Asia Adventist
SeminaryStudies

PREFACE

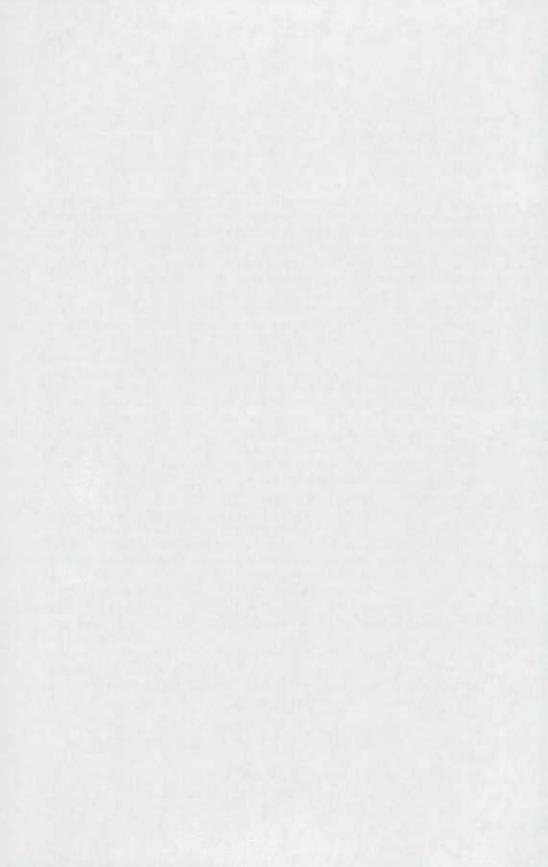The *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary*: The New Face of *AASS*

Asia Adventist Seminary Studies (ISSN 0119-8432) has been undergoing important changes. Due to personnel changes and moves, a new editorial team has been named that has worked hard over the past eleven months to continue the quality production of academic research in biblical and theological studies from an Asian perspective.

As the new editor of the journal, let me share some of these new developments: First, we have changed the name to *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary* and due to legal considerations we have received a new ISSN number (ISSN 1908-4862). However, we will continue the volume count begun in 1998 with the first issue of *Asia Adventist Seminary Studies*. Second, we decided to publish two issues per year (instead of one). Third, since we are committed to publishing quality biblical-theological research, we have instituted an international review board, including some thirty leading scholars that will provide the expertise for a vigorous peer-review process. These scholars represent a global community of biblical scholarship (Africa, North America, South America, Europe, Asia), different areas of expertise, and many renowned universities and seminaries (such as New York University [USA], University of Wisconsin [USA], Copenhagen Lutheran School of Theology [Denmark], Kenyatta University [Kenya], Ashland Theological Seminary [USA], Fribourg University [Switzerland], Andrews University [USA], Fuller Theological Seminary [USA]). We are indeed grateful to these scholars for their unselfish support of biblical-theological research in Asia. Fourth, we have redesigned both the cover as well as the inside of the journal to provide an esthetically appealing product, which will speak to students, professors, and pastors in the twenty-first century. Finally, an enthusiastic editorial team has been named, including Gerald A. Klingbeil (editor), Clinton Wahlen (associate editor), South African Ph.D. student Michael Sokupa (book review editor), and Venezuelan Ph.D. student Emmer Chacon (subscription manager).

We believe that as a long-time subscriber of *AASS* you will appreciate subscribing to its successor journal. Due to changed financial realities we had to change the pricing structure of *JAAS*. Beginning in 2006, institutional subscriptions cost US$45.00, while individual subscriptions are US$30.00. These prices will also include full text access to current and earlier articles, dissertation and thesis abstracts, and book reviews, a feature that should be implemented by the middle of 2007.

Please feel free to contact us directly via e-mail or regular mail. If you have editorial queries or general questions about the journal, please contact me at *editor.jaas@aiias.edu*. Subscription queries can be directed to *subscription.jaas @aiias.edu*. We definitely look forward to hearing from you and hope that you will enjoy the enhanced format of *JAAS*.

GERALD A. KLINGBEIL, D.LITT.

PERSUASIVE IMPACT IN PREACHING

LESLIE N. POLLARD

Introduction

The fact that there is probably not one preacher alive who would pass up an opportunity to increase the impact of his/her preaching to local congregations raises important questions. As preachers, exactly how can we increase the persuasive power of our preaching? How can our preaching carry more impact, more punch, and more potency? This presentation discusses the issue of persuasiveness in preaching. I invite you to consider the following questions: (1) What is persuasive preaching? (2) What is a sermon? (3) How can we increase the persuasive impact of our preaching?

These three questions may ring with such familiarity that we may assume that we already know the answers. But do not draw conclusions too quickly because the answers one submits to these questions will guide one's ministry of preaching. These three questions are critical for all conscientious preachers, because if as preachers, we fail to adequately implement biblical answers to these questions, then the results will disable our preaching ministry.

What Is Persuasive Preaching?

I maintain throughout this presentation that preaching, by its essential nature, is *persuasive communication*. It does not matter whether that preaching is pastoral or evangelistic in its thrust. Persuasive communication is communication that aims to convince and move the hearer to act upon God's revelation in Scripture and history. However, preaching as persuasive communication is not propaganda because of its inherent concern for truth (cf. John 16:13; 8:32; 17:17). In Spirit-filled preaching, end and means are compatible.

But what is persuasive preaching? Persuasive preaching is not academic lecturing, though it embraces and utilizes academic research. The preacher who burdens his audience with reams of tedious citations may praise him/herself for being thorough, but it will probably frustrate the hearer. Persuasive preaching is not entertaining speaking, though our preaching must be interesting and attractive. Persuasive preaching is not simply informational sharing on some subject of the Bible, though the well-researched sermon always includes some pertinent information in its content. To put it succinctly, *persuasive preaching is preaching that aims to break down resistance to, or indifference toward, the kingdom of God and the lordship of Christ, while at the same time, respecting the responsibility of the hearer to make an intelligent and lasting decision.*

In the NT this mode of preaching is evident in the many uses of the verb *peitho*, "to persuade" or "to convince." Observe how this verb reveals the intent of preaching and teaching in Paul's ministry, especially in the book of Acts: Paul and Barnabas "urged them to continue in the grace of God" (13:43); Paul reasoned "trying to persuade Jews and Greeks" (18:4); Paul argued "persuasively about the

kingdom of God" (19:8); Agrippa asked Paul, "Do you think in such a short time you can persuade me?" (26:28); Paul declared the gospel "trying to convince them about Jesus" (28:23); and Paul said, "Since we know what it is to fear God, we persuade men" (2 Cor 5:11).[1]

New Testament preaching urges men and women to "be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20). Its goal is to lead the listener to finally say "yes" to God. Persuasive preaching is earnest and intelligent. As such, it is unswerving in its purpose, though its methods may vary in time and place (cf. 1 Cor 9:19-23). Persuasive preaching includes subjective elements in its presentation, while at the same time it "works" objective facts. In its holism, it is both rational and fiery, marrying the analysis of Athens with the fervor of Jerusalem. Indeed, persuasive preaching is the only type of preaching that the NT knows.

Persuasive preaching does more than inform the listener; it arrests the hearer and convicts him/her. Academicians (who make a great contribution to the ministry of preaching by their research and writing) rarely carry this burden as does the pastor who steps into the pulpit from week to week. In his preaching the pastor is consistently attempting to convince his/her parishioners that God's way is still the best way, in spite of appearances to the contrary. Examine at length what has been written by several authorities who have devoted their lives to the study of an active preaching ministry:

> Preaching is that unique procedure by which God, through His chosen messenger, reaches down into the human family and brings persons face to face with Himself.[2]

> Preaching is not primarily arguing about something, commenting about something, philosophizing about something, or weaving speech into a beautiful tapestry of sound. Preaching is bearing witness, telling something that we know to people who want to know or who ought to know, or both.[3]

> Preaching is the divinely ordained power of personal testimony; it is Christ speaking through a called, chosen, cleansed, and commissioned messenger.[4]

> Preaching is "the art of moving men from a lower to a higher life."[5]

> Preaching is the spoken communication of truth by man to men. . . . Preaching is the bringing of truth through personality.[6]

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[1]Unfortunately, the translators of the *New International Version* have rendered the phrase "we try to persuade men." But the Greek text uses the present active indicative (not the infinitive of purpose) to say clearly that "we are persuading men" or "we do persuade men."

[2]Charles W. Koller, *Expository Preaching Without Notes* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 13.

[3]H. M. S. Richards, *Feed My Sheep* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 19.

[4]Carlyle B. Haynes, *The Divine Art of Preaching* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1939), 19.

[5]Henry Ward Beecher, *Lectures on Preaching* (New York: Fords, Howard, and Hulbert, 1900), 29.

[6]Phillip Brooks, *Lectures on Preaching* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1907), 5.

Preaching is the communication of divine truth with a view to persuasion.[7]

Preaching is truth through personality to constrain conscience at once.[8]
Preaching is divine truth voiced by a chosen personality to meet human need.[9]

God is not so much the object as the true source of Christian preaching. Preaching is thus speech by God rather than speech about God.[10]

Preaching is the communication of biblical truth by man to men with the explicit purpose of eliciting behavioral change.[11]

Preaching is the proclamation of the gospel–telling the good news of what God has done, is doing, and will do. It is not talking about God, but it is the means, in each generation by which God speaks to the people. Preaching is not a person revealing God and truths about him. It is God disclosing himself and speaking of himself through a chosen witness.[12]

Preaching is a means of grace. It constitutes God's primary method of saving souls, and it is not the preacher who teaches by means of preaching, but Jesus Christ Himself.[13]

Our preaching, commissioned by the resurrection, is a continuation of the preaching of Jesus Christ. It is "a spiritual discipline in which we offer our best words to Christ."[14]

Preaching is "making present and appropriate to the hearers the revelation of God."[15]

Having garnered all of this information, this is how I define preaching:

Preaching is the persuasive proclamation of the Gospel message. It is not an academic lecture, though it respects learning. It is not a political lecture, though it impinges upon politics. It is not a personal reminiscence, though it embraces the speaker's history. It is not the dispensing of 'good advice', though it is aware of the great issues of our 'being'. Preaching is God's powerful declaration through us of what Christ accomplished at Calvary. It is God's message and not ours. It announces what God did in Jesus Christ, what God does through Jesus Christ, and what God will do in those who love Jesus Christ.

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[7]T. H. Pattison, *The Making of the Sermon* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publ. Soc., 1898), 3.

[8]H. S. Coffin, *What to Preach* (New York: George H. Doran, 1926), 157.

[9]A. W. Blackwood, *The Fine Art of Preaching* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), 3.

[10]J. J. Von Allmen, *Preaching and Congregations* (London: Lutterworth, 1962), 7.

[11]J. Daniel Baumann, *An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972), 13.

[12]Richard Carl Hoefler, *Creative Preaching and Oral Writing* (Lima, OH: C. S. S., 1984), 5.

[13]C. Raymond Holmes, *The Last Word: An Eschatological Theology of Preaching* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987), 19.

[14]David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 449, 452.

[15]Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987), 51.

Interestingly, two types of preaching are present in the NT, didactic and kerygmatic. Around the middle of the last century, C. H. Dodd imposed a stiff division between the two by concluding that the former was directed to the saved while the latter was directed to the unbelieving.[16] However, careful examination of Dodd's dichotomy reveals that his separation of kerygma and didache is both artificial and unnecessary.[17] Didactic and kerygmatic preaching actually complement each other. *Kerygma* is the foundational proclamation of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and as such, it forms the foundation upon which *didache* rests. *Didache* is the explanation in detail of that applied truth which is the outgrowth of *kerygma*. As preachers, we do not have to choose one at the expense of the other. Donald Demaray shares a helpful insight about these two aspects of our preaching ministry:

> Preaching that attends to both–didactic-kerygmatic preaching–brings healing and wholeness. Preaching overweighted on the kerygmatic side, emphasizing conversion and minimizing nurture, retards mental and spiritual maturity in Christian discipleship. Preaching overweighted on the didactic side may focus on the theological or on the social implications of the gospel. In either extreme, the result is deformed Christians lacking Christ-centered faith and joy. The New Testament preacher keeps the two in balance.[18]

The picture of preaching presented in the NT indicates that it is nothing other than a persuasive endeavor. The motive of winning men and women to Christ, or to inspire a closer relationship with Him, was clearly the driving motive for those who preached. Paul connected the persuasive power of the preacher to the fear of God (2 Cor 5:11). Obviously, he saw the purpose of preaching not simply as the presentation or illumination of doctrine, but the swaying of the hearer. He preached for a decision. John Broadus says that "the chief part of what we commonly call application is persuasion. It is not enough to convince men of truth, nor enough to make them see how it applies to themselves, and how it might be practicable for them to act it out-but we must 'persuade men'."[19] Richard R. Caemmerer agrees forcefully with his claim that "persuasive speech isn't just for entertainment. It makes a difference in people."[20]

Some homileticians are proposing a shift in homiletical paradigms. They suggest that we redefine preaching in the autobiographical direction, as the sharing of "my story." In this homiletical expression, the form for presenting the message lies in the sharing of the preacher's personal history, experience, religious search, and so forth, in the belief that from this personal sharing, the hearer will induce the message of the Gospel and come to faith. Though I respect the intent of this effort,

[16]C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development: With an Appendix on Eschatology and History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), 7. He adds that "the New Testament writers draw a clear distinction between preaching and teaching" (ibid.).

[17]For a thorough refutation of Dodd's theory, see Robert Worley, *Preaching and Teaching in the Earliest Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 30-56.

[18]Donald E. Demaray, *Introduction to Homiletics*, 2d. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 39.

[19]John Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 4th ed., rev. by Vernon L. Stanfield (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), 170.

[20]Richard R. Caemmerer, *Preaching for the Church* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1959), 35.

still it appears that this new direction is problematic. The problem is that this subjectivist approach to preaching reduces the preaching event to a personal disquisition which ultimately holds no more authority than the preacher's limited experience. This is not NT preaching. New Testament preaching is not telling "my story," regardless of how interesting it may be. It is telling "God's story" as contained in the Bible, a story that has not only meaning and form but historicity as well. When we preach, we rise to rehearse and relive God's story as acted out in history. This is what the apostle Paul was doing when he proclaimed through one of the early hymns of the church that God "appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory" (1 Tim 3:16). As preachers, we need to remember that our testimony may illustrate the power of the Gospel, but it must never supplant the telling of the Gospel of what God did, in and through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I also wish to bring a word of encouragement, and if needed, correction to young preachers. You should know that after graduating from seminary you cannot and must not take an academic presentation style into the local church and expect to be effective. Actually, in many ways the primary work of the academicians and the primary work of the homiletician is driven by different purposes. The academician is refining, tracing, and/or distilling, some truth from Scripture. After the message of the text is derived, however laborious that process may have been, the work of the academician is completed. Read any scholarly journal in theology and this fact is self-evident. However, the pastor-preacher-homiletician's work has just begun when the message of the text is discovered. The pastor moves to the necessary second step of adorning, expanding, and contemporizing truth for the nurture of present-day disciples. This critical step is necessary because your listeners do not bear an ancient, but a modern consciousness. They are involved in today's world, not a world of 2000 years ago. Preaching is not doing public exegesis. The message of the text must be transported through a valley twenty centuries wide and applied to today.

By approaching the pulpit with any other mind set than one which says that as preacher, I am also persuader, is to do a disservice to the craft. Every time we enter the pulpit, we stand there with the intention to persuade people for God. Fail in understanding that fact about the essential nature of preaching and we will fail in our ministry of preaching. Nevertheless, whatever understanding we have of preaching will be implemented in the weekly sermon. This leads me to the second question.

What Is a Sermon?

Legend has it that in 1666, King Charles II of England prescribed listening to sermons as the only cure for insomnia. While I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the story, it is said that a churchgoer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. "I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote: "I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this, they all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do

my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

The point here is that peaching plays a dynamic and spiritually nourishing role in the life of the parishioner. This is highlighted in a survey conducted a few decades ago by Pastor Reuel Howe in which lay persons were asked to react to the preaching they listen to weekly. Six concerns were registered regarding pastoral preaching: (1) sermons often contain too many ideas; (2) sermons have too much analysis and too little answer; (3) sermons are too formal and impersonal; (4) preachers assume the hearer has more theological and biblical knowledge and understanding than he or she does; (5) sermons are too propositional, have too few illustrations, and often the illustrations are too literary and not helpful; and (6) too many sermons simply reach a dead end and give no guidance to commitment and action.[21]

The last concern on this list is what merits the attention of our discussion. Here, I will be quite specific and ask you a rather "simple" question, "What is a sermon?" Is it a religious speech? Is it "an act of worship"?[22] Is the sermon, according to Webster's *New Riverside Dictionary*, "an often long-winded lecture on duty or behavior."[23] Is a sermon an annoying harangue? Is it like Rousseau's recipe for love, which claims that "you will begin without knowing what you are going to say and end without knowing what you have said?" Ask yourself, "What is a sermon?" Is it just "something," perhaps a "speech," a pastor delivers at the "11:00 o'clock hour?" Is it an unwelcomed lecture? When someone appears to want to lecture us about something in a paternalistic, maternalistic, or condescending way, we sometimes say "OK! OK! I didn't ask for a sermon." So *what* is a sermon? Is it an authoritarian speech? Is it condescending counsel? Is it barking orders from the sacred desk?

Many definitions have been offered as to what a sermon is. William Thompson says simply that it is "a word from the Lord for you."[24] He also proffers a more complex definition, saying that it "is the word of God (Jesus Christ) who has been revealed in the pages of the written Word (the Bible) coming to the hearing of people by the proclamation of the Word (preaching)."[25] G. N. Banks, former instructor of preaching at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, holds that "a sermon is an interesting, meaningful, and sacred discourse that develops a worthy, religious theme for the purpose of bringing about an appropriate spiritual response on the part of the hearers."[26] It is, as Luther once reputedly declared, "Die Verkundigung das Wort Gottes ist das Wort Gottes!"

I would say that, just as the scalpel is the tool of the surgeon, just as the hammer is the tool of the carpenter, just as the brush is the tool of the artist, so too the sermon is a tool of the Holy Spirit in the hands of the preacher. The sermon is not the object of preaching but its servant. When we preach, we are not trying to

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[21]Reuel L. Howe, *Partners in Preaching* (New York: Seabury, 1967), 26-33.

[22]Andrew Blackwood, *The Preparation of Sermons* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1948), 255.

[23]*Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary* (New York: Berkley Books, 1984), 623.

[24]William D. Thompson, *A Listener's Guide to Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 14.

[25]Ibid., 25.

[26]G. N. Banks, syllabus for the course Sermon Types and Designs, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1980, 21.

produce tones worthy of adulation, but messages which touch the listener's hearts and minds. Hence, the sermon is the servant of preaching when it is true to the purpose of all preaching.

One of my favorite definitions of preaching is found in the book *Dramatic Narrative in Preaching* by David Brown. I like his definition because it is short and to the point; but more than its brevity, I believe that it is true to the sample sermons that we have in the NT. Brown says that the sermon is "a call to action on some point of the biblical message."[27] He asserts further:

> There are two considerations in this definition. The first is that a sermon finds its foundation in the biblical story—either a very select passage or verse, or some broad, thematic type of study. The framework for any sermon is to bring its hearer some further understanding of God through Jesus Christ, of human nature, or of any other theme which is firmly rooted in the biblical message.
>
> Second, a sermon is a call to action. A sermon goes beyond the mere teaching ministry of the pulpit (though any sermon should include teaching). The goal of preaching is not the mere impartation of factual data (however valuable that material may be). A sermon is not solely concerned with broadening of one's knowledge. *It is aimed at bringing people to a point of decision.* It is to move them to do something about the teaching material they have received. Preaching must in some way compel people to take action on what they have heard.[28]

There we have it! A sermon is a call to action. Clearly, this is the way sermons functioned in the NT. Consider Jesus' sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7), Peter's sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2), and Paul's sermon at Mar's Hill (Acts 17). These inspired preachers in Scripture did not seek to entertain, but to call women and men to committed action before God.

Further, not only is the sermon a call to action but it is also the *tool of preaching*. It is the *servant of preaching*. No spirit-filled sermon is an end in itself. The sermon is an expression of God's truth through humans as authoritative witnesses. Prior to His ascension, Jesus left the word of proclamation to the church (Matt 28:19-20). This proclamation was to be the saving announcement of the good news of God's favor toward the world. It was to be carried out through the ministries of word (*kerygma*), service (*diakonia*), and fellowship (*koinonia*). The sermon is but one aspect of the ministry of the church. It is not the only ministry of the church but it functions within the ministry of the total church. As does every other gift, the Spirit-filled sermon never "center stages" the preacher, but calls attention to the Lord of the preacher.

How Can We Increase the Persuasive Impact of Our Preaching?

Finally, we have come to the last question of this presentation. I submit that persuasion may be accomplished through communicating commitment, character, and competence to our listeners.

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[27]David Brown, *Dramatic Narrative in Preaching* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1981), 8.

[28]Ibid. (Emphasis mine).

Persuasive Preaching Communicates
Commitment

Persuasive power is directly tied to the depth of our commitment to Christ. All persuasive power emanates from this center. Our connection with Christ is the secret of power. Some lack power in their preaching because they lack commitment. Paul Sangster, son of W. E. Sangster, wrote of his father that he struggled with the temptation of letting other things steal God's place. Sangster wrote in his journal, "I wanted degrees more than knowledge, and praise rather than equipment for service."[29]

The key to persuasive power is commitment and the path to commitment is surrender. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that "when Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die . . ."[30] The key to power is being anointed in the Spirit.

Persuasive Preaching Communicates
Character

Our persuasive power is so closely tied to what the Greeks called *ethos* that our effectiveness in pulpit work is directly tied to it. The idea of *ethos* comes from the classical Greek rhetorical theory and it refers to the *perceived* credibility we enjoy as preachers.[31] Donald Sunukjian puts it this way:

> A preacher's ethos is the opinion that his listeners have of him as a person. If their opinion of him is high, he will have high ethos, or great credibility, with them. This means they will be inclined to believe whatever he says. On the other hand if their opinion of him is low, his ethos or credibility will be poor, and they will 'turn him off' even before he speaks.[32]

What is elusive about this concept of *ethos* is that it is a *perceived quality*. Therefore, as preachers we need to be keenly aware of what contributes to, or what detracts from credibility. In short, we must engage in a credibility-building program with parishioners.

What factors build the preacher's credibility? Besides commitment, three other standards are absolutely important: (1) Faithfulness to one's word. This is an important building block of credibility. To promise only what is in our power to deliver, and then to deliver on those promises, are critical to enhancing personal credibility. (2) Family life that demonstrates our capacity to love others. Much of the NT is devoted to issues in family life because the management of the family is the training ground for credible leadership in the work of the church. The preacher who treats her or his spouse in *any* way contrary to the Gospel jeopardizes his/her credibility. (3) Fairness in dealing with people. The preacher should not belong to any faction in the local church. Is the preacher fair or partial in dealing with the disciplinary matters of the church? To show preferential treatment to certain people in the local church while being severe toward others, is perhaps one of the quickest way to lose credibility in leadership. Commitment and consecration are keys to high-impact preaching. But there is a final principle that must be acknowledged.

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[29]Paul Sangster, *Doctor Sangster* (London: Epworth, 1962), 90.
[30]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, rev. ed. (London: SCM, 1959), 79.
[31]Donald R. Sunukjian, "The Credibility of the Preacher," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139 (July-September 1982): 256.
[32]Ibid.

Persuasive Preaching Communicates Competence

Sunikjian shows that speakers may communicate competency "by means of an attractive appearance, a fluent delivery, an organized message, and an evident awareness of human events."[33] Let us analyze this statement.

1. Personal appearance is so self-evident that not much comment is necessary. However, what is often neglected by preachers is the attractiveness of the *materials* which they allow to represent them. How does your church bulletin look? How does your newsletter look? People will not be excited about evangelism if the handbills are unattractive.

2. Delivery is another element of persuasive preaching. Is the delivery confident? Passionate? Earnest? I once saw a cartoon of a preacher whose church once had 500 members but now had a mere two persons in attendance, being told by his associate, "Well, pastor, I guess it doesn't help to end every sermon with 'But what do I know?'"

3. Another way to increase persuasiveness is to be clear and organized in our preaching. Being "easy to follow" is critical to influencing people. Are our sermons clearly and carefully designed, or are they amoebic, free-form, or gelatinous? Good sturdy structure is a tremendous aid to creating a "listener friendly" message.

4. Engagement with the real world is critical to the effectiveness of preachers. We bridge two worlds every time we effectively present the word of God. Our persuasiveness is greatly increased when the listener firmly believes that the preacher is connected to today's world as well as the world beyond. Persuasive power may be enhanced by accessing the local vocabulary of the people we address weekly. Frankly, there is nothing inherently sacred about using "thee" or "thou." Wise is the preacher who utilizes the words, images, and parlance of his/her listeners. We need to be attuned to the words and phrases that are familiar to the people we minister to. Further, the technical jargon of theology may be appropriate to the classroom but should not be the standard fare from the sacred desk.

Conclusion

Do the following exercise as a way of analyzing your manuscript for its persuasive potential. Take the manuscript for your next sermon and ask and answer the following questions honestly and completely:

1. Is this sermon based on the clear message of the text? Does this sermon develop one of the implications of the text? Is the text cited in the sermon a mere pretext for what I really want to say?

2. What is the objective of this sermon? What form is used to accomplish that objective: narrative, didactic, kerygmatic, polemic, or apology?

3. Is this sermon "a call to action"? What am I inviting the listener to do? Is that invitation based on the theme developed in this sermon?

4. How many examples of the local vocabulary can I identify in this sermon?

5. What is the strong first sentence of this sermon? What is the strong final sentence of this sermon?

[33]Ibid., 257.

By practicing these principles and rigorously critiquing our messages, we will increase the persuasive power of our preaching to the local congregations.

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RHETORIC IN THE RENAISSANCE ERA AND ITS IMPACT ON CHRISTIAN PREACHING

KENNETH B. STOUT, D.Min., Ph.D.

Introduction

Most sources frame the Renaissance as roughly the period from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. By nearly all accounts this was a period of sweeping change throughout Europe affecting much of society. A great, new intellectual movement began emphasizing human powers to know and alter the world and insisting on the right for men and women to pursue knowledge without restraint. Consequently new fields of study in "literature, history and science" were opened up.[1] It was during this time that rhetoric, the art of persuasion and reasoned argumentation, became, in various forms, a central issue on the European landscape and, ultimately, had an affect on the form and style of Christian preaching.

To better understand how this came to be, we need to be aware of several other key factors basic to the Renaissance itself, some of which are often misunderstood. As Thomas Conley suggests, "the familiar picture of the Renaissance as an age of erudition and eloquence, an age in which there emerged a sort of enlightened and committed stance toward the life of the mind, is factual enough, but unbalanced."[2] He goes on to suggest that the Renaissance had a "darker side" which also contributed to the rise and prosperity of rhetoric. He cites two major factors. First, the fact that the Renaissance was an age of violence and turmoil. A long list of "wars, skirmishes, invasions, and campaigns"[3] occurred throughout the era, and the vast majority of people were consumed by these turbulent events.

Second, the renaissance was an "age of disturbing uncertainty."[4] Many of the old ways of thinking were viewed as invalid. The worldview of nearly everyone had ben dramatically changed by the travels and discoveries of the great explorers

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[1] Patricia Bizzell, and Bruce Herszberg, *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present.* (Boston: Bedfored Books of St. Martins Press, 1990), 463.

[2] Thomas M. Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (New York: Longman Press, 1990), 110.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

and conquerors, and by the scientific discoveries of men like the astronomer, Copernicus. These tensions of violence and uncertainty came together during the Renaissance and were intensified by the dynamics of the Reformation. Taken together, this created a receptive environment for rhetoric and aided its emergence as a powerful force. It has been suggested that in nurturing ideas of persuasion and democracy, rhetoric may have been perceived as an alternative to the use of force and violence, while at the same time, offering a way of 'managing' and working through uncertainty. Eventually, both scientists and statesmen turned to rhetoric for answers; so much so that it has been commonly stated in recent years that "rhetoric holds the key to Renaissance humanism and to Renaissance thought."[5] As we shall see, rhetoric also came to have a significant impact on the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus by influencing the methods of Christian teachers and preachers.

It is difficult to get a precise handle on the rhetoric of the Renaissance, and to put clear, specific boundaries around it.[6] Some historians mark its preliminary stirrings in the twelfth century. Others see the life and work of Francesco Petrarcha or Petrach (1304-1374), an Italian poet and scholar, as the initiating force. Its end is identified by some with the founding of the Royal Society of London in 1660, when a group of scientists and academics announced their opposition to the use of elaborate ornamentation in the serious pursuit of philosophy and science.[7] But, again, there are differences of opinion.

The good news is that research has increased on this topic, especially since James J. Murphy's urgent appeal in 1983, that "Renaissance rhetoric is a large area that is still insufficiently explored by modern scholarship and badly in need of much further investigation."[8] The bad news is, that as one of the relatively recent authors of a text on rhetoric has said, "a comprehensive history of Renaissance rhetoric has yet to be written."[9] What we can say, in general terms, is that Renaissance rhetoric can be "traced along the path of Renaissance cultural development from Italy to northern Europe and on to England," and that "the pace of change varied greatly from place to place."[10]

While there are no crisp ways of exploring or explaining this period, I will try in this paper, to spot the broad trends, identify the key figures, and offer some new insights as based on my research. As the title indicates, I am not only interested in understanding the broad role of rhetoric in the Renaissance, but its specific impact on Christian preaching.

I will proceed through the paper in the following way: in section one, I will try to better understand the unique nature and development of Renaissance rhetoric

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[5]James J. Murphy, *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 2.

[6]Bizzell and Herzberg, 463.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Murphy, 19.

[9]Bizzel and Herzberg, 464.

[10]Ibid.

by exploring its close linkage to the rise of humanism. In section two, I will attempt to identify some of the people who have played a key role in the history of Renaissance rhetoric. In the third section, I will specifically look at how Renaissance rhetoric helped shape the Christian preaching tradition. I will do this by trying to identify trends and influences in preaching practices, and especially by evaluating the development of rhetorical writings related to preaching.

Rhetoric and the Rise of Humanism

It has been suggested that "humanism is generally regarded as the first great intellectual movement of the Renaissance," and that it "set the tone for the whole period."[11] While Murphy wants us to be careful not to conclude that it is the only aspect of Renaissance thought which is important, Conley has gone so far as to say that humanism stemmed the tide of decline which rhetoric had experienced during the Middle Ages and that "it would be difficult to overestimate" the importance it achieved during the era.[12]

Many, however, do not know what "humanism" is–so what is it? Humanism is a difficult term to define since it has such different meanings for different people. Some see it as a "lofty ideal . . . in which human intellect reigns supreme"; others view it simply as an "episode in the history of education" which brought newly available scholarly materials to light in replacement of outdated or incomplete ones.[13] The technical term, 'humanism,' actually had its origin in the nineteenth century, not the Renaissance. It was apparently coined by the German pedagogue, F. J. Niethammer (1766-1848), "who used it in 1808 to refer to a philosophy of education that favored classical studies in the school curriculum."[14] The humanists, and the humanism of the fourteenth century and throughout the Renaissance, usually stood for respected scholarship in many areas—including the area of religion—represented in many forms. To the surprise of many today, Renaissance "humanists in general were religious and at least broadly Christian," according to Charles E. Trinkaus.[15] Jerry H. Bentley notes that the "fundamentally Christian character of the humanists' thought is well established,"[16] and suggests that

[11]Ibid.

[12]Conley, 109.

[13]Ibid.

[14]G. Thomas Stadler, "Renaissance Humanism: Francis Schaeffer Versus Some Contemporary Scholars," *Fides et Historia* 21 (June 1989): 7.

[15]Charles Edward Trinkhaus, *In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 2:76.

[16]Jerry H. Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ: New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 219, ix.

Renaissance humanists interacted freely with Christianity and Christian antiquity—as well as with classical antiquity.[17]

Most scholars agree that Renaissance humanism emerged in northern Italy during the extremely difficult times of the fourteenth century.[18] As Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg explain, "Late medieval prosperity, peace, and unity were disrupted after about 1250, as Europe was torn by warfare. Moslem forces began to subjugate Eastern Europe and finally conquered Constantinople in 1453, bringing Byzantine civilization to ruin."[19] France and England bloodied each other in the Hundred Years War (1337-1453), while Europe was devastated by the Black Death. Social and then religious unrest followed as the Roman Catholic Church was wrenched by the work of the early reformers such as John Wycliffe and John Huss.[20]

The Northern Italian towns were largely protected from the worst of these forces and enjoyed prosperity as "centers of trade and learning."[21] The Italians took advantage of their favorable situation to build strong, fiercely competitive, city-states. Italian civic life came to serve as the ideal climate for a "remarkable enthusiasm for classical rhetoric" and really for general scholarly work which spread to other parts of Europe.[22] Due to the Italians' influence, "a knowledge of Greek and of works of Greek literature, including rhetorical treatises and orations, was recovered in the West."[23] And important Latin rhetorical works, long thought to have been lost, were also discovered.[24] As Brian Vickers puts it, "the history of Renaissance rhetoric is, in part, the story of the assimilation and synthesis of a great number of classical treatises, together with the many handbooks in the European vernaculars."[25] Renaissance humanists, for example, believed that the re-establishment of classical texts included a re-awakening to the important of Christian classics—including the Bible and the works of the Church Fathers.[26]

Again, it was the Italian humanists who were behind these important developments. Now these humanists were not humanistic philosophers, but teachers or advanced students of the subjects known as *studia humanitas*, who

[17]Ibid.

[18]George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 195, 196.

[19]Bizzell and Herzberg, 465.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Kennedy, 195.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Conley, 111.

[25]Brian Vickers, *In Defense of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 255.

[26]Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Renaissance in the History of Philosophical Thought," in *The Renaissance: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. Andre Chastel and Cecil Grayson (New York: Methuen, 1982), 134.

"studied on the basis of classical models and theories."[27] The fact is that these humanists were consumed with an interest in the language and literature of antiquity and did everything they possibly could to recover them and make them the "basis of the twin ideals of wisdom and eloquence."[28] As George Kennedy makes clear, the two factors of rhetoric and classicism reinforced each other. As the humanists studied the classics, they came to see a greater and greater connection to rhetoric, since rhetoric was "the discipline which had created the forms, disposed the contents, and ornamented the pages which they admired and sought to imitate."[29]

Most Renaissance historians trace the beginning of Renaissance humanism, as well as Renaissance rhetoric, to the work of Petrarch, "the first great representative" of Renaissance humanism.[30] Petrarch grew up in Avignon, studied law at Bologna, and spent the latter part of his life in Venice, Milan, and Padua, where he died. According to Bizzell and Herzberg, Petrarch sought for a "model of thinking, writing, and acting in society that was faithfully Christian," yet superior to "scholasticism" in allowing for the development of individual talents.[31] Therefore, Petrarch initiated what some have called a "Renaissance intellectual strategy." This freed him from the Scholastics' limited view of life. Petrarch felt that reading the ancients in their own language was important so he studied Aristotle in Greek and Cicero in Latin. He came to favor Cicero and his view of *humanitas*, and his *humanitas* became "the seminal concept of Renaissance humanism."[32]

Petrarch's discovery of one of Cicero's previously unknown letters in 1345 was what brought to life the fascinating career of the greatest Roman orator.[33] Later discoveries of other Ciceronian materials caused further excitement among Italian humanists. As Conley says, "for the first time, they were able to see a fleshed-out picture of the great Roman orator and for the first time, they were exposed directly to his political and philosophical ideas."[34] two other discoveries added thrust to Renaissance humanism and its emphasis on rhetoric. First, was the discovery of the complete text of Quintilian's *Institutes* in 1416.[35] Second, was the discovery of the full text of Cicero's *De Oratore*. These discoveries, taken together, offered first-hand insight into rhetoric as a coherent and holistic art.

[27]Kennedy, 196.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 162.

[31]Bizzell and Herzberg, 465.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Kennedy, 198.

[34]Conley, 11, 112

[35]Ibid., 112.

Eventually, humanism moved beyond the limits of Italy and all of Europe felt its powerful influence. The Protestant Reformation was also directly affected by it. Bernd Moeller has even suggested that it was a primary contributor to the reformers' success. He said, "No humanists, no reformation."[36] There is evidence that Martin Luther had a great appreciation for Renaissance humanism,[37] and that John Calvin was thoroughly educated in it.[38] It should be noted again, however, that Renaissance humanism was not viewed negatively as "pagan and anti-Christian,"[39] as humanism often is today; rather, it tended to focus on literature and good scholarship,[40] and emphasized rhetoric as the art of speaking effectively.[41] Protestant reformers would ultimately "set up humanist curricula in the new Protestant universities they founded" and promote humanist learning side-by-side with evangelical theology.[42]

Key Figures in Renaissance Rhetoric

In this section, I am to take a brief look at some of the primary contributors to the development of Renaissance rhetoric. The work of these key individuals would eventually help lay the foundation for both 'secular' and 'Christian' rhetoric or persuasion. I start with George Trebizond (1395-1472), since his work represents the beginning of Greek rhetoric in the universities of the West. Kennedy suggests that he became Italy's most important Greek emigrant, as far as the history

[36]Bernd Moeller, cited by Lewis W. Spitz, in "Luther, Humanism, and the Word," *Lutheran Theological Seminary Bulletin* 65, no. 1 (Winter, 85):7.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Marvin Anderson, "John Calvin: Biblical Preacher," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 42, no. 2 (1989): 171.

[39]Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), 74. A change in perspective regarding humanism apparently began to occur in the nineteenth century that spilled over into the twentieth and has continued into the twenty-first century. According to G. Thomas Stadler, what was called a "second humanism" was developed by "Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) and his associates" which made "reason and experience" the sole basis for truth. See Stadler, 7.

[40]Lewis W. Spitz suggests that a "new" or "third humanism" developed in the twentieth century which some have described as "militantly anthropocentric," "frequently anti-religious," and "existential" which clearly moved away from these more noble ideals of Renaissance humanism and became a humanism considered anti-Christian and anti-God. See idem, *The Renaissance and Reformation Movements* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971), 139.

[41]Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, ed. Michael Mooney (New York: Columbia University Press,1979), 214, 243. See also Bentley's comments, 219. There Bentley suggests that the "fundamentally Christian character of the humanists' thought is now well established."

[42]Lewis W. Spitz, "Luther, Humanism, and the Word," *Lutheran Theological Seminary Bulletin* 65, no. 1 (Winter, 85): 7.

of rhetoric is concerned.[43] What is his greatest contribution to the history of rhetoric? Conley suggests that it is his *Rhetoricorium libri quinque*, or *Five Books of Rhetoric*, considered the most comprehensive treatment of rhetoric in the Renaissance.[44] Others suggest that his main claim to fame is his introduction of Hermogenes and the Byzantine Greek rhetorical tradition into the Western tradition.[45] Hermogenes' work had previously been unknown in the West.

Next we look at the Dutchman, Agricola (ca. 1444-1445). Agricola studied in Italy for ten years and is known for translating the *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonious into Latin. It became one of the most widely used of Renaissance rhetoric schoolbooks. Around 1480, he also made available his influential *De Inventione Dialectia*. In this work he seems to subordinate rhetoric to dialectic, by defining dialectic as "that which treats all arguments about the probable," leaving no room for rhetoric to deal with "probable knowledge."[46] Agricola further urges the use of the classical rhetorical *topoi* as a source of dialectical arguments, and follows up by suggesting that these be arranged in the order which Cicero recommends for orations. He also seems to play down stylistic rhetoric by referring to it as a secondary goal.

Erasmus (ca. 1469-1536) was not a professional rhetorician, nor did he write a book on rhetoric; but he became a great classical scholar and certainly one of the most controversial theologians of the time.[47] His special contribution to rhetoric came in the form of a literary tradition. As Kennedy puts it, "his life's work was the revival of Christian piety through study of the classics"; his greatest achievement "was his edition of the Greek New Testament . . . "[48] He was also a major writer, producing such books as, *The Praise of Folly*, and the *Colloques*. He made key contributions to rhetoric in the areas of style, letter writing, and preaching.[49] He is well known for his vigorous debate with Martin Luther over the issue of free-will, which he supported.[50]

Peter Ramus (1515-1572) was a follower of Agricola, a significant rhetorician and, eventually, a favorite of Protestant Christianity as we shall see later.[51] Born of a poor farming family, Ramus was taken in by an uncle who somehow saw to it that he got a good education.[52] In time, he became a professor at the University of Paris, and in 1543, he published his crucial work, *Dialecticae*

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[43]Kennedy, 199.
[44]Conley, 115.
[45]Kennedy, 199.
[46]Bizzell and Herzberg, 471.
[47]Ibid., 120.
[48]Kennedy, 205.
[49]Ibid., 205, 206.
[50]Conley, 120.
[51]Bizzell and Herzberg, 472.
[52]Conley, 128.

partitiones, advocating what was thought to be a new and revolutionary intellectual method. Despite experiencing initial resistance to his views, even bitter controversy and political retributions, he eventually gained a high ranking at the university. He was killed, however, in the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre of Protestants in 1572,[53] which gave him the status of a saint among Protestants.[54]

Much of Ramus' professional work concentrated on the development of a "method of study and classification of the arts which increased the importance of dialectic, . . . and greatly decreased the importance of rhetoric."[55] His approach emphasized clarity, simplicity, and an easily memorized content. While Ramus appears, in some respects, to stand in the classical tradition, a more careful look shows practices and views that significantly differ from it. As Bizzell and Herzberg note, "Whereas earlier humanists had been careful to separate medieval scholarship from the classical authors, they claimed it had corrupted, Ramus wished to throw off all authorities, be they classical or medieval. . . ."[56]

Ramus features invention and arrangement under dialectic rather than under rhetoric as classically understood. For Ramus, rhetoric is simply the study of "stylistic ornamentation" and therefore, insignificant. He favors the plain style for anything that is 'serious business.' The appeal of Ramism is primarily found in its "simplification of material" to fit into neat categories, and its easier use as a "pedagogical tool."[57] Over time, Ramus's views became popular, especially among Protestants. Kennedy theorizes that Ramus's emphasis on dialectic and his depreciation of rhetoric as unnecessary ornament, coincided with Puritan convictions in favor of plain thinking and preaching, and led to his popularity.[58] Due to the impact of his teachings in "rhetorical education and in the transformation of rhetoric itself," most historians of rhetoric view Ramus's teachings as a "watershed."[59]

Our last figure is Francis Bacon (1565-1621), lord chancellor of England. Known as a profound thinker and "the herald of the new age of science," he was also recognized as a distinguished orator in the House of Commons and law courts.[60] He served his nation when there were serious debates on issues of crucial importance. The debates led to major orations in English for the first time in modern history.

Bacon discusses aspects of rhetoric in several of his works, including *The Advancement of Learning* (1605). Essentially this book is a creative attempt to "restructure human knowledge on rational principles useful for the modern world

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[53]Bizzell and Herzberg, 473.
[54]Kennedy, 212.
[55]Ibid., 210.
[56]Bizzell and Herzberg, 473.
[57]Ibid.
[58]Kennedy, 212.
[59]Conley, 124.
[60]Kennedy, 215.

with its emerging new sense of science."[61] In his approach, there are a number of similarities to Aristotle's theory of knowledge. But he adapts them to current concerns, including the relationship between rhetoric and dialectic.

Bacon attempts to divide human learning into three parts: "history which is based on memory; poetry, based on imagination; and philosophy, based on reason."[62] Bacon defines "the duty and office of rhetoric" as "to apply reason in imagination for the better moving of the will."[63] So clearly, along with Plato and Aristotle, he focuses on the function and purpose of rhetoric rather than on its ornamentation. He puts a strong emphasis on the concept of 'imagination' as being rhetorically important.

In the end, Bacon calls rhetoric "a science excellent," and makes it clear that "it has a secure place in the structure of knowledge, equal in importance to logic, because of its great practicability."[64] According to Kennedy, Bacon is seen as the one who began the recovery of the strand of rhetoric, which is sometimes, called "philosophical rhetoric."[65]

In looking briefly at the lives and theories of these key figures of Renaissance rhetorical history we have come to a better understanding of their shaping influence upon rhetoric (i.e., persuasion)–and, ultimately, on preaching–and have gained a better chronological perspective on what transpired during this era.

Renaissance Rhetoric and the Preaching Tradition

In this third and final section, I want to look at the Renaissance era to find out how the various rhetorical trends of the era had an impact on preaching. I aim to take special note of the development of rhetorical materials for Christian preaching and the people who wrote them.

The Earliest Phase

The first significant influence affecting preaching during the Renaissance appears to have been George Trebizond's *Rhetoricum libri V*, first published in 1433/1434 as a secular work. While this was not a religious document, it had importance for preaching because for the first time it made available in Latin a detailed account of Hermogenes' writing, *On Ideas*, which later had a major influence on preaching rhetoricians. Of particular importance was Hermogenes'

[61]Ibid., 216.
[62]Ibid.
[63]Ibid.
[64]Ibid., 218.
[65]Ibid., 219.

view of "solemnity" which Christian rhetoricians picked up on later, and emphasized as a legitimate element in Christian preaching.[66]

A second work of the fifteenth century was the epistolary rhetoric, *De ratione scribendi libri tres*, written by the Italian humanist, Aurelio Brandolini (apparently written before 1497/1498, but not published until 1549). This represented an early attempt to adapt classical rhetorical theory to Christian communication. Brandolini specifically changed his sections on "epideictic" or demonstrative oratory because he was under the conviction that most sacred oratory fits into this category of rhetoric.[67]

The most important fifteenth century treatise dealing with rhetoric, however, was Rudolph Agricola's (1443-1485), *De inventione dialectica libri tres*. Debora Shuger points out that in this work, Agricola makes suggestions in favor of the use of "emotion" "delight," and "movement" in rhetorical presentations. This emphasis encouraged Christian preachers and rhetoricians of that period, to include these elements in their own rhetorical practices.

The first 'humanistic sacred rhetorical work, *Liber congestorum de arte praedicandi*, was published in 1504 by Johann Reuchlin (1455-1522). It was generally considered a very weak treatise, however, and only about twenty pages long. It was basically a mix of classical and scholastic elements. The main purpose of the document was to recommend a simplified oratorical structure in place of the overly intricate subdivisions of traditional medieval sermons.[68] Interestingly, Martin Luther later used some of Reuchlin's Hebrew texts. He may have been aware of this writing on preaching as well.[69] According to Shuger, the first decades of the sixteenth century were nearly barren of writings directly dealing with preaching.

A bright spot in this period was when Erasmus (1535) published his last major writing, *Ecclesiastes*. This was "the first full-scale rhetoric since antiquity and the very first comprehensive preaching rhetoric."[70] While it reflected the medieval profile, Erasmus did more than simply repeat medieval themes. *Ecclesiastes* seriously explored the theological pillars of Christian rhetoric, though based on Augustinian theory. Erasmus made a strong appeal for passionate preaching and probed the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the preacher's own expressiveness. He extensively covered elocution and emphasized figures of thought and vivid depiction of biblical scenes.[71] We know that Martin Luther was greatly influenced by Erasmus' texts and scholarship, despite their personal theological differences. It is said that Luther assigned Erasmus' books to his

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[66]Debora K. Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 60.

[67]Lippo Brandolini, *De ratione scribendi libri tres* (London, 1549), 11, 105.

[68]Shuger, 62.

[69]Spitz, "Luther, Humanism, and the Word," 7.

[70]Shuger, 63.

[71]Desiderius Erasmus, *Ecclesisastes sive concionator evangelicus, Opera omnia*, 10 vols. (1705; repr. London, 1962), 983c-999e.

students. Perhaps this work on preaching enriched Luther's own preaching, since it was written some eleven years before his death.[72]

The Protestant Rhetorics

The Protestant rhetorics of the sixteenth century formed a close linkage with each other. There was liberal borrowing and cross-referencing among the authors. Protestant rhetoricians genuinely tried to reflect reformed theology with its new emphasis on law and grace, faith and the Holy Spirit, in their rhetorical theories. This was a new, and sometimes difficult, task as they were still tied to features of the old medieval model. For the most part, they recommended and used what came to be known as the "passionate plain style." This was characterized by the tendency to highlight emotional power while rejecting artistic devices geared to elevate language.

The first of those Protestant rhetoricians, Melanchthon, began "not as reformer, but as a humanist."[73] In fact, his views on secular eloquence remained humanistic long after his sacred views had changed. Melancthon's specific works on sacred rhetoric were written between 1529 and 1552. They were brief, but attempted to create a homiletical theory, while adjusting and holding onto Augustinian psychology. Most of Melanchton's works were not intended for publication, but some were, nevertheless, copied and made popular. Unfortunately, according to Shuger, they all "share certain features fateful for much later Protestant rhetoric. They never mention the *genera dicendi* and rarely discuss language. Instead . . . (they warn) against . . . eloquence . . . ornamentation . . . (and reject) demonstrative oratory out of hand."[74]

Yet Melanchton's homiletical theory later changed, as classical rhetoric waned in influence. Emotion, for example, became a dominant feature in his writings. He came to divide sermons into two basic categories: those that taught dogma, and those that aimed at arousing the emotions. In the end, Melanchthon constructed what was a "wholly non-classical revision of rhetorical theory" in an attempt "to erect Christian preaching on the foundations of Reformed theology and psychology."[75] Certainly these works on sacred rhetoric were read, and likely used, by his close friend, Luther.[76] We know that Calvin assigned some of the writings of Melancthon to his first-year students at the Genevan Academy.[77] Perhaps this work was among them.

[72]Spitz, "Luther, Humanism and the Word," 7-10.
[73]Shuger, 65.
[74]Ibid., 67.
[75]Ibid., 69.
[76]Spitz, "Luther, Humanism, and the Word," 8.
[77]Anderson,177.

Eventually, sixteenth century rhetorics came to be divided into either 'liberal' or 'conservative' types. As Shuger suggests,

> The former (liberal) point toward the great neo-Latin Protestant rhetorics of the seventeenth century, the latter (conservative) resemble more closely the vernacular English tradition. Yet both absorb elements of the grand style. While the more conservative rhetorics such as Perkins', The *Art of Prophesying*, dismiss or ignore rhetorical eloquence in favor of a plain and spiritual preaching, they, like the medieval *ars praedicandi*, preserve two aspects of the classical grand style: passion and expressivity. As we have seen, the passionate plain style emerges when the Holy Spirit replaces language as the "prime mover" of the emotions.[78]

In looking at the research done on John Calvin's and Martin Luther's preaching, by individuals like Marvin Anderson[79] and Fred Meuser,[80] as well as by directly examining their sermons, basic insights into the styles of these two great reformation preachers can be gained. It seems clear that Luther tended toward the "plain style,"[81] while Calvin appears to be somewhere in the middle. Calvin seems to place more stress on oratory and eloquence, as preaching values, than does Luther. Yet Calvin, too, opposes what he calls "grandiloquence."

A fresh view of sacred rhetoric began to unfold within Protestantism around mid-sixteenth century as represented by Hyperius's *Practis of Preaching* (1553; trans. 1577). Hyperius followed the example of most preachers of that day in using emotional power, relying on the Spirit, and in being expressive. He tended to divide his sermons into various classifications as most others were doing at the time; but in *Practis of Preaching* he also showed an openness to explore the full range of classical rhetoric. While he did not go into great detail on these issues, he made it clear that his belief was that the orator and the preacher "have all matters in common,"[82] including the need to use *elocutio*. His emphasis reintroduced into Protestant preaching the element of classical eloquence, and nudged Protestant sacred oratory more toward the grand style of powerful, affective preaching.[83]

The Catholic Rhetorics

The Roman Catholic rhetoricians became active in direct response to the encouragement given to them by the Council of Trent (1545-1563). As Peter Bayley suggests, at the time of the Council, preaching was in a disastrous state

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[78]Shuger, 69, 70.

[79]Anderson, 172, 173.

[80]Fred W. Meuser, *Luther the Preacher* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1983), 48-57.

[81]Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Press; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955-1986.

[82]Shuger, 71, 72.

[83]Ibid.

within the church.[84] The Council sent out a very simple, but forceful, decree insisting that "preaching is the prerogative of the bishop and those approved by him, and that parish priests should instruct their flock on Sundays and feast days in doctrines necessary to faith and morals."[85]

Following the Council of Trent, writings on preaching and Christian Rhetoric began to flourish in the Catholic Church. In fact, a full-fledged movement began in support of sacred oratory. As a result, Catholic writings on the subject came to represent the first fully developed Christian rhetoric since Erasmus' time.[86] And the writings were of substantial length and quality. While Protestant texts of the same period ran from ten to forty pages, the "Tridentine Rhetorics," as they came to be known, were 150-500 pages in length. They were rhetorical works in the classical sense.

An example of the best of these Catholic writings is Luis de Granada's *Ecclesiastica rhetorica* (1576). It deals with issues such as the origin and functions of sacred rhetoric, invention, amplification, the emotions, types of sermons, elocution, style, pronunciation and gestures. It is quite thorough. While the classical origins were clear, there were significant changes in the five-part ancient pattern (invention, disposition, elocution, delivery and memory). *Compositio* and memory were dropped, while a section on amplification and emotion was added. It has been suggested that this may have been a conscious move away from Ciceronian emphasis on "aural rhythm and periodicity" toward greater stress on emotional expressiveness—a trend which was common at this time in Renaissance rhetoric.[87]

There were several differences between the rhetorical works of Protestants and Roman Catholics of the time. One was that Catholic texts willingly embraced the legitimacy of deliberate eloquence. Another was that Catholic texts more aggressively pursued issues of style and amplification, while Protestants texts tended to view these as of only peripheral concern. Still another difference is the fact that Catholic texts had a much stronger sacramental tone. On the other hand, there were some important similarities. Both tried to reground classical rhetoric in Christian theology and psychology. Both saw the Holy Spirit as the prime mover in sacred expressivity. Finally, both emphasized the affective goals of preaching.[88]

Summary

In summary, we can say that Renaissance rhetoric certainly did have a strong impact on Christian preaching throughout the entire era. During the fourteenth,

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[84]Peter Bayley, *French Pulpit Oratory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 43.

[85]Ibid., 43, 44.

[86]Shuger, 76.

[87]Ibid., 76, 77.

[88]Ibid., 77-79.

fifteenth and well into the sixteenth century, most preachers were directly and heavily dependent on the various popular rhetorical views and classical approaches. Since rhetoric was so closely linked with general humanist education through this period, it had a profound effect on nearly everyone, and certainly on the trained clergy and church scholars. There was no uniform pattern of rhetoric at any given time, even from a secular viewpoint, so preachers were given flexibility to decide which pattern, or variation of a pattern, they wanted to work with; consequently, there were a variety of approaches among the preachers of this era. The tendency for the average preacher, however, was to largely reflect the popular rhetorical views and practices of his time.

As the Reformation progressed, both Protestant and Catholic scholars emerged to begin writing their own rhetorical treatises and books. At first, they largely mirrored the secular rhetorical texts, but, in time, they became more independent, and better oriented to the needs of preaching. The biggest challenge seems to have been for the rhetoricians, especially the Protestants, to think about how their theological views should and could be properly expressed through preaching.

We also notice that by the time of the Reformation, there came to be two broad traditions that formed around the art of preaching. One can be referred to as the "Passionate plain style," the other as the "Classical grand" or "Christian grand style." They represent two fundamental rhetorical and theological views.[89] It appears that, in general, Catholic Renaissance rhetoricians seemed to be closer, theologically and theoretically, to the "Classical grand style" of preaching, while the majority of Protestants leaned toward the "passionate plain style," or placed themselves somewhere in the middle.

It can again be said that Renaissance rhetoric, as well as Renaissance humanism, greatly influenced the shape of Christian preaching during the long era that we call the Renaissance. I believe that the impact was largely to the enrichment of preaching.

[89]Ibid., 70-79.

THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF PREACHING AND APPLYING THE WORD: ELLEN G. WHITE'S PERSPECTIVE IN RELATION TO THE EVANGELICAL VIEW POINT

NESTOR C. RILLOMA

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to investigate the contemporary evangelical literature on preaching and the published writings of Ellen G. White, in order to answer two important questions: (1) What is the general tenor of her writings in relation to the present evangelical point of view concerning the necessary components of preaching? (2) What is the importance of personal application in preaching as echoed in recent homiletical literature and White's writings? However, it is imperative that before these two queries are broached, the picture of abuses in preaching must first be understood.

Abuses in Preaching Then and Now

The term 'dis-exposition' is used in the field of homiletics to express abuses in preaching. We may have had such an experience as listeners, whereby a biblical text is read but nothing further is said about it. It is a natural feature of dis-exposition not to engage the text and its context; no attempt is made to convey the true meaning of the passage.

Dis-exposition invites many abuses to the text. Both Peter Adam and Kent Hughes point out several of these.[1] First, there is the de-contexted sermon. This occurs when the Scripture is wrenched from its surrounding context and mistakenly applied. An example of this is the use of Rev 11:10 as a Christmas text: "And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another."[2] The preacher completely ignores the last part of the verse, "Because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth." That does not sound like a merry Christmas!

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[1] Peter Adam, *Speaking God's Words* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 102-03; Kent Hughes, "The Anatomy of Exposition: *Logos, Ethos,* and *Pathos,*" *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 44-58.

[2] Unless otherwise noted all scripture references are from New American Standard Bible.

Second is the lensed sermon. The preacher sees every text through the lens of a favorite theme: psychological, therapeutic, political, chauvinistic, social, or domestic, to name a few. Regardless of what the text says, the preacher ends up preaching "his/her" theme. To put it colloquially, he "rides his hobby horse."

Third is the moralized sermon whereby each sermon has a moral. For example, in Phil 3:13 the apostle's phrase "one thing I do," is stretched to teach the importance of goal-setting. Thus, personal and professional goals become the centerpiece of the sermon. The last part of the verse, outlining Paul's primary purpose is ignored, "forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

In the fourth type of dis-exposition, the doctrinalized sermon, the Scriptures are used as proof-texts for the doctrinal preferences of the preacher. Every sermon champions his particular theological leaning.

The fifth abuse may well be called silenced sermons. The preacher actually preaches on details that the Scripture does not address. The sermon goes something like this: "Now the Bible does not tell us how Mary felt, but we can be sure she felt this way. Therefore, we ought to feel the same." We may have even heard sermons preached from the animals' perspective at Jesus' birth.

While these five abuses are disconcerting, a very common type of dis-exposition occurs because of the "homiletics of consensus." In this type of preaching, the preacher determines the congregation's needs from the pollsters' analyses of felt needs, and then bases his preaching agenda on those feelings. Certainly, all biblical exposition must be informed by, and sensitive to, perceived needs. But the problem of preaching only to felt needs is that our deepest needs often go beyond our perceived needs. In addressing this important matter, William H. Willimon, dean of the chapel of Duke University writes:

> Do you know how disillusioning it has been for me to realize that many of these self-proclaimed biblical preachers now sound more like liberal mainliners than liberal mainliners? At the very time those of us in the mainline, old-line, sidelined were repenting of our pop psychological pap and rediscovering the joy of disciplined biblical preaching, these "biblical preachers" were becoming "user-friendly" and "inclusive," taking their homiletical cues from the "felt needs" of us "boomers" and "busters" rather than the excruciating demands of the Bible. I know why they do this. After all, we mainline-liberal-experiential-expressionists played this game before the conservative evangelical reformed got there.[3]

After warning against allowing the world to set our homiletical agenda, Willimon concludes by saying, "The psychology of the gospel—reducing salvation

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[3]William H. Willimon, "Been There, Preached That," *Leadership Magazine,* Fall 1995, 75-76.

to self-esteem, sin to maladjustment, church to group therapy, and Jesus to Dear Abby—is our chief means of perverting the biblical text."[4]

White never used the homiletical term 'de-exposition' but in her writings she certainly points to some of the abuses mentioned above. For example,

> In order to sustain erroneous doctrines or unchristian practices, some will seize upon passages of Scripture separated from the context, perhaps quoting half of a single verse as proving their point, when the remaining portion would show the meaning to be quite the opposite. With the cunning of the serpent they entrench themselves behind disconnected utterances construed to suit their carnal desires. Thus do many willfully pervert the word of God. Others, who have an active imagination, seize upon the figures and symbols of Holy Writ, interpret them to suit their fancy, with little regard to the testimony of Scripture as its own interpreter, and then they present their vagaries as the teachings of the Bible.[5]

White regards this process of homiletical de-exposition as willful perversion of the Word of God. As such, it includes the following faulty preaching practices: (1) using passages out of context, (2) quoting a text to prove a point, (3) imagining symbols and figures, (4) interpreting texts to suit one's opinion, and (5) presenting personal vagaries as teachings of Scriptures.

Again, in *The Story of Prophets and Kings*, White points out the faults of present-day preaching. She admonishes church members in general, as well as those who stand to preach, to avoid the pitfalls of de-exposition.

> The words of the Bible and the Bible alone, should be heard from the pulpit. But the Bible has been robbed of its power, and the result is seen in a lowering of the tone of spiritual life. In many sermons of today there is not that divine manifestation which awakens the conscience and brings life to the soul. The hearers cannot say, "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" Luke 24:32. There are many who are crying out for the living God, longing for the divine presence. Let the word of God speak to the heart. Let those who have heard only tradition and human theories and maxims, hear the voice of Him who can renew the soul unto eternal life.[6]

True Components of Preaching

Dis-exposition is a serious problem that deserves careful thought. The abuses described above are increasingly dominating pulpits. Such approaches to Scripture are not going to be replaced quietly and easily. Therefore, it is necessary, especially

[4]Ibid., 76.
[5]Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1911), 521.
[6]Ellen G. White, *The Story of Prophets and Kings* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1917), 626.

for Seventh-day Adventists, to expound the true components of biblical preaching in the writings of Ellen G. White since she is seen as a prophetess and founding member of the denomination. This investigation will be seen in the three classical rhetorical categories of *Logos, Ethos,* and *Pathos.* These terms will not be used in their strict definition. Nevertheless, these categories, broadly understood and given Christian qualification, provide helpful approaches to the published writings of Ellen G. White in relation to the contemporary evangelical literature in homiletics.

Logos: The Preacher's Conviction about Scripture
Biblical preaching is preaching in service to the Word. To do this, a preacher must believe in the authority of Scripture and recognize the inseparability of the Word and the Holy Spirit. It presumes a belief in the authority of Scripture; but there is more, namely, a commitment to biblical preaching is a commitment to hearing God's Word. Christian preachers today have authority to speak from God only as long as they speak His Word. Preachers are not only commanded to preach, they are commanded specifically to preach the Word.

The Authority of Scripture
White adheres to the position that the authority we attach to Scripture will determine the weight and prominence we give to Scripture in our preaching. For a preacher to present biblical sermons, he or she must recognize the infallibility, the sufficiency, and the potency of Scripture.

Infallibility. Biblical exposition comes only from those with a high view of the infallibility of Scripture. White recognizes the Bible as the infallible Word of God. On December 15, 1885, she expressed her high regard for the infallibility of the Bible.

> When God's Word is studied, comprehended, and obeyed, a bright light will be reflected to the world; new truths, received and acted upon, will bind us in strong bonds to Jesus. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony. Our own views and ideas must not control our efforts. Man is fallible, but God's Word is infallible. Instead of wrangling with one another, let men exalt the Lord. Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, "It is written." Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, The Bible our rule of faith and discipline.[7]

Three years later she held the same position,

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[7]Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 1:416.

Had the Bible been received as the voice of God to man, as the book of books, as the one infallible rule of faith and practice, we would not have seen the law of Heaven made void, and the swelling tide of iniquity devouring our land.[8]

Over two decades later, she held the same consistency, explaining the authority of Scripture when people recognize its infallible nature,

In order to exercise intelligent faith, we should study the Word of God. The Bible, and the Bible alone, communicates a correct knowledge of the character of God, and of his will concerning us. The duty and the destiny of man are defined in its pages. The conditions on which we may hope for eternal life are explicitly stated, and the doom of those who neglect so great salvation is foretold in the most forcible language.[9]

She concludes by pointing to the result of not recognizing the Scripture as the infallible Word of God. Thus,

As men wander away from the truth into skepticism, everything becomes uncertain and unreal. No thorough conviction takes hold of the soul. No faith is exercised in the Scripture as the revelation of God to man. There is nothing authoritative in its commands, nothing terrifying in its warnings, nothing inspiring in its promises. To the skeptic it is meaningless and contradictory.[10]

The summary of White's position on the authority of Scripture is in the introduction of her famous book *The Great Controversy.* She balances the importance of explaining and applying the teachings of Scriptures. Observe the following:

In His Word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience... Yet the fact that God has revealed His will to men through His Word, has not rendered needless the continued presence and guiding of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, the Spirit was promised by our Saviour, to open the Word to His servants, to illuminate and apply its teachings.[11]

Sufficiency. While a high view of the infallibility of Scripture is essential to biblical preaching, it is not enough by itself. The preacher must wholeheartedly believe in the sufficiency of Scripture as well as embrace Scripture's own claim about this matter. He or she must be personally convicted as was Moses, "Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, with which you shall

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[8]Ellen G. White, "The Faith that Will Stand the Test," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald,* 10 January 1888, para. 11.

[9]Ibid., 22 September 1910, para. 2.

[10]Ibid.

[11]White, *The Great Controversy* (1888), vii, viii.

command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law. For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life" (Deut 32:46,47). Such a belief is essential to a preacher's heart. The Scriptures were life to Moses and food to Jesus (Matt 4:4; cf. Luke 4:4; Deut 8:3).

White saw a historical connection with the reformers concerning the sufficiency of Scripture. She claims, "The grand principle maintained by Tyndale, Frith, Latimer, and the Ridleys, was the divine authority and sufficiency of the Sacred Scriptures. . . . The Bible was their standard, and to this they brought all doctrines and all claims."[12] In commenting on the deep conviction of the reformer John Trask's view of the sufficiency of Scriptures, she underscores "the sufficiency of the Scriptures as a guide for religious faith" because he believed "that civil authorities should not control the conscience in matters which concern salvation."[13] White is grounded in this truth for she maintains, "As we search the Scriptures we find ground for confidence, provision for sufficiency."[14]

Potency. Combined with a high view of the infallibility of Scripture and a belief in its sufficiency, we need confidence in the Bible's potency.[15] The Bible makes precisely this claim for itself in Heb 4:12-13:

> For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

God's Word can penetrate the hearts of the greatest sinners of our age. It can cut away our own religious façade, leaving us flayed, exposed, and convicted. His Word is so powerful that as He wills, it will pierce anyone.

In her writings, White never uses the word *potent* as far as the Bible is concerned. Instead, she employs the simpler term, *powerful.* Relating it to preaching, she strongly expresses the belief that the Bible possesses power to change people's lives through the working of the Holy Spirit. She elucidates, "In the preaching of the word there must be the working of an agency beyond any human power. Only through the divine Spirit will the word be living and powerful to renew the soul unto eternal life."[16]

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[12]Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1884), 4:173.

[13]Ibid., 181.

[14]Ellen G. White, *That I May Know Him* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1964), 228.

[15]John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1974), 283, illustrates this in a conversation between the warrior-heroes Mr. Great-heart and Mr. Valiant-for-truth.

[16]Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1952), 64.

Inseparability of the Word and the Holy Spirit

In addition to recognizing that the Word has authority, it is also important to recognize that the Word and the Spirit are closely connected. In a 1995 article in honor of British preacher R. C. Lucas, Australian OT scholar John Woodhouse makes a compelling argument for preaching based on the inseparability of the Word of God and the Spirit of God. He says, "In biblical thought, the Spirit of God is closely connected to speech."[17] He concludes, "Precisely for this reason Scripture is profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness: it is in the Word that God Himself speaks today. Therefore, the surest way to recover the 'living' Word of God is to recover preaching that truly expounds the Scriptures."[18] When the Word of God is expounded, there the Spirit speaks.

Similar sentiments of the inseparability of the Word and the Holy Spirit have been expressed by White. Note the following statement:

> You have the word of the living God, and for the asking you may have the gift of the Holy Spirit to make that word a power to those who believe and obey. The Holy Spirit's work is to guide into all truth. When you depend on the word of the living God with heart and mind and soul, the channel of communication will be unobstructed. Deep, earnest study of the word under the guidance of the Holy Spirit will give you fresh manna, and the same Spirit will make its use effectual.[19]

White explains the process that occurs when a preacher proclaims the Word of God under the supervision of the Holy Spirit to the avid listener. She reminds,

> It is the efficiency of the Holy Spirit that makes the ministry of the word effective. When Christ speaks through the minister, the Holy Spirit prepares the hearts of the listeners to receive the word. The Holy Spirit is not a servant, but a controlling power. He causes the truth to shine into minds, and speaks through every discourse where the minister surrenders himself to the divine working. It is the Spirit that surrounds the soul with a holy atmosphere, and speaks to the impenitent through words of warning, pointing them to Him who takes away the sin of the world.[20]

Further, she advocates that the Spirit plays a major function in preaching. To her, the Holy Spirit is the ultimate source of power to make preaching a life-changing force. She writes at length,

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[17]John Woodhouse, "The Preacher and the Living Word: Preaching and the Holy Spirit," in *When God's Voice is* Heard, ed. Christopher Green and David Jackman (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1995), 55.

[18]Ibid., 60.

[19]Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1901), 6:163-64.

[20]Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1915), 155.

The preaching of the word is of no avail without the presence and aid of the Holy Spirit; for this Spirit is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit, will it quicken the conscience or transform the life. A minister may be able to present the letter of the word of God; he may be familiar with all its commands and promises; but his sowing of the gospel seed will not be successful unless this seed is quickened into life by the dew of heaven. Without the co-operation of the Spirit of God, no amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light. Before one book of the New Testament had been written, before one gospel sermon had been preached after Christ's ascension, the Holy Spirit came upon the praying disciples. Then the testimony of their enemies was, "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." Acts 5:28.[21]

Ethos: The Preacher's Integrity

Simply put, *ethos* is who the preacher is. It is his or her character. *Ethos* has to do with the condition of his/her inner life and with the work of the Spirit within, especially as it relates to preaching. Biblical preaching is enhanced when the preacher invites the Holy Spirit to apply the text to his/her own soul and ethical conduct.

The Preacher's Character

Phillips Brooks, the well-known Episcopal bishop of Boston and author of the famous hymn "O Little Town of Bethlehem," touched on this subject with his definition of preaching in the 1877 *Yale Lecture on Preaching.* He said, "[P]reaching is the bringing of truth through personality."[22] He then elaborated,

Truth through Personality is our description of real preaching. The truth must come really through the person, not merely over his lips, not merely into his understanding and out through his pen. It must come through his character, his affections, his whole intellectual and moral being. It must come genuinely through him.[23]

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[21]Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1940), 671-72. See also Ellen G. White, "Who are the Sanctified?" *The Signs of the Times,* 28 February, 1895, para. 4, "When the Spirit of God moves upon the heart, it causes the faithful, obedient child of God to act in a manner that will commend religion to the good judgment of sensible-minded men and women. The Spirit of God illuminates the mind with the word of God, and does not come as a substitute for the word. The Holy Spirit ever directs the believer to the word, and presents its passages to the mind, to reprove, correct, counsel, and comfort. It never leads its possessor to act in an unbecoming way, or to manifest extravagant and uncalled-for developments that bear not the least resemblance to that which is heavenly, and lower the standard of what is pure and undefiled religion in the minds of men."

[22]Phillips Brooks, *Lecture on Preaching* (Manchester, VT: James Robinson, 1899), 5.

[23]Ibid., 9.

In the early 1900s, William Quail carried the idea further by asking rhetorically, "Preaching is the art of making a sermon and delivering it? Why no, that's not preaching. Preaching is the art of making a preacher and delivering that."[24]

White also stresses the importance of the preacher's character. She insists that living preachers should reflect the character of the Chief Shepherd. This is her advocacy:

> The same Bible that contains the privileges of God's people, and his promises to them, sets forth also the sacred duties and solemn obligations of the shepherd who has charge of the flock of God. By comparing the living preacher with the divine picture, all may see whether he has the credentials from heaven, likeness of character to him who is the Chief Shepherd. God designs that the teacher of the Bible should in his character and home life be an illustration of the principles of truth which he is teaching to his fellow-men.[25]

She further emphasizes that a preacher should possess the same characteristics manifested by the Good Shepherd. She also points out that motive is an indicator of character. She writes convincingly,

> All the shepherds who work under the Chief Shepherd will possess His characteristics; they will be meek and lowly of heart. Childlike faith brings rest to the soul and also works by love and is ever interested for others. If the Spirit of Christ dwells in them, they will be Christlike and do the works of Christ. . . . The motives which prompt to action give character to the work. Although men may not discern the deficiency, God marks it.[26]

The Preacher's Affections

However, nothing is more powerful than God's Word when it is exposited by one whose heart has been harrowed and sanctified by the Word that is being preached. The Puritan Williams Ames said it exactly:

> Next to the evidence of truth, and the will of God drawn out of the Scriptures, nothing makes a sermon more to pierce, than when it comes out of the inward affection of the heart without any affectation. To this purpose it is very profitable, if besides the daily practice of piety we use serious meditation and fervent prayer to work to those things upon our own hearts which we would persuade others of.[27]

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[24]Quoted in Paul Sangster, *Doctor Sangster* (London: Epworth, 1962), 271.

[25]White, *Gospel Workers,* 243.

[26]White, *Testimonies for the Church* (n.d.), 4:377.

[27]Quoted in Art Lindsley, "Profiles in Faith, William Ames; Practical Theologian," *Tabletalk* 7:3 (June 1983): 14.

Self-appropriation of the truth preached will strengthen the preacher for preaching, such that it may be said, "His sermon was like thunder because his life was like lightning."[28]

Jonathan Edwards also addressed the matter of affections. He did not use the word as we do, to describe moderate feelings, emotions, or tender attachments; by affection, he meant one's heart, inclination and will.[29] He questions, "For who will deny that true religion consists in a great measure in vigorous and lively actings and the inclination and will of the soul or the fervent exercises of the heart?"[30] He then goes on to demonstrate from Scripture that real Christianity deeply impacts the affections that shape our fears, hopes, love, hatred, desire, joys, sorrows, gratitude, compassions, and zeal.[31]

White, in an 1881 article that discusses the disciple John, places similar emphasis on the importance and necessity of the preacher's affection. She comments insightfully,

> John's affection for his Master was not a mere human friendship, but the love of a repentant sinner. . . . His love for Jesus led him to love all for whom Christ died. His religion was of a practical character. He reasoned that love to God would be manifested in love to his children. He was heard again and again to say, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another . . ." The apostle's life was in harmony with his teachings. The love which glowed in his heart for Christ, led him to put forth the most earnest, untiring labor for his fellow-men. . . . He was a powerful preacher, fervent, and deeply in earnest, and his words carried with them a weight of conviction.[32]

Indeed, sermon preparation involves humble, holy, critical thinking. It allows the truth to harrow the preacher's heart. It involves asking the Holy Spirit for insight; it includes on-going repentance; it demands complete dependence on God.

Pathos: The Pastor's Passion

The preaching event must also be an exercise in Spirit-directed *Pathos* or passion. A false passion may have subtle roots. Martin Lloyd-John observes,

[28]Harvey K. McArthur, *Understanding the Sermon on the Mount* (New York: Harper, 1960), 161, quoting Cornelius A. Lapide, *The Great Commentary of Cornelius A. Lapide,* trans. Thomas W. Mossman (London: John Hodges, 1876), 1:317.

[29]Jonathan Edwards, *The Religious Affections,* repr. ed., (Edinburgh, U.K.: Banner of Truth, 1994), 24, explains, "This faculty is called by various names; it is sometimes called the inclination; and, as it has respect to the actions that are determined and governed by it, is called the will; and the mind, with regards to the exercises of this faculty, is often called the heart." Cf. pp. 24-27.

[30]Ibid., 27.

[31]Ibid., 31. Cf. pp. 31-35.

[32]Ellen G. White, "Sanctification, the Life of John," *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald,* 15 February, 1881, par. 4.

A man prepares a message and, having prepared it, he may be pleased and satisfied with the arrangement and order of the thoughts and certain forms of expression. If he is of an energetic, fervent nature, he may well be excited and moved by that and especially when he preaches the sermon. But it may be entirely of the flesh and have nothing at all to do with spiritual matters. Every preacher knows exactly what this means. . . . You can be carried away by your own eloquence and by the very thing you yourself are doing, and not by the truth at all.[33]

White, with a similar emphasis, reminds her readers that many preachers have preached Christless sermons and have not been affected themselves, by the truth they present to the people. With a rebuking tone she says,

The preaching the world needs is not only that which comes from the pulpit, but that which is seen in the everyday life; not only Bible precepts, but Christlike characters and heaven-born practices; the living, loving disciples of Jesus who have felt that it was more precious to commune with Jesus than to have the most exalted positions and praise of men; hearts that are daily feeling the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, that are made strong and tender by inward conflict and secret prayer, and whose lives though humble are eloquent with holy deeds--these are the kind of workers that will win souls to Jesus. In our ministry we must reveal Christ to the people, for they have heard Christless sermons all their lives.[34]

Passion and Personality

Passion may be demonstrated not only in the highly animated dynamics of the preacher; it can be equally present when the preacher talks quietly and slowly, calmly and measurably.

According to John Piper, Sereno Dwight asked a man who had heard Jonathan Edwards preach, if Edwards was an eloquent preacher. His reply is testimonial,

He had no studied varieties of the voice, and no strong emphasis. He scarcely gestured, or even moved; and he made no attempt by the elegance of his style, or the beauty of his pictures, to gratify the taste, and fascinate the imagination. But, if you mean by eloquence, the power of presenting an important truth before an audience, with overwhelming weight of argument, and with such intenseness of feeling, that the whole soul of the speaker is thrown into every part of the conception and delivery; so that the solemn attention of the whole audience is riveted, from the beginning to the close, and impressions are left

[33]D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959-60), 2:266.

[34]Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Hagerstown, MD: E. G. White Estate, 1993), 17:73, 74.

that cannot be effaced; Mr. Edwards was the most eloquent man I ever heard speak.[35]

In 1897, White wrote about the need for preachers to be passionate in proclaiming the truth as well as in correcting errors. She warns that preachers must not neglect "the duty of speaking words of warning to those who are erring,"[36] not necessarily with a multitude of words, but with a readiness "to open the Bible, and according as circumstances shall require, read reproof, rebuke, warning, or comfort to those who listen. He should teach the truth, rightly dividing the word, suiting out portions that will be as meat in due season to those with whom he associates."[37]

The Necessity of Personal Application

While those committed to biblical preaching, including Ellen G. White, are convinced of the truth and the power of the biblical text, many are unclear as to the preacher's responsibility, both in explaining and applying the meaning of the text to the lives of people. We will focus on the latter.

Objections to Application in Preaching

Contemporary evangelicals are not the only ones who have struggled with this matter. Karl Barth, reflective of his transcendent view of God and theology of revelation, questioned if it was indeed possible for anyone to apply Scripture to life. He insisted that being faithful to the text and also true to life in this age is "a serious difficulty" that has "no solution."[38] Rather, the task of bridging the gap between the Bible and life today remains in the hands of God alone. For Barth, application in preaching is merely talking about the text and contemporary life; he believes that God must bridge the gap between the two. In short, application is inferential, not direct. An individual's response results from an encounter with God Himself, regardless of the preacher's work.

Charles G. Dennison criticizes any emphasis for application in preaching because many do so by attempting to find a point of contact between the text and the audience. He comments, "Rather than seeing the hearers of the Word called and placed by grace within that Word and its flow of the drama of salvation, this approach, as unintentional as it may be, allows the contemporary situation to determine the Word's relevance."[39]

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[35]Cited in John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 49-50.

[36]Ellen G. White, "Preach the Word," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald,* 28 September 1897, para. 10.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Karl Barth, *Prayer and Preaching* (London: SCM, 1964), 108.

[39]Charles G. Dennison, "Some Thoughts on Preaching," *Kerux* 4 (1989): 8.

John MacArthur Jr., though not opposed to the preacher developing general application in his sermons, rejects any obligation to do so, and downplays the need for sermon application, arguing that the Word of God has inherent power.[40]

The Need for Application

Despite the above criticisms and objections, we are convinced that biblical preaching is most effective when it includes direct and explicit application to the lives of people. Indeed, the Holy Spirit uses human means to accomplish both tasks in the preaching event. This view is supported by leading authorities on preaching. Haddon W. Robinson notes, "Many homileticians have not given accurate application the attention it deserves."[41] John A. Broadus, in his seminal work on expository preaching says, "The application in a sermon is not merely an appendage to the discussion or a subordinate part of it, but it is the main thing to be done."[42] Jerry Vines laments that the "subject of application in the work of exposition has not received sufficient attention."[43] Harold T. Bryson predicts that "more than likely the concern for relevancy of the text will produce more books on application or interpretation and more emphasis in sermons on applying the biblical text to life in today's world."[44] Jay E. Evans is even more forceful, "Is application necessary? Absolutely." [45]

White strongly stresses the need for application in preaching. She agrees that exposition should not be the only concern of the preacher; application of truth to the

[40]John MacArthur Jr., "Moving from Exegesis to Exposition," in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching,* ed. Richard Mayhew (Dallas: Word, 1992), 300.

[41]Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 89. He adds, "No book has been published devoted to the knotty problems raised by application" (ibid., 90).

[42]John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons,* new and rev. ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1944), 210. John F. Bettler, "Application," in *The Preacher and Preaching,* ed. Samuel T. Logan Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986), 332-33, envisions an even greater role in application: "Application, no matter how skillfully structured or helpfully delivered, must never be viewed as an 'add-on.' It is not a skill to be developed merely as part of a good preaching repertoire. It is not frosting. It is rather the cake—the entire enterprise, from picking a text to post-sermon discussions, must be understood as *application.*"

[43]Jerry Vines, *A Practical Guide to Sermon Preparation* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 97. J. I. Packer, "From the Scriptures to the Sermon," *Ashland Theological Journal* 22 (1990): 49, admits that pulpits are weak in practical preaching.

[44]Harold T. Bryson, "Trends in Preaching Studies Today," *Theological Educator* 49 (Spring 1994): 119.

[45]Jay E. Adams, *Truth Applied: Application in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 32. His convictions are thus because he views preaching as heralding. "It is not mere exposition. It is not lecturing on history—even redemptive history. It is not 'sharing.' It is authoritatively declaring both the good and the bad news of the Bible. It is forcibly bringing home to God's people God's message from God's Word." Ibid.

lives of the hearers is equally important. She indicates, "It is not enough that we merely give an exposition of the Scriptures. . . . We are not to merely open the Bible and read something to the people and then go away out of the desk and carry no burden of souls with us."[46]

Defining Application

What is application in preaching? Several definitions exist, each with its own merit. Broadus defines it as "part, or those parts, of the discourse in which we show how the subject applies to the persons addressed, what practical instructions it offers them, what practical demands it makes upon them."[47] Ramesh Richard sees application as moving the "audience from just receiving to exhortation and implementation of God's truth."[48] Adams stresses the pertinence of "scriptural truths" so that people "not only understand how those truths should effect changes in their lives but also feel obligated and perhaps even eager to implement those changes."[49] David Veerman asserts that application is "answering two questions: *So what?* and *Now what?* The first question asks, 'Why is this passage important to *me?*' The second asks, 'What should I do about it today?'"[50] Wayne McDill claims,

> Application is more than just taking the sermon truth and attacking the congregation with it. Application presents the implications of biblical truth for the contemporary audience. It is a call for action, putting the principles of Scripture to work in our lives. It deals with attitudes, behavior, speech, lifestyle, and personal identity. *It appeals to conscience, to values, to conviction, to commitment to Christ.*[51]

As such, sermon application may be either descriptive or prescriptive. In the first place, it appropriates the principles of Scripture to contemporary life, pointing

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[46]Ellen G. White, "The Minister's Relationship to God's Word," in *Sermons and Talks* (Hagerstown, MD: E. G. White Estate, 1990), 62. Cf. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1944), 337-38.

[47]Broadus, 211.

[48]Ramesh Richard, *Scripture Sculpture: A Do-It-Yourself Manual for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 116.

[49]Adams, 17.

[50]David Veerman, "Sermons: Apply Within," *Leadership* 11 (Spring 1990): 122. He indicates that application is not (1) additional information, giving more facts in the sermon; (2) mere understanding since grasping the sermon or scriptural content mentally is far different from the ability to apply it properly in one's life; (3) the same as relevance because listeners need specific and concrete admonitions; (4) to be equated with illustrations. Ibid., 121-22.

[51]Wayne McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 187 (emphasis mine).

out examples of obedience and disobedience and the results that follow;[52] in the second place, the preacher may use Bible truth as guidelines for behavior.[53]

Hermeneutics and Application

Some evangelical scholars distinguish between hermeneutics and exegesis.[54] In such a view, hermeneutics involves only the explanation of a passage of Scripture; at that point its task is complete. However, the preacher as an interpreter of the biblical text must move beyond what a passage of scripture meant then, to what it means now. As such, hermeneutics as a process includes application as well. In other words, the preacher must apply the biblical text in order to complete the task of hermeneutics. Yet leading authorities in this field acknowledge that

> Despite the importance of application, few modern evangelical scholars have focused on this topic. In fact, most hermeneutics textbooks give it only brief coverage, and many major commentary series only mention application with passing remarks to help readers bridge the gap from the biblical world to the modern world.[55]

In their opinion, while proper application is dependent upon establishing the meaning of a text, "the process of interpretation is incomplete if it stops in the land of the meaning."[56] Indeed, "the goal of hermeneutics must include detecting how the Scriptures can impact readers today."[57]

White admonishes those who listen to preaching to diligently study the Scriptures and weigh the interpretation proclaimed in the homily. She insists that people should not be "content with the interpretation given by those whose business it is to proclaim the word of God. Ministers who thus educate the people are themselves in error." In fact, it is on "by searching the Scriptures [that] we are to know God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. The Bible has not been given for the benefit of ministers only; it is the book for the people . . ."[58]

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[52]Ibid. He adds, "The implications of biblical truth are thus used as a measure for life, not to tell the hearer what he should do but to show him what is actually taking place."

[53]Ibid. "Our hearers want to know in concrete terms how they are to live out the implications of biblical truth."

[54]V. C. Pfitzner, "The Hermeneutical Problem and Preaching," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 38 (1967): 348, comments on the relationship between these two concepts.

[55]William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas: Word, 1993), 403.

[56]Ibid., 401.

[57]Ibid., 18.

[58]Ellen G. White, "The Bible to Be Understood by All," *The Signs of the Times* 20 August 1894, para. 02.

The Gap between Then and Now

As noted above, those who object to application in preaching voice their most strident objections to the gaps between the biblical text and the contemporary audience. In their zeal to defend the timeless and transcendent nature of the Word of God, they tend to ignore the very real differences between the world of the Bible and that of the hearer today. However, to ignore application for fear of rendering the Word of God unapproachable or incomprehensible is a needless fear. To be certain, the need to study and contextualize certain cultural references is obvious, and so should be the need to make contemporary application. The chasm between these two worlds may be bridged by application.[59]

Sidney Greidanus addresses this thorny issue by appealing to the use of Scripture in different stages of redemptive history. His conclusion is well taken,

> The sermon, therefore, still consists of explanation and application—not because the Word is objective, but because the Word is addressed to the church at one stage of redemptive history while the preacher must address this Word to the church at another stage of redemptive history. The Word, to be sure, is addressed to the church of all ages, but this confession should not cause us to lose sight of the fact that it is first of all directed to a particular church at a certain stage of redemptive history. There is, certainly, continuity in redemptive history; there is continuity in the church of all ages; but the discontinuity between then and now should not be overlooked.[60]

John R. W. Stott views preaching in terms of bridge-building. Accordingly, the enormous cultural changes that have occurred since the Bible was written have caused a "deep rift . . . between the biblical world and the modern world."[61] He writes compellingly that the preacher's responsibility is to build bridges that "enable God's revealed truth to flow out of the Scriptures into the lives of men and women today."[62]

We have to be aware of the "amazingly contemporary"[63] nature of the Bible and at the same time, note that its relevance is not always apparent. We can therefore agree with Nolan Howington's claim, "To make biblical truth clear, there

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[59] This 'distance' between the context of the Bible and the contemporary setting may be observed in four areas, namely, time, culture, geography, and linguistics. Since translation and exegesis are legitimate means to bridge the 'distances' between the text and us, then application of the text is legitimate as well. Cf. Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, 13-18.

[60] Sidney Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1970), 158.

[61] John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 138.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Stott, 141. See too Keith Willhite, "Audience Relevance in Expository Preaching," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149 (July-September 1992): 356, "Nothing is more relevant for human beings than the revealed Word of the living God."

must be explanation; to make it relevant, there must be application."[64] In the same vein, Vines notes, "To fail to make practical application of the Word of God is to do injustice to the Bible's purpose. God's truth is timeless. God was thinking of us when He wrote the Bible."[65]

Scripture is relevant precisely because it has the ability to speak to issues faced by contemporary human beings despite the distance between both worlds. Stephen F. Olford correctly notes, "It would be safe to say that there is no part of Scripture that is unrelated to some aspect of faith and life."[66] The preacher, therefore, should take note of Walter C. Kaiser's understanding of the Bible's ability to address the needs of people today.

> The relevancy and adequacy of the Bible to meet the needs of a modern age are easily demonstrable. In fact, sermons that feature the latest pop psychology or recovery plan are settling for less than they could or should. In almost every contemporary issue the Church faces today, she would have been better off a thousand times over had she gone with a systematic plan to go through the whole Bible in an expository way.[67]

Application is necessary in preaching because of the distance in time, culture, geography, and language between the text of Scripture and the preacher. Nevertheless, the preacher does not need to *make* Scripture relevant. He/She must, however, *demonstrate* its relevance; that is, he/she must appreciate the task of "transferring a relevant message from the past to the present."[68]

Bridging the gap between these two worlds is a matter of properly applying the message of a given passage to the preacher's audience.[69] It is not an easy task for the preacher, but one that is essential in order to fulfill the demands of the sermon. All preachers do well to connect with Stott's passion in,

> Praying that God will raise up a new generation of Christian communicators who are determined to bridge the chasm; who struggle to relate God's

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[64] Nolan Howington, "Expository Preaching," *Review and Expositor* 56 (January 1959): 63.

[65] Vines, 96.

[66] Stephen F. Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 256.

[67] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "The Crisis in Expository Preaching Today," *Preaching* 11 (Sept-Oct 1995): 8. William Ward Ayer, "The Art of Effective Preaching," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 124 (Jan-March 1967): 31, makes a similar call, "The man behind the sacred desk must have studied to show himself approved as he handles the truth, adapting it to the needs of today, needs which are basically the same as for all days, but especially for our day when surface situations have been so radically changed in a rapidly changing world."

[68] Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 158.

[69] Willhite, 356, believes that the preacher must also take aspects of argumentation into consideration when bridging the gap.

unchanging Word to our ever changing world; who refuse to sacrifice truth to relevance or relevance to truth; but who resolve instead in equal measure to be faithful to Scripture and pertinent to today.[70]

Benefits of Application

Application benefits the congregation in at least five ways: (1) Listeners are urged to respond as a result of hearing the demands made upon them by the biblical truth presented in the sermon; (2) application is holistic, involving mind, will, and emotion; (3) Christ-likeness is developed in the listeners; (4) moral discernment in an amoral environment is developed; and (5) the hearers grasp the biblical message as relevant to their contemporary needs.[71]

It is along these lines that White makes the following claim:

> Through the application of the truths of the Gospel, men become laborers together with God. But those who while claiming to believe the Bible fail to practise the truth it contains, are blind and can not see afar off. This is why so many men and women live at cross-purposes with God. They do not live and work upon the Gospel plan of addition. Their religious experience is dwarfed.[72]

Application is the vital link between God's eternal Word given in antiquity and the concepts of men and women in the present.[73] Preachers do not need to discuss the option of "needs-based preaching" because the biblical revelation is more than adequate to touch hearers across the spectrum of humanity. The role of the preacher is to make biblical truth plain enough for listeners to understand its meaning and to demonstrate its relevance.[74]

Conclusion

Logos, Ethos, and *Pathos* are the key components of biblical preaching. As a preacher, White strongly advocated that the Bible is wholly infallible, totally sufficient, and very potent. She was convicted of the need for biblical preaching, in which the Word of God dominates one's being, inviting the Holy Spirit to winnow the soul in order to conform one's life to the truth that is preached. God's

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[70]Stott, 144.

[71]Hershael W. York and Scott A. Blue, "Is Application Necessary in the Expository Sermon?" *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 70-84.

[72]Ellen G. White, "Our Duty as Christians," *The Signs of the Times,* 12 September 1900, para. 06.

[73]Howington, 63, understands this role of application, "The preacher will throw the light of divine revelation upon human need and will present the resources of grace that are sufficient for that need. His sermons will thus disclose the vital relation between the passage and actual life. Though the setting of the text is ancient, the living word through it speaks to personal need and in the present tense."
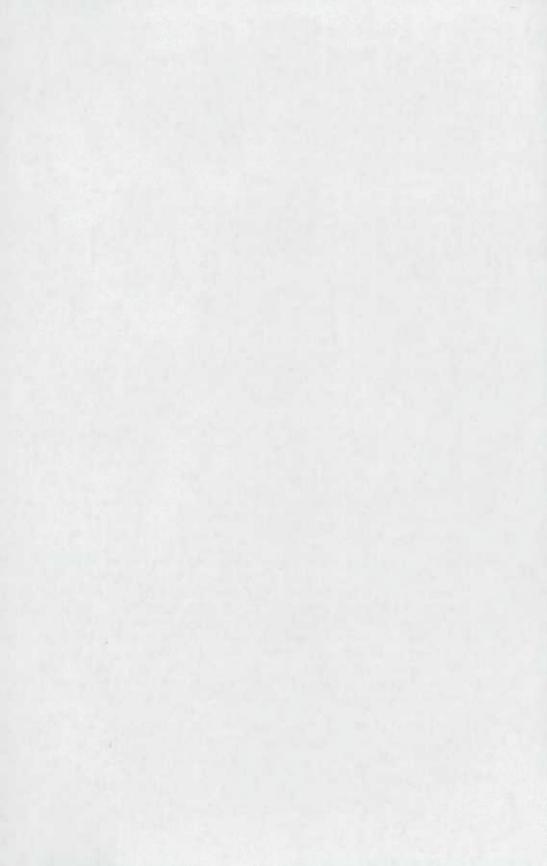
[74]Louis Lotz, "Good Preaching," *Reformed Review* 40 (Autumn 1986): 38, poetically describes preaching that succeeds both in explanation and application.

Word must come out of the inward affection of the heart without any affectation. When she stood to preach, she did so with a passion that evoked itself in great earnestness. In her life and ministry she combined the *logos,* the *ethos,* and *pathos* of preaching the Word.

For White, application is inherent in the work of biblical preaching. It is impossible to preach a true biblical message without relating the biblical text to the contemporary hearers. Application is not only central to hermeneutics; it is the mechanism that bridges the gap between the world of the biblical text and the world of the preacher's audience. However, she cautions readers against viewing application as a human endeavor alone. It is definitely not a task to be undertaken apart from the preacher's assurance of the inherent power of God's Word and the ultimate role of the Holy Spirit to apply that Word to human hearts. As daunting a task as it may be, application is requisite in preaching so as to fulfill the purpose of changing lives.

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TELLING THE STORY: A BRIEF SURVEY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN PREACHING

R. CLIFFORD JONES

Introduction

Scholars of African American[1] religion have long noted the central position of the pastor in the life of the black church.[2] From its inception as "The Invisible Institution"[3] to the present, the black church has succeeded in meeting the needs of its beleaguered constituents, in large part because of the vision and prowess of its leadership.[4] Little wonder James H. Harris contends that the black preacher "is the most visible, listened-to spokesman in the black community,"[5] and this in spite of the fact that he may not always be formally educated. Yet, if the black pastor has occupied a central position in the black church, it was the preacher's ability to expound the word of God that generally made for his or her success. It has long been understood in the African American community that what qualified and

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[1]In this article, I use the terms "African American" and "black" interchangeably, if not synonymously. I am quite aware that in the United States there are people of African descent who do not resonate with the term "African American," this being especially the case among those who were not born in the United States. I am also aware that the terms by which people of African descent in the United States have been called have changed over the years, and include "Negro," "colored," and "Afro-American."

[2]For a trenchant treatment of the subject, see Charles V. Hamilton, *The Black Preacher in America* (New York: William Morrow, 1972); H. Beecher Hicks Jr., *Images of the Black Preacher* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1977); and Emerson Boddie, *God's "Bad Boys"* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1972).

[3]Among the excellent works on the black church as the "Invisible Institution," see Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); and Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Built* (New York: Pantheon, 1974), 159-284.

[4]According to James Weldon Johnson, *God's Trombones* (New York: Penguin, 1927), 2, the black slave preacher was a "vital factor" in the black community, providing a "sense of unity and solidarity" to the disparate groups of Africans who landed as slaves in the American colonies. Calling the black preacher "the first shepherd of this bewildered flock," Johnson claims that "it was the old-time preacher who for generations was the main spring of hope and inspiration for the Negro in America." Ibid.

[5]James H. Harris, *Preaching Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 3.

distinguished an individual to lead a black congregation was his or her ability to "tell the story."[6] In fact, "'telling the story' is the essence of black preaching."[7]

In this article, I survey African American preaching, beginning with an examination of the religious heritage of African Americans. I follow with a historical exploration of black preaching dealing with periods extending from slavery to the end of the twentieth century. In each era I examine the content and contours of black preaching, uncovering the aims and goals of the genre of that time, followed by a profile of some of the outstanding black preachers in each time period. I then examine the theology and stylistic elements of historic black preaching, concluding with a brief exploration of contemporary trends in black preaching.

A study of black preaching is crucial because it provides clues to broader social, economic, and political themes. This is not because the African American sermon has ever been a social and political commentary bereft of biblical and theological underpinnings, but rather, because black preachers seldom, if ever, ignored the social context in which their sermons were crafted. Stubbornly refusing to offer "pie-in-the-sky," "sweet-by-and-bye" discourses that did not reflect a meaningful response to present, troubling realities, black preachers have always sought to ground their sermons in the immediate context. Further, given the history of people of African descent in America, the objectives of African American preaching are far from surprising. Indeed, it is difficult, if not impossible, to drive a wedge between African American preaching and the social context. Undoubtedly, African American preaching cannot be fully understood outside the context of African American history.

The African Religious Heritage

Unlike most other ethnic groups, Africans who landed in North America during the seventeenth century did not come voluntarily. They did not come full of optimism and in search of a better life. Nor did successive waves of Africans arrive in response to tales from families already in America that this was a glorious land of opportunity. Moreover, for the most part, Africans seldom arrived as close-knit family units bent on improving their lot in life. The first wave of Africans were people who had been plucked from their homeland and packed into slave ships for a transatlantic trip known as the "Middle Passage." Those who survived the brutal voyage landed on strange, alien soil to face hostile conditions. They came as slaves. It was not until the dawn of the twentieth century that people of African descent

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[6]James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury, 1975), 57, 58, 60.
[7]James H. Cone, *Speaking the Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation, and Black Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 24.

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migrated voluntarily in significant numbers to the United States, and then those who came did so overwhelmingly from the West Indies, not Africa.[8]

Scholars of African American religion are divided on whether or not African religious beliefs survived the "Middle Passage" and the effects of slavery. One school of thought, championed by E. Franklin Frazier, asserts that slavery in the United States erased all the religious myths that the slaves brought with them.[9] Conversely, others, among them Melville Herskovits, argue that residual elements and "Africanisms" are still evident in African American culture, especially in its religious practices.[10] Striking a balance between these two extremes are scholars like Albert J. Raboteau, who, though admitting that the gods of Africa all but died in America, posit that early African American religion was a syncretism of African and European religions. This school of thought contends that the brand of African American Christianity that remains to this day is a reworked Christianity crafted to meet the unique social context of the African American.[11]

One Africanism that survived in the New World was the oral tradition. Indeed, the African American preaching tradition had its beginning in the oral tradition, that is, preaching from memory and without notes. Early African American preachers followed in the footsteps of African griots and storytellers, for whom storytelling was the "equivalent of a Western fine art."[12] Cornel West refers to the oral tradition as kinetic, explaining it as "the fluid protean power of the word in speech and song" that includes "rich Africanisms such as antiphonality (call and response), polyrhythms, syncopation, and repetition."[13]

[8]Ibid., 85, 86.

[9]E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken, 1964), 6.

[10]Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon, 1941), 207-60.

[11]Raboteau, 58, 59, 86.   Cornel West, *Prophetic Fragments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 43, states that the black appropriation of Christianity was "an attempt to make sense out of a meaningless and senseless predicament."

[12]Olin P. Moyd, *The Sacred Art: Preaching and Theology in the African American Tradition* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1995), 43. Moyd bemoans the tendency of Western society to view illiterature with illiteracy, and illiteracy with inferiority. He points out that African griots were people of "superior intelligence," arguing that "this oral tradition is no indication of mediocrity." Ibid., 44. He is quick to assert that in stressing that the oral tradition is in no way inferior to others, he is not saying that preachers should resort to ad-hoc, knee-jerk, preaching. Yet, neither is Moyd promoting manuscript preaching. He believes that an internalization of the truths of the story is what makes for effectiveness in the pulpit.

[13]West, 43.

Pre-Civil War Black Preaching

During slavery, African American preaching was primarily concerned with dispensing hope to a people caught in the clutches of disenfranchisement and powerlessness. Blacks daily struggled to find meaning and purpose in life. Separation from homeland and family made for a tenuous, precarious social existence, and the future did not bode well for the steady stream of slaves that poured into the American colonies. In several narratives of the Old Testament, especially the Exodus event, the slave preacher found hope embedded. Bringing home-spun exegetical skills to bear on these passages, slave preachers found much with which they could resonate. More particularly, they saw parallels between the experience of Israel in Egypt and their situation in North America, and they early dismissed the notion that the God of the Exodus would not act in a similar way to ameliorate their situation.

Dismissing some early portraits of the slave preacher as a "semi-comic figure" lacking in intelligence, James Weldon Johnson ascribes more than average intelligence to the slave preacher, even saying that not infrequently the slave preacher was a "man of positive genius" who succeeded in committing to memory the Bible stories he had heard read on the plantation. Often, slave preachers had to augment the missing elements of the stories they heard. Using imaginations that were "bold and unfettered," these preachers were adroit at painting passionately with words, often lifting their hearers off their feet as a result of their picturesque oratory. Not surprisingly, slave preachers were among the first in their social group to develop competency in reading the Holy Scriptures being their main, if not, only text.[14]

Slaves expected slave preachers to know the Bible. To be sure, the slave preacher's knowledge of the Bible did not have to be complete, perfect, or accurate. Any knowledge of the Scriptures, considered by people of the time to be the domain of whites, increased the credibility of the slave preacher. Yet knowledge of the Bible was not enough; the slave preacher had to be able to 'tell the story,' one reason being that "preaching rather than instruction" was what was needed to meet the needs of the slaves. Slave preachers also had to be able to sing and the combination of preaching and singing was known as "moaning."[15]

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[14] J. W. Johnson, 4-5. Although they were by no means academic intellectuals, slave preachers were preferred over white preachers by slaves. Cf. Lawrence Devine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 44. See also Genovese, 261-62.

[15] Frazier, 17-18.

Early black preaching was primarily narrative.[16] Lacking the tools necessary for eye-opening exegesis, slave preachers used Bible texts mainly as points of departure, their sermons often having little to do with their main texts. Still no text was off limits; if it was in the Bible, it could be referenced, if not preached. And the slave preacher was not averse to declaring his freedom and latitude in explaining the imponderables of Scripture. Indeed, the preacher's declaration that he was going to do just that heightened interest in the sermon, and authenticated the call of the preacher.[17]

Another reason slaves expected black preachers to know the Bible was so that the preachers could correct the many falsehoods and innuendos associated with Scripture that white preachers had foisted upon the slaves. Plantation owners had often retained white preachers who asserted that there was warrant and backing for slavery in Scripture, and that blacks were inherently inferior to whites. Some white preachers even went so far as to purport that God was not at all troubled by the diabolical institution. Correcting the biblical misrepresentations of white preachers was an expectation slaves and freed blacks had of African American preachers, whom, they believed, were uniquely qualified for the task on account of their special 'call' and dynamic preaching style.[18]

Slave preachers could divulge a doctrine of egalitarianism, but had to be careful their white masters were out of earshot. Albert J. Raboteau relates anecdotes of a Sarah Ford whose Uncle Lew preached once that God "make everyone to come to unity and on de level, both white and black." Uncle Lew found himself back in the field with the rest of the slaves the next morning all because his master had been in the audience. Another slave preacher, caught up in prayer at the end of his sermon, talked about blacks being "free from work, free from the white folks, free from everything." When he was threatened with losing his ability to preach, the preacher ceased from talking about freedom.[19]

Noteworthy among pioneer black preachers were George Liele, Black Harry, Nat Turner and John Jasper. The content and styles of their preaching reflect the rich variety of African American preaching. Liele was born in Virginia around 1750 but moved to Georgia prior to the Revolutionary War. He started preaching shortly

[16]According to Raboteau, 236-37, the slave sermon was "built on a formulaic structure based on phrases, verses, and whole passages the preacher knew by heart . . . characterized by repetition, parallelisms, dramatic use of voice and gesture, and a whole range of oratorical devices." The sermon "began with normal conversational prose, built to a rhythmic cadence . . . and climaxed in a tonal chant accompanied by shouting, singing, and ecstatic behavior. . . . The dynamic pattern of call and response between preacher and people was vital to the progression of the sermon, and unless the spirit roused the congregation to move and shout, the sermon was essentially unsuccessful." Ibid., 237.

[17]J. W. Johnson, 4, 5.

[18]Valentine Lassiter, *Martin Luther King in the African American Preaching Tradition* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim, 2001), 24-25.

[19]Raboteau, 23.

after joining the Baptist church, commanding the respect of both black and white
congregations, and continued to do so after migrating to Jamaica.   Yet Liele's
message did not rouse the slaves. Indeed, he refused to preach to slaves who had not
received permission from their masters to attend his services, and to them he
preached "the mere message of Christ" instead of "directing attention to their
wrongs."[20]

Black Harry was a Methodist who learned to preach from his master. Though
illiterate, Harry was considered "the greatest orator in America" during the late
eighteenth century, and it was said that announcing that Black Harry would preach
somewhere would guarantee a standing-room-only crowd.[21]

Nat Turner was born in 1800 and, from the earliest, was repulsed by slavery,
viewing it as diabolical. A self-taught preacher, Turner claimed he had received
visions from God, including one that motivated him to plan his infamous 1831
revolt that left approximately sixty whites dead.   Today, Turner is memorialized
by blacks as slavery's most revolutionary preacher, and vilified by others as a
lunatic who fancied himself a modern-day messiah who used violence to pursue
freedom. Either way, Turner, without doubt, ranks high among notorious slave
preachers.[22]

Born into slavery in 1812 in Richmond, Virginia, John Jasper was fifty when
he gained his freedom. By then, he had been preaching for twenty-five years, and
had already earned notoriety as the consummate slave preacher. Blacks as well as
whites flocked to listen to Jasper, whose uncommon skills as a homiletician were
self-taught and self-styled. Jasper was "imaginative, innovative; crudely eloquent,
and apparently self-confident."[23] Although the sermon for which he is best known,
"The Sun Do Move," is rife with scientific inaccuracies, it is still viewed as a
classic, due in large part to Jasper's ability to use his imagination as a hermeneutical
device.[24]

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[20]Carter Godwin Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, DC: The
Associated Publishers, 1921), 47.

[21]Ibid, 57.

[22]Full treatment of Nat Turner may be found in Herbert Apthekar, *Nat Turner's
Slave Rebellion* (New York: Humanities, 1966); F. Roy Johnson, *The Nat Turner Story*
(Murfreesboro, NC: Johnson, 1970); and Stephen B. Oates, *The Fires of Jubilee: Nat
Turner's Fierce Rebellion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975); and Gayraud S. Wilmore,
Black Religion and Black Radicalism (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983), 62-73.

[23]Cleophus J. LaRue, *The Heart of Black Preaching* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton
University Press, 2001), 142.

[24]Ibid. LaRue says that although Jasper's sermon has an interesting title, his real
purpose in the sermon was "to demonstrate the truthfulness and reliability of the power of
God." Moreover, "this is not a sermon delivered solely to demonstrate the superiority of
religion over science. Rather, it is a sermon about the power of God to act versus the power
of humankind to perceive and to believe." Ibid.

For a full account of Jasper, see William E. Hatcher, *John Jasper: The Unmatched*

Valentine Lassiter asserts that early African American preaching, whether emotional, soul-searching or spirited, was a "major aspect of theology, spirituality, and social expression."[25] Further, long before the term black theology came into vogue, the slave preacher was dispensing it in a "non-academy style."[26]

In analyzing early African American preaching, David T. Shannon posits that it contributed to the development of an African American hermeneutic in terms of contextuality, with preachers using the biblical text synchonically and diachonically; correlation, with preachers harmoniously correlating "the ancient biblical stories and changing historical situations"; confrontation, with preachers using double entendre and humor as methods of confrontation; and consolation, with preachers presenting "the basic biblical theme of divine presence in the midst of oppression and suffering as a basis of hope."[27]

Post-Civil War African American Preaching

The Emancipation Proclamation did not significantly change the meaningless and senseless predicament of millions of blacks. Discrimination and de facto segregation still confronted them, conspiring to make their life difficult. Nevertheless, with Reconstruction focusing on black uplift in theory if not in practice, black preaching after the Civil War emphasized teaching the Bible with emphasis on Christian behavior and morals. A theology of personal responsibility was highlighted, with black preachers encouraging their listeners to improve their quality of life. During this time organized religious life developed, and in the early twentieth century, with the mass migration of blacks from the South to the North, which saw a rise in urbanization, black preaching became more urbane and sophisticated.[28] The result of black preaching during this era was that concepts of evangelism and nurture began to emerge, schools and institutions were developed, people became more conscious of behavioral and societal norms, and there was spiritual growth in the African American community.

In the three decades leading up to the Civil War, African American preachers had been challenged to "bring the people to a higher standard of thought."[29] But with no black schools of higher learning, and having been denied access to existing

Negro Philosopher and Preacher (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1908); and Richard Ellsworth Day, *Rhapsody in Black: The Life Story of John Jasper* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1953).

[25]Lassiter, 25-26.

[26]Ibid.

[27]David T. Shannon, "An Ante-bellum Sermon: A Resource for an African American Hermeneutic," in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Cain Hope Felder (Minneapolis: Fortress), 119-23.

[28]Felton O. Best, ed., *Black Religious Leadership from the Slave Community to the Million Man March: Flames of Fire* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon, 2001), 6-7.

[29]Woodson, 169.

institutions, acquiring an advanced education posed severe challenges for black preachers. Exacerbating matters was the fact that in the wake of Nat Turner's rebellion, black preaching had been banned in many southern jurisdictions.

Illustrative, if not representative, of late-nineteenth century black preaching was Daniel Payne, an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) bishop who firmly believed in an educated clergy. Payne focused on teaching more than preaching, all in the name of hoisting the level of scholarship in the black pulpit. To be sure, not all AME preachers were ecstatic about the bishop's emphasis, and some introduced their sermons by stating that they had not "rubbed their heads against the college walls," a disclaimer that was generally greeted with a resounding "Amen!" from the congregation. Yet Payne pursued his goal of educating the AME ministry, and by the end of the nineteenth century his denomination had an impressive number of degreed clergy. According to Cleophus LaRue, Payne was "from the school of thought that believed moral virtue was foremost in the Christian life." His sermons were filled with "admonitions to thrift, education, and discipline," and his preaching did not abound in "agitation or stridency directed towards whites or those in powerful government positions."[30]

Henry Highland Garnett and Alexander Crummell are two other erudite late nineteenth century African American preachers worth mentioning. Garnett was a presbyterian who pastored in Washington, DC, New York City, and Jamaica, West Indies. He was an exceptional orator. Crummell, denied admission to General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church of New York, ultimately earned a degree from Cambridge University in England in 1853.[31] Payne, Garnett, and Crummell dispel the charge that nineteenth century African American preachers were illiterate charlatans who repudiated the notion of education and preyed on their congregants.

Twentieth Century Black Preaching

In the twentieth century, African American preachers continued to speak to the social situation of their communities.[32] As the century began, millions of blacks

[30]LaRue, 66.

[31]Ibid., 36-44.

[32]This is illustrated in the records of preaching during that era. Consult the following volumes of twentieth century black sermons: Jini Kilgore Ross, ed., *What Makes You So Strong? Sermons of Joy and Strength from Jeremiah A. Wright Jr.* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1993); William D. Watley and Suzan D. Johnson Cook, *Preaching in Two Voices* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1992); William D. Watley, *From Mess to Miracle* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1989); William D. Watley, *Sermons on Special Days: Preaching Through the Year in the Black Church* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1987); J. C. Wade Sr., J. C. Wade Jr., and M. V. Wade Sr., *These Three: A Collection of Sermons* (Nashville: National Baptist Publishing Board, 1985); Samuel D. Proctor and William D. Watley, *Sermons from the*

streamed into the industrial cities of the North in search of work, creating conditions that threatened an already volatile racial climate. By mid-century, several cities erupted in race riots, and the Civil Rights Movement was born. As cities burned, African American preachers preached a doctrine of accommodation and resistance.[33] Three notables among twentieth century black preachers were Howard Thurman, Gardner Taylor and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The author of twenty-two books, Thurman served as dean and professor of theology at Howard University, the flagship black educational institution in the United States. He eschewed the life of political activism for that of mysticism, opting to pursue liberation from racism and all forms of oppression by taking the road less traveled–the inward journey.[34] Gardner Taylor was pastor for fifty years at the historic, venerable Concord Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York, taking his congregation from a fledgling group to a powerful bastion of several thousands. His poignant, penetrating preaching is legendary. Known for his incredible intellect and ability to preach an entire sermon on one verse of Scripture, Taylor is considered the dean of black preachers. His delivery is the classic "start slow, rise high, strike fire, sit down in a storm"[35] style.

Martin Luther King Jr. was a twentieth century social and religious American icon whose influence on race and culture is fundamentally significant, if not legendary. Born into a middle class family, King attended prestigious schools, finally earning a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Boston University. Yet King's theology was not a product of his schooling but the result of his experiences in the black church. Refusing to shun or downplay his heritage, King stated that as the son, grandson, and great-grandson of Baptist preachers, the church was his life and that he had given his life to the church.[36] From his grandparents and parents, as well as from the black church, King derived courage that he linked with the theme of hope in Scripture to frame his message of non-violence, love and inclusion. King's

Black Pulpit (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1984); Milton E. Owens Jr., ed., *Outstanding Black Sermons,* vol. 3 (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1982); Walter B. Hoard, ed., *Outstanding Black Sermons,* vol. 2 (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1979); J. Alfred Smith Sr. ed., *Outstanding Black Sermons* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1976); William M. Philpot, ed., *Best Black Sermons* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1972);

[33]Hans A. Baer and Merrill Singer, *African American Religion in the Twentieth Century: Varieties of Protest and Accommodation* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).

[34]Howard Thurman, *The Growing Edge* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956).

[35]LaRue, 11. For a study of the content of Taylor's sermons and his method of sermon preparation and delivery, see Gardner Taylor, *How Shall They Preach* (Elgin, IL: Progressive Baptist Publishing House, 1977).

[36]Martin Luther King Jr., *Why We Can't Wait* (New York: Signet, 1963), 87.

message of hope sustained him and his beleaguered constituency through intense hardship and disappointment.[37]

According to LaRue, twentieth century African American preaching was characterized by three broad dynamics: (1) an attempt to situate God in the text, (2) the linking of the biblical text to the real-life experiences of the listening community, and (3) an analysis of the end to which God's power is used.[38] He underscores that in twentieth century black preaching, God's power was used to "liberate, deliver, provide, protect, empower, or transform."[39]

The Theology of Black Preaching

The theology of African American preaching emerges from the firm conviction that the Bible is the word of God. It was not always so. When they were first introduced to the Bible, the reaction of the slaves was "an admixture of rejection, suspicion, and awe."[40] They were suspicious of "Book Religion" and were not oblivious to the fact that their masters were "Bible Christians."[41] But in time they came to accept the Bible as the unfailing word of God. It functioned as a "world into which African Americans could retreat, a 'world' they could identify with, draw strength from, and in fact manipulate for self-affirmation."[42] Frazier asserts that the Bible was the "means by which the slaves acquired a new theology . . . (that) provided the Negro with the rich imagery which has characterized the sermons of Negro preachers and the sacred folk-songs of the Negro."[43]

The concretizing element in the theology of black preaching is the belief that preaching is the primary medium for conveying God's revelation to God's people. Neither abstract nor esoteric, the theology of black preaching holds that "preaching

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[37]For a collection of King's sermons on the theme of love, see Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963). For a compelling analysis of King as a preacher, see Mervyn A. Warren, *King Came Preaching: The Pulpit Power of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 2001).

[38]LaRue, 69-71.

[39]Ibid., 71.

[40]Vincent Wimbush, "The Bible and African Americans: An Outline of an Interpretative History," in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation,* ed. Cain Hope Felder (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 84-97, deftly outlines a metamorphosis of sorts in the reaction of blacks to the reading of the Bible. According to him, on their first reading blacks responded with rejection, suspicion and awe of "Book Religion." Their second reading brought about transformation while the third resulted in the establishment of the Bible as the Sacred Canon. Esoteric and elitist hermeneutical principles came with the fourth reading, and fundamentalism with the fifth.

[41]Ibid., 85.

[42]Ibid., 83.

[43]Frazier, 11-12.

is vehicle and theology is content."[44] The mission of the preacher is to bear the good news of redemption and be an ambassador for God. Fundamental to this is the preacher's call and every African American preacher has had to supply confirmation of his or her call before he or she gained credibility. Olin P. Moyd aptly sums up the theology of African American preaching this way: "The preacher is a *special* person with a *special* calling, with a *special* message of hope to a *special* people from the underside of life in America."[45] The preacher may be male or female.[46]

For African Americans, preaching is God-inspired; that is, God inspires the message by way of Scripture, nature, and life experiences. The preacher delivers the message to a congregation that helps in creating and sustaining the sermonic encounter. Stated simply, the sermon is a special encounter with God in time, with the preacher speaking in, for, and through the congregation. The sermon is not simply God's message, but also the preacher's reflection on God's message, and the

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[44]Moyd, 11.

[45]Ibid., 58 (Emphasis mine).

[46]Historically, a nettlesome issue in the black church was whether or not women should preach. Black women were shut out from the regular pulpit for most of the nineteenth century, utilizing their preaching gifts as independent evangelists during the time. Over twenty women are known to have preached in the nineteenth century, with the number increasing in the twentieth century. A woman known only as Elizabeth is thought to be the first black woman to preach. She was a Methodist who had been born into slavery and who gained her freedom in 1796. She started preaching in 1808 and continued for half a century.

Jarena Lee is considered as the second black female preacher. Born free in 1783 in New Jersey, Lee joined the AME church in Philadelphia and after some difficulty had a successful preaching career from 1818-1849. Lee published her autobiography in 1836.

Other black women preachers include Zilpha Elau, Rebecca Cox Jackson, Amanda Berry Smith, and Sojourner Truth, who is considered the standout among the group. Born Isabella Baunfree, Truth is known for her work in the temperance and woman's suffrage movements, and her "I Am Woman" speech ranks as a classic among great American speeches. These women overcame daunting challenges to proclaim God's word.

After wrestling with the question of whether or not women should preach, Ella Pearson Mitchell, ed., *Women: To Preach or not to Preach: 21 Outstanding Black Preachers Say Yes* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1991), 17, concludes that they should, basing her response on what she calls a "theology of gifts." E. P. Mitchell states that the "gifts needed to restore the Bible to its rightful place are abundantly available, both among women and among men bestirred to preach with power by a new and fruitful mix of cultures and genders." Ibid.

For volumes of excellent sermons by black women see: Ella Pearson Mitchell, ed., *Those Preachin' Women: Sermons by Black Women Preachers* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1985); idem, *Those Preaching Women: More Sermons by Black Women Preachers* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1988). Cf. Bettye Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and Their Sermons, 1850-1979* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988); Marcia Y. Riggs, ed. *Can I Get a Witness? Prophetic Religious Voices of African American Woman, An Anthology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997).

congregation's message as well. A sermon is the witness the preacher demonstrates to the world that God has been with him or her. It is an experience of truth, not just a notion of truth.

Like Scripture, the context of preaching functions as both source and norm for the African American preaching experience. Preaching is a re-enactment of the Gospel story. It is not simply retelling the old, old story, but reliving and reanimating it. Preaching is propelled by an other worldly hope (the second coming of Jesus Christ), but grounded in a this-worldly reality.

Among other theological realities, the doctrine of the Trinity is fundamental to black preaching. Let us briefly examine each of these in turn.

God

From slavery to the present, the hermeneutics of black preaching has reflected four major themes or elements: (1) God is in full control of the cosmos, in spite of the negative realities that plague our world; (2) there is a moral ecology at work in the world, so that right will always triumph over wrong; (3) God sustains the world and is able to do so because He is omnipotent; and (4) God is a God of infinite love and mercy.[47] Black preachers have always viewed God as a God of justice who is wholly concerned with the plight of His creation and who is committed to their ultimate liberation. God is not conceived of in metaphysical terms, being far removed from people's condition; rather, He is a God who, though "high and lifted up," stoops low to be their Friend, Helper, and Comforter. Clothed in omnipotence and omniscience, the God of the black sermon has also been mysterious in a compelling and awe-inspiring way. God's ways are beyond comprehension. They are "so high, can't go over (them); so deep, can't go under (them); so wide, can't go around (them)."[48]

The God of the African American sermon has been a creator God, and nowhere is this view more powerfully captured and conveyed than in a sermon by

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[47]Lassiter, 8-9. See also Warren H. Stewart Sr., *Interpreting God's Word in Black Preaching* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1984).

According to Frank A. Thomas, *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1997), 3, the black preacher has historically placed a premium on experiential explanations of the realities of evil and pain, not just cognitive ones that might satisfy rational minds but leave the heart still broken and yearning. He says that black preachers have always known that the "word from the Lord" for which the black congregants yearned, was one that underscored the power and presence of God with them in their struggles, and also emphasized that God's promises and power would ultimately bring about their liberation.

[48]William H. Pipes, *Say Amen, Brother! Old Time Negro Preaching: A Study in American Frustration* (New York: William-Frederick, 1951), 17. In his sermon, "De Sun Do Move," John Jasper says "My Lord is great! He rules in de heavens, in de earth and down under de ground." See John Jasper, "De Sun Do Move," in *The Book of Negro Folklore*, ed. Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps (New York: Dodd, Mead , 1966), 228.

Johnson entitled "The Creation." Following is the poetic conclusion of this masterpiece.

Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He kneeled him down.
And there the great God Almighty
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle of his hand;
This great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till he shaped it in his own image
Then into it he blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul.
Amen. Amen.[49]

Jesus

Jesus has always been central in the black preaching tradition, and historically, black preachers have seldom, if ever, had troubling issues with Christology. Indeed, their view of Jesus has been so high that one detects little cleavage between their views of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ fully reveals God the Father, and demonstrated His omnipotence consummately in His triumph over death and the grave. Yet it is in Jesus' identification with the oppressed, and in His stance of solidarity with them, that Jesus shows Himself to be truly a "Man of Sorrows." His incarnational commitment to the poor is evidenced in His suffering, death, and resurrection, and holds out hope for the personal and corporate liberation and transformation of humankind.[50]

[49]J. W. Johnson, 20. A full and trenchant treatment of God in black preaching may be found in Benjamin E. Mays, *The Negro's God as Reflected in His Literature* (New York: Athenaeum, 1938).

[50]William B. McClain, *The Soul of Black Worship* (Madison, NJ: Multiethnic Center, Drew University, 1980), 32. Liberation has been, without question, an abiding theme in African American preaching. At times explicit, at other times implicit, liberation has been lifted up by not a few black preachers. Harris, 38, says that Jesus "embodies the perfect paradigm for preaching liberation."

The Holy Spirit

No black preacher will discount the role of the Holy Spirit in preaching. Indeed, it is the Holy Spirit who calls the preacher,[51] and it is the Holy Spirit who empowers the preacher, making any attempt to preach without the Holy Spirit's aid a foolhardy and dangerous act.[52] Black preachers know that a sermon without the anointing of the Holy Spirit is bound to fall short of changing lives, eloquent though it may be. It is the Holy Spirit who energizes preaching, giving the sermon compelling content and contours, and both congregant and preacher know when the anointing has not taken place. Preachers are known to elicit the Spirit's power with call and cries. "I can feel the Spirit moving/coming on" may be uttered by the preacher, often in response to a plea of "Help him, Holy Spirit!" from an anguished listener.[53]

The Delivery of the Black Sermon

Robert M. Franklin claims that historically, black sermons have been "poetic masterpieces that are biblically rooted, politically prophetic, intellectually stimulating, emotionally evocative, rhetorically polished, pastorally sensitive, and reverently and joyfully delivered."[54] Even today, *how* the black sermon is delivered is as important as *what* is delivered, making style a critical issue in black preaching.

Style is the medium that transmits the assurance of grace that is central to African American preaching. It is "the way in which manner, method, word, tone, and feeling are appropriated"[55] and conveyed. Elements of style in African American preaching include "rhetoric, repetition, rhythm, rest, spontaneity, tone, chant, cadence, melody, drama, and epic,"[56] all of which are impacted by the audience context. In authentic black preaching, style is not a contrivance utilized for the sake of showmanship. Almost always, personal style is genuine and dynamic, and it is not style that energizes the African American sermon but the word of God itself. To be certain, black preaching would not be black preaching without style.[57]

In black preaching, style and substance come together "in an ideal marriage, thus creating a union of all past and present experiences."[58] When a wedge is driven

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[51]Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 23.

[52]Pipes, 37.

[53]For an impartial and enlightening look at the role of the Holy Spirit in preaching, see James Forbes, *The Holy Spirit and Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989).

[54]Robert M. Franklin, *Another Day's Journey: Black Churches Confronting the American Crisis* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 68.

[55]Moyd, 88.

[56]Ibid., 89.

[57]Ibid., 111.

[58]Harris, 62.

between these two, black preaching loses its punch and people tend to become bored and call the preacher "a lecturer or intellectual."[59] Yet black preaching is "more than a form of rhetorical style; it is a function of content. . . . It is possible to say not only that Black preaching is substance as well as style, but that its substance determines its style."[60]

One element of style in black preaching is the call and response dynamic. Some observers see deep theological and spiritual elements that represent yearnings of the human heart and reflect motions of the Holy Spirit at work in the hearts of God's people. Common verbal responses of the black congregation indicate a hierarchy of sorts: "Help 'em, Lord!" is on the lowest rung; the listener is searching for a connection with, and is praying for, the preacher. The rhetorical "Well?"is on the second and suggests that the preacher is hinting at something, whatever that may be. The third level is the ecstatic, "That's all right!" indicating that the sermon is becoming persuasive. That some truth is being affirmed is conveyed by the "Amen!" on the fourth rung. The expressive "Glory! Hallelujah!" is at the top and represents the highest form of praise.[61]

Black preachers have always known that there is much useful theology in hymns and songs. Consequently, they have exploited music to the fullest, utilizing it to drive home truths otherwise too difficult to articulate, as well as to engender emotion in their hearers. Recalling a sermon preached at the funeral of a convicted thief around 1866, Ned Walker says that the preacher had the congregation sing the well-known hymn "There is a fountain filled with blood." When the congregants got to the second verse with the words, "The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day," they exploded in emotion.[62]

To underscore the importance of emotion in black preaching is not to denigrate substantive content. The best of black preaching has always linked emotion and content, and a sermon that seeks to appeal only to the emotions, without feeding the intellect, has always been frowned upon in the black church. Yet black preachers are as quick today to bifurcate emotion and emotionalism as in

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[59]Ibid., 64. For an insightful study of personal style in black preaching, see Henry Mitchell, *Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 88-99.

[60]Calvin B. Rock, "Black SDA Preaching: Balanced and Binding or Betwixt and Between," *Ministry*, September 2003, 5.

[61]Evans E. Crawford and Thomas H. Troefer, *The Hum: Call and Response in African American Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 13-24. They refer to this broadly as "Homiletical Musicality." Three excellent studies on musicality in black preaching are Gerald Davis, *I Got the Word in Me and I Can Sing It You Know* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Michael Spenser, *Sacred Symphony: The Chanted Sermon of the Black Preacher* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1987); and William C. Turner Jr., "The Musicality of Black Preaching: A Phenomenology," *Journal of Black Sacred Music*, 2, no.1 (1988): 21-34.

[62]Quoted in H. Mitchell, 34-35.

years past, dismissing emotionalism as cheap and unworthy of solicitation from the pulpit.

B lack preachers early learned to eschew the "three points and a poem" method so characteristic of deductive/rationalistic preaching. Central to this style is the notion of a proposition rising out of the text, and the task of the preacher is to deductively unpack the proposition. Along the way, the preacher seeks to illustrate, demonstrate, and elucidate the truth of the pericope, with a view to leading hearers to accept it. The very nature of this Eurocentric approach makes for emotion to be discounted. It is thought that emotion tampers with the integrity of the thinking process. But African American preachers have known intuitively that a sermon that does not contemplate the emotions is destined to bore.

According to Frank A. Thomas, the emotional process is facilitated by five factors: (1) use of dialogical language, which causes listeners to invest in the sermon; (2) appeal to core beliefs; (3) concern for emotive movement; (4) unity of form and substance, which accepts that both are inextricably and reciprocally linked; and (5) creative use of reversals, key to creativity in the sermon.[63]

Closely linked to emotion in black preaching is celebration. Moyd points out that the traditions of Israel were characterized by celebration, and that God authors, ordains, expects, and honors celebration. He adds that "authentic African American celebration embodies spiritual transcendence and spiritual and social empowerment."[64] It is "not merely sound without substance and shouts that are shallow" but the "joyful and ecstatic overflow of the hearts of those who proclaim and those who hear and internalize the redemptive melodies in the proclamation." Moreover, if there is celebration in the sermon, it is because there is "substance in the proclamation that elicits the celebration, and that substance is the keryma."[65]

Celebration actually fosters cerebration, so that the sermon that fails to trigger celebration is counter productive.[66] In fact, celebration and cogitation are "two sides of the same coin, that is, mutually related and interdependent."[67] Celebration is at its best when it saturates the entire sermon, not something that comes as an appendage at the end of the sermon. To be sure, toward the conclusion of the sermon celebration serves as the "joyful and ecstatic reinforcement of the truth already taught and delivered in the main body of the sermon."[68] Its goal then is to cement and drive home "meaning in core belief."[69]

[63]Thomas, 7-18.

[64]Moyd, 112.

[65]Ibid., 99-105, passim.

[66]H. Mitchell, 121. For his instructive study of celebration in black preaching, see Henry Mitchell, *Celebration and Experience in Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990).

[67]Harris, 41.

[68]Thomas, 61.

[69]Ibid.

Contemporary Trends in African American Preaching

Historic African American preaching, especially of the folk type, is currently at an intersection, and many blacks, particularly the young and urban, are eschewing it in favor of a lecture-style type of preaching that places a premium on biblical truth and personal sanctification.[70] While quickly affirming the primacy and value of Bible study and teaching, Franklin is worried that along the way this emphasis may cause the loss of two critical features of historic African American folk preaching, namely, its creative use of poetry and its unapologetic focus on issues of justice. He states that both Christianity and the English language will lose if black preaching surrenders poetry and art to become "more cognitive and discursive" since preaching "is not philosophical argumentation but an invitation to take an imaginative journey, to visit ancient places, and to overhear the conversations of Moses, Esther, and Jesus."[71] In this regard, Franklin has an ally in Harris, who laments:

> Unfortunately, black preaching today is more evangelical than evangelistic, more soothing than troubling. It is more "spiritual and imaginative" than it is indicting of the framers of injustice and unrighteousness. Consequently, it needs to become more bold, prophetic, and searing, both in substance and form, in order to expedite the quest for freedom and social change. Preaching liberation is an ethical responsibility of both black and whites. . . . And for preachers to preach anything less is to be in complicity with sin and evil.[72]

Citing and expanding on current and looming twenty-first century challenges to black preaching, which include technological advancements, urbanization, globalization, secularism, and neofundamentalism, Moyd admonishes twenty-first century African American preachers to preach the whole counsel of God from a "stance of obedience to the call of God." He asks preachers to base their preaching on a practical theology that appeals not only to the head but to the feet as well. As such, they must engage in "situational preaching with eternal consequences." Preaching of this nature will be "true to the text, applicable to life situations, and always relevant." Moyd wants contemporary African American preachers to keep their sermons logical, coherent, and cohesive, even as they remain so free that "spontaneity under the Holy Spirit" is not diminished or eradicated.[73]

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[70]Franklin, 69. For an enlightening analysis and clues as to how the burgeoning black middle class population perceives preaching, see Marvin A. McMickle, *Preaching to the Black Middle Class* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 2000).

[71]Franklin, 71.

[72]Harris, 52-53.

[73]Moyd, 120-21 passim. For insightful studies of how several contemporary African American preachers craft their sermons, see Cleophus J. LaRue, ed., *Power in the Pulpit: How America's Most Effective Preachers Prepare Their Sermons* (Louisville: Westminster/

Summary and Conclusions

Black preaching was born in slavery, weaned in Jim Crow segregation, raised during the Civil Rights era, and came of age toward the last half of the twentieth century.[74] Black preaching has always been a response to the harsh realities blacks have encountered as they sought meaning and purpose living in an alien land. Since it is virtually impossible to drive a wedge between preaching and culture, black preaching has been markedly different from other types of preaching.[75] The differences are in both substance and style, and to acknowledge and cite them is not to say that one style is inherently better than the other. Black preaching is unambiguously and unapologetically biblical, and the hermeneutical methods utilized by black preachers have not been so much those "derived from an intellectual encounter with the text but from a gift of the Spirit."[76] Harris puts it eloquently:

> Black preaching is indeed exciting and jubilant, but it is also sad and reflective. It represents the ebb and flow of the Holy Spirit that correlates with the ups and downs of life. It reflects the reality of context and experience. Additionally, it is creative interplay between joy and sorrow, freedom and oppression, justice and injustice. It is art, style, form, and substance. It reflects the power of the church in the presence of the Holy Spirit.[77]
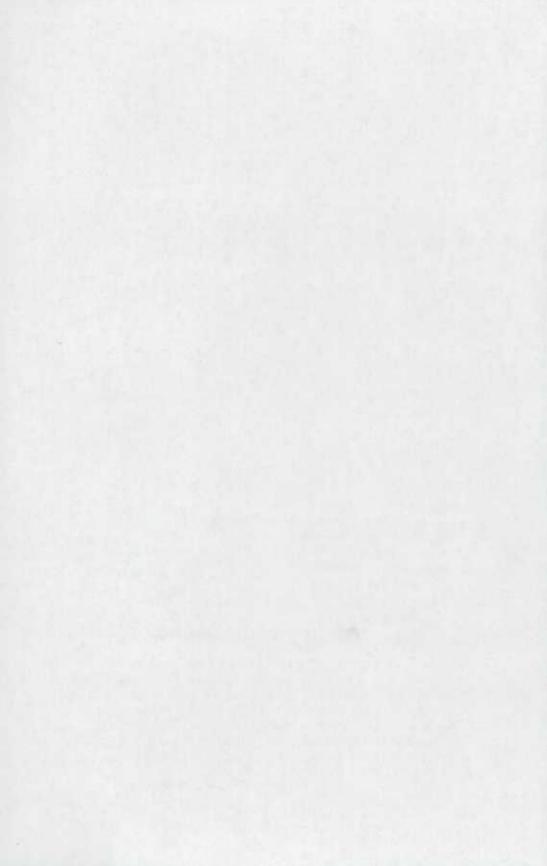
From slavery up to the present, African American preaching has been a veritable balm in Gilead, delivering hope and comfort to a people caught in the clutches of disenfranchisement and squeezed in the throes of powerlessness. At once exegetically sound and contextually relevant, African American preachers have been people of indefatigable courage and uncommon wisdom who were skilled in crafting sermons that powerfully impacted their hearers. Though their sermons reflect a complex and diverse breed, they give evidence of a unifying thread, that of calling blacks, indeed, all people, to respond creatively and courageously to the

John Knox, 2002); and E. K. Bailey and Warren Wiersbe, *Preaching in Black and White: What We Can Learn from Each Other* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003).

[74]In seeking to define black preaching, Thomas, 13, says that "the nature and purpose of African American preaching is to help people experience the assurance of grace (the good news) that is the gospel of Jesus the Christ." La Rue, *The Heart of Black Preaching*, 9-12, conceives of the genre as a "rich and varied tradition, covering broad configurations of motivations, theological points of view, art forms, structures, and styles of delivery. . . . The integrative thread that ties this type of proclamation together is a distinctly biblical hermeneutic, which is grounded in and related to the African American experience."

[75]H. Mitchell, *Black Preaching*, 11-16.
[76]Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, 138.
[77]Harris, 52.

evil in the world by living harmoniously with others. Since African American preaching has focused on the joys of living in heaven, challenging people to reach forward eschatologically to the heavenly experience, not a few detractors have labeled it 'other-worldly' and 'pie-in-the-sky' absurdities that have hindered the black quest for empowerment. But nothing could be farther from the truth. Black preaching has always been two-dimensional, pointing to a world to come, even as it deals with the challenges of contemporary existence.

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IS EXPOSITORY PREACHING STILL VALUABLE IN THE POSTMODERN ERA?

SHIN, YANG HEE

Introduction

Mounting evidence indicates growing disillusionment with the notions of absolute truth and traditional preaching. The relevance of expository preaching to the postmodern culture is being questioned. Diogenes Allen observes that the church's claim of possessing absolute truth is the chief obstacle in the way of modern people being convinced of the claims of Christianity.[1] David Hilborn argues that the expository method of preaching does not seem to be suited to today's postmodern world and maintains that this is the opinion of several leading evangelicals.[2] The implication is that pastors must preach what people want to hear rather than what God wants to be proclaimed. So the question is applicable, Is it possible to preach expositorily to a postmodern culture in a way that is creative and captivating? In other words, is expository preaching still valuable today?

This paper describes the postmodern perspective, identifies the specific challenges that postmodernism poses against expository preaching, examines the distinctiveness of expository preaching, and reveals the meaning of such preaching to the postmodern mind.

The Postmodern Perspective

Observers of postmodernism have commented that it is virtually impossible to give a full definition of this cultural trend.[3] This difficulty is further reflected by the fact that scholars disagree among themselves as to what this phenomenon actually involves and who originally coined the term.[4] Despite these issues it is possible to identify the general features of this phenomenon. As Graham Johnston

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[1]Diogenes Allen, *Christian Belief in a Postmodern World: The Full Wealth of Conviction* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), 17.

[2]David Hilborn, *Picking Up the Pieces: Can Evangelicals Adapt to Contemporary Culture?* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997), 155, 160.

[3]Alister McGrath, *Bridge Building: Communicating Christianity Effectively* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1994), 223.

[4]Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 11, 5.

claims, "Postmodernism is better understood descriptively and by its features, rather than by definition."[5] These include

1. Postmodernism is essentially a reaction to modernism.[6] This is seen in the fact that as a movement, it marks the end of modernity with its emphasis on rational discovery and science, which provided the foundations of an attempt to build a better world.[7] David Cook, the British theologian, comments insightfully,

> Postmodernism moves beyond the 'modern', scientifically based view of the world by blending a skepticism about technology, objectivity, absolutes and total explanations with a stress on image and appearance, personal interpretation, pleasure and the exploration of every spiritual and material perspective.[8]

2. A popular element of postmodern thought is the emphasis that each individual is part of a particular local human community and therefore, truth should be interpreted in the light of that community.[9] Since there are several different local communities, the postmodernist believes that there are several different truths that may exist alongside each other.[10] Therefore, postmodernism challenges all metanarratives—grand stories about the world— whether they are political, social, theoretical, or religious.[11] Christianity, as one among many metanarratives, is consequently considered as an unacceptable way of interpreting the world and is rejected in favor of truth in the local realm.[12]

3. Relativism. Stanley J. Grenz observes that those who adhere to the philosophy tenets of postmodernism are not particularly concerned about proving themselves 'right' and others 'wrong'.[13] This attitude stems from their idea that because beliefs are ultimately a matter of social context, what might be right for one person in his/her context may not be right for another; but what may be wrong for a person in a different context, may be acceptable to someone else in a different social setting.[14]

4. Truth. Martin Robinson observes that postmodern culture is not so much concerned about whether a concept is actually true or not; it is rather more

[5]Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Postmodern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-First Century Listeners* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 24.

[6]Peter Hicks, *Evangelical & Truth: A Creative Proposal for a Postmodern Age* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1998), 33.

[7]Grenz, 12.

[8]David Cook, *Blind Alley Beliefs* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1996), 9.

[9]Grenz, 14.

[10]Ibid.

[11]D. Tidball, "A Beginner's Guide to Postmodernity," *Alpha*, May 1996, 6.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Grenz, 15.

[14]Ibid.

concerned about whether it actually 'works' or not.[15] Hence, in postmodernism truth is not concerned with absolutes. Instead, it is concerned with the subjective feelings of each individual in a particular social context. We can agree with Alister McGrath that postmodernism is "the precommitment to relativism or pluralism in relation to questions of truth."[16] In fact, a recent survey shows that about two-thirds of Americans no longer believe in objective truth.[17]

C. Calver speaks of the confusion over truth in modern society.[18] He points out that uncertainty prevails and that truth is reduced to what each person feels is true, rather than anything being absolute.[19] Postmodern thinkers have given up the search for absolute, all-encompassing truth because they have become convinced that all claims for truth rest on a multitude of conflicting interpretations.[20] All interpretations of truth, including the Christian worldview, are said to be equally valid, inasmuch as that they are also equally invalid.[21] At best, postmodernists believe that all interpretations of truth can only be judged on the basis of what may or may not work for each individual.[22]

Postmodern Challenges to Expository Preaching

Judging from the discussion above, we now investigate why some hold that expository preaching is inadequate for postmodern hearers. Several charges are brought against such preaching.

1. Expository preaching is authoritarian. Since all truth is relative and subjective, postmoderns are wary of anyone who claims to possess *the truth*.[23] Further, a didactic monologue is deemed unacceptable and appears to be too much of an assertion of power. Therefore, communication is to be characterized by dialogue and consensus rather than proclamation by an individual garbed in a clerical gown.[24] This requires an open listening attitude.

2. Expository preaching is rationalistic, striving for a radical analysis of the biblical text like specimens under a microscope.[25] According to Craig Loscalzo, "The modern pulpit is steeped in a reasoned homiletic, marked by point-making

[15]Martin Robinson, *To Win the West* (Crowborough, England: Monarch, 1996), 217.
[16]McGrath, 223.
[17]Johnston, 8.
[18]C. Calver, *Thinking Clearly about Truth* (Crowborough, England: Monarch, 1995), 24.
[19]Ibid.
[20]Grenz, 163.
[21]Ibid.
[22]Ibid.
[23]Johnston, 31.
[24]Ibid., 150.
[25]Hicks, 40.

sermons, alliterated outlines, and third-person descriptive logic."[26] But postmodern people are impatient with that kind of mental discipline. They are interested in emotive images, not cerebral ideas in the written word; personal sense (or what one experiences) over sensibility (what one reasons).[27]

3. Expository preaching is unbiblical. The reason proffered for this assertion is that although Jesus' parables and narratives provide a constructive model for preaching in the twenty-first century, expository preaching itself is not found in the Bible.[28] Like Jesus, preachers today should display similar creativity. Christians need to have a thorough understanding of Scripture but be able to communicate the truth of its message through story and in a way that is relevant to postmodern society.[29]

These objections, however, are all open to challenge. We now turn our attention to this task, dealing with each in turn.

Expository Preaching
Is Authoritarian

One reason for the incongruity between expository preaching and the postmodern audience is not cultural anachronism but the nature of the Word of God as having absolute authority. It is not the *form* of the sermon that is authoritative; rather, it is the *source*. A leading expert agrees, "It is exactly so with the preacher: our authority is not to be seen in our manner but in our message."[30] Since expository preaching essentially and primarily deals with the Word of God, then this is where its pulpit authority exists.[31]

Intrigued with Paul's approach to preaching, some commentators have studied it in order to obtain clues for effective communication of the Gospel.[32] The record in Acts 17:15-34 indicates that the Stoic philosophers of Athens, who, like postmodern thinkers, "want to know strange things" (v. 20) and "hear some new thing" (v. 21), perceived Paul as one who "seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods" (v. 18).[33] Although his kerygma was misunderstood then, just as expository preaching is misunderstood now, he did not soften the note of proclamation in order to accommodate himself to their Socratic presuppositions. As the herald of God

[26]Craig Loscalzo, "Apologizing for God: Apologetic Preaching to a Postmodern World," *Review and Expositor* 93 (1966): 412.

[27]Johnston, 48, 140.

[28]Hilborn, 155.

[29] Ibid., 160.

[30]Haddon W. Robinson, *Expository Preaching* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1986), x.

[31]Faris D. Whitesell, *Power in Expository Preaching* (Chicago: Revell, 1963), 1.

[32]David J. Hesselgrave, *Scripture and Strategy: The Use of the Bible in Postmodern Church and Mission* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1994), 101.

[33]Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture references are from the NKJV.

it was his duty to "command repentance" (v. 30) on the basis of divine authority.[34] Undoubtedly, Paul's method of communication often involved disputation, debate, and dissent in his mandate of proclamation. But it was "neither to compromise revealed truth by adding appealing notions to it nor subtracting unappealing truths from it."[35] So while Paul involved himself in dialogue[36] it was only with the goal of persuading people to the truth of that Word, never as accommodation to the pluralistic open-mindedness of the pagan Areopagus.[37]

Expository Preaching
Is Rationalistic

Grenz remarks that "postmoderns look beyond reason to nonrational ways of knowing, conferring heightened status on the emotions and intuition."[38] As already noted, postmodernism marks the end of science that arose in part out of a desire to dispel 'pre-scientific' beliefs, myths, and metanarrative from the realm of knowledge.[39] At the same time, however, postmoderns welcome and celebrate mystery and communicate via myths and symbols.

We may observe that society today is largely dependent on technology and the scientists who sustain it. Few scientists buy into postmodern subjectivism, at least as far as their professional work is concerned. It is further notable that the majority of people still accept objective reality as a matter of course. Postmoderns represent only one segment of contemporary society and they have not yet carried the day, as John F. MacArthur Jr. observes, "Postmodern culture is an academic assessment of the culture. The average Joe doesn't have any idea what that means."[40] If this is so, then is it not premature to turn our backs on "the objective real world of science and reason?"[41] Is it not also premature to talk of the abandonement of exposition for the sake of cultural relevance? Therefore, the answer is not to play around with irrationalism or mysticism of postmodernism.

[34]H. Robinson, x. "The NT has over a hundred distinct verbs on the subject of preaching. Of these verbs, over two-thirds are verbs of declaration, the most common being kerusso (to herald) and didasko (to teach). . . . The herald acts on another's authority." Ibid.

[35]Ibid., 93.

[36]In Acts 17:17 Paul "argued [dialegomai] . . . with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the market place every day with those who chanced to be there." John R. W. Stott *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 76, presumes that this "was a vocal dialogue."

[37]Hesselgrave, 101.

[38]Grenz, 14.

[39]Ibid., 47.

[40]John F. MacArthur Jr., "Expository Preaching in a Postmodern World" [article on-line]; available from http://www.biblebb.com/filesMAC/CISv2n2-1.htm; Internet; accessed 13 May 2003.

[41]Johnston, 30.

Rather than accommodation to such an anti-scientific backlash, a more strategic response on the part of Christian apologetics would be to embark on a spirited biblical defense of the proper place of reason in the construction of human knowledge.

The subjectivism of postmoderns is not new; pagan religions in biblical times were thus characterized. It was the objective *Logos* that distinguished the biblical prophets and apostles from this pagan environment. The Great commission of Jesus—"teaching them . . . all things I have commanded you" (Matt 28:20)—would not have been comprehendible without access to such a normative mandate. And Paul, anticipating Gnosticism, which was quite similar to postmodernity, warned precisely about the intolerance of "sound doctrine," disillusion with the "truth," and wandering after "myths." Significantly, he took this stance in order to urge Timothy to "preach the Word" (2 Tim 4:2-5).

Expository Preaching Is Unbiblical

James F. Stitzinger describes the rich heritage of expository preaching in church history as well as in the Bible.[42] Preaching in the Bible, he says, comes in two basic forms: revelatory and explanatory. Clearly, in the Old Testament after a body of revelation had been given, people would turn to it with a need to have it expounded or explained. An example of this was when Nehemiah commented on the law (Neh 8:1-8; Ezra 7:10). New Testament exposition reveals Christ, who is both the model of preaching and the essence of what is preached.[43] His preaching included both revelation and explanation. The Sermon on the Mount is a good model of explanation and exposition marked by timeless authority (Matt 5-7; cf. Luke 4:16-30).[44] It is also significant that the early church grew rapidly, largely through preaching the "word of exhortation" (Acts 13:15). Preaching in the Bible provides an important mandate for the church in the post-biblical age, "Continue to explain and exposit the message now fully revealed."[45]

In order to accomplish this, we must grasp the meaning of preaching as a biblical witness. Gerhard Friedrich notes the four most prominent verbs employed by New Testament writers to portray the richness of biblical preaching: *kerussō*, "proclaim" or "preach," *martureō*, "testify," *didaskō*, "teach," and *parakaleō*, "exhort."[46] If exposition cannot be identified with any of these it is because its

[42]James F. Stitzinger, *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word, 1992), 36-60.

[43]Ibid., 40.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid., 42.

[46]Gerhard Friedrich, *"Kerussō," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 3:703.

ambition is to embrace all four. We may note, however, that the common link between these terms is their focus on the things of God and Scripture as being exclusively central to the preacher's message.[47] Hence, expository preaching maintains the biblical element.

However, a major factor that must be addressed is the misconception about what is meant by expository preaching. It is too often identified with a style of preaching that is colorless, unimaginative and pedantic. But expository preaching is not primarily a matter of style at all. John Stott affirms:

> All true Christian preaching is expository preaching. If by an 'expository sermon is meant a verse-by-verse explanation of a lengthy passage of Scripture . . . this would be a misuse of the word. . . . It refers to the content of the sermon (biblical truth) rather than the style (a running commentary).[48]

Expository preaching describes the method by which the preacher decides what to say, not how to say it. This leads us necessarily to examine the nature of such preaching.

The Distinctiveness of Expository Preaching

As far. as Harold Freeman is concerned, biblical preaching is two-dimensional in nature, dealing with the prior biblical text and the contemporary context of the hearers.[49] But according to Haddon W. Robinson, it is three-dimensional. He defines expository preaching as the

> communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.[50]

It is a living process involving God, the preacher, and the congregation.[51] It is reasonable, therefore, to accord to this three-dimensional structure: God is exalted in worship, the preacher is fueled to communicate the Word of God, and the congregation is nurtured by the preached Word. It is this distinctiveness that marks expository preaching.[52]

[47]MacArthur, 9.
[48]Stott, 125-26.
[49]Harold Freeman, *Variety in Biblical Preaching* (Waco: Word, 1987), 28.
[50]H. Robinson, 20.
[51]Ibid., 19.
[52]MacArthur, 17, claims that such markedness is best achieved when the expositor (preacher) pays equal attention to the dynamics of both the biblical text and the audience.

The primacy of expository preaching is seen in that it satisfies the demands of all entities when communicating the Word of God: the heart of the preacher burns, God is glorified in worship, and listeners are nurtured when the Word is delivered. It is God, through His Word, that binds both preacher and congregation in a cohesive unity. Let us examine each of these.

God-Exalting Worship

Even if exposition pays equal attention to both the biblical text and the hearer's context, it is non-biblical if it overlooks the "liturgical dimension of the preaching."[53] The preaching of the Word seeks to exalt God, not the deliverer (preacher) or deliverance (style and form) of that Word. The preacher has to be careful that he or she does not usurp God's place by honoring the human product. Preachers need to give attention to Joseph S. Carroll's admonition, "These three things are what men seek: to be glorified, to be exalted, and to be honored. Therefore, to worship God we must divest ourselves of all desire for glory and honor and power; *for He and He alone is worthy of such.*"[54]

Preacher-Fueled Communication

When the preacher exalts the truth above all else, something special happens. James Stewart points to this when he discusses the role of preaching in worship:

> Preaching is worship not just because it awakens . . . God's glory in the congregation, but also because it exhibits God's glory in the preacher. . . . Preaching pursues its aim of worship not merely through the preaching exultation, but through expository exultation. The song of his heart has power, but it is God's power only when he is singing over the truth.[55]

When he or she focuses on this, the preacher not only awakens the slumbering passion of God's people for the surpassing worth of knowing God and His Son, Jesus Christ, but the heart of the preacher himself/herself is roused. How does this happen? Luke 24:13-32 provides powerful evidence. As the resurrected Christ walked with two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus, "he interpreted to them all the scriptures" and "their eyes were opened." They could not but confess, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?"(vv. 27,31,32). When the preacher submits humbly to Jesus and listens to the Bible, the word of God burns his or her own heart; and

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[53]James Stewart, *Heralds of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972), 5.

[54]Joseph S. Carroll, *How to Worship Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 37 (italics supplied).

[55]Stewart, 5.

this burning fans his/her preaching such that the slumbering faith of the God's people is kindled.

As Calvin Miller so emphatically indicates, true biblical preaching can only occur when "the contemplative life of the pastor is foundationally tied to his personal affair with the Bible."[56] True expository preaching, from start to finish, feeds the soul of the preacher. Indeed, "As the expositor studies his Bible, the Holy Spirit studies him. When a man prepares expository sermons, God prepares the man."[57] Expositors are forced to pry into the text and while they are digging, God reveals hidden springs that refresh their souls.[58] The well is deep and the supply of refreshment unfailing. If the message has first been kindled in the heart of the preacher it will also burn the hearts of the listeners.

Congregation-Nurturing Preaching

Expository preaching usually concentrates on a single passage. The effect is that even an average listener is able to remember the flow of the sermon as well as its main points longer than if the sermon dealt with numerous passages without explaining their meaning in detail. It is questionable if a sermon has any great value if a listener forgets much of its content in short order. As such, it defeats the purpose of the sermon as "oral communication with the Word of God intended to be remembered."[59]

Expository preaching stimulates the listener to think contextually and helps to produce mature Christians.[60] By explaining the meaning of a passage in its own context, the expositor improves the biblical literacy of the congregants. People start to think biblically and they learn effective measures for distinguishing between truth and fallacy. Moreover, by traveling the world of the text with the expositor, the congregation experiences both the situation of the text and their present situations. Expository preaching freely travels the gap that space and time have created between the written text and the modern hearer. This means that the congregation is nurtured in a growing maturity of the Word.

[56]Calvin Miller, *In Spirit, Word and Story* (Dallas: Word, 1989), 88.

[57]H. Robinson, 24.

[58]Stott, 125-26.

[59]Yang Hee Shin, Class notes for CHMN 711, Seminar in Preaching and Worship, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines, 2003.

[60]H. Robinson, 57.

The Meaning of Expository Preaching
in a Postmodern World

The exposition of Scripture has become increasingly more challenging to practice and justify in today's postmodern culture. In an environment where truth is relative, ethics are situational, and authority is questioned, there is certainly no welcome mat out for the expository sermon that delineates truth, defines morality, and declares the authority of God. Yet, the faithful expositor ought to direct his/her attention and care toward means of preaching the timeless Word of God in a culturally sensitive way. Not only does expository preaching go against the grain of postmodernism as a cultural phenomenon, it also goes against postmodern trends in hermeneutics and homiletics. Expository preaching is both the antithesis and the antidote of postmodernity.

In discussing the value of preaching in a postmodern culture, MacArthur summarizes his findings: (1) The bottom line is that expository preaching confronts the amorality of postmodernism with an authoritative message of absolute truth and then lets the Spirit of God make the application to the heart; (2) the advantages of preaching expositorily in a postmodern culture are the same as they are in any environment where there is error; (3) preaching is going to impact people rather than culture. Therefore, do not concentrate merely on preaching but present the message in a riveting and compelling manner.[61] He concludes, "Rather than trying to take the Bible and bring it into the postmodern day, I try to take the postmodern day and bring it back to the Bible."[62]

Nevertheless, preachers must humbly listen to the criticism that expository preaching has been too wedded to rationalistic modes of interpretation. The intention of God in Scripture is certainly to impart objective knowledge of Himself but it goes far beyond that. For instance, in the Bible the purpose of the imperative 'rejoice!' is not just to impart objective knowledge about joy but to help the reader experience joy.

In this respect, one dimension of expository preaching notes the role of preaching in worship. The recovery of true biblical preaching will never be important until preachers realize its centrality in worship. Preaching is no addendum to worship, but is itself worship, and is crucial to everything that takes place in corporate worship.[63] MacArthur offers this redress, "While the growing trend among today's preachers is toward consumer satisfaction and contemporary relevancy, we reaffirm that biblical preaching must be first directed toward divine satisfaction and kingdom relevance."[64]

[61]MacArthur, 21.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Sherard Burns, "Preaching as Worship" [article on-line]; available from http://www.homestead.com/blackalliance/preaching.html; Internet; accessed 21 April 2003.

[64]MacArthur, 21.

In order to pay attention to "preaching as worship," expository preaching must have a "heraldic dimension."[65] When Paul instructs Timothy, "Preach the word" (1 Tim 4:2), the word for 'preach' means to "cry out," "herald" or exhort."[66] It does not refer simply "to explain." It is what a town crier did, "Hear ye, Hear ye! The King has a proclamation of good news for all those who swear allegiance to his throne." This heralding is exultation. Preaching is a public exultation over the truth that it brings. It is not disinterested or neutral. It is passionate about what is says. It is "expository exultation."[67]

Nevertheless this heralding contains teaching. In 2 Tim 3:16 the Scriptures are recommended as being profitable for "teaching." Further, "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (2 Tim 4:2). True preaching is the exposition of the Word of God. It does not consist merely of the opinions of a person. It is the faithful exposition of God's Word. It is expository exultation. James W. Alexander is right when he says, "There is happiness in preaching. . . . The declaration of what one believes, and the praise of what one loves, always give delight: and what but this is the minister's work?"[68]

Preaching is the declaration of what one believes. However, it must be clear that preaching pursues its aim of worship not merely through the exaltation of preaching, but through expository exultation. The message, preached from the heart has power, but it is God's power only when pure, unadulterated truth is proclaimed. This is what expository preaching pursues ultimately in the postmodern world.

Conclusion

This paper argues that the expository method must continue to inform the public teaching of the church if it wishes to remain securely biblical in its ethos. Expository preaching of God's message to postmodern listeners involves navigating a hazardous path with both opportunities and obstacles. Since it relies on the conviction that God has spoken intelligibly to our world, expository preaching is an indispensable asset in the church's testimony to truth. Only careful attention to the normative Word will prevent contextualization from turning into syncretism and the search for relevance from becoming a slippery slope to compromise.

Postmodern thinking challenges expositors with a fresh opportunity to confidently present the biblical text within the modern living context. And the

[65]Stott, 135. Cf. H. Robinson, x, who believes that the herald's authority relies only on his message of the Word of God.

[66]Stott, 18.

[67]John Piper, "Preaching as Worship: Meditations on Expository Exultation" [article on-line]; available http://www.beginningwithmoses.org./bigger/preachpiper.htm; Internet; Accessed 24 April 2003.

[68]James W. Alexander, *Thoughts on Preaching* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1975), 117.

expositor has to do this in the face of that thinking that sees preaching as colorless, unimaginative, neutral and pedantic. This new challenge presents opportunities for showing what real expository preaching is. God intends to communicate to the heart as well as the mind. The task of the expositor is fundamentally to find a bridge to communicate that message from God to the mind and of the postmodern culture. All preachers, like the Samaritan woman (John 5), stand by the well of opportunity in the thirsty postmodern era, to rediscover the "truth and passion,"[69] the "logic on fire"[70] that characterize real expository preaching.

So is expository preaching still valuable in the postmodern era? We answer with a resounding "Yes."

[69]MacArthur, 343.
[70]D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Preachers and Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 97.

AIIAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

DISSERTATION AND THESIS ABSTRACTS

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR MOBILIZING THE AIIAS SEVENTH-
DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH MEMBERS TO DO OUTREACH
MINISTRIES BASED ON THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF MANAGEMENT

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Advisor: Praban Saputro, Ph.D.

The AIIAS Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church was organized to meet the spiritual needs of its members. One of the ways to meet the spiritual needs is to do outreach ministry in Silang Municipality. There are many resources in the AIIAS SDA Church that can be utilized. This project attempts to assist the AIIAS SDA Church to mobilize its members to do outreach ministry.

The purpose of this project was to construct practical guidelines for mobilizing the AIIAS SDA Church members to do outreach based on the five principles of management: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling.

To reach the goal, biblical, theological, and theoretical foundations were established. First, biblical foundations were established by examining Jesus' five principles of management for sending out His twelve and seventy disciples; namely, planning, selecting, team building, training, and supervision. Second, theological foundations were also established. They were the Great Commission of Jesus, the Royal Priesthood of all believers, and Spiritual gifts. Third, as theoretical foundations, the five principles of management were adapted. They were planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling. The researcher, as a Personal Ministries Department (PMD) leader, designed, implemented, and evaluated the mobilizing program, together with the twelve Personal Ministries (PM) leaders, in accordance with these five steps.

From the project, the five steps of practical guidelines were constructed: (1) The PMD leader needs to make a short-period outreach plan (two-semester plan); (2) the PMD leader needs to organize multiple outreach groups, (3) the PMD leader needs to make an accurate recruitment plan, (4) the PMD leader needs to

conduct regular training seminar and supervision, and (5) the PMD leader needs to evaluate the PM leaders and AIIAS SDA Church members thoroughly.

DEVELOPING TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR FAMILY MINISTRIES LEADERS OF SELECTED SDA CHURCHES IN THE JAKARTA CONFERENCE

Researcher: **Samuel Timbul Tua Simorangkir**, D.Min., 2005
Advisor: Praban Saputro, Ph.D.

The Jakarta Conference of Seventh-day Adventist (JCSDA) responded to the needs of its members, particularly the young married couples (YMCs)–to improve their married life–but it was not sufficient. The Family Ministries Department (FMD) suggested that the entire Family Ministries (FM) leaders should serve the needs of YMCs in their respective churches. Unfortunately, the majority of them do not have adequate knowledge to manage FM programs to best serve the needs of the families.

It was observed that no matter how good the programs are if the people who will handle the programs have insufficient training, it will only reap a little.

To meet this problem, a mentoring project was developed to fill the gap between the plan of JCSDA and the needs of YMCs in the selected local churches. There are about 650 YMCs within JCSDA, and this conference is responsible in enabling the FM leaders to minister to the needs of the families.

The mentoring project was restricted to the five local churches selected by JCSDA. The churches are Kota Wisata, Depok Timur, Taman Harapan, Ciracas, and Salemba.

The purpose of this project is to develop FM training programs that would enable FM leaders to design and conduct an FM program that would serve the needs of the YMCs in the local SDA churches.

The project used descriptive research which was divided into three main parts: design, implementation, and evaluation. The FMD and FM leaders were involved in the designing of the program. The pre-evaluation interview was used on the FM leaders to assess their understanding on the affairs of the FM prior to the implementation of the program. The post-evaluation interview was used to evaluate the performances and the program itself. Both the FMD and FM leaders were consulted in the implementation of the program.

Three programs were designed to accomplish the goals and objectives of this project. The first was an FM mini-convention. The second was an FM mentoring, and the last was a YMCs program. All the programs were properly implemented and evaluated.

At the end of the evaluation period, the training program generally was perceived to have achieved its goals and objectives. The FM leaders were able to administer a program for the YMCs. This training was shared to the local members

through the participants and suggestions on how to improve it were considered for future similar projects.

WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION (PHIL 2:12): AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE BACKGROUND AND MEANING OF A PAULINE EXPRESSION

Researcher: **Laurent Frederic Brabant**, MA, 2005
Adviser: Clinton Wahlen, Ph.D.

Man is saved by grace and not by works (Eph 2:8-9; Rom 4:5; 5:1-2; Titus 3:5). However, the expression, "work out your own salvation," in Phil 2:12 seems to conflict with what Paul declares elsewhere. How can man "work out his own salvation" if salvation is a gift from God? The purpose of this study is, in the light of the apparent contradiction, to better understand the extent of human involvement within Paul's larger soteriological framework.

This study analyzes the concept of salvation in both undisputed and disputed Pauline Epistles and shows a comprehensive meaning of it: (1) past, present, future elements of salvation; (2) the triune Godhead's participation in the process of salvation; (3) faith as the condition of salvation for humankind; (4) reference to either spiritual or physical deliverance; and (5) connection with similar themes (ransom, suffering). This study shows that there is no contradiction in both undisputed and disputed Pauline Epistles.

This study presents a detailed exegesis of Phil 2:12-13. Paul's statement in Phil 2:12-13 describes the engagement of human and divine activity in the total work of salvation. The expression, "work out your own salvation," means that the Philippians have to do some effort, not for earning salvation, but rather, to live it out in order for them to shine as lights in the world (v. 15). They have to keep on working out or effecting their personal salvation. However, the Philippians are not left to their own devices. God Himself is powerfully working in them to achieve His gracious saving purposes in their lives (Phil 2:13). God is the provider of their salvation and He also makes sure that this salvation is effective in their lives.

This research shows that there is no contradiction between Paul's teaching on salvation elsewhere and his expression "work out your own salvation" in Phil 2:12. Philippians 2:12-13 underscore the important role of man and God in the total work of salvation.

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MEANING AND IDENTITY OF "THOSE WHO PIERCED HIM" AND "ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH" WHO WILL MOURN BECAUSE OF HIM IN REV 1:7

Researcher: **Daniel Berchie**, MA, 2005
Advisor: Joel Musvosvi, Ph.D.

The objective of this study was to determine the meaning and identity of "those who pierced Him" and "all the tribes of the earth" who will mourn because of Him (Rev 1:7).

The study began by considering the unending debate among scholars regarding the meaning of Rev 1:7, especially the last two clauses. Basically, the contention of scholars has been how John used Dan 7:13 and Zech 12:10-14 to serve his intended purpose. The other concern has been the syntax of Rev 1:7. Through an exegetical study, I attempted to address the problem of the meaning of the last two clauses.

The study reveals that first, "those who pierced Him" are those who participated in the events connected with Christ's crucifixion, namely, the Jewish and the Roman Representatives. Second, "all the tribes of the earth" are the wicked. The wicked will mourn in despair as Christ brings judgment on them. This conclusion, based on the grammatical and syntactical considerations of the last two clauses of Rev 1:7, fits both the historical and literary contexts.

JAMES WHITE AND J. N. ANDREWS' DEBATE ON THE IDENTITY OF BABYLON, 1850-1868

Researcher: **Samuel Kibungei Chemurtoi**, MA, 2005
Advisor: Francisco Gayoba, D.Theol.

James White and John N. Andrews disagreed, from 1850-1868, on what constituted Babylon in the book of Revelation. White held, during most of the period studied, that the Protestant churches constituted Babylon, and excluded the Roman Catholic Church. Andrews, on the other hand, held that Babylon comprised all corrupt Christianity that had ever existed in the history of the Christian church.

This study first examined and analyzed the theological and contextual background that may have contributed to the varying views of White and Andrews on the identity of Babylon. The restorationist theology of the Christian Connection from which White came from had direct influence on his interpretation: Babylon is composed of churches whose doctrines are unbiblical. It is not certain whether the Methodist theology from where Andrews came from had direct influence on his interpretation. Nonetheless, his interpretation was largely influenced by that of Charles Fitch, a Methodist minister who interpreted Babylon as all corrupt religious systems.

Second, the study analyzed the arguments of White and Andrews in the debate. The locus of White's interpretation of Babylon is Rev 14, particularly verse 8. He identified Babylon with the Protestant churches who rejected the first angel's message of Rev 14:6-7 during the Advent message in early 1840s. Andrews, on the other hand, interprets Babylon based on Rev 12, 13, and 17.

Third, the study traced and analyzed the chronological development of the debate. White was initially opposed to including the Roman Catholic Church in the identity of Babylon. However, he had indicated some openness towards accepting

Andrews' views in 1853 and by 1868 he fully conceded. Andrews, on the other hand, consistently kept his view which identified Babylon with all corrupt Christianity.

Fourth, the theological interests or concerns that were possibly being safeguarded were investigated. White's concern was to protect the interpretation that links the rise of the Sabbatarian Adventists with the prophetic fulfillment of the three angels' messages of Rev 14. Therefore, for him Babylon fell in 1840s. It was not clear as to what Andrews may have been safeguarding.

Fifth, the study analyzed the significance and the impact of the debate towards the formation of the identity and mission of the Sabbatarian Adventists. For White, the Sabbatarian Adventists were the people who came out of Babylon, that is, the fallen Protestant churches. It follows that the Sabbatarian Adventists can be identified with the third angel of Rev 14. For Andrews, the work was most important. The Sabbatarian Adventists, as the people symbolized by the third angel, was to give the warning message to Babylon, that is, all apostate churches, against receiving the mark of the beast or worshiping her image. The emphasis of White on identity, based on historical fulfillment during the 1840s, and of Andrews' emphasis on mission to all, were both important in shaping the rise of Sabbatarian Adventists.

AN EVALUATION OF JACK SEQUEIRA'S UNDERSTANDING OF JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION IN RELATION TO THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Researcher: **Mwachi Caesar Wamalika**, MA, 2005
Advisor: Aecio Cairus, Ph.D.

Jack Sequeira's view of justification and sanctification has been diversely received in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Some scholars think that his view of universal justification separates God's justifying act from the new birth experience and is "foreign" to the Adventist position.

This study evaluated Sequeira's idea of a universal objective justification and a subjective justification experienced by faith. In his view, the first is bestowed on mankind, potentially and collectively. Actual persons are born subjectively lost, but objectively saved in Christ.

The study observed that Sequeira's terminologies are peculiar to his theology and liable to misunderstanding. "Objective" refers to acts affecting people, but only potentially, while "subjective" refers to actual salvation or perdition. In contrast, mainstream Adventism prefers other biblical expressions for the universal effects of God's plan of salvation. Together with other Arminians, Adventists would rather speak of the universal provision of salvation, or an objective reconciliation of the entire world. However, this study also found substantial similarities between Sequeira's ideas and mainstream Adventism. Though without using the phrase, concepts exist closely related to a potentially universal justification.

At Sequeira's potential discourse, justification and new birth both come inseparably in Jesus Christ. On the other hand, at the discourse level of actual realities, a person is either a lost unbeliever or a believing, justified and born-again person. Christ's righteousness is always the key factor. The impression some scholars get of separation between God's justifying act and the new birth in Sequeira's theology is a result of mixing his two levels of discourse. This study concludes that, terminologies apart, a close analysis of Sequeira's view is unable to establish that it deviates substantially from mainstream Adventism.

THE PURPOSE OF THE FLOOD AND THE MEANING OF *šibᶜâ šibᶜâ* IN GEN 6:17-7:1-5

Researcher: **Paluku Mwendambio**, MA, 2005
Advisor: Yoshitaka Kobayashi, Ph.D.

There are contrasting views concerning the purpose of the flood narrative as related to the living creatures in Gen 6:17-7:1-5 and the meaning of the Hebrew expression *šibᶜâ šibᶜâ* in same pericope. Some scholars consider the deluge as a myth and thereby suggest that it merely provides some spiritual and moral lessons. Others perceive it as a means of punishment, salvation or both punishment and salvation. The idiom *šibᶜâ šibᶜâ* is also understood either as seven individuals or seven pairs, that is, fourteen. While scholarly views are largely divided on these issues, no study has, as yet, been done to discuss them fully in Gen 6:17-7:1-5. After investigation, the researcher found out that

1. The analysis and context of Gen 6:17-7:1-5 show that at one hand, terminologies such as *ləšahēṯ* "to destroy" (6:17) and *māhâ* "wipe out," "exterminate," or "erase" (7:4) imply aspects of destruction with a key idea that God decreed to destroy what in truth has already corrupted itself. On the other hand, terms such as *ləhayyôṯ* "to make alive" (Gen 6:19b, 20b) and *ləhayyôṯ zeraᶜ* "to make a seed alive" (Gen 7:3b); the promise of a covenant (Gen 6:18); the command to go into the ark (Gen 6:18; 7:1); and the order to store food for all living creatures in the ark (Gen 6:21) are evidences that God's purpose was to protect the righteous beings and animal life upon the earth during and after the flood. In other words, it is obvious that elements of destruction are present in Gen 6:17-7:1-5, but, in the final analysis, protection of the righteous people, rather than punishment, emerges as God's main purpose in Gen 6:17-7:1-5.

2. As to the meaning of the Hebrew expression *šibᶜâ šibᶜâ* "seven seven" in Gen 7:2, 3, after investigation, it appears correct to state that the expression denotes comprehensively "seven by seven," that is, "seven individuals" of all the clean animals rather than "seven pairs" or fourteen. In Hebrew, the duplication of the same adjective (numeral) conveys an adverbial meaning. In Hebrew grammar, when a cardinal number is repeated without conjunction, it corresponds to the single number being repeated and connotes an adverbial meaning.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE NEGATIVE PARTICLE לֹא: AN
EXEGETICAL STUDY OF THE PROHIBITION "THOU SHALT NOT
KINDLE A FIRE IN ANY OF YOUR DWELLINGS ON THE SABBATH
DAY" (EXODUS 35:3)

Researcher: **Milton Thorman Pardosi**, MA, 2005
Advisor: Yoshitaka Kobayashi, Ph.D.

The prohibition "Thou shalt not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day" (Exod 35:3) has been debated among those who observe the Sabbath day. Jews and Samaritans interpreted it as a permanent prohibition for the Sabbath itself is a permanent law. But, Jews are divided into two views. The first view does not allow Jews to kindle and keep a fire burning continually on the Sabbath day. The second view allows Jews to have a fire on the Sabbath, but the fire itself cannot be kindled, refueled or extinguished during the Sabbath hours. The Samaritans do not allow their members to kindle and keep a fire burning on the Sabbath day.

Some Christian scholars have interpreted it as a temporary prohibition and relate it to the time of Israel's wandering in the wilderness for forty years. According to other scholars, however, a prohibition that used לֹא as its negative particle must be considered permanent. Other scholars relate it to the construction of the Tabernacle and its equipment. In this view, it seems that this prohibition was valid less than one year. Others relate it to pagan worship. It is originally directed against cultic practices with fire kindled in worship of foreign Gods. The texts that are quoted in support of this view, however, are out of context.

The main question of the study is about the nature of the negative particle לֹא in the structure: לֹא + Imperfect. The main purpose of the study is to investigate the nature of the negative particle לֹא in the structure: לֹא + Imperfect.

This study resulted to three findings. First, all the verbs in the imperfect form(s), whether Simple Present Future or Simple Present-Future Positive Command, according to the verb and its context, might be classified into three categories of action: momentary, temporary, and permanent actions. Second, the negative particle לֹא in the imperfect form(s), whether Simple Present-Future Negative or Simple Present-Future Negative Command, is only negation of the action indicated by the verbs. It does not function as a sign that the action of the verb in the imperfect form(s) is a permanent action. This is because the time action of the verb in the imperfect form(s) is determined not by the use of the negative particle לֹא, but by the verb and its context. Third, the prohibitionist in Exod 35:3, according to the verb and its context, could be considered temporary though it used לֹא as its negative particle. It might be proven from some other prohibitions in the Pentateuch which used לֹא as their negative particle, but actually they are temporary prohibitions for they are bound with such situations and conditions. When the situations or conditions changed, they might no longer be valid, or might be slightly different in their implementation in the future. Yet, the principles of the Sabbath itself through this prohibition, that the Sabbath is a holy day and a day of rest, still binds those who observe the Sabbath day.

Notes

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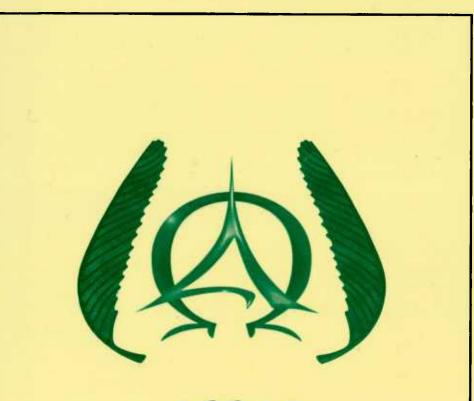## *Theological Seminary*

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