiled offspring from Judaism. Encountering the challenging forces of the Greek philosophies and oriental mystery religions, it had found it necessary to systematize and regulate its faith, presenting it in terms familiar to the Hellenistic mind.[1]

Limitations of this study will not permit tracing the history of the church from the time of its establishment in Jerusalem to the medieval period mentioned above by the historian, Clifford E. Olmstead; however, brief consideration of developing circumstances is in order so as better to understand some of the factors which prompted various religious leaders through the ages to seek restoration of New Testament Christianity. The fundamental theme of Baxter's preaching is that the church of the Twentieth century should again be patterned after the church of the New Testament period; thus, it is pertinent

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[1]Olmstead, Ibid., p. 2.

to examine significant developments which resulted in a departure from the original church.

European Religious Cultures

Mosheim, in his Ecclesiastical History, describes the condition of the church in the Twelfth Century as having deteriorated to the point that it is surprising that the religion of Christ survived:

> All orders contributed, though in different ways, to corrupt the native purity of true religion. The Roman pontiffs led the way; they would not suffer any doctrines that had the smallest tendency to diminish their despotic authority; but obliged the public teachers to interpret the precepts of Christianity in such a manner, as to render them subservient to the support of papal dominion and tyranny . . . . The priests and monks contributed, in their way, to disfigure the beautiful simplicity of religion; and, finding it their interest to keep the people in the grossest ignorance and darkness, dazzled their feeble eyes with the ludicrous pomp of a gaudy worship, and led them to place the whole of religion in vain ceremonies, bodily austerities and exercises, and particularly in a blind and stupid veneration for the clergy.[1]

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[1]John Lawrence Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, Vol. 1 (Rosemond, Calif.: Old Paths Book Club, 1959), p. 293.

Mosheim's record of church history can be expected to contain a biased view, but even with that taken into consideration, other evidences bear testimony to similar developments in the established religion of the period. The Roman papacy had patterned church government after the powerful Roman government; and with its close alliance to secular power, had successfully gained an almost unbelievable authority and control over people throughout a large portion of the world.

Historians seem to be in unanimous agreement that authority during this period was being erroneously assumed by popes and that it was being grossly abused. One source states the following assessment of conditions:

> The triumph of the Papacy, the penetration of society by the Canon Law, the use of the most sacred mysteries on occasion as sanctions for mundane claims enforced without reference to moral considerations, were making the Christian dispensation take on the aspect of mechanical legalism.[1]

Lewis Sergeant, a biographer of John Wycliffe, comments on the circumstances:

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[1]J. R. Tanner, C. W. Previte-Orton, and Z. N. Brooke, The Cambridge Medieval History (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1932), Vol. VII, p. 507.

> Not only religion, but even morality and the sanctions of society were made to depend on the subtleties of fallible men, who, whilst discrediting the intellect, applied their own imperfect intellects to the definition of good and evil for their fellow creatures.[1]

The corruptness in religion was also referred to in the literature of the age. Marsiglio of Padua, rector at the University of Paris, wrote a remarkable work, The Defender of Peace, which was translated from the Latin into both French and Italian. In the work, Marsiglio contends that the exorbitant power claimed by the Pope has disturbed the peace of the world; also, that in order to have peace, it will be necessary to reduce the religious authorities to their proper places in society, and to recognize the fundamental sovereignty of the entire community of believers in the church.[2]

Marsiglio manifested an attitude which became prominent in most nations, especially in England. During the fourteenth century, England, under the kings, Edward III and Richard II, became a country of warfare,

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[1]Lewis Sergeant, John Wycliffe (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1892), p. 29.

[2]Lynn Thorndike, The History of Medieval Europe (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928), pp. 561-62.

pestilence, and rebellion. This era, and the period immediately preceding it, wrought important changes. Distress within the country brought forth some great literature which gives much light as to social and religious conditions. It was the age of Rolle, Wycliffe, Langland, Gover, Froissart, and Chaucer. In the works of Langland and Chaucer, one can hear the authentic voices of the two chief sections of the English people. The condition of the poor is described by Langland:

> Making articulate the conscience, the pathos, the indignation of the plain godly men who paid in their labour and their lives the monstrous price of pomp and war, revolted by the injustice, the callousness, the hypocrisy, of the powerful in Church and State, but at heart conservative, lovers of old ways, suspicious of the new age, untouched by any foreign influences, the permanent substratum of English life.[1]

In Chaucer, one sees a sharp contrast:

> We have the voice of the fashionable go ahead world, of the society that did the king's business and made his court brilliant. This was the society that moulded and used the men for whom Langland spoke. It was a society where the number of educated laymen was increasing, a society secular in its temper and cosmopolitan in its outlook. Its culture and

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[1]Tanner, Previte-Orton, and Brooke, op. cit., p. 485.

> language, its codes and its interests owed hardly less to France and Italy than to English tradition. In its vivacity, in its humour, in its combination of kindliness and cynicism, as in its occasional shallowness, it represents a civilisation that was ripe and waiting for a change.[1]

For a great number of years, Rome had been the metropolis of religion, and the French Universities had been the capitals of scholastic theology and law. Sergeant thought that John Wycliffe helped England to break the bonds of foreign influences:

> The time was at hand for the English Church and the English State to break away from their foreign trammels; but a series of mighty efforts was needed in both cases, and it was only with the eye of faith that Wyclif could see the chains of Romanism and feudalism finally snapped.[2]

"Wyclif," or Wycliffe as more recent authorities spell the name, was an Oxford schoolman and Priest of the Catholic church during the fourteenth century, when Catholicism was undergoing the perplexing problem of having two popes--one in Avignon, France, and one in Rome.[3] This

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[1] Ibid., p. 485.

[2] Sergeant, op. cit., p. 23.

[3] Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), pp. 297-99.

"Great Schism" created bewilderment for Wycliffe and all other Catholics concerning which pope should be the authority for the church.

Wycliffe had been subjected to three years of intensive study of the Holy Scriptures as part of a rigorous seventeen-year course of study for a doctorate in Theology.[1] He reasoned that many of the doctrines of the church had originated during a period when church leaders were not generally enlightened with biblical or secular knowledge. He was capable and willing to subject every doctrine to an intense criticism, an attitude and practice which had a profound effect on the English religious culture. In commenting on Wycliffe's work, Of the Truth of Holy Scripture, Sergeant said:

> God's will, he says, is plainly expressed in the two Testaments taken together. Christ's law suffices for Christ's Church, without requiring the addition or substitution of another priest-made law, and the Christian who understands it has enough for his needs in this world. The direct message and voice of God to man in the words of Holy Writ, without any necessity for an intermediary--this was his "passionate conviction of truth," and we can understand how such a declaration

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[1]F. D. Matthew, The English Works of Wycliff (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1880), p. i.

> would shock the conventional orthodoxy of the fourteenth century.[1]

Contrary to orthodox ideas that only authorized church leaders could interpret Scriptures, Wycliffe believed that the common people should reason for themselves and let the Scriptures serve as the ultimate authority. As evidence to this attitude, Sergeant quoted from the text of a work by Wycliffe:

> Christian men and women, olde and young, shulden study fast in the New Testament, and no simple man of wit shulde be aferde unmesurably to study in the text of holy Writ . . . . The New Testament is of ful autoritie, and open to understonding of simple men, as to the poynts that ben most neeful to salvation.[2]

Some sources hint that Wycliffe obtained his unorthodox views from former teachers and other scholars; but according to one source, his views were the result of a keen, analytical mind which had an insight into the needs of his day:

> Wyclif conceived that he was calling for a return to the healthier outlook of an earlier age. In the dissolution of St. Thomas' synthesis of reason, the Bible, and Church

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[1] Sergeant, op. cit., p. 196.

[2] Ibid., pp. 196-97.

> customs and belief, Wyclif does not fall back on ecclesiastical authority. He proposes to re-establish equilibrium by the more arduous method of adjusting Church custom and belief so as to agree with a reasoned interpretation of the Bible, for the Bible is the most authoritative statement of God's law.[1]

Wycliffe's method of determining authority for religious belief and practice is significant to this study because of the influence it apparently had on the religious developments which spawned the Reformation Movement in Europe. In discussing the impact of Wycliffe's ideas, the author of The Shorter Cambridge Medieval History states:

> In the exceeding abstract scholasticism of Wyclif lay the germs of many ideas which could have and did have momentous practical applications . . . . In the long, conflicting gestation and transformation of ideas, theological, legal, and social, which filled thinking minds in the fourteenth century his part, curiously enough, was to present a body of formulated criticism and counter-doctrine, which could appeal to zealous, discontented, eager men of that age and through them reach the stirring elements in society, knight, bourgeois, and peasant, who were fumbling for remedies to present ills.[2]

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[1]Tanner, Previte-Orton, and Brooke, op. cit., p. 506.

[2]C. W. Previte-Orton, The Shorter Cambridge Medieval History (Cambridge: University Press, 1952), Vol. II, pp. 949-50.

Whether prompted by John Wycliffe's ideas or by original thinking, history indicates that people of the following three centuries did start testing the beliefs and institutions surrounding them. Through the efforts of John Hus, Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, and other independent thinkers, the Protestant movement swept over Europe.

The reformers initiated their movements by protesting abuses in doctrine and practices of the Roman Church. Overall, the resulting churches took as their common characteristic the rejection of the authority of the Roman Church, whether speaking through the pope or through ecumenical council. Various emphases of doctrine and practice produced distinctive religious bodies which retained many features of the parent church. Eventually, some of these religious groups became established as state religions. Olmstead describes them:

> For the most part, the earliest products of the Reformation were the great churchly systems which retained a Catholic sense of the church even though they broke with Rome. Closely allied with strong nationalistic forces in their countries, they were invariably accorded the privileges pertaining to an establishment. These systems, which belonged to the right wing of the Reformation, were the Lutheran, the

> Reformed, the Anglican, and with some justification, the Puritan.[1]

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe experienced numerous dissenting religious groups as a consequence of zealous and eager religious leaders who were still unhappy with ecclesiastical systems. They were generally built around some particular emphasis which the members believed to be expressive of the essence of Christianity. Concerning these groups, Olmstead observes:

> Their forms of polity were simple, generally of the congregational type. Although they gradually took on a more churchly character, they neither became nor aspired to become church establishments. Their strength lay in the piety of their adherents and the strictness of their discipline. Symbolic of the common man as they were, they seldom produced leaders of more than secondary importance. Yet their influence was deeply felt in Europe, and in America their character and type became normative.[2]

For the most part, the established churches in Europe, with their powerful state systems, were able to hold the dissenting groups in check. It is significant that the discovery and settling of America were contemporaneous with the Protestant Reformation in Europe.

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[1] Olmstead, op. cit., p. 4.

[2] Ibid., p. 16.

The New World was settled primarily by deeply religious people who were seeking freedom of conscience, individual rights, freedom of speech, self-government, and complete religious freedom. They found the new land favorable for expression, experimentation, and propagation regarding ideas and beliefs.

Although the idea of religious freedom brought many Europeans to the American colonies, the actual practice of religious freedom was most difficult for the various groups once they become dominant in any area. Once established, churches would often deny freedom of worship and privileges to other groups. Most of the colonies developed a Church-State relationship wherein the dominant church was supported by taxes which were paid by all members of the colony. Members of the established church could vote, hold public office, and enjoy other rights that were denied to non-members. This tight control caused people of strong character and firm beliefs to seek new territory where they could establish religious groups in harmony with their own concepts; thus, American soon became a land with a multiplicity of churches.

Concerning the immigration from Europe, the church historian, William Warren Sweet, notes that the largest single racial group to find its way to America, and the last to come, were the Scotch-Irish. These immigrants were the most widely scattered of any group, with at least five hundred Scotch-Irish communities throughout the thirteen colonies. Because of severe domination by the established Church of England, they "brought with them to the New World a burning hatred of church establishments and bishops."[1] It was primarily the Scotch-Irish influences that brought about the religious movement from which the Churches of Christ evolved.

Churches of Christ

Multiplicity and division of American churches have presented a grave problem to serious Christian believers from the very beginning of American settlement. Many sincere efforts have been made to discover ways of

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[1]William Warren Sweet, The American Churches (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), p. 21.

bringing the differing Christian groups together into one fold--one flock with one shepherd.[1] The history of many of the efforts has been compiled into one comprehensive volume sponsored by the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey near Geneva, Switzerland. Entitled, A History of the Ecumenical Movement, the volume is introduced by the Chairman of the Board, Reinold von Thadden-Trieglaff, who observes:

> Divisions have existed in the Christian society since the period of the New Testament. Church History has often been written in terms of those divisions. It had long been felt that the time had come when the history of the Church should be treated from the opposite point of view, in the light of the earnest unitive efforts by which almost every century has been marked.[2]

The Churches of Christ had their beginning in one section of the American frontier as the result of two Scotch-Irish immigrants who were thrilled with new freedoms found in America, but saddened by the spectacle of a divided Christendom. The above mentioned volume gives an account of their effort:

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[1]John 10:16.

[2]Reinold von Thadden-Trieglaff, A History of the Ecumenical Movement, ed. Ruth Rouse and Stephen C. Neill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), p. xxi.

> On the western Pennsylvania frontier, in the opening years of the 19th century, there lived two Scottish-Irish preachers of the "Seceder" variety of Presbyterianism--Thomas Campbell (1763-1854) and his son Alexander Campbell (1788-1866). These men developed an approach to Christian unity which was not only peculiarly American, but which has provided a continued impulse to unity into the present century.[1]

The account continued with pertinent facts about the approach. While still in the Old Country, Thomas Campbell had been concerned over Christian divisions in Northern Ireland, where four separate species of "seceder" Presbyterians existed after having broken with the Secession Church, which in turn was a schism from the Church of Scotland. He labored to reconcile the divided groups of Northern Ireland; however, he was unsuccessful, and several factors combined to cause him to seek new opportunities in America. His son, Alexander, and the rest of his family, migrated a short time later. Before they left Ireland, both of the men had probably been influenced to some extent by James and Robert Haldane, John Glas, Robert Sandeman, and Grenville Ewing, who were discouraged

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[1]Don Herbert Yoder, "Christian Unity in Nineteenth-Century America," A History of the Ecumenical Movement, ed. Ruth Rouse and Stephen C. Neill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), pp. 236-37.

with the rigid formalism and lack of evangelistic fervor characterized by the established church of Scotland.

Much to his disappointment, the elder Campbell found the same trend developing in America as he had witnessed in Ireland. However, his ideas soon brought trouble from the tiny presbytery in western Pennsylvania. After being rebuked for allowing non-Secederes to participate in the Lord's Supper, he withdrew from his church in 1808, and gathered a group of like-minded people which first called itself the "Christian Association of Washington, Pennsylvania."

In order to explain his position, Thomas Campbell published in 1809 a now famous plea for Christian unity entitled "Declaration and Address." The principal ideas of the document are described by Don Herbert Yoder:

> This document, one of the great milestones on the path of Christian unity in America, was a Declaration of Independence to all those on the frontier who desired to transcend the sectarian spirit. His message to the liberated souls is--push through the tangled underbrush of the Protestant creeds, which are for the most part human opinions only, to the pure spring of Bible truth. Unite in Christian Associations, rejecting human creeds and rallying around the Bible alone. "Sick and tired of the bitter jarrings and janglings of a party

> spirit"--so Campbell describes himself, after his tilt with conservative Presbyterianism on the frontier. "We would desire to be at rest," he writes, "and, were it possible, we would also desire to adopt and recommend such measures as would give rest to our brethren throughout all the Churches: as would restore unity, peace, and purity to the whole Church of God."[1]

Yoder observed that there was something uniquely American about the restoration movement, which was characterized by warm-hearted informality in worship, vocal insistence on congregational independence, and avoidance of clericalism.

These ideas advocated by Campbell will be recognized as being very similar to those set forth by John Wycliffe during the Medieval period. Circumstances were entirely different in America, though, and the restoration ideas were destined to have a much greater impact upon society in America than in England. Churches resulting from the movement started by the restoration ideas have been noted by recent writers as being among those which have made great sociological impacts upon America.[2]

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[1]Yoder, Ibid., p. 237.

[2]Hartzell Spence, The Story of America's Religions (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. ix.

In a study of American churches, Hartzell Spence traces the "restoration movement" by referring to it as the "Disciples movement." This may be accounted for because of the fact that two large religious groups resulted from the restoration ideas: (1) the Disciples of Christ (also known as the Christian Churches) and, (2) the bodies commonly known as the Churches of Christ. Both groups had a common historical background in America until the movement divided in the year 1906 over the issues of missionary societies and church music.

Spence calls attention to three indigenous groups, other than Campbell's group, which actively started propagating essentially the same ideas for unity of Christian believers. He writes:

> The idea of designating followers of Jesus simply as "Christians" without denominational status was probably first used in America by James O'Kelly. In 1792, he led a small group away from the Methodist Church in Virginia and North Carolina. The group reached a strength of more than twenty thousand and ultimately was absorbed by either the Disciples or the Congregationalists.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 186.

Another group was formed about 1801, when two New Englanders, Elias Smith and Abner Jones, broke relations with the Baptists. Of this movement, Spence states:

> By 1807, their group included fourteen churches, also known as "Christian," which emphasized the right of all believers to think for themselves.[1]

The third group originated from the efforts of a frontier Presbyterian minister named Barton W. Stone, who showed an intense dislike for the rigidity of his church's doctrine. He persuaded others to join him in establishing the Springfield Presbytery. They soon recognized that this new organization was foreign to the New Testament pattern. They composed a document called Last Will and Testament which Spence labeled as satiric; however, other sources indicate that serious thinking and desire for unity prompted the authors to write it. Another historian describes it as being of great significance:

> The Last Will and Testament contains less than eight hundred words, but it is one of the classical documents coming out of the restoration movement. It showed the sincerity and honesty which characterized Stone in wanting to

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[1] Ibid., p. 186.

> give up everything of human origin in religion and take only the Bible.[1]

After this introduction, the volume gave the text of the document. The items especially related to ecumenism were:

> (1) We will, that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one Body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.
>
> (2) We will, that our name of distinction, with its Reverend title, be forgotten, that there be but one Lord over God's heritage, and his name One.
>
> (3) We will, that our power of making laws for the government of the church, and executing them by delegated authority, forever cease; that the people may have free course to the Bible, and adopt the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.
>
> (4) We will, that candidates for the Gospel ministry henceforth study the Holy Scriptures with fervent prayer, and obtain license from God to preach the simple Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, without any mixture of philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men, or the rudiments of the world . . .
>
> (5) We will, that each particular church, as a body, actuated by the same spirit, choose her own preacher, and support him by a free will

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[1]Earl Irvin West, The Search for the Ancient Order, Vol. I (Nashville, Tenn.: Gospel Advocate Co., 1949), p. 25.

> offering, without a written call or subscription--admit members--remove offences; and never henceforth delegate her right of government to any men whatsoever.
>
> (6) We will, that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books, which stand in competition with it, may cast them into the fire if they choose; for it is better to enter into life having one book, than having many to be cast into hell.
>
> (7) We will, that preachers and people, cultivate a spirit of mutual forbearance; pray more and dispute less; and while they behold the signs of the times, look up, and confidently expect that redemption draweth nigh . . .

The document was signed by six witnesses: Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard M'Nemar, B. W. Stone, John Thompson, and David Purviance.

Spence notes that the movement by Stone won an instant hearing primarily because settlers had been so confused by the denominational preachers, each of whom claimed an exclusive "ladder to heaven." He describes the new preaching as being independent, liberal, and intellectual. The Presbyterians were especially attracted by Stone's preaching. "By 1827," Spence notes, "the Stoneites numbered 12,940, from Kentucky and Tennessee to Missouri."[1]

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[1]Spence, op. cit., p. 187.

This quotation by Spence points to one of the bothersome problems faced by each of these groups as they sincerely tried to get away from distinguishing names. Other people and groups insisted on giving them names of some type other than what they desired to be called. Followers of Barton W. Stone's teaching were called "Stoneites," and those converted by Campbell's preaching were labeled "Campbellites." When the movements eventually merged, the members generally agreed that they would use no names but those giving preeminence to Christ. The prevailing attitude of people within the movement was expressed by one, John Smith, who spoke at one of the meetings which brought unity to the similar groups:

> Let us, then my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stoneites, New Lights or Old Lights, or any other kind of lights, but let us come to the Bible and to the Bible alone, as the only book in the world that can give us the light we need.[1]

Pleas by rugged, dedicated, and sacrificial preachers were heard throughout the land in the early nineteenth century. Spence cites some facts in speaking of the work of "Raccoon John Smith"--the same Smith as quoted above:

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[1]West, op. cit., p. 33.

> Raccoon John's greatest achievement was his role in the merger of between twelve thousand and twenty thousand Disciples with ten thousand Kentucky "Christians." Barton W. Stone, the Christian leader, had long advocated such a union. On January 1, 1832, both Stone and Raccoon John were in Lexington, Kentucky, when the groups were merged.[1]

After the merger, Thomas Campbell's son, Alexander, gradually became one of the most powerful influences of the restoration movement. Research of literature has indicated a tendency by writers who were sympathetic to his views to refrain from emphasizing Campbell's role in the movement. Possibly this could be accounted for because of the desire to escape being labeled "Campbellites." One example of how he is viewed by those outside his group may be seen in information revealed by Walter Brownlow Posey, who delivered the Twenty-fifth Series of the Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in South History at Louisiana State University in April, 1963. The lectures were published in book form and the second chapter entitled, "Protestants Against a New Sect," is devoted to the movement in which Campbell functioned. Concerning Campbell, Posey says:

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[1]Spence, op. cit., pp. 191-92.

> Early in the course of his crusade Campbell became aware of the great value in a continuing medium by which his reforms could be promulgated, his opinions disseminated, and his criticisms of the Baptists broadcast. For this purpose he established in 1823 at his home in Bethany, Virginia, a small monthly magazine, the Christian Baptist . . . . The output of Campbell's press was so large that the federal government established a post office at Bethany and made him the postmaster, a position which he held for thirty years.[1]

About the movement, Posey summarizes:

> The West was admirably suited for the rise and growth of this new church. Campbell was always aware of the great vantage ground within which his followers sought to convince and to convert. The simplicity of his gospel, freed from the subtleties of Calvinism and preached by a nativeborn lay group, had powerful appeal and bore significant results. By 1860 this denomination had some 200,000 members. Together Stone and Campbell had built a church that has been aptly described as "an example of a religious movement true to the genius of the democratic peoples of America, riding the wave of westward expansion and becoming a voice and vehicle of the religious aspirations."[2]

The first signs of a division in the rapidly growing religious body came about the middle of the nineteenth century. As often happens, the division originated from

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[1]Walter Brownlow Posey, Religious Strife on the Southern Front (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), p. 55.

[2]Ibid., pp. 74-75.

attempts to unify forces. Mission-minded leaders were intent on combining the powers of all the congregations by establishing an American Missionary Society. As reported by one source, they persuaded many churches to send representatives to a national convention:

> At their first national convention, held in Cincinnati in 1849, the American Christian Missionary Society was organized as their first cooperative endeavor in missionary work. The objection that such a society found no warrant in Scripture went unheeded; the trend toward formal organization had begun.[1]

The churches which cooperated in that venture soon crystallized into a separate body known generally as the Christian Church or Disciples of Christ. The majority of the churches which opposed the formation of the national organization began to use the name Church of Christ.

The more conservative congregations attempted to hold firmly to the restoration principles. Since they had no State or National organizations, they were hardly noticed by historians or religious statisticians after the development of the Christian Church. In recent years, however, Churches of Christ have spread rapidly

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[1]Olmstead, op. cit., p. 310.

and appear to having a noticeable impact on the American culture.

Status of Churches of Christ

It is almost impossible to present information giving the true status of an organization that has no head on earth, no headquarters, no official publishing house, and no authoritative body above the eldership of each local congregation.

Although the churches disclaim being a denomination, they have been recognized as representing a significant religious body; and Frank S. Mead has listed the "Churches of Christ" in his Handbook of Denominations. The following quotation will show the status of the group according to Mead's sources:

> Twenty thousand independent congregations with a total membership of about 2,000,000 constitute the Churches of Christ. They are located in 50 states with greatest concentrations in the South and West, have congregations in 65 foreign countries, and in the past 20 years have emerged as one of the top 10 non-Catholic bodies in North America.[1]

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[1]Frank S. Mead, Handbook of Denominations (New York: Abingdon Press, 1965), p. 87.

In 1964, the Detroit News, a metropolitan daily with a circulation of 750,000, ran a series of articles on "What Our Religions Are." For the series, information about the "Churches of Christ" was presented by Joseph F. Jones, who was serving as minister of the Northwest Church of Christ in Detroit, and Professor of Bible and Church History at Michigan Christian Junior College nearby in Rochester, Michigan. The information was published and later printed in booklet form.

Jones was careful to explain in his introduction that "the very nature of Christianity as viewed by Churches of Christ makes it impossible for one individual member to speak officially for these churches throughout the world." He continued to say,

> I do not feel it presumptuous, however, to note that the general beliefs and practices set forth in this article are shared by the main stream of Christian leaders within the brotherhood of Churches of Christ.[1]

In speaking of the beliefs, Jones cited essentially the same basic beliefs as those already noted in this study

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[1]Joseph F. Jones, The Churches of Christ Salute You (Dallas, Tex.: Christian Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 1.

as being propagated by the original leaders of the restoration movement.

Concerning the status of the Churches of Christ, he writes:

> Churches of Christ in the United States today constitute a brotherhood of 2,300,000 members, in approximately 19,000 congregations, and are served by perhaps more than 8,000 ministers. Statistics on the churches, however, listed in the World Almanac and the Yearbook of American Churches, must be viewed conservatively, since there is no national headquarters for gathering and reporting data on the churches; and it is a known fact that some congregations do not report such statistical information.
>
> In metropolitan Detroit alone there are more than sixty churches of Christ, with a membership exceeding 11,000. These churches maintain a wholesome congregational autonomy, working harmoniously in fellowship projects too extensive for one church; but without any attempted control from any "national headquarters." Some sources cite the churches of Christ as the nation's fastest growing church numerically.[1]

It may be noted in the above quotation that the term "churches of Christ" is not capitalized except for the word "Christ." This is intentional on the part of the writer of the article. Jones explains that the terms "church of Christ" and "churches of Christ" were not

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[1] Ibid., p. 3.

intended by members to be denominational in sense. Grammatically, the terms describe the church as being the possession of Christ. Various other descriptive words or expressions indicate the nature of the church: "body of Christ," "family of God," "church of God," and "church of the firstborn." He explains that individual members of the church are designated in terms of their relationship to God, Christ, or one another. "As learners of Christ's teaching, they are disciples; in view of their cleansing in conversion, they are designated as saints; and, in relationship to other Christians, they are brothers and sisters in Christ." Jones summarizes his discussion of the descriptive use of terms in the following manner:

> It is significant that in the New Testament such terms or words referring to individual members are not proper titles denoting some special office in the church, but rather descriptive of the Christian's nature.[1]

As may be noted from the preceding statements from one who is attempting to describe the "Church of Christ" to those who may be unfamiliar with it, members of the religious body desire a non-denominational status for the

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[1] Ibid., p. 4.

church; and they would like other people to view them as a group of disciples who follow Christ rather than as some denominational creed or doctrine. In a booklet entitled Neither Catholic, Protestant nor Jew, Baxter attempts to communicate this same idea:

> We are attempting to be in truth and in fact just what people were in New Testament times, Christians, members of the church. If Paul were here today and someone would ask him if he were a Protestant, he would not understand the question. Paul never claimed to be a Protestant. He refers to himself in I Corinthians 4:1 as a "minister of Christ," and that is a follower of Christ, a Christian. He sought to persuade Agrippa to be a Christian, nothing more (Acts 26:28-29). The church cannot be called Protestant in the ordinary sense of the word because Protestant churches did not exist in New Testament times. Neither then nor now is the church a party within a party, built around a powerful personality or built upon one passage of scripture to the neglect of others. Paul states the reason why this could not be the case when he condemns the people of Corinth for their party divisions by saying, "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's" (I Corinthians 3:21-23).[1]

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[1]Batsell Barrett Baxter, Neither Catholic, Protestant Nor Jew (Nashville: Hillsboro Church of Christ, n.d.), p. 10.

This ideal for the church as advocated by Baxter, Jones, and others of the present Restoration movement calls for abandonment of denominational names, creeds, and doctrines which are not authorized by the Scriptures. Their reasoning is that if the widely-separated Jews and Gentiles could be transformed into one body by the preaching of the Gospel, surely denominational groups today can also be united by the same method. To these advocates of New Testament Christianity, the Word of God represents the "seed" of the Kingdom of Christ as indicated by the Lord himself when he spoke the parable of the sower.[1] When the seed is planted in "good ground" with favorable circumstances, it will produce fruit after its kind. They believe that when the pure New Testament Christianity is preached, the resulting religious groups will take on the characteristics and practices of the original parent church.

On the other hand, if teaching and preaching of the Gospel have been or are corrupted by additions of traditions and philosophies of men, it may be expected that the offspring will differ substantially from the

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[1]Luke 8:5-15.

pattern set forth in the New Testament for the church which Christ established. Also, resulting religious bodies will differ from one another to the extent that accumulated traditions and creeds differ and are modified. Those who plead for restoration of the New Testament church recognize that preaching of the Gospel in the first century did not abolish Jewish or Gentile sects, but that through the arduous method of teaching and preaching, great numbers were converted; and these religious groups were molded into harmonious bodies regardless of location, language, customs, or secular government.

The Word of God is viewed by members of the Churches of Christ as the unifying force. Admittedly, there are problems of interpretation; problems associated with maturation; and the manifold problems common to human failing; yet, insofar as people use the common source of authority, there is a potential for oneness as advocated by the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians:

> Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of

> your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.[1]

Members of the Churches of Christ believe that the New Testament represents "the faith" or body of knowledge revealed by God through Christ and his special messengers, and that it is complete. To them, this idea is supported by numerous scriptures such as the following two:

> Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.[2]

> Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them . . . . how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? Which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will.[3]

The reasoning is that since the writers of the New Testament were eye-witnesses and were given special

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[1]Ephesians 4:3-4.

[2]Jude 1:3.

[3]Hebrews 2:1-4.

powers and gifts, their guidance, admonition, and knowledge represent the best possible source for authority and unity.

Even with this common source of authority, difficulties similar to those of the Corinthian church are expected. That church had inspired teachers and preachers who taught the same doctrine; yet because of tendencies to give men preeminence, some became followers of Peter, others of Paul, and still others of Apollos. Paul's epistle rebuked the Corinthians and admonished them to give Christ all the glory rather than honoring men.[1] Members of Churches of Christ believe that the epistles were written to the various churches for the purpose of guiding and correcting disorders in those religious bodies; and also, to serve the same purposes for future churches.

One of the more significant characteristics of Churches of Christ is that of critical examination of doctrines and practices being taught by teachers and preachers in their own midst as well as those of other religious groups. Members believe this practice is a

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[1] I Corinthians 1:10-13.

necessity if they heed the guidance of the epistles. For example, they note Paul's admonition to the Corinthians: "Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves."[1] Also, attention is directed to the epistle to the Roman church, which admonishes:

> Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent.[2]

Because they think people can easily be deceived by conflicting religious doctrines being propagated by skilled orators, evangelists of Churches of Christ have often been involved with religious controversy in the form of oral and written debates and discussions.

Alexander Campbell had numerous debates with outstanding public speakers of his era. When Robert Owen, England's champion of skepticism, came to America in 1828 challenging America's clergy to debate concerning the Christian religion, Campbell accepted the challenge. The debate was conducted in Cincinnati, Ohio, at the

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[1] II Corinthians 13:5.

[2] Romans 16:17-18.

largest Methodist church house in the city, and is described by one source as being well-attended:

> Campbell's moderators were judge Jacob Burnet, former mayor of the city; Major Daniel Gano, and Col. Samuel W. Davis. The debate started on Monday, April 13, 1829, and with the exception of Sunday, continued over the twenty-first. The attendance was so large that many couldn't get in, and had to return home. On the last day there were twelve hundred present.[1]

With the passage of time, it appears that public debates are not being utilized as often by preachers of the Churches of Christ as during the Colonial period; however, current endeavors still show evidence of aggressive activities.

Endeavors of Churches of Christ

It is not possible to examine all facets of endeavors by the Churches of Christ as they attempt to reach and influence the modern world; however, it is pertinent to observe some recent activities and developments so as to have a fuller perspective of the religious culture in which Batsell Barrett Baxter functions.

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[1]West, op. cit., pp. 74-75.

The Time magazine of January 20, 1967 gives the following report regarding some of the more noticeable activities during the previous year:

> The 2,500,000 members of the Churches of Christ, who live mostly in the South and Southwest, have embarked on a new kind of aggressive evangelism. In order to carry the Gospel to one corner of the U.S. where they have few adherents, the churches are sending entire communities of believers to the urban Northeast instead of relying on individual missionaries to do the task.
>
> The first Exodus took place in 1963 when Dwain Evans, a Church of Christ preacher, led a trek of 85 families, most of them from Texas, to West Islip, Long Island. So successful was this experiment--the West Islip congregation now has its own $300,000 church and has won 100 converts--that other ministers set up similar communities in Somerville, N.J. and Stamford, Conn.
>
> This year, the Churches of Christ plan to organize new congregations in Rochester, N.Y., Burlington, Mass., and Toronto, Canada. By 1968, they hope to ship a readymade congregation to Sao Paulo, Brazil.[1]

An examination of the Britannica Book of the Year for 1968 reveals information which suggests rather widespread influences:

> Among other evangelistic efforts, Operation Doorbell, a religious survey approach to

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[1] "Religion," Time, Jan. 20, 1967, p. 66.

> evangelism, was responsible for setting up 6,500 home Bible Studies across the U.S. The Faith Corps sent young mission trainees to assist missionaries in many countries. The advance guard of Operation 1968, a group of 200 missionary families settled in Bela Horizonte, Braz., for evangelistic purposes. Perhaps the most notable step of 1967 was the founding of Campus Evangelism, designed to train college students to reach their classmates . . . . Seminars were held in California, Florida, and Texas.[1]

Since Churches of Christ do not have any organizational structure above the local congregation, many observers are amazed at the way churches throughout the world cooperate in joint ventures. Challenges, needs, and opportunities are usually publicized in brotherhood papers and on nationwide radio and television programs. If such efforts appear to be scriptural, wise, and functional, the appeals normally receive enthusiastic response from individuals and churches. Willing churches cooperate in sending funds, supplies, and skilled individuals to meet specific needs. A report from Brintannica in 1967, illustrates the cooperative ventures:

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[1]"Churches of Christ," Britannica Book of the Year, 1968, Ed. W. R. Dell (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1968), p. 671.

> Across North America "Campaigns for Christ," in which many churches in a city cooperate in an evangelistic effort, were held. Groups of 50 to 100 workers also conducted such campaigns in New Zealand, Nigeria, South Africa, and Korea.
>
> Team effort is typical in overseas mission groups. In Korea the team included a veterinarian, physician, nurses, civil engineer and printer, as well, as teachers and preachers. In Nigeria, ten years after the church was registered with the government, there were 600 congregations, 275 African preachers, and 50,000 members.
>
> The program "Herald of Truth" was broadcast on 825 radio stations and 152 television outlets in 49 states of the U.S. and in 12 other countries.[1]

In other cooperative ventures churches and individuals in 1966 were operating sixteen junior colleges, five senior colleges, and three graduate schools; they were supporting fifty-two children's homes, two maternity homes, and twelve homes for the elderly; and were gradually expanding work among the blind, deaf, and imprisoned.[2] These efforts have been the source of adverse criticism by some preachers and churches in the brotherhood who think of the efforts as being comparable to the

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[1] Britannica Book of the Year, 1967, p. 664.

[2] Britannica Book of the Year, 1968, p. 671.

Missionary Societies which caused division earlier in the movement. In all cases, however, the churches are autonomous in government and have the power in their local bodies to support or refrain from supporting any particular collective effort of the brotherhood.

Some individual congregations have made great impacts upon their immediate environment. The 20th Century Christian magazine for April, 1969 published a reprint from Guideposts magazine which honored the congregation in Madison, Tennessee, with its 12th annual award for its "conspicuous initiative and spiritual creativity." Dr. Norman Vincent Peale made a formal presentation of a bronze plaque to the Madison Church of Christ on January 7, 1969. The award contains the following information:

> The church began with 70 members meeting in a garage. Today, 34 years later, Madison Church of Christ in Madison, Tennessee, has some 3,000 members--white and black--who worship and work in an enormous complex of meeting rooms, workshops and a handsome new auditorium seating 3,000. Attendance at its two Sunday morning services often tops 6,000; its Sunday school is the 13th largest in the nation.
>
> The really impressive fact, though, about Madison Church of Christ is not its size nor its fine facilities--it is the accomplishments of its congregation. Someone has estimated that 90 per cent of Madison's members

> participated in one or more of the church's special projects. And those projects are almost uncountable.[1]

Just a few miles from the Madison Church of Christ there is another congregation that, although not as large, probably has had an even greater impact upon the world at large. If so, it possibly can be attributed to the preaching and speaking of Batsell Barrett Baxter, who has served as the regular minister for the church since 1951. The emphasis of this research project will now shift to this one specific body of religious people known as the Hillsboro Church of Christ.

The Hillsboro Church of Christ

The initial meeting of the Hillsboro Church of Christ was held on the first Sunday in October, 1927, in a residence at 2208 Hillsboro Road. S. F. Morrow preached the first sermon to a small group of twenty-seven people. On the following three Sundays the group listened to preaching by V. E. Gregory, J. P. Sanders, and S. P.

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[1] "Guideposts Church Award for 1968," 20th Century Christian, April, 1969, pp. 26-28.

Pittman, each taking the preaching responsibilities in the order given. These three preachers continued to supply the preaching for the congregation by appointments for several years.

The group purchased the land at 2206 Hillsboro Road during the spring of 1928; built the basement of the present building during 1929; erected the present building, including the main auditorium and classrooms during 1931; and in 1955, constructed the twenty-six additional classrooms for the educational program.

A brief historical sketch published by the church cites the following information:

> For several years, the Hillsboro congregation did not have a regular minister. Different preachers were given monthly appointments. Among those engaged in this way were J. E. Acuff, R. C. Bell, F. B. Srygley, E. G. Collins, J. T. Hinds, Clay Pullias and others. Many outstanding preachers have held meetings at Hillsboro, among whom are L. L. Brigance, P. D. Wilmeth, J. P. Sanders, Horace Busby, G. C. Brewer, Otis Gatewood, N. B. Hardeman, James D. Bales, Norvel Young, James Baird, Willard Collins, L. R. Wilson, Ira North, Athens Clay Pullias, Howard Horton, J. D. Thomas, George Bailey, Len Channing, and others.[1]

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[1] "Historical Sketch," Directory of Hillsboro Church of Christ (Nashville: Hillsboro Church of Christ, 1966), p. 1.

Other information in the "Historical Sketch" reveals that in 1936, J. P. Sanders was called to become the first regular minister of the church. When Sanders resigned in 1939 to accept employment with the George Pepperdine College in Los Angeles, the church secured the services of B. C. Goodpasture, formerly of Atlanta, Georgia, who was noted throughout the brotherhood as an outstanding preacher. He moved to Nashville to assume the editorship of a well-established and influential brotherhood paper entitled, The Gospel Advocate. Goodpasture resigned as minister at Hillsboro in 1951 and was succeeded by Batsell Barrett Baxter.

Immediately thereafter, Goodpasture was selected by the church to serve as one of the several elders who oversee the congregation. Diligent attention is given by the church to pattern its organization after the New Testament example. A quotation from one of Baxter's sermons will serve to explain the emphasis on elders for oversight:

> Let us go back and study in some detail the original plan as given by the inspired writers of the New Testament. First of all, there was a plurality of elders in each congregation. This is shown by the fact that when Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians he began it with

> these words, "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." (Phil. 1:1) . . . . At this point we need to pause and demonstrate that the terms--elders, presbyters, bishops, overseers, and pastors--are synonyms and are to be used interchangably. The New Testament pictures a group of men, all of equal rank, ruling each congregation.[1]

When the church directory was printed in July, 1966, there were ten elders serving as overseers: Harmon A. Collins, F. Marlin Connelly, R. K. Evans, B. C. Goodpasture, James W. McDonough, Prentice A. Meador, H. Kelly Morton, C. N. Richardson, E. Meredith Shepherd, and E. W. Smith. These elders were assisted by twenty appointed deacons, who assumed most of the responsibility for the functioning of the church program as the elders directed and supervised various projects.

Concerning the membership the "Directory" published in 1966 relates:

> The congregation has had a regular and continued growth. In order to relieve the crowded conditions at the Sunday morning service, in September 1951, two identical services were begun. The congregation is located near colleges and universities and many students make

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[1]B. B. Baxter, The Structure of the Church (Sermon #383, preached on Jan. 27, 1963).

> this their church home while in the city . . . . The Sunday morning Bible classes have an attendance of from 800 to 900. These classes are well graded and are under the direction of efficient teachers. The congregation has grown in numbers from the original 27 to a membership at the present time (July 1966) of approximately 1260.[1]

The influence of the congregation and its preachers has potentially reached literally millions of people. For several years the Sunday morning sermons have been taped and broadcast Sunday evenings on a local radio station. Afterward, the tapes of the sermons are filed in the church library and made available to churches throughout the area and other parts of the United States at no charge. Dr. Baxter's secretary, Mrs. G. Paul Crowder, has indicated that small churches, when not being able to secure preachers for certain periods, will often contact the Hillsboro congregation for an appropriate number of Baxter's taped sermons. Records are kept on the tape containers as to where the sermons have been heard. Also, mimeographed copies of the sermons are made available to the radio audience and to all interested preachers, students, and members of the church who desire to be on the mailing list.

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[1] Directory, p. 2.

During most of Dr. Baxter's time with the church, the elders have arranged for him to be available for extensive radio and television preaching in cooperation with national brotherhood sponsored "Herald of Truth" programs. Also, Dr. Baxter has been allowed to serve on the faculty at David Lipscomb College during most of his association with the Hillsboro church.

The church activities have extended across the waters to Europe and other countries. Concerning mission work, the church directory noted:

> Wil and Lee Goodheer were sent to the Netherlands by this congregation in 1959. They have worked in Haarlem and The Hague.
>
> For the past fourteen years Brother Len Channing in Aylesbury, England, has been fully supported by the Hillsboro church. In 1961 a group of 40 workers went from the States, under the direction of the Hillsboro elders to help start a congregation in the Wembley-Harrow section of London . . . . Three men in England receive their support from Hillsboro. Similar campaigns were held in Aylesbury and Wembley during the summer of 1963, with ninety workers from the States going to help the English brethren strengthen the congregations there. Batsell Barrett Baxter has been the preacher in all the meetings during these campaigns.[1]

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[1] Directory, p. 2.

The church cooperated with Dr. Baxter in making it possible for him to do extensive traveling and speaking in other parts of the world. He made a trip to Europe and the Holy Land in 1949; was flown to Tokyo at the invitation of members of the churches in the Far East--a trip that lasted from November 17 to December 12, 1957, and included visits to Hawaii, Ibaraki (Japan), Seoul (Korea), and back to Los Angeles; was sent to Lubbock, Texas for the religious campaign conducted in the new Lubbock Municipal Auditorium, May 13-20, 1956; and again to Lubbock during October 4-11, 1964 for another campaign in the 10,000 seat Municipal building.

Much pertinent information about the Hillsboro Church of Christ is revealed in an address delivered by Dr. Baxter on October 2, 1966, the occasion being the thirty-ninth anniversary of the church. In his introduction he gave a brief summary of the nature and work of the church described in the New Testament; then, he spoke of the Hillsboro church:

> This is an auspicious occasion, for this is the thirty-ninth birthday of the Hillsboro Church of Christ. It began on the first Sunday in October, 1927, with twenty-seven charter members. Our new directory lists 1260 members as of this

> date. These are active working, regular members who are currently part of the Hillsboro church. What are these Christians doing in carrying out the Lord's work today?
>
> Something of the activities of the church can be seen in the record of contributions. In 1943 the average Sunday contribution was $243.00. By 1951 the per Sunday contribution had risen to approximately $1000.00. In 1962 the weekly total was $3,071.00. In 1965 the average weekly contribution was $4,140.95. This was an increase of $465.00 over 1964 and was an average of $3.31 per person per week. Even more significant than the total or the individual per capita giving, in my estimation, is the use made of these funds. For years we have divided our expenditures into two categories "four ourselves" and "for others." In 1965, 67.4 per cent was spent for others, with 32.6 per cent spent on the home operation. The figures for the first six months of 1966 show an increase of $318.00 per Sunday over 1965. Even more encouraging is the fact that 73 per cent has been spent for others and only 27 per cent for ourselves out of the record collections for the first six months of this year.[1]

Throughout the remainder of the address, Baxter cited how the work of the Hillsboro church fell into the same categories as the work done by the early Jerusalem church: (1) benevolence; (2) edification; and (3) evangelism--this category received 61 per cent of the 1965 contributions. Examples were given in each of the

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[1]B. B. Baxter, What the Church is Doing (Sermon No. 532, preached on Oct. 2, 1966), pp. 1-2.

categories so that the church members could understand how their contributions were being used. A note was added to the mimeographed copy of the address explaining:

> From time to time the elders call upon the 1260 members of the congregation to give over-and-above their usual giving for some special need. On October 2, 1966--the Sunday the above sermon was preached--the call was for help in providing the funds to make more color television films for the Herald of Truth program. The baskets were passed as usual. When the collection was counted it totalled $33,574.65.[1]

The available information on the Hillsboro Church of Christ does indicate an active, giving, and growing religious body. Apparently, its influence is being exerted in many directions through Christian education, religious campaigns, missionary activities, benevolent work, local church programs, and the mass media of national radio and television. At this stage the researcher is primarily concerned about determining how Batsell Barrett Baxter has functioned in this particular cultural environment.

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[1] Ibid., p. 3.

CHAPTER III

BAXTER AND THE HILLSBORO CHURCH OF CHRIST

A sound rhetoric, according to Gordon F. Hostettler, must be concerned "with the humaneness of discourse; i.e., with its total and long range effect upon society and not merely with its immediate effect upon a present audience."[1]

Since Batsell Barrett Baxter is a contemporary speaker, it will be somewhat difficult to observe and evaluate on the basis of Hostettler's "sound rhetoric" as it pertains to long range effects; nevertheless, it is possible to observe the basic characteristics of the subject's rhetoric over the rather long span of eighteen years--almost two decades.

Earlier, in defining rhetoric, it was noted by the researcher that rhetoric could deal with either truth or falsehood, and with either ethical or unethical method. This is true; however, as pointed out by Hostettler, "in

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[1]Hostettler, op. cit., p. 12.

its best tradition, rhetoric has stressed integrity of ideas, adequacy of thought processes, and the always needed ethics for communication."[1] Hostettler then noted that, in this sense, speeches should ultimately be evaluated in terms of their relationship to truth, freedom, and the aspirations of mankind. Baxter's speaking at Hillsboro will be examined with these concepts of rhetoric in mind.

The study at this point will concentrate principally upon a man and his efforts to publicize and promulgate his beliefs, ideas, and related knowledge. After considering what was expected from him by the culture in which he functioned, the researcher will seek answers to the following questions: (1) How did Baxter interpret the needs of the people to whom he spoke? (2) What means and tools were utilized by Baxter? (3) How successful were his attempts at creating and discovering ideas, analyzing and arranging materials, and delivering messages?

Special interest will be manifested in the content of messages and the possible effect of the content upon

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[1] Ibid.

the destinies of listeners. Baxter's major ideas will be observed as they are exposed in representative sermons and written materials. Perhaps this is the best way to understand the speaker. Ernest J. Wrage, a rhetorician of the modern era, has written an interesting comment in regard to ideas:

> Whether we seek explanations for an overt act of human behavior in the genesis and moral compulsion of an idea, or whether we accept the view that men seek out ideas which promote their interests and justify their activities, the illuminating fact is that in either case the study of ideas provides an index to the history of man's values and goals, his hopes and fears, his aspirations and negations, to what he considers expedient or inapplicable.[1]

This approach potentially could provide enlightening information about the culture of this period of time. Wrage also observed that "it is axiomatic that the extant records of man's responses to the social and physical world as expressed in formulations of thought provide one approach to a study of the history of his culture."[2]

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[1]Ernest J. Wrage, "Public Address: A Study in Social and Intellectual History," Quarterly Journal of Speech (Dec., 1947), p. 451.

[2]Ibid., p. 451.

Expectations of the Hillsboro Church of Christ

On November 10, 1968, Dr. Baxter delivered a message to the Hillsboro congregation on the subject of "preaching." He introduced the sermon with these words:

> When a person comes into the Hillsboro church building his eyes begin to explore the surroundings. He finds, first of all, that the building is relatively simple. There are seats, approximately 735 permanent seats, with carpeted aisles and full length drapes at the front. There is a baptistry, implying that at each service there is the hope that someone will want to become a Christian. On Sunday mornings the communion table is spread in anticipation of that time in the service when the Lord's Supper will be served. Then, there is the pulpit. The pulpit is central. It is raised above the surrounding floor. It is prominent. The pulpit is for preaching.[1]

When Baxter came to the Hillsboro church, the elders and the congregation expected him to "fill the pulpit." His primary responsibility would be that of preaching the Word of God and living according to its principles. Another quotation from the same sermon

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[1]Baxter, The Place of Preaching (Sermon #615, preached on Nov. 10, 1968), p. 1.

indicates something about the nature of worship as practiced by the church:

> As one examines each of these New Testament avenues of worship, it is interesting to look at them in terms of the makeup of the human hand. Let each of the fingers represent one of the avenues: singing, prayer, the Lord's Supper, and giving. Then, let the thumb represent preaching. Just as in the makeup of the hand the thumb is different from the fingers, so preaching is different from the other acts of worship. When a congregation sings or prays or gives or eats the Lord's Supper, it is worship being offered to God. When the preaching is done it is God guiding and directing his people. Just as the thumb is in a different plane from the fingers, so the preaching involves a different direction in worship. It is from God rather than to God.[1]

The Hillsboro church expected preaching from their pulpit to be Bible-centered--with ideas and points either originating from the Scriptures or significantly related to Biblical principles and precepts.

Although the church was what many would label as "fundamentalistic" in regard to doctrine, the membership was education-minded and cultural-minded. Nashville, with its replica of the Athenian Parthenon and numerous colleges and institutions of higher learning, has been known

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[1]Baxter, Sermon #615, p. 1.

for years as the "Athens of the South." The city is an important printing and publishing center, with two daily newspapers and more than fifty periodicals, most of them produced by religious or professional groups.[1] Most of the members of Hillsboro live in the vicinity of Vanderbilt University and David Lipscomb College. There is a special interest in David Lipscomb College because most of their children are sent there for their undergraduate work. In selecting Dr. Baxter for their minister, the church cooperated with the Administration of the college in bringing to Nashville a teacher with the doctoral degree in Speech and with a rich background in biblical studies. The church expected Dr. Baxter to work closely with David Lipscomb College in its basic goal to "provide the very best in a Christian liberal arts education under the direction of Christian teachers in a distinctively Christian environment."[2]

The church also expected their new preacher in 1951 to carry on the quality of work done by his

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[1] Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. 19 (New York: Americana Corp., 1965), p. 713.

[2] David Lipscomb College Bulletin (Nashville: 1968), p. 28.

predecessor, B. C. Goodpasture. A rather unusual situation existed in regard to Baxter's predecessor. Goodpasture, as editor of one of the most widely circulated religious journals in the brotherhood, finding that he needed to devote more time to his editorial responsibilities, resigned from full-time preaching responsibilities. However, he wanted to remain with the congregation where he had preached twelve years.

In a recent sermon, Dr. Baxter made reference to Goodpasture's attitude toward the church as expressed before Baxter agreed to come work with the congregation:

> About that time I went down to Brother Goodpasture's office one day to talk to him about it. In the course of the conversation he said something that I would like to repeat to you. He said, "Brother Baxter, the Hillsboro church is one of the greatest congregations in the entire brotherhood. In fact, I think there is none greater."[1]

It happened that the congregation had a good opinion of Goodpasture, too. Immediately upon his resignation he was honored with being appointed to serve with nine other men as bishops to oversee the total program of the church.

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[1]Baxter, What Makes a Church Great? (Sermon #603, preached on Aug. 11, 1968).

The church leaders at Hillsboro expected Baxter to be ready for every challenge for proclaiming the Word of God. With ten elders and twenty well-qualified deacons to help, the church had outstanding leadership which allowed their regular minister to be free of administrative duties that often fall the lot of church ministers where they are regarded as "pastors."

One example of the eldership's attitude and expectations in regard to Baxter may be seen in their action when Baxter was offered the opportunity to become the principal speaker for the first series of semi-dramatic programs being produced by Herald of Truth under the sponsorship of the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas. The work presented the possibility of speaking to one hundred million viewers each week. Baxter wrote an article telling how he, his wife, and the eldership reacted:

> The regular duties as minister of the Hillsboro church, a congregation of 1150 members, loomed large in my thinking. My responsibilities at David Lipscomb College, teaching a full load in the Bible Department, loomed equally large. Where could we find the time to make twenty-six half-hour television films. This would take weeks, possibly even months. There didn't seem to be much

> possibility of my helping, but we decided to talk with the elders about it.
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> The elders of the Hillsboro church met for lunch, to consider this matter. They are businessmen and made decisions rapidly. Brother Goodpasture put it in these words, "We at the Hillsboro church have been endeavoring for years to preach the gospel to the lost. This is the greatest opportunity we've ever had." Someone else said, "We can make arrangements for the preaching at home. How long will you need to be away?" Another of the elders suggested that the Hillsboro church furnish the preacher free of charge, and still another added, "Let's go all the way, let's pay his transportation expenses also."[1]

In many ways the Herald of Truth radio and television program is unusual. Sponsors of the program distribute to all interested people a monthly publication in which the editor points out the following facts: (1) More than 2000 congregations and many interested individuals have cooperated on a completely voluntary basis for twelve years of successful work. (2) The program has a world-wide scope with programs currently going out over more than 450 stations in 48 states and over foreign countries. (3) The elders of the Highland Church of Christ have always directed, and had the oversight of,

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[1]Baxter, What the Great Opportunity Means (Carbon copy of article from subject's personal file, n.d.), pp. 1-2.

every phase of the work. (4) Every lesson and sermon to be delivered on either radio or television is first submitted to the elders in double-spaced manuscript form.[1]

Since 1960, when Baxter started his work as one of the principal speakers on the program, the Hillsboro congregation has been one of the chief contributors for the financial needs of the effort. In 1964, when Dr. Baxter was diagnosed as having malignant cancer which required an operation and seven weeks of confinement, the elders and all concerned tried to cooperate in diminishing his work load.

When hearing of Baxter's illness, the thousands that made up his radio and television audience deluged him with cards and letters letting him know of their interest and prayers on his behalf. He made a remarkable recovery; and on May 17, 1964, expressed his gratitude for letters, prayers, and flowers as he delivered a sermon to the Hillsboro church--a message which was printed and mailed to all on the church's mailing list. Concerning his illness, he said:

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[1]W. F. Cawyer, "An Unusual Work," Herald of Truth (April, 1964), p. 4.

> I am deeply grateful for the excellent doctors and nurses and for advanced medical knowledge which have restored me to health. While the word cancer often brings feelings of fear, I have learned that through the expert care that modern medical science can provide these feelings can give way to hope and even to confidence. We are most encouraged so far as future prognosis is concerned in my case. Our encouragement comes from radical abdominal surgery for the removal of the malignancy with all surrounding tissues, and the lack of contamination of any other organs of the body. My doctors give me reason to believe that my health can be normal for a number of years to come.[1]

Rather soon after this date, Baxter was again facing a very taxing speaking schedule and work load. The Herald of Truth audiences contributed to making him a well-known personality in almost every corner of America. He made fifty-two half-hour television films during 1960; fifteen additional films in the 1962 series; was regular speaker on the radio network during the second and fourth quarters each year from 1961-65; and as the networks kept adding stations, the program depended more and more upon the principal speaker of years past. From 1966 until the present, Baxter has spent a great portion of his time away from his wife, children, brethren, and

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[1]Baxter, Our Lord Feeds the Multitudes (Sermon #432, preached on May 17, 1964), p. 1.

friends in Nashville. The filming of the dramatic-type programs required that he spend more time on location. Many of those closest to the Baxter family have thought that too much was being expected of Dr. Baxter and his loved-ones.

A recent church bulletin from the Hillsboro church indicates, however, that the pace has not let up. After explaining the critical need for a new series of film, the following announcement was made:

> Our elders and Brother Baxter have agreed that it is urgent for him to make 13 new films for Herald of Truth this summer, even though he is already working with the Herald of Truth radio program, making tapes for use when he takes over these weekly sermons the first Sunday in August. Accordingly, he has been in Dallas all the past week and hoped to produce four new films on this trip. He will continue to make these flying trips to Dallas through the summer until the new series of 13 is completed.[1]

The same publication included an excerpt from a letter received by the church from one of the Highland church elders who oversee the Herald of Truth:

> Brother Baxter is ready to face the hot camera lights this summer. He has accurately read the critical situation and is sacrificing

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[1] Sunday Bulletin, Hillsboro Church of Christ (June 15, 1969).

> to an extent that he personally would never tell you. The Hillsboro church and David Lipscomb College are giving up badly needed hours of his time. And his family will lend him to us when you know they would rather have him home . . . . We have no one else to turn to. We cannot afford to lose what has been gained by so much past struggle and prayer.[1]

This brief resume indicates some of the more demanding expectations of the Hillsboro brotherhood concerning Batsell Barrett Baxter. In addition to these, he was expected to perform wedding ceremonies, officiate at weddings, counsel, visit the sick, and engage in many other duties of the ministry. While doing research in Nashville during the summer of 1968, the writer visited the Sunday morning services and the Sunday evening services; then, on Monday morning, attended a funeral service for one of the elderly members. Dr. Baxter spoke at all three services. It was noted that two couples were waiting for him after the Sunday evening services--apparently for counseling appointments. When his secretary was interviewed regarding Dr. Baxter's work schedule, she replied:

> His fault--if it can be classified as a fault--is that he is too good for his own good--he can't say no. He will drive himself to the

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[1] Sunday Bulletin (June 15, 1969).

> ends of endurance for others. He has exhausted himself at times--he is doing three jobs now. He has a love for people that is unsurpassed.[1]

It seems apparent that this attitude and disposition to serve did put him in a position of being very susceptible to heavy demands for his time. Yet, this is essentially the environment and relationship for which he had deliberately planned and prepared.

In Baxter and the Hillsboro Church of Christ, one may see the picture of a dedicated preacher working with a church which will exert every possible effort to create a favorable climate for proclamation of his message. While the dominant themes of the message will be considered later, it seems important first to give more attention to the rather unusual "climate for communication" which was afforded Baxter as he started his work with the Hillsboro congregation.

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[1]Mary Brown Crowder, taped interview, Aug. 5, 1968.

Climate for Communication

As Dr. Baxter began his new relationship with the Hillsboro Church of Christ in Nashville, it must have seemed to him that he had found an "ideal climate" for utilizing his abilities in publicizing and promulgating the ideas, concepts, attitudes, and knowledge which he had accumulated during his thirty-five year life-span.

Baxter's early goals for life included preparing himself to the very fullest of his ability so that he might preach and teach the "truths" of God's word. Early in life, with his wife's agreement, he decided he could best serve the Lord and his fellowmen by devoting his life to preaching for churches which shared his conviction regarding the importance of Christian education for young people. He wanted to preach for a congregation near a Christian College where he would have opportunity to teach in conjunction with his ministerial work.

The Hillsboro church offered him the "perfect" situation. In accordance with Baxter's views, the people of the congregation looked upon the Bible as containing "truth"--the superior wisdom of God. They wanted that

"truth" energized, and believed in using the most modern means and techniques available for preaching and teaching. They expected Baxter to utilize his vast background in rhetorical training and Christian education in helping them meet the needs of the local church and in extending their influence in every other way possible. At the very beginning, he had at his disposal the pulpit and classrooms of the congregation, plus, a position with David Lipscomb College. These two avenues offered unlimited opportunities for preaching and teaching.

New avenues of communication soon became apparent to the congregation and to Dr. Baxter. The former minister, B. C. Goodpasture, who was now serving as an elder after Baxter assumed full preaching responsibilities, successfully launched the religious periodical, Gospel Advocate, into one of the most widely circulated journals in the brotherhood. As his father had been before him, Batsell Barrett Baxter became one of the staff writers for the paper. Another periodical, 20th Century Christian, with a rapidly growing circulation, invited Baxter to become one of its staff writers.

Also, the radio and television media soon became available to Baxter; and a vast new audience thus became familiar with him. Because the listening audience started requesting copies of the messages they heard, the sermons were printed and sent to all who requested them. Many of the messages concerned challenging issues and critical problems; and as the demands for copies increased, the elders deemed the content as being worthy of being published in booklet form. Attractive booklets were printed on excellent paper stock and distributed free in large quantities.

When visiting the Hillsboro Church office during the summer of 1968, this researcher received permission to take one of each of the booklets currently being made available. The titles, with the number of copies printed at that date, are presented in the following list:

1. The Problem of Human Suffering (125,000).
2. Love Thy Neighbor (10,000).
3. Come Ye Out From Among Them (135,000).
4. What Is the Church of Christ? (1,535,000).
5. Neither Catholic, Protestant Nor Jew (750,000).

6. The Greatest Story Ever Told (100,000).
7. The Word Became Flesh (10,000).
8. What Does the Bible Say? (150,000).
9. Understanding The Bible (600,000).
10. A Dangerous Doctrine (75,000).
11. The Old Paths (135,000).
12. The Alcohol Problem (No number stated).

Without counting the last one, this adds up to 3,625,000 copies! One may readily see that Baxter's ideas, concepts, knowledge, etc. were subject to circulation far beyond the local church and the city of Nashville. The booklets were sent out free to individuals on request, and were distributed at cost to churches.

When interviewing Mary Brown Crowder, Baxter's secretary, the writer was astounded at the potential influence of every Sunday morning sermon being preached by Baxter. She related that each sermon is taped, and at 8:05 the same Sunday evening, is sent out over the 50,000 watt WLAC radio station in Nashville. Responses have been received from as far north as Wisconsin and from the south all the way to the Bahamas. At the time of the interview,

1450 copies were being printed; with more than a thousand copies being mailed, and the remainder being placed in the vestibule for local members.

Mrs. Crowder told of receiving a letter from a serviceman overseas who was using the printed sermon in a rather unique way. He related the problem faced by a group of military men as they met for worship without a preacher being available. A solution was found through having certain men take turns in reading one of Baxter's sermons each time. He thought the preaching was quite effective--at least, from the standpoint of content.

Tapes of the sermons were being used in similar ways. While the writer was in the church office discussing the possibility of obtaining a number of the tapes for research purposes, Mrs. Crowder pointed to a box of two dozen tapes which had just been returned from Rogersville, Tennessee. She explained that the preacher of the Church of Christ there had undergone an operation on his throat which made it impossible for him to continue a scheduled radio program. The taped sermons by Baxter were being used until he recovered. It was a rather common occurrence, she said, for preachers who had been

students in Dr. Baxter's Homiletics class, to inform churches without preachers about the tape service offered by the Hillsboro Church of Christ. Tapes were being mailed out on a regular basis.

Baxter had, indeed, found a favorable climate for rhetoric. His impressive "climate for communication" will be considered from five aspects: (1) preaching and teaching at Hillsboro; (2) participation in Christian Education at David Lipscomb College; (3) radio and television work with the "Herald of Truth" program; (4) evangelistic campaigns; and (5) work with the "Foundation for Human Betterment." This last area evolved as the result of interest by a prominent Nashville physician who was on the teaching faculty of the Vanderbilt University Medical School. The physician had a keen interest in helping people with psychosomatic illnesses. After hearing Baxter preach on the radio, he was deeply impressed with his voice and the content which dealt with mental attitudes. The outcome was a program which afforded Dr. Baxter an unusual "tool of rhetoric," and an association with several prominent doctors who shared a desire to help meet the needs of suffering humanity.

Preaching and Teaching at Hillsboro

When becoming associated with the Hillsboro Church of Christ in June of 1951, Baxter let the people of the church know how he felt about his responsibility as a preacher of the Gospel. Among his first sermons was one entitled, "My Responsibility."[1] In the introduction, Baxter states:

> God's instructions to his preachers are very clear and very challenging. Paul wrote to Timothy: "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with long suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; (helpful teaching) but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill thy ministry." (II Tim. 4:1-5).[2]

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[1]This sermon was preached before the church made arrangements to tape the sermons; however, Baxter preached the sermon again during March of 1969, thus, affording some idea of what was said in the initial sermon.

[2]Baxter, My Responsibility (Sermon #634, preached on March 30, 1969), p. 1.

In the revised printed copy of the sermon text, Baxter underlined the phrase, "preach the work; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with long suffering and teaching." One may well imagine that he likewise made it stand out in preaching by giving it special vocal emphasis.

It is a general practice of Churches of Christ to have two sermons from the pulpit every Sunday--one in the morning and one in the evening. Soon after Baxter arrived, the Hillsboro Church of Christ started having three sermons from the pulpit every Sunday. The 735 seats of the auditorium would not adequately seat the Sunday morning assembly of Christians. The historical sketch of the congreation reveals that "in order to relieve the crowded conditions at the Sunday morning service, in September 1951, two identical services were begun."[1]

At the rate of three sermons per Sunday over a period of over eighteen years, Baxter certainly had opportunity to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with long suffering and teaching." In an introduction to a sermon

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[1]"Historical Sketch," p. 2.

preached on January 14, 1968, he made the following revelation:

> According to records which I have kept through the years, this is the 1205th time that I have prepared a message and stood in this pulpit to deliver it to this congregation. Many messages on many themes have been presented. We have ranged from one end of the Bible to the other and have dealt with almost every conceivable subject found in the scriptures. Some of these messages have been primarily for those who would hear them in this building. Some have been primarily for those who listen by means of radio as the service is rebroadcast each Sunday evening.[1]

In that same sermon, Baxter observed that the church was aware of, and grateful for, the radio audience scattered over an area of some twenty states. He mentioned having received letters from "an area bounded by Michigan on the north, Texas on the west, Virginia and the Carolinas on the east, and Puerto Rico on the south." In thinking of his audience and their needs, Baxter had the added problem of knowing that the message would have a completely different type of audience in the evening on the radio program. The listeners of the Hillsboro congregation were aware of the opportunities afforded by

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[1]Baxter, Man's Response to His Lord (Sermon #580, preached on Jan. 14, 1968), p. 1.

the radio audiences, and apparently, were understanding when Baxter preached sermons designed especially for non-members of the church.

With the great number of sermons being preached each year, one would naturally wonder about how Baxter managed to prepare the messages. When questioned about this, he wrote a reply:

> Each year I have also held an average of four gospel meetings away from the home congregation. During most of these years it has been my practice to prepare one new sermon each Sunday, relying on previously prepared sermons for the other service each week. Of course, these older sermons were revised as they were preached in new congregations and under new circumstances.[1]

There is evidence that Baxter was keenly aware of his audiences in the physical plant at Hillsboro. For example, on September 18, 1960, which happened to be the first Sunday that many college students were in attendance as they began the new school year at David Lipscomb College and neighboring schools, Baxter preached on the "Responsibility of Listening." He pointed out how it has been only recently that our educational systems have

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[1]Baxter, "General Information," p. 6.

begun properly to emphasize listening--the skill of hearing. His development and application made it clear that audiences have responsibilities as well as speakers.

> Those who will not hear the gospel of Christ have no chance of eternal salvation. Those who do listen with an open mind and with an understanding heart have the beginning of salvation.[1]

Baxter's awareness of the audience on that occasion is clearly indicated in his closing remarks:

> The lesson of this hour has an application to students, who are starting another school year. Listen carefully to all that your teachers say and accept that which is good. It has a special application to college students, who are entering for the first time upon this great era of their lives. Listen carefully and discriminately to all the things that are said; choose that which is worthy.[2]

In addition to speaking at three services on Sunday, Baxter has the responsibility for the "College Class" on Wednesday evening. It is the practice of the Hillsboro church to have classes for all age groups on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. Baxter is usually

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[1]Baxter, Responsibility of Listening (Sermon #298, preached on Sept. 18, 1960), p. 1.

[2]Ibid., p. 4.

free from the Sunday morning class schedule; however, his class on Wednesday evening is always large and requires extensive preparation because the college students are capable of confronting him with some of the more difficult problems and issues of life. This is the type of communication situation for which he prepared, though, and he considers these challenging classes as one of the delights of his life. Enjoying the work with young men and women, he devotes much time in being attentive to their needs and problems; and the young people feel he is on their side. Still, this same feeling is shared by other age groups too; and according to Mrs. Crowder, his secretary, the elderly especially love Dr. Baxter because of his attentive visits and understanding care for them.

Baxter's classes not only challenge the teacher, but being on controversial topics and issues, motivate students to think and conduct research. Due to the popularity of the classes, arrangements are occasionally made so that people other than college students can attend. For example, a church bulletin gives the following notice to members:

> Brother Baxter is slated to teach his Lipscomb course in Christian Evidences in the college's evening program in the winter quarter. The class will meet from 6:30 to 7:20 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning Jan. 7, 1969, in the new Lecture Auditorium. This course may be taken by adults who do not qualify for college credit, as well as by college students with full credit.[1]

The special challenge provided by these classes and other similar communication opportunities may account for Baxter's decision to change from the field of Speech to concentrate primarily in religious work. When he was questioned concerning the change, he stated that while in the area of Speech, he occasionally found himself so involved in the details of debate programs, teaching fundamentals, etc. that he could not devote time to doing what he loved most--helping people adjust to life. In his own words, he states, "I just didn't find the challenge there that I find in the area of religion. It was not quite what I wanted to sink my life into."[2]

Baxter's concern for the individual and his belief in the potential of human beings are manifested in ways

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[1] Sunday Bulletin, Hillsboro Church of Christ (Nov. 24, 1968).

[2] B. B. Baxter, taped interview, Aug. 5, 1968.

other than in sermons from the pulpit and messages from the classroom. Dan Harless, one of the associates with Baxter in producing the script for radio and television programs, attributes warmth, compassion, and genuine interest in people as being part of Baxter's personality, and that persons in trouble often seek him out for counselling. Regarding this area, Harless says:

> In addition to his work in the pulpit BBB is adept in the art of counselling. There are many calls upon him in this area by people in all walks of life. There is a preponderance of requests for assistance because of marital difficulties. Recently, he preached a strong sermon on the subject of marriage in which he pointed out the Bible stated reasons for divorce as well as the safe course to pursue (among those whose lives have become dreadfully tangled) in avoiding adultery or continuing in adulterous unions.[1]

Other than counselling, there is evidence that Baxter becomes much involved with people in ways which never become known to many members of the church. This writer was told by his secretary that he does much of his work "behind the scenes." Acting on her hint, this researcher received permission to insert a notice in the

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[1]Dan Harless (personal letter to researcher, July 7, 1969).

Sunday Bulletin, which is mailed to former members as well as being distributed to current members, requesting that people correspond directly with the writer concerning specific ways in which Baxter had influenced their lives. A number of letters have been received, most of them praising Baxter so extravagantly that no significant meaning may be gained. One of the letters, however, contains information which suggests a rather unusual change in life as the result of Baxter's influence.

A man, sixty years of age, relates how he was converted as the result of Baxter's preaching. Becoming a Christian created a special problem because he was in the juke box, slot machine, and beer business. He soon recognized that his business endeavors conflicted with the "way of life" as taught by Baxter. In the letter, he expresses how Baxter helped him overcome the problem:

> Brother Baxter came to my house at nights for several weeks and counseled me as to other means of making a living. Having decided to go into the tree business (about which I knew little), I went to Auburn University in Alabama and to Clemson University in South Carolina and studied what they call a "short course" about trees. After returning to Nashville, I was visited at nights by Brother Baxter who questioned me at length about my knowledge of trees.

> One night he came with several thousand three-paged typed copies of letters addressed to property owners in Nashville showing them what they could do to save their trees and shrubbery. Brother Baxter also had typed envelopes to these people. . . . That was the beginning of my tree business and it has continued to grow and prosper through the years.[1]

The letter was typed on impressive stationery with the letterhead, Queen's Expert Tree Surgery. Wayne R. Queen stated in his letter that he had done over $360,000 business in 1968, and expected to surpass that in 1969. He told of having six children, three of whom had graduated from David Lipscomb College, and three were students at the college. Queen also related how he and two of his children had gone to England with Baxter on a religious campaign.

Another letter, made available from Baxter's files, was addressed to him from a young man who was moving from the Hillsboro community. He related how Baxter had helped him during a very crucial period:

> You probably won't remember this, but I could never forget; in the spring of 1952, while a freshman in high school, I was

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[1]Wayne R. Queen, letter, dated July 29, 1969.

> arrested for stealing articles from vehicles. As this was my first offense, Judge Tatum paroled me to my parents. My parents, being members at Hillsboro, asked you to come by the house and talk to me. While I don't remember all of the conversation, I do remember telling you that I couldn't explain my actions and also I remember you praying for me in the living room of my house. This had a deep impression on me because to my knowledge, no one had prayed directly for me before. While I haven't been perfect since then, I certainly consider this prayer one of the turning points of my life.[1]

The correspondence also indicated that Baxter had baptized the young man and his wife some years later, and that they had been helped by his sermons. In writing about Baxter's sermons, he said:

> You amaze me on how you keep informed on current events and how you apply this to your preaching. I hope I haven't missed the point all these years, but to me, the thought you have stressed the most and which I think is the basic idea of Christianity is Christ's answer to the Pharisees in what is the great commandment in the law: 1) Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul and mind and 2) Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.[2]

It cannot be determined how many of Baxter's counseling cases turned out as successfully as these two

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[1] J. R., private letter to Baxter, dated July 20, 1969, p. 1.

[2] Ibid., pp. 2-3.

which have been cited, but testimony from a number of sources seems to verify the statement by Harless that "there are many calls upon him in this area by people in all walks of life." His method was to show a sincere, warm interest in the person and his problems, doing whatever he could to help personally, while at the same time, inspiring and guiding the troubled soul to adjust his life to God's way.

This action on Baxter's part was in accord with what he taught aspiring preachers in his Homiletics classes. He stressed the importance of mingling with people to learn of their problems and needs; thus, one would be able to "take aim" with sermons. To him, sermons are not the most important aspect of preaching; rather, it is the people to whom the sermons are directed. In this regard, in one class lesson, he quoted Charles E. Jefferson: "A doctor's business is not to know books, but to cure people. Your supreme business is not to build sermons, but to build characters."[1]

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[1]Baxter used this quotation from Jefferson to stress the importance of taking aim with sermons. As will be noted later in the study, he does consider building of the sermon as vitally important, but it is a means to an end--that of building character and lifting people to a higher level of life.

Ministering to the needs of the Hillsboro Church of Christ is considered by Baxter as his primary work, and the congregation definitely receives his first loyalties; however, both Baxter and the church are much concerned with reaching out into other areas with the Gospel. The most obvious avenue for an "outreach," in Baxter's judgment, is Christian education. David Lipscomb College, which is located about one mile from the church building, offers a unique challenge for Baxter and the church.

Christian Education

David Lipscomb College is situated on a beautiful shaded campus of sixty-five acres about four miles from the Nashville courthouse. The residential area around the campus is considered one of the most desirable in the city.

"DLC," as it is commonly called, was formerly "The Nashville Bible School" until April, 1918, when the name was changed to honor one of the founders who had deeded his farm to the institution in 1903. The college was an outgrowth of the efforts of David Lipscomb and J. A.

Harding to provide a school to "educate young people for the greatest usefulness in life." It had its beginning on October 5, 1891, with only nine young men in attendance on the opening date. After ten years of gradual growth, on February 2, 1901, the school was incorporated as an educational institution and chartered with the authority to confer degrees and issue diplomas.[1]

The school's purpose was set forth originally in the following clause:

> The supreme purpose of the school shall be to teach the Bible as the revealed will of God to man and as the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice, and to train those who attend in a pure Bible Christianity, excluding from the faith all opinions and philosophies of men, and from the work and worship of the church of God all human inventions and devices. Such other branches of learning may be added as will aid in the understanding and teaching of the Scriptures and as will promote usefulness and good citizenship among men.[2]

Currently, ten objectives are listed by the college Bulletin as being primary purposes of the school:

1. To provide the very best in a Christian liberal arts education under the direction of Christian teachers in a distinctively Christian environment.

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[1] David Lipscomb College Bulletin, 1968-69, p. 30.

[2] D.L.C. Bulletin, p. 31.

2. To equip the student to communicate clearly, logically, and effectively through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

3. To give the student a basic economic understanding and ability to choose a vocation that will make the best use of his talents in earning a living and in serving God and his fellow man.

4. To encourage the development of an appreciation for the good and beautiful.

5. To train future leaders in the church.

6. To train future leaders in all honorable professions and vocations.

7. To develop socially responsible citizens.

8. To prepare young men and women for their future roles as builders of the home, as husbands and wives, and as fathers and mothers.

9. To stimulate intellectual curiosity.

10. To hold up Christ as the example to follow in every field of activity, in elementary school, junior high, high school, and in college, as well as in later life.

One may readily note that these objectives correspond very closely with the special interests of Baxter and the Hillsboro Church of Christ. Baxter and the eldership of this church are especially interested in the Speech and Bible Departments because of their vital roles in training church leaders and preachers.

Although primarily a Bible college, David Lipscomb College has attained high academic standards, and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The campus also presently provides facilities for an elementary, junior high, and high school.

Baxter's family residence is located just one block from the college campus. His college office is located on the main floor of the air-conditioned Administration building. As a full Professor and Head of the Bible Department, he enjoys one of the more spacious and comfortable office arrangements.

The Bible Department receives top priority from the administration, as is evidenced by statements in the Bulletin:

> The Bible is the heart of the curriculum at Lipscomb. It is taught as the inspired word of God. Every secular subject in interpreted in the light of revealed truth. Speculation is shunned. Each student is required to have a lesson in the Bible every day, the sequence being planned to cover the entire Bible in four years. Every student at Lipscomb majors in the Bible, for in the course of four years he spends more hours in the study of the Bible than in his secular major field.[1]

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[1] D.L.C. Bulletin, p. 79.

The Bulletin carefully points out that constant efforts are made to insure that the Bible itself is studied rather than materials about the Bible.

The following courses are required of every student before graduation:

1. "Early Hebrew History"
2. "Life of Christ"
3. "Beginning and Growth of the Church"
4. "Christian Evidences"
5. "The Apostolic Church"
6. "Introduction to the Old Testament"
7. "Introduction to the New Testament"
8. "Systematic Christian Doctrine."[1]

Because of the college's emphasis upon the Bible and Christian living, it receives liberal support from Christians who share the same convictions and goals. Although the college is not owned and controlled by any particular church or group of churches, the Board of Directors and all faculty members are members of the Church of Christ.

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[1] D.L.C. Bulletin, pp. 79-80.

While the college is not considered as a seminary or "preacher's school," it is true that most ministers of the Churches of Christ do attend one of the "Christian Colleges" in preparation for preaching. Most elderships in the brotherhood who make decisions concerning the employment of ministers share the thoughts which Baxter expresses:

> Quite often a young man who plans to preach thinks in terms of needing only a knowledge of the Bible. Without question he needs a knowledge of the Bible, perhaps far more extensive than he yet dreams, but he also needs a knowledge of a number of other fields. He needs to know English grammar. He needs to have speech instruction, he needs to be familiar with the history of the past, he needs to study some psychology, he needs to know the great literature of the world, and there are still other fields that can contribute to his ultimate effectiveness as a preacher. In order to achieve this breadth of training, this balance, a college education is highly desirable.[1]

In discussing contributions being made to the church by Christian colleges, Baxter points out that while it is true that the church can function well without Christian colleges, or any other institution, it is significant that institutions often afford training and

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[1]Baxter, The Christian College and the Training of Preachers (Article in Baxter's file, n.d.), p. 3.

education to Christian individuals who consequently perform more effectively, thus, enabling churches to reap the benefits.

In particular, Baxter calls attention to the year 1891, the date of David Lipscomb College's beginning. At that date, the church situation in Nashville, Tennessee, and Cincinnati, Ohio, was just about the same--each city had only a few "loyal Churches of Christ." Then, he reasons:

> Today, seventy years later, there are still only a few loyal congregations in the Cincinnati area, but in the Nashville area, there are 115 congregations in the county of which Nashville is the center, and a total of some 800 loyal churches of Christ within a radius of 150 miles of Nashville. What has been the difference? The answer is at least in part the fact that in Middle Tennessee the church has found many consecrated young men and women who have received at least some of their training in Christian homes and in David Lipscomb College, which the church then uses in the great work of spreading the gospel.[1]

The environment around each of the Christian institutions has been influenced much in the same way. Baxter, himself, is a product of an environmental

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[1]Baxter, The Christian College, pp. 1-2.

atmosphere centered in a Christian home, an aggressive church program, and a Christian education. The combined influences, with each emphasizing propagation of the Word of God, are very effective in influencing lives of impressionable young people.

Baxter's attitude regarding the influence of Christian schools may be seen in remarks made in a speech to the alumni of Abilene Christian College in 1961. The speech was Baxter's response after having been chosen "Alumnus of the Year." He calls attention to the influence of men and women who have taught at Abilene Christian College, and adds:

> The word influence itself is an inspiring word. It comes from a Latin participle and means literally "to flow into," or "in flowing." Influence simply means that one life flows into another life.
>
> The influence of this school began to flow into my life even before I enrolled in the first grade over on the old campus back in 1924. It was then that Miss Essie Rambo taught me to read and thereby enriched my life forever. The list of names that followed hers is too long to be mentioned, even in part, but it extends through the years until finally graduation came in 1937. The great principles of Christian living were taught line upon line, precept upon precept, life upon life. Walter Adams taught me to think of teaching; Don Morris taught me to

> speak; Paul Witt taught me physics; R. C. Bell taught me Bible. These and many others gave of themselves as they taught their own particular fields and also the way of the Lord. For their shadows of influence I, and all of us, will continue to be debtors throughout eternity.[1]

The examples of Christian teachers who sacrificed time and money to teach young people had influenced Baxter early in life. His father had been such a person; and from his youth, he had lived on or near the campus of a Christian college. It is not too surprising, then, to find him choosing the classroom as one of the important avenues for utilizing his skills as a rhetorician and teacher.

Baxter's changeover from the Speech Department to the Bible Department at David Lipscomb College allows him to concentrate more on his favorite source of ideas--the Bible. In this area he is able to utilize the principles and skills of rhetoric while, at the same time, having what he considers the ultimate source of truth. One of his favorite courses to teach is the one entitled "Christian Evidences."

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[1]B. B. Baxter, Response to Alumnus of the Year Award (Baxter's file).

The course on "evidences," he feels, offers a greater challenge because, as a required course, it is always large; also, the classes often include students who are not members of the Church of Christ. He has considerable feedback in class, and often receives notes or letters which give important insights concerning issues and problems that exist among young people. The following note will serve as one example of the feedback:

> Thank you for being open-minded and kind toward other viewpoints, especially toward the theistic evolutionist . . . . And thank you, too, for your very fair treatment of Joseph Fletcher and situation ethics. I felt you presented your case better than anyone I have ever heard--and I agree with your viewpoint. I was extremely glad you were not another one of those who condemn situation ethics without knowing what they're talking about. When someone treats a position which I have wondered about unfairly, it make me leap to the defense of that position and makes me believe it even though deep in my heart I have no concrete reasons for believing it. I know that such a reaction is unjustified but I want to go on record for my generation as saying that it <u>is there</u> and those who expect to influence us should take it into account, as I believe you did. They <u>must</u> treat other views fairly or youth will not listen to them.[1]

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[1]Student's note to Dr. Baxter, June 2, 1968 (Baxter's file).

Many of the young people do listen to Baxter. One of his colleagues[1] who teaches in the English Department was interviewed concerning the reason why Baxter's classes are always overflowing even though the subject matter does not appeal to many of the students. She attributes it to four things: (1) a rare combination of confidence and modesty; (2) unusual skill in presenting subject matter; (3) a quiet, unobtrusive thoroughness in delivery which commands the utmost respect and admiration; and (4) ability to remain unoffensive in a subject with built-in prejudices.

Baxter's greatest potential for influence is a course in Homiletics, which is designed especially to help prepare young men to preach. The course is part of the Speech Department's offering, and is identified as Speech 346: "Preparation and Delivery of Sermons," and Speech 347: "Practical Aspects of Preaching."

Because of the fact that every student receives a large number of hours in Bible regardless of his major, Baxter often advises preaching students to major in Speech

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[1]Cynthia Corlew Dilgard (personal interview, Aug. 7, 1968).

and minor in Bible. This advice may more readily be understood by noticing the purposes of the Speech program:

> The speech major's program has been designed to serve student needs in four areas: (a) to assist in the training of young men to preach the gospel, (b) to give a broad basis of instruction for those who are planning to go on in graduate work in speech, (c) to provide the instruction necessary to enable a person to become a teacher of speech on the secondary level, and (d) to provide a liberal arts education for those who desire to enter some specialized field of study or activity other than speech.[1]

Of the 46 hours required for a Speech major, the student may take 8 hours in Homiletics, 4 hours in "Oral Interpretation of the Bible," and 8 more hours in "Restoration Preaching." Thus, by being selective, one may study 20 hours of Bible-related subjects on the Speech program.

For his course in Homiletics, Baxter uses his own book, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, as one of the major texts. In addition, he hands out mimeographed lesson outlines prefaced by an assignment sheet with the following instructions:

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[1] D.L.C. Bulletin, p. 171.

1. Each student will be expected to read extensively from the following texts: Baxter, Batsell Barrett, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, Macmillan Co., N.Y., 1947; Meyer, Jack, The Preacher and His Work, C.E.I., Athens, Alabama, 1960; and Broadus, John A., revised by Weatherspoon, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, 1944.

2. During the term each student will be expected to read one book from accompanying list and hand in an evaluation, not to exceed 300 words. (list of 28 books included).

3. Each student will be expected to read two books of sermons during the term and hand in an evaluation of each--according to suggested format.

4. Each student will be expected to choose three printed sermons and make a careful analysis of each. In addition, each student will be expected to hear three sermons preached.

In regard to performances by students, Baxter relates the following general information:

> Each student will be expected to deliver several carefully prepared sermons during the term. Each sermon should be planned so as not to exceed ten minutes. In its preparation, a "full content" outline should be made. Prior to delivery this complete outline should be boiled down into a "keyword" outline. Both of these outlines should be handed to the instructor on the day of the delivery of the sermon. The student should go over his sermon several times aloud before presenting it to the class. He should take nothing with him to the platform except his Bible or New Testament. Outlines should be memorized.[1]

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[1]Baxter, "Assignment Sheet," Preparation and Delivery of Sermons (Course Outline), p. 3.

Baxter, through the years, has made a regular practice of taking the Homiletics class to the Hillsboro church building for one of the sermon presentations. Students are thus able to get the "feel" of speaking in a large auditorium. While one speaks, others of the class are dispersed in the auditorium to serve as critical listeners.

Baxter is often called on to recommend promising students for preaching appointments at various churches in the area. Opportunities have never been lacking for those students who have applied themselves and who have indicated adequate seriousness of purpose. As is true in most religious bodies, the Churches of Christ also have a preacher shortage; thus, the young men who successfully complete Baxter's course in Homiletics are usually in demand by congregations in the area who look to the college for aid in supplying their pulpits with well-trained ministers. The greatest complaint of churches is that not enough young men are being trained. This fact is a constant source of concern for Baxter as is evidenced by journal articles directed toward eldership encouraging churches to start instilling the desire to preach in their young men at an early age.

Baxter feels that churches have the primary responsibility for supplying men to fill the pulpits. In one article, he relates how an elder of a large, well-established congregation asked for help in obtaining a good minister. In the course of the conversation, the elder was asked how many preachers had been developed from within the church's membership during the congregation's history. The church leader was rather embarrassed when he had to admit that he could not name a single one. Baxter then observes:

> The great shortage of preachers today is largely a result of a failure on the part of congregations to carry out a program of finding and training young men to carry the gospel. Elders, preachers, and Bible class teachers have a heavy responsibility to do something about this in the generation to come, lest the Cause of Christ suffer irreparably.[1]

In the article Baxter suggests a positive course of action. He mentions how he had, for a number of years, been aware of the pressing need for a textbook on religious speaking to use in Men's Training Classes among the churches. To meet this need he wrote the book, Speaking

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[1]B. B. Baxter, Men's Training Classes (from Baxter's file), p. 3.

for the Master, which was published by the Macmillan Company in 1954. In it, Baxter points out advantages which churches might expect when they establish training classes:

> One of the primary values of men's training classes is that in every group of ten to fifteen men who go through a course of study of this kind, there is likely to be one, or two, or even three who will eventually become gospel preachers. As the men learn to make their announcements, read the Bible and pray in public, and as they are instructed in the making of simple religious talks, there begins to grow a confidence that they could preach the gospel. As further speech instruction is given concerning both delivery and the organization of material, there develops the ability to speak persuasively. Finally, under the skillful guidance of a mature, dedicated Christian teacher, the young man can be led to make the great decision to be a gospel preacher.[1]

Printed matter of this type obviously has been designed to help churches and also, to help Christian colleges in obtaining more young men for their programs. In the process, too, a greater demand has been created for Baxter's text, Speaking for the Master. Significantly, these communications indicate Baxter's alertness to media for promulgating ideas and aims. He makes expert use of the related resources available through the Hillsboro

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[1]B. B. Baxter, Men's Training Classes, p. 2.

Church of Christ, David Lipscomb College, and the religious journals which are happy to publish all of the materials which he submits. His opportunities to use the radio and television media come primarily as a result of his reputation in Christian education and from his abilities in the public proclamation of the gospel.

The larger and more influential congregations of the brotherhood are largely supplied by preachers from Christian colleges--many are being trained by Baxter. He has become so well-known that, in addition to being selected for the first issue of Great Preachers of Today, published in 1960, Baxter was selected to be the featured speaker during the same year for the Herald of Truth television program. The preface of the book of sermons contains the following statement by the editor, J. D. Thomas:

> Among Brother Baxter's numerous honors, his choice to be the featured speaker for the HERALD OF TRUTH Television Series for 1960 is one of his greatest. This choice is a clear recognition of his masterly ability in sermon building and pulpit skill, and is no small indication of the quality of the work to be expected in this volume of sermons.[1]

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[1] J. D. Thomas, "Preface," Great Preachers of Today (Abilene, Tex.: Biblical Research Press, 1960).

Baxter's reaction to this challenge of television preaching, along with that of the Hillsboro Church of Christ, has been referred to earlier in this chapter. Although it is not part of the research plan to make a detailed study of his speaking on the Herald of Truth Radio and Television programs, it does appear pertinent to examine that area from the standpoint of its being an important avenue for communication of ideas.

Radio and Television

Harold A. Bosley, in an article entitled "The Role of Preaching in American History,"[1] discusses contemporary preaching and points out that the modern preacher must now be able to use "radio, television, share in panel discussion, participate in talk-back sessions, as well as preach the formal sermon at the service of worship."

Bosley's observation is especially applicable to Baxter's situation with Hillsboro. During his first year with the church, he received an invitation from the

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[1] Preaching in American History, op. cit., p. 34.

president of Radio Station WLAC in Nashville to speak on the "CBS Church of the Air" program. Baxter states that, to his knowledge, this was the first time any preacher from the Churches of Christ had been asked to speak on a nationwide network. The experience proved to be challenging and self-satisfying to Baxter, and made him more aware of the great potential in radio preaching. Soon after this experience, a contract was negotiated with the same radio station whereby his Sunday morning sermons were recorded on tape and used for a radio broadcast at 8:05 each Sunday evening. He learned to preach with a stop-watch on the pulpit to aid in adjusting his sermons to a precise 25-minute period.

Much more flexibility and adjustment were demanded of Baxter after 1960, when he became the featured speaker on the Herald of Truth television program. This additional avenue of communication, combined with all his other activities did serve to test Baxter's ability to measure up to what Bosley regarded as essential for successful contemporary preaching.

The nature of Baxter's television speaking may be noted by examining news releases via the weekly

bulletin published by the Hillsboro Church of Christ. Baxter had to fit into somewhat of a "commercial format" as indicated by the following quotation:

> In introducing the film shown Wednesday evening, Brother Harless called attention to the new format designed as the "hook," in terms of commercial producers, to attract and hold viewers; and the indispensable--or nearly indispensable--person to give voice and personality to the message. All three elements seem happily combined in the new film, and even greater response would seem likely to result when all 144 stations are showing them.[1]

The "hook" of the new series consists of fast-moving sequences of scenes from on-the-spot filming of actual life-situations such as ghetto episodes, riots, drunkenness, etc., the filming being designed to focus attention on current problems and issues of society. Baxter's role is that of being the "speaking personality" of the program. It is a central role; and he is well aware that all the money, efforts, and talents being directed to the other aspects of the program are for the express purpose of aiding in communicating the message which he speaks; thus, it remains true that the speaker

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[1] Sunday Bulletin, Hillsboro Church of Christ, Sept. 22, 1968.

and his message are the vital components of communicating the gospel.

Baxter has apparently become very proficient in functioning as the "personality" of the program. Reporting on the program's activities for the year 1968, an article in the bulletin states:

> One hundred thirty more radio stations have begun giving free broadcast time, adding over 1,000,000 new listeners. The television programs are now seen in 150 cities. We are now beginning to broadcast in Central and South America as a result of a tremendous surge of interest in Herald of Truth radio programs among our Latin American neighbors. We have now reached a point where it is possible to move aggressively into other broadcast areas and become the first to reach a vast segment of an untapped audience: A Herald of Truth television special on a national network of stations in prime evening time during 1969; a 13-week series on one-hour "Phone-in" audience participation programs dealing with Bible answers to current problems.[1]

Baxter's participation on the radio programs does not require a great amount of adjusting nor does it take so much of his time in preparation. Baxter states that most of his radio sermons are selected from his outline file containing the best of sermons preached during past years at Hillsboro and in evangelistic campaigns.

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[1] Sunday Bulletin, Hillsboro Church of Christ, Feb. 23, 1969.

As a consequence of his Herald of Truth radio and television work, Baxter has become well-known among the brotherhood of the Church of Christ, and this has opened up another avenue of communication. A trend has developed in the brotherhood to cooperate in planning extensive efforts to reach people through "Campaigns for Christ." In considering well-known personalities to speak for these campaigns, the committee for the cooperating churches usually has the name of Batsell Barrett Baxter at the head of the list.

Evangelistic Campaigns

Although the elders at the Hillsboro Church of Christ have been keenly aware of reaching out with efforts to evangelize, they have not thought it wise for Baxter to plan more than four campaigns or "gospel meetings" per year. Each of these efforts usually requires seven to ten days of his time.

Some of the campaigns are extremely well-planned, skillfully administered, and highly successful in terms of attendance and responses. For example, in October of

1964, Baxter was invited to be the speaker for a campaign in the 10,000 seat Municipal Coliseum of Lubbock, Texas. The sermons preached during the series were later compiled in a book edited by Baxter. The following facts are presented in the preface materials:

> Directed by Lubbock's Broadway Church of Christ, the campaign was a co-operative, area-wide effort which received the fellowship and financial support of hundreds of congregations throughout west Texas and eastern New Mexico. Dr. Harvie Pruitt, minister of the Green Lawn church in Lubbock, directed a special "Children's Class" which attracted nightly more than 1,000 youngsters between the ages of 4 and 10. Held in the Municipal Auditorium adjacent to the Coliseum, this class was an epoch-making event within itself. B. Wayne Hinds, Chairman of the Department of Music at Lubbock Christian College, directed the a capella congregational singing. The congregation, averaging almost 8,000 nightly, swelled the arena with the inspirational strains of the great songs of the church.[1]

This particular speaking situation enabled a large segment of the brotherhood to become personally familiar with Baxter. Chartered buses brought people in from 90 towns and cities throughout Texas; also, more than 20 states were represented during the series. The Saturday evening services were devoted to a special rally for young

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[1]Banowsky, loc. cit.

people. The announced topic, "God's Way for Sexual Morality," attracted a capacity audience. A photograph in the front of the book shows an audience of 10,000 people on the closing night.

During interviews, Baxter spoke of this particular campaign as being one of his most rewarding experiences in public address. Evidence from other sources indicates that Baxter may have achieved a peak in his speaking career during the ten successive nights of speaking. The regular minister of the Broadway Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas, Dr. Banowsky,[1] is lavish in his praise for Baxter's preaching:

> During the South Plains Coliseum Meeting his preaching was powerful--clear--irresistible. As these messages were delivered from night to nigh, a total of 528 persons responded to the invitation of Christ. Of this number, 134 were baptized into Christ. But even these impressive figures do not tell the complete story. Innumerable waves of good were set in motion that will extend to thousands of lives and scores of congregations for decades to come.[2]

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[1]Banowsky, after sitting at Baxter's feet several years as a student, was advised and encouraged by Baxter to continue in higher education, thus, he may be inclined to be overly lavish in praise.

[2]Banowsky, loc. cit.

This is rather extravagant praise, coming from one who holds a Ph.D. in Public Address, but there is no reason to doubt genuine sincerity on the part of Banowsky. Having been taught by Baxter at David Lipscomb College, he is a firm believer in the persuasive power of public speaking; and more especially so when it pertains to what he considers as "the power of God unto salvation."[1] Banowsky's own success in public speaking has been noteworthy. Recent polemic encounters with such outstanding personalities as the late James A. Pike and Joseph Fletcher have enhanced his reputation among members of the Churches of Christ. With such positive attitudes concerning the values in public address situations, there appears to be some justification for Banowsky to reason that "innumerable waves of good were set in motion that will extend to thousands of lives and scores of congregations."

After that endeavor in Lubbock, Baxter was deluged with requests that he speak for campaigns in other parts of the world; however, activities at David Lipscomb

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[1]Banowsky's conviction is based on the idea in Romans 1:16, referring to the Gospel as being God's power to save those who believe.

College and other pressing obligations made it impossible for him to accept most of the invitations. Due to his confining responsibilities at his home congregation and with the college, Baxter must limit his campaign speaking to three or four engagements per year. The following excerpt from a letter indicates his situation regarding availability for outside speaking efforts:

> While I wish that it were possible for me to say yes to your idea of a campaign in Mt. Pleasant, I do not see any real possibility of my coming. Now that we are on the four-quarter system at Lipscomb my time for meetings is so very limited and I have promised the available time until the middle 1970's.[1]

Although limited in his own opportunities to conduct special evangelistic efforts, Baxter does not think the day is over for the "old-fashioned gospel meetings." His thoughts are expressed in an article regarding a meeting at the Hillsboro Church of Christ in which Banowsky did the speaking:

> In a day when gospel meetings in local congregations are thought by many to be dying out, it is refreshing to hear a visiting Christian medical doctor say, "As we came to your meeting tonight, we actually saw people running toward the building in order to get

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[1]B. B. Baxter (personal letter, May 15, 1966).

> there in time to get a seat." He further indicated that when he arrived at the building it was yet fifteen minutes before time for services to start.[1]

The above meeting, taking place in 1967, attracted an overflow audience to the extent that listeners were directed to the basement auditorium, where they could watch and hear by means of closed-circuit television. At midpoint in the meeting, on a Wednesday night, there were 1233 people in the building which had been designed to seat fewer than 800 people.

Baxter has written about the results of the meeting in a manner which illustrates the preeminence which he gives to public proclamation of God's word.

> The real heart and center of the success of the meeting, however, was in the preaching of William S. Banowsky, the young, powerful evangelist of the Broadway church in Lubbock, Texas. The sermons were eminently Biblical. They were relatively simple, and dealt with practical, daily, personal matters. Never have we seen a preacher adapt the Lord's teaching more effectively to the needs of the people in his audience. The people who attended got something to help them in living the Christian life. It was presented simply but interestingly, as our Lord preached in

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[1]B. B. Baxter, William S. Banowsky Conducts Outstanding Meeting (Manuscript of article, Baxter's personal file), p. 1.

> parables with practical applications. The messages were presented in love, but with firmness, which is consistent with real love.[1]

In some ways the successful meeting endeavor by Banowsky in Nashville may have provided Baxter with even greater inward satisfaction than that attained by his own successful campaign in Lubbock. Banowsky was a living example of the tremendous influence possible through skillful teaching and guidance of capable young people in an environment such as that provided by David Lipscomb College. As Baxter listened to the young man speak to the large and attentive audiences, he must have remembered the time when he first brought the eager young Homiletics student over to the Hillsboro building to practice a sermon in the empty auditorium.

Although Baxter could not continue to conduct as many campaigns as he would desire, he was in a key position to exert influence in many such endeavors through training of young men like Banowsky. By spending more time in Nashville, he also had occasion to develop contacts and friendships which opened up another unique avenue of communication.

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[1]Baxter, ibid., p. 2.

"Foundation for Human Betterment"

What endeavors have given you the most satisfaction in your life as a minister and teacher? When faced with this question during an interview, Baxter thought for a moment; then, he went over to a cabinet and returned with several recordings enclosed in impressive album jackets. His enthusiasm was clearly apparent as he talked of Dr. Oscar W. Carter and the "Foundation for Human Betterment."

Although Dr. Carter is not a member of the Church of Christ, the two have developed an exceptionally close relationship during their few years of acquaintance. Baxter explained how Carter had experienced a very unhappy childhood which left him somewhat embittered with humanity. One of Carter's most vivid memories of youth was an accident he had while ice-skating. He experienced a broken nose and a resulting disfigurement of face which was attributed to neglect in taking him to a doctor. Later in life, Dr. Carter had an expert surgeon repair the crooked nose so that hardly a scar remained, but the scars of neglected love were not so quickly removed.

Baxter related how Oscar Carter, being endowed with a brilliant mind, worked his way through medical school, and how he successfully built a medical practice which brought him distinction and fame in medical circles. Yet, Carter was not satisfied because he realized he was not really helping people in the area where they most needed aid--in their mental attitude toward life. This realization prompted Carter to organize a non-denominational, non-profit organization composed of four ministers, five doctors, and two businessmen. As one of the ministers, Baxter's role is primarily that as a narrator of materials prepared by Dr. Carter in collaboration with other members of the foundation.

The purpose of the foundation is stated on the album jacket of one recording:

> All members of this foundation are very much concerned over the fact that with all of our material advances, mankind in general does not live the happy, useful, radiant life that he was meant to live. The members of this foundation thoroughly believe that if we pool the knowledge that we have in our various fields: the fields of religion, medicine, psychiatry and business, we can do something to improve this situation. This is the sole purpose of this foundation. All materials which are produced and distributed by the foundation are aimed at one thing, and that

> is helping common, ordinary human beings to better face and solve their day-to-day problems of living and thus to live happier, fuller, more useful lives.[1]

Carter, with all his skill and desire to help better the state of humanity, apparently realizes he cannot project his deep concern through his own personality. He thinks he has been influenced by his environment:

> During the past twenty-five years I have worked rather closely with human beings as a doctor, and frankly at times I feel like that in general human beings are a pretty sorry lot. However, at these times often I think of Batsell Baxter and this gives me a little more hope for the human race.[2]

Dr. Carter's activities in Nashville have enabled him to have close association with many influential citizens. As an urological surgeon with over twenty years of practice, he is a member of the American Board of Urology, the American Urological Association, and the American Medical Association; has served as president of the Nashville Surgical Society during 1965 and 1966; is on the hospital staffs of Saint Thomas Hospital, Mid-State

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[1]Oscar W. Carter, album jacket of recording by the Foundation for Human Betterment, 1921 Hayes St., Nashville, Tenn.

[2]Carter (personal letter, dated June 30, 1969).

Baptist Hospital, Nashville General Hospital, and Vanderbilt University Hospital; and is a member of the teaching faculty of the Vanderbilt University Medical School.

In attempting to analyze why a medical doctor of Carter's stature would manifest so much interest in Baxter, it appears that certain attributes of Baxter's personality have been the primary factors involved. When asked to express his thoughts concerning the reason for Baxter's being selected to narrate the materials for the Foundation For Human Betterment, Dr. Carter writes freely of his high esteem for the man:

> Dr. Baxter is certainly one of the finest, if not the finest human beings that I have ever known. He is the most kind, loving, considerate, empathetic persons I have ever seen . . . . He has a positive goodness and a radiance about him that seems to bring out the best in everyone with whom he is associated. I have experienced this quality with him in my own personal experience. I have seen it work in people whom he is counseling, and I have seen this thing work from the pulpit. The fact is simply this, Batsell Baxter brings out the best in everyone with whom he comes in contact.[1]

It is apparent that, to Dr. Carter, Baxter radiates the love and compassion that he missed so much during

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[1] Ibid.

his early life. As an experienced medical doctor, he is convinced that goodness and love will do more to help meet the needs of human beings than anything the medical profession has to offer. Dr. Carter wrote all of the material for one of the most widely used of the albums produced by the foundation. In it, he points out that it is now a well-known medical fact that "the giant destructive emotions of hate, envy, jealousy, fear, and guilt produce diseases just as certainly as do bacteria or poisons." He then gives the physician's point of view concerning problems caused by the "destructive emotions":

> As physicians, we know that these diseases are on the increase and that we have very little success in treating these diseases as long as the patient harbors these giant destructive emotions . . . . We know that as long as the human personality is dominated by love, we are able to channel our aggressive energies into socially acceptable forms. We know, however, that when this love is absent, these giant destructive emotions become dominant in the human personality and produce these psychosomatic diseases. Physicians are gradually realizing as a plain, cold, scientific, medical fact that love is just as necessary to promote our health, our happiness, and our peace of mind as are food, air, and water.[1]

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[1]Carter, album jacket, loc. cit.

Carter believes that Baxter has the ideal voice for narrating materials which emphasize love. Other than the materials composed by Dr. Carter, there are selections by Henry Drummond and Henry VanDyke which also stress love. Baxter narrates the materials for eight of the eleven albums which are available at this date.

Information on the album jacket of A Physician Looks at Love and Health states:

> This record is finding a rather wide professional acceptance and use. At the present time, it is being used by practicing physicians in their treatment of patients with psychosomatic disorders, by psychiatrists, and by clinical psychologists. It is also being used by ministers in their counseling work, and by teachers of psychology at numerous colleges and universities.[1]

This researcher had an interesting and significant experience with the recordings during the summer session of 1969 at Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas. A colleague, Dr. Bernard-Thomas Hartman, Professor of Speech Pathology, noticed the recordings and requested permission to listen to certain ones. One by one, he listened to the entire group; and two weeks later, he enthusiastically related how he used one entitled A

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[1] Ibid.

Cure for Procrastination in one of his classes. As the result of interest manifested by Dr. Hartman and others of the department, the records will become part of the library being maintained by the Speech Department.

There are indications that Baxter may have reason to be enthused about the work he is doing with "The Foundation for Human Betterment." He thinks it will have lasting effects as evidence by closing remarks of an interview:

> Long after we're gone, he and I both can still be helping people--because the recordings have good, solid materials.[1]

Each member of the foundation has been active in promoting the distribution of the recordings in his own area. One example of distribution is seen in an advertisement which appeared in the 20th Century Christian of April, 1969.[2] Subscribers were offered a one-year subscription to the 20th Century Christian for the regular price; and as a bonus, each subscriber was promised a free "LP Record of The Greatest Thing in the World"

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[1] B. B. Baxter (interview, Aug. 5, 1968).

[2] 20th Century Christian (Apr., 1969), p. 67.

narrated by Batsell Barrett Baxter and produced by "The Foundation for Human Betterment."

It is conceivable that Baxter is correct in thinking that his influence, and Dr. Carter's, will continue after both have passed from the world scene. Of all the avenues of communication available to Baxter, it appears that this one affords the best opportunity for reaching people who do not ordinarily listen to preaching.

CHAPTER IV

BAXTER'S INTERPRETATION OF THE WORLD

Every age has, no doubt, had special challenges for concerned religious people who felt compelled to contribute to solutions for the problems and needs of humanity. The prosperous twenties faced the perplexing challenge of the raging secularism of Clarence Darrow and H. L. Mencken. Secularism provided the background for new and liberal trends in religious thought and education. Theologians of liberal schools, influenced by the thinking rooted in New England Transcendentalism and Hegelianism, evolutionary philosophy, and Biblical ethics started serving what one has identified as "a curious mixture of absolute idealism."[1] Speaking of the theologians of this new era, Olmstead said, "Their enthusiasm for the ethical teaching of Jesus, however exemplary, did not hide the fact that their theological foundation was more secular than Christian."[2] Whether they were

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[1] Olmstead, op. cit., p. 547. [2] Ibid.

conscious of it or not, he said, "they were accommodating themselves to the intellectual currents of the new age, an age which venerated science and found in the philosophy of science its way of life."

Baxter's appearance on the American religious scene came at a time when churches had already undergone the frustrating attempts of utilizing a "Social Gospel" to meet the needs of humanity. Deep imprints on religious thought and education had been made by (1) John Dewey and his religious humanism; (2) Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Barth, and Emil Brunner with their forms of existentialism; (3) Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and others with both liberalism and neo-orthodoxy; (4) Mordecai Kaplan and new emphases in American Judaism; and (5) liberal thinkers within Roman Catholicism. There were, however, some aggressive religious bodies which were not greatly affected by the philosophical concepts of liberal thinkers.

Henry P. Van Dusen observes that one of the most vital and aggressive expressions in American Protestantism is what may be called the "Third Force" in religion. This refers to several groups of churches which cut across the major denominations and which, he states, include

about 5,000,000 persons in the several Churches of God, Adventists, Churches of Christ, various Pentecostal Churches, the Church of the Nazarene, and the Assemblies of God.[1] He states that these groups put more emphasis on the Holy Scriptures for authority and guidance.

While it might be helpful to attempt a more detailed analysis of the American religious scene, it is thought best, however, to forego the effort in order to focus attention on Baxter's own analysis. First, though, it may prove helpful to note how Olmstead summarizes a discussion of the American religious scene:

> It seems unlikely that any single contemporary analysis of American religion, however discerning, can hope to accomplish greater results than to stimulate thinking and encourage discussion. The present is too fluid to justify more than the most tentative observations concerning possible trends. Granted, therefore, that there have been evidences of secularism and humanistic nationalism as powerful ideological factors in American religious life, it is equally true that there have been intelligent and dedicated efforts to bring life in a disordered world into conformity to the dynamic will of that Supreme Being who is the Lord of history.[2]

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[1] Salisbury, Religion in American Culture (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsay Press, 1964), p. 157.

[2] Olmstead, op. cit., pp. 592-93.

The hypothesis for this portion of research might well represent an affirmative answer to the question: Does Dr. Baxter's analysis of humanity's plight, with the accompanying effort to meet the needs, represent an intelligent and dedicated effort "to bring life in a disordered world into conformity to the dynamic will of that Supreme Being" who, as Christians believe, is "Lord of history?"

Baxter's Analysis of the Religious Scene

In a discussion of the critical approach to speaking, Richard B. Gregg suggests a "phenomenological" orientation, in which the rhetor will "attempt to discover the underlying value judgments present in discourse, for such judgments are a direct result of the rhetor's concept of reality." Also, he will

> try to determine the degree to which the value judgments of an intended audience coincide with those of the rhetor, and if there is a disparity he will examine the rhetor's strategy for achieving audience identification on the level of values.[1]

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[1]Richard B. Gregg, "A Phenomenologically Oriented Approach to Rhetorical Criticism," Central States Speech Journal (May, 1966), p. 89.

In the writer's estimation there is much merit in these suggestions, and it is felt that such an attempt will harmonize with the stated intentions to use the historical methodology combined with whatever else that might help explain, comprehend, and/or criticize. Gregg's ideas are based on the philosophical theory of phenomenology advanced by Edmund Husserl. Gregg cites a definition:

> Phenomenological psychology concentrates its attention upon man's ability first to intellectualize and symbolize his environment into cognitive structures and then act upon the basis of those structures.[1]

As Gregg points out, "a phenomenological approach forces the critic to focus on the larger context."[2] This chapter of the study, as already indicated by the Introduction, will deal with Baxter's analysis of the religious scene and with his value judgments as manifested in selected materials from the larger context of his speaking efforts while associated with the Hillsboro Church of Christ.

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[1] Ibid., p. 73.

[2] Ibid., p. 90.

Concerning the Mission of the Church

How does Baxter view the mission of the church as it functions in the world? In an analysis of religious changes and trends, Baxter notes that among the changes in recent decades, none is more radical or fraught with more serious consequences than the changed understanding of the mission of the church. As Baxter discusses this in a sermon of September 15, 1968, he states:

> Ilion T. Jones, in an article "The Church's Defection From A Divine Mission," apprearing in the May 24 issue of Christianity Today, has said, "Traditionally the church has devoted its major resources to the evangelization of individuals. But recently a number of church leaders have embarked upon a campaign to persuade the churches to use their resources to bring about a revolution. Sometimes this movement is described as the evangelizing of social institutions, in contrast to the old plan of evangelizing the people who operate these institutions. At other times its proponents say it is designed to change social structures rather than to change human hearts."[1]

Baxter cites proceedings at the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Uppsal, Sweden, in July, 1968, as an example. The chief officer, General Secretary Eugene Carson Blake, at one point, said,

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[1]Baxter, The Church and Its Divine Mission (Sermon #608, preached Sept. 15, 1968), p. 1.

> The most widely held criticism of the World Council of Churches is the charge that it is involved in social, economic, and political questions, leading the churches away from their central task of proclaiming the gospel, worshipping God, and offering eternal salvation to a dying and sinful humanity.[1]

Baxter cites another quotation which he says would best give the picture of the emphasis of the Fourth Assembly. It is a summary given by Harold Lindsell in an article published in Christianity Today, August 19, 1968, where two opposing views are observed. One tends toward the secular and would make the church a pressure group of the world and in the world. It sees the church as the agency of political, economic, and social change and has for its goal the betterment of men and society. The other sees the mission of the church as

> evangelizing the world, that is, preaching the Gospel of Christ to all men. It does not reject social concern, properly understood and used, but it refuses to be satisfied with temporal paliatives instead of external remedies.[2]

Baxter obviously agrees with the latter view as indicated by certain emphatic assertions concerning the aims and ways of Christ:

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

> Christ was concerned with changing hearts and lives and thereby changing the world. It is exciting to notice that in his teachings and in the teachings of his apostles there is throughout the New Testament the idea that men are to be "born anew" and that after becoming his disciples they are "New creatures."[1]

In his judgment, the best way to change the world--and any of the social organizations of the world--is to be primarily concerned with changing attitudes of individuals who make up the world.

In his concluding analysis, Baxter points to what he considers the best solution for the plight of humanity:

> It would appear that many modern religious leaders are "putting first things second." "They are more concerned about housing than about heaven," it would seem. The liberal theology of our time which doubts that there will be a judgment and questions the existence of heaven naturally leads men to center their thoughts on the here and now rather than on eternity. However, for those of us who still firmly believe in heaven, as Jesus so clearly did, our primary emphasis must still be on the importance of saving the soul. This is not to say that we are unconcerned about man's welfare on this earth, but that we are even more concerned about his spiritual welfare in the hereafter. Real Christianity when practiced as Christ taught it will lead to respect for all men. It will lead to a removal of injustice and discrimination. It will replace hate, envy, jealousy,

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[1] Ibid., p. 3.

> greed, lust, retaliation, and the like with love and concern for all men. It is the only way that the world can permanently be remade.[1]

Baxter's solution to humanity's plight revolves around educating the human mind with wisdom from a Divine Being which became flesh--Christ the Son of God. He does not consider it a simple solution; instead, he conceives it as requiring the utmost in sacrifice from individuals and churches. While the tendency for man to seek gratification of basic needs is well-known to Baxter, he does not subscribe to the interpretation of some that man is basically evil.

Man's Basic Nature

Already, various sources have been noted which testified to Baxter's apparent love for human beings. Possibly, this may be accounted for by his interpretation of man's basic nature. In a sermon on the topic, Baxter uses the following paragraph for an introduction:

> No subject is more interesting than man himself. Every aspect of man is interesting:

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[1] Ibid., p. 4.

> his origin, his destiny, his thought, his speech, his behavior, his possessions, and especially his goals and purposes in life. But nothing is more interesting to me than a discussion of man's basic nature. Is man basically good or basically evil, or only neutral?[1]

In this message, Baxter considers the evidence which would tend to verify that the nature of man is ugly and evil. He discusses the religious position of Augustine, Calvin, and others who believe that all men have inherited Adam's sin and are, therefore, sinners at birth and are lost until in some special way the grace of God has been applied to their lives. He also presents the view of man as perceived by Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud; and in addition, calls attention to what each person may observe:

> Are children evil at birth? Look at a child and you will see that he is quite selfish and makes demands of his parents that are most inconsiderate. He cries in the middle of the night and will not stop until his mother supplies his every need, even though she may be exhausted from the endless procession of duties which accompany child care. His wish must be her command. He seems totally unconcerned about her welfare, or that of other children in the family. Someone has even described the newborn baby

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[1]Baxter, Man's Basic Nature (Sermon #555, preached on May 7, 1967), p. 1.

> as a barbarian, totally self-centered and uncompromisingly demanding. Look at man when he is grown. Again, he often appears selfish and sometimes even cruel and ruthless. Often he is unconcerned about the wants and needs of others, so long as his desires are met. Yes, there is a great deal of evidence that indicates that the nature of man is ugly and evil.[1]

Baxter admits the existence of "ugliness" and "selfishness" in man, but he does not believe this to be his basic nature. On the other hand, he does not think man to be essentially neutral--that the whole story is told in terms of heredity and environment. Of this view, he says:

> This view would be deeply disturbing, if true. It would mean that the Bible is all wrong. It would mean that God is totally wrong in assigning praise to some and blame to others. There would be no real responsibility on the part of anyone, for it would be the environment that would be to blame. This deterministic, behavioristic view of life does not take into consideration the fact that there is something within man that determines what he will do with his heredity and his environment. This view of man's nature, we also must reject.[2]

After a consideration of the two views cited above, Baxter states his own interpretation:

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., p. 2.

> It is my conviction that there are many evidences that man's nature is essentially good. It is also interesting to note that a large and growing number of psychologists take this view. On the physical level, there are several factors which indicate that man is neither evil nor neutral. For example, though man's instincts are few, he does have a strong instinct to live, and to be well and healthy. This instinct appears to be universal and through the centuries has driven man to seek food, water, shelter, and the other necessities of life. There is this in-born drive to stay alive and to keep well . . . . On a higher moral and ethical level, man further demonstrates that he is intrinsically good.[1]

After citing several examples to support his assertions, Baxter calls attention to Immanuel Kant:

> Immanuel Kant, the noted philosopher, once wrote, "Two things fill me with wonder and awe --the starry heavens above and the moral law within." He was referring to the sense of <u>ought</u> in man. Animals do not have it. Only man has it. Man is a creature of choice and by making his choices he determines his course in life and his destiny in eternity. The sense of ought in the human heart is one of the most convincing evidences that man's nature is essentially good.[2]

In accordance with his usual practice, Baxter goes to the Scriptures for what is to him, the most meaningful evidence. In regard to the goodness of man's nature, Baxter says:

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 2. [2] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 3.

> It was in this area that the apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, "When Gentiles that have not the law (of Moses) do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them." (Rom. 2:14-15). Paul was speaking of what Lewis calls the Law of Human Nature and was saying, in effect, that if the Gentiles lived up to the law in their hearts, then in God's sight they would not be sinners. However, he hastens on to say that no one does live up to the law perfectly and therefore they need the saving gospel of Christ which takes away sin.[1]

He uses several other arguments based on the Scriptures, and especially emphasizes that man is created in the image of God; therefore, his basic nature must be good.

Baxter's analysis is summed up in the conclusion as follows:

> In summary we may say that in the beginning God created man pure and holy. Then man was contaminated by sin. Ultimately, Christ came to redeem man. Man's true nature is good indeed, but sin has corrupted that nature. It is in this sense that "as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." Man did not inherit the guilt of Adam's sin, so does not begin life as a depraved sinner. But man does partake of the sins of the world and therefore the inspired writer could say, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of

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[1] Ibid., p. 3.

> God." Christ came to redeem man from his sins and this makes it imperative that we come to Christ for cleansing.[1]

Because of Baxter's interpretation of man as being basically good even though he has become evil through partaking of sin, he looks upon every human being as being redeemable and potentially good. This is where God's grace enters the picture--accompanied by the necessity of preaching by man.

Conception of God's Grace

Attention has been given to Baxter's attitude toward preaching and the preeminence it had in his life even back in his undergraduate days in college. He believes strongly in God's grace, but he connects the availability of grace with proclamation of the Gospel by man and reception of it by hearers.

Baxter defines grace:

> Grace literally means "unmerited favor." It means blessings from God which the sinner does not deserve or merit. Salvation is thus conceived as something given to man, not as a

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[1] Ibid., p. 4.

> matter of debt, but as an undeserved gift. In short, man cannot achieve heaven by works of merit.[1]

The Gospel of Christ is considered by Baxter as being the supreme manifestation of God's love and grace toward mankind. Basically, the Gospel consists of the facts concerning the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ--facts which man must know and believe in order to be redeemed from sin; it consists of commands whereby man's faith might be tested in obedience; it consists of instruction in righteousness enabling man to live a better and more abundant life on earth; and it consists of promises which offer hope for the future. These ideas are summed up by Baxter in a quotation from a sermon he preached on "The Biblical Doctrine of Grace, Faith, and Works":

> A very significant passage on the subject of grace is found in Titus 2:11-14, where we learn that God's grace has already appeared. "For the grace of God hath appeared (past tense), bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope

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[1]Baxter, The Biblical Doctrine of Grace, Faith and Works (Sermon #422, preached Feb. 23, 1964), p. 1.

> and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works." Notice that God's grace has already come.[1]

Baxter reasons that since God's grace has already been manifested through his apostles and inspired writers, there is no further need of miracles and continued revelations from God; however, there is great need for preaching, teaching, and publicizing of the Gospel. He has defined preaching as the communication of God's truth by man to men. He elaborates on that definition on one occasion:

> The first of the two elements in preaching is man. When God created man in the beginning he made him a creature of choice and has, through the ages since, respected man's ability to choose. Man is never forced to do God's will. So, when man sinned against God and needed to be redeemed, God provided the way and communicated this blessing to man through his messengers. God has given us his inspired written word. However, a written page, necessary as it is for the permanence of God's inspired word, does not have the power nor influence that the spoken word has. God loved man enough that he arranged for his message to be presented with all of the life and vitality that comes through a living

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[1] Ibid., p. 1.

> person. When a man believes God's message and feels deeply the value of this message he proclaims it with much greater power and influence than the written word can ever have.[1]

In this analysis and attitude one may readily see why Baxter feels compelled to devote himself so fully to promulgating the Word of God as he understands it.

How does Baxter reconcile the usual religious problem of "grace versus works?" He considers grace as God's part in salvation and faith as man's part. Faith is possible only through knowledge of the Gospel; therefore, it is impossible apart from the grace of God. Man manifests faith or lack of faith by whether or not he obeys Christ's commands and does the works which are ordained in the Gospel. Works can never save apart from grace and faith, but they are necessary to show one's faith in Christ and his love for God and fellowmen. Baxter's analysis in summary is expressed as follows:

> Grace is God's overture toward man; obedient faith is man's response toward God. Faith is a condition of heart, which involves obedience to God's commands. If faith does not involve obedience it is not Biblical, saving faith. Grace is <u>salvation made possible</u>; obedient faith is <u>salvation made</u>

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[1]Baxter, Sermon #615, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 1.

> actual. Grace made salvation available to all men of all time, but only obedient faith makes salvation a reality for any man any time. When one separates faith from action he has destroyed faith.[1]

True, he reasons, grace made salvation available to all men; yet, that availability depends on whether or not the Gospel is preached to every generation of man. In the following discussion, Baxter explains how preaching by man is vitally important; however, it is only the means which makes it possible for God's grace to function:

> The important element in preaching is the message of God. Paul wrote to the Romans, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Rom. 1:16). The same apostle wrote to the Corinthians, "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching (literally, through the thing preached), to save them that believe." (I Cor. 1:21). Then, the same apostle said it even more directly in II Cor. 4:7, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves." Man is a means through which the message comes, but the message itself is the absolutely essential element in preaching.[2]

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[1]Baxter, Sermon #422, p. 4.

[2]Baxter, Sermon #615, p. 2.

Thus Baxter conceives the Gospel as containing the superior wisdom from God which the world needs for salvation and for a way of life. The Gospel, made available by God's grace through Christ's life and sacrifices, has been revealed in the New Testament. Through the years, and especially in the present generation, God's wisdom has been obscured and made ineffective by liberal philosophies of man; by creeds and traditions of man; and by failure to preach and teach God's truths. These influencing factors which hinder the power of the Gospel have resulted in failure of the church in fulfilling its mission; and have allowed man, who is basically good, to be overcome with sin. Baxter believes that the preaching and teaching of the Word of God to every individual is the answer for those who will receive and obey it. Those who reject the preaching of the Gospel, and consider it as foolishness, are left to their own wisdom and devices.

Further understanding of Baxter's analysis and interpretation of the world in which he lives may be accomplished by considering distinctive ideas and themes in his speaking.

Distinctive Ideas and Themes

What were the distinctive ideas and themes in Baxter's speaking--the special emphases? An examination of the available materials containing his messages indicates that certain themes do stand out predominantly in his sermons, teachings, and published materials. The themes seem to have a direct relationship to his interpretation of the religious and secular trends in the world. Many of his ideas seem to be in complete harmony with those expressed by the recognized influential preachers of American history. Harold A. Bosley, in his contribution to the volume, Preaching in American History, cites the dominant themes for sermons in the American churches leading up to the contemporary period:[1]

> (1) First and always a primary concern was the Word of God as found in the Bible . . . .
>
> (2) Secondly, the preachers were concerned with a vital personal experience of salvation . . . .
>
> (3) Thirdly, the preachers were concerned with correct doctrine, and here heresies, schisms, and sectarianism ran rife . . . .

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[1]Harold A. Bosley, "The Role of Preaching in American History," Preaching in American History, ed. DeWitte Holland (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), pp. 29-30.

(4) Fourthly, the acid debate between Protestants and Roman Catholics lost none of its bite on the long voyage from Europe . . . .

(5) Fifthly, the preachers were always concerned with personal morality and public order . . . .

(6) Finally, the preachers invariably found themselves involved in issue of general controversy in their day.

Baxter has attempted to disassociate himself from debating or dealing with issues existing between Protestantism and Catholicism. This effort has led to one of his distinctive themes which is implied in a booklet he co-authored entitled, Neither Catholic, Protestant, Nor Jew. Baxter has a basic and significant idea which permeates most of his preaching dealing with doctrinal issues --to go back beyond Catholicism and Protestantism for authoritative doctrine.

This fundamental idea and four other related ideas appear with regularity as themes in his speaking and writings. Baxter has apparently formulated these ideas as answers to five obvious questions one confronts in his attempt to analyze and interpret the religious conditions of the world today. The questions are:

(1) How can unity of religious people be achieved?

(2) What is God's plan for saving man from sin?

(3) What are God's provisions for worship?

(4) What is the way of life for followers of Christ?

(5) What is the future of man after life on earth?

Each of these questions will be considered as we seek Baxter's answers from available materials at his disposal.

Unity of Religious People

Already, it has been noted that the movement which resulted in the Churches of Christ became known as the "Restoration Movement." The "Restoration" theme appears with regularity in Baxter's preaching. For example, in his preaching to the Hillsboro congregation, Baxter's sermon topic on January 20, 1963, was "The Restoration Idea"; on February 20, 1966, his topic was "Walking in the Old Paths"; and his subject for February 9, 1969, was "The Restoration Principle." The body of each sermon sets forth essentially the same idea as was noted as being characteristic of preachers of the early movement. Contemporary developments in religion wherein even more

divisions exist apparently serve to make the idea of "restoration" all the more essential in Baxter's mind. In the 1966 sermon, he refers to the movement as having a definite goal, basis, and method:

> Time was when such names as Wycliffe, Zwingli, Huss, Luther, Calvin and Knox were household words. These men tried diligently to pierce the darkness that had settled upon the church during the Middle Ages. These men are known as the Reformers. Their efforts to reform certain abuses in the church led to the beginning in the 16th century of the great Reformation Movement.
>
> But I speak today of another movement--a movement that was not and is not an attempt to reform but a movement to restore--not an effort to reform the 16th century church or the church of any century; but an effort to rebuild from the original foundations the original church as the Lord gave it to man in the first century. This Restoration Movement goes far beyond the work of the Reformation Movement. Its goal is the unity of all believers in Christ. Its basis is the inspired word of God, the New Testament. Its method is the restoration of the New Testament church.[1]

In his 1969 sermon, the need for "restoration" is especially emphasized in the introduction:

> In our 20th century mixed-up world nothing is more needed than a return to the

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[1]Baxter, Walking in the Old Paths (Sermon #504, preached on Feb. 20, 1966), p. 1.

> scriptures and the restoration and practice of the apostolic period. Notice the description of the religious world of our day given by George Harris, Senior Editor of Look Magazine: "You feel religious restlessness everywhere you go. The big denominations, long placid, are suddenly possessed by turmoil. Pope Paul needs all his authority to control, or try to, the revolution in Roman Catholicism. But Protestantism, with no central machinery, is rocked even more violently by the same historic disturbance. Many Protestant leaders believe that the church will not survive as it is . . . . The main body of U.S. Christianity has slowed to a rest, ever more at ease beside the culture it created. A record 64% of the population claims status in some religious body, and millions accept the church as just an extra luxury built into our architecture of affluence. The church no longer irritates a man by revealing the wide gap between what he ought to be and what he is. 'What is the use of getting more people into a church that is no church?' asks one religious leader."[1]

Baxter is well aware of the human tendency to exalt men; thus, the practice of establishing religious bodies honoring men. In the conclusion of his 1969 sermon, he reasons:

> Obviously it was not the purpose of these pioneer preachers to preach a new system or to start a new church. They simply wanted all believers in Christ to join hands and hearts in going back to Christ and his original church. Although we who are part of this continuing

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[1]Baxter, The Restoration Principle (Sermon #627, preached on Feb. 9, 1969), p. 1.

> Restoration Movement are sometimes called by the appelation "Campbellites," we deny the validity of any such designation. It is our intention to bypass all of these men and go all the way back to Christ and his church. Just as we are grateful for Luther, Calvin, Knox and the rest of the Reformers, so we are grateful for these men of the Restoration Movement, but we would miss the entire point if we made any or all of these men our religious leaders. We follow them only as they follow Christ.[1]

Baxter's sermons include materials which manifest great concern over the divided state of Christianity. On June 7, 1964, he preached on the topic "Can the Ecumenical Movement Succeed?" In his introduction, he cites facts about divisions in American Christianity and among other religions of the world; then, as evidence of the critical aspect of the situation, he points to expressions by two of the "world's most noted historians," Arnold Toynbee, in his book, The World and the West, and Hendrik Kramer, in his book, World Culture and World Religions. Both espoused the view that the international outlook is critical and that "unity of universal scope is the social and political hope and need of our age."[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 4.

[2] Baxter, Can the Ecumenical Movement Succeed? (Sermon #434, preached on June 7, 1964), p. 1.

After giving a brief history of the ecumenical movement, Baxter gives his appraisal and attitude regarding the accomplishments. He believes that while the attitudes of desire for brotherhood and cooperation, and the motives behind the movement are wonderful, the major problem still remains after all the years of effort: "No effective method of achieving the goal of unity has yet been found." Baxter calls attention to the motto of the Stockholm Conference, "Doctrines divide; service unites," and says that while it sounds good, it does not bring about real unity. He then observes that because the basis of all religious division is primarily doctrinal, the erasure of division and the achievement of unity must necessarily deal with doctrines.

In Baxter's opinion, the fundamental issue in bringing about Christian unity revolves around achieving a common basis of authority. After illustrating his point by referring to the way sharp differences are settled in baseball by umpires who use commonly accepted rules, he presents a rhetorical question: "What possibilities of securing such a religious arbiter are there?" He then answers his own question by indicating that three sources have been proposed:

> Some would suggest the church as the final authority. Others would suggest individual conscience, or private judgment as the ultimate authority. Still others would suggest the Holy Scriptures as the decisive authority.[1]

Baxter proceeds in the sermon to develop the argument that the Word went out through the apostles as they were guided by the Holy Spirit and that this Word brought the church into being and brought salvation to the lost. The Word, which may be thought of as the seed of the kingdom (or church), preceded the church; in other words, it was the Word which produced the original Church of Christ and which also decreed what would be its nature. He reasons that the same seed, or Word, when planted in receptive hearts in any age, would produce a body of people with the same essential nature and practices. His reasoning implies that individual churches may spring forth in various parts of the world with identical characteristics even though they have absolutely no contact with each other. Their unity would stem from the fact that the same seed produced each--they had a common source. This, he explains, is the only way one could account for the indigenous bodies with identical

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[1] Ibid., p. 4.

characteristics which resulted in the formation of Churches of Christ during the Colonial period of America.

Salvation

How can lost mankind be saved? This question often serves as a basis for Baxter's sermon themes; especially is this true in regard to messages designed to reach the audiences which he believes have been confused by conflicting religious doctrines on the subject of salvation.

The question itself implies that man is lost; that he is a sinner; and that unless something is done, there will be unhappy consequences. Baxter seems aware of the impact of liberal theology, which left many with the impression that man himself could solve his problems through the power of positive thinking or other applications of his own wisdom. Baxter has rather notable company who share his views in regard to the significance of man's realization that he needs the wisdom of God for salvation. In discussing neo-orthodoxy, Harold Brack described it as a movement:

> Neo-orthodoxy emphasized the historical character of Christianity. It pointed to the biblical record of the mighty acts of God and lifted up the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Such an emphasis led to a revival of the doctrine of the Word of God. This revived doctrine of the Word of God declared that the Bible is an authoritative witness to the Divine self-disclosure. Hence preaching, i.e., proclamation, rests on God's Word . . . . Neo-orthodoxy also insisted on a more realistic view of man with full recognition that man is a sinner. Man's denial of God's lordship was declared to be the basic issue.[1]

Reinhold Niebuhr is cited by Brack as being the theologian primarily responsible by transmitting Barthianism to America. Brack quotes Niebuhr to illustrate how he objects to the preaching of Norman Vincent Peale:

> The Christian religion is one of repentance and faith, sin and grace. Christianity stresses the idea that man tends to think more of himself than he should and there can be no real meeting with God, except through repentance and the confession of sin.
>
> The basic sin of this new cult is its egocentricity. It puts self instead of the cross at the center of the picture. Christianity insists that you cannot have faith without repentance, and since the very ideas of sin and repentance are negative, the positive thinkers simply leave them out, or at

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[1]Harold Brack, "Neo-Orthodoxy and the American Pulpit," Preaching in American History, ed. DeWitte Holland (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), pp. 278-79.

> best, gloss them over. The result is a partial picture of Christianity, a sort of half-truth.[1]

While Baxter is not of the "neo-orthodox school," he agrees with this point; and he is particularly concerned about the impact of preaching by exceptionally influential preachers like Billy Graham, Peale, Roberts, and others, who leave out what Baxter considers as "essentials" in regard to what man needs to do for salvation.

In one sermon entitled "God's Way for Salvation," Baxter indicates the many answers which sincere people often receive as they listen to various preachers who deal with the question. After listing several such answers, he states:

> Still others would emphasize that man is saved by faith. Their primary emphasis is on the need of believing in God and in Christ as the divine son of God and upon a commitment of one's life to the Savior. This is an action that can be taken in the privacy of one's own room, they tell us. There are still others who emphasize that something more is needed before one is saved. Man must also obey certain simple commandments of the Lord. They have in mind such things as the confession of Christ before men and baptism. With all of these ideas before us let us now turn to the Holy Scriptures to determine "God's Way for Salvation." After all, it is not man's perogative

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[1] Ibid., pp. 279-80.

> to determine how he will be saved, but rather it is his responsibility to study God's will to learn God's way for his salvation.[1]

Baxter cites evidences from the Scriptures which support the special emphases that many were giving as answers to man's quest for salvation. He agrees on the necessity of a good moral life, of God's grace, of faith, of repentance; but he believes none of these alone to be sufficient. Furthermore, all of these taken together will not be adequate for salvation without obedience from the heart. Along with these, he emphasizes that baptism is necessary because it is the obedient act of faith which puts one into a covenant relationship with God. He sums his idea up in the conclusion of the message:

> Man's salvation begins with God's great love for the lost. It begins with God's grace, manifest in Christ for all men. Then comes the fundamental act of faith on the part of man. In order for that faith to be living, saving faith it must involve obedience to God's commands. Faith is a condition of the heart on the part of man that involves obedience to God's will. In addition to believing, man must repent of his sins. Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish." (Luke 13:3). Jesus also said, "Everyone

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[1]Baxter, "God's Way for Salvation," Making God's Way Our Way (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1964), p. 61.

> therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32-33). Jesus also said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16:16).[1]

As evidence of this comprehensive view of salvation, Baxter cites the conversion of Paul. Baptism is included and emphasized only because it was so treated in the New Testament examples of conversion. Baxter observes that in the apostle Paul's conversion, even though he had manifested belief in Christ and had spent three days in fasting and prayer, he was still considered as being unsaved. It was only when "Ananias, the God-selected and God-sent preacher" arrived, that Paul was told specifically the final condition whereby his sins would be forgiven. Ananias told the penitent Paul to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." After pointing this out, Baxter adds, "I might further emphasize that in every one of the eight major cases of conversion recounted in the book of Acts, baptism is included." He then reasons that this is a distinction

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[1] Ibid., p. 70.

accorded no other act involved in becoming a Christian. "Not even faith is mentioned in every case, though certainly it is implied. Only baptism is singled out by name every time."[1]

Baxter views baptism as a "rich, meaningful symbol" which has great significance to all believers, even to the "common people" who might not ever be able to study the original text in order to get the true meaning as used in early writings. Baxter develops a convincing argument wherein he points out that the consensus of Greek lexicons was that the word translated "baptism" meant "to dip, plunge, immerse, or submerge," and was so understood and practiced by the early church for about two centuries. He believes that one must be adequately taught, and that the disciple once taught, must express his belief that Christ is the Son of God. This excludes infants, whom Baxter considers as innocent and safe; therefore, they do not need baptism. He believes babies suffer the consequences of Adam's sin, but that they are not guilty before God until they become knowledgeable of right and wrong. They

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[1] Ibid., pp. 70-71.

should be reared in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" so that they will early learn the significance of God's grace, of faith, of repentance, and forgiveness.[1]

Baptism, he believes, has design or purpose in addition to its symbolism. Baxter points out that many believe and teach that the sinner is saved simply by calling out in faith to God in some manner; then, he should be baptized. This, he says, contradicts the order given in the Gospel:

> In Mark 16:16 we find this order: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Notice that the sinner comes through baptism unto salvation.
>
> The same teaching is found in Acts 2:38: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Here sinners are told to be baptized for the remission of their sins.[2]

In the conclusion of one sermon on the subject of baptism Baxter observes that it is common to hear jests and humorous comments about the practice and that many have little concern about "what baptism is, who should

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[1]Baxter, "Baptism--What? Who? Why?," Great Preachers of Today (Abilene, Tex.: Biblical Research Press, 1960), pp. 62-65.

[2]Ibid., p. 66.

be baptized, and why it is to be done." Of this attitude, he says:

> This, however, is a careless and dangerous way to handle a subject which is given so important a place in the inspired word of God. If baptism is important enough to be mentioned more than one hundred times in the brief book that God has given us to guide us from earth to heaven, and if it was important enough that Jesus made a long journey in order to be baptized, it is important enough for every living soul to render this act of obedience to the God who made him. "Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16).[1]

Baptism is not considered by Baxter as a work on the part of the person being baptized. Instead, it is looked upon as an expression of faith wherein the believer has the assurance from God that all sins of the past life will be forgiven. Baxter reasons that God has chosen baptism as the point at which man's relationship is changed from the world into "the kingdom of the Son of his love." The act of baptism itself, when administered to a taught, sincere believer, symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.[2] The subject of baptism confesses to all witnesses that he believes the facts concerning

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[1] Ibid., p. 67.

[2] Ibid., p. 62.

Christ's life, death on the cross, and resurrection by God; and it indicates the desire of the person to "die to the old life of sin" and to "walk in newness of life." Water is simply an element prescribed by God. That which saves is not "the washing of the filth of the flesh," but rather, it is the "answer of a good conscience toward God."[1] Man overtly expresses a changed heart and attitude; and God, according to his promises, adds the person to his family--the church.

Baxter considers a person as saved at this point of faith, but looks upon it as only the beginning of the "more abundant life." He introduces the next challenging question which pertains to God's provisions for the church in regard to worship.

Worship

What provision has God made for members of the body of Christ in regard to worship? This question, too, has been a great challenge to Baxter. As one of God's spokesmen, he is obligated to reveal the nourishing

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[1] I Peter 3:31.

spiritual food which he feels God has made available for his family. Also, much like a physician, he feels responsibility for recognizing symptoms revealing spiritual illnesses. In his book, Heart of the Yale Lectures, Baxter discusses the importance of audience analysis and quotes William M. Taylor:

> Another prerequisite to success in the pulpit is a good knowledge of the human heart. The physician must understand, not merely the nature of the remedies which he is to employ, but also the symptoms and workings of the diseases which he desires to cure.[1]

Baxter conceives of the church as being designed by God to provide man the opportunity to worship with others in close relationship as a spiritual family.

Once when preaching on the "Glory of the Church," Baxter spoke of its relationship with God:

> Part of its glory lies in the relationship which Christians sustain to God and to Christ. It is wonderful to say that we are God's family; we are God's household. In I Timothy 3:15, this expression is used "the house of God, which is the church." In Eph. 2:19 we find another expression, "No more strangers and sojourners, but . . . the household of God." It is a wonderful thing to be a part of a family. We are part of God's family when we become Christians. In Gal. 3:26 there is an

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[1]Baxter, Heart of the Yale Lectures, p. 241.

> additional sentence, "For we are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.[1]

Baxter seems to sense the great need for human beings to worship God and fellowship with others of "like precious faith." The idea of worship often serves as the theme for entire sermons, and is emphasized in most sermons.

In one sermon, Baxter asks rhetorically, "What is worship?" He answers:

> Worship is an act in which the redeemed person seeks to express his appreciation and gratitude for salvation, as well as to discover ever fuller enrichment of life and fellowship with God through Jesus Christ.[2]

The above definition indicates why one should worship God. Baxter elaborates further on the "why" in a sermon entitled "Glorifying God in Worship." Two primary reasons for worship are stated: (1) God is eminently worthy of our love and affection; and (2) it is good for man. As part of the second point, Baxter reasons:

> It lifts him up from the hum-drum, run-of-the-mill life that he is likely to lead. The

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[1]Baxter, The Glory of the Church (Sermon #604, preached on Aug. 18, 1968), p. 3.

[2]Baxter, Making God's Way Our Way, p. 94.

> physical things of this world will perish within a few generations, so man needs to tie himself to something that is eternal. Not only is it good for us because it brings us into the presence of the eternal, the spiritual, but even in our worship we find that the cares and the turmoils of our lives are smoothed away. Genuine, deep, soul-filling worship does more to calm the nerves and pacify the human spirit than anything else on earth. Then, too, when we worship we are doing the thing for which we were primarily created. Man's greatest purpose in life is to honor and glorify God. We do this most directly when we worship. The worship of God, the pouring out of our innermost feelings of adoration and love are in line with man's number one purpose in existence.[1]

Baxter thinks of worship as an expression from the heart of the individual. It may be both private and public. When the church assembles together, the worship shoud be conducted in such ways that each individual may participate. It is not to be something designed to entertain or be a "spectator event." He distinguishes between the worship of the Old Testament and the worship of the New Testament. To him, Old Testament forms of worship were "shadows" or "figures" of good things to come in Christ, whereas:

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[1]Baxter, Glorifying God in Worship (Sermon #502, preached on Jan. 30, 1966), pp. 1-2.

> The New Testament plainly teaches that there are five, and only five, avenues or acts of worship. I prefer to call them avenues of worship because, like an avenue or road by which men travel to a destination, they are means through which we offer unto God our worship. They are: prayer, singing, meditation on God's word, eating the Lord's Supper and giving of one's means. Through each of these acts we offer to God the worship of our hearts. Notice also that these are the only avenues of worship authorized by the Scriptures. For this reason we are not at liberty to introduce additional acts of worship such as the burning of incense, the lighting of candles, the keeping of feasts, or even the use of instruments of music.
>
> One of the most meaningful scriptures in all the Bible concerning worship is that found in John 4:23-24, where Christ says, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." To "worship in spirit" means that the Christian must offer genuine, heart-felt, meaningful devotion to God . . . . To "worship "in truth" means that the Christian must stay within the bounds and directions which the Lord has given for his worship. Man is not at liberty to take from, add to, nor modify the avenues of worship which God has specifically given.[1]

Because of this attitude toward worship, when churches of Christ worship together, they engage in congregational singing. There is music, but only that which

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[1]Baxter, The Meaning of Worship (Sermon #533, preached on Oct. 23, 1966), pp. 2-3.

comes from the human heart as made by vocal folds functioning together in singing out spiritual ideas and thoughts.

In speaking of "Worship in Song," Baxter cites examples of New Testament music and the admonition given to Christians in regard to singing:

> On the night in which Jesus was betrayed just a few hours before he was to be crucified, he ate the Passover with his disciples for the last time and inaugurated the Lord's Supper. At the end of this memorable meeting the scriptures tell us, "And when they had sung a hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives." (Matt. 26:30) . . . . Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also." (I Cor. 14:15). He also wrote to the church at Ephesus, "Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5:19). It is generally agreed that "psalms" refer to the actual psalms which we find in the Old Testament. "Hymns" are thought to be songs that are directed to God and Christ in praise and devotion. "Spiritual songs" are thought to be songs that are directed to fellow-Christians.[1]

This practice of acappella music gives a distinctive characteristic to the worship of the Churches of

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[1]Baxter, Worship in Song (Sermon #611, preached on Oct. 6, 1968), p. 1.

Christ which adhere to this particular understanding of the Scriptures. It is one of the primary distinctions between the "Churches of Christ" and the bodies known as the "Christian Churches." The practice, however, is not as unique as many seem to think. In giving facts about the "more than 150,000,000 Eastern Orthodox Christians in the world," Spence notes that "except among some of the Greeks, the Liturgy is unaccompanied by musical instruments."[1] In reviewing historical sources, this researcher found the following comments concerning use of instruments in worship:

> The earliest reference is to the use of the flute and harp in the second century. At Alexandria, Clement forbade the use of the flute, on the ground that it was "too wordly," and substituted the harp. Ambrose is said to have introduced instrumental music in the West in the fourth century. There was great opposition, however, and the use of instruments in the Western church did not become general until the tenth century. The Eastern church has never adopted instrumental music. Some of the sixteenth century reformers considered organs as "monuments of idolatry."[2]

Baxter's rationale for not using the mechanical instruments is based primarily upon the New Testament

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[1]Spence, op. cit., p. 123.

[2]Klingman, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

Scriptures. While he seems to make special efforts not to appear dogmatic about the position, he is firm in his conviction as illustrated by the following comments:

> I might also mention that the "law of exclusion" does not permit the use of mechanical instruments of music in our worship. We are authorized to sing, but not to play. This was the universal practice in the early church and for half a dozen centuries after its beginning, according to the unanimous voice of church music historians.[1]

Baxter's idea of what church music should be was influenced by his basic conception that worship must be an act wherein the individual human heart is involved. This will be noted in his concepts of the other aspects of worship also.

The financing of the church program has always seemed a major problem among religious organizations. The problem has prompted many efforts and schemes for raising money--so much so that churches have been accused of "making merchandise of religion." Baxter's idea of "raising money" for religious purposes would avoid that criticism. He conceives of <u>giving</u> as an act of worship.

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[1]Baxter, Sermon #611, p. 2.

During one period at Hillsboro during the year of 1968, Baxter used a series of five sermons to set forth what he considered the five "avenues of worship." In one sermon he poses the question: "Is giving also an activity of Christian worship?" In answering the question, he notes that it depends upon the definition of worship. For this purpose he defines worship as "the human spirit pouring out adoration and praise to the Creator of the universe." He points out that evidences of man's inner feelings toward God ought to be offered according to God's desires and directives, and that when this is done, it is worship.

He reasons further:

> What has man done in his efforts back through the ages to worship God? For one thing, he has built temples and erected altars. He has made pilgrimages, as the ancient Hebrews did annually to Jerusalem. He has listened respectfully and responsively to God speak, as the Hebrews did at the foot of Mt. Sinai when God gave his law through Moses. Man has prayed. Man has sung. Man has eaten religious meals, as in the Passover or the Lord's Supper. Man has also fasted. Then, in addition to all these, man has given gifts. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were gifts. Animals and food were given for the purpose of offering sacrifices unto Jehovah. In fact, one of the most important and most

> consistent acts of worship has been that of giving.[1]

Since giving involves the sacrificing of the whole "self" to the Lord as well as purposeful giving of money, Baxter considers it as "one of the most significant and meaningful acts of worship in which a human being can engage."[2] He does not believe nor teach that the tithing laws of the Old Testament apply to the Christian. The law of the Spirit in the New Testament is superior, he thinks, and it puts the individual to a greater test. He points out that the Christian is to give according to how he has prospered and how he purposes in his heart:

> We are all familiar with I Corinthians 16:2 which reads, "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper . . . ." II Corinthians 9:7 adds, "Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."[3]

During Baxter's eighteen and more years at Hillsboro, the church has raised all of its money through "freewill offerings," and it is the general practice of

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[1] Baxter, What It Means to Give to the Lord (Sermon #614, preached on Nov. 3, 1968), p. 1.

[2] Ibid., p. 2.

[3] Ibid., p. 3.

Churches of Christ never to bind certain amounts for its members to give, nor do they use any merchandising methods to raise money for financing programs.

Among the other aspects of worship, Baxter's view of the partaking of the Lord's Supper also deserves some attention. His position, and that generally of the Churches of Christ, is distinctive among religious bodies today. The view conceives the Lord's Supper as having been instituted to serve as a memorial with special significance to the individuals who participate. Although the partaking can have significance for only members of Christ's body (the church), no attempt is made to decree who will partake. Every individual is free to partake or not by his own choice. The elements, "unleavened bread" and "fruit of the vine" (wine or grape juice), are looked upon as symbolic of Christ's body and his blood. The distinctive aspect pertains to the practice among Churches of Christ of serving the Lord's Supper every Sunday. Baxter believes that, in addition to express commands, church practices should be governed by the examples of the early church. He notes that New Testament Christians had a general practice of meeting on the first day of the week,

whereas, the Jews gave emphasis to the seventh day in their worship. To support this, he cites scripture from Acts:

> In Acts 20:7 we read, "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them . . . ." It seems that the apostle Paul had remained at Troas for almost a week in order to have the opportunity of eating the Lord's Supper with the disciples there. Sacred History also bears out the fact that the early Christians ate the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day. Justin Martyr, Tertullian and others tell us that the supper was eaten weekly during the second century.[1]

Sunday, the first day of the week, is regarded by Baxter as the Lord's Day. During the Lord's life on earth, he and his disciples observed the seventh day; but after the church was established on the day of Pentecost, the records indicate that Christians met on the first day. Baxter regards Sunday as the Lord's Day rather than as the Sabbath. He calls attention throughout his preaching concerning Christian worship that Christ arose from the grave on the first day; the church was established on the first day; Christians were told to "lay by in store" on the first day; and they gathered to "break bread" on the

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[1]Baxter, Around the Lord's Table (Sermon #610, preached on Sept. 29, 1968), p. 4.

first day. Consequently, one finds that Baxter's preaching exhorts people to meet for worship every first day of the week for praying, singing, meditation on God's word, eating the Lord's Supper, and giving of one's means.

Baxter devotes a considerable portion of his teaching and preaching to instruction concerning prayer. In discussing prayer, he reasons that if the apostles realized the need for instruction as was manifested when they approached Jesus with the request, "Lord, teach us to pray," then, certainly we need to display similar attitudes.[1] He conceives prayer as an activity that avails many blessing when one is properly taught concerning what is acceptable to God. He stresses that all prayer should be addressed to God:

> Nowhere in the scriptures is there a prayer, addressed to "Mary, the blessed mother of Jesus," to "St. Anne," to St. Christopher," or to others. If we follow the Bible, we will pray only to God.[2]

Also, he thinks prayer should be in the name of Christ. Baxter argues that when Jesus was upon the earth,

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[1]Baxter, Speaking For The Master, p. 32.

[2]Ibid., p. 36.

it was not possible to pray through him to the Father; but once he ascended to heaven, it became necessary for our prayers to be offered through his name. He notes that the apostle Paul emphatically stated in I Timothy 2:5 that there is just one mediator between God and men--Christ Jesus. He stresses that public prayers should be intelligible and from the heart--"with spirit and with understanding."

In regard to meditation upon God's word as an "avenue of worship," much has already been written about Baxter's attitude concerning the preeminence of preaching. Since the Word of God represents the superior Divine wisdom from above, he reasons that the Scriptures should be the constant source of ideas for instruction in the ways of righteousness. In addition to proclaiming the ideas from the pulpit and teaching them in the classrooms, he stresses that the Bible should be read publicly:

> Nothing is more vital in a worship service than the effective reading of the Bible, for when the scriptures are read God speaks to men. Yet the Bible is often read in a careless and thoughtless way that fails to keep the attention of the congregation. As a consequence the reading is often relegated to a minor place in the worship service.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 23.

He regards a Bible reader as having a sacred responsibility to read correctly and well. The reading of the Bible "must in some sense mean the interpretation of the Divine Spirit and Will to the hearts of men."[1] As in reading any literature, the Bible reader must understand the message in order to lead others to an understanding. Baxter observes that in order to select pertinent messages for the public, the reader should understand and make clear to whom the passage of scripture was written:

> The Bible consists of sixty-six separate books, written over a span of more than sixteen hundred years. Various sections have primary application to the patriarchs, or to the Hebrew nation, or to the apostles, or to Christians in general. It is important to know about any passages whether it deals with the Patriarchal Age, or the Mosaic Age, or the Christian Age. Only one who thus "rightly divides the scriptures" can hope to understand them.[2]

The reader must ascertain who is speaking and what is the design or purpose of the message:

> Is it a simple narrative? Is it a prophecy? Is it a command? Is it figurative? Is it literal? Only by understanding the general design, or purpose, of the passage

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[1] Ibid., p. 26.

[2] Ibid., p. 27.

> can one properly understand the specific message.[1]

As in preaching and teaching, the reader should "lay aside private theories and prejudices, for these prevent that teachable attitude toward the Bible which is the first essential to genuine feeling and true expression."[2]

In summary, these references to Baxter's idea of worship indicate that he thinks of worship as being communion with God, with Christ, and with fellow members of God's family--the church. Christian worship consists of the five aspects which characterized the New Testament Church: prayer, singing, giving, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and "feeding the mind" with the Word of God. The idea of feeding the mind of man is central to Baxter's preaching. He believes that once man believes the Gospel, changes his attitudes, and establishes a new relationship with God and Christ, he is then subject to being led in a superior <u>way</u> of life.

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 27-28.

[2] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 28.

The Way of Life for Christians

What is the way of life for followers of Christ? Baxter often speaks of "the more abundant life" available through following the teachings of Christ. He frequently gives as examples the accounts of changes wrought in the lives of people like Peter, John, Mary Magdalene, and Saul of Tarsus. He believes that one of the most thrilling stories of the New Testament is that telling about the wonderful changes that came about in the lives of individuals who submitted themselves to Christ. Of this he says in one sermon:

> This kind of change is reflected in Paul's words, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1-2).
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> Although the Christian still wears the same name and outwardly appears as he did before his conversion, he is a new creature. In the deepest sense he is under <u>new management</u>.[1]

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[1]Baxter, <u>The Biblical Description of a Christian</u> (Sermon No. 421, preached on Feb. 16, 1964), p. 3.

Baxter points out how the new creature has new life purposes and goals, a new outlook on life, and a new destiny. "He is on his way to an eternal life of happiness in heaven with God," but all the rewards are not reserved for the heavenly existence. The Christian's mind is open to being re-educated so that he is able to grow spiritually, and gradually become a partaker of God's divine nature. Baxter continues his description of the new way of life:

> The Christian engages in new activities. To quote the apostle Paul again, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10). He develops new habits. Habits of thinking, of speech, of dress, and of behavior in general undergo significant changes. Profanity and vulgarity of speech are no longer heard. Angry, lustful, envious thinking gives way to constructive, helpful meditations. Indecent, suggestive dress is replaced by modest apparel. Drinking gives way to soberness and so through all of the activities of life.[1]

While recognizing that the Christian life is not free of problems, troubles, afflictions, and sorrows, Baxter sets forth the Christian way as superior because of the believer's attitudes and hopes:

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[1] Ibid., p. 3.

> The Christian does not bury his head in the sand, refusing to see the world's problems. Rather, seeing them he is not concerned with emphasizing them, but rather he is concerned with finding a way to overcome them . . . . The Christian follows a wholesome, constructive, optimistic way of life. It is free of destructive criticism. It is full of constructive help for every problem situation.[1]

A perusual of Baxter's sermons and works shows that he devotes the greater part of his preaching and teaching on the general theme of the "Christian Way of Life." One book of his sermons has been given the title, Making God's Way Our Way, in which the themes are concerned with God's way for: man's heart, the nation, the home, religious unity, his Church, salvation, the wicked, sexual morality, Christian worship, and the righteous.

Although Baxter recognizes the almost overwhelming power of temptation on man's part to yield to selfishness and his general fleshly nature, he believes that man's mind, with its spiritual inclination, can be so directed as to lift him to a higher plane of life. This belief on Baxter's part is indicated by sermon titles of messages which he has prepared and preached at Hillsboro: "Right

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[1]Baxter, Whereunto Shall I Liken This Generation? (Sermon #584, preached on Feb. 18, 1968), p. 4.

Attitudes," "Too Much of Self," "Overcoming Temptation," "Non-Conforming Transformers," "The Challenge to Spiritual Growth," "Internal Restraints," "What Would Jesus Do?," "Anxious and Troubled About Many Things," "The Conquest of Fear," and "The Life of Trust." One may see evidence of many sermons of this type liberally scattered throughout Baxter's preaching at Hillsboro.

Reference to one of the above messages will point out the positive emphasis which Baxter gives to life. In the printed version of The Challenge to Spiritual Growth, he compares spiritual growth with physical and intellectual growth; then, observes that in the spiritual realm, growth does not take place without plan and effort. After citing several references showing God's emphasis on spiritual growth, he adds:

> Still another admonition to spiritual growth is found in II Peter 1:5-7, "Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love."[1]

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[1]Baxter, The Challenge to Spiritual Growth (Sermon #609, preached on Sept. 22, 1968), p. 2.

Baxter refers to the means by which the early Christian grew, and he reasons that Christians today can grow in the same ways. He lists six ways in which Christians of the twentieth century may grow:

(1) We grow by association with Christians of our own day.

(2) We grow spiritually through association with those in need--the sick, the disturbed, the bereaved, the poor, the young, and others.

(3) We grow spiritually by association with Christians of other generations.

(4) We grow through association with people of long ago whose lives are described in the scriptures.

(5) We grow spiritually through our association with Christ.

(6) We grow spiritually through our association with God.

Baxter's conclusion is that men can choose to grow spiritually. "The formula for such growth is very simple--carefully choose our associations. Let us then desire this greatest of all virtues."[1]

This growth, Baxter believes, is in the direction of God--man's true destiny is intended to be an eternal existence with the Heavenly Father. However, Baxter

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[1] Ibid., p. 4.

thinks that because of the battle for the hearts of men by conflicting powers, man may be sidetracked and led away from his intended destiny. This is the subject of the next portion of the study.

After Life on Earth, What Then?

"What Lies Beyond the Grave?" Baxter has used this title of a sermon which he designed to answer the question concerning the future of man after life on earth. One of his main points deals with what he identifies as the "universal yearning" for life beyond the grave. Among other examples, he recounts the occasion when Robert Ingersoll spoke the "Eulogy at His Brother's Grave." According to Baxter's account, Robert Ingersoll had the reputation of being an agnostic. He and his younger brother, Ralph, had entered a pact that whichever one should die first, the other one would speak at the funeral. In the manhood of middle life, the younger brother, Ralph, was taken from his busy activities by death; and it was Robert's responsibility to deliver his funeral sermon. Baxter comments:

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[1] Ibid., p. 4.

> In Arlington Cemetery near Washington, D.C., Robert Ingersoll, the nation's most famous orator of his generation, stood and spoke of his yearning to know what lies beyond the grave. I want to quote a few lines from that speech. Somewhere near the middle, he says, "Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of a wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death hope sees a star and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing. He who sleeps here, when dying, mistaking the approach of death for the return of health, whispered with his latest breath, 'I am better now.' Let us believe in spite of doubts and dogmas and tears and fears that these dear words are true of all the countless dead."[1]

Baxter interprets Ingersoll's remarks as an indication that he wanted to believe in heaven. Baxter thinks that most people want to believe, but that they have not yet grasped the reality of heaven. In setting forth his purpose in the introduction of his message, after citing how Christ spoke of the road to heaven as being narrow and difficult, Baxter states that many people get distracted and travel down side roads:

> They forget where they are going. I would like in this message to help you forget the sideroads and make heaven a little more real.

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[1]Baxter, "What Lies Beyond the Grave?," If I Be Lifted Up (Nashville, Tenn.: Gospel Advocate Co., 1956), pp. 109-10.

> I firmly believe that many people are going to be lost because heaven is only a vague generality to them.[1]

Baxter cites the pictures of heaven as revealed in the book of Revelation and climaxes the discussion of heaven with special attention to the promises of God:

> There are still other glorious promises. Listen! "He shall wipe away every tear." We all have our sorrows, but God shall wipe away every tear. "Death shall be no more." Who is there among us who has not been saddened by death? "Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away." Finally, we read in this beautiful description that heaven will last forever.[2]

The belief in heaven and hope of heaven are perceived by Baxter as strong motivating forces for encouraging people to keep themselves pure and clean. In a sermon on the "Power of Hope," he says:

> The apostle John, in I John 3:3 adds this, "And everyone that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." That is a very meaningful scripture. If we really hope for a life to come, then we purify ourselves. We live different, purer, cleaner, more wholesome lives because of that hope. We are going somewhere; we have not time to be enamoured of the things of the world; we are

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[1] Ibid., p. 108.

[2] Ibid., p. 117.

> on a journey and no journey is satisfying until the destination is reached.[1]

It would seem rather inconsistent to believe in the reality of heaven without also believing in the reality of hell. Baxter does believe and teach the reality of a place of punishment. In the same sermon in which he speaks of heaven being promised for the faithful, he also voices a warning:

> In this picture of eternal life there is a discordant note, and I would not be true to my trust if I did not read that also. In the same paragraph from which we have been reading is a sentence which says that not all men will enter heaven. Here is the sentence: "But for the fearful . . ." (that may be talking about the young man or the young woman who is not really bad, but who is so timid and fearful that he never accepts Christ). "But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." (Rev. 21:8).[2]

In his sermons concerning heaven and hell, Baxter does not attempt to give literal meanings to the descriptions. Rather, he attributes the language used by God as being necessary because of man's limited capacity for

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[1]Baxter, The Power of Hope (Sermon #512, preached on May 1, 1966), p. 3.

[2]Baxter, "What Lies Beyond the Grave?," p. 118.

understanding the spiritual world. God's problem, he believes, was similar to what would be experienced by a man who visited New York City for the first time, and returning to his remote home on the western plains, would attempt to describe the skyscrapers and subways to his small children. He would have to describe that which they had never seen in terms with which they were familiar; thus, he might refer to the farm's highest landmark, the silo, in trying to give the picture of New York's skyscrapers. Because of the children's limited perspective, they could not possibly get the true picture; but the father could succeed in communicating sufficient meanings to arouse an intense desire in the children to see what their father had seen. In much the same way, Baxter reasons that when "God tried to describe a spiritual world to human beings who know nothing but material things, it was impossible for the description to be fully understood."[1] He concludes, however, that meanings are sufficiently clear regarding the glories of heaven and the terribleness of hell to convince people of the reality of each place.

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[1] Ibid., p. 115.

Baxter, in his regular ministry to the Hillsboro congregation, apparently realizes the strong motivational value of speaking on the attractiveness of the possible life in the hereafter with God. For example, in one sermon concerning the Christian's attitude toward death, he cites several examples of faithful members of the local group who, in their hour of death, expressed hope and assurance. He observes that death is never easy for several reasons; and especially, because it involves our entrance into the unknown:

> Anything that we have not done before, or anywhere that we have not gone before is likely to bring with it some uncertainties and fears.[1]

Having the assurance of God's promises, Baxter adds, one is able to enter such an experience with expectancy rather than despair. He uses an illustration to provoke thought:

> A noted infidel was walking one day with Alexander Campbell. He observed, "Yonder ox has no fear of death." Campbell replied, after a moment's thought, "But neither does yonder ox have any hope in death." Christ has taken the fear out of death and has replaced it with hope and anticipation.[2]

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[1]Baxter, The Christian's Attitude Toward Death (Sermon #509, preached on April 3, 1966), p. 4.

[2]Ibid., p. 4.

There is rather convincing evidence that Baxter, himself, has a strong assurance and hope in life after death. In March of 1964, he was informed by a doctor that tests revealed that he had cancer. Various people who witnessed his reaction have been deeply impressed with the serenity with which he accepted the news and faced the ordeal of major surgery. One medical doctor who is not of Baxter's religious faith stated:

> I have also observed Dr. Baxter during periods when he had very deep personal troubles, both medical and emotional troubles. During these times he has remained the same with an equanimity of faith and a calmness of spirit that was an inspiration to all who knew him.[1]

Speaking of his own reaction upon being told that there was a malignant growth, Baxter related:

> Af first, there was a feeling of unbelief. Then came a feeling of shock. Over a few days these wore away and there came a feeling that everything must be left entirely in the Lord's hands. The whole experience was not as difficult as one imagines beforehand. Actually, such an experience brings one closer to the Lord.
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> In the days of waiting and preparation one prays more often. But strangely, the prayers are not for one's survival. Rather, one finds himself praying, "Oh Lord, I leave my affairs

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[1]Oscar W. Carter, letter of June 30, 1969, p. 3.

> totally in thy hands. I do not know what is best. Thy will be done." There follows a "peace that passeth all understanding" as promised in Philippians 4:6-7.[1]

What lies beyond the grave? What is man's future after life on earth? Baxter would apparently be the first to admit that much is unknown and uncertain; but on the other hand, he has strong convictions that that which is known through God's word is sufficient to influence man's destiny during his life on earth--and possibly--his eternal destiny.

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[1]Baxter, "The Doctor Said, 'Cancer,'" Power For Today (Nashville: Williams Printing Co., 1968), p. 18.

CHAPTER V

PRACTITIONER OF AN ART

"Public address is an art." "Public address is a science." Which is true? Actually, both statements may be considered as correct depending upon viewpoints. For purposes of this chapter, the practice of public address will be considered as an art. To clarify the distinction between "science" and "art" as related to speech, reference is hereby made to definitions of the terms by John Franklin Genung:

> Science is systematized knowledge: if then the laws and principles of discourse are exhibited in an ordered and interrelated system, they appear in the character of a science. Art is knowledge made efficient by skill: if then rhetorical laws and principles are applied in the actual construction of discourse, they become the working-rules of an art.[1]

This portion of the study will attempt to examine how Baxter utilizes his knowledge in applying rhetorical laws and principles in public address. The above

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[1]John Franklin Genung, The Working Principles of Rhetoric (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1900), pp. 4-5.

definitions have been selected to serve as working definitions for "science" and "art" primarily because of pertinency to the overall development of this project.

By considering art as "knowledge made efficient by skill," attention should be more effectively focused on Baxter's practice of those laws and principles which he has learned in the form of "systematized knowledge" as they appeared "in the character of a science."

It is significant that much of what Baxter learned about rhetorical laws and principles during his pursuit of the doctoral degree in Speech has been organized in concise form to appear in two books published by the Macmillan Company: (1) The Heart of the Yale Lectures, and (2) Speaking for the Master.

The Heart of the Yale Lectures is divided into three major parts: (1) "The Preacher," (2) "The Sermon," and (3) "The Congregation." These correspond to the major rhetorical divisions of: (1) the speaker, (2) the message, and (3) the audience. As noted in the introduction of this dissertation, Aristotle conceived rhetoric as an art, mastery of which calls for (1) the evincing through speaking a personal character that will win the confidence of

the listeners; (2) the use of logical reasoning; and (3) the understanding of human emotions and how to engage them through speech. Thus, it is apparent that Baxter has, in this book, set forth a body of materials which may be relevant in determining the extent of Baxter's knowledge regarding rhetorical laws and principles.

Thus far, this study has concentrated on Baxter's development as a personality, his religious background, his relationship with a particular religious group, his major outlets for communication, and the central themes and ideas of his messages. This chapter will center on his practices in the following areas: (1) audience analysis, (2) sermon preparation, (3) materials of speaking, (4) style, (5) delivery, and (6) interaction with audience.

Audience Analysis

> The only defensible speech is one that is the product of thorough preparation. The price that must be paid for the privilege of standing before an audience is work--long and thorough study.[1]

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[1]Baxter, Speaking for the Master, p. 80.

Baxter believes that listeners have a right to expect speakers to deliver pertinent, worthwhile ideas. This requires thorough preparation which, for a particular speaking situation, requires that the speaker have a clear concept of his audience before choosing his topic and constructing his speech. He sets forth the following factors which should be considered:

1. Size of the audience
2. Sex of its members.
3. Ages represented.
4. Educational backgrounds represented.
5. Occupations represented.
6. Organizations--religious, social, and professional--represented.
7. Chief interests and motives present.
8. Beliefs, attitudes, and convictions present.
9. Existing knowledge of the subject.
10. Attitude of the audience toward the speaker.[1]

This foregoing list ends with consideration of the audience's attitude toward the speaker. Regarding the speaker, Baxter stresses an attitude of love:

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[1] Ibid., p. 57.

> In order to persuade men, the man who stands in the pulpit must have a genuine love for them, a love characterized by understanding and sympathy. In addition, he must have a wholesome respect for those to whom he preaches. When these attitudes are known to the congregation his sermons will take on new persuasive power.[1]

The audience receives primary consideration in Baxter's writings on preaching. In The Heart of the Yale Lectures, after having discussed the preacher and the sermon thoroughly in the first and second major parts, Baxter states:

> The preacher and the sermon are without meaning unless there is a congregation, for preaching exists for the sole purpose of influencing men. The aim of preaching is to move the people from a lower to a higher plane of living. The final test of the effectiveness of all preaching is this: What changes have occurred in the lives of the people because of the preaching?[2]

Concerning the importance of knowing the audience, Baxter summarizes by using the analogy of the construction engineer who takes care to consider the services which a building must render before he sets about to design and build the structure. In relating this to the preacher he concludes:

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[1]Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, p. 125.

[2]Ibid., p. 231.

> In like manner, the wise preacher carefully considers the use to which his sermon is to be put before he chooses the materials with which to build the sermon and determines the arrangement of those materials. Just as there is little possibility that a building constructed without thought of its eventual use could be of much value, so it is likewise improbable that a sermon constructed without thought of its effect could have much influence. The wise speaker first decides what the purpose of his sermon is to be, and then bends every effort to accomplish that purpose.[1]

Baxter reasons further that "in order to accomplish his basic purpose, that of moving men, the preacher must possess a thorough knowledge of mankind in general and of his own congregation in particular."[2]

In these observations from the works of Baxter it is clearly evident that he places much importance on a proper attitude toward the audience, and on an understanding of the audience. The central question now is to determine whether he functions in accordance with his ideal for audience analysis.

Baxter's Practice.--This writer sent Baxter a list of several questions related to his preparation and delivery of sermons. In response, he prepared answers under

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[1]Baxter, Ibid., p. 240.

[2]Ibid., p. 252.

the title, General Information from Batsell Barrett Baxter.

Concerning the procedure which he generally uses in selecting subjects for his sermon, Baxter's answer indicates that he does attempt to give first consideration to his audience as he sets about preparing specific sermons:

> For at least two decades my fundamental thesis by which to be guided in the selection of subjects for sermons or speeches is the needs of the audience. This is the primary conscious objective, however, I find myself from time to time forgetting this criterion and choosing subjects more from the standpoint of what interests me, or what I have read that was challenging, or what I feel that I can make a meaningful sermon from, than the actual needs of the congregation. Logically, I aim to preach to the needs of my hearers, though I find myself from time to time forgetting this high purpose. However, I would say that in the long run most of my sermons are chosen because I feel they are needed by significant portions of the audiences to whom I speak.[1]

In further consideration of the question, Baxter cites an incident when he was asked to speak for the chapel services of David Lipscomb College during the Spring quarter of 1968. He had leeway to choose any

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[1]Batsell B. Baxter, General Information, p. 1.

topic which he thought might be interesting to the students. Regarding his decision in the matter, he remarks:

> I was tempted to choose some light theme of inspiration or interest for the twelve-minute speech, for we all like to make interesting chapel speeches and have a good response from the student body. However, on second thought, I realized that the young men in the audience, facing the question of military service to their country in wartime, needed some carefully studied instruction concerning the Christian's responsibilities to government and to God. Therefore, my talk was longer than usual, heavier than usual, but to a pressing need of the young men who were listening.[1]

In his preaching at the Hillsboro congregation, Baxter faces a rather unique and challenging task in regard to audience analysis; and more especially, in regard to taking aim at specific needs. Each sermon preached on Sunday mornings actually has three different audiences. Already, it has been noted that two worship services are conducted during the morning, with the same sermon being presented at each. While there are slight variations due to the extemporaneous method of presentation, the topic and main points are identical. The first sermon presentation is recorded on tape, thus enabling a third

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[1]Baxter, Ibid., p. 1.

audience to hear the message as it is broadcast over the Nashville radio station.

This naturally creates a rather perplexing situation for Baxter in regard to concentrating on specific problems and needs of the Hillsboro congregation. Because the circumstances call for Baxter to give consideration to all three audiences, he usually selects topics based on general problems and issues rather than on local problems and needs.

Many of Baxter's sermons are doctrinal in nature, as has been indicated in the examination of his major themes. Other than the doctrinal topics, research of sermon manuscripts indicates topics which reflect Baxter's interpretation of the world in which he lives. He analyzes some of the more critical issues as being rooted in prejudice, selfishness, anxiety, fear, apathy, materialism, lack of discipline, etc. This is evidenced by topics such as: "Respect for People," "The Problem of Prejudice," "Too Much of Self," "God Loves the Poor," "Anxious and Troubled About Many Things," "Search for Something Solid," "The Need for Involvement," "Right Attitudes," "The Importance of Discipline," and "Juvenile Delinquency."

Baxter is keenly aware of certain trends which he interprets as constituting grave dangers to the well-being of our society and the destiny of human beings. One example may be noted in a sermon preached on May 19, 1968, which he entitled, "The Voice of the People." In his development of this sermon, Baxter displays a keen insight into the trends throughout the world wherein people in all areas of society are being overly influenced by majority power. He cites five resulting trends which he believes could be totally destructive to our country if allowed to continue without the counteracting effect of "God's voice":

1. The new moral permissiveness and emphasis on the sensual.
2. The emphasis on materialism.
3. The growing lack of respect for God, for law and order, for property, for life, and for the tradition of society.
4. The lack of concern for hard work, discipline, and sacrifice.
5. The lack of respect for marriage and for the home.

While the above five areas were not developed to any significant extent in this particular sermon, they do

serve as a springboard for many other sermon topics. Baxter especially stresses "the home" in many of his sermons: "The Ideal Family," "Framework of Marriage," "The Power of a Christian Mother's Influence," and "Families and Influence." Possibly, he is deeply aware of how his own home influenced his personality. Pertinent and timely ideas seem to abound in his mind, his greatest task being that of selecting and arranging materials.

Sermon Preparation

Baxter's views and teachings concerning the preparation of sermons may be examined by observing what he teaches his students of preaching. One of the lessons in the Homiletics sourse is entitled, "Preparing the Sermon."[1]

Baxter stresses that preachers should build their own sermons rather than devising "short-cuts" such as

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[1]Baxter, Lesson No. 7 of Course Outline for Speech 346.

sermon outline books or books containing "ready-made discourses which can be preached on short notice." He lists the following steps:

1. Remember the needs of the people.

2. Take inventory.

    a. Write down on a sheet of paper:

        (1) Every appropriate scripture passage that comes to mind.
        (2) Every idea that seems appropriate.
        (3) Every illustration that might fit.
        (4) Every poem, quotation, etc. that you can think of.

    b. Let this be a period of "free thinking" --a period in which you explore the stock of information which you already possess.

3. Gather new materials.

    a. Read widely:

        (1) The Bible.
        (2) Bible dictionaries, concordances, commentaries.
        (3) The sermons of others on the same theme.
        (4) General reading: Religious periodicals, tracts, books, biographies, histories, current events, etc.

    b. Observe carefully.

        (1) If one begins his preparation in time--preferably weeks or even months before the sermon is to be delivered--he will find that much valuable material comes without

effort. H. W. Beecher wrote out sermon ideas, put them in pigeonholes of his desk for future use. He had a sermon "in preparation" sometimes for forty years. "Sermons grow."

(2) Useful illustrations and practical examples often come from observation. These make possible effective application of the theme to the lives of the hearers. These come from all areas of human experience and are true to life.

c. Record carefully:

(1) Get the paper habit.
(2) Read with pen or pencil in hand.
(3) Carry a notebook or cards with you.

4. Organize--outline.

a. Begin with your proposition, or purpose sentence.

b. Divide your outline into three major parts: Introduction, Discussion, and Conclusion.

c. Include only one item or statement in each unit.

d. Select a consistent set of symbols to show the relationship between main points and subordinate points.

e. Show the relationship between main points and subordinate points by proper indentation.

f. Use complete sentences for all main headings and sub-headings.

g. Phrase each statement as it is to be spoken to the audience.[1]

In his text, Speaking for the Master, Baxter advises the beginning speaker to draw up a preliminary outline after taking inventory of knowledge already in mind; then, he encourages extensive research in gathering additional materials. He cites Alan Monroe's "most helpful analysis" of the various types or kinds of speech materials: (1) explanation; (2) analogy or comparison; (3) illustrations; (4) specific instances; (5) facts and statistics; (6) testimony or quotation; and (7) restatement.

Regarding these materials as suggested by Monroe, Baxter observes:

> Every speech should have a balanced spread of the kinds of material indicated. Explanation and restatement are necessary, but low in interest qualities. Illustrations add life and make the meaning clear. Use them copiously. Facts and quotations furnish the meat that makes a speech worth hearing. Use all these materials with variety.[2]

In writing about organization and arrangement, Baxter reveals the influence of his rhetorical background:

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[1]Baxter, Ibid., pp. 18-19.

[2]Baxter, Speaking for the Master, p. 84.

> As long ago as Aristotle, three centuries before Christ, there was a continual emphasis upon the necessity of a plan or outline. Aristotle's division was into two main parts: proposition and proof. The Roman, Quintilian, suggested a fivefold organizational plan which was followed by writers for several centuries after his day: (1) exordium, (2) statement of facts, (3) proof, (4) refutation, and (5) peroration. The apostle Paul gave the advice, "Let all things be done decently and in order." Almost without exception great speakers--Daniel Webster, Wendell Phillips, Henry W. Grady, Henry Ward Beecher, William Jennings Bryan, and Abraham Lincoln, to name only a few--have ordered their thoughts by an outline.[1]

Baxter teaches that once the discussion portion of the speech is well organized, the speaker should give special attention to planning the introduction and conclusion. He states:

> The most emphatic parts of a speech are the beginning and the end. An excellent beginning goes a long way toward making an effective speech, and a strong conclusion may turn the tide in winning the desired audience response. There is an old saying about actors: "By their entrances and their exits shall ye know them." Speakers sometimes underrate these parts of the speech and consequently neglect them. Many a sermon is worked out with great care until the conclusion is reached, and then is left to take care of itself. It is wise to master the technique of beginning and ending speeches with strength, for no position in the speech is quite so strategic as are these two.[2]

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[1]Baxter, Ibid., p. 90.

[2]Baxter, Ibid., p. 99.

Baxter thinks the introduction and conclusion should be relatively brief--not more than two or three minutes each for a thirty-minute sermon. He specifies brevity as a virtue of great importance regarding all aspects of sermon preparation. "Get a good beginning and a good ending, and get them close together."[1]

In summarizing, Baxter states that the wise speaker should carefully plan his speech to accomplish his chosen purpose; then, he should give special attention to getting it off to a good start and to closing it with force and power.

Baxter's Sermon Building Techniques

When asked to describe his usual practice of sermon preparation, Baxter responded by giving a step-by-step description of how he builds a sermon. Concerning the first step of his four-step process, he states:

> First of all, I sit down with a blank piece of paper and "brain-storm" for a significant period of time, during which period I list everything that I can think of on the subject which I have chosen. This includes

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[1]Baxter, Ibid., p. 106.

> scriptures, illustrations, points I wish to make, poems, quotations, etc. These are listed at random as they come to mind.[1]

Baxter prefers to engage in this first step for a considerable period of time before it is necessary to complete his speech organization. He believes that speeches grow; thus, if a speaker will choose his subject several weeks before he speaks, he will benefit by having a number of ideas come his way from daily experiences. His second step is also part of what the ancients called the "invention" process--discovery of ideas:

> Step 2 consists of reading, discussions with others, and general thinking concerning my subject, thus gathering additional information to that which was found in my original "brain-storming." This covers some days or even weeks and is basically research for the ultimate message.[2]

This emphasis by Baxter on the discovery of materials for speaking corresponds to what other rhetoricians have called attention; for example, J. Jeffery Auer states:

> The essential worth of what a speaker says is determined by the reasoning and evidence

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[1]Baxter, General Information, p. 1.

[2]Baxter, Ibid., p. 1.

> that go into it; thus invention is the development of facts, opinions, and arguments through research and contemplation. It includes logical and psychological procedures for selecting and synthesizing those materials most appropriate to the rhetorical problem at hand. The classicist described this total process as the development of proofs--logical (logos), emotional (pathos), and ethical (ethos). But whatever the label, the heart of invention is Reason and Evidence.[1]

In seeking information relating to this inventive aspect of speaking, this researcher interrogated Baxter about his method and means of keeping abreast of knowledge, trends, and issues especially related to his ministerial duties. In his reply, he states:

> I try to read the various religious magazines that relate to our brotherhood and to my particular situation: Gospel Advocate, 20th Century Christian, Power for Today, Firm Foundation, Christian Chronicle, Action, Mission, Restoration Quarterly, Minister's Monthly, Journal of Religion and Mental Health, Journal of the Society of Biblical Literature, Christianity Today, and several other religious journals of regional nature. Of course, I do not read all of these all of the time, but I take all of them, glance through them, and read them as regularly as I can. I exchange a number of church bulletins and try to keep up with various things happening in the brotherhood through them. I also try to keep up with general current events through

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[1]J. Jeffery Auer, The Rhetoric of Our Times (N.Y.: Meredith Corp., 1969), p. 222.

> Time, a daily newspaper, the F.B.I. reports, and several other secular journals or house organs. Conversation with other men on our Lipscomb faculty also enables me to keep up with affairs somewhat generally, as does the fact that I travel a good bit and through meetings and other things visit different sections of the country, thereby catching up with affairs in various parts of the land. I also try to keep up with the latest publications and read as time permits books in several different areas of our religious field.[1]

Although Baxter does not mention his deposit of materials which he maintains in files, this researcher has had occasion to see his filing system. He apparently practices, with a high degree of efficiency, what he advocates for every public speaker--preservation of materials for speaking.[2]

One file is labeled "Illustration File," and consists of illustrations, quotations, poems, statistics, and proverbs preserved on 4 by 6 inch cards. Another "Subject File" is a permanent collection of information kept in 8-1/2 by 11 inch manilla folders. As he finds information in the forms of pamphlets, tracts, notes, outlines, newspaper clippings, magazine clippings, etc.,

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[1]Baxter, General Information, p. 5.

[2]Baxter, Speaking for the Master, p. 87.

he drops them into an appropriate subject folder. His other valuable file is the one which he will mention in the last step of sermon preparation--a loose-leaf notebook for finished sermon outlines.

Baxter's third and fourth steps involve the analysis of materials, selection, arranging, and final organization:

> Step 3 comes in looking at all of this information and working up a tentative outline. This is a handwritten outline in which I freely shift materials from the beginning to the end or back and forth. Some materials are struck out as not quite on the subject. Other materials are further developed and subdivided. It is during this organization of the total material gathered that I decide which would be best for introduction and which for conclusion. When this handwritten outline finally takes shape it is still not in very presentable condition for public viewing. The final step is the typing of the outline, which I do myself, onto permanent rag-content, cloth-edged paper. This outline will be kept, so I try to make it reasonably attractive in format and grammatically correct. I follow a standard outline procedure in a somewhat relaxed manner.[1]

Much as the first two steps correspond to the classical concept of "invention," these two steps correspond to the concept of "disposition," or the arrangement of the logical, emotional, and ethical proofs:

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[1]Baxter, General Information, p. 1.

> More than merely a matter of outlining techniques, disposition involves the whole concept of giving form and structure to ideas. Its theories are those of orderly thinking, and its goal is learning how to see things whole, as well as in parts. In instrumental terms, of course, the structuring of discourse must be guided by adaptation to the intended listeners, since the aim of the discourse is to get the desired response from a particular audience.[1]

This introduces the question of the various means used by Baxter as he attempts to get desired responses from his audience. As already noted, he places primary importance on the Word of God as representing the superior wisdom which has the potential for lifting man from a lower to a higher plane of living. The Word has to be communicated, however, and the communication process involves a speaker and an audience; thus, effectiveness of persuasion depends upon the speaker, the message, and the audience. For the best results, it is apparent that a speaker needs an understanding of the factors related to each area--the speaker, the message, the audience--which have potential for influencing behavior and thinking.

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[1]Auer, op. cit., p. 223.

Materials of Speaking

Throughout the history of rhetorical theory, various terms have been used to identify the available means of persuasion in the speaking situation. Aristotle conceived the means of persuasion as consisting of three kinds: (1) that residing in the character of the speaker; (2) that possible through producing a certain attitude in the hearer; and (3) that which appertains to the argument proper.[1] As already noted in a previous quotation by Auer, these three means are usually identified as ethical proofs, logical proofs, and emotional proofs. Regarding these three general areas, the authors of a current text, Principles of Speaking, offer a similar division of the three means:

> Most rhetoricians agree that, in a general way at least, the speaker has available to him three broad categories of materials--old timers have called these heart materials, head materials, and belly materials; that is, those materials that affect the credibility of the speaker, those that seem most closely associated with what we call the reasoning process, and those that help the listener to "see into the speaker" and associate the speaker's ideas with the listener's experience. Taken all

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[1] Cooper, op. cit., p. 8.

> together these materials we shall call materials of speaking. Separated into their workable, if somewhat arbitrary parts, we shall label them materials of personal proof, materials of development, and materials of experience.[1]

For convenience in theoretical discussion there seems to be considerable merit in separating the means of persuasion into these areas which are especially related, respectively, to the speaker, the message, and the audience. Therefore, Baxter's materials of speaking will be considered under the following three areas: (1) materials of personal proof, (2) materials of development, and (3) materials of experience.

As applied to Baxter, first an examination will be made concerning his expressed attitude regarding these three areas; then, some consideration will be given to his use of the means in communication of his ideas in preaching. His style, delivery, and interaction with the audience will be considered under different headings, but will also be related to his use of the three categories of materials as identified above.

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[1]Hance, Ralph, and Wiksell, op. cit., p. 55.

Personal Proof

As the term clearly implies, personal proof emanates from the person who is speaking, and is closely associated with the personality as broadly conceived. Other terms are sometimes used in reference to the means of persuasion provided by the total impact of the speaker's personality:

> This element--personal proof--is often called source credibility. The concepts of personal proof and source credibility are not exactly the same but the differences are negligible, and the terms will be used interchangeably here.[1]

In the consideration of Baxter's attitudes toward this kind of persuasion, reference will be made to "ethical" proof or persuasion as may be noted in the following example:

> Ethical persuasion lies in the speaker as a person. It includes what the audience knows of him before he rises to speak; his reputation for honesty, integrity, good will, and other such factors. It includes his appearance and grooming. It includes also what he displays during his speech: his background of information, his wisdom, his trustworthiness, and his attitude toward the audience.[2]

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[1] Hance, Ralph, and Wiksell, op. cit., p. 80.

[2] Baxter, Speaking for the Master, pp. 108-09.

Because Baxter's conception of "ethical persuasion" corresponds closely with what other rhetoricians have labeled as "personal proof" or "source credibility," these terms will be used interchangeably in this study.

Baxter's extended work with the Herald of Truth television series has contributed much toward making his countenance and other physical features familiar to many people throughout the United States. An example of this may be noted in a statement by an associate who accompanied him on a trip to the nation's capitol:

> While accompanying Baxter on a trip to Washington two events indicated how widespread he is known. We were having dinner in a downtown restaurant when a total stranger, not a member of the Church of Christ, approached our table and asked if he was the man who preached each week on television. Later a guard in the Capitol asked a similar question. Neither had any connection with the church.[1]

He is especially well-known to church members of his own faith as the result of his publishing in brotherhood papers, his religious campaigns, his prominence in Christian education, his radio preaching, and his television work.

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[1]Harless, loc. cit., p. 1.

When asked about the impact of his reputation upon his audiences, Baxter wrote out a reply stating:

> When I stop to analyze the situation, I realize that at this particular stage in my life that reputation as Herald of Truth radio and television speaker, teacher in a Christian college, etc. does have a very favorable effect upon audience acceptance. However, these factors are out-of-mind ordinarily at the time of speaking. This is especially true when I am preaching to my home congregation. I have preached there for more than seventeen years and we know each other so well that degrees, honors, etc. have less significance than when I am a stranger in a far distant location.[1]

In Baxter's estimation, the main value of personal proof lies in its potential for helping a speaker to get a good start with an audience. It could be detrimental, he thinks, if a speaker lets his previous attainments influence his attitude to the extent of neglecting message preparation:

> When I am before a new audience, then the books, degrees, positions do make some difference. However, I would have to say that I think these things are only good to get off to a favorable start. The message itself and the manner of its presentation have to stand on their own legs if a message is to be accepted. We dare not rest upon our laurels if we would influence people.[2]

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[1]Baxter, General Information, p. 3.

[2]Baxter, Ibid., p. 3.

More than anything else concerning personal proof, Baxter emphasizes the need for a preacher to live a good moral life that is above reproach. In his book designed to help develop speakers for the church, Baxter points this out:

> Particularly is it true of religious speaking that high moral character is an absolute prerequisite to effectiveness. In all public speaking it is a significant item, but in the kind of speaking with which this book is concerned it is the very foundation. A speaker must have the confidence of the people before he can persuade.[1]

There is some evidence that Baxter himself has gained more confidence from his listeners as the result of his outward manifestation of serenity during his crisis with cancer in 1964:

> Since his brush with death, having had two operations because of malignancy, there is an air of urgency in Baxter's quiet preaching. He is able to lend strength, because of his own recovery, to numbers of people who face surgery because of malignancies similar or identical to his. On the rare occasions when he mentions his illness there is a remarkable rapport with his audience--including those who have never suffered a malignancy.[2]

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[1] Harless, loc. cit., p. 1.

[2] Harless, loc. cit., p. 1.

Baxter is well-known in the Nashville area because of his sympathetic work with those who are ill, discouraged, suffering, and dying. Testimony indicates that some of his listeners are especially influenced by his speaking as the result of having been personally aided by kind deeds of the past. One insurance executive writes:

> About four years ago, I was in great dispair because of some current events and it was Dr. Baxter I turned to for guidance. He manifested the interest and offered me encouragement which restored my confidence to the extent I have been able to move forward in God's work and achieve things for Him that would not have otherwise been possible.[1]

This executive's zeal for Baxter because of past association is vividly apparent as he comments on Baxter's preaching:

> One cannot listen or talk to Dr. Baxter without becoming captivated by his desire to guide you in the right direction. A couple who are my wife's relatives and who live in a small town some distance from Nashville, see and hear Dr. Baxter on TV. They have told us on more than one occasion he was their favorite speaker and one of the highlights of their long lives would be to meet and greet him. Their religious affiliation is not in keeping with Dr. Baxter's teaching.[2]

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[1]Malcolm Lucy, Vice President, The National Life and Accident Insurance Co., Nashville, Tenn. (personal letter, Aug. 20, 1969).

[2]Ibid., p. 2.

The last statement of this quotation introduces the question as to whether or not Baxter makes any attempt to make his proposals coincide with the beliefs and attitudes of his listeners. Minnick, in discussing how to win belief through the opinion of others, includes a source of ethical appeal which Baxter does not mention:

> The nature of ethos can be clearly understood if prestige is conceived as arising from three sources: (1) the tangible attainments or known reputation of the speaker which the audience acquires before the delivery of the speech, (2) the character and personality revealed by the speaker as he utters the speech, and (3) the coincidence of the speaker's proposals with the rigid beliefs and attitudes of the audience.[1]

Baxter's expression of thoughts concerning his responsibility as a preacher of the Gospel conflicts with the idea of necessarily harmonizing his proposals with the beliefs and attitudes of the listeners; yet, he recognizes that such a practice is effective, and because it is, there is all the more reason to preach the Word of God with urgency. In a sermon entitled, "My Responsibility," he states:

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[1]Wayne C. Minnick, The Art of Persuasion (Cambridge, Mass.: The Riverside Press, 1957), pp. 112-13.

> God's instructions to his preachers are very clear and very challenging. Paul wrote to Timothy: "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with long suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine, but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth . . . .
>
> In his letter to the Galatians Paul wrote: "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ." (Gal. 1:10). To preach "to please men" by softening the claims of the gospel is neither satisfactory to men nor to God.[1]

In this sermon, Baxter develops an idea which prevails throughout his preaching. It is the idea that the Gospel is designed by God to transform people by changing their attitudes, beliefs, and actions as needed so that human beings may rise to a higher level of existence. There is a tendency for people to "heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts"--teachers who will teach what they want to hear. Baxter stresses that the preacher must be an instrument for transforming lives, and that

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[1]Baxter, My Responsibility (Sermon #634, preached on March 30, 1969), pp. 1-2.

this cannot be accomplished if he conforms his message to existing beliefs and attitudes which are out of harmony with God's will. It should be noted, however, that Baxter is in accord with the concept of making proposals coincide with the listeners' beliefs and attitudes if those beliefs and attitudes are approved of God. In the same sermon already mentioned above, Baxter uses personal proof in this way:

> Eighteen years ago I stood before this congregation for the first time. During these many years my life has been greatly enriched by knowing you and working with you to the glory of God. There have been many encouragements. There is only one regret, but it is a deep one: There are still many people whom I have come to know and love who have not yet become Christians. You attend the services regularly and often. Seemingly you enjoy coming. Evidently you are in sympathy with what we are trying to do. You certainly believe in God and Christ and the Bible. But you have never done the things necessary for the saving of your souls.[1]

In a limited sense, Baxter does coincide his proposal with the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of his listeners; however, he does not hesitate to point out clearly certain ways in which the lives and actions of some listeners do not harmonize with God's proposals for

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[1]Baxter, Ibid., p. 2.

those who are to receive promised blessings. His following pleas are based on reasoning wherein he uses examples of preaching and conversions which are recorded in the New Testament.

An examination of sermons preached by Baxter during his long period with the Hillsboro Church of Christ indicates that he seldom refers to himself or accomplishments of the past. On rare occasions he does narrate personal experiences which, in addition to creating vivid mental pictures, also should serve to enhance his ethical appeal. An example may be seen in the following Introduction to a sermon:

> One Saturday morning a number of months ago I was driving into town on Fourth Avenue, South, when a light changed and I had to stop. As my car slowed to a stop I noticed a little Negro boy of about twelve who was ready to step off the curb to cross the street. He eyed the front end of my car with some apprehension, then as it stopped, he looked up at me and smiled. His smile was one of the widest and most appealing that I have ever seen. His smile seemed to say, "I should have known you'd stop. You're my friend." I returned his smile and sure enough we were friends.[1]

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[1]Baxter, Little Things in a Day of Bigness (Sermon #581, preached on Jan. 21, 1968), p. 1.

Another example, also from an Introduction, serves to illustrate Baxter's use of personal proof:

> It was just a year ago that I paused one day on a street in a residential district of London to talk with an elderly man, a retired teacher, who was picking withered leaves and petals from his rose bushes. I invited him to attend the campaign which we were conducting and to hear the gospel of Christ preached. His reply was very brief and very direct. I think I shall never forget it. He said simply, "I wouldn't be interested." As we talked it was obvious that he did not even believe in a personal God, nor that Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God, nor in the inspiration of the Bible. In short, he does not believe.[1]

These uses of personal proof serve well in creating the impression that Baxter is a man who is aware of what is going on in the world, and that he is concerned with individuals in all walks of life. His exhibition of genuine personal interest in people is of common knowledge among those who know him sell. A close associate states:

> If I were to choose one word to describe this man, that word would be concern.[2]

Baxter's concern for fellow human beings as manifested in his speaking and deeds may be one of the more

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[1]Baxter, The Problem of Faith (Sermon #369, preached on Sept. 16, 1962), p. 1.

[2]Harless, loc. cit., p. 1.

important factors accounting for his favorable ethical proof. Along with his concern, he apparently radiates warmth, friendliness, and good will through his delivery and choice of language and lines of reasoning. If so, this should become apparent as attention is turned to his use of logical and emotional proofs, his style, his delivery, and his interaction with the audience.

Materials of Development

Materials of development will be considered as those appertaining to the reasoning and argumentive process. These materials are usually called "logical proofs," and are characterized by their function in appealing to the intellect of the listeners through the development of reasons for believing the proposals of the message. The constituents of logical proof are generally recognized as being evidence and reasoning or argument. Regarding definitions, the following descriptions by Hance, Ralph, and Wiksell are cited for clarifying how the terms will be used in this study:

> Evidence may be defined as facts and opinions used as the basis of reasoning. Facts are cases, statistics, and physical objects--phenomena that are observed, described, classified, reported, and presented. Opinions are points of view--interpretations and evaluations of facts--held by persons other than the person doing the reasoning.[1]
>
> Reasoning may be defined as the process of inferring conclusions from evidence or from other conclusions.[2]

These authors point out that "facts and opinions are the raw materials of reasoning," and that they must meet the tests of both logical and psychological adequacy in order to be considered as "good evidence."

Any materials which help make speeches clear, convincing, and interesting may be considered as helpful to the reasoning process. Materials which may be found and used by the speaker are: (1) examples of phenomena, (2) narratives, (3) statistics, and (4) quotations. Materials which may be created by the speaker are of four types: (1) repetition, (2) restatement, (3) comparison, and (4) contrast.[3]

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[1] Hance, Ralph, and Wiksell, op. cit., p. 98.

[2] Ibid., p. 100.

[3] Ibid., pp. 91-98.

With the foregoing definitions serving as an introduction concerning materials and procedures of reasoning, attention will now be directed toward Baxter's concepts and use of the materials related to logical development of messages.

In response to a question concerning his use of logical and emotional appeals, Baxter responds:

> My own theory is that both are legitimate and that the subject matter, and the personality of the person and the type of occasion determine which should be used and in what proportion. Because of my educational training, working with young people as a teacher in college, and because much of my preaching has been done before a rather well-educated church audience, I tend to use logical appeals more than emotional appeals. They come more naturally, seem to be more effective, and do not leave me open to criticism as an emotional type speaker. I have often felt, however, that there should be more emotional appeal than I am able to put into them. Also, I believe I can feel through the years that I put less emotional materials in the messages than in earlier years.[1]

As noted previously, Baxter made a thorough study of preachers who have spoken on the Yale Lecture Series, and the above expressions show quite significantly the

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[1]Baxter, General Information, p. 3.

influence of his findings. In summarizing an examination of the appeals used by Yale lecturers, Baxter concludes:

> In his approach to the congregation the effective minister will use both the appeal to reason and the appeal to emotion, since both appeals are held to be legitimate. Some men respond better to one, some to the other. A warning should be sounded against the misuse of either type of appeal. Sometimes preachers have undertaken to prove propositions which did not require proof. In such cases the offering of proof often has served to create more doubt than confidence. Sometimes preachers have allowed their use of emotional appeal to degenerate into sentimentalism or sensationalism. Both practices should be avoided. Let it be remembered, however, that many of the greatest preachers have been men who exhibited a high degree of emotion in their own natures.[1]

Baxter appears to have been influenced in his attitudes toward the use of reasoning in his preaching by the concepts set forth by William Norwood Brigance and Ray Keeslar Immel in their text, Speechmaking; Principles and Practice, which was published in 1938, and apparently in rather common use at the time Baxter was doing graduate work. In giving conclusions and evaluations, he cites their "modern treatment" of the subject of "reason and argument":

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[1]Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, pp. 286-87.

> Where do reason and argument enter the picture? What part do they play in human behavior? A very impelling part indeed. For one thing, people desire generally to know the truth, to recognize quackery, to avoid being gullible, to resist animal urges--in short, to be rational beings maintaining self-respect. To satisfy these desires intelligent people must turn to reason. For another thing, although the mass of people, to be sure, avoid reasoning so long as there is smooth sailing--they dislike the strenuous effort which it demands--yet they resort to it the instant they get into a jam, or must solve a perplexing problem, or must find a way out. Reason, in other words, is the instrument for solving our problems, for satisfying our desires, for obtaining the higher values of life. Argument, of course, is reasoning set forth in print or in spoken words. We may not "argue a man into a desire," but we can, by argument and reason, enable ourselves and others to solve our problems and so advance toward attaining our desires.[1]

After using the lengthy quotation above, Baxter immediately follows it with another from the same source:

> It follows, therefore, that, although argument plays an important part in persuasion, arguments are not equally persuasive simply because they are equally logical. The persuasive speaker must be able to unite argument with the springs of action in human beings. He must be able to premise logic upon impelling wants--self-preservation, progress, honor, and the like. His argument must not only impel the hearers to accept his logic as true, it must also arouse them to want what their minds have proclaimed as

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[1]Brigance and Immel, quoted by Baxter, Heart of the Yale Lectures, pp. 303-04.

> true. This is not mere appeal to passions or mere play on emotions. It is loaded logic. And rest assured that no other kind of logic--no appeal to reason which does not interweave an appeal to want--will seriously influence human behavior.[1]

This concept of reasoning, which Baxter has clearly accepted as his own, views logical and emotional appeals as being most effective when used "hand-in-hand," or together. Baxter treats the two areas together in all the discussions on the subject which have been discovered by this researcher. The definition which Baxter uses for persuasion stresses the importance of the two proofs being used simultaneously:

> Now that we have made a somewhat detailed analysis of what is involved in persuasion, perhaps we are ready for a definition. Brigance defines it: "When the aim is to rouse from indifference, to inspire, or to stimulate lagging enthusiasms and faiths, persuasion is a process of vitalizing old desires, purposes, or ideals. When the aim is to secure the acceptance of new beliefs or courses of action, persuasion is a process of substituting new desires, purposes, or ideals for old ones."[2]

To illustrate how the two proofs, emotional and logical, may be used with more impact Baxter cites an example:

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[1]Brigance and Immel, Ibid., p. 304.

[2]Baxter, Speaking for the Master, p. 114.

> A father discovers that his teen-age boy is surreptitiously smoking cigarettes. He could scold and threaten the boy, but it would not accomplish his desired goal. Instead, he patiently shows the boy that smoking will reduce his chance of making the first string on the football squad. If he can persuade the boy that smoking will prevent his achieving some cherished goal there will be no smoking.[1]

Baxter then observes that the apostle Paul, in his message to the Athenians on Mars Hill, began his persuasive speaking by referring to convictions which they already had:

> Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you.[2]

Baxter points out how the apostle, instead of battering down beliefs of the Athenians, establishes rapport by showing interest in their cherished objects of worship; then, he continues to reason with them concerning the Christian faith. This, Baxter observes, is an example of the combined use of emotional and logical appeals--and

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[1] Baxter, Ibid., pp. 112-13.

[2] Ibid., p. 113.

with favorable results as indicated by the scriptural account.[1]

"Attention materials" play an important function in Baxter's theory and practice of persuasion. Regarding attention, he states:

> In the speech, the first step toward persuading an audience is to secure attention--not just any kind of attention, but fair, favorable, and undivided attention. Attention may be of several varieties. Voluntary attention is given because of a sense of duty. Involuntary attention is given to some spectacular occurrence, such as the passing of a fire engine. Non-voluntary attention is given because of intrinsic interest in a subject; and of course this is the only type of attention that a speaker really wants.[2]

Baxter believes an art is involved in the process of securing "fair, favorable, and undivided attention," and that it may be learned by serious study. He cites Alan Monroe's list of nine "factors of attention": (1) activity or movement, (2) reality, (3) proximity, (4) familiarity, (5) novelty, (6) suspense, (7) conflict, (8) humor, and (9) the vital. He adds that people are most interested in those things and ideas which concern

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[1] Ibid., p. 113.

[2] Ibid., p. 111.

them personally, and that such materials are good for securing attention. He thinks attention is necessary in order to develop reasons for believing proposals.[1]

Baxter's theory of persuasion involves a combined use of ethical, logical, and emotional materials. A study of his sermons indicates an intermingling of the three to the extent that one cannot adequately illustrate his use of logical development without also calling attention to the ethical and emotional materials which are directly related to his reasoning. As a case in point, consideration will again be given to the introduction selected from his sermon, "Little Things in a Day of Bigness," which was quoted previously as an example of personal proof. His narrative account of his personal experience with the little Negro boy, in addition to showing his concern and friendliness, should have enabled Baxter to secure rapt and favorable attention through the use of reality, familiarity, and a certain amount of suspense. It also served a purpose for the argument which he developed later in his message.

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[1] Ibid., p. 111.

Out of all the teeming activities occurring in the busy city of Nashville on a Saturday morning, this one small incident is set forth as being meaningful and helpful to two individuals of different races. For a few moments, Baxter became friends with the small boy, and it brightened his day and made him feel good toward all the black race.

From this narrative of personal experience, Baxter lays the groundwork for the development of logical materials. Before discussing these materials, the remaining portion of the introduction will be presented. Baxter states his purpose and central idea:

> For some time I have wanted to bring you a message on the importance of small things. As I have considered this theme, I have thought of the possibility of using Proverbs 6:6 as my text, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." Another passage that could serve as text for this theme is found in Prov. 30:24-28, which reads, "There are four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: the ants are a people not strong, yet they provide their food in summer; the coneys are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; the lizard taketh hold with her hands, yet is she in king's palaces." All of these verses suggest that man, talented and sophisticated though he may be, can learn from the humble creatures of the earth.

> Still another possibility for the text is Zechariah 4:10, a passage in which God asks, "For who hath despised the day of small things?" Yet it is a few verses above this scripture that I found what I believe to be the essence of the message which I have in mind. In Zech. 4:6, God has said, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts." This is it! In a day when power, size and numbers seem to determine the outcome of everything, it is good for us to remember that ultimately it is not by might, nor power, but by the Spirit of God that basic issues will be decided.[1]

Baxter's specific purpose is to convince his audience that each individual human being is important to God. The central idea developed during the message is that basic issues will be decided by God on the basis of man's own individuality rather than upon "power, size, and numbers." His first major point is an assertion that our present era is "a day of bigness":

> Ours is a day of bigness. Crowds of people are everywhere. It is not unusual for a football crowd to number as many as 100,000 spectators. Recently, in December, more than 50,000 watched a football game when the temperature was thirteen below zero. Basketball crowds now commonly number ten to twelve thousand people and on a special occasion in the Astrodome as many as 52,000 watched a single game. Yet these numbers, impressive as they are, are nothing

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[1]Baxter, Little Things in a Day of Bigness, p. 1.

> compared to the thirty or forty or fifty million that sometimes watch a sporting event or some specially important happening by means of television.[1]

Baxter, knowing that he has a number of sports-minded fans in the audience, uses statistics and examples which are familiar and meaningful to them. He also has several business people in the audience to whom the following facts and statistics would be especially meaningful:

> In our day governments are bigger, with multiplied billions of expenditures. Cities are bigger, as they spread out over the surrounding countryside. Expressways make it possible for commuters to travel twenty and thirty miles to and from work without undue investment of time. Buildings are bigger. Business is bigger, with more than eight million cars and trucks produced in a single year and with twelve to thirteen million shares traded on the New York Stock Exchange in a single day. Along with these ever-increasing aspects of modern life, we must also recognize that our problems are bigger.
>
> As the United States population goes past the two hundred million mark and shows no evidence of slowing down, and as the world population reaches toward the three and one-half billion mark, an individual man is likely to feel: "I am not important." Lost in a sea of faces, living on a street of look-a-like houses,

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[1] Ibid., p. 1.

> and working at a desk like all the others, man feels his own insignificance.[1]

In the latter paragraph, Baxter focuses on the individual and makes a transition which involves the listeners in a hypothetical reasoning process:

> It is in this situation that man might well say, "What I do that is good will not mean much. What I do that is evil will not be noticed." But if a man tends to feel that his behavior is unimportant, he needs to look again. When he feels that the good he does is not of much value, he needs to remember that it was one man, Noah, who saved the human race from extinction in the flood. He needs to remember that if there had been ten righteous men the city of Sodom would have been spared. When he is tempted to feel that evil behavior will not be noticed, he needs to remember that Adam and Eve placed a low estimate on disobedience to God, and as a result the whole human race has suffered in a thousand ways ever since. The fact is that God's system is based entirely upon individual behavior.[2]

In using the statistics to present data concerning familiar phenomena and activities, Baxter indirectly involves his listeners so that they sense the feeling of smallness in a world of bigness; then, he leads them back to his text by citing familiar and specific instances in Biblical history which support his point that God's system is based on individual behavior.

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[1] Baxter, Ibid., pp. 1-2.

[2] Ibid., p. 2.

After using this process of inductive reasoning, Baxter, as noted in the last sentence of the foregoing quotation, states his conclusion; then, he uses restatement immediately so as to reinforce the point being developed:

> His [God's] concern is with every man in an individual, personal way. God blesses and punishes not on the basis of nations, races, or even families, but on the basis of man's own individual thoughts and acts.[1]

Baxter's second major point concerns the fact that God, in dealing with human beings, has often used "insignificant people" to accomplish great works. Again, he uses inductive reasoning as he presents specific instances of familiar figures from the Old Testament, from which he draws the inference that ordinary people are often doing the things which mean most to God.

Baxter's conclusion consists of a restatement of the central idea with brief references to hypothetical examples which give support to the proposition:

> Even in a day of bigness God is more concerned over one soul than over the entire material world. The great things of our day

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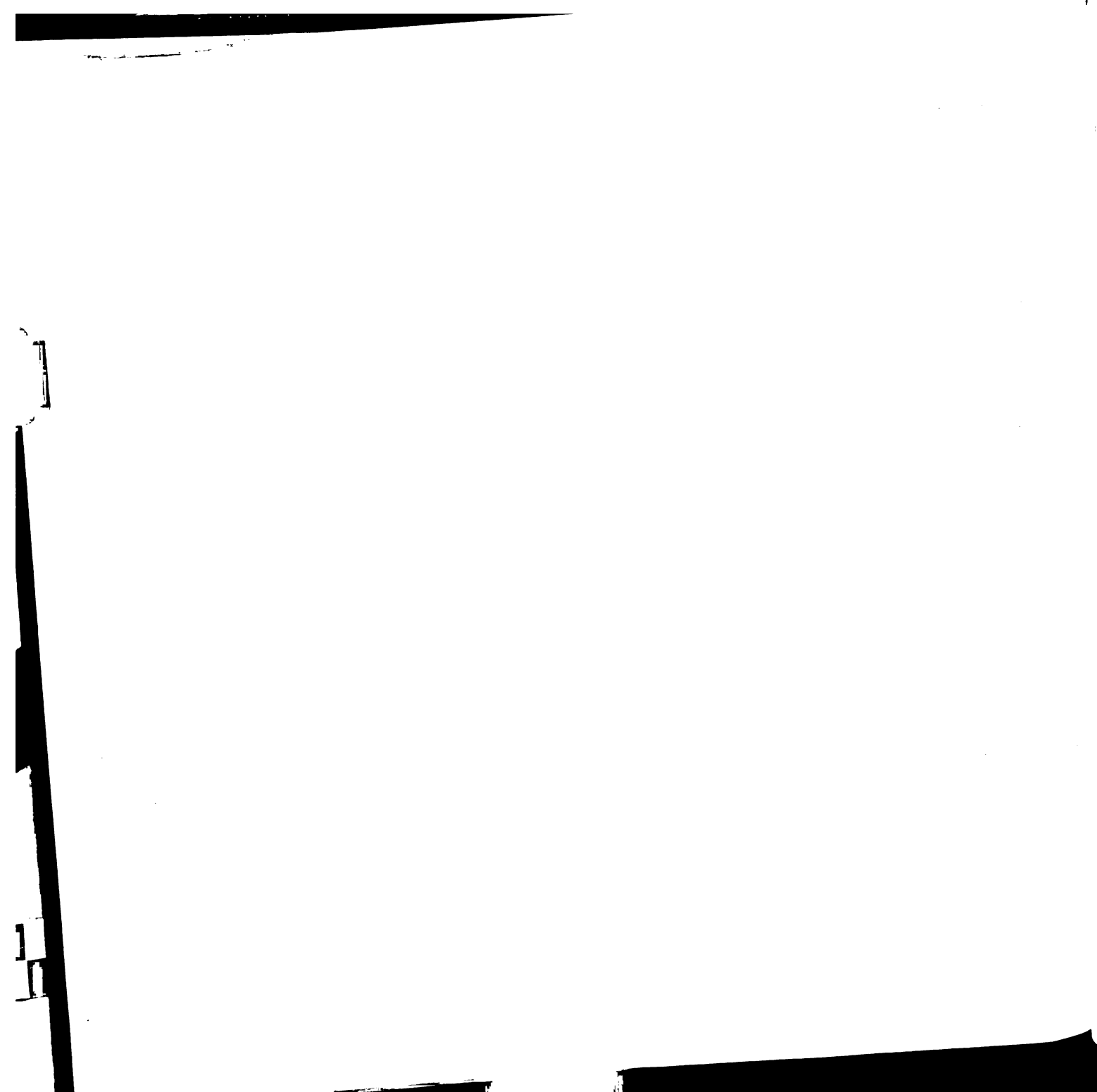
[1] Ibid., p. 2.



> may not be the public things at all, but the quiet unnoticed things. An attractive young Christian girl choosing the longer of two dresses because she wants to be modest may be more significant than what the Secretary of State, or the Secretary of Defense, is doing. A talented Christian young man at a business dinner, saying, "Thank you, I don't drink," may be far more significant than what the president of the company, or even the President of the United States, is doing. Whenever men make decisions to follow Christ and to live according to the Spirit, this is more important than the great spectacular things that make the headlines.[1]

In the concluding statement above, Baxter is making use of deductive reasoning by stating a general proposition which has been arrived at through inductive reasoning. He, then, proceeds from the general proposal to instances which support it. Up to, and through, this stage of his message, Baxter has been indirect in his approach to the audience. In his final persuasive appeal, he is direct:

> The biggest decision of a person's life is that which leads him to stand with Christ. We have just a few years at most and we need to let those years count fully for our Lord. You are important in God's sight. Your eternal destiny is important enough that Christ came to the world and died that you might have eternal life in heaven. Do not discard as

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[1] Ibid., p. 4.

> unimportant that which bears the image of God, that for which Christ died. Come to him now, obeying his commandments, so that he may cleanse you of your sins and add you to his eternal family, the church.[1]

With this closing appeal, Baxter utilizes materials which are designed to move listeners through appealing to basic impelling wants; especially, the protective and acquisitive wants.

The foregoing example of Baxter's development of reasoning, and the use of materials for visualization and clarification, is typical of most of his preaching. He uses an inductive approach with much greater frequency than he does the deductive approach. Most of his sermons have abundant use of what Baxter refers to as "life situations" which indirectly guide the thinking of listeners to understand his proposals. Baxter's findings resulting from his studies of the Yale lecturers convinced him of the value of developing arguments indirectly. Regarding this, he quotes Ralph W. Sockman:

> If sermons aim at solving the life situations of actual persons, they will not fall into the traditional classifications of topical, expository, doctrinal and the like. When we start with life situations we start where men

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[1] Ibid., p. 4.

> live, than lead the questioning soul to the 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. It is the project method applied to the Bible. Such preaching will combine the teaching quality with the intensely practical.[1]

Another quotation from Walter Russell Bowie's The Renewing Gospel reinforces this same idea:

> The most characteristic modern preaching has taken its cue from the psychological approach. It is not deductive, but inductive. It does not begin with large religious doctrines and then bring these down to their particular applications. It begins with the living person, and his confused but vital impulses; and it explores the possibilities for these, until at last it shows the frustration of the irreligious life, and reveals the great highroads of religious faith as the way in which the man himself must choose to go when he has found the real direction of his soul.[2]

It is obvious that Baxter frequently uses ideas similar to these which he has quoted from Sockman and Bowie. An examination of his sermons preached at

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[1]Ralph W. Sockman, as quoted by Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, pp. 276-77.

[2]Walter Russell Bowie, as quoted by Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, p. 277.

Hillsboro during the past several years shows that he often begins his message with consideration of problems and/or needs which are present in life situations that are familiar to the audience. An example of this practice may be observed in the introduction of a sermon entitled, "Our Heritage," which he preached following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963:

> During these past two days we Americans have passed through a great ordeal. Through the means of television and radio we have seen history made before our eyes. We have been caught up in a great unfolding tragedy. The first citizen of our nation, and because of his position perhaps the first citizen of the entire world, our own chief executive, lies dead as the result of a wild, irrational, brutal act of a madman. All of us, nearly one hundred ninety million of us, have stood shocked, unbelieving, stunned, silent, and grieving. We have stood united. For a few days there have been no political partisans--only Americans. We have stood united in our sympathy for a bereaved family, and in our grief for a fallen leader, for whom all of us, even those who differed with him in religion and in political ideas, felt affection.[1]

From this "life situation" account, Baxter makes a transition which immediately engages the audience in a reasoning process with him:

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[1]B. B. Baxter, Our Heritage (Sermon #411, preached on November 24, 1963), p. 1.

> In times of tragedy we find ourselves asking, "Why? Why did this happen?"

Baxter then proceeds to guide the thinking of the listeners concerning the blessings from a rich heritage: (1) a wonderful land and climate, (2) an excellent system of government, (3) a great ancestry, and (4) religious freedom. After a brief discussion of each of these, he makes a transition:

> As we bring our attention from the great heritage of the past to the examination of the present, we become deeply concerned about the drift of our day. The qualities that made our nation great are gradually slipping away. Ours is a nation in which vice and crime are much too prominent. Crime in a recent year was seven percent above the previous year. Although we pride ourselves on being a Christian nation, we have more murders, more sex offenses, and more of certain other types of crimes than any similar segment of the world's population. Ours is a nation in which the taking of dope and the drinking of intoxicants is much too widespread. Ours is a generation in which self-indulgence and sensualism are accurate descriptive terms. As a result adultery is common and the number of divorces rises year by year. It is a time in which materialism has dominated the thinking of a great host of Americans. Ours is a generation in which atheism, agnosticism and doubt loom ever larger. In the realm of religion liberalism has eaten the very heart out of orthodox Christianity. Still further, lawlessness has reached the point of anarchy in various places and at various times.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 2.

Just as Sockman suggested, Baxter has started with a life situation and has continued to guide the minds of his audience into reflective thinking about the world in which they are living; then, he leads the questioning souls to the doctrinal and Biblical sources. In further development he vividly shows the consequences and frustrations of the sensual and selfish life, and follows with a portrayal of the higher level of life possible through following the examples of Christ and the early Christians, who also lived in the midst of evil.

Baxter makes frequent use of John Dewey's "steps in reflective thinking":

> Upon examination, each instance of reflective thought reveals more or less clearly, five logically distinct steps: (1) a felt difficulty; (2) its location and definition; (3) suggestion of possible solution; (4) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; (5) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection.[1]

In his text, Speaking for the Master, Baxter advocates Alan Monroe's adaptation of Dewey's reflective pattern which is commonly known as the "motivated sequence," and is defined as "the sequence of ideas which, by

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[1]John Dewey, as quoted by Baxter, Speaking for the Master, p. 94.

following the normal process of human thinking, motivates the audience to respond to the speaker's purpose."[1]

An example of Baxter's use of the motivational sequence of thinking may be seen in an outline of one of his sermons entitled, "E Pluribus Unum":[2]

E Pluribus Unum

Proposition: "To lead all believers in Christ to want to unite in Christ's church."

Attention Step:

I. There are too many churches in America.

A. At first this sounds like the expression of a critic of religion.

B. The speaker, however, is in full sympathy with true Christianity.

II. We are concerned to find the reasons why, after more than sixty generations of time, Christianity is no more effective in American than it is.

Need Step:

I. The church is divided.

A. The official United States Census Reports give the following facts:

1. 1906--191 religious bodies.
2. 1916--202 religious bodies.
3. 1926--215 religious bodies.
4. 1936--256 religious bodies.

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[1]Alan Monroe, as quoted by Baxter, Ibid., pp. 94-95.

[2]Baxter, Ibid., pp. 95-98 (sample outline in chapter on "Organization and Arrangement").

B. It is estimated that there are now more than 300 separate churches in America.

II. Christ desired that all believers be one.

A. John 17:20-23.

B. I Corinthians 1:10-13.

III. Religious division has hindered the progress of Christianity.

A. Wars are still raging throughout the world.

B. Crime and vice are still running rampant.

C. Infidelity is still common.

Satisfaction Step:

I. "E Pluribus Unum" suggests the answer.

A. The meaning of this motto of the United States is "From many into one."

B. We need to do in the religious world what the early American colonies did in the political world.

1. In unity there is strength.
2. A handful of sand is impotent--but bind the grains of sand together with some cohesive force, and they become a rock.

II. Why not unite on the church described in the Bible?

A. It would have an appeal to all God-fearing people.

B. It would have the approval of God and Christ.

C. Let us leave man-made creeds.

D. Let us "speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent."

Visualization Step:

I. The restoration of New Testament Christianity has already begun.

A. Hundreds of thousands of believers in Christ have already pledged themselves to return to the church of the apostolic age.

B. Several thousand congregations of the New Testament church already exist in America.

II. The Restoration movement, begun a century and a half ago, is making greater progress today than ever before.

Action Step:

I. Let each man study his Bible to discover the Lord's church.

II. Let each man give himself, his energies, his talents, and his wealth to the triumph of Christ's church.

Baxter suggests the motivated sequence pattern of development for situations where there is a problem to be solved. He uses it in his own preaching most often when he is dealing with problems confronting religious people as the result of what he considers to be a departure from New Testament doctrine and practice. This gives him the opportunity to set forth examples from the Word of God as the best possible solutions to man's problems in the contemporary world.

After this consideration of Baxter's conception of reasoning and his practices, it is evident that he does give primary importance to the use of logical appeals; however, he also sees the urgency of using materials which are designed to make the messages more real and interesting to his listeners. For this purpose, he includes emotional or sensory materials which help the audience visualize and experience the things being discussed.

Materials of Experience

Some attention has already been given to Baxter's view of persuasion and the relationship of logical and emotional appeals as the speaker attempts to secure the acceptance of new beliefs or courses of action. Further understanding about his conception of persuasion through the use of emotional and/or sensory materials may be gained by noting the following quotation:

> Experience has taught that each of us has many basic human urges or drives, sometimes called instincts, emotions, habitual action tendencies. To recognize these basic motives is simply to recognize the way we are made. They are neither bad nor good in themselves,

> but can be used either for worth-while purposes or for unworthy purposes. The public speaker who wishes to persuade must learn what these inner drives are and adapt his appeals to them.[1]

In recognizing this significant category of materials for speaking, Baxter is in harmony with classical rhetorical theory which, as stated by Aristotle, asserts that "persuasion is effected through the audience, when they are brought by the speech into a state of emotion; for we give very different decisions under the sway of pain or joy, and liking or hatred."[2] Baxter's view of emotional appeals is also similar to that advocated by Wayne C. Minnick in his text, The Art of Persuasion, in which he states:

> The development of moderate emotional responses is essential to the motivation of achievement of any kind; indeed, moderate emotion facilitates intelligent behavior. Let a man have no feeling at all toward an event, let him be truly indifferent to it, and he will not act at all, intelligently or otherwise. On the other hand, it is true that if he be too strongly moved by it, though he will certainly act, he may be unable to act intelligently.[3]

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[1] Baxter, Speaking for the Master, pp. 113-14.

[2] Cooper, op. cit., p. 9.

[3] Minnick, op. cit., p. 225.

Baxter is aware of the ethical problems which may arise from the overuse of emotional appeals; thus, as Minnick, he advocates moderate use of such materials. He recognizes the great power in the use of sensory materials but carefully guards against using them to motivate people without proper rational appeals so as to enable intelligent decisions.

In discussing the use of logical and emotional materials, Baxter cites many of the Yale lecturers as examples in use of one or the other; then he arrives at his own observation that the "effective minister will use both the appeal to reason and to emotion, since both appeals are held to be legitimate."[1] Baxter's own ideal for the use of emotional appeals corresponds very closely with that which he quotes from W. Herbert Perry Faunce:

> For centuries Christian teachers have apologized for the emotional element in religion . . . . The truth is that our feelings are the mainspring of all we have and are. The feelings are not signs of weakness, they are the motive power in all our living. If they are wrongly directed, we become slaves of passion or caprice. If they are strong and steadfast, then the intellectual and social life becomes potent and progressive. Every feeling tends to vent

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[1]Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, p. 286.

> itself in action, and when strong enough issues in deeds without any conscious choice. That habitual currents of feelings wear channels in the very substance of the brain, that through those channels feeling discharges itself with ever increasing swiftness and ease, that the slightest desire tends to eventuate in deeds, and that no human being can permanently desire one thing and act another--these are the psychological facts that reenforce the ancient insight: "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he."[1]

Faunce's thinking may or may not have prompted Baxter to develop a sermon on the topic, "As a Man Thinketh in His Heart." Whatever be the case, Baxter does set forth the idea that the heart or mind of man can be dominated by emotions. After developing an argument which infers that no effect is without its cause, and no cause is without its effect, Baxter states:

> This being true it follows that when man allows his heart or mind to be dominated by the great negative destructive emotions of HATRED, which includes anger, jealousy, envy, resentment and the like, or FEAR, which includes many different types of anxiety, or GUILT, which also is of many kinds and many degrees, and FAILURE or FRUSTRATION, which means man is inadequate to face his situation

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[1]W. Herbert Perry Faunce, as quoted by Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, pp. 267-68.

> successfully, it is inevitable that his whole life shall show the effect.[1]

Baxter continues to point out how certain emotions cause psychosomatic diseases, and he gives a number of examples with supporting statistics to prove his point. On the positive side, he cites emotions which greatly aid the thinking of man so as to foster health, happiness, and wisdom. He cites an example to support his assertion:

> The Journal of the American Medical Association recently reported a symposium in which a number of doctors participated in discussing the treatment of chronic ulcerative colitis. The final recommendations for prevention and treatment placed strong emphasis upon faith, hope, love and forgiveness. It is rather heartening to the Christian to find the highest medical authorities in our land today proposing for the cure of certain physical illnesses the same things that the apostle Paul advocated in the long ago.[2]

Baxter's goal in preaching is to lift people to a higher level of living, and these findings concerning his ideas and thinking about the relationship of emotions and thinking clearly indicate that he believes persuasion must utilize fundamental human drives in creating interest,

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[1]B. B. Baxter, As A Man Thinketh in His Heart (Nashville: Washington Industries, 1966), p. 8.

[2]Baxter, As A Man Thinketh in His Heart, p. 12.

attracting attention, and building attitudes. He makes no attempt to discuss logical and emotional materials separately because he considers man's thinking and feeling capacities as being directly related to each other. There is considerable evidence to support his thinking. In discussing motivation in 1938, Jon Eisenson states:

> The basic drives . . . are for the most part concerned with the preservation and continuance of the physical and mental well-being of the individual. Nor is there any clear-cut distinction between the physical and the mental. These drives are not learned; they are universally present in all naive human beings. The changes, suppressions, and modifications that take place in these drives are usually the result of environmental influences. They are learned, and the individual who makes the modifications may no longer be considered naive. For the most part, however, drives remain basically the same with most normal human beings.[1]

Eisenson, Auer, and Irwin, in a treatment of motivation in a textbook published in 1963, state:

> In 1938, one of the authors of this book introduced a discussion of motivation by declaring that: "The amount of organized human behavior that is not determined by an individual's wants, interest, and purposes is so small as to merit attention only because of its rarity." Despite the enormous amount of psychological research in the subsequent quarter of a century,

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[1]Jon Eisenson, The Psychology of Speech (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1938), p. 251.

> there is no reason to modify this statement. The more we study human behavior the more sure we are that it is dynamic, characterized by great energy stemming from basic inner drives--wants, interests, and purposes.[1]

Baxter does attempt to make use of the "great energy stemming from the basic inner drives." He believes that human beings can be influenced to change their lives by suppressing, controlling, and modifying the basic human drives so as to conform to the more divine nature possible through instruction from the Word of God. In other words, a man's thinking can be influenced by appealing to emotions; and preaching, in order to be effective, must take into account man's sensory experiences. Baxter's intermingling of logical and emotional appeals has already been noted in discussing materials of development. Other examples will be noted as an examination is made of his style.

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[1]Eisenson, Auer, and Irwin, The Psychology of Communication, p. 244.

Baxter's Style

In making use of the materials of speaking to influence human beings, the speaker must depend on language. The speaker's way of expressing thought in language is usually referred to as his style. Although there may be a multiplicity of definitions for style, within the context of speaking, the term is ordinarily applied to the speaker's distinctive manner of selecting words and putting them together. The authors of The Speaker's Resource Book, after recognizing that "style" is a "loosely used word and very hard to define," state:

> When applied to the use of language, style is employed most specifically to designate the selection and arrangement of words.[1]

It is in this sense that style will be considered as further study is made of Baxter's practice of the art of speaking. It should, of course, be understood that much more is involved than just words and their arrangement. In discussing "the language code," Weaver and Ness

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[1]Carroll C. Arnold, Doublas Ehninger, and John C. Gerber, The Speaker's Resource Book (Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1961), p. 310.

point out how language reveals much about the person who is speaking:

> In a very real sense it is true that style is character revealed in language. The ancient rhetorician, Longinus (213-273 A.D.), told his students that great style is the echo of a great personality. Edward Gibbon said almost the same thing, "Style is the image of character." Buffon, the French scientist and philosopher, epitomized this point of view in his memorable and oft-quoted statement, "Le style est l'homme meme" (Style is the man himself). Roger Brown observes that language style is as individual as a fingerprint.[1]

If it be true that character is revealed in language, an examination of his style should give further understanding of Baxter's personality in addition to providing information about his knowledge and ability concerning language usage.

Evidence from Baxter's works suggests that he considers style of vital importance in public address. In his text, Speaking for the Master, immediately following a chapter on "Persuasion," he presents a chapter entitled, "Words," which he introduces in the following manner:

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[1]Andrew T. Weaver and Ordean G. Ness, The Fundamentals and Forms of Speech (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1963), p. 175.

> Words are the tools with which the speaker works. They are the bridges over which his ideas are transported into the minds of his hearers.[1]

Baxter then observes that the study of style is a vital matter to every speaker. For supporting material to back up this assertion, Baxter uses a quotation from William Pierson Merrill:

> A good English style is as essential to the preacher as a good delivery wagon is to the grocer. There are too many men in the pulpit who know a good deal, and think well enough, but have never gained the mastery of effective and simple language, through much companionship with the best writers, through deliberate and painstaking cultivation of a homely forceful use of words. A preacher without skill in words is like a knight with no knowledge of sword play.[2]

In another of his books, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, Baxter devotes two full chapters to a consideration of style. As he initiates a discussion of style, he quotes William Jewett Tucker, who advocates that the pulpit, as much as any agency of public speech, should place insistence upon style:

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[1] Baxter, Speaking for the Master, p. 115.

[2] Ibid., p. 115.

> The truth in itself, however true it may be, will not insure the preacher a hearing. It is in preaching as in all good speech, the truth, plus the man, plus the style.[1]

It is not clear what Tucker means by style, nor does Baxter clarify the definition in that particular context. However, after considering many other views of style, he summarizes with the following observations:

> While it is true that a poor message cannot be made good by a good style, it is equally true that a good message may be rendered ineffective by a poor style. The wise preacher, therefore, gives thoughtful attention to the development of a good style so that it may reinforce the content of the sermon.
>
> When developed, the good style first of all makes the message clear. Its chief function is to create in the minds of the hearers the exact ideas which the speaker wishes them to have. In achieving its goal of clarity, the good style is concrete rather than vague or indefinite.[2]

Vividness is considered to be of utmost importance. He states that no "quality of style is more important than vividness, the quality of putting your message into such form that it will capture your hearers' attention and

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[1]William J. Tucker, quoted by Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, pp. 129-30.

[2]Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, pp. 146-47.

imbed itself deeply in their minds."[1] Much stress is put on illustrations to create mental pictures which may serve four purposes: (1) make the speaker's meaning clear; (2) help the listeners remember; (3) exert a force of proof or persuasion; and (4) awaken and sustain interest. He emphasizes that the speaker should keep the following qualities in mind in selecting words: clearness, simplicity, familiarity, exactness, and good taste.[2]

In his own practice of using language, Baxter makes liberal use of illustrations and specific instances to prompt mental pictures. Evidence in the form of testimony from a colleague[3] points to the possibility of exceptional talent by Baxter regarding vivid word usage:

> While Batsell Barrett has many qualities which make him an outstanding preacher, the one above all, to me, is his ability to vividly, exactly, and concisely picture human events. He is so observant that in a speech before the faculty one time, he said, "Listen just a minute"; and we listened. He said, "Do you hear the airplane going overhead? This is the regular 10:00 plane for Dallas." Then he

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[1]Baxter, Speaking for the Master, p. 116.

[2]Baxter, Speaking for the Master, pp. 116-20.

[3]Carroll B. Ellis, Chairman of Speech Dept., David Lipscomb College (letter, Aug. 9, 1968).

was able to weave this into the body of what he was saying.[1]

More evidence is available in the form of an actual sample from one of Baxter's sermons. It is appropriate at this point also to note the difference between Baxter's use of language in the actual speaking situation and his use of language in the same sermon after it has been revised by Baxter for publication in written form. The materials in the first column were transcribed from a tape recording made during actual delivery in the Hillsboro Church building.[2] Those in the second column were selected from a published version.[3]

Taped Version	Published Version
Can we really believe in a heaven like we've read of tonight? Oh, yes. Our God, who created the universe--spoke it into existence--can do it. Our God does so many wonderful things we hardly notice. Have you ever gone out into your garden in the fall of	Can we really believe in heaven? Is it reasonable to believe that God can perform the miracle that will take us from this world of sorrow and struggle into the wonderful spiritual world of which we have been speaking? Is it reasonable?

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Baxter, God's Way for the Righteous (delivered Oct. 11, 1964).

[3] Baxter, Making God's Way Our Way, pp. 111-12.

the year and seen a green, ugly caterpillar as it crawls along to a fence post? And you notice that it spins a kind of a cocoon about itself. Nothing very marvelous about that. It's a gray-brownish kind of ugly little shell. And you notice that it fastens it to that fence post and you watch it. You could go over after a few weeks and crush it with your fingers. And if you did, you'd find only a foul smelling liquid inside. But you leave it. And there it goes on some weeks. And then one day when the winter's come and is gone, again you're in your garden. And in a bright sunlit afternoon when the rays of the sun warm the air, a miracle happens. There is a shaking of that cocoon, and a breaking forth. And instead of the green ugly caterpillar that went in, there emerges one of the most beautiful creatures that the world has ever seen. There the gauzy ring-wings, at first damp, are dried in the spring sunlight. And then, behold, before your very eyes, floating out into space, already with the ability to fly, is one of the most brilliantly colored, marvelously designed of all God's creatures. A

Did you ever go out into your garden late in the fall of the year and see a cocoon fastened to a fence post? Only a few week before, an ordinary caterpillar had woven this cocoon about himself. Should you crush this tiny protective cell, you would find a foul-smelling liquid inside. Instead, you leave it alone through the winter months until you have forgotten about its very existence. Then, one warm spring afternoon, you enter your garden again, and before your very eyes a miracle happens. In the warm afternoon sunlight, the cocoon breaks open, and from inside emerges a tiny new creature. Gauzy wings are dried in the sun. Then, almost unbelievably, a beautiful, multicolored butterfly floats out into the balmy spring air. God has transformed an ugly worm into a beautiful butterfly. If God can do that--and he does it a million million times every year--can he not transform man into a creature fit for paradise?

Why not become a Christian and start the glorious journey toward heaven?

magnificent butterfly. And you think back to that worm that crawled into that cocoon. And then you think about the intervening time. And then you watch the butterfly as it soars there in the brilliance of the sunlight. And you say, "If God could do that, then He can transform me, as I leave this earth and as I go to that great heavenly home, into a creature that will live eternally." You and I are made in the image of God. There'll come a time when we leave this old chrysalis behind. That which is of the earth will go back to the dust from whence it came, and the spirit--the part of us made in God's image--will float upward to spend eternity with God.

In examining the two foregoing columns, it is noticeable that Baxter uses many more words for oral speaking than for the written version. His oral style displays more vividness, more use of description, and more spontaneity. There is evidence of his awareness of the need for instant intelligibility in oral communication. This may be observed by noting the use of shorter words, thought groups, and sentences in the taped version; also, there is more frequent use of personal address,

and more use of imagery--words to create sensory impressions.

Other than using words just to create vivid mental images, it is apparent that Baxter is appealing to reason. In essence he is reasoning that God is responsible for the phenomenon which he describes, and if God can transform an ugly caterpillar into a beautiful butterfly, he can also prepare the human being for a heavenly environment.

As may be noted in the numerous quotations already cited during consideration of Baxter's major themes, he makes extensive use of examples in the form of instances and illustrations which clarify, support, and add interest value to his ideas. This, along with his ability to use narratives, statistics, and quotations, helps him influence people with his ideas. As aptly pointed out by the following quotation from the text by Hance, Ralph, and Wiksell, words serve a vital function in the reasoning process:

> We must remind you that words, alone and in combination, form the major vehicle through which reasoning, evidence, and all of the other constituents of persuasion and exposition reach your listeners.[1]

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[1]Hance, Ralph, and Wiksell, op. cit., p. 229.

This is essentially what Baxter states about the function of words as already noted in his treatment of style. Reasoning, with appropriate evidence and logical development, is highly important; however, it is obviously true that words do form "the major vehicle" or "bridge" by which all the "constituents of persuasion and exposition" reach the minds of the listeners. This, apparently, is the thinking which prompted Baxter to include in the introduction to his treatment of style the following quotation by Joseph Conrad: "He who wants to persuade should put his trust not in the right argument, but in the right word . . . . Give me the right word and the right accent, and I will move the world."[1] Baxter, himself, indicates in the chapter that one does need the right argument, but stresses that one also needs a skill in the use of words; otherwise, the argument may not be understood and accepted by listeners.

Baxter does not always make a clear distinction between style and delivery in speaking. For example, in summarizing statements concerning delivery, he states:

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[1]Baxter, Speaking for the Master, p. 115.

> Each preacher has a personal style of his own which should be retained. Slavishly to imitate another, even though he be a master of the preaching art, usually spells disaster.
>
> The best of all the speaking styles is the plain natural style of animated conversation. While the formal, artificial manner of speaking leaves congregations cold, the warm, personal, conversational mode enables the preacher to reach the hearts of his hearers.[1]

In writing about the "plain natural style of animated conversation," Baxter is, of course, in the province of delivery, where words are heard as sounds subject to the influences of loudness, pitch, quality, time, pronunciation, and other factors which may affect style. Actually, it is through delivery, or the presentation of the speaker's message by visible and audible means, that one's oral style becomes manifest.

Baxter's Delivery

Baxter recognizes delivery as the final test for the practitioner of public address. In writing of delivery, he cites the testimony of several great Yale

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[1]Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, p. 195.

lecturers who stress the importance of delivery; then, he gives a quotation by Charles Reynolds Brown:

> Here is the final test! Here you win or lose! All that has gone before helps or hinders, as the case may be, but the proof of the pudding is the eating. Here in the delivery of your sermon the nourishment which you have brought for a hungry congregation is either eaten with relish, satisfaction and resultant strength, or it is left on the plate as a bit of cold victuals, useless and repellent. Take heed how you deliver![1]

Baxter tempers enthusiasm for delivery by following it with a pertinent statement by William M. Taylor:

> I would not go so far as to say that articulate, earnest delivery is everything in a sermon; for truth is in words as well as in manner, and far more in the former than the latter. Yet it is undeniable that effective utterance will give force even to a feeble sermon; while careless, hesitating, and indistinct speech, will make the finest composition fall flat and powerless upon the listeners' ears.[2]

Concerning his own thoughts on the importance of delivery, Baxter makes the following conclusion:

> Just as the manufacturer knows that, no matter how excellent his product, there are no profits until after delivery, so the

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[1]Charles Reynolds Brown, quoted by Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, p. 174.

[2]William M. Taylor, quoted by Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, p. 175.

> thoughtful preacher knows that, no matter how fine the sermon, there is no profit until after the sermon is actually delivered to the minds and hearts of the people.[1]

In the analysis of Baxter's concept and practice of delivery, the following main topics will be considered: (1) mode of delivery; (2) visible aspects of delivery; and (3) audible aspects of delivery.

Mode of Delivery

In summarizing his findings after his doctoral study of the Yale Lectures, Baxter indicates that the method of delivery used most widely by successful preachers is the extemporaneous, wherein careful preparation is done before delivery, but the manuscript is not used while speaking.[2]

Regarding his own delivery, after explaining the four-step preparation process of building sermons, Baxter adds:

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[1]Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, p. 195.

[2]Baxter, Ibid., pp. 195-96.

> All that remains after these four steps of preparation is oral practice to get the message in mind before delivery. I like an hour, if possible, in fairly close connection to the service when the message is to be delivered. I try to go over the message three to five times aloud, reading from my outline, saying it in my own words, re-saying parts of it that seem rough or incomplete until finally I have the whole in mind. I carry this outline with me to the pulpit, but almost never look at it. Only when I need to read from it quotations or statistics do I actually look at it. The delivery is extemporaneous from a carefully prepared outline, but I find that I lose audience attention and interest by looking at the outline very much and so therefore have trained myself to dispense with it in actual delivery for the most part.[1]

In his Homiletics course, Baxter discusses the advantages and disadvantages of three modes of delivery: (1) writing the sermon and reading it to the congregation; (2) writing the sermon and memorizing it for delivery; and (3) preparing the sermon thoroughly and delivering it extemporaneously.[2] In this same course outline, he lists the advantages and disadvantages of each mode of delivery. He chooses the extemporaneous method to practice and teach because of the following advantages: (1) enables the

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[1]Baxter, General Information, p. 2.

[2]Baxter, Homiletics Course, Outline No. XVI, p. 34.

preacher to spend more time or effort where he feels the audience is not getting his point; (2) accustoms the preacher to think rapidly and independently; (3) saves time for other work; (4) enables delivery to be livelier, and (5) affords natural and conversational manner. Possible disadvantages are cited as being: (1) tendency to neglect preparation; (2) awkwardness in word choice; (3) danger of making blunders in statements; and (4) dependence upon feelings at time of speaking.

Baxter does not even consider the impromptu mode of delivery as a possibility, apparently because of his deep convictions that a preacher must earn the right to speak by thorough study and preparation. He acknowledges that the written manuscript method, wherein the preacher reads or memorizes his message, may be used effectively by some speakers; however, he advises his students to develop the extemporaneous method because time and flexibility become of utmost importance to preachers who take advantage of the numerous opportunities to communicate.

Whatever be the method of delivery, Baxter recognizes that two important aspects are involved--visible and audible. The two aspects normally function together

except for radio audiences or other situation where only the voice is heard. As further consideration is given to Baxter's delivery, each aspect will be considered separately.

Visible Aspects

In advising beginning speakers regarding the importance of the visual image presented to the listeners, Baxter quotes Bacon and gives some pointers:

> Francis Bacon told of a question once asked of Demosthenes: "What is the chief part of an orator?" He answered, "Action." "What next?" "Action." "What next again?" "Action." Surely this is overstatement; but it is true that what an audience sees is important. First of all, a speaker should be properly groomed before he stands before his audience: he should be clean and neatly dressed; his hair should be combed; and his clothes should be in keeping with the style of the day but not showy or distracting.[1]

As noted in the foregoing quotation, Baxter introduces a chapter on delivery by first considering what people see before and during the time of speaking. The nonverbal aspect of communication is in operation before the verbal face-to-face situations. That which transpires

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[1]Baxter, Speaking for the Master, p. 60.

before the speaker utters a word may influence the audience communicator. Concerning preliminaries to audible aspects, Baxter advises:

> When walking to the platform, walk so as to create confidence; walk as one who knows where he is going there. Neither hurry nor lag, but take your position as one who has a right to be there. After you have reached your speaking position, pause a moment to turn and look the audience squarely in the eye and see that all are looking directly at you. Then begin to speak.[1]

Baxter stresses enthusiasm and animation as essential aspects of public address, and he especially thinks that enthusiastic movement not only has a favorable impact on the audience, but also affects the speaker in a positive way:

> The James-Lange theory of the emotions is especially valuable for public speakers. It holds that physical action can arouse or stimulate the emotions. Most people think that only the opposite is true--that aroused emotions lead to physical action. Actually, both are true. If you feel timid and fearful and unenthusiastic before an audience, force yourself to be enthusiastic, to move about on the platform, to use gestures. Then, before you know it, you will begin to feel enthusiastic. Try it and see.[2]

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[1] Baxter, Speaking for the Master, p. 63.

[2] Ibid., pp. 62-63.

Concerning posture, another overt element directly related to appearance, Baxter points out the basic elements and offers advice to beginning speakers:

> The basic elements of good posture are dignity, balance, poise, stability, and directness. Stand erect--stand tall. Do not stand stiffly erect as in the military posture: this is artificial and would make natural, easy, conversational speech almost impossible. Place both feet solidly on the floor, but not so as to appear "planted" and incapable of movement.[1]

Baxter gives considerable importance and emphasis to gestures and movement during the speaking process. He defines a gesture as "a movement of any part of the body--head, shoulders, arms, hands--to convey some thought or feeling or to enforce the oral expression of a thought or feeling."[2] He indicates that no speaker can afford to speak without this important means of supporting his oral presentation and then gives testimony from Herbert Spencer:

> To say "Leave the room" is less expressive than to point to the door. Placing the finger on the lips is more forcible than whispering "Do not speak." A beck of the hand is better than "Come here." No phrase can convey the idea of surprise so vividly as opening the eyes

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[1] Baxter, Speaking for the Master, p. 63.

[2] Ibid., p. 65.

> and raising the eyebrows. A shrug of the shoulders would lose much by translation into words.[1]

Baxter stresses that gestures must come from within the speaker; however, he still advocates learning the various types of gestures, and practicing to the extent that it will come easy for the speaker to use them when inner impulses dictate. He names and gives examples of two basic types of gestures which he labels as: (1) descriptive and (2) conventionalized. By descriptive, he refers to those movements which describe or imitate the object, movement, or ideas being discussed; and by conventionalized, he means those gestures which have come to have a standardized, universal meaning such as pointing to indicate direction or clenched fist to show strong feelings. He believes that the speaker should let the entire body enter into the gestures as one well coordinated unit, with spontaneity and naturalness being the chief ends being sought.[2]

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[1]Herbert Spencer, quoted by Baxter, Speaking for the Master, p. 65.

[2]Baxter, Speaking for the Master, pp. 65-67.

When asked about his own use of movement and gestures, Baxter comments:

> I try to use gestures, appropriate to the subject matter and also to the size of the audience. These gestures are the usual type, which we describe in the speech textbooks. I also try to use facial animation to let the audience know the sincerity of my feelings about the subject being discussed. However, there is no extensive or overly dynamic physical accompaniment to my speaking. I believe the style would be classed as somewhat restrained or conservative, rather than enthusiastic or spectacular.[1]

The above self-analysis corresponds quite well to a description given by a colleague who responds to an inquiry concerning Baxter's audible and visible communication:

> He is a splendid looking person. His posture is not the best. As a result of his recent sickness, he does not have any excess weight on him. He is trim and appears to be in good health. He is not the fireball or effervescent personality, but is the quiet, dignified, warm, and understanding man who people almost instinctively turn to. He is marked by humility, poise, a nice sense of humor, and always the right word in the right place . . . . His style of delivery is conversational. I have never heard him make an impassioned plea in the sense of arm-waving or being excited. He speaks in an animated conversational way. You soon are so wrapped up in the

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[1]Baxter, General Information, p. 2.

> message he is delivering that you are not aware of his bodily movement. Being a speech teacher, on several occasions I have noticed particularly the splendid way in which he uses his body to re-enforce his thoughts, not in the sense of overt action, but covert.[1]

This description fits the idea which Baxter advocates in his text as he quotes Archbishop Whately, who states that when delivery is "really good the hearers never think about it, but are exclusively occupied with the sense it conveys, and the feelings it excites."[2]

Another of the more important aspects of bodily or visible communication, according to Baxter, is eye contact. With this, too, he stresses the importance and then gives advice:

> The eyes should look directly into the faces of the audience. Nothing is more important in the study of delivery than establishing eye-contact with your hearers. Do not look above their heads; do not look down at the floor; look at them. Have no regular pattern of movement, but cover the entire group from time to time while speaking. Think of your line of vision as a kind of invisible bridge over which your ideas flow into the minds of your listeners.[3]

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[1]Ellis, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

[2]Baxter, Speaking for the Master, p. 60.

[3]Ibid., p. 64.

From the foregoing observations, it is apparent that Baxter is especially conscious of the importance of the visible aspects of delivery. Evidence indicates that he does generally practice the principles which he advocates for desirable visual communication; consequently, his audience ordinarily receives a visual image of a speaker who exhibits a neat, well-dressed appearance; poise; a warm friendly countenance; subdued enthusiasm; good eye contact; and a pleasing conversational manner. This latter item, however, actually depends more upon audible means than upon visible; thus, the study will now be directed toward an examination of Baxter's concepts and practices regarding audible communication.

Audible Aspects

"The voice is best," Baxter observes, "when without calling attention to itself it presents the message to the listener loudly enough to be heard and clearly enough to be understood, and yet without noticeable strain."[1]

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[1]Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, p. 195.

Apparently, Baxter's own voice does impress listeners favorably so as to enhance his message. Dr. Carter, who initially selected Baxter to narrate the special messages on the importance of love for the "Foundation of Human Betterment," states that Baxter has "the most sincere, convincing voice of any speaker I have ever heard," and that the first message he heard by Baxter "came to life with a freshness and a meaning and an intensity that I had never dreamed possible."[1] Other evidences seem to verify that Baxter does have a distinctive vocal quality which seems to impress most listeners favorably. After listening to the recording entitled, "The Greatest Commandment," Dr. William H. Bos, Associate Professor of Speech at Stephen F. Austin State University, gives his reaction:

> My immediate reaction to hearing Dr. Baxter's recording was that his voice is impressive in quality, revealing him as a man of warmth, goodwill and character, worthy of respect . . . . Baxter's reading of Scripture was clear and meaningful, with good conversational vocal quality.[2]

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[1]Oscar W. Carter, op. cit., p. 2.

[2]William H. Bos, Memo (July 2, 1969), p. 1.

It is interesting and significant to note that both Carter and Bos relate personality traits to Baxter's voice. Apparently, listeners do have a tendency to associate one's voice with various aspects of personality. In regard to this phenomenon, Weaver and Ness comment:

> Possible relationships between voice and personality have long fascinated psychologists and speech scientists. Their experiments and empirical observations reveal that, although voice is not a wholly accurate index of personality, it most certainly does influence the responses of the listener, particularly because it affects the image of the speaker in the listener's mind.[1]

In the case of Dr. Bos's impression, he noted in a memo that he had never met Dr. Baxter in person, but had read "his well-known volume, The Heart of the Yale Lectures." It may be that the contents of the book also had some impact in affecting the "image of the speaker" in the mind of Dr. Bos; however, as Weaver and Ness point out, the voice alone does prompt listeners to make judgments concerning emotional characteristics of the speaker:

> It is a small wonder that voice is related to personality and that voice reveals the speaker; the so-called vocal organs are integral parts of the vegetative, life-giving, and

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[1]Weaver and Ness, op. cit., p. 124.

> life-maintaining mechanisms of the human body. As has been observed earlier, man has no voice organs as such; the voice is produced by structures the primary functions of which are to keep the body alive and working.[1]

Baxter's listeners do not ordinarily rely solely on his voice to get meanings from his messages; however, in the cases of recordings produced by the "Foundation of Human Betterment" and in his radio preaching, the listeners must depend on voice alone. In either case, the unusual quality of his voice does seem to be an asset because people seem quick to note quality before other things:

> Quality is perhaps the first aspect of an individual's voice that is noted and evaluated by a listener. If it seems to suit the speaker's feelings, ideas, and mood, the quality will be accepted as adequate and appropriate.[2]

It should be noted, however, that a pleasing quality of itself does not insure successful communication. As a case in point, Dr. Bos calls attention to what he considers a weakness in Baxter's recording of "The Greatest Commandment":

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[1] Ibid., p. 125.

[2] Ibid., p. 133.

> Despite an impressive voice, the narrow range of rate and tone used by the preacher resulted in vocal monotony that was soporific rather than stimulating in effect. This was heightened by the absence of pauses to signal paragraphing and very little change of pace was used to indicate highlights or minor climaxes.[1]

The recording by Baxter which Bos heard also included a reading of Vandyke's "The Other Wise Man." Since Bos wrote his doctoral dissertation on the preaching of Henry Vandyke, he was especially interested in listening to this particular narration. After listening carefully, Bos writes the following criticism:

> In Baxter's reading, as in his sermon, the soft, warm quality of his voice was immediately noticeable. On the other hand, I would make several suggestions for what I would consider improvement. His diction was clear, except for pronouncing Danuel for Daniel and Judah for Judea. His phrasing was weak at several points, primarily due to a faulty breathing pattern. As in the sermon, a relatively monotonous pattern of tone and rate developed because of insufficient "centering" on key words and an absence of pauses or changes of pace to indicate paragraphing . . . . In a word, the reading could use more dramatic vocal expressiveness, especially in the closing lines.[2]

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[1]Bos, loc. cit.

[2]Baxter, General Information, p. 2.

Since Baxter's pronunciation did apparently distract this listener to some extent, it can be assumed that he has sufficient "Southern dialect" to attract the attention of listeners who are not accustomed to it. Except for a few words, though, Baxter does not have a distinctly Southern dialect. Although he has lived in Tennessee since 1946, it is obvious that his voice has been influenced by other regions in which he has lived in the past. Baxter thinks of his speech as being primarily "General American":

> My having lived in Tennessee, Texas, and California for considerable periods of my life has also enabled me to have something of the "General American" type of speech, rather than a distinctively southern or Texas pronunciation. This has been quite helpful in my preaching by means of radio and television.[1]

When asked to express himself about any particular problems in audible communication of his messages, Baxter comments:

> I have never felt that I had an unusually pleasing voice, nor one that was especially rich or melodious. However, as the years have gone by the voice has deepened somewhat and I believe has a more pleasing quality than it had in earlier years. Perhaps the long period of

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[1]Baxter, General Information, p. 2.

> training in speech, as I taught others to speak, and the many years in radio and now in television work have improved its quality. At least, I have been more careful in its use. All of this has contributed I think to make my voice acceptable in television work and in the making of a number of recordings that might be called religious, or psychological, or success type records.[1]

Baxter likes to use an amplifying system when he is speaking. Most of his speaking situations do afford him the use of a public address system of amplification, and he feels his voice is enhanced by it:

> Since my voice is not a strong, powerful voice, I find the use of a public address system is desirable whenever the audience is above 150 people. I do not always have it, but I feel it desirable at that point. The effectiveness of my speaking is much greater when I have a good public address system and can let it provide much of the physical power of the message. I find that when I am addressing a particularly large audience--1500 or 2000 or more--that I tend to strain and put more vigor into the delivery than at other times. Gestures are bigger and the voice is louder, and there is more strain. Voice quality suffers, but perhaps the dynamic quality is needed for those larger groups.[2]

Although Baxter recognizes that he does not have a voice capable of great power in volume, he is apparently

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[1] Ibid., p. 2.

[2] Ibid., p. 3.

aware of the possibility of having at his disposal an even greater power which is of the nature described by Henry Ward Beecher. In writing of his power, Baxter quotes Beecher:

> You may fire an audience with a loud voice, but if you wish to draw them into sympathy and to win them by persuasion, and are near enough for them to feel your magnetism and see your eye, so that you need not have to strain your voice, you must talk to them as a father would talk to his child. You will draw them, and will gain their assent to your propositions, when you could do it in no other way, and certainly not by shouting.[1]

Although Baxter gives much importance to developing maximum vocal effectiveness along with appropriate visible communication, his overall view of delivery reveals that he considers other factors as being even more important than vocal or audible codes. In a final summary of conclusions regarding the outstanding Yale lecturers, Baxter states:

> When a preacher is known to be a man of exceptional piety and godly character, and when he sustains to his congregation the role of loving friend, his hearers make less rigorous demands on points of style, delivery, language, technique, and other similar elements. He can

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[1]Beecher, quoted by Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, pp. 178-79.

> be eminently successful, without possessing the finer techniques of the speaking art.[1]

There is considerable evidence to suggest that Baxter enjoy the role as a "loving friend" to the Hillsboro congregation. Attention will now be focused on his interaction with the audience.

Interaction with the Audience

In its most simple form, the term "interaction" refers to the action that occurs between the speaker and the audience. In this sense, it is clearly apparent that communication is interaction. In discussing rhetorical criticism, Richard B. Gregg points out the process:

> Rhetorical discourse occurs whenever a human agent tries through the vehicle of language to affect the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of another human being. At the heart of the rhetorical act is the interaction that occurs between the rhetor (one who attempts to influence), the linquistic message (which constitutes the discursive instrument of persuasion), and the auditor (who may react both to the rhetor and his message). This process

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[1]Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, p. 306.

> of three-way interaction may be called a rhetorical transaction.[1]

Language is the vehicle, according to the above conception, through which the speaker affects the audience. As already noted in a discussion of Baxter's visible aspects of communication, the oral use of words is not the only bridge between the speaker and audience. Much communication takes place other than on a verbal level. As they discuss the use of language in a recent text, professors Murray, Phillips, and Truby observe:

> The verbal symbols of speech and writing cannot be separated from nonverbal associations. Silence may communicate the emotional inner state of a person. The empty spaces that surround words may be so powerful that they cancel out the impact of the spoken words. The movements of faces, eyes, hands, or bodies may transmit more meaningful ideas than our words. Speech is a behavior and it can never be considered apart from the other behaviors in which it is embedded. Together speech and surrounding behavior represent a projection of our total personality. Often meanings we wish to conceal are transmitted by nonverbal behaviors; all our words cannot mask our real intentions. So powerful are nonverbal communications that our bodies can

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[1]Richard B. Gregg, "The Study of Rhetorical Criticism," The Communicative Arts and Sciences of Speech, loc. cit., p. 39.

> communicate ideas we have suppressed or do not wish to admit we have.[1]

If it is true that significant meanings are transmitted nonverbally by the speaker, it is reasonable to assume that listeners may also communicate ideas back to the speaker as they respond to verbal and audible stimuli. The usual term to define this phenomenon is "feedback," which is defined by one speech authority in the following manner:

> For speech purposes we may think of feedback as useful in a self-correcting sense, or perhaps we should say audience-adapting sense. As our transmitted signal is bounced off our receiver, it feeds back information which allows us to correct and refine our signal. A quizzical look, a frown, a yawn, the sound of our own voice--any of these may cause us to re-evaluate and recode our own emitted signal.[2]

David K. Berlo points out that the action-reaction relationships of speaker and audience are significant in analyzing communication--especially in analyzing the speaker's effectiveness:

> An awareness and utilization of feedback increase the communication effectiveness of

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[1]Murray, Phillips, Truby, op. cit., p. 20.

[2]Raymond S. Ross, Speech Communication (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), pp. 7-8.

> the individual. The ability to observe carefully the reactions others make to our messages is one of the characteristics of the person we designate as being good at "human relations," or "sensitive as a communicator."[1]

Baxter gives careful consideration to the audience as he speaks. On the three occasions that this researcher sat with the Hillsboro congregation as Baxter spoke, he noted that the listeners were very quiet and attentive, and that they seemingly were looking at the speaker throughout the discourses. A front view of a rather large section of the audience could be observed by the researcher due to the fact that the balcony seating is U-shaped, thus affording a face-to-face situation for one who is seated near the rear of the auditorium. Throughout all of his discourse, it was obvious that Baxter included every section of the upper and lower levels with eye contact. Whether seated on the main floor or balcony, one may readily notice that Baxter is directing attention toward him at times, and is very much aware of his presence.

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[1]Berlo, op. cit., p. 115.

Baxter believes that he can sense audience reactions, and he does attempt to adapt so as to improve effectiveness:

> Through the years I have become quite adept in reading audience reactions. I believe I know pretty well what an audience is thinking as I speak to them, for I can tell by the degree to which they listen, physical responses, eye-contact, quietness, etc., how well a message is going over. I try to adapt to the signals that the audience unconsciously is giving to make the message as effective as possible. Sometimes, of course, I misread an audience, or maybe some individual in the audience, but generally I think I am reasonably accurate in knowing how well an audience is responding.[1]

Baxter is much more concerned about the long range effectiveness of his preaching than he is with immediate reaction, which although it may help him be more effective at the moment, does not let him know whether ideas are changing beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. He has been preaching for the Hillsboro congregation for sufficient years to enable him to make certain deductions which are pertinent to understanding more about his prolonged interaction with the congregation. Regarding this he states:

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[1]Baxter, General Information, p. 3.

> In measuring the effectiveness of sermons, there are, of course, many ways to approach the matter. The most obvious is in number of responses. As I analyze the meetings and local work that I have done in recent years, I find that the number of responses seems to be smaller than when I was fifteen or twenty years younger and more vigorous in my delivery. As time goes by I find myself a little more deliberate, and a little less enthusiastic in speaking . . . . As one grows older I think the effectiveness can be measured in other manners better than in overt responses. General respect, attendance, returning attendance, invitations for meetings, etc. indicates the effectiveness of one's preaching.[1]

By the term "responses" Baxter has reference to people of the audience who come forward as an "invitation song" is sung at the end of each sermon. It is customary for preachers of the Church of Christ to conclude each sermon with an invitation for listeners either to obey the commands of the Gospel or to express other desires of the heart.

Another form of interaction occurs in the form of comments from members in regard to his preaching. According to his own testimony, expressions from listeners do influence his speaking behavior:

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[1]Baxter, General Information, p. 4.

> Compliments and criticisms definitely influence my attitudes and actions. Criticisms are more influential than compliments. Compliments tend to be over-done and are somewhat embarrassing. Criticisms are less often given but have far more influence in changing or modifying the speaker's behavior.[1]

In seeking expressions from various members of the Hillsboro congregation concerning Baxter's preaching, this researcher discovered many more compliments than adverse criticisms. This possibly can be accounted for by the tendency of people to refrain from being identified publicly with negative criticism. Some members did express deep concern over the fact that he was allowing himself to be overly burdened with work other than ministering to the local church. All other expressed evaluations of his preaching were favorable. It is clearly apparent that Baxter is highly respected and loved by the greater part of the congregation.

Concerning interaction, congregational activities, as manifested in the overall church program, are more significant than verbalisms from individuals. There is evidence that the congregation has reacted favorably to Baxter's basic goal for his preaching--that of raising his

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[1]Baxter, General Information, p. 4.

hearers to a higher level of life. To Baxter, this "higher level" consists primarily of a life of unselfish service to other human beings. Statistics quoted in the Sunday Bulletin[1] during the early days of 1969 demonstrate that the congregation is growing consistently in serving those outside their own local group. The financial statement for the year 1968, shows total receipts as $262,607.56. Facts concerning disbursements of this income indicate that 51.3 percent was spent for others; 27.9 percent was used for the local operation; and 20.8 was transferred to the Building Fund.

Though benevolent programs, foreign and American mission efforts, radio and television communication, and religious campaigns, the Hillsboro Church of Christ is reaching out in attempts to influence. While there is no valid way of measuring the part that Baxter's preaching has played in this outreach, an attempt will be made in the following chapter to set forth some meaningful value judgments and conclusions.

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[1] Sunday Bulletin, Hillsboro Church of Christ (Jan. 19, 1969).

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The general purpose of this study, as expressed in the Introduction, was to apply the principles of rhetoric to the speaking career of Batsell Barrett Baxter. Specifically, it was stated that the research project would attempt to describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate related factors comprising background influences; personality; cultural environment; the materials, ideas, and proposals in messages; elements of preparation, organization, and delivery of speeches; and the interaction of the speaker and society.

Rhetoric has been described as involving the accumulated body of knowledge pertaining to man's attempt to utilize his mind, voice, bodily actions, and other available resources to publicize and promulagate ideas, concepts, attitudes, information, knowledge, etc. Admittedly, a problem exists concerning guiding principles and standards of appraisal because of the fact that rhetorical theory is continually subject to modification and change.

Recognizing the hazards of man's tendency to view standards as absolute, this writer has endeavored to heed the advice set forth by Baird and Thonssen concerning methodology in criticism:

> Whatever yardstick is used, the critic will wisely refuse to succumb to the rigidities of any formula; he will define clearly his critical referents but will exercise reasonable independence and flexibility in the application of his "norms"; he will proceed with full recognition of the limitations of his materials; he will recognize, for example, that speeches have their birth and end in a situation that cannot be repeated, that no two speeches are exactly alike, that the same measuring device can hardly be indiscriminately applied.[1]

Regarding evaluation of Baxter's speaking, one central question has been in the forefront throughout the study: How has Baxter utilized the available means of communication for publicizing and promulgating his ideas, information, values, attitudes, etc.? The "available means" have been categorized as: (1) the use of "personal proof"; (2) the use of "materials of development"; and (3) the use of "materials of experience."

Essentially, these three areas correspond to those which Aristotle set forth as being necessary for "mastery"

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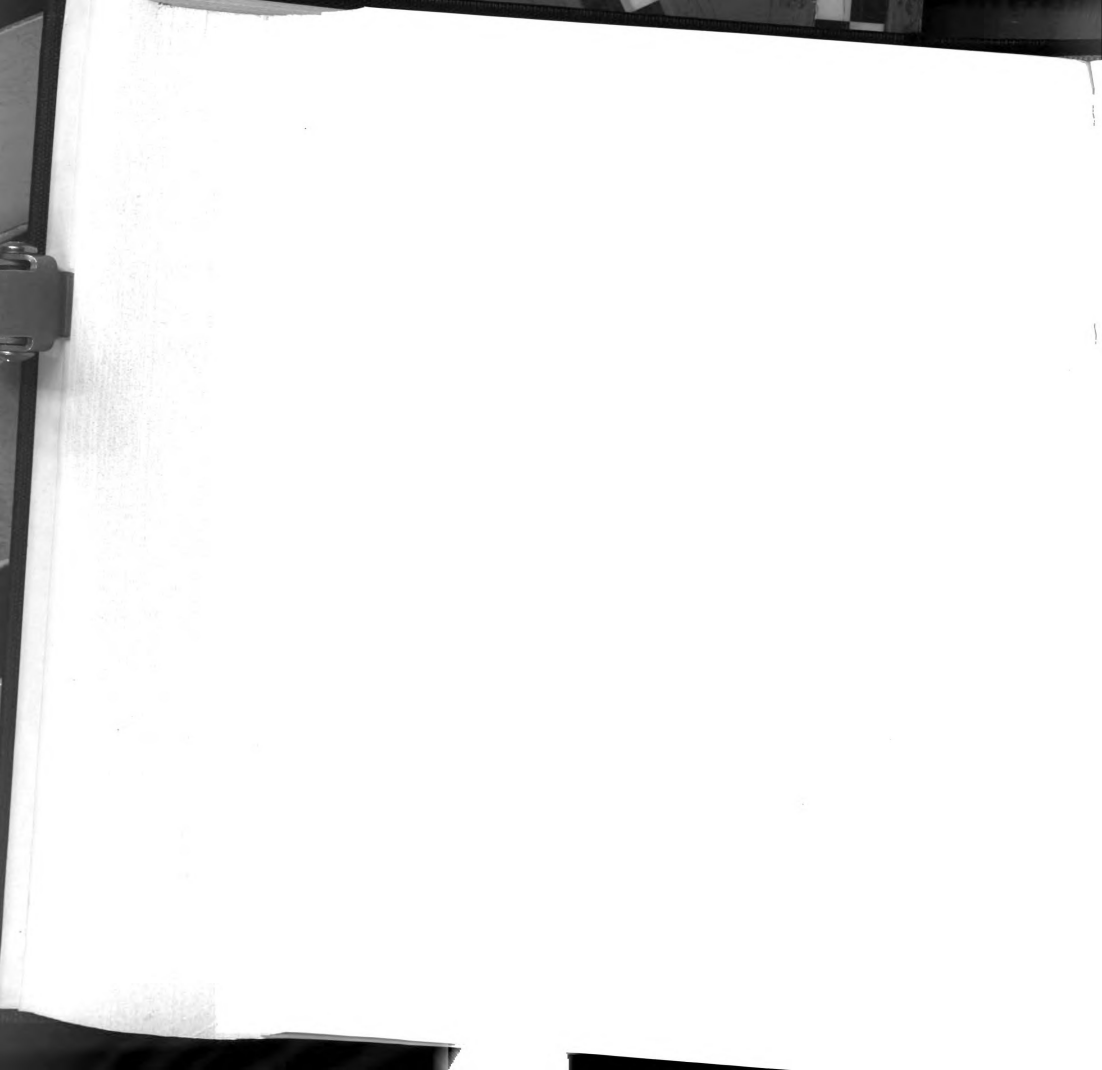
[1]Baird and Thonssen, op. cit., p. 136.



in order for one to become proficient in the art of rhetoric. In the process of investigation and the selection of guiding principles for appraisal, it has been recognized by this writer that, since Aristotle's time, many other scholars have observed public speakers and have through their analyses, interpretations, and evaluations made valuable contributions to the body of knowledge comprising rhetorical theory and criticism. This accumulated "traditional" body of knowledge is viewed with respect by this researcher; and has been used primarily as a basis for standards of appraisal.

The general procedure in studying Baxter's speaking has been to discover pertinent information concerning: (1) his development as a personality; (2) the cultural context in which he functions; (3) his interpretation of the world about him; (4) the central themes and ideas of his messages; and (5) his practices in the areas of audience analysis, sermon preparation, materials of speaking, style, delivery, and interaction with the audience. Each of these areas has been set forth in the study as separate chapters, and in each case, a certain amount of analysis, interpretation, and evaluation has been included. At this

stage, the above general areas will again be used as a format for purposes of summarizing and making value judgments concerning Baxter's competence as a speaker and his impact upon society.

Personality

What are the significant factors related to Baxter's development as a speaker? This study was initiated with the assumption that a speaker's personality is an essential factor to consider when attempting to analyze and evaluate his competence as a communicator. As noted when discussing the role of personality, "the ethos--the person of the speaker--is fully as important to the success or failure of communication as are logic, evidence, and development."[1]

The term "personality," as used in this study has been defined as

> an expression of many forces and influences, inherited and acquired, physical, environmental, and psychological . . . of the individual's values and attitudes that are modified if not

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[1]Hance, Ralph, and Wiksell, loc. cit., p. 79.

> initially shaped by interaction with a culture at large and a sub-culture in particular.[1]

It is principally on the basis of this definition and its significant relationship to the concept of "personal proof" that Baxter's development as a personality has received primary attention.

Evidence indicates that Baxter's basic attitudes and values were acquired from three sub-cultures comprising a Christian home, the fellowship of Churches of Christ, and Christian educational institutions. His homelife in particular radiated an atmosphere of love, peace, and concern for others which apparently affected Baxter's personality positively to the extent that he is characterized by the same attributes. Also, testimonies from several sources indicate that Baxter's parents, by their examples and teaching, propagated in their son the attitude that the most important function in life is that of exemplifying and teaching the Gospel of Christ.

This basic attitude regarding his function in life motivated Baxter to choose public address and preaching as related fields which, in his judgment, would best prepare

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[1]Eisenson, Auer, and Irwin, loc. cit., p. 333.

him for realization of his primary aim in life. In the process of attaining the Ph.D. degree in the field of speech he gained an extensive background in rhetorical theory which he concurrently used as he preached regularly for Churches of Christ in the vicinity of the University of Southern California. His dissertation topic was ideally suited to his goals because it permitted him to compare theories of outstanding preachers of the past with concepts he had gained.

Baxter's findings prompted him to draw nine general conclusions which have served as a model for his own preaching and speaking. As listed by Baxter in the final chapter of The Heart of the Yale Lectures, the nine conclusions are:

1. The most vital element in the persuasion of a congregation is the person who stands in the pulpit. In turn, the paramount qualification of the man in the pulpit is his Christian character.

2. In order to achieve his maximum effectiveness (and in addition to the possession of a genuine Christian character), the preacher must be sincere, must be earnest, must be original, must be well informed and studious, must possess a strong healthy body, and must possess a good mind.

3. The preacher must be confident in his own ability, yet not conceited, must have a high respect and genuine love for his audience, and must possess a strong liking for all of the work of the ministry.

4. In order to reach its peak of effectiveness, the clear sermon must be presented in a style which is clear, concrete, interesting, original, and coherent. Sensationalism and elegance are undesirable elements. The style may profit from the judicious use of appropriate illustrations. Its language must be simple, familiar, and precise.

5. After thorough preparation, the sermon is most effective when delivered extemporaneously.

6. The order of the service, and the physical setting in which the sermon is delivered must be so planned as to aid the sermon in accomplishing its purpose.

7. The sermon must have a definite purpose, the selection of which is determined by the needs of the congregation.

8. In order to persuade men, the preacher must possess a thorough understanding of his own congregation and of men in general.

9. The most effective approach to the audience is the one which begins with the preacher and audience "en rapport," which appeals judiciously both to the reason and to the emotions, which makes use of indirect rather than direct appeals, which is audience-centered rather than subject-matter-centered, which appeals to man's basic motives, which

> repeats the chief elements to be grasped, and which includes the sparing use of humor.[1]

These conclusions represent value judgments regarding Baxter's ideal for methods and techniques in preaching. They have served as measuring devices or guiding norms for his own speaking career, and also, for students in his Homiletics classes. He asserts that each suggestion which he advocates in these nine conclusions "can also be found among the secular rhetoricians, ancient or modern, and sometimes in both."[2]

In summary, it is clearly evident that Baxter derived basic religious values, attitudes, and beliefs during his formative years in a Christian home and in subcultures which are closely related to Churches of Christ. His personality was broadened considerably through new concepts and values derived from graduate studies while earning the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Speech. The findings in Chapter I are considered especially pertinent to the research project because as Croft aptly observes, the

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[1]Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, pp. 288-99.

[2]Ibid., p. 300.

"principal difficulty of speech criticism is that we are not really able to evaluate a man's skill apart from his ideas (his beliefs, attitudes, etc.)." Croft, in his discussion of the functions which rhetorical criticism should serve, reasons:

> Rhetorical evaluation will attempt to discover the following things: (1) the basic values on which the speaker rests his proposals themselves; (2) the specific proposals themselves; (3) the manner in which the speaker attempts to connect values with proposals in the minds of his audience; (4) the extent to which these connections were appropriate to the audience being addressed.[1]

Since Baxter's parents were members of the Church of Christ and all of his undergraduate education was obtained in schools related to the Churches of Christ, Chapter II of the study was designed to discover information about this cultural environment which supplied Baxter with most of his basic values and beliefs. It should be noted also at this point that Chapters III, IV, and V of the project are aimed at discovering relevant information regarding items 2, 3, and 4 in the above quotation.

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[1]Croft, op. cit., p. 289.

Religious Culture

Throughout his life and preaching career, Baxter has been affiliated with the Churches of Christ, which emerged on the American religious scene as the result of three indigenous church movements during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The movements were precipitated by frontier Protestant leaders who were unhappy with the authoritarian creeds which they thought contributed to sectarianism and division. The eventual crystallization of the movements was accomplished when the respective leaders discovered they shared one common goal--that of restoring the church of the Lord according to the pattern set forth in the New Testament scriptures.

It was believed that the "restoration plea," when taught and adhered to in practice, would bring forth autonomous bodies (churches) distinguished by names which give preeminence to Christ, by worship patterned after the New Testament church, and by a righteous way of life corresponding to the principles and precepts of Christ's teaching. The churches resulting from the aggressive evangelism of those early American leaders are described

as being "characterized by warm-hearted informality in worship, vocal insistence on congregational independence, and avoidance of clericalism."[1] The ideal of the movement which stressed "unity through restoration" offered an attractive appeal to pioneering American settlers. The fundamental ideas of the movement were remarkably similar to those set forth by John Wycliffe during the Medieval period of history. Aggressive evangelism by zealous preachers resulted in rapid growth during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the extent that membership grew to over 200,000 followers. The movement was split over the question of missionary societies in 1906, and the resulting two religious bodies became known by the names "Churches of Christ" and "Disciples of Christ." The latter group of churches are currently identified by the name "Christian Churches."

The Churches of Christ represent the sub-culture which supplied Baxter with his religious background and dominant ideas and values. According to a recent report giving statistics on the independent groups listed under

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[1]Yoder, loc. cit., p. 237.

the name "Churches of Christ," there are about twenty thousand congregations with a membership of approximately 2,000,000. Expansion has been impressive during the recent period contemporary with Baxter's preaching career as is verified by statistics in Mead's Handbook of Denominations which states that in the past twenty years, Churches of Christ "have emerged as one of the top ten non-Catholic bodies in North America."[1]

One may readily recognize that fidelity to the restoration ideal for the church demands aggressive preaching and teaching which propagates New Testament doctrine; otherwise, there is the ever-prevailing tendency for churches to conform to established traditional doctrines which are more in harmony with contemporary trends. The nature of the Gospel calls for it to be a transforming influence which instructs human being to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts" and to live "soberly and righteously,"[2] thus, Baxter considers his primary aim in

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[1]Mead, loc. cit., p. 87.

[2]Titus 2:11-12.

preaching to be that of moving "the people from a lower to a higher plane of living."[1]

As a preacher functioning in this particular religious culture, Baxter is expected to have firm convictions regarding the use of the New Testament as authoritative doctrine for the church. Churches of Christ do not generally permit ministers to preach in their pulpits unless they subscribe to this basic conviction. They regard denominational creeds and all philosophical doctrines as being a reflection of man's limited wisdom, and thus, inferior to the divine wisdom of God. Consequently, Churches of Christ do not fellowship with the contemporary religious bodies which use sources of authority other than the New Testament. This practice has limited Baxter insofar as being able to function in religious cultures outside the environs of Churches of Christ.

Findings reported in Chapter III suggest that the Hillsboro Church of Christ recognizes this problem and has made special efforts to cooperate with Baxter in reaching out with new avenues of communication. During

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[1]Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, p. 231.

almost two decades with the congregation, Baxter has had a rather ideal climate for publicizing his beliefs and values. Other than the Hillsboro pulpit and David Lipscomb College classrooms, he has had extensive use of the mass media of radio, television, and the printed page. Attention will now be given to an evaluation of the principal ideas and themes which he chose for communicating through these various means.

Baxter's Interpretation of Religion

Among the possible methods of measuring effectiveness in speaking, this researcher believes that the communicator's ability to understand and interpret major trends and happenings is among the more important. Especially, it seems that this should be true in the investigation of preaching effectiveness. Those familiar with the Bible may recall that Christ, on one occasion, upbraided the Pharisees and Sadducees because they could not "discern the signs of the times."[1] These people whom the

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[1]Matthew 16:3.

Lord criticized exhibited unusual skills in some areas, but they were not alert to the tremendous historical and prophetical event which was taking place before their eyes. They failed to understand that the Messiah had come, and that he was actually accomplishing his work on the outside of the framework of their established religious structures. One may well imagine that some "doctors of the Law" would have rated very high on the basis of oratorical skills other than those involved with interpretation of the world about them.

Regarding this idea of interpretation, Marie Hochmuth Nichols states:

> Our topical concern may be with "style" and "content" or "language" and "truth," but the function of the rhetorical critic remains the same. He must serve his society and himself by revealing and evaluating the public speaker's interpretation of the world around him and the peculiar means of expressing that interpretation.[1]

With this function in mind, therefore, the objective in Chapter IV was to provide information relevant to Baxter's analysis and interpretation of the world's religious needs. For this purpose, an attempt was made to

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[1]Marie Hochmuth Nichols, "Introduction," Rhetoric and Criticism (Baton Rouge, La.: L.S.U. Press, 1963), p. vi.

discover the underlying value judgments which Baxter exhibits in the overall context of his speaking.

To Baxter, the problems and ills facing the world today are chiefly the result of failure of churches to fulfill the mission which Christ intended for his people to perform. In his judgment many churches have become so involved in social, economic, and political questions that they have been negligent of their central task of forcefully proclaiming the Word of God which has the power to convert and mold attitudes of individuals who may then serve as leavening influences in all realms where corrupting trends are eroding society.

The task of changing hearts and transforming people into followers of Christ is not considered by Baxter as an easy one; rather he views it as requiring the same sacrificial endeavors as were characteristic of preachers and churches during the aggressive spread of Christianity in the first century.

Baxter conceives man's basic nature as being good rather than evil or neutral. Regarding the latter, he admits the powerful influences of heredity and environment, but denounces the "deterministic, behavioristic

view of life" for not taking cognizance of the "something" in man that enables him to determine himself how he will use his inherited traits and how he will react to his surroundings. This "something" is what Baxter interprets as a God-given conscience which causes him to yearn for goodness and a supreme Being. He accounts for this with evidence from the scriptures which asserts that God made man in his own image, thus, setting him apart from all other creatures.

He believes God's grace has made provisions for man to overcome the seemingly overpowering tendencies toward selfish gratification of his basic desires. He interprets God's plan for lifting man to higher levels as being accomplished by teaching him to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts," and supplant his life with soberness, righteousness, and godliness.[1] This, in effect, makes God's grace depend upon two significant factors: (1) proclamation of the Christian way of life by faithful desciples, and (2) willingness to be instructed by hearers.

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[1]Titus 2:11-12.

Baxter believes that if preachers fail to preach the Gospel in any generation, or if the Word of God is adulterated, used deceitfully, or superseded by man's wisdom and philosophy, sin, with all its ugly forms, will win a victory in the minds of mankind.

Concerning solutions for the major ills of our world, Baxter advocates going back beyond the current philosophical approaches and traditional church doctrines to the gospel preached by contemporaries of Christ and his chosen apostles. He reasons that the New Testament doctrine has been thoroughly tested regarding its usefulness in promoting unity, its uniformity in teaching man what to do to be samed, its provisions for meaningful worship, its influence in guiding man to live righteously and compassionately with other human beings, and its promise of hope for a future life. These five positive themes are predominant throughout the larger context of Baxter's preaching. Findings in Chapter IV indicate that Baxter used the five basic ideas with regularity as he planned his sermons throughout his years with the Hillsboro Church of Christ. His practices of sermon-building, style, delivery, etc. are examined in Chapter V.

Evaluation of Practices

Materials in Chapter V were introduced with reference to Genung's definition of science as "systematized knowledge" which, when pertaining to public address, includes "the laws and principles of discourse" as they appear in an ordered and interrelated system. This definition was immediately followed with Genung's conception of art as "knowledge made efficient by skill," and then his conclusion: "if then rhetorical laws and principles are applied in the actual construction of discourse, they become the working rules of an art."[1]

Applying these concepts to Baxter's case, we may appropriately ask: How competent is he in applying his "systematized knowledge" of rhetorical laws and principles? This question served as the basic objective for the investigation in Chapter V, with attention focused on: audience analysis, sermon preparation, materials of speaking, style, delivery, and interaction with the audience.

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[1]Genung, loc. cit., pp. 4-5.

By his own testimony Baxter attempts to practice what he preaches regarding skills involved in the art of public speaking. He admits freely that he falls short of the ideal criteria which he sets forth for himself and his students of Homiletics, but he believes that by utilizing all available knowledge pertaining to every aspect of communication he can enhance the power of God's word. As any other type of speaking, Baxter views the art of preaching as involving the careful selection and skillful blending of many elements, mastery of which will certainly entail careful experimentation and study. His attitude toward perfection in speaking is similar to that expressed by the apostle Paul regarding perfection in life. In his letter to Christians of Philippi, Paul states:

> Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on . . . . I press on toward the goal of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.[1]

Whether it pertains to the above conception of perfection or to perfection in speaking, Baxter considers the goal as a lofty one worthy of lifetime pursuits:

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[1]Philippians 3:12-14.

> He who gives himself to preaching must be willing to dedicate his best efforts through all his lifetime to the learning and perfecting of the art.[1]

As is evidenced by findings concerning audience analysis and sermon preparation, Baxter is constantly seeking to improve his understanding of human beings and their needs, concerns, and problems. He makes himself available to people for counseling; he keeps in close contact with the younger generation and mingles often with other age groups; he spends many taxing hours in hospital visitation and with lonely members who are confined to their homes; and, through extensive travels in other countries and close association with missionaries being supported by the Hillsboro congregation, he is gaining wider perspectives of societal problems in foreign countries.

Possibly, one of the greatest voids in human understandings pertains to an area right "at his own doorstep" in Nashville, Tennessee. The city has a large Negro population; yet, according to available information, the membership of the Hillsboro congregation has been all

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[1]Baxter, Heart of the Yale Lectures, p. 12.

white during Baxter's career with the church. Segregation in churches, schools, and other institutions of the city has been, until recently, a generally accepted practice by both the white and black population.

Regarding the Hillsboro church and congregations of Negro brethren in the area, evidence points to a relationship characterized by love and cooperation. When asked about possible consequences when and if Negro people seek membership, Baxter stated that the elders' policy is to accept them and to seek solutions to resulting problems as they occur. It is apparent that, due to lack of confrontation and experience, Baxter and the congregation have not been exercised in ways whereby they might gain the insights and knowledge which apparently are necessary for maximum understanding of the needs and problems of the black population.

Baxter's attitude toward involvement in problems of the Negro race seems to coincide closely with that expressed recently in an article by Gregg, McCormack, and Pedersen:

> The most useful rhetoric in the years ahead will be a rhetoric of coexistence: "Coexistence primarily calls for maximum feasible

> participation by blacktown, minimum participation by whitetown. Let blacks do it themselves. Let them choose their own leaders. Don't try to run things. Stay away until you are invited, and go away when you have provided whatever it is that you can offer blacktown. Don't offer advice unless you are asked for it.[1]

The desire to coexist, to be helpful, to be alert to every avenue of promoting solutions to problems and bortherhood is clearly discernable in Baxter's preaching and actions. He is much concerned about the plight of all downtroddened peoples of the world; and especially, he is alarmed about the widening gap occurring between the black and white people on the American scene. His concern and perception are apparent in materials of a sermon which he preached August of 1965, a few days after the devastating Watts riots in the Los Angeles area. After giving several quotations describing the "holacust,,the burning, the destroying," and other examples of senseless desturction, Baxter reasons:

> It's easy for me as a white man to look and say, "How terrible, how wrong." And yet I've got to look beyond the immediate wrongs and think

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[1]Richard B. Gregg, A. Jackson McCormack, and Douglas J. Pedersen, "The Rhetoric of Black Power: A Street-Level Interpretation," QJS, Vol. LV, No. 2 (April, 1969), p. 160.

> about the days and months and years that have preceded. There have been discriminations. There have been things that made people seethe in white hot rebellion. And I guess my place to start thinking is not with the burnings of the moment but with the feelings that led to those burnings and those riots.[1]

These expressions are consistent with his basic belief that the world can be changed for the better; but he thinks it will have to be done by first changing attitudes of minds. He recognizes that he is faced with listeners among the congregation and in the radio audience who do have deep-seated prejudices, and he seeks diligently to build sermons which will eventually replace harmful attitudes with love, compassion, concern, and other Christian attributes.

In the area of invention, or discovering and originating good and useful ideas for speaking, Baxter functions with an exceptionally high degree of proficiency. He carefully maintains an "Illustration File," a "Subject File," and a file for "Finished Sermon Outlines." These resources, along with a well-supplied library, enable

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[1]Baxter, Our Disintegrating World (Sermon #483, preached Aug. 15, 1968), p. 4.

Baxter to have at his disposal a wide range of materials for use in sermon preparation.

Concerning the three general categories of speaking materials consisting of (1) materials of personal proof, (2) materials of development, and (3) materials of experience, Baxter displays facility in use of each as he skillfully intermingles the materials to meet the needs of the particular speaking situation. Because he views Christianity as requiring rational acceptance of divinely revealed "facts" pertaining to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and because the path to a higher level of living demands constant education of the mind, Baxter gives primary emphasis to logical reasoning in the development of his sermons. He favors the motivated sequence structure, by which he attempts to follow the normal process of human thinking. Although he stresses logical appeals, he is very conscious of the vital function served by maintaining a favorable personality and of utilizing the fundamental human drives in creating interest, attracting attention, and in building desirable attitudes.

Regarding Baxter's style, testimony from a number of sources combined with this writer's personal observations, confirm what Baxter's colleague, Carroll Ellis, analyzed as being the primary quality which accounts for Baxter being an "outstanding preacher."[1] This quality is his ability to "vividly, exactly, and concisely picture human events" by his distinctive way of selecting words and putting them together to form "word pictures." He practices what he teaches his students; thus, his sermons are characterized by language which is familiar, clear, exact, and in good taste.

He conceives words as "bridges" over which the speaker's ideas are transported into the "minds of his hearers." The delivery of ideas through the medium of words, then, is the final test for the practitioner of public address. He views delivery of a speech as having two significant aspects--what people see, and what people hear.

As Baxter enters the pulpit, listeners of the Hillsboro congregation are accustomed to seeing a

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[1]Ellis, loc. cit.

well-dressed and neatly groomed preacher who pauses calmly as he positions his Bible, then briefly acknowledges the presence of the congregation with directed eye contact to each area of the auditorium. His posture and stance are suggestive of dignity, poise, and balance. They see a countenance which exhibits friendliness, warmth, and pleasantness; yet with a manner which denotes seriousness of purpose. As he begins his sermon, they hear a voice which is characterized by a predominantly General American dialect, distinctness in articulation, pleasing vocal quality, and good variety in volume, pitch, and rate. By his own testimony, skills in vocal communication vary according to his physical and mental states; and his visible aspects also may be affected, but to a lesser degree because of deliberate attention to keeping the visual image up to the standards he has set for himself.[1] In other words, when handicapped by sub-normal physical or mental states, he thinks he can control the visible aspects more successfully than he can the audible aspects.

Baxter's mode of delivery is extemporaneous with subdued enthusiasm and a natural, conversational manner.

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[1]Baxter, General Information, p. 2.

One is almost unaware of gestures and bodily movement; yet, he does definitely use his entire body for well-coordinated gestures which re-inforce his thoughts without calling attention to themselves. Although he usually has a complete sermon outline on the pulpit, he rarely refers to it; and when he does, it is with such efficiency that his audience seldom notices any head movement. He has high regard for the values in maintaining good eye contact with his audience, and consequently, has refined his talents to the point that he feels he can profitably adapt his speaking to audience signals.

It is clearly apparent that, from the standpoint of Baxter's overall performance in pulpit and classroom speaking to the Hillsboro congregation, he is making maximum use of the knowledge he possesses regarding rhetorical concepts and principles. There is no evidence to indicate any unusual natural endowments except possibly in the element of vocal quality. After about nineteen years in the same pulpit he is highly respected by his listeners--a respect which seems to grow more and more the longer they know him. It is not one-sided as evidenced by the fact that he chooses to remain with the

congregation when he could so easily justify giving up the pulpit there to devote more time to mass media television and radio preaching. He looks upon his long tenure with the Hillsboro Church of Christ as one during which he and the congregation have grown together to attain a higher level of life and of service to society. He is optimistic about the future as may be noticed in a sermon preached during 1969, on the general theme of "Encouragement." After calling attention to some of the things which discourage, he cites a list of things which are encouraging; among which is the following:

> The opportunities of our time in transportation and communication are unique. Never before have we had the opportunity on any given Sunday of preaching the gospel on 522 radio stations and 151 television stations, many of which are located in major cities of our nation. These are not vague hopes for the future, but present opportunities in hand. The picture is encouraging also in terms of magazines and papers that are effectively telling the story of Christ. Many activities both in America and throughout the world are being made possible by these modern communication media.[1]

This is indicative of the positive attitude which Baxter manifests in approaching all problems; also, it is

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[1]Baxter, What is There to be Encouraged About? (Sermon #635, preached on Apr. 13, 1969), p. 2.

illustrative of his alertness to the potential for good in modern communication media. This attitude, and his alertness to the value of making maximum use of every available means of communication, possibly more than speaking techniques, account for his numerous opportunities for influencing the world.

Baxter's Impact Upon Society

Is it possible to measure and evaluate Batsell Barrett Baxter's impact upon society? If so at this point, it could well be that after another decade it would represent only a small portion of his total impact after his ideas have had the benefit of their continuing influence. Regarding this thought, Ernest J. Wrage, in a discussion of "Public Address and Social History," observes:

> The techniques of the speakers are often highly individualized and perish with their bones; their ideas live after them. From the study of speeches may be gained additional knowledge about the growth of ideas, their currency and vitality, their modifications under the impress of social requirements, and

> their eclipse by other ideas with different values.[1]

At the age of fifty-three, and after having already lived five years beyond the date of major surgery for malignant cancer of the abdomen, Baxter possibly is just beginning to have his greatest impact upon the world; however, if he never spoke another word, there is unlimited potential influence in the ideas which he has set forth thus far in his speaking career.

In their treatment of measuring effectiveness in speaking, Thonssen and Baird state that response "is the key determinant of effectiveness" in speaking; then, they explain:

> This presupposes the speaker's intelligent recognition of the necessity of adapting his materials to listeners; of his keeping the audience, rather than formal rules, constantly in mind. Unlike the writer who may deliberately prepare his copy for the ages, the orator must direct his remarks to the immediacy of the present occasion. This does not close the door to statesmanlike conduct. But it does require that the speaker adapt himself to conditions as he finds them, and that he communicate his ideas with a view to their taking root in the lives of the hearers, and, either immediately or

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[1]Ernest J. Wrage, "Public Address: A Study in Social and Intellectual History," QJS, Vol. XXXIII (Dec., 1947), pp. 453-54.

> subsequently, influencing their belief or action.[1]

As Baxter communicates his ideas, he adapts to his immediate audience comprised of local church members; however, he realizes that his ideas may have an impact upon many other people on future occasions. This potential impact is made possible due to the fact that each sermon is recorded on tape and heard later by a large radio audience. Also, as already noted, Baxter carefully revises each sermon into a more appropriate written style for publication and distribution. Baxter strives for maximum impact from his own preaching, and stresses the same principle for students in his Homiletics course. He advises them to mimeograph their sermons for distribution, and cites the Hillsboro church as an example:

> Hillsboro church sends its Sunday morning sermon to a list of 1200 or more shut-ins, service men, former members, prospects and people who have requested it. In addition, 300 sermons are picked up by the congregation and scattered abroad.[2]

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[1]Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, Speech Criticism (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1948), p. 460.

[2]Baxter, Preparation and Delivery of Sermons (Course outline), p. 35.

Greater impact yet for the same sermons is possible through the preservation of the recorded sermons in the church library, where they are filed and loaned without charge to churches, radio stations, and other institutions. His opportunity for impact, thus, comes not only from having his ideas take root in the lives of immediate hearers but also through other people who are influenced and who often promulgate the same ideas.

Still greater propagation of ideas is achieved through Baxter's practice of working with the Hillsboro church in selecting his most useful and timely sermons for the purpose of making attractive tracts or booklets which are distributed at cost. It was noted in Chapter III that over 3,625,000 of these booklets had already been printed, and some of the popular tracts were being reprinted on a regular basis; for example, the one entitled "What is the Church of Christ?" has already reached a total of 1,535,000 copies. Other pertinent sermons are selected for books of sermons, four of which have been published to date. During his long span at Hillsboro he has been honored in having many of his sermons published

in brotherhood journals; and these in turn, are often used by preachers and church leaders as sources for ideas.

As one contemplates the possible long-range effects of such wide distribution of Baxter's ideas, it seems to add emphasis to the following comments by Thonssen and Baird:

> Clearly, the response to a speech need not be immediate. Sppeches may be inadequate to produce a certain effect at once and still be none the less great. But a good idea, initiated by a speaker, may in turn be supplemented by other addresses and writings, and eventually result in wholesome action. This may be referred to as the theory of cumulative effects in oratory.[1]

Although the cumulative effects of Baxter's preaching and speaking cannot be accurately measured, there is no hesitancy on the part of people who know Baxter well to give what appear to be lavish value judgments concerning his impact upon the contemporary religious scene. For example the current President of Pepperdine College, Los Angeles, California gives the following appraisal of Baxter's preaching:

> Through television and radio, over Herald of Truth, Dr. Batsell Barrett Baxter has

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[1]Thonssen and Baird, op. cit., p. 460.

> probably spoken to more people than any other advocate of the restoration movement. In addition to his impact through the media, he has had a tremendous impact as a local preacher, primarily at the Hillsboro Church of Christ, and as a college educator at Pepperdine College and at David Lipscomb College.[1]

Facts do seem to verify this assessment. At this date, as this study is being summarized, Baxter's ideas in the form of sermons on video tape are being supplied to over 150 television stations who have contracts for the Herald of Truth program; also a still wider distribution is being achieved by taped sermons which are supplying over 525 radio stations.

Regarding impact, there is evidence that Baxter had much influence also in the face-to-face conversational speech occasions. An example is revealed in a letter this writer received from Canada in which a former serviceman explains that while he was serving with the U.S. Army in Seoul, South Korea, he met Baxter, who was visiting a missionary. He relates how Baxter heard him make a short talk during religious services, and later, as they were sharing a meal at the home of the missionary, Baxter

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[1]M. Norvel Young (Personal letter, dated Sept. 17, 1969).

talked seriously with him about devoting his life to preaching when he finished his army service. He states how he reacted to Baxter's persuasion at the time:

> I told Dr. Baxter I didn't want to preach, that I had other plans in the speech and hearing therapy field. He replied kindly, "That is a noble ambition, but you ought to preach." Once again, a few moments later, he repeated that statement. Four years later, although I had majored in speech and social sciences, I was preaching, and still am preaching eleven years after his strong suggestion to me.[1]

This man credits Baxter with being directly responsible for turning his mind toward a search for a higher plane of life:

> Baxter is directly responsible for turning my interests from secular pursuits to a full-time ministry of the Word . . . . His urging has placed me in a position to lead over 500 people to Christ, and to do mission work in two fields.[2]

The impact was accomplished in one meeting with one conversation as is evidenced by the following statement:

> I never had a class under Dr. Baxter, never attended David Lipscomb, and only met brother Baxter once in my life.[3]

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[1] Floyd Lord (minister, Church of Christ, 1708 Bayview Ave., Toronto 17, Ontario, Canada--letter of Sept. 4, 1969).

[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

Baxter himself may not know about the impact he has had on the lives of many others with whom he has had brief encounters. Some have been called to his attention and, undoubtedly, must serve as encouraging "feedback" to Baxter--and it surely must add to his ethos. An example may be noted in the following announcement which appeared in an issue of the Sunday Bulletin of the Hillsboro Church of Christ:

> Billy Smith, president of Ibaraki, credits brother Baxter with having influenced him to give up a position with the airlines and prepare himself at Lipscomb for mission work, after he was past college age.[1]

Ibaraki refers to Ibaraki Christian College in Japan, a growing educational institution which is well-accepted in Japan, and has great potential for propagation of ideas which harmonize with those being advocated by Baxter. Through the years Baxter has had a profound influence on the men who have been encouraged to attend David Lipscomb College for the express purpose of preparing for the ministry or mission work. Other than being influenced by Baxter's religious ideas, these men who

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[1] Sunday Bulletin (Hillsboro Church of Christ, Sept. 22, 1968), p. 3.

"sit at his feet" in courses on Homiletics, Christian Evidences, and Bible are usually guided and strongly encouraged to continue in higher education for advanced degrees which will enable them to have greater impacts upon the world, therefore, the "cumulative effects" of Baxter's speaking may continue to multiply.

It is appropriate that this research project be concluded with a final reference to a basic idea which Baxter carefully implanted in the minds of his hearers:

> God chose to bring the world to salvation through the "force of ideas" rather than through the "force of might."[1]

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[1]Baxter, Preparation and Delivery of Sermons (Course Outline), p. 3.

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