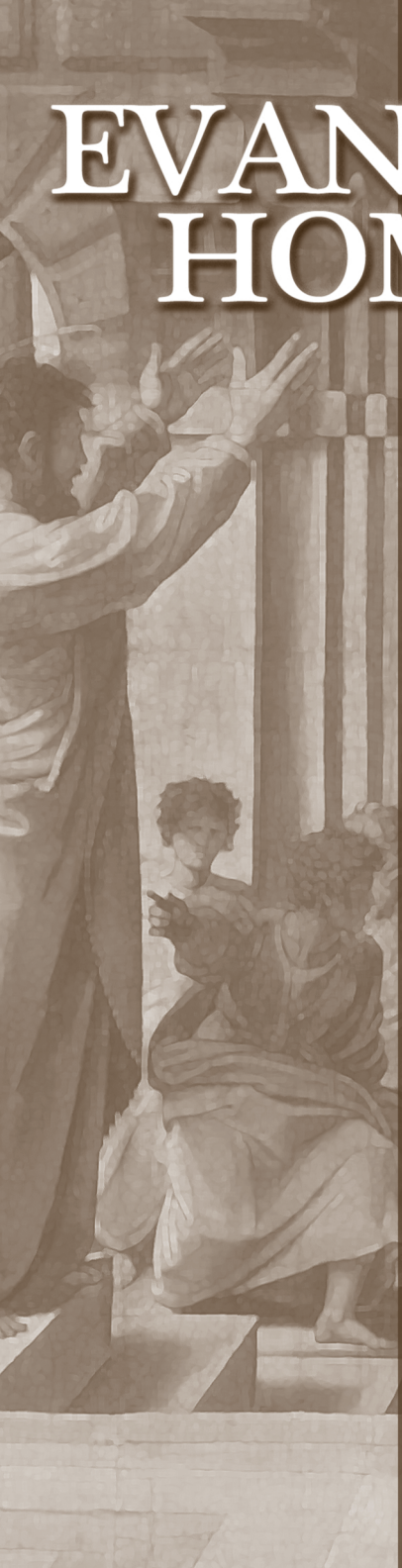

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1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

4. We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.

5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

ANGLES OF PREACHING

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This edition of the *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* is a demonstration of the various angles by which to understand and appreciate the breadth of approaches to the field of homiletics.

The articles are from around the globe, including authors from New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. The diverse contributions cover the use of scripture in the sermons of Martin Lloyd-Jones and W.E. Sangster at the outbreak of World War II, an analysis of theocentric preaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, imagination in expository sermon construction, preaching and teaching and the doctrine of humanity, and evoking and invoking gratitude in preaching. In addition, a guest editorial, and the appreciable gallery of book reviews, which includes a new feature—voices from the past.

The guest editorial is by Russell St. John, reflecting thoughtfully on the concept of preaching sin as an act of love. This is followed with an article by Emma Swai asking the question, "How did preachers Martin Lloyd-Jone and William Sangster use Scripture in their preaching responses to the outbreak of World War II? Swai examines the sermons of these two eminent preachers with the help of Grounded Theory, an analytical inductive approach.

In the next article, John Jefferson Davis ponders, "Why preachers should *not* start at the beginning but instead start at the ending in the teaching and preaching on the doctrine of man." Davis's insights will help any thoughtful homiletician or preacher consider how one commences preaching on the doctrine of man.

Lynne Taylor and Jessica Bent's insightful study of online preaching in New Zealand during a focused-period during the COVID-19 pandemic is helpful in gaining perspective on the elements of theocentric and therapeutic as preached in sermons examined.

Jeremy McClung's helpful study on evoking and invoking gratitude in preaching is intriguing and insightful. McClung was past recipient of the Scott M. Gibson Emerging Scholar Grant. This article is the essay that he submitted for the grant.

Finally, Andrew Page offers an article on imagination in expository preaching. Page argues, "imagination serves an important and necessary role in expository sermon construction." Readers will appreciate the approaches Page explores as he examines the use of imagination in expository preaching.

One can appreciate from the content in this edition of the *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* that there are indeed various angles from which homiletics can be researched—including, historically, biblically, theologically, sociologically, and through psychological analysis, sermon assessment, and so much more. The contours of homiletical research are vast, inviting scholars to explore the field from any number of angles. This is our calling as homileticians, to investigate preaching from various vantage points, thus strengthening the preaching task and ultimately bolstering the church, bringing honor to Christ.

REFLECTIONS ON PREACHING SIN AS AN ACT OF LOVE

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INTRODUCTION

I still recall the first time I sang the hymn, *God, Be Merciful to Me*. The opening words of the third verse declare, "I am evil, born in sin." As soon as the words left my mouth, my soul balked, accusing the hymnist of hyperbole, even harshness. Sinful? Yes. Evil? Hardly. But the word lingered, knocking about the back of my mind, humbling me, as my conscience questioned my reaction. "Why not call you evil? What part of you shines as holy as God? Does your heart not also display the corruption of Adam, your father?" Soon, self-defense turned to self-examination, accusation to prayer, and defiance to repentance. I too think evil, speak evil, do evil. If "out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, [and] slander" (Matthew 15:19), then my heart—the core of my being—is, in fact, evil. The stark, ugly truth, though hard to hear, forged in me deeper awareness of my own sin, and thus deeper appreciation for the Christ who overcomes it.

Would you ever stand in the pulpit and say to your sheep, "You are evil, born in sin?" My experience with *God, Be Merciful to Me* has, over time, affected not only my awareness of the depths of my own sin, but also the manner in which I preach about sin. I have grown more direct, more probing, more willing to say hard things. The world, and some Christians with it, label

preaching about sin "unloving." But I have come to see that preaching the stark reality of sin, so far from comprising a loveless act, represents instead a profound act of love.

CULTIVATING a SENSE of SIN

Against a Five Dollar "Savior"

Only a sinner needs a savior. Only a debtor needs forgiveness. Only a prisoner needs a ransom. If the sheep to whom I speak do not own themselves as sinners, they will not sense their need for their Savior. If they do not own themselves as debtors, they will not sense their need for forgiveness. If they do not own themselves as prisoners, they will not sense their need for ransom. Jesus made this truth explicit when he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32). His parable of the two debtors builds upon this truth:

> "A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly" (Luke 7:41-43).

If you possess five dollars' worth of sin, you possess a five-dollar savior. If, however, your debt stands mountainous, infinite, and eternal, then your Savior looms mighty indeed in your sight. When, moreover, the Scripture declares that Jesus "gave his life as a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:6), it teaches that every unsaved person to whom you preach languishes in bondage, awaiting a Redeemer to offer the ransom price of freedom. That price transcends the ability of any sinner to pay, for as Peter declares, "[Y]ou were ransomed," not "with perishable things such as

silver or gold," or anything else that a sinner has to offer, "but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Big Forgiveness, Bigger Love

If "he who is forgiven little loves little" (Luke 7:47), then faithful preaching of the doctrine, depth, and depravity—of the evil of human sin—helps your sheep to know that they, in Christ, have been forgiven much indeed. And he who is forgiven much, loves much. Preaching sin, as an act of love *for* the sheep, fosters greater love *from* the sheep.

PAUL and HEROD AGRIPPA II

Chief of Sinners

The apostle Paul imbibed this truth, not only in his theology, but also in his practice of ministry—in his preaching. The same Paul who declared that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), likewise described himself as the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15), applying his theology of sin to his personal history of sin. Paul understood that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), and this conviction informed the way he ministered. Luke records an episode in Paul's life that demonstrates the manner in which Paul preached sin directly and without diminution. This episode strikes me deeply, for the sin Paul preached was *his own*.

In Acts 26 Paul stood before King Herod Agrippa II, ostensibly to refute false accusations that Jewish authorities had leveled against him (Acts 26:2-3), but Paul harbored other ambitions. He desired not so much to exonerate himself as to proclaim his Savior. But rather than establishing his theological credentials, rather than reviewing for Agrippa his apostolic *bona fides*, Paul began by describing his sin:

> I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And I did so in

> Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities (Acts 26:9-11).

So far from skirting over his past or attempting minimize his crimes, Paul instead purposefully accentuated his iniquities, recounting not only his sinful actions, but also his wicked goals and unchecked wrath against the Church. Why?

Chief of Sufferers

After decades of faithful service to Christ, why did Paul not simply gloss over the less seemly moments of his past? After all, the persecutions Paul had perpetrated against the nascent Church occurred before Paul professed faith in Christ, before he left his pharisaical way of life, and before he endured "far more imprisonments, with countless beatings," for the sake of Christ, such that he was "often near death" (2 Corinthians 11:23). Since his days of "raging fury" (Acts 26:11) against the Church, Paul had suffered enormous misery for the sake of Christ:

> Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure (2 Corinthians 11:24-27).

Why, then, magnify his sin rather than magnifying his ministerial labors, his ecclesiastical accomplishments, or his apostolic sufferings?

Agrippa, in the Grippa' Sin

Maybe it helps to understand a bit more about the man to whom Paul spoke. Herod Agrippa II was great-grandson to Herod the Great, who had not only murdered the baby boys of Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16), but also murdered his own son, Aristobulus,[1] who was Herod Agrippa II's grandfather.[2] Herod Agrippa II's great-uncle, Herod Antipas, whom Jesus dubbed "that fox" (Luke 13:32), had beheaded John the Baptist (Mark 6:27). Herod Agrippa I, who was Herod Agrippa II's father, murdered James, the son of Zebedee (Acts 12:2), and later suffered death by devouring worms, for "did not give glory to God" (Acts 12:23). Although nominally Jewish,[3] the Herodian family tree reeked of incest and intrigue, of imperial politics and pagan values, and Herod Agrippa II offered little exception to the character of his family.[4] His given name was Marcus Julius Agrippa,[5] and his allegiance lay with Rome, not Judea. When the Jewish people rebelled against Rome in AD66, Agrippa fled Jerusalem, supporting the armies of Rome[6] as they conquered Judea, razed Jerusalem, and enslaved the Jewish people. Throughout his lifetime, rumors hounded Agrippa of an ongoing incestuous relationship with his sister, Bernice.[7] Suffice it to say that Herod Agrippa II was no son of Abraham.

To this man, Paul revealed the truth of his own sinfulness, depravity, and naked wickedness, holding nothing back. And the implication seems clear. It is as though Paul says, "If I can be washed of my sin, Agrippa, so can you. If I can change and serve this Christ, so can you. If I can acknowledge my sin and seek the Savior, so can you. If you think, even for a moment, that I'm some Christian goody-goody, who doesn't understand what it means to be ruthless, to employ violence for personal gain, or to murder innocent people, you're wrong." Paul magnified the enormity of his own sin, for by so doing, he magnified all the more the

surpassing mercy of Christ in overcoming it. He proclaimed the unveiled sinfulness of sin, using himself as Exhibit A, not only to convict Agrippa, but also to teach him that no sinner stands beyond the reach of Christ's mercy. Not even Herod Agrippa II.

YOU and YOUR SHEEP

Preaching Sin

Not every man or woman in your congregation has committed atrocities like Agrippa, but every human heart is atrocious (Jeremiah 17:9). And although none of us is as wicked as we could be, none of us has escaped the depravity and corruption of original sin (Psalm 51:5). Even the most sanctified Christians "were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another" (Titus 3:3). The Word of God profits by means of reproof and correction as much as by teaching and training (2 Timothy 3:16), and every preacher must strive to testify along with Paul, "I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable" (Acts 20:20).

Big Sin, Bigger Savior

So, dear preacher, preach sin. Expose its full wickedness. Help your sheep to see the sin in their own actions and inactions, words, thoughts, attitudes, desires, and even heart motivations. Tell them that every sin committed against an infinite and eternal God demands an infinite and eternal punishment (James 2:10). Instruct them that they commit no sin so small but that it merits the "eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41), while their acts of devotion never serve Christ so fully that they merit commendation much less salvation (Luke 17:10).

If you proclaim Christ but not sin, you proclaim *a* savior who comes to forgive a five-dollar debt, to heal a common cold, or to ransom a people who never suffered real bondage in the first place. But when you preach sin as an act of love, you

proclaim *the* Savior who comes to forgive a five hundred trillion-dollar debt, to heal an incurable, fatal malady, and to ransom a people who suffered eternal bondage to sin and its awful wages.

Simply put, if I minimize sin, I minimize the mercy of Christ in overcoming sin, but when I offer full weight to the enormity, the criminality, the perversity, the rebellion, and the misery of sin, I magnify all the more the mercy of Christ in overcoming it. In order fully to exalt Jesus Christ as Savior, I must put sin under a microscope, expose it, and proclaim it in all its ugliness, it's wickedness—even its *evil*—in order to show the greater beauty of Christ our Savior.

CONCLUSION

I *am* evil, born in sin. The hymnist wasn't exaggerating. But Christ saves evil people like me, like you, like our sheep. I urge you to join me in preaching sin boldly, clearly, and without equivocation, for preaching sin is an act of *love*.

NOTES

1. F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (New York: Doubleday, 1971), 29.
2. H. W. Hoehner, "Herod," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Volume 2*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 693.
3. Herod the Great's second wife, Mariamme, was a princess of the Jewish Hasmonean dynasty, and thus the Jewish people considered Aristobulous, Herod Agrippa I, and Herod Agrippa II Jewish leaders. See Bruce, *History*, 22, and Hoehner, "Herod," 689.
4. J. A. Alexander, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Edinburgh, UK: Banner of Truth, 1963), 392; and Derek W. H. Thomas, *Acts* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011), 689.
5. F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 456.
6. Hoehner, "Herod," 697.
7. John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church & the World* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity), 368.

HOW DID LLOYD-JONES AND SANGSTER USE SCRIPTURE IN THEIR PREACHING RESPONSES TO THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR II? TRIALLING ANALYTICAL APPROACHES TO THE HOMILETICAL USE OF SCRIPTURE

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ABSTRACT

Both D. M. Lloyd-Jones and W. E. Sangster are distinguished figures in evangelical history, looked to as examples of men who used their preaching to respond to the issues of their day, in particular the outbreak of World War Two. Their sermons in response to this traumatic event were published towards the end of 1939, but the preachers' collections show an immediate disparity in the amount of Scripture being used. Analysing the use of Scripture is key when looking at homiletical exemplars in terms of learning from them. By the nature of any choices being both linguistic and theological, any approach must be interdisciplinary. So, in order to move towards establishing a methodology for analyzing how Scripture is used within the sermon, this article trials different methods to assess which may or may not be useful in constructing a way of systematically learning from successful preachers of the past.

Using the example of Grounded Theory, which advocates the creation of inductive categories, a new framework enabling analysis of the use of Scripture within a sermon has been created, Scriptural Categorization Analytics, and is applied to the sermon collections of Sangster and Lloyd-Jones in order to investigate the

effectiveness of this technique as a tool for studying the use of the Bible within sermons.

INTRODUCTION

If modern preaching is to be "well informed" with "the proper ingredients,"[1] then it not only needs to be aware of current cultural situations, but also have a sense of ecclesial and homiletic history, an awareness of what has gone before. "Preaching history is immensely rich, and preachers can learn from each other;"[2] if preaching, or at least the preparation of and for preaching, "can indeed be learned," then it is good practice to reflect on the sermons of others.[3]

Following on from the assertion that "Faithful engagement with Scripture is a standard by which preaching should be measured,"[4] then the use of Scripture is, or at least should be, key to any sermon preached within the church. That is not to define how Scripture is used, other than to assert Scripture should be present in some form.

This study originated from the observation that Scripture, as demonstrated by the quotation of or reference to biblical passages, did not seem to be overtly present in some of the sermons published in William Edwin Sangster's *These Things Abide*,[5] sermons delivered and published in the autumn of 1939, in response to the outbreak of World War Two. According to Sangster's own treatise on homiletics, *Power in Preaching*, preaching needed to be "Based squarely on the Bible,"[6] raising the issue of how Scripture, when present, is used within Sangster's sermon collection.

Currently, there appears to be no existing method by which to analyse scriptural usage within a sermon. This study attempts to find a way to construct that analysis, by experimenting with ideas from different disciplines. In order to do this effectively, so that any method may be transferred and used to analyse sermons by other preachers, Sangster's sermons cannot be looked at in isolation; any methods need to also be

trialled with a preacher who overtly uses Scripture more frequently.

Sangster's contemporary, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones,[7] also published a collection of sermons at the outbreak of World War Two, *Why Does God Allow War?*[8] Not only were both collections of addresses originally presented and published against the same historical backdrop, Lloyd-Jones and Sangster preached in the same geographical area of London.[9]

According to their published sermons, Sangster and Lloyd-Jones apparently displayed very different approaches to the crisis, especially with regards to their use of Scripture within those homiletic responses. One obvious contrast, on a first reading of *Why does God Allow War?* and *These Things Abide*, is the evident use of Scripture, if Scripture is purely counted to be the written, or printed, Bible. Lloyd-Jones uses a large number of references and quotations, with Sangster using demonstrably less. The difference is so stark, that a modern reader cannot help but wonder why this is the case.

Often what is written about Scripture and homiletics focuses on either the importance of Scripture to preaching, or comments on generalities regarding usage, such as for exposition. Scholarship seems to ignore how the Bible is used linguistically and the purposes for which those linguistic choices are made. From trialling different methods, it is hoped that this study will provide some building blocks to facilitate this area of study.

Any study of preaching "should focus on the actual event;"[10] if preaching is a "multifaceted" spiritual event, then there are multiple "ingredients" and variables, including the congregation, the preacher, the sermon itself, and "the presence of Christ."[11] In essence, any retrospective analysis of a preaching event can really only focus on the sermon as constructed and preserved for publication. This means that, out of necessity, the sermons in this study have to be treated "as written texts produced by the participating preachers"[12] for the purpose of

analysis, despite being a text created for the purpose of preaching to a listening audience.

What this study aims to do is quantify where Scripture is used and categorise how, by using the example of approaches which initiate inductive categories from the data being analysed. Inductive categories from the sermon corpora will be created and, in so doing, construct an analytical framework of how Scripture is being used, bridging the gap between quantitative and qualitative through the closer examination of specific examples.

The identification, categorisation and analysis of Scripture usage raises the issue of whether a sermon can be biblical if Scripture is not quotationally present; this is, perhaps, a wider issue than can be tackled here, but by contrasting two contextually equivalent preachers, it is possible to demonstrate the usefulness of an analytical framework for evaluating biblical usage within a sermon. Any analytical framework may then potentially be used outside of the context in which it is constructed.

CORPUS LINGUISTICS AND SCRIPTURAL IDEOLOGY

Where sermons have been analysed as a corpus previously, such as by Aleksandra Bizjak Končar in 2008, the focus has been on rhetorical analysis, studying linguistic features and rhetorical units.[13] Methods of communication, not usage of Scripture, have been investigated. However, corpus linguistics, as an approach, has the potential to profile a preacher and show their position on Scripture, creating a foundation for the specific analysis of how overt Scripture is used.

If language use reflects ideology, whether consciously or unconsciously, then the frequency of divine reference should reflect doctrinal beliefs, since corpus linguistics can show "how *x* is talked about"[14] if "*x*" were to refer to the divine. If the corpus linguistics data matches the doctrinal expectations for Sangster

and Lloyd-Jones, then it is reasonable to suggest that any corpus linguistics data regarding Scripture would be similarly valid.

For the purposes of this study, in that it is functioning as a test of the corpus linguistics approach, divine terminology will be limited to references to God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit using easily identifiable vocabulary. This is not all-encompassing, as there will inevitably be other references, for example to God using "He," but by using a list of obvious divine terminology the test data will show whether the approach can identify, through language, the doctrinal standpoints of Sangster and Lloyd-Jones, which are already known.

	Sangster		Lloyd-Jones	
References	315	[0.8%]	489	[1.8%]
God	206	65%	411	84%
Almighty*	5		1	
Lord	15	5%	32	7%
Jesus	24	8%	10	2%
Christ	42	13%	19	4%
Son*	1		10	2%
Spirit*	3		5	
Cross*	19	6%	1	

*in reference to Jesus, God, Holy Spirit

A word list for each corpus was created in order to obtain quantitative data regarding the specified divine terminology; where there was potential as to an alternate meaning, a concordance was created and used to verify the usage being analysed. Numeric data for word usage was then used and compared to the total word count for each corpus, to produce a percentage value for divine reference within the sermons of each preacher, allowing the disparity in word count between Lloyd-Jones and Sangster to be somewhat negated; these are presented within square brackets.

Immediately it becomes evident that, despite a larger word count, Lloyd-Jones makes proportionately more direct reference to the divine within his sermons. Although both refer to "God" more than to "Jesus," Sangster refers to "Jesus" and "Christ" to a much higher degree: 21% of Sangster's divine references and to "Jesus" and "Christ" compared to 6% of Lloyd-Jones', 8% if "Son" is included. Perhaps surprisingly, the cross is missing from Lloyd-Jones' preaching, at least from a linguistic perspective.

Lloyd-Jones' and Sangster's doctrinal positions are well-known. As a Calvinist, Lloyd-Jones believed in the total sovereignty of God. With over eighty percent of his references to divinity being to God, the linguistic data from Lloyd-Jones' sermons reflects the Reformed perspective of a divine hierarchy, a position purporting that "The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding" and "the Son is eternally begotten of the Father."[15] According to Lloyd-Jones himself, "Evangelistic preaching worthy of the name starts with God and with a declaration concerning His being and power and glory."[16] It does not, therefore, seem surprising that "God" is the most frequent of Lloyd-Jones' references to the divine, by a substantial margin.

As a Wesleyan Methodist, Sangster was much more focused on the centrality of salvation and the importance of faith in Christ. This is also reflected in the data, particularly with the prominence of Jesus Christ; the importance of God is not denied, but "Jesus," "Christ" and the "Cross" form 27% of Sangster's divine reference, noticeably including key aspects of salvation and a less hierarchical version of the Trinity. Sangster's language reflects a more soteriological perspective.

Quantitative data regarding the use of divine reference vocabulary suggests that, as an approach, corpus linguistics can indeed propose doctrinal positions from linguistic usage. Both preachers outlined, in their later treatises on preaching, that they felt sermons should be "based squarely in the Bible"[17] and contain "the message of the Bible."[18] It would be logical to then assume that both would practice biblical preaching and that Scripture

would feature heavily in their sermons. From a linguistic perspective, those relatively educated listeners would have expected both quoted scriptural references and references to the Bible itself.

It is impractical to use the word lists and concordance features of a corpus linguistics approach to identify biblical quotations and references. However, by creating a vocabulary list for biblical reference, similar to the one created earlier for divine reference, it is possible to look to corpus linguistics data for an indication as to the importance of the Bible as Scripture for each of Sangster and Lloyd-Jones. To this purpose, a scriptural reference vocabulary list has been used which includes: "Scripture," "Bible," "Gospel," "Testament," "Epistle" and "Word." In the case of "Word," the meaning was checked against a created concordance to verify that it referred to Scripture. Again, the vocabulary list being used is not all-encompassing, but the focus of this approach is to look for an indication of ideology as exhibited by language, something that will always be a suggestion needing to be looked at from other angles and using other approaches.

	Sangster	Lloyd-Jones
Scripture	1	4
Bible	6	34
Gospel	7	14
Testament	9	23
Epistle	2	4
word*	14*	23*
*checked against concordance re possible variance in meaning		

In five sermons, Lloyd-Jones refers to Scripture as an entity over a hundred times, whereas Sangster, in his fifteen

sermons, contains less than forty such references. It is quite a substantial difference which would, on the surface, suggest that Lloyd-Jones gave more importance over to Scripture. The Westminster Confession refers to "the infallible truth and divine authority" of Scripture, that it "ought to be believed, and obeyed" because "it is the Word of God."[19] As a Calvinist, this was Lloyd-Jones' standard; he adhered to Calvin's notion that without Scripture "there can be no faith."[20] Lloyd-Jones' language and objective reference to the Bible certainly reflects its centrality, for him, within the sermon and supports the assertion that the written Bible was "the Word of God."

By contrast, the data would suggest that Sangster did not place as much importance on the Bible, but this may well be a case of each preacher having a different focus for their preaching. For Sangster, rather than being a written word, "the Gospel is a meeting of God and man"[21] so if he had "to take a sublime truth and make it plain"[22] a sermon could still contain the Bible's message without making explicit reference to the written word; he defined what a sermon was in relation to Scripture using the words of Bernard Manning—"A manifestation of the Incarnate Word, from the Written Word, by the spoken word."[23] Christ, as "the Incarnate Word" was of primary importance, as was God meeting with man, so preaching could be legitimate without mentioning the Bible, as long as it was "honestly related" to it.[24] A lack of mentioning the entity of the Bible does not prove Sangster did not view the Bible as essential, more that he did not regard the explicit reference to it to be essential.

THE HOMILETICIAL LINGUISTIC USE OF SCRIPTURE BY LLOYD-JONES

Lloyd-Jones was famous as an expository preacher, one who practiced a "verse-by-verse approach."[25] He attempted "to present and apply the truths of a specific biblical passage"[26] and in *Why Does God Allow War?* each sermon in prefaced by verse which is purported to be the text of the sermon that follows,

though other verses tend to be brought in throughout. Although Lloyd-Jones' sermons are presented as being focused on a single text, realistically they include so many different texts that they are more accurately described as expository sermon "based on…a doctrine linked to various texts."[27]

In order to identify where Scripture is used, it is necessary to employ three simple linguistic labels: quotation, paraphrase and reference. "Quotation" will be used where Scripture is quoted verbatim, "paraphrase" where a person, event or saying from Scripture is described or summarised using the preacher's own words, and "reference" where a person, event or saying from Scripture is referred to in passing, possibly as part of a discussion or exegesis. Scriptural use has been identified, counted and categorised into one of these three groups. Each of these groups will need to be further sub-divided, but at this point of initial analysis, the three labels will suffice in providing an overview.

"Hymns" are counted, where they have been directly quoted, as a point of interests; in the case of Sangster they are often quoted instead of Scripture and according to Lloyd-Jones' standpoint Scripture alone should be preached within a sermon.

	Scripture: quotation	Scripture: paraphrase	Scripture: reference	Hymns
Sermon 1: "Man in the Presence of God"	34 [9]	4 [1]	7	1
Sermon 2: "Facing the Unexpected"	13 [3]	-	38 [36]	2
Sermon 3: "The Mystery of God's Ways"	23 [4]	1	7 [4]	1

Sermon 4: "Why Does God Allow War?"	14 [4]	3 [1]	2	-
Sermon 5: "The Final Answer to All Our Questions"	47 [26]	3 [1]	10 [2]	-

[Square brackets indicate repetition]

As evidenced by the total occurrences of Scripture (45:51:31:19:60), Lloyd-Jones used Scripture extensively within all of his sermons. He rarely paraphrased and did not simply refer to Scripture without it being extensively quoted. The data appears to present an anomaly to this hypothesis in "Facing the Unexpected," however almost all of these references are to Manoah and his wife, as Lloyd-Jones pursues an expository discussion of the characters in Judges 13.22-23, quoted repeatedly in the sermon.

Despite a stated belief that nothing should be quoted except the Bible itself, Lloyd-Jones does quote hymns in three of his sermons. This indicates that either he was not as firm in his viewpoint as *Preaching and Preachers* suggests, or that he later changed his approach to adopt a stricter line.

LLOYD-JONES AND BIBLE QUOTATIONS

On 24th October 1961, Lloyd-Jones addressed the National Bible Rally at the Royal Albert Hall in London and stated that it was "the standard and the language, the dignity and the glory of the old Authorized Version" which should be preached.[28] This appears to be a tenet he adhered to during his earlier preaching career also; every biblical quotation found in *Why Does God Allow War?* is from the Authorized (King James) Version. A belief in the

ability of the authority of the Bible to speak for itself appears to be illustrated when Lloyd-Jones, an advocate of expository sermons, does not explain key quotations. For example, in "The Mystery of God's Ways" he introduces 1 Peter 5.6-7 with "as Peter put it so perfectly…" and does not follow it with additional discussion, merely a qualifying statement imitating the language of the quotation, "Never doubt that he careth."[29]

Interestingly, despite extolling the authority of the Authorized Version, Lloyd-Jones was not always averse to "tweaking" the translation where he felt it to be appropriate; often this would be indicated, such as "the hope of [Christ's calling]" when using Ephesians 1.18,[30] but this was not always the case. In "The Mystery of God's Ways" he removes "and seducers" from 2 Timothy 3.13, simply replacing the words with an ellipsis.[31] Occasionally verses are quoted with words in a different order, as with Hebrews 11.13 in "The Final Answer to All Our Questions,"[32] or similar verses are merged but presented as one quotation, Psalm 107.6,13 in "Why Does God Allow War?"[33] This, though, is fairly unusual and normally Lloyd-Jones' scriptural quotations appear word for word as they would in the Authorized Version.

This is not to say that Lloyd-Jones always quoted the whole of a verse. Sometimes he included all of a piece of text, such as Matthew 24.6-7,[34] but Lloyd-Jones often simply picked out the section of the quotation which he wanted to use, weaving biblical phrases like "worse and worse" (2 Timothy 3.13)[35] into his sentences. Even with the occasional "tweak" or mistake, such as labelling Matthew 5.44 as the non-existent 'Matthew 6.44,'"[36] Lloyd-Jones' biblical quotations were always referenced.

The variation in Lloyd-Jones' use of quotation, both in the use of whole or sampled quotations, indicates that further analysis is needed to identify the purposes behind why quotations were either used in full or included as phrases within Lloyd-Jones' sentences, instead of his own words. In each case, both separated and integrated quotations were used in different ways.

THE HOMILETICAL LINGUISTIC USE OF SCRIPTURE BY SANGSTER

For Sangster, according to *The Craft of the Sermon*, legitimate use of Scripture was for exposition, as a starting point, or as a motto for the message.[37] Yet, as already discussed, some of his sermons contained no scriptural reference at all. Readability disputes that this was for reasons of linguistic accessibility, but comprehensibility is obviously about more than language. Centrality of the biblical message does not necessarily translate as centrality of the Written Word and if, for Sangster, "the Word" is more than what is printed in the Bible, it is unsurprising that there is less overt Scripture within *These Things Abide*.

For clarity, the same three linguistic labels of quotation, paraphrase and reference will be used to initially categorise scriptural reference. As previously, "quotation" will be used where Scripture is quoted verbatim, "paraphrase" where a person, event or saying from Scripture is described or summarised, using the preacher's own words, and "reference" where a person, event or saying from Scripture is referred to in passing, possibly as part of a discussion or exegesis. Hymns are again counted where they have been directly quoted, since they are treated by Sangster as effectively equivalent to Scripture.

	Scripture: quotation	Scripture: paraphrase	Scripture: reference	Hymns
Sermon 1: "When Oranges Are More Than Diamonds"	-	-	-	5
Sermon 2: "Star-Light On The Shadowed Way"	-	-	1	1

Sermon 3: "Gold From Dross"	7 [1]	1	4 [2]	5
Sermon 4: "God Forgive Us!"	1	-	-	-
Sermon 5: "When Hope is Dead - Hope On!"	5	-	7	1
Sermon 6: "Convictions - Not Opinions!"	-	-	-	2
Sermon 7: "Good Without God"	6	1	7	0
Sermon 8: "The Pledge of Those Glorious Scars"	10 [6]	4 [1]	11 [2]	3
Sermon 9: "Secret Sorrows"	-	-	-	0
Sermon 10: "Purifying the Atmosphere"	-	1	-	0
Sermon 11: "Drunk and Mad"	3	1	2	1
Sermon 12: "Does God Have Favourites?"	4	2	35 [17]	2
Sermon 13: "All Is Not Lost	1	-	-	0

Whilst We Have Courage"				
Sermon 14: "The Fear of Death"	8 [2]	-	1	4
Sermon 15: "And After Death - What?"	14 [4]	1 [1]*	4	4

[Square brackets indicate repetition]
*Sangster's paraphrase of John 14.2 directly follows his quotation of the verse itself, effectively repeating it but in Sangster's own words.[38]

The data on Sangster's scriptural usage clearly shows less overt preaching of the written Bible itself. Three of Sangster's sermons do not include Scripture, with "Star-Light on the Shadowed Way" only including a single reference within the question "What price will Moloch demand ere this lesson be fully learned?"[39] and "God Forgive Us" only including a version of Psalm 119.67 because it is embedded in a quotation from "the late Bishop of Durham."[40] Effectively a third of the corpus contains no overt use of Scripture; within the rest, only "The Pledge of Those Glorious Scars" and "After Death—What?" are numerically comparable with Lloyd-Jones. The number of references in "Does God Have Favourites?" distorts the data somewhat, because they are simply lists of groups of people, many in repetition, to illustrate that these peoples no longer existed, unlike the Israelites.

Interestingly, the lack of repetition appears to contribute to lower instances of scriptural usage. The exception to this is in "The Pledge of Those Glorious Scars;" Sangster's focus on "graven"[41] is reflected by the repetition of Isaiah 49.16.

Sangster did use Scripture; he quoted, paraphrased and referenced it, but the sermons in *These Things Abide* were certainly not expository. He told stories more than he overtly preached the

written words of the Bible. Whilst Lloyd-Jones may have criticised Sangster for his apparent lack of scriptural usage and non-expository style of preaching, especially as exemplified in this corpus, it is possible to assert since "other types of preaching that proclaim the biblical truth are certainly valid and valuable"[42] and Sangster does not contradict Scripture, just uses it less overtly, *These Things Abide* can still be considered "biblical." Indeed, the presence of Scripture in sermons that are not expository suggests its overt usage can still be analysed even when the presence of overt Scripture is not central to the style of preaching being considered.

SANGSTER AND BIBLE QUOTATIONS

The Bible was important to Sangster as "the story of God's dealing with man and man's experience of God"[43] but he took the perspective that it was the "source-book" for faith; whether someone specifically believed it to be the Word of God, or held it to contain the Word of God, was not particularly important. This more liberal attitude is reflected in his use of bible quotations.

Sangster, when he did quote Scripture, varied in which translation he chose. Often Scripture appears in the King James Version, but equally present is the American Standard Version. Exactly which translation Sangster chose to use is not always clear since, much more than Lloyd-Jones, he "tweaked" translations by taking out words or seemed to "merge" several translations together. Matthew 6.20 appears in "Does God Have Favourites?" without the words "for yourselves,"[44] possibly because Sangster discusses communities directly before the quotation and did not wish for his audience to take the Scripture as individually focused. He quotes Mark 2.5 in "The Fear of Death" as "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee,"[45] wanting the present tense of the ASV but the direct "thee" from the KJV. Tense is an interesting issue in Sangster's biblical quotations, something he often adjusts. The ASV and KJV both translate Psalm 73.22 as "I was a beast before Thee;" Sangster, albeit prefaced by "one must

borrow the language of the Psalmist," presents the quotation as "I am a beast before thee."[46] Changing the tense of the biblical quotation makes it present and more immediate for the sermon's audience. Whereas Lloyd-Jones identified and referenced every biblical quotation, Sangster rarely references and does not always even demarcate his. In some cases, scriptural quotations are presented but are not identifiable. "Daughter, thy purity is ever before Me" is quoted as God's words but the phrase does not appear to exist in biblical translations used by Sangster; it does, though, appear similarly quoted in a 1954 American newspaper.[47] The quotation is not unbiblical, after all it mirrors Mark 2.5 as quoted in the same sermon, but it seems as if Sangster is quoting what he sees as the biblical message, rather than quoting Scripture. Similarly, Sangster presents summaries of Scripture as quotations. For example, in "Good without God," Micah 6.6-8 is paraphrased as an apparent quotation: "Burnt offerings will not placate God," says Micah.'[48]

When quotations are used by Sangster, they can often be found grouped together. Whether this be around Paul making "Faith, Hope and Love, the cardinal virtues of Christendom" through various epistle quotations in "When Hope is Dead—Hope On!"[49] or to briefly illustrate the difference between "sleep" and "death" by using the words of Jesus, in "And After Death—What?"[50] or to emphasise the agreement between prophets on the holiness of God, in "Good Without God"[51] Sangster always seems to have a definite purpose in his use of scriptural quotations.

SANGSTER AND ALTERNATIVE POINTS OF REFERENCE

Sangster's argument for the validity of sermons which did not contain Scripture but were still in harmony with it, came from the idea that if people did not believe in the Bible then using Scripture would not create conviction.[52] If the Bible was not necessarily an acknowledged source of authority for his congregation and did not "deal in any direct way with many ethical and social problems" affecting that congregation,[53]

Sangster looked to find other references with which he could communicate biblical truth.

For many preachers, "the Bible remains the absolute authority for salvation even though it is not the only source of truth,"[54] but for Sangster "that which can clarify the Word of God, and carry conviction to a hesitating mind; that which can banish doubt and remove impediments from frustrated faith, is not to be airily set aside by anyone."[55] As illustrated by previous data, hymns provided a valuable reference resource for Sangster in his preaching. Every hymn Sangster quotes appears in the 1933 Methodist Hymn Book, which states in its introduction that "Methodism has always been able to sing its creed."[56] For Sangster and his contemporaries, the hymnal was "more than a utilitarian religious songbook; it [was] a theologically-conceived manual for Christian living"[57] so quoting hymns would have been like quoting from an expression of the Bible and of its doctrine. Sangster himself believed that hymn writing required "spiritual discernment."[58] Hymns are simple, direct and "always, at least, vaguely familiar;" they can be grasped by listeners and possibly convey additional meaning by subsequent singing.[59]

The sermons in *These Things Abide* are not limited to religious points of reference; secular and cultural points of reference pervade Sangster's sermons. To analyse this in detail is beyond the remit of this study, but the most effective demonstration of this is "When Oranges Are More Than Diamonds," the first sermon in *These Things Abide*. Sangster, as indicated previously, does not mention Scripture in this particular sermon. Instead, he quotes hymns and literature, to be precise *The Hound of Heaven* by Frances Thompson,[60] because "there are sublime moments in preaching when the right poetic quotation can do what no prose can achieve."[61] The familiarity Sangster uses to connect with his audience is not through Scripture, but through classic novels and historical or cultural figures. In this regard, Sangster offended Lloyd-Jones, who believed that "A sermon is meant to be a proclamation of the truth of God as mediated through the preacher. People do not

want to listen to a string of quotations of what other people have thought and said."[62]

Different approaches to referencing Scripture, including quotation, on a very practical level prove that there is more to analyse than simply how that Scripture is referenced. Different reference forms can be employed for a variety of purposes, purposes which a preacher may deliberately chose to employ.

SCRIPTURAL CATEGORISATION ANAYTICS— CREATING AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Purely "empirical data can…be deceptive"[63] and a more qualitative analysis of how Scripture is used is necessary to begin to comparatively assess how Lloyd-Jones and Sangster employ Scripture with their message. In order to reach this point, the empirical data gathered so far regarding that usage needs further categorisation. However, categories beyond that of "quotation," "paraphrase" and "reference" for the utilisation of an alternative source, such as Scripture, within a sermon text are not available. In order to further analyse in greater detail, therefore, new categories need to be devised; in order that these new categories specifically apply to the corpora of Lloyd-Jones' and Sangster's sermons, they need to be inductively created, effectively derived from the corpora as a collective.

The example of inductive categorisation can be found in the grounded theory approach. Although developed in the field of Sociology, it has been applied in empirical homiletics with regards to sermons. For example, H. J. C. Pieterse's study into the sermons with Matthew 25.31-46 as a sermon text, within the Dutch Reformed Church and the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa, looked into how that issue of poverty was approached. Pieterse then went on to categorise the communication of "how" the poor could be cared for, from the perspective of a "research gap" in homiletic literature whereby it was stated that the poor should be cared for but without an analysis of "how."[64] Pieterse, though, was focused on how

poverty was discussed, using the sermon text as a way of selecting the corpora of sermons,[65] not specifically on how Scripture in general was being used.

Fundamentally, to use Theo Pleizier's terminology, the homiletic use of grounded theory looks to label "pieces of interviews to capture analytic ideas."[66] Pleizier reformulates the standard sociological enquiry questions to incorporate pre-theoretical assumptions that "religious realities can be studied empirically" and that the hearing of a sermon involves "homiletic interaction" and "divine-human dynamics."[67] These questions are as follows:

- What is relevant in the data for a homiletical study?
- What (property of a) socio-religious category is indicated in the data?
- What is religiously going on in the data?

Given that previous homiletic analysis using a grounded theory approach utilises a data set that included interviews, from listeners following a sermon, using grounded theory to analyse published sermons where those interviews are not available is practically impossible. However, the example of grounded theory in forming categories as they emerge from the data[68] allows for a necessarily inductive approach, given the lack of a pre-existing analytical framework for the practical linguistic usage of Scripture within sermons.

In reference to Pleizier's first question, regarding what is relevant in the data for study, the fact that the substantial disparity in the amount of explicit scriptural usage, between Lloyd-Jones and Sangster, is obvious to a reader suggests that scriptural usage should be a focus of investigation. His second and third questions are not relevant to this particular project; since the corpus being analysed consists purely of published sermon texts and the focus is on the use of Scripture, the socio-religious element cannot be analysed in detail. Additionally, given that the focus is on how Scripture is being used and not on

the effect of that usage, this project cannot, therefore, tackle the question of what is religiously going on for the hearer of any of the sermons. All that can be suggested is what the preacher is attempting to use Scripture for.

From a linguistic perspective, the empirical data shows a difference in each preacher's practical use of Scripture, in whether presented Scripture is quoted, paraphrased or simply referenced, but this does not propose any answer as to each preacher's purposes in using Scripture. Each practical linguistic category needs to be divided into categories identifying the preacher's purpose in using Scripture linguistically in that way. This can only be done inductively, since the labels are not already available, therefore making at least this aspect of a grounded theory relevant. "Categorization and classification…are probably the most fundamental operations in thinking and language;"[69] there needs to be a method of sorting.

Linguistically, quotations can be positioned within the language of the text or separated from the writer's own words. Integrated quotations consist of a single word or short phrase used within a preacher's own sentence, whereas separated quotations tend to be full sentences or verses from Scripture. Separation can be by presenting quotations as separate sentences or by keeping the verse quotation verbatim in its original form, which is introduced and constitutes a substantial section of the sentence—Scripture has not been broken up and employed instead of other possible linguistic choices.

Examples of separated quotations:

> "this people refused to harbour a single idol and said, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts.'"[70]
>
> "sums up his teaching by saying, 'So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses'"[71]

Examples of integrated quotations:

> "We do not consider our respective positions or remind ourselves that he is 'the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity'"[72]
> "God cannot forget His people because He has 'graven' them (or printed them) on the palms of both His hands."[73]

Separated quotations can obviously be used and then explained, functioning as part of an exegetical discussion. Alternatively, they may be presented after a discussion, without being explained, to emphasise a point or to metaphorically underline what the preacher has said using Scripture. Integrated quotations can be specific words or phrases that are being examined as part of exegesis. Where the function of integrated quotations is not exegesis, and the quotation is not discussed in detail, it may be functioning as a thematic link to elsewhere in the sermon, reminding the audience of a point already made. Integrated quotations may also simply replace non-scriptural words, to complete the preacher's sentence.

The proposed division of the "quotation" category can be outlined as follows:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">Quotation
Where Scripture is quoted verbatim</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Separated
Quoted whole</td><td colspan="3">Integrated
Words or phrases functioning within a sentence</td></tr>
<tr><td>Exegesis
Discussed in some detail</td><td>Emphasis
To highlight an idea</td><td>Specific
As part of exegesis</td><td>Associative
Not discussed exegetically; links to a theme elsewhere</td><td>Incidental
Simply the words in the sentence</td></tr>
</table>

In itself, "paraphrase" would seem to be a relatively simple category, however within a sermon it evidently is used for different purposes. In "Man in the Presence of God" Lloyd-Jones very briefly summarises the story of Jannes and Jambres as an example of Jewish exorcists[74] and introduces his sermon on Romans 8.28 by summarising "the earlier part of the chapter."[75] When Sangster paraphrases the story of Esau and Jacob in "Does God Have Favourites?" he inserts his own opinion both through the rhetorical questions he chooses to ask and the adjectives he uses to describe each character.[76] Less frequent, at least within the corpora used in this study, is the use of paraphrase for the purpose of comparison. In "The Mystery of God's Ways," after summarising the story of God's people in Egypt, Lloyd-Jones directly compares the Israelites to "the many who actually hold that view today."[77] Similarly, Sangster likens his depiction of war-torn Warsaw in "The Pledge of Those Glorious Scars" to Isaiah's desolate Jerusalem.[78]

The division of the "paraphrase" category can be outlined as follows:

Paraphrase Where a person, event or saying from Scripture is described or summarised, using the preacher's own words		
Summary Key information is provided, without comment within it, in the preacher's own words.	*Commentary* Opinion is provided within the paraphrase, commenting on Scripture as the key information is provided.	*Comparison* Scripture is paraphrased alongside an alternative source, with direct comparisons being made through the paraphrase

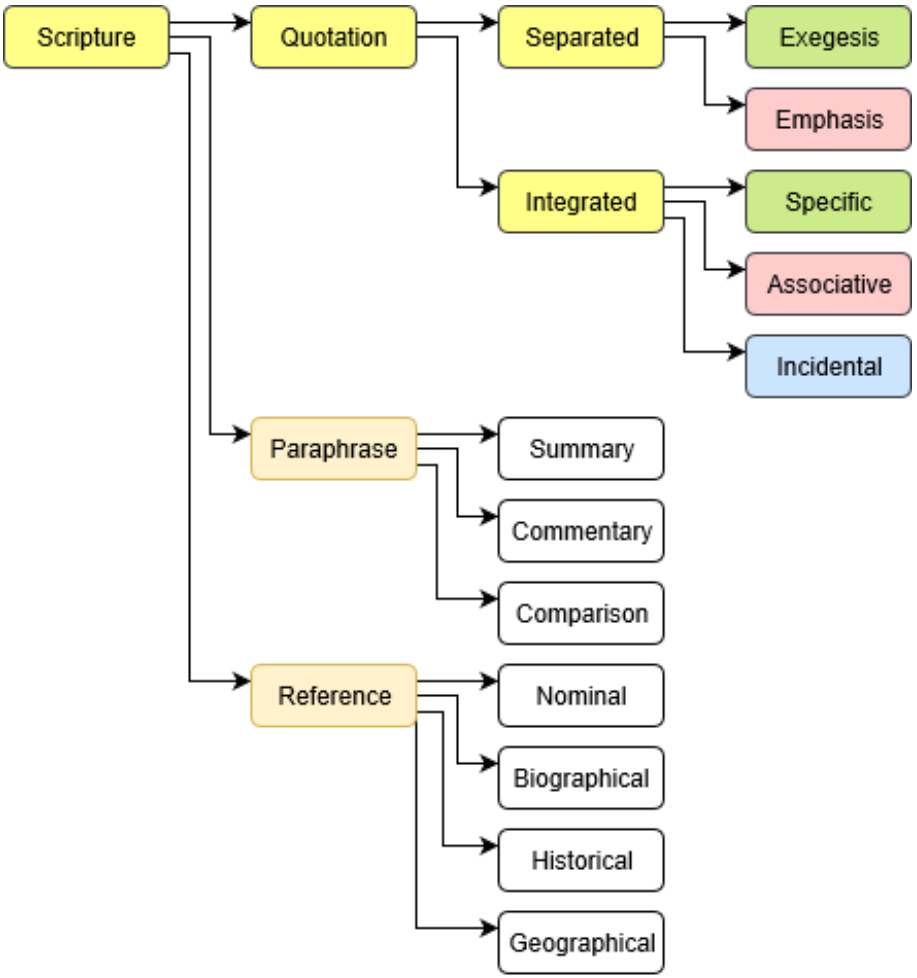
"Reference" is almost a usage of Scripture that the preacher pays little attention to; in a sense, they appear to remind

the audience the message is linked to Scripture or to introduce Scripture in some form or another. Where Scripture has been referred to in passing without further comment, it has been categorised as "reference". This being said, reference could still occur for a range of purposes. At this point of investigation, "reference" is initially subdivided as:

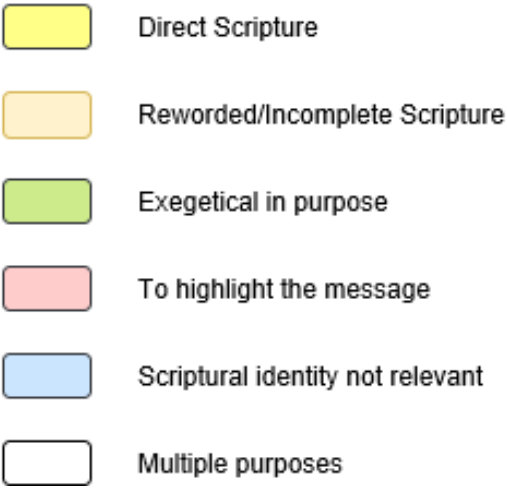
Reference Where a person, event or saying from Scripture is referred to in passing			
Nominal Book title	*Biographical* Person or character	*Historical* Story or event	*Geographical* Place

Combining the various subdivisions of the established usage categories creates an analytical framework to begin to study how Scripture is used within the sermons of Lloyd-Jones and Sangster, in the sermon collections *Why Does God Allow War?* and *These Things Abide*. Although it may not at present be all-encompassing, this new framework provides a starting point where there was previously no method to enable this. As a prototype, it needs a name: Scriptural Categorisation Analytics.

The following diagram depicts a summary of the categories and purposes assigned by the Scriptural Categorisation Analytics framework, which will be applied to the corpora used in this study in order to provide profile data on the preachers concerned. Also indicated, where applicable, are the purposes for which Scripture is used within each category.


Scripture
Quotation
Separated
Exegesis
Emphasis
Integrated
Specific
Associative
Incidental
Paraphrase
Summary
Commentary
Comparison
Reference
Nominal
Biographical
Historical
Geographical

"Direct Scripture" is the written Bible, as the original starting point of any scriptural usage. Where that usage is verbatim and therefore "quotation", this is indicated according to the key below. Additionally, where purposes such as being for exegesis coincide, this is also colour-coded.



Where categorisation needs further development and purposes have not yet been assigned, these have not been coded.

SCRIPTURAL CATEGORISATION ANALYTICS—ANALYSING SERMONS

Scriptural Categorisation Analytics provides the framework created by the inductive categories obtained from the corpora of Lloyd-Jones' and Sangster's sermons. Placing both preachers within the framework allows for it to be tested as a method of analysis.

Scriptural Categorisation Analytics presents Lloyd-Jones as:

	Scripture											
	Quotation					Paraphrase			Reference			
	Separated		Integrated									
	Exegesis	Emphasis	Specific	Associative	Incidental	Summary	Commentary	Comparison	Nominal	Biographical	Historical	Geographical
Sermon 1:	6	10	7	7	4	3	1	-	2	5	-	-
Sermon 2:	1	5	2	-	5	-	-	-	-	38	-	-
Sermon 3:	5	10	-	3	5	-	1*	1*	-	7	-	-
Sermon 4:	3	4	-	2	5	-	1	2	-	2	-	-
Sermon 5:	8	13	10	10	6	2	1	-	1	9	-	-

* Lloyd-Jones' summary of God's people in Egypt in "The Mystery of God's Ways" begins as a commentary, one which he dips in and out of throughout the sermon, but at points he uses it to compare the reactions of Israel to those of his contemporaries.

According to the data, Lloyd-Jones does not make passing references to places or to events; if either are mentioned they are within the context of another Scriptural usage. Nominal references are made within the course of Lloyd-Jones' sermons, but not to a significant degree. Biblical figures and groups of people, however, are referenced repeatedly. For example, in "The Final Answer to All Our Questions" Lloyd-Jones lists "Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David and all the others" in relation to the question

"Can the people whose lives we find recorded in the Old Testament be described as men and women who avoided the problems of life..?"[79] These apparent paragons of faith are used to bring authority to the assertion that problems are to be faced with faith. Conversely, the biographical reference within "Facing the Unexpected" stems from an intense discussion of the attitudes of Manoah and his wife (Judges 13.22-23) as alternative courses of action; they are not sources of authority. These different purposes behind the use of nominal references suggest that the categorisation could be further divided according to function.

A surface consideration of the data does not suggest anything of significance in terms of Lloyd-Jones" use of paraphrase. However, the lack of paraphrase in comparison to quotation shows that where Scripture can be quoted, it is quoted verbatim. Looking beyond the purely quantitative, there is a difference in function where he uses "summary." As previously mentioned, in "The Final Answer to All Our Questions" Lloyd-Jones summarises Romans 8 to provide the background to his sermon, as a way of introducing his message. He also summarises actual verses, providing references to these, where he wishes to be specific. Again, as already mentioned, in "Man in the Presence of God" Lloyd-Jones summarises 2 Timothy 3.8 as "Jannes and Jambres could enter into competition with Moses up to a point"[80] instead of quoting the epistle writer's original words: "As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses" (Authorised King James Version). This could have been because the appearance of the two characters in 2 Timothy 3.8 does not include the events which their reference is meant to be illustrating; Jannes and Jambres are traditionally magicians from Exodus 7[81] but are not mentioned by name anywhere other than in 2 Timothy. Lloyd-Jones is using the summary of 2 Timothy 3.8 as a summary of the events in Exodus 7, to provide an illustration of Jewish exorcists, the tradition of whom he thought his audience would be familiar with. "Summary," therefore, could potentially be subdivided into "introduction" and "illustration."

Lloyd-Jones' scriptural quotations can be summarised as:

	Quotations					
	Separated		Integrated			Total
	Exegesis	Emphasis	Specific	Associative	Incidental	
Sermon 1	6	10	7	7	4	34
Sermon 2	1	5	2	-	5	13
Sermon 3	5	10	-	3	5	23
Sermon 4	3	4	-	2	5	14
Sermon 5	8	13	10	10	6	47

Given that "Exegesis" and "Specific" have been defined as having the express purpose of exposition, it is unsurprising that these categories should be found within a preacher who was known as being an expository preacher. Somewhat surprising, perhaps, are the relative high numbers found in the "Emphasis" and "Incidental" categories. Where the Bible is being used to underline a point, or where biblical words are incidental to the preacher's sentence, it raises the query as to whether the preacher is using Scripture to "proof-text" the message instead of drawing the message from Scripture.

Effectively the concern is that "proof-texting is dogmatic cherry-picking, and eisegetical use of the Bible, or ecclesiastical imposition on ancient literature,"[82] using quotations "pulled from the Bible in support of a particular belief or doctrine."[83] The key, though, is whether regard has been shown for the context of the passage being cited.[84] Quotation for emphasis, or quotation that is incidental can lend authority to the preacher's words and "is not necessarily problematic;"[85] it has biblical precedent and therefore should not be too hastily dismissed.'[86]

Some instances of Lloyd-Jones' incidental quotation could be deemed unnecessary, such as using "the very elect" (Matthew 24.24)[87] instead of simply referring to believers. Using biblical terminology to insinuate authority is not necessarily proof-texting in a negative sense, but it is Scripture being used merely as language not practically as the Written Word which Lloyd-Jones' values so highly. However, using phrases such as "everlasting love (Jeremiah 31.3)"[88] with a specific biblical

reference point does lend a sense of authority to the language and is relevant to the discussion which it is used for. The "incidental" category is one where a qualitative analysis is needed to avoid a misinterpretation of the data. The category also needs further subdivision, as appealing to the authority of the Bible is a valid purpose to be considered, despite being a problematic one since that appeal may or may not be appropriate.

Scriptural Categorisation Analytics presents Sangster as:

	Scripture											
	Quotation					Paraphrase			Reference			
	Separated		Integrated									
	Exegesis	Emphasis	Specific	Associative	Incidental	Summary	Commentary	Comparison	Nominal	Biographical	Historical	Geographical
Sermon 1:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sermon 2:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Sermon 3:	3	2	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	2	2	-
Sermon 4:	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sermon 5:	-	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	5	-
Sermon 6:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sermon 7:	-	5	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	6	-	-
Sermon 8:	1	2	3	-	4	3	-	1	1	8	-	2
Sermon 9:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sermon 10:	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sermon 11:	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-

Sermon 12:	-	3	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	33	-	2
Sermon 13:	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sermon 14:	1	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1*	-	-
Sermon 15:	8	3	2	-	1	1	-	-	1	2	1	-

*Sangster refers to the Angel of Death, which is possibly a scriptural reference but equally could come from come from a prominence in contemporary culture; since the cultural reference may well originate from Scripture, the reference has been included.

Sangster's general lack of overt scriptural usage makes creating a profile using Scriptural Categorisation Analytics difficult. However, the data does provide some points of interest regarding Sangster's preaching. Paraphrase is not common within *These Things Abide*, though when it is used to give an overview of a biblical story, there is always commentary on that story; in "Gold From Dross" Sangster provides the key events of the Joseph narrative but his linguistic choices are very opinionated, thereby containing the commentary within the vocabulary itself.[89] On occasion, Sangster's commentary on a particular situation becomes a comparison to issues faced by his audience; in "Drunk and Mad" Sangster discusses "The trouble with alcohol" and links the "that all-embracing cordiality" to the Apostles in Acts 2, to enable the "sham…exuberance" to be put shame in comparison to the spiritual "gaiety" of the Apostles.[90]

In "Good Without God" Sangster presents a summary paraphrase of Micah 6.6-8 as a quotation. This is not the only occurrence of Sangster summarising particular verses; the last line of "Purifying the Atmosphere" is a summary of Psalm 30.5, not indicated to be Scripture but is recognisable as such. Where the purpose of "commentary" or "comparison" is almost self-

explanatory, this is not the case within the "summary" category. Using the two examples provided here, summary presented as quotation, to be seen as Scripture, is different to the final line of a sermon, used to underline a message. Summary paraphrase can be used to different purposes for Sangster, just as it can for Lloyd-Jones; within the constructed framework of Scriptural Categorisation Analytics, "summary" needs to be further divided according to purpose.

A problematic, and as yet uncategorised, scriptural reference linked to this issue appears in "Good Without God." Sangster writes "'Religion and morality,' said the prophets, 'belong together.'"[91] The presented quotation is not identifiable as a Bible verse so, given examples such as Micah 6.6-8, could be assumed to be a summary. However, Sangster does not specify which prophets, appearing to appeal to every prophet in the Old Testament. Since the supposed summary cannot be linked to a definite piece of Scripture it cannot be categorised; neither can 'the prophets' be acknowledged as a biographical reference because they cannot be identified.

Sangster's use of scriptural reference also proves interesting; the categories apply, but his usage of them show that reference is not necessarily as straightforward as was first assumed. Geographical reference in sermons is rare, since places are normally the settings to a story being paraphrased. Sangster, though, uses them as a link to his audience's assumed prior knowledge. "Bethel and Jabbok" function next to his commentary on Esau and Jacob as a reference to historical events outside of the narrative he is paraphrasing, with Jacob's true character "only apparent after Bethel and Jabbok."[92] Similarly, Sangster's references to "Jerusalem" and "Zion" in "The Pledge of Those Glorious Scars" provide an anchor between Sangster's comparison of Warsaw and "the Book of God."[93]

Biographical reference is the most common, as discussed previously, and most often functions as part of discussion. Even in these cases, Sangster still assumes prior knowledge on behalf of his audience. "When Paul was imprisoned by Nero"[94] is never

expanded upon; it assumed the when, how and why is already known since the events are not provided. This example also illustrates that category boundaries are not always clear; "Paul" has been classed as biographical reference, however it could equally be deemed historical, with the assumption of a background narrative. Additionally, the following comment of "He transformed his prison…" could be used as indicative of a commentary, albeit a short one.

Sangster's reference does not fit easily into categories, even his usage of historical scriptural reference is not uncomplicated. "The truth may even be nailed to a cross"[95] demonstrates his use of metaphor and, whilst a historical reference to the crucifixion, the purpose is not to refer to the event itself. It becomes evident, therefore, the purposes behind scriptural reference are important in the further division of the category; the particular purpose in "how" Scripture is being used needs to be brought further forward.

To look at the Scriptural Categorization Analytics presentation of Sangster's use of quotation more closely:

	Scriptural Quotations					
	Separated		Integrated			Total
	Exegesis	Emphasis	Specific	Associative	Incidental	
Sermon 1	-	-	-	-	-	0
Sermon 2	-	-	-	-	-	0
Sermon 3	3	2	-	2	-	7
Sermon 4	-	1	-	-	-	1
Sermon 5	-	4	-	-	1	5
Sermon 6	-	-	-	-	-	0
Sermon 7	-	5	-	-	1	6
Sermon 8	1	2	3	-	4	10
Sermon 9	-	-	-	-	-	0
Sermon 10	-	-	-	-	-	0
Sermon 11	-	3	-	-	-	3
Sermon 12	-	3	-	-	1	4
Sermon 13	-	1	-	-	-	1
Sermon 14	1	7	-	-	-	8
Sermon 15	8	3	2	-	1	14

Despite not having the reputation of being an expository preacher, and the sermons within *These Things Abide* not being expository in style, Sangster did use overt Scripture for the purpose of exegesis, as evidenced by the "Exegesis" and "Specific" data. Much more common, though, is his use of overt Scripture for emphasis. The majority of Sangster's separated quotations are not explained, instead used at the end of a paragraph or discussion to underline a particular point in the message; Philippians 1.21 is used to end a paragraph outlining Paul's devotion to Christ[96] and 2 Timothy 1.12 is used to bring "Does God Have Favourites?" to conclusion.[97] Technically, using unexplained Scripture to support the message could be described as "proof-texting" but if, as Sangster appears to have believed, the authority of the Bible spoke for itself, then it was up to the audience to link the Scripture to the message and in doing so engage with the quotation provided.

CONCLUSIONS

"Most Christian preachers will affirm the central importance of Scripture as the basis for preaching, even though they express this in a variety of ways."[98] If "his spirit uses the Word itself to fulfil his saving and sanctifying purposes"[99] and the Word is closely identified with Scripture, then how a preacher uses Scripture becomes important, if we are to judge the validity of that usage. Sangster and Lloyd-Jones are examples of how overt scriptural usage can vary both in terms of practical linguistic method and homiletic purpose. The methods trialled in this study have evidenced that whilst any analysis of these differences needs to be both quantitative and qualitative, an analysis is both possible and productive.

"Preaching is biblical whenever the preacher allows a text from the Bible to serve as the leading force in shaping the content and purpose of the sermon."[100] If that text is not necessarily present within the sermon, it does not automatically follow that

the sermon is not biblical. If Scripture is a central consideration, language can be analysed for the attitude to Scripture contained within a sermon, which proved to be the case for Sangster and Lloyd-Jones.

As a new method, Scriptural Categorisation Analytics introduces a thought-provoking perspective on the homiletical use of the Bible. The data obtained from *These Things Abide* and *Why Does God Allow War?* indicates that profiling a preacher's purpose in quoting Scripture is possible and that Scriptural Categorisation can provide a method of analysing the purposes behind scriptural usage. It is not a perfect method and also relies, to an extent on some subjectivity in deciding exactly which category to place a usage of Scripture. This being said, there is no method currently attempting to analyse the use of Scripture within sermons in the same way. As a starting point, the framework does show that analysis is both possible and useful.

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WHY WE SHOULD *NOT* START AT THE BEGINNING—BUT INSTEAD START AT THE *ENDING*—IN PREACHING AND TEACHING THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF MAN

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Let's start at the very beginning…When you read, you begin with A-B-C…When you sing you begin with Do-Re-Mi…

Julie Andrews, *The Sound of Music*

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that preaching and teaching on human nature should not begin at the beginning, with Gen 1:26–28 and the Image of God—but with the ending—with Christ, the Second Adam, the true image of God, in whom the redeemed are being renewed, and in whom the redeemed will finally be glorified. A method of whole-brain sermon preparation is presented, in which narrative, conceptual, and visual tools are employed, with a view to engaging the listener's mind, emotions, and will.

INTRODUCTION

Julie Andrews was right on where to begin in teaching someone to read—or to sing—start at the very beginning. However, when it comes to preaching and teaching the biblical doctrine of man (anthropology), I argue that the best place to start is not at the traditional beginning—Gen 1:26–28, with the first Adam—but with the biblical ending—with Christ, the Second Adam—the final, perfected image of God.

This paper's thesis is that a Christian doctrine of man should begin with the Second Adam, not the first; not with the original creation of man (Gen 1) but with the final perfection of man in *glorification*. Rom 8:26–30, John 17:20–26, and the synoptic texts on the Transfiguration of Jesus[1] will be expounded as foundational texts in light of which Gen 1:26-28 should be interpreted. Reversing the traditional approach connects protology with eschatology, and both with Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, and ecclesiology as well.

This approach argues that the *Imago Dei* means that God from the beginning designed humans with unique, God-redeemed capacities to become conformed to the moral and spiritual likeness of Christ (Rom 8:29); who as adopted sons and daughters (Rom 8:15,16) would reign with Christ (Luke 22:29,30; Eph 2:6; Rev 2:26; 3:21); who, in glorified, resurrected bodies (I Cor 15:42–44; Phil 3:21), would experience unending, joyful, loving fellowship with the Father, in union with the Son, in the fullness of the Spirit (Rom 5:5; I Jn 1:2; Eph 5:18)—together with all the people of God, the Bride and Body of Christ (Eph 5:27; Rev 21:2,9–11)—in the context of the glorious New Creation (Rom 8:21; Rev 21, 22).

The outline of the paper is as follows: First, the importance and timeliness of reconsidering the doctrine of man. Second, reasons for reversing the traditional order: a) the New Testament as the key to interpreting the Old Testament; b) man as created and fallen understood in light of man as redeemed and perfected; c) beginnings understood in light of the final ends (e.g., acorn in light of the oak tree; infant in light of the adult; a story's beginning in light of the climactic end). Third, exposition of key New Testament texts as foundational for biblical anthropology: Rom 8:26–30 (glorification *designed*); John 17:20–26 (glorification *described*); and the Transfiguration: Matt 17:1–13; Mark 9:2–13; Luke 9:28–36 (glorification *displayed*). Fourth, generalizing the discussion by outlining a *whole-brain* method of sermon preparation employing narrative, conceptual, and visual tools to engage the listener's mind, emotions, and will.

TIMELINESS AND IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

This topic is timely and important, given the growing secularization of modern culture and the high levels of anxiety and pessimism felt by many. The growth of science and technology in the modern age has produced what Charles Taylor has called the *immanent frame*—a mindset focused on life in this world, with fading consciousness of heaven, hell, and eternity.[2] Social media, smartphones, digital devices, streaming video, video gaming, and the internet dominate the time, attention, and imaginations of many. Evolutionary biology, genetic engineering, neuroscience, and artificial intelligence understand man in materialistic terms, rather than in the spiritual and transcendent categories of scripture. These cultural influences converge to trap many in the "iron cage" of an immanent frame.[3] Growing levels of anxiety and pessimism in American culture also point to the timeliness of fresh thinking about the doctrine of man. Many—especially among the young—struggle with anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts.[4] Pessimism about the future is fueled by despair about the fate of the earth, dystopian scenarios in movies and video, political polarization and stridency, school shootings, random violence, drug addictions and homelessness. Just as a secular culture's focus on the world below calls for an "anthropology from above," so does the culture's pessimism call for an "anthropology of hope."

REASONS FOR REVERSING THE TRADITIONAL ORDER

There are theological and logical reasons for reversing the traditional order in teaching the biblical doctrine of man. Traditionally, systematic theologies start with Gen 1:26–28, man as the image of God (the "first Adam"), then consider man as fallen, and then discuss the renewal of the image (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10) and Christ as the last Adam (I Cor 15:45–49). However, it makes theological and logical sense to start not with the first Adam, but with the last Adam—the true and perfect image of

God, the image of the final glorified state which God intended for man from the beginning.

Theologically, reversing the traditional order is consistent with the principles that the New Testament interprets the Old, and the clearer passages the less clear. Gen 1:26–28 states that man is the image and likeness of God, but the meaning of these terms is not defined. Does the image consist in dominion over the lower creation? In humanity's creation as male and female? In the ability to "be fruitful and multiply"? In the notion of sonship (cf. Gen 5:1–2, "Adam . . . had a son . . . in his own likeness . . . in his own image . . . Seth.")? In special honor and glory accorded to humanity (cf. Ps 8:5, "crowned . . . with glory and honor")?

The Old Testament gives no concise definition of the image, nor does it provide a synthesis of its various aspects. This significant ambiguity and "under-determination" of the concept by the textual data is plausibly a reason for the vast amount of scholarly literature that these texts have generated.[5] It is only in the New Testament that the moral and spiritual aspects of the image (e.g., Eph 4:24; Col 3:10: the image renewed in righteousness, holiness, and knowledge of God) become explicit. Only in the New Testament is it revealed that Christ is the true and perfect image of God (Col 1:15), and that God will glorify (Rom 8:30; Phil 3:21) the redeemed by conforming them to the image of his Son, the last Adam and the man from heaven (I Cor 15:45,49).

Logically, a thing's final, fully mature state—not its initial, less mature state—is the key to understanding its identity, meaning, and purpose. To understand an oak tree, start not with the acorn, but with the oak tree fully grown. To understand the human being, start not with the infant, but with the adult, healthy and fully grown. The author reveals the meaning of the main character's life not at story's beginning, but rather in the story's end. The full meaning of man as *Imago Dei* is revealed not in the first Adam, the man from earth, created and fallen—but in the last Adam, the man from heaven, the image of man redeemed and glorified.

In his 1989 book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, business and leadership consultant Stephen Covey advised readers to "Begin with the end in mind."[6] Before starting the journey, have a clear picture of the intended destination. Before starting a business, have a clear business plan and basic purpose in mind. God, as a "highly effective God," had a clear purpose in mind—foreknown and predestined from eternity—when he created man.

The word "end" (Gr. *telos*) can have dual senses—either the *termination* of a process (full grown; finished; completed) or story, or the *purpose* of an agent's actions and behavior. According to Aristotle, to fully understand something, four causes must be considered: the material ("What is it made of?"); the efficient ("How does it work?" "How was it made?"); the formal ("What is the basic design?" Who was the designer?"), and the final ("For what purpose was this designed and made?").[7]

Consider, for example, a simple object—a hammer. To adequately answer the questions, "What is this? What is it for?––it is insufficient to invoke only material causes ("It's made of wood and metal") or efficient causes ("It was made in a factory in China?)—without considering formal ("It was designed by the manufacturer . . . ") and final causes ("to be a carpenter's tool"). The hammer was not designed to be a child's toy for smashing furniture in the playroom, or a weapon to be used in domestic violence, but as a tool for the carpenter or homeowner to hammer nails. To rightly understand the *Imago Dei*, God's final purpose for creating man—the glorification of the redeemed—should be clearly in mind from the start.[8]

KEY TEXTS AND CONCEPTS: ROMANS 8:26-30; JOHN 17:20-26

THE TRANSFIGURATION AND GLORIFICATION

Rom 8:26–30, John 17:20–26, and the synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration—Matt 17:1–13; Mark 9:2–13; Luke 9:28–36—will

now be expounded as foundational texts for biblical anthropology, in light of which Gen 1:26–28, Eph 4:24, and Col 3:9 should be understood. Special attention will be given to *glorification*—an underrepresented concept in both anthropology and soteriology. Redeemed humanity's glorification was determined by God from eternity (Rom 8:29), described by Jesus in his high priestly prayer (Jn 17:20–26), and depicted on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt 17, Mark 9, Luke 9).

ROMANS 8:26–30: GLORIFICATION DETERMINED

Rom 8:28–30 reveals God's ultimate purposes for humanity's creation and redemption: "For those God *foreknew* (intended, designed from eternity) he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brothers . . . those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also *glorified*." Stephen Covey was hardly the first to "begin with the end in mind." God—from the beginning— created man with glorification in mind.

In the history of Protestant evangelical theology some of these topics in the *ordo salutis* ("order of salvation")—foreknowledge, predestination, calling, conversion, and justification—have been given great attention, but glorification has suffered relative neglect. Book-length treatments of glorification have been few and far between, the works of Arthur Michael Ramsey (1949), Bernard Ramm (1963), Haley Goranson Jacob (2018), and Graham Cole (2022) being notable exceptions.[9]

Great attention was focused on justification during the Reformation, and more recently, during the debates on the so-called New Perspective on Paul.[10] From the seventeenth century down to the present Calvinist–Arminian debates focused attention on the doctrines of predestination. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Great Awakenings and revivalism placed the topics calling and conversion high on theological agendas. From the nineteenth century down to the present, the

challenges posed by Darwinism and evolutionary biology forced theologians to rethink human origins. However, glorification—the final condition God intended for the redeemed—was not being integrated into biblical anthropology.

In the twentieth century Protestant theologians have taken increased interest in the Orthodox doctrine of *theosis* or "divinization".[11] Evangelical theologians generally consider the language of "divinization" to be problematic and appeals to texts such as 2 Pet 1:4 ("participate in the divine nature") Ps 82:6 ("I say you are gods") as exegetically weak. Nevertheless, evangelical theologians[12] have seen that this Orthodox tradition challenges the West to give greater attention to a biblical doctrine—glorification—too often neglected in Protestant theology and preaching. It is, however, beyond the scope of this paper to give focused attention to the Orthodox doctrine of *theosis* as such.

Romans 8 and other Pauline texts point to the personal, corporate, and cosmic dimensions of glorification. All three are connected to the presence and work of the Spirit. Individual glorification occurs at Christ's return and with our bodily resurrection, when Christ transforms "our lowly bodies to be like his glorious body" (Phil 3:21).[13] This glorified resurrection body will be imperishable, filled and transformed with the luminous, life-giving power of the Spirit (I Cor 15:42–48). The glorious, luminous body of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration prefigured the glorifies bodies of the redeemed. The glorification of the believer can begin in the present, as we behold, in meditation and worship, the glory of the ascended Christ in heaven (cf. 2 Cor 3:18).[14]

God's eternal purpose to share his glory with the redeemed has corporate[15] as well as individual dimensions. Christ loved the church—not just individuals—and gave himself up for her to present her to himself as a *radiant* (*endexos*, "glorious"; "endoxified") church, holy and blameless (Eph 5:25,27). Christ's atoning work had in view both the satisfaction of divine justice and the beautification of the beloved bride. The

intended glorification of the church is a reminder that the forensic categories of Western atonement theology need to be complemented by the participationist and aesthetic categories of the East. God values both righteousness and beauty!

The imagery of the beautiful bride in Eph 5:27 is rooted in Old Testament scripture. In the royal wedding celebrated in Psalm 45, the king's bride is gloriously appareled in a gown interwoven with gold, and the king, anointed with the oil of joy, is enthralled with her beauty (Ps 45:7–15). As the bride and her attendants are led into the presence of the king, they are filled with "joy and gladness" (Ps 45:15). This imagery of the gloriously appareled, beautiful bride is also found in the final book of the Bible, in Revelation 21. Here the church, the new Jerusalem, is depicted as a "bride, beautifully dressed (*kekosmeimevein*, "adorned")[16] for her husband" (Rev 21:2). The intended purpose of God's creative and redemptive work is depicted as a gloriously beautiful bride and city (Rev 21:11)—a corporate body luminously resplendent with the holiness and love of God.

Romans 8 and other biblical texts reveal the cosmic scope of glorification: "The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom 8:21). Liberated from the curse, and suffused with the Spirit of God that hovered over the waters of the first creation—a *good* material creation (cf. Gen 1:31)—the new creation will be radiant with God's glory—a glory filling the earth as the waters cover the sea (Hab 2:14). The Old Testament prophets envisioned such a transformation of the material order (Isa 35:6,7; 51:3; 54:11,12; 60:19,20; 65:17–25; 66:22; Ezek 47:7–12), and these images inform Revelation's description of the Holy City, the new Jerusalem filled with the light of God's glory, beautified with precious jewels—a new garden of Eden watered from the throne of God (Rev 21:10,11; 22:1–20.

The same Christ who created all things (Col 1:16) in heaven and on earth, and who sustains all things (Col 1:17), in his atonement reconciled to himself all things, making peace through his blood shed on the cross (Col 1:20). Christ's atoning

work centers on redeemed humanity, but in removing the curse, extends its benefits to the material creation. Because of Christ's atonement, the glory of God can indeed fill creation, "as the waters cover the sea." The person and work of Christ is the basis for the final glorification of nature, and for Christ's and the apostles' hope for the "renewal of all things" (*apokatastaseos panton:* Matt 19:28; Acts 3:21).[17]

JOHN 17:20–26: GLORIFICATION DESCRIBED

Jesus' High Priestly Prayer (John 17) is widely recognized as a foundational text for Christian unity. It has, however, rarely been recognized as a foundational text for biblical anthropology. As his earthly ministry draws to an end, Christ reveals what he and the Father had in mind from the beginning—final perfection and glorification of all the redeemed. Specific aspects of this final glorification are revealed in John 17:20–26, where Jesus prays for all who were to believe in him through the apostolic witness.

Astonishingly, Jesus says to the Father, "I have given them the glory that you gave me" (John 17:22)—the glory that the Son in his preincarnate state enjoyed with the Father before the world began (John 17:5). The glory that God would never share with some other "god" (Is 42:8: "I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols") is now given to his adopted sons and daughters, that they might glow with the godlike glory of God!

Christ wants us to be with him, in his presence in heaven, so that we may behold his glory (John 17:24a), and so recognize that the Father has loved him as beloved Son "before the creation of the world" (John 17:24b). Our shared glory, bestowed by Christ, is the basis of unity among believers that reflects the unity of the Father and the Son (John 17:22b: "as we are one"). As sinful humans we fight and compete for fading glory. As redeemed saints we share an unfading, super-abundant glory that we never could merit!

This "eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor 4:17), merited for us by Christ, is a glory not only observed externally, outside of

Christ—but also a glory experienced internally, in intimate union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In what is arguably the highest point theologically in this already "high" priestly prayer, Jesus prays that we might be—finally—one with one another in the way that the Father and the Son are one—"as you are in me and I am in you" (John 17:21a). Jesus wants us to finally experience a quality of *perichoretic* communion[18] that he enjoys with the Father. And that is not all. Astonishingly, Jesus prays that ". . . they [we] may also be in us" (John 17:21). The climax and final destination of our salvation and glorification is "life in the Trinity"[19]—joyful, unending fellowship with the Father and the Son (I John 1:2), in the communion with the Spirit (2 Cor 13:14). This God had in mind from the beginning, and this is the proper end for which God created man. Thus, John 17:20–26 is a foundational text for understanding Gen 1:26–28 and man as the image of God.

THE TRANSFIGURATION: GLORIFICATION DEPICTED

Third, and finally, the Transfiguration of Jesus (Matt 17:1–13; Mark 9:2–13; Luke 9:28–36) should be recognized as integral for biblical anthropology. Christ's glory revealed on the "high mountain" provides a vivid depiction and foreshadowing of our own glorification that will occur when Christ returns to raise us in glory (cf. I John 3:2, ". . . when he appears, *we shall be like him*, for we shall see him as he is.").

This striking event in the life of Christ was being widely commemorated in the churches of the East by the eighth century.[20] Regional observances in Western churches were made more official by a Bull of Pope Callistus III issued in 1457.[21] However, this remarkable manifestation of Christ's divine glory, typically remembered in liturgical churches on August 6, has received scant attention—theologically and homiletically—in evangelical and Pentecostal churches.[22]

The Transfiguration occurs at a pivotal moment of transition in the ministry of Jesus—at the conclusion of his

Galilean ministry, after Peter's confession of Jesus as messiah, and before the journey to Jerusalem for the climactic events of Holy Week. The manifestation of his glory to Peter, James, and John—together with the appearance of Moses and Elijah in their glory—is rich with theological significance. The Transfiguration reveals the mysteries of Jesus's identity; the union of his divine and human natures; the unity of the old and new covenants; the reality of life beyond the grave and of the world to come; the visible and invisible church; and the communion of saints.[23] It foreshadows the return of Christ in glory at the end of the age.

Let us imagine, by faith, that we are journeying with Peter, James, and John, ascending with Jesus to the summit of the holy mountain. We leave the crowds below. We leave behind the devices that distract us with the ephemeral images of Vanity Fair below. We focus, instead, on lasting images from the Heavenly City above—images foreshadowing, in microcosm, a glorious new creation and coming kingdom of God.

As we become fully spiritually awake, we see Moses and Elijah, in glorious splendor. In the Spirit we come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God—into the presence of righteous men made perfect. We come into the presence of Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, to the atoning blood shed for us in the earthly Jerusalem (cf. Heb 12:22-24). We realize that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and of Moses and Elijah—is not the God of the dead but indeed the God of the living (Matt 22:32). We realize that the "communion of the saints" and "eternal life" are not idle dreams, but living realities for all the redeemed—in all times and places—in both Old and New Covenants.

We see the face of Jesus, shining like the sun, shining with an uncreated, unfading glory—unlike the fading glory of Moses' face. His glory is not reflected from without but shines from within—from the eternal splendor of his divine nature,[24] now suffusing his physical body and even his garments. By faith, we behold an image of our own glorification, and a foreshadowing of the glorification of the material creation itself. Our glorification

will be perfected at the return of Christ, in our resurrection from the dead. But we can begin to experience it, in part, in the present, as we contemplate, in the Spirit, Christ's glorious face in worship, prayer, and meditation (cf. 2 Cor 3:18).

We hear the voice of the Father, affirming the identity of Jesus as the beloved Son—the Suffering Servant and divine Son whose voice is to be heard, believed, and obeyed above all others. We are enveloped by the bright cloud, the Holy Spirit, the Shekinah Glory.[25] We are taken into the divine presence, into the glorious and loving communion of the Father, Son, and Spirit. We are experiencing, partially and proleptically, an answer to Jesus' prayer that ". . . they may also be *in us*" (John 17:21)—so that the world might believe that Jesus was indeed sent by the Father.

We descend from the mountain to face the conflicts and sufferings below—but, like Jesus, fortified and strengthened to endure the suffering yet to come. We descend from the mountain, in the sure hope of a future glory, when those made righteous ". . . will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt 13:43). This is the glory and perfected salvation that God envisioned and predestined for us, from the very beginning, before time began.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION: WHOLE-BRAIN SERMON PREAPARATION

This paper has argued that preaching and teaching about the nature of man should start not with man's initial *creation*, but rather with man's final *glorification*. Texts such as Gen 1:26–28 (the image of God), Eph 4:24, and Col 3:10 (renewal of the image) should be expounded in light of Rom 8:26–30, John 17:20–26, and the synoptic accounts of the Transfiguration (Matt 17; Mark 9; Luke 9). Reversing of usual order was justified by these principles: The New Testament is the key to the interpretation of the Old. Less clear texts are to be interpreted in light of the clearer texts. The nature of things should be understood not on the basis

of their initial, imperfect states, but rather on the basis of their final, perfected states. Christ, the Second Adam—the man from heaven—is the key for understanding the first Adam, the man from earth.

The texts expounded in this paper—Rom 8:26–30 ("Glorification Determined"); John 17:20–26 ("Glorification Described"); and the synoptic texts on the Transfiguration ("Glorification Depicted")—could be the basis for a three part preaching or teaching series on glorification—the purpose for which God created the redeemed, and the final goal of salvation. For application, the preacher could explain how the doctrine of glorification, though often neglected, has great practical relevance. It lifts the Christian's imagination from the distractions of the present age, and gives a vision of hope and final victory in the face of suffering, sickness, and death. It is a worthy topic for both preaching and personal meditation.

In my book *Meditation and Communion with God,* I explained a method of "whole-brain" meditation.[26] This method, an extended form of *lectio divina*, involves pairing a text from the epistles or a teaching passage with a narrative text on the same topic. For example, on the topics of sonship and reception of the Spirit, a gospel text on the baptism of Jesus (Matt 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:29–34) could be paired with epistle texts such as Rom 8:14–17 or Gal 4:6–7, which speak of adoption and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The gospel accounts as narrative and pictorial engage the right side of the brain and connect with the emotions—and so increase the likelihood that the text will be remembered and acted upon. In the light of the texts in Romans and Galatians, as they engage the verbal and logical processes of our left hemispheres, we can see that the baptism of Jesus can be a picture of our own sonship, adoption, and reception of the Spirit. Like Jesus, by faith we can see and hear the Father's affirmation that we too are his beloved children, empowered by the Spirit for obedient service.

This method of whole-brain meditation can be generalized as a method for whole-brain sermon preparation.

The idea is to engage both sides of the listener's brain—narratively, conceptually, and visually—by using, in our sermon preparation, three sources: the words of the biblical text, the concepts of systematic theology, and religious images of art history. As illustrations of this method, consider two examples: the Transfiguration of Jesus—already discussed above, in relation to the doctrine of glorification—and the story of the prodigal son. Preparing to preach on the transfiguration, the preacher would first study the gospel narratives in Matt 17:1–13, Mark 9:1–13, and Luke 9:28–36, with the aid of various commentaries, in order to remind the listeners of the basic story line, its context in the ministry of Jesus, and its foreshadowing of the passion of Christ, his resurrection, and glorious return. The concept of glorification—illustrated in the transformed appearances of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah—could be explained with the help of relevant sections of the systematic theologies of Wayne Grudem or Millard Erickson,[27] and then used in application, encouraging them to remember this image of their salvation's final completion, as encouragement in the face of suffering. For the third element—the visual component—the preacher could access through Google Images an icon of the Transfiguration,[28] and provide it to the listeners either as a bulletin insert, or as a projected image included as one of the sermon outline slides. Commentaries on the iconic depictions, both from art history and homiletical perspectives, have already been referenced in footnote 22 above. Also helpful in this regard is the study by Andreas Andreopoulos, *Metamorphosis: The Transfiguration in Byzantine Theology and Iconography*.[29] The preacher could point out selected features of the icon to illustrate points of the biblical text and aspects of the concept of glorification. To conclude the sermon, the preacher might consider using the collect for the Transfiguration from the Book of Common Prayer:[30]

> O God, who on the holy mount revealed to chosen witnesses your well beloved Son,

> wonderfully transfigured in raiment white and
> glistening: Mercifully grant that we,
> being delivered from the disquietude of this world, may
> by faith behold the King in
> beauty; who with you, O Father, and you, O Holy Spirit,
> lives and reigns, one God,
> forever and ever. *Amen*

As a second example, consider the oft-preached story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–31). Preparation could begin, as usual, with a careful study of the biblical text and selected commentaries. Worth considering here are the reflections of Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son,*[31] and the historical and cultural background provided by Kenneth Bailey in *The Cross and the Prodigal*.[32] The lost son experiences reconciliation with his father—a powerful truth that speaks to many who have experienced broken or disfunctional family relationships. The concept of reconciliation embedded in the narrative is clarified theologically in Grudem and Erickson.[33] In applying the text, the preacher might explain that while forgiveness can be unilateral, true reconciliation is bilateral, involving two parties: the offended and the offender. Restoration of the relationship involves genuine repentance by the offender, and recognition of the sin that has damaged the relationship. For the visual component of preparation, one could do a *lectio divina* meditation on Rembrandt's painting *The Return of the Prodigal Son*[34]—a painting that inspired Henri Nouwen's insightful reflections on this powerful biblical story. Rembrandt's depiction—will all three figures in shadow and light—evokes the pathos and emotion of the story, and the father's compassion together with the son's humility, and the restored relationship that resulted.

In sum, whole-brain sermon preparation attempts to bring together the narrative, conceptual, and visual dimensions of effective preaching. "Preacher, tell me what it means; tell me what it looks like; and tell me why I should care about it—and how I could live it out." Whole-brain sermon preparation can

help the preacher provide his listeners with good answers to each of these very legitimate questions.

NOTES

1. Other texts, especially 2 Pet 1:16–18 ("we were eyewitnesses of his majesty . . . when we were with him on the sacred mountain"), and John 1:14 ("The Word became flesh . . . We have seen his glory"), 2 Cor 4:6 ("the light of the glory of God in the face of Christ"), and Heb 1:3 ("The Son is the radiance of God's glory") have direct or indirect relevance to the Transfiguration but are outside the specific focus of this paper.
2. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).
3. The phrase "iron cage" is from Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, referring to a man caught in remorse and despair over his sin. "Iron cage" as used here is not so much a metaphor about being imprisoned in guilt and remorse, but rather a modern, secular inability to imagine a transcendent, spiritual world beyond the present one.
4. Jean M. Twenge, *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood* (New York: Atria Books, 2017): "Insecure: The New Mental Health Crisis," 93–118.
5. For representative literature, see David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (London: Collins, 1973); Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1986); Philip Edgecumbe Hughes, *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005); Lucy Peppiatt, *The Imago Dei: Humanity Made in the Image of God* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2022), with extensive bibliography, 143–48. See also Gerald Bray, "The Significance of God's Image in Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 42:2 (1991): 195-225 and D.J.A. Clines, "The Image of God in Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 (1968): 53–103. For treatments of the image in systematic theologies, see

bibliography in Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), 642–43.

6. Stephen R. Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 98: "begin with the end in mind is to begin . . . with the image, picture, or paradigm of the end of your life as the frame of reference or the criterion by which everything else is examined."

7. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I.3, 983 a 24–983 b. Modernity and postmodernity, dominated by science, technology and digital media, view humans primarily (or exclusively) in material and efficient terms, ignoring God as man's designer and final end—the *teleological* dimensions.

8. It is interesting to note that the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, precedes Q.10, "*How did God create man?"* with Q.1, "*What is the chief end of man?"* and its answer: "Man's chief end [purpose] is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." The *teleological* (purposive) beginning of the catechism is significant. The beginning is seen in light of the end, and processes in light of God's purposes. *The Confession of Faith and Catechisms* (Willow Grove, PA: Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2005), 355, 362.

9. Arthur Michael Ramsey, *The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949); Bernard Ramm, *Them He Glorified: A Systematic Study of the Doctrine of Glorification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963); Haley Goranson Jacob, *Conformed to the Image of His Son: Reconsidering Paul's Theology of Glory in Romans* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018); Graham A. Cole, *Glorification: An Introduction* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2022). Though not a book-length treatment, also worthy of note is C.S. Lewis' essay "The Weight of Glory" in C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory And Other Essays* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 1–15.

10. The so-called New Perspective debate was sparked by E.P. Sanders' seminal 1977 book, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press), in which he questioned the common Protestant belief that Judaism in the time of Jesus taught

works righteousness or salvation by works. In *Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009), N. T. Wright argued that the Reformation emphasis on imputed righteousness was too narrow an understanding of Paul's teaching on justification. For various criticisms of the New Perspective, see D.A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark Seifrid, eds. *Justification and Variegated Nomism. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004).*

11. For a review of this growing interest, see my chapter, "Salvation Reconceptualized: is Our Western Gospel Big Enough?" in John Jefferson Davis, *Practicing Ministry in the Presence of God* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2015), 125–149; Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung, eds. *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

12. See, for example, Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 117–137; Donald Fairbairn, *Eastern Orthodoxy: Through Western Eyes* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 79–95.

13. On the glorified resurrection body, see Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 1018–29; Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology,* v.3 [1696], tr. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1997), 617–21.

14. See Davis, *Practicing Ministry in the Presence of God,* 141 n.62 for accounts of Seraphim of Sarov, an Orthodox saint, and the English mystic Evelyn Underhill, whose faces were reported by witnesses to be radiant with a heavenly light.

15. The corporate dimension of glorification is highlighted by John Murray, who notices that final glorification is experienced *simultaneously* by all the redeemed at the time of Christ's return and the general resurrection: John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 219.

Glorification is glorification in union with Christ and bound up with the renewal of creation: 220–21.
16. Perfect passive participle of *kosmeo* (cf. "cosmetic") to "adorn, make beautiful or attractive.". "In preparation for the marriage and the arrival of the groom the bride was bathed and oiled, perfumed, her hair fixed, and was adorned
with her wedding garment": Fritz Reinecker, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 859.
17. With the rise of modern science and a materialistic world view, the Christian imagination has found it more difficult to see how "the heavens declare the glory of God" (Ps 19:1) —to see, through the eyes of faith—God's glory in nature. See John Jefferson Davis, "The Spirit and the Glory's Banishment from the Material World: Reimagining Divine Immanence in the Light of Later Modern Science," *Science and Christian Belief* 32:2 (2020) 22–37.
18. In his fine study *Perichoretic Salvation: The Believer's Union with Christ as a Third Type of* Perichoresis (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), James D. Gifford, Jr. has convincingly argued that the concept of perichoresis has applicability not only in Christology (e.g., the two natures of Christ) and in the doctrine of the Trinity, but in soteriology as well—in believers' unity with Christ, and with one another.
19. In his fine study *Life in the Trinity: An Introduction to Theology with the Help of the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009), my Gordon-Conwell colleague Donald Fairbairn has rightly argued that the final goal of the gospel and the whole Christian story is "life in the Trinity": participation in the Son's relationship with the Father, in the communion of the Holy Spirit.
20. J.W.C. Wand, *Transfiguration* (London: Faith Press, 1967), 13.
21. George Duncan Barry, *The Transfiguration of Our Lord* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1911), "History of the Festival of the Transfiguration," 124–31 at 127.
22. For a helpful survey of modern New Testament scholarship on the Transfiguration, see W.L. Liefeld, "Transfiguration," in

Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 834–41, with extensive bibliography. Issues of history and theology are treated by the Orthodox scholar John Anthony McGuckin in *The Transfiguration of Christ in Scripture and Tradition* (Lewiston, ME: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), and from the Anglican tradition, by J.W.C. Wand, *Transfiguration* (London: Faith Press, 1967); Lionel Crawfurd, *The Transfiguration: A Manifestation of God in Man* (London: Skeffington & Son, 1911); George Duncan Barry, *The Transfiguration of Our Lord* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1911); and already referenced above, n.9, Arthur Michael Ramsey, *The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949), 101–47. For homilies on the Transfiguration from Byzantine authors including Origen, Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, John of Damascus, and Gregory of Palamas, see Brian E. Daley, SJ, *Light on the Mountain: Greek Patristic and Byzantine Homilies on the Transfiguration of the Lord* (Yonkers: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2013). Solrunn Nes, *The Uncreated Light: An Iconographical Study of the Transfiguration in the Eastern Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) is a fine study of the iconography of the Transfiguration by an Orthodox art historian and practicing iconographer.

23. The Transfiguration has been called "The Gospel in Microcosm": Allison A. Trites, "The Transfiguration of Jesus: The Gospel in Microcosm," *Evangelical Quarterly* 51:2 (1979): 67–79.

24. Cf. Heb 1:3, "The Son is the radiance (*apaugasma*) of God's glory and the exact representation of his being"; Col 2:9, "In Christ all the fullness of the deity (*pan to pleroma tes theotetos*) dwells in bodily form (*somatikos*)."

25. The verb used here, *episkiazo* ("overshadow") is the same verb used in Ex. 40:35 (LXX) to describe the glory cloud over the Tabernacle in the wilderness: Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: Vol 1:1:1–9:50* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 872. Isa 63:11–14 identifies the glory cloud that led the Israelites in the wilderness as the Holy Spirit.

26. John Jefferson Davis, *Meditation and Communion with God: Contemplating Scripture in an Age of Distraction* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012), 142–50.
27. Grudem, *Systematic Theology,* 1018–29; Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 924–29.
28. As an example of one on of many iconic depictions of the Transfiguration, see https://www.uocofusa.org/news_110809_3, accessed May 30, 2023.
29. Andreopolous, *Metamorphosis* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005).
30. *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 243.
31. Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming* (New York: Doubleday, 1992). Nouwen retells the story from three perspectives: the younger son, the elder son, and the father.
32. Kenneth E. Bailey, *The Cross and the Prodigal: Luke 15 Through the Eyes of Middle Eastern Peasants,* 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005).
33. Grudem, *Systematic Theology,* 722, and Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 744, 893
34. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rembrandt_Harmensz_van_Rijn_-_Return_of_the_Prodigal_Son_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg; accessed May 30, 2023.

THEOCENTRIC THERAPEUTIC PREACHING: GOOD NEWS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

The global COVID-19 pandemic disrupted all areas of life including the worship practices of local churches. It caused trauma, breaking connections, and shattering assumptions about the safety of the world and (for Christians) assumptions about God. Forced to take their worship and ministry online, church leaders continued to support the wellbeing and spiritual development of their congregants, including through their preaching. This research analysed the online worship services of three churches during the first weekend of Aotearoa New Zealand's March – May 2020 Lockdown. It drew on Neil Pembroke's work on divine therapeia, exploring the theocentric and therapeutic messages that preachers communicated to their attenders. Each church demonstrated an integration between the theocentric and the therapeutic. The theocentric related to God's character and attributes (particularly God's love, attentive presence and faithfulness), and activity and power. The therapeutic was expressed by lamenting and acknowledging

pain, offering words of comfort, and inviting response, including in care for others. For each church, the goal was towards human flourishing: shalom, or well-being even amid difficult circumstances. Three implications for the Church are evident. First, churches can be encouraged to include space for pain and lament alongside their talk about God. Secondly, the human need for personal agency might healthily be expressed in service towards others. Thirdly, the hopeful sense, experienced by many, that perhaps our church, community or world could be better post-COVID ought to be encouraged and explored. Suggestions for further research are also made.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted all areas of life, everywhere. Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ) adopted an elimination strategy early, and by 29 March 2020, was in Level-4 Lockdown. Everyone was "instructed to stay at home in their bubble other than for essential personal movement."[1] Churches moved their ministry online, offering regular Sunday worship services, as well as other online resources and means of connection.

The lockdowns were difficult, particularly for those who were isolated, or overwhelmed due to their circumstances, be they related to challenging work and/or family responsibilities, concern for loved ones, illness, or fear of the disease. Many struggled to come to terms with the new and changing situation. While the experience of a global pandemic is new for this generation, ministers and churches are familiar with contexts and experiences that are challenging, even traumatic. The Hebrew Scriptures include a reservoir of human expression of pain, uncertainty, and grief. Overall, the Bible tells the story of God seeking relationship with humanity: loving, acting, and being present, and working towards the flourishing of the world. These are rich resources that can be drawn on to comfort and encourage, and to point to God as the source of hope and well-being.

Ministers spoke directly into the shared trauma of the pandemic. Their goal was to support the well-being or flourishing of their congregation (and others): to see them experiencing shalom: "well-being that exists in the very midst of threats."[2] Sunday sermons were a key resource they employed, and the sermons of three ministers are the focus of this article.

On the first Sunday of NZ's Level-4 Lockdown, the three preachers drew on (or mirrored) the ancient practice of lament. They made space for pain to be named. They offered comfort: speaking of God as loving, attentive and faithful, and active and powerful. They invited response, both internal, and towards others (other individuals, and wider society). They recognised that personal, societal, and ecclesial change was both inevitable and needed.

Drawing on and extending Neil Pembroke's work on divine *therapeia*, the research demonstrates that these churches offered sermons that were both therapeutic and theocentric. They recognised and did not shy away from the trauma, and worked towards shalom.

THE TRAUMA OF A PANDEMIC AND THE NEED FOR SHALOM

> Shalom … is well-being that exists in the very midst of threats – from sword and drought and wild animals. It is well-being of a material, physical, historical kind, … salvation … in the very places where people always have to cope with anxiety, to struggle for survival, and deal with temptation. It is well-being of a very personal kind, … but it is also deliberately corporate.[3]

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted all aspects of life. As well as causing serious physical symptoms among those infected (and for some, death), COVID-19 also proved detrimental to the well-being and mental health of the uninfected, increasing stress, anxiety, and depression.[4] Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ), thanks to

both its isolation, and strong, proactive government response suffered comparatively low numbers of COVID-19 cases and deaths.[5] However, even NZ was not immune from adverse effects.[6] This is unsurprising, for as well as causing physical harm, COVID-19 negatively impacted "three innate needs crucial to overall wellbeing: competency, autonomy, and belonging."[7] As psychologist Chris Sibley and his collaborators note, "living through community-wide disasters … results in immediate risk to people's mental and physical health and social relationships."[8]

Theologians Megan Warner, Christopher Southgate, Carla Grosch-Miller and Hilary Ison describe trauma as "a specific and automatic collection of physiological responses to an event, which are triggered when an individual's or community's adaptive capacity is overwhelmed."[9] In March 2020, offering "guidance to ministers as the coronavirus deepens," Southgate, Grosch-Miller and Ison recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic "*is* a trauma to communities, the nation, [and] the world."[10] As research on other community-wide disasters has revealed, "watching the pandemic unfold, [and experiencing] social isolation and financial insecurity [are all] likely to affect people's mental and physical health."[11] Key impacts of trauma are the breaking of connections and the shattering of "assumptions about how the world is supposed to be," including "for Christians, … assumptions about who and how God is in the world."[12] As a result, "one of the tasks in trauma recovery (or remaking) is to piece together from the shattered fragments a coherent view of God and the world."[13]

The Judeo-Christian concept of shalom provides a framework for understanding how well-being might be experienced, even amid trauma. Shalom includes concepts such as "completeness, wholeness, and harmony or well-being."[14] It is an internal state, not wholly dependent on external circumstances. Yet, shalom is also aspirational. For Tim Harris, humanity is invited to participate in the *missio Dei* and work towards the flourishing of all creation.[15] Shalom, therefore, involves a *becoming* towards a fuller realization of the *imago Dei*,

within the context and purposes of the healing of all: "personal, communal, and … creational."[16] Such an understanding, and tension, is helpful to recall in the context of a global pandemic that reminds us of our world's need for salvation and healing and makes very clear our human limitations. Church leaders can draw on such an understanding to support their congregations and communities.

Among the resources that churches offer, three are particularly pertinent here. In response to relational dislocation, churches can be places of belonging and connection. When trauma has shaken prior understandings, the church can offer frameworks and ideas that one might use to piece (back) together healthy and coherent views of a disrupted world. When it is difficult to imagine or remember deep peace, churches might open a wider vision for creaturely flourishing and human participation in it. One means by which the church achieves such ends is by communicating the message of faith, including through preaching.

THEOCENTRIC THERAPEUTIC PREACHING

For Neil Pembroke, "preaching is essentially a liturgical naming of God's redeeming love in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit."[17] Like pastoral counselling (and pastoral care), preaching can help "persons cope with various psychological, existential, and developmental challenges."[18] However, the endpoint of preaching is not merely comfort; preaching should challenge the hearer "to shape their lives in conformity to Christ."[19] As Pembroke notes, "God reaches out with compassion, understanding, and forgiveness, but God also confronts the skewed values, distorted thinking, and destructive actions of God's people."[20]

Pembroke argues, therefore, that preaching can be both therapeutic and theocentric. Therapeutic because it helps bring healing. Theocentric because it acknowledges God as both the source of healing and the framework for living. Theocentric

therapeutic preaching should place God in Christ, rather than "human distress and psychological solutions," at the centre of the sermon.[21] It should also help the hearer to live well amid whatever circumstances they find themselves in.

All this raises the question of how theocentric therapeutic preaching might occur, in terms of both form and content, during a global pandemic. To explore this, Lynne reviewed early literature related to preaching during COVID-19, alongside insights from related fields.

Psychotherapist, Sasha Bates provides a helpful framing. She points to the therapeutic importance of bearing silent witness to pain during this pandemic period.[22] This naming of pain can occur in the context of the worship service, as well as in other formal or informal pastoral interactions. Those who suffer need time to acknowledge the reality of their suffering.[23]

Bates goes on to note the helpfulness of "poetry, works of art, [and] pieces of music" in enabling people to "express the pain they can't yet form into thought themselves."[24] As David Nixon notes (citing Brueggemann), the Psalms, Lamentations, and Job all offer such a means of expressing the "rawness of human reality."[25] These ancient texts put words to the unknown and the unspeakable and validate such longings and experiences as being common to human experience.[26] Cathy Ross draws on the book of Lamentations to emphasise the importance of crying out, not only as a means of naming our pain but also in order to sit with it. As she says, "we cannot rush away" from either the pain or the cause.[27]

Lament also goes further, naming not only the pain, but also the presence (or, perhaps, apparent absence) of God in that pain. For Ross, "the public practice of lament is essentially having the courage to name what is happening, [and] to insist on engaging with God in the midst of the tragedy and the ruins."[28] In this way, lament ensures the therapeutic is deeply theocentric.

Robert Beamish links lament to preaching, recognising the need for preaching to connect "with the hearer in their time of disruption and disorientation."[29] Lament does not look for or

move prematurely to explanations or solutions that may appear satisfying to the mind, without touching the heart.[30] Rather, preaching at such a time can create space to honestly talk about both God and the context in which we find ourselves.[31]

Post-resurrection, Christian identity is shaped by a living hope that is grounded in Christ's life, suffering, death, and resurrection. This is a hope that needs to be articulated and accounted for, but softly, tenderly, and kindly.[32] Such hope is expressed in an assertion that God is with us: a statement that must not only comfort but point to the reason *why* our comfort at such times comes from God.[33] In doing so, the preacher names what Pembroke, linking the theocentric and the therapeutic, calls "God's providential and redemptive activity … in the contemporary context."[34]

Kaze Yemtsa and David Nixon both note a key difference between pastoral ministry during normal times and during COVID-19: the pandemic is a uniquely shared experience. Although "pain is ubiquitous,"[35] pastoral leaders usually encounter "others' crises from a point of relative stability."[36] During COVID-19, however, pastoral leaders share with their congregations and communities the particular destabilisations and disembedding experiences of COVID-19.[37] As Nixon suggests, the resultant powerlessness and vulnerability may be a site from which one can discern God's activity.[38]

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

In keeping with the core task of practical theology as defined by John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, this article offers "critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world."[39] Specifically, it investigates the preaching practices of three churches during the first Sunday of the COVID-19 lockdown. It considers how these sermons were part of participating in God's redemptive practices, as well as

what might be learned for future preaching ministry, particularly in times of trauma.

The research is part of a wider project, exploring how Australian and New Zealand churches ministered during COVID-19, including the motivations behind their responses, and how they supported the holistic well-being of attendees and the wider community. Data for the wider project was gathered via a questionnaire, leadership interviews, focus groups, and content analysis of (and participation in) online worship.[40]

An online questionnaire of NZ and Australian church leaders, undertaken in late 2020/early 2021, provided invaluable background on how churches responded to COVID-19, including how they engaged in pastoral care, in worship, and with the wider community. From the questionnaire, Lynne identified churches that had provided online worship gatherings during the first lockdown, continued to perceive that there were positive aspects of their experience of worshipping online, had recordings of lockdown services readily available, and were prepared to be included in further research. Three churches of different sizes, all located in neighbouring suburbs within the Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland supercity were approached and consented to involvement in further research.

Church One (C1) is a small Anglican parish, with one paid minister (who we will call Rachel).[41] Pre-COVID, they gathered weekly in two sites. Church Two (C2) is a large Baptist church, with a substantial staff team (including James, their lead pastor) and an extensive array of supporting ministries. Pre-COVID, in addition to their three on-campus weekly services, C2 held another service in a different location and offered a live stream of their main on-campus service. Church Three (C3) is a middle-sized Anglican parish, with one paid minister (Mark). Pre-COVID, they held two worship services each Sunday in the same building, as well as a midweek communion service.

Lynne carried out site visits in March 2021 to these three churches, conducting interviews and focus groups. We both undertook content analysis of recordings of selected services,

including the first compulsory lockdown service held on 29 March 2020. This is the service (Service #1) analysed in this paper.[42]

We viewed each church's Service #1, recording impressions as memos. (C1 did not record Service #1. Instead, Rachel subsequently recorded and posted online "part of [her] reflection.") We uploaded transcripts of each service into NVivo for analysis. Jess then coded the Service #1 transcripts deductively, to Pembroke's themes, and categories derived from the initial literature review (see Table 1). Consistent with a critical realist approach, we considered how God's character and activity were presented during sermons and worship, as well as descriptions of how God might have been experienced by the hearers.[43] We included in the coding both implicit and explicit mentions of each category.[44]

Table 1: Themes and categories used for coding

Themes (from Pembroke)	**Category**
Theocentric	God's character (being)
	God's activity
	… experienced by humans
Therapeutic	Lament … and space for pain
	Lament … including words of comfort
	Inviting response

Next, Lynne inductively coded the theocentric categories of the data into the specific attributes of God that were named in sermons.[45] Three were common to all churches (God's love; God's attentive presence and faithfulness; and God's activity and power). The goal towards human flourishing was also noted and coded for. Finally, Lynne coded and categorised the data on any response invited by each minister.

Data from focus groups and interviews of leaders and attendees was considered alongside data from the analysed services. Once a full draft of the article was completed, recordings of the three sermons/messages were replayed to ensure they had been represented accurately.

PREACHING IN THE PANDEMIC

During the early days of COVID-19, ministers spoke directly into the shared trauma of the pandemic. Their goal was to support the well-being of their congregation (and others); to see them experiencing shalom, even amid the challenging times. Sunday sermons were a key resource they employed, and are the focus of this article.

The findings are reported in three sections. The first considers the theocentric elements of the Service #1 sermons, exploring the three aspects of God's character and activity that were highlighted by all ministers. These are God's love; attentive presence and faithfulness; and activity and power. The end goal of human flourishing is also noted in this section. The second section considers the therapeutic aspects of the sermons. The final section focuses on other responses or calls to action that were invited, whether personal (towards God or others), as a church (in terms of the church's form or activity), or as a wider context (community, society, or nation).[46]

Theocentric: Love

All three churches affirmed God's love. Rachel (C1) neared the end of her reflection with the affirmation: "God is love." James (C2) also spoke of "God's love," expressed in God's interactions with humanity throughout all generations: past, present, and future. Recapping an earlier service in some detail, he referred to Jesus as loving and accepting imperfect people. Mark (C3) clearly communicated that God knows us and loves us.

For each church, this love invited a response. Those at C1 were encouraged to "return" to God's love. C3 attendees were invited to "receiv[e] God's loving grace." James (C2) noted that God's love (and goodness) can and should be multiplied through the people of God. He was clear that God's love is not static and is not just for those in the church. Here, he offered both comfort

and challenge: because Jesus loves and accepts imperfect people, we should also love and accept others.

Theocentric: Attentive presence and faithfulness

God's love was linked with God's attentive presence and faithfulness. James (C2) affirmed that God is with us "whatever season we are going through." God "does not neglect [our] spiritual and … physical … needs." Mark (C3) similarly affirmed: "God hasn't abandoned us; God is there all the time." Mark also noted the grief that Jesus experienced when his friend Lazarus died, reassuring attendees that Jesus grieves and journeys with them. In doing so, Mark acknowledged what the listeners might be feeling, validated their own experiences with God, connected them to the biblical account, and offered hope of new life. Rachel (C1) encouraged a *return* to God. She linked the longings evident in Ezekiel 37:1-14 with Augustine's assertion that "restless hearts will only find rest when they return to God." She implied that some action or request was required on the hearer's part to regain the readily available connection with God.

Theocentric: Active and powerful

All three ministers recounted God's activity, but how they did so differed. Rachel (C1) and Mark (C3) clearly articulated God's presence and comfort but expressed other aspects of God's activity in more implicit ways. While they had read the Ezekiel text, so it was fresh for the viewer, Rachel and Mark both relied on the listeners already understanding its meaning, or having a broad knowledge of God's activity, as described in the scriptures. Throughout Rachel's reflection (C1), her statements generally *implicitly* attributed God's agency. In the end, however, she explicitly stated that it was God who could and would breathe new life into people: "with breath, with Spirit, with God, with love." For Mark (C3) some actions were explicitly attributed to

God, while others were merely implied. For instance, his listeners were encouraged to trust and hope in God.[47]

James (C2), however, in describing God as being both active and powerful, almost always directly attributed "God", "Jesus", or the "Spirit" as the active agent. For instance, as well as being attentive to human need, the "God of miracles" acts in "power" to multiply human efforts. The impetus here is beyond just themselves: they participate in God's work towards holistic well-being, so that "others might be drawn into thinking about the greater perspective of the kingdom of God." Rather than focusing on listeners' individual lives, James focused on the activity of God in relation to their experiences as a church: they had experienced God in the past, and they will experience God again. He said: "There's a part of me that thinks that everything that has been sown in our church over its life has prepared us … for this season and for the future." Here, the implication is that God has moved throughout their history, preparing them for the circumstances they find themselves in. He gave the example of the timely theme of the sermon series, "Questions Jesus asked," chosen pre-COVID. The question for Service #1 (the fifth in their series) was "What do you have (that I can multiply at this time)?" Listeners were encouraged to offer what they had to God, trusting that God would multiply it. Here, as in the closing prayer (in which James asked the Spirit for help with patience, endurance, and the ability to look beyond oneself), human dependence on God-who-acts was reiterated.

Theocentric: Towards human flourishing

For each minister, a desired result of their preaching was human flourishing or thriving: shalom. Mark (C3) drew on the Ezekiel text to point to such flourishing. Reflecting on the work of Walter Brueggemann on the Psalms of orientation, disorientation, and new orientation, Mark noted the psalmists' experiences of both closeness to and distance from God. He linked the move "from disorientation to new orientation" with the text where "Ezekiel

offers a vision of their worst moment, their worst disorientation and provides an image of orientation where that which was the worst [the dry bones] is knitted back together." At C1, Rachel also noted the agency of God in this transformation. She assured the hearers that "life can be breathed" into our difficult circumstances. "New life can definitely come and flourish" and the listener can experience "new life, … new breath, … [and a] real home." James (C2) made clear "that God wants us to thrive" during the pandemic. He acknowledged "[that] seems a little ironic and maybe a little hard for us in New Zealand at this time when we find ourselves in complete lockdown." However, he said, "we believe it's possible because we serve a God of the impossible." As James stated throughout, this flourishing was not just for themselves as individuals or as a church, but for the sake of others.

Therapeutic

All three churches incorporated therapeutic elements into their services by acknowledging pain and making space for lament in their sermons, including offering words of comfort. They invited response. Often, these therapeutic aspects occurred concurrently.

Therapeutic: Lamenting … by providing space for pain

The primary way these leaders acknowledged pain was by simply naming the reality that they found themselves in. James (C2) used this method almost exclusively, pointing to the lockdown circumstances time and again throughout his sermon. For example, he acknowledged the challenging season COVID-19 brought. It was unexpected, brought "lots of questions," and caused people to feel "uncomfortable" and insecure, not least due to the loss of control and certainty. He named the potential for loneliness, as they were "experiencing scarcity and isolation in relationships."

Rachel (C1) and Mark (C3) both drew on resources from scripture (and Mark also used a poem) to help their congregations explore their pain and express their current reality. Rachel drew parallels with the experience of the exiled people of God in Babylon. She began her reflection by stating that "we find ourselves in interesting times … dispersed from each other and … trying to navigate an entirely new world." Linking this to the Ezekiel text, she acknowledged "the feeling of dryness, death, dry bones, and … exile" that her listeners, like the Israelites, "can have." She concluded her reflection by specifying the "interesting times" as times of "lockdown" and isolation. In doing so, Rachel named the challenging circumstances, and provided a space for the listener to also acknowledge and examine their own pain, including their "hopelessness" and "longing."

While Mark (C3) also acknowledged the reality of their situation, he was generally less specific about the detail; he made space for parallels between the contexts of Israelite and pandemic, without making them explicit. Near the beginning of his sermon, Mark stated, "[We are in a] time of societal disorientation. Things aren't going how we'd intended at all." However, he generally drew on scripture, and imagery of desert and wilderness, rather than explicitly naming the pandemic context. The exact detail was left open, therefore, allowing the hearer to find themselves in the scriptures, or to connect with others from the bible who have felt a similar pain, and to employ their own words, feelings, and expression. For example, he spoke of Psalms of disorientation where the people ask, "Where is God? Why did God let this happen?" In doing so, he legitimated the asking of such questions, before noting Psalms of reorientation that affirm God's presence. He did not shy away from the difficulty that the enslaved Israelites faced: "Hundreds of people died, [including] the very young and the very old." The Israelites had lost both the young people who represented their "hope for new life in the land" and the "wisdom, knowledge and stories"

that the old people held. "In one valley they had lost their past and their future."

Therapeutic: … and offering words of comfort

The ministers did not stop at providing space to name pain; words of comfort often followed close behind. Each speaker, however, approached this therapeutic element differently. Rachel (C1) made broader sweeps with her words of comfort, allowing them to address more than the pandemic, including things "in our own personal lives that are a bit dry."

James' words of comfort (C2) were often tied to God's activity, not least because "Jesus is with us." James saw God as the ultimate source of comfort. However, James' words of comfort were not always directed solely toward his audience. He encouraged his hearers to themselves comfort others: to offer to others what they had.

Mark (C3) pointed to comfort as he drew on the experiences of Ezekiel, the psalmists and Christ. He implied that we, like them, can experience a new orientation, where we discover that "God hasn't abandoned" us, that "God is there all the time" even in our despair, and that we can "rediscover God's call" on our lives. Here, Mark was linking trust and promises, saying, "We have to trust that a time of new orientation will come." Like James, Mark called for people to support one another: "We need to be kind to each other." Mark, however, was more explicit about the reciprocal nature of this support, noting "we all need support at this time."

Therapeutic: Inviting response

Each minister called for specific responses from the listeners. In addition to noting the inevitability of change, including for the church, these responses fit within three core categories: the individual attendee or hearer, the church, and the wider context. These are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Human response

	Who/what is invited to respond?	**Response relates to…**
1	Attender/hearer	God
		Others
2	Church	The form of the church
		The activity of the church
3	Wider context: community, society, or nation	Opportunity for change
	Inevitability of change	*All - individual, church, society*

For Rachel (C1) there was a sense of hopeful anticipation of what change might come. She invited listeners to commit to living in new ways personally and towards others—including as a society and as a church. She emphasised that the hearers' needed to personally respond to God, finding "new life" and "home" in relationship with the loving God. In relationship to others, she noted the need to find "some ways of being slower, of taking more care, of loving our neighbours." In saying this, her hope was not just for people in the church. The wider community also has a necessity and opportunity to embrace "different ways" of interacting with one another. Finally, she hoped that the pandemic might result in some "new and different ways of being church, [including] a return to some ancient ways as well."

Mark (C3) primarily emphasized the inevitability of change and personal responses. Concerning the former, he advocated for "go[ing] willingly into the desert." While he acknowledged the need to "grieve the change," he looked forward to God's "new way and new call … com[ing] through in our lives." At a personal level, he challenged the hearer to consider, "Am I oriented towards God's call?" and encouraged them that they "can look to the hope of new life" in relationship with God.

Inviting response was the key focus of James' (C2) sermon. The main response he called for was that each person considers Jesus' question: "What do you have that I might be able to multiply at this exact time?" They were invited to bring what they have, for the sake of the well-being of others. "The God of miracles uses

his people to draw others closer to him." The inevitability of change was implicit for James, while he explicitly (and often) emphasized the need for personal, church, and (to a lesser extent) wider societal responses. Most often, his statements applied to more than one of these categories at once, particularly individual responses towards others and the activity of the church. For example, he highlighted a church-wide initiative where everyone was encouraged to regularly contact and encourage three other people throughout the lockdown. While this action was personal, one-to-one, it was also corporate, on behalf of the church. As James noted, "it will go some way to showing that we are people of compassion." There was a similar overlap when actions in response to God had a likely impact on others. For instance, he prayed that the church "would grow in our love and faith in God," continuing to tell the story of their faith "and that future generations will look back and see the faith of God's people … at this time."

CONSIDERING IMPLICATION FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

Consistent with Pembroke's recommendations, these ministers were preaching sermons that were both therapeutic and theocentric. They allowed room for pain to be expressed while naming the hope that can be found in God. Significantly, this hope was not just for the hearers: they were invited into active participation in God's redemptive practices, both through caring for others and by working towards wider societal change.

LAMENT AS BALANCING PAIN AND COMFORT

Lament is a powerful tool for expressing the "pain and injustice" felt in the liminal space between trauma and resolution.[48] As Matthew Kim reminds us, lament should not be rushed over: "we must give our listeners the time they need to vent and wallow in their lament."[49] However, balancing the therapeutic

with the theocentric, the practice of lament (usually) involves expressing both protest at how things are, and (thanks to God) hope in a future that will be better.[50] This balance was achieved in the sermons we analysed.

As Pembroke notes, in divine *therapeia*, "the preacher takes her lead primarily from the message of God's therapy that is found in the particular text she is working with."[51] This was most clearly demonstrated in Mark's (C3) sermon, where he reflected on the Israelites' and Jesus' experiences of disorientation and reorientation. There, Mark legitimated grief, acknowledged the current reality, and pointed towards hope, as he suggested that the hearer should "grieve the change, journey in the wilderness like Jesus, and know that God's new life and way will come for us." This dynamic interplay – lament with hope, (an interplay present throughout the Psalms[52]) helped to situate the therapeutic in the theocentric. God was named as the source of hope, love and redemption, even amid struggle.

Such comfort is not triumphant. It fully acknowledges pain, yet points towards a good God who is beyond the particular situation, and beyond human understanding. This latter point, and the humility it engenders, proved essential in a season of uncertainty when the trauma of the pandemic rendered vulnerable not only us but also our images of God.[53]

Amid such vulnerability, hope comes as a gift, fragile and remembered. There is no straight line, no simple cause and effect, between pain and hope. Hope echoes in the stories shared and the actions taken, because lament does not end with naming our difficulty.[54] Hope is evoked through remembering and telling of God's greatness. Doing so, including through scripture and sermons, can work to make problems seem smaller and less overwhelming.[55] Lament itself offers this balance of pain and hope.

CARING FOR OTHERS

Lament also has the potential to move people beyond their individual concerns. In fact, for Ross, lament "has the potential to be creative and generative" as we move towards becoming "a community of compassion and solidarity."[56]

James (C2) demonstrated this most clearly, including as he invited the listeners (uncertain of how to act) to offer what they had in their hands – including a mobile phone – and to use it to connect with others, intentionally and regularly.[57] As he noted, this was something that everyone could do, even as their usual experiences and ways of being and contributing were not possible.[58]

Two impulses were at play. The first was towards interpersonal connection. As Sibley et al. note, "common threats [as well as bringing risks] also provide an opportunity for people to increase social cohesion and connection."[59] Connection is a core value of C2, so it is unsurprising that it was emphasised so strongly.[60]

The second impulse was evangelistic: sharing "that God is with us" and "being the hands and feet of Jesus … who deliver the good news of God's love into people's lives." Here, James named the potential for others to help their friends by pointing them to the source of peace.

There was a third, perhaps unintended consequence. The pandemic caused a loss of individual agency as decisions imposed by the government and the virus itself severely restricted personal choice. A communal impetus and concern beyond oneself provide a potential means for people, struggling with a loss of autonomy and competency, to regain some sense of personal agency.[61]

WORKING TOWARDS POSITIVE SOCIETAL CHANGE

Wider still, the invitation to work towards societal change is a key aspect of lament: not only crying out to God but acting

towards what Brueggemann calls God's "new thing".[62] Early on in the pandemic, there was for many a sense that perhaps our world might be positively changed as a result of COVID-19. Such a stirring was evidenced, for example, in Tomfoolery's "The Great Realisation," viewed over seven million times, and later published as a children's book.[63]

Three years on, the reality seems to be increased polarization and emboldened racism and misogyny.[64] Globally, health systems struggle and inflation continues to rise. As Marmott and Allen note, COVID-19 "exposes the fault lines in society and amplifies inequalities."[65] Essentially, the pandemic acted as an x-ray, revealing what was already there below the surface. The problems that we face were rooted, not only in a virus, but also in processes, systems, structures, and attitudes that predated the pandemic. There is an ongoing invitation to change and deeper reflection; to acknowledge and work towards solutions for the challenges that COVID-19 has highlighted, challenges that are both ecclesial and societal.

Many types of action are required: An increased emphasis on connection. An honest valuing and naming of human emotion. An (again honest) lament and struggle. A movement away from "a preoccupation with self to a submission to and reliance upon God."[66] Active protest that seeks to ameliorate the effects of the pandemic.[67]

Such a desire for change was evident in each of the sermons reviewed, including Rachel (C1) who looked hopefully towards a "new normal … as we find new and different ways of being church, … community … and country." As the quote often attributed to Winston Churchill says, "don't let a good crisis go to waste."

A word of caution is necessary. As has been the case throughout history, there are different understandings of the nature and cause of contemporary problems, and different visions of the solutions required and how they might be enacted. Humility is required, as is an emphasis on genuine compassion

and solidarity, and careful discernment about what positive change might be.

CONCLUSION

In the trauma and disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a need for shalom. Churches and ministers recognised this need and worked to meet it, including through their preaching. In the first Lockdown services, an overall impetus towards shalom ("well-being that exists in the very midst of threats"[68]) was present in each of the sermons reviewed. In doing so, they mirrored the ancient tradition of lament, providing space to sit with pain, before offering comfort by speaking of God as loving; attentive and faithful; and active and powerful. Their goal was towards not only personal shalom, but participation in God's wider purposes, primarily (in this early stage) for the well-being of other people, also struggling with the pandemic.[69]

Both through and in addition to offering words of comfort, the sermons and other work of the three churches addressed three significant needs. They encouraged deliberate efforts towards interpersonal connectedness, addressing the relational dislocation of the Lockdown. They helped people make sense of the struggle and rebuild a coherent view of the disrupted world. Each minister did so not by ignoring the struggle, but by allowing "the groan[s] of protest and anguish"[70] and pointing to the work of God in their midst and beyond. In doing so, they encouraged not only crying out to God but acting towards God's purposes. They invited participation in God's mission.

In this way, the preaching was what Pembroke would describe as both therapeutic and theocentric. This approach to preaching was effective during the pandemic and provides a helpful model for future preaching ministry, including in times of difficulty or trauma. The preaching retained a therapeutic concern for the hearers, while clearly pointing to God as the source of life, hope and comfort. It appropriately balanced both

comfort and challenge and retained "the essential message of the [biblical] text" being preached.[71]

Three implications for churches have been noted. There is always a need to appropriately balance the therapeutic with the theocentric, to allow grief to be expressed, and to point to God's goodness and grace. A degree of personal agency can be experienced by reaching out to others. The desire to see our world, communities and churches changed for the better should continue to motivate us. Emphasising these three things might help keep us firmly centred on God, attentive and responsive to the therapeutic needs of our church and communities, and also recognises our call to participating in the missio Dei as seen beyond the church. As James (C2) prayed: may there "be a miraculous abundance of love, of grace, of compassion, of kindness, and creative ways" of being the church.

There are several avenues for future research. First, exploring if and how these churches engaged in theocentric therapeutic preaching in their later services will provide insight into longer-term responses to ongoing difficulties. Were the same attributes of God emphasised? To what extent was space continued to be given to lament and naming of pain? Was there a point at which it became unhelpful to speak of the pandemic? Did the way that it was spoken of change over time? Secondly, investigating the preaching of other churches, including churches in different socioeconomic contexts, will provide rich comparative data. Thirdly, the pandemic meant that (although each exact circumstance was unique) pastoral leaders and their congregations experienced the same difficult situation. Further research can explore how ministers balanced an appropriate vulnerability with providing a ministry of steady or non-anxious presence.

NOTES

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5. Particularly prior to the omicron outbreak in early 2022. https://covid19.who.int/region/wpro/country/nz
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14. Craig Ellison, *From Stress to Well-Being: Contemporary Christian Counseling* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003).
15. Tim Harris, "Shalom, Gospel and the Mission of God," in *Flourishing in Faith: Theology Encountering Positive Psychology*, 65-80, 2017.
16. Ibid.
17. Neil Pembroke, *Divine Therapeia and the Sermon: Theocentric Therapeutic Preaching* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013).
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Sasha Bates, "Finding New Languages for Loss." *Therapy Today* 31:6 (2020): 43-45.
23. Robert Beamish, "Preaching in the Time of COVID: Finding the Words to Speak of God," *Practical Theology* 14:1-2 (2021): 47-57.
24. Bates, "Finding New Languages for Loss." Also, see Cathy Ross, "Hope Is Tough: Reflections in a Time of COVID-19." *Practical Theology* 14:1-2 (2021): 86-97.
25. David Nixon, "Despatches from the Frontline: Parish Responses to COVID-19 and Some Initial Analysis." Ibid.: 35-46; Walter Brueggemann, *Praying the Psalms: Engaging Scripture and the Life of the Spirit.* 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2007).
26. Nixon, "Despatches from the Frontline."
27. Ross, "Hope Is Tough."
28. Ibid.
29. Beamish, "Preaching in the Time of COVID."
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid. Matthew Kim reminds us to "preach lament without an immediately happy ending." Matthew D. Kim, *Preaching to People in Pain: How Suffering Can Shape Your Sermons and Connect with Your Congregation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021).
32. Ross, "Hope Is Tough."
33. Beamish, "Preaching in the Time of COVID."

34. Pembroke, *Divine Therapeia*. Bates' third suggestion towards healing is (literal) movement. Useful not only as a means of "shifting stuck patterns and for addressing trauma," movement can also be helpful in "representing pain in a way that words couldn't do." Bates, "Finding New Languages for Loss." During COVID-19, the churches' worship expressions that may involve movement were disrupted. Sharing communion, moving to songs (for example, dancing, clapping or swaying), greeting one another with physical touch, and engaging in embodied worship responses were not possible in a way that was physically shared beyond the viewer's household. However, each of these therapeutic techniques—holding space, drawing on poetic and literary resources, and movement—are possible in an online context. Of course, the form they take may be different.
35. Kim, *Preaching to People in Pain*.
36. Nixon, "Despatches from the Frontline."
37. Kaze Yemtsa, Bachelard. "Using the COVID-19 Pandemic as Fresh Lenses to Generate a Thicker Analysis of Four Research Theories on Discipleship within a Reformed Congregation;" Ibid.: 58-71; Nixon, "Despatches from the Frontline."
38. "Despatches from the Frontline."
39. John Swinton and Harriet Mowat *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM, 2006).
40. The research was reviewed and approved by the School of Arts, University of Otago, New Zealand. For further publications, see Lynne Taylor, "Learning from Bear Hunts, Workouts and Generosity: Noticing Five Ways to Wellbeing in a Pandemic." *Stimulus: The New Zealand Journal of Christian Thought and Practice* 27:1 (2020): 14-19; Lynne Maree Taylor, "Reaching Out Online: Learning from One Church's Embrace of Digital Worship, Ministry and Witness," *Witness: The Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education* 35 (2021): 1-14; Lynne Taylor, "Lessons from and for the Church in Covid Times: Looking Back and Forwards." *Stimulus: The New Zealand Journal of Christian Thought and Practice* 28:2 (2021).
41. All names are pseudonyms.

42. In Service #1, C1 and C3 both drew on the lectionary texts for Year A: 29 March 2020. C2 continued working through their series exploring "questions [that] Jesus asked."
43. Lynne Taylor, "Making Room for the Missio Dei in Missiological Research." *Mission Studies* 37:1 (2020): 52-77.
44. For instance, when Rachel talks about "the dry bones having life breathed into them" the inference is that God did the breathing. Therefore, this was code to *God's activity*.
45. These were: goodness, love, presence and faithfulness, meeting needs, acceptance, true home, personal, active, powerful, preparing us.
46. While the sermons are analysed here, other elements of the worship service also focused on the reality that the viewers were experiencing and offered words of comfort. This was particularly evident at C3, during both their opening statement and the responsive activity that followed the sermon. C1 also did so during their opening reflection. Rachel only recorded her reflection, so it was not possible to explore this in relation to C2.
47. Mark (C2) read Ruth Burgess' poem, *The Desert Waits: An Invitation to Lent.* This poem refers to angels "who come when God decides / that we need their help; / when we are ready / for what they can give us."
https://danny61.wordpress.com/tag/ruth-burgess/ Accessed 15 July 2021.
48. Carla Grosch-Miller, Megan Warner, and Hilary Ison, "Enabling the Work of the People: Liturgy in the Aftermath of Trauma," in *Tragedies and Christian Congregations: The Practical Theology of Trauma*, eds., Megan Warner, Christopher Southgate, Carla Grosch-Miller and Hilary Ison. Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology, 149-66 (Abingdon, UK: Taylor and Francis, 2020).
49. Kim, *Preaching to People in Pain*.
50. John Swinton, *Raging with Compassion: Pastoral Responses to the Problem of Evil.* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).
51. Pembroke, *Divine Therapeia*.

52. Ken Langley, "Preaching Hope and Lament from the Psalms" *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 22:1 (2022): 34-54.
53. The humility is also crucial when it comes to discerning and working towards positive change, as will be discussed in the final subsection.
54. Ross, "Hope Is Tough."
55. Kim, *Preaching to People in Pain*.
56. Ross, "Hope Is Tough."
57. One potential weakness was evident here. One could infer from James' sermon that he thought those in the church did not themselves need support. Rather, they would offer support to others. It is unlikely that was his intention, and the church offered an extensive array of support services, but it does point to the need to be clear about our own vulnerabilities, and the fact that we may offer support to others despite our weaknesses, rather than from a position of strength.
58. Marileen Steyn, Cas Wepener, and Hennie Pieterse, "Preaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa" *The International Journal of Homiletics* 4 (2020): 1-20.
59. Sibley et al., "Effects of COVID-19." This was evident for people surveyed during NZ's national lockdown. They "reported a greater sense of community than those prelockdown" and this was "associated with lower levels of psychological distress." Ibid.
60. Taylor, "Reaching Out Online." While the recording Rachel (C2) uploaded only contained her reflection, she emphasised the importance of connection and hearing one another, mentioning in her introduction that it was "fabulous" to have heard other voices during their Zoom service.
61. Hathaway, "Sense of Belonging." Steyn, Wepener, and Pieterse, "Preaching During COVID-19."
62. Walter Brueggemann, *Virus as a Summons to Faith: Biblical Reflections in a Time of Loss, Grief, and Uncertainty* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2020).

63. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nw5KQMXDiM4 Accessed 6 July 2021. Roberts, Tomos, and Nomoco. *The Great Realization* (New York: Harper Collins Children's Books, 2020).
64. I write this the day after Aotearoa New Zealand's Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, announced her resignation. No politician is perfect, or makes decisions anyone can always wholly agree with. However, it is unacceptable that Ardern has been subject to increasing threats of violence and misogyny. Social media posts (including from some Christian agencies) frequently permit, even encourage, posts and comments sharing misinformation and disinformation, as well as racist, sexist, misogynistic, dehumanizing, and/or threatening content. See, for example, https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/482761/the-hatred-and-vitriol-jacinda-ardern-endured-would-affect-anybody Accessed 20/1/2023.
65. Michael Marmot and Jessica Allen, "COVID-19: Exposing and Amplifying Inequalities." *J Epidemiol Community Health* 74:9 (2020): 681-82.. Much research explores the disproportionate negative impact of Covid-19 on certain communities and groups. For example, Nikki Fortier, "COVID-19, Gender Inequality, and the Responsibility of the State" *International Journal of Wellbeing* 10:3 (2020).
66. Brueggemann, *Virus as a Summons to Faith*.
67. Ryan Patrick McLaughlin, "Lamenting God's 'Good' Creation." Paper presented at the Christian Theology in the Midst of Covid-19, University of Winchester, 2020.
68. Brueggemann, *Peace*.
69. Harris, "Shalom, Gospel, Mission." While shalom is for all creatures, in the first sermons analysed here, the emphasis was interpersonal. (Andrew Shepherd explores ecological dimensions in his article: Andrew Shepherd, "COVID-19 - an Invitation to Ecological Repentance?". *Stimulus: The New Zealand Journal of Christian Thought and Practice* 27:2 (2020): 12-18.)
70. Brueggemann, *Virus as a Summons to Faith*.
71. Pembroke, *Divine Therapeia*.

IN VIEW OF GOD'S MERCY: EVOKING AND INVOKING GRATITUDE IN PREACHING

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ABSTRACT

Although gratitude is sometimes mentioned by homileticians as a motivator for discipleship, its place in sermons remains relatively unexplored. This article considers how preachers can intentionally *evoke* (draw forth) feelings of thankfulness and *invoke* (appeal to) these as the impetus for obedience. This grace-gratitude-obedience pattern may be seen throughout the Bible; however, recent New Testament scholarship has underscored the extent to which, in the first century, grace demanded an active response on the part of recipients. This is evident in Paul's letter to the Romans, particularly as he appeals to readers to offer their bodies to God in view of his mercy—i.e., in gratitude for the grace described in the preceding chapters. Preachers can follow his example in their own sermons. However, to avoid moralism, it is important that listeners are genuinely thankful to God. An interdisciplinary exploration of gratitude offers a framework for helping people feel thankfulness that can be used in sermon-crafting. The *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola are examined as a model for *evoking* and *invoking* Christian gratitude by personalizing God's love in Christ and calling for an active response. Finally, practical recommendations are offered, applicable to a wide variety of models and methods.

INTRODUCTION

> Receive, Lord, all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will—all that I have and possess. You, Lord, have given all that to me. I now give it back to you, O Lord. All of it is yours. Dispose of it according to your will. Give me your love and your grace, for that is enough for me.[1]

This sixteenth-century prayer written by Ignatius of Loyola expresses the overflow of a heart so ravished by the grace and love of God that it cannot help but offer itself back to Him. In beautiful simplicity, it captures the foundation of Christian maturity: surrender of one's whole life to God, recognition that all comes from Him and should be returned to Him for His will, and trust in the sufficiency of His love and grace. Traditionally known as the *suscipe,* the Latin word meaning "receive" with which it begins, this prayer stands in stark contrast with so many prayers that focus on what God can "give" to meet our needs. It articulates the heart posture Paul envisioned when he made his appeal to the Romans (and us) to "offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God" (Rom 12:1).

This is precisely the kind of response that most pastors long to see arise in their congregations as they proclaim the good news of Jesus and His call to discipleship. What more could preachers hope to result from their sermons than this kind of whole-life surrender to God? Yet, one of the most frustrating aspects of preaching, particularly to the same people week after week, is the lack of heart-level response from listeners—those in the pew *and* the one in the pulpit! It can seem as if, with the passing of time, Christians become immune to the gospel, unaffected by the grace of God, and unwilling to offer God even a tithe of their hearts and lives. Spiritual journeys that began with enthusiastic abandon drift into a compartmentalized Sunday religion that protects itself against even the most passionate appeals from the pulpit. How can sermons pierce the spiritual Kevlar so many listeners wear under their church clothes? How can preachers dare to hope that their attempts to proclaim the

Word of God—broken and inadequate as they may be—may inspire the offering of sincere *suscipe* prayers in their listeners, as they present their bodies to God as living sacrifices? This paper will explore the transforming power of gratitude as a key homiletical tool to rouse sleepy disciples and spur them to lives of obedience and surrender.

While ultimately it is the role of the Holy Spirit to produce spiritual fruit in the lives of our listeners, neither they nor we are passive in the process. Dallas Willard states it well: "Grace is not opposed to effort. It is opposed to earning. Effort is action. Earning is attitude. You have never seen people more active than those who have been set on fire by the grace of God."[2] Because of this, it is important for preachers to consider what sets people on fire—what motivates Christians to "make every effort" to progress in their discipleship (2 Peter 1:5, 10, 3:14). Preachers have sometimes employed fear—of hell, judgment, or even earthly "chastisement"—as a means to spur listeners into action. Despite its theological shortcomings and the difficulty of reconciling threats with good news, a fear-based approach has proven effective in some settings. However, in today's Western culture any hint of scare tactics are immediately and firmly rejected, and modern preaching has largely moved away from this approach. No doubt there have also been times when a preacher could appeal to a sense of Christian duty, simply telling their congregations, "this is what the Bible teaches," or "this is what God wants," and at least some would accept it as their responsibility to obey. However, concepts of duty and obligation are becoming foreign to today's individualistic society and are no longer reliable motivators for behavioural change. Moreover, the dangers of "ought"-focused moralistic preaching have been well-documented, and so preachers today are more likely to simply minimize or avoid concrete application altogether than they are to try to motivate it by fear, duty, or any other means.[3] This leads to sermons which, while rightly shining a spotlight on the grace of God, do not pay adequate attention to the call for radical

transformation or what motivates it. It is not difficult to see the results in the Western church today.

This paper will argue that gratitude is a theologically sound, culturally appropriate, and homiletically effective motivator for life-change. Acknowledging the role of gratitude in preaching and spiritual formation is not new. Many homileticians point to thankfulness as an important element in sermons.[4] According to Milton Crum, the purpose of preaching is to "bring about change and evoke thanksgiving."[5] Stephen Farris says sermons should "move the congregation to a more grateful sense of God's love and a determination more completely to obey God's will."[6] Arthur Van Seters describes discipleship as based on "an ethic of grateful response," which causes people to want to live out their faith in practical ways.[7] Brian Chapell discusses the importance of gratitude in practical application, arguing that "believers need to serve God pre-eminently out of loving thankfulness for the redemption he freely and fully provides."[8] Paul Scott Wilson portrays active response (or "mission") as a "chance to express joy and gratitude."[9] Yet, while these and other homileticians acknowledge the place of gratitude in preaching, they tend to mention it only in passing—as a theological construct and safety net against moralism or legalism—without focusing on its motivating power. Few have explored *how* preachers can intentionally harness gratitude in their efforts to help people mature and grow spiritually.

In order to better understand gratitude as a homiletical device we must consider how preachers can *evoke* ("inspire or draw forth") and *invoke* ("appeal to") gratitude in sermons.[10] Both are essential elements in preaching for grateful response. If people do not *feel* grateful, or if that gratitude has faded into the background, it has little power to motivate. So, preachers must understand how their sermons can *evoke* strong feelings of thankfulness for God's gifts of life and salvation. But *feeling* grateful is not the only goal, and so preachers also need to understand how to *invoke* that sense of thankfulness in calling for

obedience, self-surrender, and sacrificial discipleship. Furthermore, they need to do so with confidence that preaching in this way is not spiritually manipulative, but is in fact biblically and theologically justifiable.

This paper will bring together insights from three different fields of study to offer a practical framework for preaching for grateful response. First, it will lay a biblical foundation, showing that this interplay of grace and gratitude underlies the moral and ethical teachings in Scripture, particularly in Paul's letter to the Romans. This will demonstrate that *invoking* gratitude in calling for obedience is a standard part of the biblical pattern. Second, recent scholarship in psychology, spirituality, and virtue ethics will offer insights into what gratitude is, what causes it, and how it may be *evoked* in preaching. Third, the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola will be engaged as a case study of how gratitude can be placed at the center of Christian spiritual formation. Although its non-homiletical nature may seem to make it an odd choice as a model, it contains important lessons for preachers on both *evoking* and *invoking* gratitude in their sermons. Finally, simple recommendations for preaching for grateful response will be offered. These principles may be applied to many homiletical models and perspectives, with the ultimate goal of increased commitment to Christ and loving self-surrender to God in all of life.

GRATEFUL RESPONSE IN THE BIBLE

For centuries, Protestant theologians have noted that the Bible contains both law and gospel. On the one hand, both Old and New Testaments contain commands, rules, guidelines, and instructions for living a life pleasing to God. On the other, both Old and New Testaments paint a picture of a God who is loving and gracious, even when people do not follow his ways. Deliverance from Egypt was a gift to the Israelites, and deliverance from sin and death is a gift offered to all people in

Christ. By no merit of our own—only by the grace of God and the sacrifice of Jesus—we are forgiven, cleansed, and adopted into God's family. We are dependent on this grace, not only in the beginning of our spiritual journey, but on an ongoing, daily basis. At its heart, Christianity is about what God has done for humankind because of His sheer generosity. This must be the message we preach, clearly and repeatedly, to our congregations. Grace should take center stage in the sermon, as in the life of the Christian.

Recent emphasis on this has led some homileticians to downplay "application" in sermons, lest it mistakenly send a legalistic message. But the Bible contains not only grace, but also law—moral and ethical instructions for living a godly life. To swing the pendulum too far away from the practical aspects of the Christian life means listeners are left with too little vision for living out their faith on a daily basis. In Scripture, God reveals His radical grace *and* He calls people to radical discipleship, and so preachers must include both in their sermons. But how does the Bible relate these two aspects of its message? The progression from law to gospel has been given considerable attention, in which God's commands bring conviction of sin and prepare the individual to receive the gospel. However, there is also a gospel–law pattern that emerges throughout Scripture, in which thankfulness for the prior grace of God leads to human obedience. "We love because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Both for the Israelites and the church, the giving of instructions was subsequent to God's saving acts, and part of His redemptive work.[11] This biblical dynamic of grateful response is a simple but powerful pattern that can guide our preaching.

The Shape of Paul's Letter to the Romans

This dynamic can be seen in the writings of the apostle Paul, particularly in his letter to the Romans. Paul's emphasis on God's grace cannot be questioned. It is largely through his letters that we understand the incredible gift given in Christ. But despite this

emphasis on grace, he does not seem to be concerned that his plentiful and detailed ethical instructions would send a contrary message or lead to a new legalism. In fact, he regularly reminded the churches that accepting the gospel implies radical whole-life transformation. His famous words in Romans 12:1–2 were not written to non-believers, but to those who had already accepted the Christian message:

> Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

The very familiarity of these words blinds us to their radical demands, and to how far short we fall of the kind of whole-life transformation they describe. But like Ignatius' *suscipe* prayer, they concisely capture the kind of life to which preachers should regularly call their listeners.

However, Paul's appeal does not occur in a vacuum, but as part of a carefully structured, unified epistle. In fact, although his letter to the Romans provides enough source material to inspire a lifetime of sermons, it is itself much more *like a sermon*—meant to be heard and digested in one sitting.[12] Because of this, it is informative for preachers to consider how Paul leads his readers *to* and *from* the appeal to offer themselves as living sacrifices. The beginning of the twelfth chapter of Romans represents a major shift in the letter, a turning point from "'the indicative' side of the gospel to a focus more on the 'imperative' side of the gospel."[13] The first eleven chapters are spent expounding the Christian message—describing the sinfulness of humanity; our unworthiness before, and even enmity with, God; and God's gracious and loving action on our behalf through Christ. Through Jesus believers are forgiven, justified, released from slavery to sin, given the Holy Spirit, adopted into God's

family, made heirs with Christ, and shown enduring love. Paul sees God's grace at work everywhere, even in the heart-wrenching rejection of the Messiah by his own people. All of this builds toward the astonishing conclusion that "God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all" (Rom 11:32).

Far from being a purely intellectual exercise devoid of emotion, Paul's prolonged reflection on God's grace leads to a climactic outburst of praise:

> Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
> How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!
> "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"
> "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?"
> For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen (Rom 11:33–36).

Not only does he remind the Romans in compelling detail that they are the recipients of an undeserved and indescribable gift, he leads them in a response of verbal worship.

But could words possibly express all the thanks due to such a gracious God? For Paul, there is another response that constitutes "true and proper worship." It is here that he introduces the idea of self-offering, explicitly tying it to the undeserved gifts of God: "*Therefore*, I urge you, brothers and sisters, *in view of God's mercy*, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice…."[14] It is on the basis of the astonishing grace he has spent more than half the letter expounding, that Paul urges them to "be transformed." Douglas Moo explains, "Paul has just summarized that universal mercy of God (11:30–32) and expressed praise for it (11:33–36). Now he calls Christians to respond."[15]

There is a dynamic in this passage that is not made explicit in the text. Just what is it that connects the receipt of God's mercy with the response of surrender? Why does Paul think the one should lead to the other? He describes the response of self-offering as "true and proper"—their logical (to play off the original Greek λογικός) act of worship. What is it that Paul assumes is happening in his readers that will naturally lead them from his reminders of God's infinite grace into self-sacrificial lives of obedience? Is it *fear*, lest God, weary of showing mercy, should change his posture? Is it *obligation*, the heavy burden of an unpayable debt? Is it *duty*, a sense that this is the right or honourable thing to do? None of these fits with the context of a joyous doxology within which Paul makes his appeal. Instead, both Paul and his readers lived under a cultural paradigm that recognized *gratitude* as the appropriate response to a gift, and action as its most important expression. Gratitude is the hidden dynamic that connects "in view of God's mercy" to "offer your bodies as living sacrifices."

Grace and Reciprocity in the First Century

There has been considerable attention paid in recent years to the cultural rules of reciprocity in the Graeco-Roman world, and how they differ from modern assumptions. Understanding the first-century framework of grace, gift-giving, and reciprocity that Paul worked within helps to shed light on his approach to discipleship. Thus, it is instructive to take a fresh look at the word most often translated as "grace" in the New Testament: χάρις. In the Graeco-Roman world this "was not a primarily religious, as opposed to secular, word. Rather, it was used to speak of reciprocity."[16] First, χάρις may have described something pleasing or beautiful; second, an attitude of kindness, generosity, or beneficence; and third, a concrete expression of that generosity, through a particular gift or benefit bestowed. A fourth meaning described the response that was appropriate to any of the first three: gratitude.[17]

The first-century Roman philosopher Seneca employed the popular image of the "three graces"—three maidens dancing hand-in-hand in a circle—to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the varied meanings of χάρις. He describes the proper dance of these graces as one maiden bestowing the benefit, another receiving it, and the third returning it.[18] Although these three acts do not line up precisely with the definitions of χάρις above, Seneca's description captures visually the kind of reciprocal relationships that were pervasive in the first century.[19] The mutual interplay of generosity and gratitude in χάρις had to be kept in balance: "Grace *must* answer grace, or else something beautiful will be defaced and turned into something ugly."[20] Nowhere was this dynamic more active than in patron-client relationships, a broad category of mutually beneficial social relationships that saturated first-century life. Wealthy patrons would demonstrate their χάρις (generosity) by bestowing χάρις (actual benefactions) on clients with some sort of practical need. Clients were then expected to respond with their own χάρις (concrete expressions of gratitude). This mutually beneficial patron-client framework applied not only to human relationships, it also shaped common understandings of divine-human relationships.[21]

As the first Christians learned about the grace extended to them in Christ, they would have received it using these cultural lenses. For them, God's grace would not have been of a different kind than the grace with which they were already familiar; it would have been understood as different only in quality and degree. Moreover, they would have known that the reception of gifts "given freely" laid the recipients under obligation to respond with grace to match (insofar as possible), with the result that much exhortation in the New Testament falls within the scope of directing believers to a proper, "grateful response" to God's favor.[22]

Perfections of the Gift

In his ground-breaking work, *Paul and the Gift*, John Barclay explores how first-century assumptions about reciprocity shed light on Paul's teachings. Particularly relevant to this discussion is his description of various "perfections" of the concept of gift. When different people or cultures idealize gift-giving, they place their emphases on different characteristics. These unspoken assumptions about the "perfect" gift significantly change the implications surrounding it. Barclay outlines six of these possible perfections of the gift: *superabundance*, in which the size, significance, or permanence of the gift is emphasized; *singularity*, which highlights the benevolence of the giver as their sole and exclusive mode of operation; *priority*, which stresses the timing of the gift as prior to any initiative on the part of the recipient; *incongruity*, in which the unworthiness of the beneficiary comes to the forefront; *efficacy*, indicating that the gift fully achieves what it was designed to do; and *non-circularity*, which underlines that the gift is given with no expectation of reciprocity or return.[23]

Barclay argues persuasively that it is the *incongruity* of God's gift in Christ that is emphasized in Paul's writings. In some ways, this was in contrast to the surrounding culture, which encouraged benefactors to bestow gifts on recipients who had proven or would prove themselves worthy. Instead, Paul repeatedly highlights that it is the undeserving nature of the recipients that make God's grace stand out: "Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us . . . . While we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of his Son . . ." (Rom 5:7-10).

Paul's focus on *incongruity* means that reading his writings through the lens of one or more of the other perfections of grace will skew our interpretation. This is particularly important as we consider his letters from a twenty-first century Western perspective, where the emphasis in gift-giving tends to

be on what Barclay describes as *non-circularity*. In today's society, the ideal gift is given without expectation of receiving anything in return. A gift given with "strings attached" is often seen as manipulative, coming from ulterior motives—or worse, as a form of bribery. Because of this, anonymous gifts which preclude even the possibility of saying "thank you," are seen as the ultimate expression of generosity. Accordingly, recipients learn that to try to "repay" a gift with more than a simple expression of thanks would be to taint the purity of the giver's motivation.

The danger of this cultural emphasis, according to Barclay, is that the ideal of *non-circularity*, is a modern construct. A gift with "no strings attached" is unfamiliar to most other cultures, and completely foreign to people in the early church.[24] Gift-giving in most contexts functions as an important way to form and develop relationships. Thus, it necessarily involves reciprocity (and precludes anonymity). This was certainly the case in first century Graeco-Roman culture. Barclay summarizes key features of gift-giving in that context: 1) gifts are generally given in order to create or reproduce social bonds; 2) the rules of reciprocity raise the expectation of return, even in unequal social relations; 3) the recipient of the gift is under a strong, though non-legal, obligation to reciprocate; 4) the gift is often associated with the person of the giver, and is therefore, to some degree, "inalienable"; 5) gifts are usually construed as voluntary and expressive of goodwill, even if they arise from pre-existing bonds of obligation; 6) thus, gifts may be both voluntary and obligatory at the same time.[25] Clearly the ideal of *non-circularity* is incompatible with such a relationship-oriented approach to gifts.

When reading about grace in the New Testament, therefore, "we should assume, unless there is strong evidence to the contrary, that gifts carry expectations of a return."[26] This is evident in the way Paul structures his letter to the Romans. While he clearly and repeatedly emphasizes the *incongruity* of God's grace, he also understands that divine gifts call for human response. In Barclay's words, his "appeal 'by the mercies of God' may be taken to indicate that grace has 'strings attached.'"[27] The

first recipients of the letter would not have been surprised by Paul's encouragement to express their true and proper worship through concrete actions. In fact, their cultural understanding would have already been leading them to the same conclusion as they read: such a great and undeserved gift as God had shown in Christ called for whole-hearted surrender and loyalty, expressed not only through words, but in daily life. This was the only "logical" response.

Painting a Picture of Response

It is important to observe that immediately after his call to self-offering in Romans 12:1–2, Paul launches into extensive and detailed moral and ethical instructions. It is as if he is saying, "offer your bodies as living sacrifices, be transformed by the renewing of your mind, and this is what that should look like." Although he seems to imply that knowing and approving the will of God is a natural result of having their minds renewed, Paul does not leave them to figure it out on their own. He does not assume that the Holy Spirit will guide them in "application," with no human assistance. Rather, he paints a vivid picture of how they as individuals, and as the body of Christ, can live out their worship in daily life—whether in welcoming strangers, submitting to authorities, living in unity with each other, or any of the other detailed ethical instructions included in Romans 12–16.

It is not just the first two verses of Romans 12 that should be understood as a Paul's description of their response to grace. Rather, all of Paul's instructions are to be carried out "in view of God's mercy." Note the breadth and depth of his depiction of what it means to be a living sacrifice, and consider how each relates back to the grace God has revealed in Christ:

> Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of

> you . . . . If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse (Rom 12:3, 6–14).

Consider what he is implying: In view of God's mercy, who saved you while you were still a sinner, "do not think of yourself more highly than you ought." In view of God's mercy, who loves you with an unquenchable love, your "love must be sincere." In view of God's mercy, who in Christ humbled Himself for you, "honor one another above yourselves." In view of God's mercy, who gave His son for you even when you were his enemy, "bless those who persecute you" and "overcome evil with good." Grace has implications for behaviour which are not only generalized ("offer your bodies") but also very specific ("practice hospitality").

We see Paul moving in this letter from a vivid description of God's generosity, to an appeal for a response of gratitude, to detailed instructions on what that response should look like. This assumption that receiving God's grace implies an active response undergirds much of the New Testament. But it is also a common pattern in the Old Testament. Far from being a legalistic system of earning God's favour, the pages of the Old Testament are permeated by grace. Creation is a bountiful gift to humankind; Abraham is chosen and declared righteous before he has any chance to worship or please God; deliverance from Egypt is an act of undeserved mercy; peoplehood and the promised land are

gifts; the wealth and success of the nation are blessings from God's hand; and despite their infidelity, God remains faithful and merciful, always calling the Israelites back to himself through the prophets, and ready to welcome them with open arms were they to respond. Like Paul does, much of the Old Testament emphasizes the *incongruity* of the gifts received from God. Moses reminds the people in Deuteronomy 9:6, "it is not because of your righteousness that the Lord your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people."

However, although these benefits were showered on the Israelites without regard to their worthiness, they were not given without expectation of return. Within the ancient covenantal system, both parties had responsibilities. Israel was called to worship God exclusively *and* to follow His Torah—laws which prescribed a way of life that was "holy," distinct from the nations around them. Not only was Torah seen as a precious gift in and of itself (see Psalm 119), but it was to be their way of expressing gratitude for the blessings God had already given. David Pao explains: "It is clear that keeping the commandments is not to be understood as a way to earn favour in the presence of God. Rather, it is a response to the divine acts of grace."[28]

Because the pattern of grace–gratitude–obedience is a major theme in both Old and New Testaments, it should inform the way preachers approach their task. The supposed polarities of "gospel" and "law," so often placed in tension in homiletical writings, are in fact connected by the strong bond of gratitude. Both are essential aspects of biblical teaching, and neglecting either misshapes discipleship, creating either legalists or nominalists. Preachers should never preach God's grace in a way that discourages human response; and they should never call people to action without first reminding them of what they have been given. Furthermore, unlike Paul, who could assume that his audience would know that receiving the grace of God implied a change in behaviour, preachers in today's Western culture must clearly spell out the necessity of grateful response, lest their listeners project a framework of *non-circularity* on the gospel.

Invoking gratitude in sermons as a reason for obedience is not only biblically and theologically justifiable, it is particularly expedient for preachers today as they work against a culture that has taught people to receive without feeling the need to reciprocate.

However, this does not mean simply telling people that they *ought* to be more thankful and then explaining how they should live. Gratitude cannot be imposed as a moral duty. Richard Lischer rightly warns that used in this way thankfulness can become just another form of moralism.[29] Preachers cannot call for grateful response by badgering and berating their congregations. Thankfulness must arise naturally. So, before preachers can *invoke* gratitude as a motivation for the Christian life, they must learn how to *evoke* it in their listeners, which is the focus of the next section.

INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES ON GRATITUDE

Throughout history, many have recognized the importance of gratitude in moral development. Cicero called it greatest of virtues and the parent of all others. A resurgence of interest in this topic has led to many recent publications—both popular and scholarly—and have made it a regular theme for talk shows and podcasts.[30] But just what *is* gratitude? Is it a mindset or an emotion? To what degree are people able to choose gratitude? Why and when does thankfulness lead to actions and transformation? For answers to these questions, particularly as they relate to preaching, we turn our attention to the fields of moral philosophy, spirituality, and positive psychology.

According to Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman, gratitude is "a sense of thankfulness and joy in response to receiving a gift," which stems from "the perception that one has benefited due to the actions of another person."[31] As an internal posture, true gratitude consists of appreciation, goodwill, and a disposition to act accordingly.[32] While a sense of obligation is implied, unlike other debts, gratitude *feels* good, and is

experienced as a positive emotion.[33] "It is not a debt of justice, since the gift is free, and the debt must therefore not be paid *off*; but it is a debt—a debt of gratitude—that binds the recipient spiritually to the giver."[34]

One of the recurring themes of recent scholarship has been discovering the personal benefits of becoming more thankful. Gratitude functions as an impetus for becoming a moral person and engaging in pro-social behaviour.[35] It leads to happiness, health and well-being; mitigates toxic emotions; curbs antisocial impulses; and is one of the strongest predictors of human flourishing.[36] Popular culture has picked up on this and has presented the development of a grateful disposition as a key to a better, happier life. However, despite its clear benefits and its popularity as a discussion topic, gratitude itself does not seem to be on the rise. "A growing number of social commentators contend that gratitude is a diminishing virtue in modern times and that we are less grateful than in former days."[37] Why is this?

One obvious reason is that the idea of pursuing gratitude only for selfish reasons (health benefits, positive emotions, etc.) raises questions about its sincerity. Can one simply decide to be more thankful in order to experience these benefits? This is particularly questionable in a consumer society marked by the pervasive sense of dissatisfaction which Mary Jo Leddy describes as "soul-destroying and dispiriting."[38] Peterson and Seligman see this as rooted in "the perception that one is a passive victim, a sense of entitlement, a preoccupation with materialism, and a lack of self-reflection."[39] Emmons points to increasing secularism, loss of contact with the natural world, loss of a sense of rootedness in a place, and loss of appreciation of the past as all contributing to a state of disconnectedness and individualism.[40]

This individualism can quickly turn to narcissism and the belief that one is deserving of everything. Gifts are turned into rights, and entitlement takes root.[41] Closely related and driving this sense of entitlement is pride, an inflated view of one's own value. Pride and self-sufficiency are increasingly held in high esteem in today's society, meaning that any sense of being

dependent on others is resisted, seeing it as a threat to autonomy.[42] People are even prone to take *offence* at gifts and givers because they threaten their dignity and self-importance. This is certainly the case when it comes to the Divine Giver, whose Gift demands that self-reliance be laid at the foot of the cross, all rights be waived, and gratitude be expressed by becoming living sacrifices.

Today's popular approach to gratitude is "far removed from historical conceptions that emphasized concepts of duty, obligation, reciprocation, indebtedness, owing and being owed."[43] Furthermore, critics have lamented that "what passes for gratitude today is a generic and vague feeling of well-being that often does not even acknowledge the presence of a giver toward whom one should direct one's thanks."[44] As fewer people believe in a *personal* God, it can be difficult for them to express their recognition of the positive aspects of their lives as gratitude, rather than mere happiness or pleasure.[45]

Cultivating Gratitude

Clearly, preachers who wish to evoke gratitude in people today are faced with a monumental challenge. Even in the case of listeners who believe in a Divine Giver, they must battle with the pride, entitlement, and self-sufficiency that are so pervasive. What can be done in order to overcome these barriers and cultivate greater thankfulness? According to Peterson and Seligman, the consensus of scholarship is that true gratitude occurs when three criteria are met: 1) the benefit must be recognized and evaluated positively by the recipient, 2) the benefit must not be attributed to the recipient's own effort, and 3) the benefit must be perceived as coming from the intrinsic motivation of the giver.[46] Each of these must be present in order to effectively evoke gratitude, and so we will consider each one and its implications for preaching below.

In order for the first criterion to be met, an individual needs to be aware that they have received something, and they

need to evaluate it as something positive and beneficial. Gerald Fagin describes gratitude as the "spontaneous response to the experience of the giftedness of reality," and so the first step is simply *noticing* the gifts we are receiving.[47] "To take something for granted is to cease to acknowledge it as a gift given by someone. We lose touch with the giver. The gift is no longer a gift, but a possession."[48] Cultivating gratitude must reverse this tendency to take things for granted. This is why practices which encourage intentional reflection, such as gratitude journaling, are so vital to developing a grateful disposition. In addition, saying "thank you" is an important way to increase gratitude. While we often assume that feelings of thankfulness lead to its external expression, the converse is also true. Expressing gratitude helps people develop a thankful disposition. "We become virtuous people by performing virtuous actions…. When we regularly *give thanks* for gifts received, we *become a grateful person* apt to recognize the giftedness of all things."[49]

So, the first task of the preacher who wishes to evoke gratitude is simply to help people notice (or remember) what they have been given. The focus may be on the goodness of life and creation, and the providence of God in daily life, or His redemptive acts in history and through Jesus, or the promise of a future life with Him. Whatever the subject, preachers must not assume their listeners are already attentive to the gifts they have received. They must point them out—and keep doing so, week after week.

The second criterion necessary for gratitude to occur is that the benefit must not be attributed to the recipient's own effort. In other words, it must be experienced as unearned or undeserved. A large sum of money is received quite differently depending on whether it is a gift or a paycheque. While an employee might say "thank you" for the paycheque, the gratitude is only surface level because they know they have earned it.[50] No matter how many or how generous the benefits, as long as the recipients believe they are entitled to or deserving of what has been given, they cannot experience them as gifts. Paul

points out this dynamic in Romans 4:4: "Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation."

Because of this, in order to increase gratitude, any sense that the recipient deserves or has earned the gift must be purged. They must face their own shortcomings, coming to a sense that they have been given far more than they deserve. In other words, they must be humble:

> Gratitude seems born of humility, insofar as it acknowledges one's dependence on both natural and supernatural forces . . . . In gratitude and humility the mind is turned to realities beyond itself. Awareness of one's limitations and basic human dependence becomes keener. In gratitude and humility, however, the myth of self-sufficiency is defeated. The grateful look upward and outward to the sources that sustain them. Becoming aware of realities beyond oneself protects one from the illusion of being self-made, being here by right—expecting everything and owing nothing. The humble person says that life is a gift to be grateful for, not a right to be claimed. Humility ushers in a grateful response to life.[51]

Fortunately for preachers, the Christian message is one of humility: "The authentic gospel of the New Testament remains extremely offensive to human pride."[52] Unfortunately, most Christians have long ago ceased to think of themselves as spiritually impoverished sinners and undeserving rebels, and have adopted a more comfortable view of themselves as "pretty good people." While self-loathing is neither healthy nor necessary, it is right and proper that preaching should expose sin and dismantle facades of self-righteousness. To preach for conviction of sin is not cruel and unusual punishment. It is the path to greater joy—if listeners are led from there into a greater experience of God's amazing grace.

This is because gratitude occurs in the gap between a person's perception of what they deserve and what they have

received. As that gap shrinks, the closer they come to entitlement. Even worse, if the gap is reversed and they think that they deserve *more than* they have received, it leads to resentment. However, whenever a person senses that they have received more than they deserve, gratitude begins to emerge. When, either by increasing their awareness of the gifts or their unworthiness, they become convinced that they have received *much more* than they deserve, then the kind of gratitude that leads to life-change bubbles up and overflows.

However, none of that can happen without the presence of the third criterion: the benefit must be perceived as coming from the intrinsic motivation of the giver. There are really two things that must be grasped here: that there is indeed a Giver, and that the gift was given intentionally and generously. To return to our prior analogy, a sum of money could be received as a gift or a paycheque, or it could be found lying on the street with no chance of returning it to its rightful owner. In this latter case, the money would neither be earned, nor would it be a gift. It would simply be a stroke of good fortune. This is how many people perceive their lives today, particularly those who believe life on earth is the accidental product of impersonal forces. They might feel "lucky," but not grateful, at least not in the traditional sense that requires this third criteria. True gratitude can only occur when one has a sense that a gift has been intentionally and generously given by *someone*, out of their own free will.

So, understanding the benevolent character and intentions of the giver is also essential for cultivating gratitude. This means that it is important for preachers to describe not only the gifts that God has given, but also the kindness and generosity with which He gives them. While many Christians would affirm that "God so loved the world," they do not live with a moment-by-moment awareness of God's personal love for them—or that "every good and perfect gift is from above," flowing from His fatherly care (James 1:17). Preachers must continually remind their people that God does not just give for the world's sake, or for His own glory, but out of concern for His individual children.

"If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" (Matt 7:11). This helps to guard the dynamic of grateful response from becoming transactional, framing the gifts of life and salvation in the context of a personal love relationship.

To summarize, preachers who wish to evoke gratitude in their listeners should help them sharpen their perception of: 1) the goodness and abundance of the gifts they have received from God, both in creation and in salvation; 2) their rebellion against and sinfulness before God, making them undeserving of any good gifts from his hand; and 3) God's love, kindness, and generosity toward them.

To evoke gratitude in listeners, it is important that all three aspects be given attention. If someone has a keen sense of the goodness of life and the fact that it is undeserved (criteria one and two), but no sense that it has been given by a loving God (criterion three), they will simply feel lucky. If they have a sense of God's love and an awareness of His gifts (criteria one and three), but no sense of their own sinfulness or unworthiness (criterion two), they will slip into entitlement. On the other hand, if someone has a deep sense of their own unworthiness and an understanding of God's love (criteria two and three), but no awareness of all the good gifts they have received (criterion one), at best they will settle into the kind of joyless resignation that hopes for eternal life but is blind to present blessings. Even worse, they may fall into the kind of spiritual resentment captured by Jesus in his portrayal of the older brother in the parable of the prodigal son: "All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends" (Luke 15:29).[53]

Two Kinds of Gratitude

If cultivating Christian gratitude is simply a matter of helping people become aware of God's gifts, acknowledge their unworthiness, and understand His love, this would appear to be an easy task, readily accomplished. Surely most Christians, if asked, would affirm the basic gospel truths that God is loving, that He gives good gifts, and that they are unworthy sinners saved by grace. Why, then, do we not consistently see the kind of heartfelt, overflowing thankfulness that leads to people to offer themselves as living sacrifices?

Hichem Naar offers insights that helps to explain the lack of transforming, passionate gratitude in church. Rather than looking a gratitude as a single phenomenon, Naar differentiates between two distinct categories of thankfulness. The first, which he calls "generic" gratitude, is primarily cognitive. It is simply the recognition that one has positively benefited from the benevolent actions of another. This belief may be held intellectually without leading to emotional or volitional response.[54] Generic gratitude is thankfulness that is consigned to the head, with little power to affect hearts and wills. This sheds light on why many Christians sincerely say they believe in God's love, His many gifts, and their own unworthiness—and may even *say* they are very thankful to God—but their lives do not demonstrate their gratitude in meaningful ways.[55] It is not that they are completely ungrateful, but that their gratitude is "generic"—consigned to their head and leaving their emotions and lives unaffected.

However, Naar describes a second category which he calls "deep" gratitude. This emerges when the cognitive recognition of a benefit received meets an area of particular concern or "care" for the beneficiary.[56] In other words, the gift must become personally important to the recipient. At this point, gratitude becomes an "affective attitude or sentiment," a lasting disposition that is connected to, but not enduringly dependent on, feelings of thankfulness.[57]

What is needed in the church is not so much a move from ingratitude to gratitude, but from generic to deep gratitude. In order for this to happen, the incredible grace of God expressed in the gospel must go beyond the realm of beliefs and intellect and become personal and meaningful for individuals. In order to cultivate transforming gratitude in preaching, we must not only give attention to what people *believe* about the three ingredients of gratitude, but how they *feel* about them. Preachers must not only to raise awareness, but also seek to create an *experience of gratitude* in their listeners by personalizing God's love, His gifts, and their own unworthiness and neediness. The next section will examine the *Spiritual Exercises* as an example of how this may be done, and a model of how gratitude can be effectively evoked and invoked in Christian spiritual formation.

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES AND GRATITUDE

In the same way that Paul's appeal in Romans 12:1 cannot be taken on its own, apart from the larger structure of his letter, the *suscipe* prayer at the beginning of this paper must be understood in its context. The words "receive, Lord, all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will," were not intended to be an isolated or spontaneous expression of surrender. Rather, this prayer is the culmination of an intentional journey from apathy to joyful and loving surrender. Found in the climactic "Contemplation to Attain Love" near the end of Ignatius' *Exercises*, it is meant to be the heartfelt expression of a soul captured by grace and overflowing with thankfulness. Since the sixteenth century these *Exercises* have proven effective in facilitating relational encounters with Christ, and in catalyzing transformation in the lives of many who have experienced them.[58]

Jérôme Nadal, a close companion of Ignatius, explained that the "secret" to the effectiveness of the *Exercises* is simply that "they teach a method of preparing oneself to receive the word of God and his gospel."[59] For the most part, the *Exercises* follow the life, death, and resurrection of Christ as recorded in the gospels—

employing imagination and reflection to make familiar stories real and personal. It is their close connection to the biblical theology of the saving love of God that makes them effective.[60] Gilles Cusson explains that by bringing exercitants into "admiration and grateful contemplation" of God's plan of salvation, Ignatius "begets an experience of deepening our Christian vocation and of inserting ourselves here and now into the place God offers us in the unfolding history of salvation."[61]

While the main content of the *Exercises* is not particularly inventive, there is no question that they lead people to experience the gospel in a uniquely transformative way. Is there an internal "logic" that is the key to their success?[62] While oversimplification is to be avoided, the concept of grateful response which we have been exploring is certainly a major contributor to their effectiveness.[63] According to Roger Haight, this is not so much about their ability to stir up thankfulness as a passing emotion, but to form a permanent and fundamental moral disposition of gratitude, and to explicitly call for an active response to the gifts received.[64] This makes the *Spiritual Exercises*, despite their non-homiletical format, an excellent case study from which to learn. Clearly, there are limitations on what can be accomplished in one sermon as compared to an extended retreat, but there are patterns and principles to be gleaned from Ignatius' approach that can bear fruit in preaching.

Background

Ignatius' own spiritual journey began around the age of thirty during a prolonged convalescence after sustaining an injury in battle. Because there were none of his preferred novels of chivalry at hand, he resigned himself to reading religious books to pass the time. Two of these would introduce him to the gospel and change his life: Ludolph of Saxony's *The Life of Christ*, and a popular book on the lives of the saints, *Golden Legend*.[65] To his surprise, these books appealed to his romantic notions of knighthood and adventure, creatively redirecting these toward

Jesus and the heroes of the faith who had lived remarkable lives of devotion to Him.[66] Given ample time to reflect and pray, a resolution began to grow in him to give his life to the service of Christ, whatever that would mean.[67]

Upon his recovery, he gave away his clothes, hung up his sword and dagger, and struck out at the age of thirty-one in the loose sackcloth of a pilgrim. His first destination was the town of Manresa, where he went through a prolonged time of spiritual darkness, plagued by guilt, doubt, and despair. However, eventually this period of desolation was lifted by powerful encounters with God that left him with a lasting sense of peace and forgiveness and convinced him of the truth of the gospel beyond a shadow of a doubt.[68] He experienced "an overwhelming sense of everything coming to us from the hands of a loving God who desires to share goodness and life. His heart was moved with profound gratitude."[69] From that point forward, Ignatius began to turn his focus outward, "to labour with Christ for the salvation of others."[70]

Because of the transforming power of his own encounters with God, Ignatius wanted to help others have similar experiences. It was during his time at Manresa that he first sketched out and began to lead people through his *Spiritual Exercises*, which would become the hallmark of his approach to formation, decision-making, and teaching others to find God in daily life.[71] Ignatius described their "principle and foundation" as the belief that "human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord," and that all created things (including one's own self) and are to be employed solely to this end.[72] Their stated purpose is to help the participant "overcome oneself, and to order one's life, without reaching a decision through some disordered affection."[73] The *Exercises* were meant to stir new passion in nominal Christians, and help them make God their first priority in all of life's decisions—to "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness" in all things (Matt 6:33).

Exercitants (participants in the *Exercises*) are led through four "weeks" (not necessarily literal seven-day periods) which

include prescribed prayers, self-examination, imaginative gospel meditations, rich metaphors and analogies, and free-flowing colloquies (imaginary conversations) with Christ, the Father, and occasionally Mary. Each "week" in the exercises has a particular theme or themes, perhaps best captured by the "grace" for which Ignatius instructs exercitants to pray. The first week of the exercises consists of a penetrating look at one's own sinfulness, during which exercitants ask God for "shame and confusion" about themselves, and "sorrow and tears" for their sins.[74] The second week asks for the grace to "be ready and diligent" to do the will of God, and proceeds through careful reflection on events of Christ's life leading up to Palm Sunday, with a repeated theme being "and all this for me!"[75] In the third week the request is for "heartfelt sorrow and confusion, because the Lord is going to his Passion for my sins."[76] Reflection turns to the passion of Christ—the Last Supper, his prayer in the Garden, the trials, his crucifixion, and the removal of his body from the cross. The fourth week takes a decidedly jubilant turn as the focus moves to the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the grace asked for is "to be glad and to rejoice intensely."[77] It is in this fourth week, as the *Exercises* are drawing to an end that the "Contemplation to Attain Love" occurs, a profound reflection on God's grace and the individual's response that is viewed by many as the summit of the experience.

How do the *Exercises* so consistently evoke a response of gratitude in participants? Greater insight into this can be gained by looking at them through the previously introduced criteria for gratitude: an awareness of the gift, a sense that it is undeserved, and belief in the good intentions of the giver. Each of these criteria can be seen in the *Exercises*, contributing to their effectiveness in *evoking* gratitude. We will examine them below in the sequence in which Ignatius employs them.

Bringing Sin into Focus

After a brief introduction stating the principle and foundation of the exercises, the focus immediately turns to sin. Ignatius begins by giving instructions for an exercise he calls the "daily particular examination of conscience," which focuses on a single sin or fault that the individual wishes to amend. This involves resolving, upon rising in the morning, to guard carefully against that sin. At noon, the exercitant is told to ask God for the "grace to recall how often one has fallen into the particular sin or fault."[78] As they review morning, hour by hour, the exercitant is to enter a dot in a chart for each time they fell into the that sin, resolving to do better in the future. This exercise is to be repeated after supper, and every day during the exercises. The chart serves as a visual reminder of the participant's struggle against sin. Furthermore, Ignatius recommends that "each time one falls into the particular sin or fault, one should touch one's hand to one's breast in sorrow for having fallen," as a physical reminder of the participant's sinfulness.[79]

While Ignatius states that the goal is to help get rid of the sin or fault, it is clear that he does not expect this to be a quick and easy process. He has exercitants compare their charts from each week "to see *if* any improvement has been made."[80] Clearly, he does not have a high view of the human capacity for self-improvement. Why, then, does he begin the *Exercises* with this particular focus? While he does not overtly state it, this attention given to a particular sin, committed many times despite resolutions to guard against it, clearly helps pave the way for more general meditations on sin and one's own sinfulness.

In the actual meditations of the first week, Ignatius seeks to drive home the seriousness of sin and its consequences. Exercitants are to reflect on the angels that sinned and were cast into hell, on Adam and Eve and the far-reaching consequences of their one sin, and on anyone who has faced judgment and damnation for only one or a few sins. In each case, the exercitant is to consider how much more frequently and flagrantly they

have sinned—although they have (to this point, at least) escaped punishment. "I will call to memory the gravity and malice of the sin against my Creator and Lord; then I will use my intellect to reason about it—how by sinning and acting against the Infinite Goodness the person [who has sinned less than me] has been justly condemned forever."[81]

Ignatius continues building this theme, as the exercitant asks for "growing and intense sorrow for my sins." He has them examine the "court-record" of charges against them by calling "to memory all the sins of my life, looking at them year by year or period by period."[82] As he continues to build a sense of unworthiness, he asks the individual to reflect on their own relative unimportance by asking, "What is all of creation when compared with God? And then, I alone—what can I be? . . . I will consider who God is against whom I have sinned, by going through his attributes and comparing them with their opposites in myself: his wisdom with my ignorance, his omnipotence with my weakness, his justice with my iniquity, his goodness with my malice."[83]

Vivid imagery is employed, as exercitants are told to imagine the sights, sounds, and smells of hell. They are to picture themselves as "a sore or abscess from which have issued such great sins and iniquities and such foul poison," as "a knight who stands before his king and his whole court, shamed and humiliated because he has so grievously offended him, from whom he had received numerous gifts and favours," and "as if I were being brought in chains to appear before the supreme and eternal Judge."[84] Ignatius wants all of this to have an emotional effect on participants. The second exercise, he says, should culminate in "an exclamation of wonder and surging emotion, uttered as I reflect on all creatures and wonder how they have allowed me to live…. How is it that [the earth] has not opened up and swallowed me, creating new hells for me to suffer in forever?" This is followed by an immediate expression of thanks to God for "giving me life until now."[85]

In a particularly powerful moment, exercitants are told to imagine Christ, hanging in agony on the cross in front of them, and to consider these questions: "How is it that he, although he is the Creator, has come to make himself a human being? How is it that he has passed from eternal life to death here in time, and to die in this way for my sins? . . . What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I do for Christ?" Then, "gazing on him in so pitiful state as he hangs on the cross, speak out whatever comes to your mind."[86]

What is the purpose of such dramatic focus on sin? As seen in the very first exercise, Ignatius does not expect all of this to lead to immediate repentance. Neither does he wish to inflict punishment or misery as an end in itself. Rather, he is very carefully creating a sense of unworthiness in the participant that will allow them to better receive and appreciate God's gifts of life and salvation. He forces people to confront their own sinfulness, both by tracking their (losing) battle with a specific sin, and by having them reflect on all of the sins in their lives. This also *personalizes* their need for salvation, which, in line with Naar's framework, prepares them to move from generic to deep gratitude. The vivid portrayal of the consequences of sin sharpens the sense of need to an even greater extent. All of this helps to develop the kind of humility that counters any sense of pride and entitlement and leads the participant to a sense of desperation like that articulated by Paul in Romans 7:24: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?"

What can preachers learn from the way Ignatius begins his *Exercises*? First, although his end goal is a grateful and loving relationship with a good God, he starts with sin and shame. Popular culture today denies sin and rejects shame as something unhealthy and soul-destroying.[87] Certainly, preachers have been guilty of using shame in ways that are manipulative and damaging, but today there is pressure for them to avoid biblical perspectives on sin, guilt, and shame altogether. The temptation is to focus only on God's grace and love, without ever shining the

spotlight on the seriousness of sin and its consequences. Yet, as our earlier model made clear, unless people sense that a gift is undeserved, they cannot experience true gratitude. Worse, if they mistakenly believe that they *do* deserve God's gifts, they can become frustrated or angry when He does not give them what they want. This means that preachers who wish to evoke gratitude must, counterintuitively, never shy away from proclaiming the seriousness of sin and judgment—even in ways that produce some degree of guilt and shame in listeners. Fortunately, if they continue to follow the model of the *Exercises*, "the grace of shame, confusion and sorrow does not linger…but is reconfigured in a new identity: gratitude."[88]

It is also instructive that Ignatius does not begin with "sinfulness," but rather one particular sin of the individual's own choosing. By raising awareness of this one sin, it paves the way for individuals to grasp the larger reality of their own sinfulness, both intellectually and emotionally. In contrast, when preachers today actually do address sin, they often speak of "sinfulness" in generic terms, expecting their listeners to automatically fill in the blanks. This can make it easier for listeners to relegate sinfulness to an abstract theological idea, with no sense of personal reality. To help people understand sinfulness, they must be made aware of specific sins in their lives—how present they are on a daily basis, and how futile their attempts to overcome them often prove to be.

Although prolonged reflection or chart-making would be difficult in the sermon itself, listeners can be encouraged to do these on their own time. The sermon itself can include brief pauses where the congregation is given a chance to briefly reflect on the operation of a sin in their own lives. Furthermore, the preacher may offer a description (autobiographical or imagined) of what it looks like to struggle with a particular sin on a daily basis, narrating the internal and external dynamics in real-life scenarios. Painting a vivid picture of a particular sin allows listeners to see it in their own lives, shakes them from their complacency, and reminds them that—even if they have been

Christians for many years—they are still unworthy sinners. This takes direct aim at the root causes of ingratitude described earlier—entitlement and pride—and opens the door for a far greater experience of grace.

Experiencing the Love of the Giver

Another necessary ingredient for gratitude is belief in a giver: that good has happened not by sheer luck or chance, but because someone has caused it intentionally, for the benefit of the recipient. As exercitants begin to examine the life and mission of Christ in the second week, the focus becomes the good intentions of God and His plan of salvation. Reflection on the incarnation takes on a cosmic perspective as they consider "how the Three Divine Persons gazed on the whole surface or circuit of the world, full of people; and how, seeing that they were all going down into hell, they decided in their eternity that the Second Person would become a human being, in order to save the human race."[89] Ignatius knows that salvation cannot be received as a gift if God were somehow constrained to offer it. So, he paints a picture of the Godhead *deciding* to rescue human sinners. This is not to be experienced only as a gift for humankind in general, as revealed in the prayer for "an interior knowledge of our Lord, who became human *for me*, that I may love him more intensely and follow him more closely." [90] Ignatius thus highlights the intentionality of the Giver, and the personal nature of His action. To drive this home, he further engages the imagination: "I will listen to what the persons on the face of the earth are saying; how they speak with one another, swear and blaspheme, and so on. Likewise, I will hear what the Divine Persons are saying, that is, 'Let us work the redemption of the human race.'" He has them imagine the deeds of humans—wounding, killing, going to hell—while Christ is humbling himself in the incarnation.[91] All of this serves to enlarge the goodness of God, and His shocking generosity.

Not only has God acted decisively for the good of exercitants, but the sacrificial obedience of other people has also been to their benefit. They are to imagine themselves with Mary, Joseph, and the newborn Jesus. "Behold and consider what they are doing; for example, journeying and toiling, in order that the Lord may be born in greatest poverty; and that after so many hardships of hunger, thirst, heat, cold, injuries, and insults, he may die on the cross! And all this for me!"[92] This, then is repeated for each of the chosen scenes of Jesus life leading up to His triumphal entry. "All this for me"—not "us" or "humanity"—becomes an intimate refrain, driving home the personal nature of the gospel. It is reminiscent of Paul's experience of Jesus as "the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20).

It is notable that Ignatius does not spend a great deal of time directly dealing with God's nature. He assumes his exercitants have some degree of familiarity with Christian doctrine and teachings, and so does not need to delineate the goodness of God, his power and sovereignty, or his grace from a theological perspective. Rather, he is trying to create a fresh, personal experience of these realities for those who likely already grasp them intellectually. He does this by prolonged reflection on God's ultimate self-revelation, the incarnate Christ. Because most of the *Exercises* are reflections on Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection, it allows exercitants to discover God's gracious character in concrete terms. By the time they reach the end of the exercises, they have come to know the Father by spending many hours with the Son. It is this relational connection that convinces participants of the goodness and love of God to such an extent that, even if they face poverty, sickness, and death, they still respond in trust.

What can preachers learn about evoking gratitude from Ignatius' approach in this area? First, effectiveness may not be so much about teaching people *about* God's attributes, as it is about helping them to encounter them personally. There is no greater way to do this than by leading them to Jesus, because there is no clearer or greater revelation of God's character. Encouraging

growth in this aspect of gratitude is largely helping people see Jesus clearly. As they get to know Him and experience His love and power, there will be no doubt that the good things come from a good Giver. Ignatius' use of imagination is also instructive. His approach helps to personalize the relationship with Christ in a way that theological principles simply cannot. Preachers, too, can leverage this by encouraging people to put themselves into the stories of Jesus—helping them feel his healing touch, hear his words of mercy, see his compassionate gaze. Using the imagination to engage the senses in biblical stories helps to drive home their reality, bringing the grace of God in Christ into the physical world.

Counting Every Blessing

Ignatius was keenly aware that Christians often took God's gifts of life and salvation for granted and saw this as deadly poison to the spiritual life. In a letter to Fr. Simon Rodriques, dated March 18, 1542, he writes:

> It seems to me . . . that ingratitude is the most abominable of sins and that it should be detested in the sight of our Creator and Lord by all of His creatures who are capable of enjoying his divine and everlasting glory. For it is a forgetting of all the graces, benefits, and blessings received. As such it is the cause, beginning, and origin of all sins and misfortunes.[93]

Because of this, the idea of noticing God's gifts and giving thanks pervades not only his *Exercises*, but the whole "Ignatian" approach to spirituality. Ignatius advised busy scholars to forego long periods of meditation, and simply become more aware of God in daily life. They were to notice "the presence of our Lord in everything: their dealing with other people, their walking, seeing, tasting, hearing, understanding, and all our activities. For his Divine Majesty is truly in everything by his presence, power,

and essence."[94] Accordingly, the *Exercises* are saturated with this simple expectation that God is close at hand, and that His grace is offered generously and continually.

The "General Examination of Conscience"—found in the *Exercises* but also practiced on an ongoing basis as the "Daily Examen"—provides a regular reminder of the need to express gratitude to God. "The First Point is to give thanks to God our Lord for the benefits I have received from him."[95] For Ignatius, these benefits include life itself, daily providence, and God's redemptive work—the gifts of salvation *and* creation.[96] The *Exercises* devote prolonged attention to Christ's self-gift, and the spiritual benefits bestowed through it. However, Ignatius does not diminish God's more ordinary gifts. In the "Contemplation to Attain Love," he has participants carefully and creatively consider all the richness of life, pondering "with deep affection" what God has done for them:

I will call back into my memory the gifts I have received—my creation, redemption, and other gifts particular to myself. . . . I will consider how God dwells in all creatures; in the elements, giving them existence; in the plants, giving them life; in the animals, giving them sensation; in human beings, giving them intelligence . . . . I will consider how God labors and works for me in all the creatures on the face of the earth…. I will consider how all good things and gifts descend from above.[97]

It is as if he seeks to overwhelm the exercitant with a sense of being surrounded and supported by countless tokens of God's love. As they "count" their blessings, sincere gratitude cannot help but arise.

What can preachers learn from Ignatius about this third aspect of evoking gratitude? Simply that people easily forget or take for granted God's blessings in life and salvation and need to be reminded—often. Preachers may assume that their congregations already "know" all that God has given them, and so fail to articulate His benefits on a regular basis. But *knowing* is different from *remembering*. Ignatius explains on the very first page of the *Exercises* that "what fills and satisfies the soul

consists, not in knowing much, but in our understanding the realities profoundly and in savoring them interiorly."[98] Regularly bringing people back to the foot of the cross, where God's greatest gift was given, is not to treat them as biblically illiterate. Neither is it treating them as spiritually or emotionally immature to remind them of the gifts of everyday life. Rather, helping people notice again the grace of God is to recognize that, like the Israelites in the Old Testament, we are spiritually forgetful. This is why the Psalmist urges his own soul to "forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2). Reminders from the pulpit of the giftedness of life is a true gift to listeners, and can be a breath of fresh air to those who are burdened with its difficulties.

The Action Question

Although Ignatius was clearly concerned about helping people experience gratitude, he was not content to simply leave them *feeling* more thankful. He wanted their thankfulness to lead to life-change. "Ignatius intended the *Spiritual Exercises* to be a transformative process, in which we would be so moved with gratitude for God's bountiful goodness that the resulting love would evoke generous desire to give in return."[99] He believed that gratitude and love were the proper motivators for the life of discipleship—but he did not assume that it would happen automatically. Instead, he repeatedly brings exercitants back to what Fagin calls "the action question."[100] What kind of concrete response is called for by this grace and gratitude?

The "action question" comes into sharpest focus near the end, but throughout the *Exercises* Ignatius is carefully leading participants in that direction. In the first week, as exercitants contemplate Christ on the cross, imagining their Lord beaten, bloody, and in great pain, Ignatius has them ponder, "What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?"[101] Examining one's past and present service to Christ in plain view of the cross is, to say the least, humbling—and an effective way to evoke the sorrow for sin that is essential

to that first week. In this context, the third question ("what ought I to do for Christ?") functions more as a foil for the participant's sinful reality than a guide for the future. However, as the first week's focus on sinfulness is left behind, the "action question" takes on a more future-oriented tone.

In week two, Ignatius uses an analogy to remind exercitants that Christ is on a mission and has invited them to join Him. He paints a picture of a good, kind, and generous earthly king on a mission to conquer the world, pointing out that anyone who refused to answer the call of this earthly king would be "scorned and upbraided by everyone." He then reasons:

> How much more worthy of consideration is it to look on Christ our Lord, the eternal King, and all the world assembled before him. He calls to them all, and *to each one in particular* he states: "My will is to conquer the whole world and my enemies, and thus to enter into the glory of my Father. Therefore, whoever wishes to come with me must labor with me, so that through following me in the pain he or she may follow me also in the glory." . . . All those who have judgment and reason will offer themselves wholeheartedly for this labor.[102]

Ignatius uses culturally appropriate imagery and emphasizes the individuality of Christ's call to drive home the concept of mission in a fresh way. He does not hide or sugar-coat the cost of service to Christ, but has exercitants offer themselves in prayer, expressing their desire and decision to imitate Christ even in "bearing all injuries and affronts, and any poverty, actual as well as spiritual."[103] The King is not inviting his subjects to an easy journey, but the fact that he will travel with them makes the hardships easier to bear. In a similar vein, the image of the Three Divine Persons looking out over the earth and sinful people, and deciding "to save the human race" captures the heart of the *missio Dei* and roots the "action question" in the prior action of God.[104]

In the third week, the exercitant reflects on the Last Supper, betrayal, judgment, crucifixion, and burial. As they do so each day, Ignatius has them consider, "how he suffers all this for my sins," and then return to the earlier question: "What ought I to do for Christ?"[105] This time, though, the question is not meant to contrast with past failures, but to prepare the participant for a new reality, rooted in the joy of the resurrection and in response to God's indescribable gift. All of this leads to its culmination in the Contemplation to Attain Love. By this point, exercitants are well aware of their own unworthiness, the goodness of God, and the many gifts they have been given. Now Ignatius spells out the dynamic of grateful response most explicitly, as participants ask for "interior knowledge of the great good that I have received, in order that, stirred to profound gratitude, I may become able to love and serve his Divine Majesty in all things."[106]

To "stir up" this gratitude, Ignatius has the participant consider at length the many gifts of God: "my creation, redemption, and other gifts particular to myself. I will ponder with deep affection how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much he has given me of what he possesses, and consequently how he, the same Lord, desires to give me even his very self."[107] It is at this point that the *suscipe* prayer occurs, as the exercitant considers what the proper response to such divine generosity might be:

> Then I will reflect on myself, and consider what I on my part ought in all reason and justice to offer and give to his Divine Majesty, namely, all my possessions, and myself along with them. I will speak as one making an offering with deep affection, and say: Receive, Lord, all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will—all that I have and possess. You, Lord, have given all that to me. I now give it back to you, O Lord. All of it is yours. Dispose of it according to your will. Give me your love and your grace, for that is enough for me.[108]

Three more times the exercitant is led to think through various gifts of God, to consider their appropriate response, and to pray the *suscipe*.

What can preachers learn about invoking gratitude from all of this? First, it is important not to simply spring the idea of grateful response on the congregation at the end of the sermon, to motivate future "application." Rather, they can be encouraged at various points to consider their own response to Christ—what they have done, are doing, and ought to do for Him. This does not need to be made explicit or given prolonged attention—brief allusions to the expectation of discipleship will suffice to raise the listener's awareness.

Second, it is important that, like Ignatius, preachers learn to ask the "action question": What are you going to *do* in response to God's grace and mercy? Sometimes the answer to this question will be explicit in the text or implicit in the particular shape that grace takes: you have been forgiven, show your gratitude by forgiving others; you have received material blessings, meet the material needs of others; you are embraced by God's love, imitate Him by living a life of love. Other times, God's grace will call for a more general response of love, surrender, and submission to God. Whatever the case, the "action question" needs to be presented, and the listener needs to be given time—if only a few moments of silence—to consider the answer for himself or herself. Part of the power of the *Exercises* is that they are not overly prescriptive, but leave room for individual responses. It can also be powerful to verbalize this new commitment in prayer. Depending on their own preference and liturgical context, preachers could write a prayer of response and commitment, as Ignatius did in the *suscipe*, or simply leave space for listeners to pray in their own words.

One final, but significant lesson for preachers comes from observing the way in which Ignatius frames the exercitant's response. From the very title, it is clear that the goal of the final contemplation not to produce surrender, commitment, or even gratitude—but "to attain love." In keeping with that, Ignatius

prefaces it with two "preliminary observations" on the nature of love: first, that it "ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words," and second, that is "consists in a mutual communication between two persons. That is, the one who loves gives and communicates to the beloved what he or she has, or a part of what one has or can have; and the beloved in return does the same to the lover . . . . Each shares with the other."[109] The Christian life is a matter of a love relationship between the individual and God, in which each gives and receives. God has taken the first step, expressing his love not just through words but through deeds—by coming to earth, suffering, dying, and rising again. Such a love could never be equalled, but how could it be left unrequited? In view of God's self-offering, how can the beloved help but reciprocate, offering himself or herself as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God? By framing the "action question" in terms of relationship, mutuality, and love, Ignatius protects against a transactional or obligatory view of the Christian life that might indeed lead to action but is not the kind of relationship God wants with his children.

Preachers who wish to harness the motivating power of gratitude must also be sure not to turn it into a mechanical or duty-driven process. Increasing gratitude is not, in the end, a way to get Christians to behave better. It is, rather, a means to help them experience God's love and express their own love to him in the context of a growing relationship. Preaching for grateful response is about helping the personal connection between the individual and God grow and flourish. In this way, it is less like selling a new product to boost spiritual vitality, and more like providing marriage counselling. It may include making listeners aware of their own shortcomings in the relationship, bringing them face-to-face the destructive tendencies of their past and present behaviour, helping them rediscover and admire their spouse's good qualities, and challenging them to make changes to better show their appreciation. But all of this is done with the goal of increasing love in a covenant relationship. Grateful response to God is more

about intimacy than reciprocity. It simply uses the power of gratitude to catalyze the kind of love-in-action that breathes new life into this sacred relationship.

CONCLUSIONS

Evoking and Invoking Gratitude in Sermons

The primary goal of this paper was to explore how preachers could harness the motivational power of gratitude by *evoking* and *invoking* it in their sermons. We have covered a great deal of material, so a summary of what was discovered about each of these concerns is in order.

To *evoke* gratitude, preachers need to raise awareness in their listeners of three things: the abundance of the gifts they have received, their own unworthiness as recipients, and the loving and gracious heart of the Giver. Furthermore, they need to make each of these areas personal, seeking to move their listeners from a generic head-gratitude to a deep, transformative heart-gratitude. Illustrations, metaphors, times of silent reflection, self-evaluation, and even a healthy amount of guilt and shame can help to rouse sleepy disciples and recapture their hearts.

To invoke gratitude, preachers need to learn to ask "the action question": what are you going to do in response to all the good gifts God has given? Rather than presenting the "application" part of the sermon as a list of instructions, they need to leave room for listeners to come up with their own response, where possible. While prescription is to be avoided in application, description can be very helpful—like Paul, they should not shy away from spelling out obedience with specificity. Of course, this should always be tied back to the grace received from God, whether it is specifically tied to a gift of God ("Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you," Rom 15:7) or generally tied to God's graciousness ("In view of God's mercy, offer your bodies," Rom 12:1). Moreover, gratitude

should be highlighted as foundational for the Christian life, although preachers should ensure that the pattern of grateful response does not become transactional or mechanical. Rather, it should be framed in the context of a loving relationship, emphasizing intimacy above reciprocity.

The Structure of Grateful Response

Many homileticians have pointed out the theological implications of sermon structure. Dennis Cahill writes, "Sermon design is not just a matter of what works. Sermon design also relates to theology, literary form, and to the culture of the world in which we live."[110] Fred Craddock went so far as to say that "it is probably a clearer and more honest expression of [the preacher's] theology than is the content of sermons."[111] The intent of this paper was not to propose a rigid new framework; yet, preaching for grateful response does have important implications for the way that preachers structure their sermons.

In essence, there are two structural principles that may be derived from what we have considered in this paper. The first is that sermons should generally be constructed so that a proclamation of God's grace precedes the call to obedience. Proclaiming grace without calling for obedience runs the risk of lackadaisical Christianity and antinomianism. Calling for obedience without offering grace is inevitably a recipe for legalism and moralism. Both must be present in sermons; however, the order is also important. If the call to obedience comes first *and then* grace is offered it can create confusion for listeners. It is as if the preacher is saying, "do this, because it is what God desires" and then following it with "it does not matter if you do this, because God is gracious." On the other hand, moving from grace to obedience brings much greater clarity: "God is gracious regardless of your behavior," and then, "here is how you can show your gratitude to him *by* your behavior." Preachers should be aware of these structural implications and endeavour to move from grace to obedience when possible.

The second principle which may be derived from our study is that grace and obedience should be *explicitly* linked by gratitude. It is not enough to simply imply that response is to be grateful. Granted, Paul was able to do this in his letters because gratitude would have been read between the lines by his recipients. However, in our culture that encourages gifts to be received without feeling a need to reciprocate (non-circularity), the expectation that gratitude should be expressed through actions must be repeatedly and clearly driven home for our listeners. The goal is that over time grateful response becomes so ingrained that it affects their thinking on a day-to-day basis as they face moral and ethical choices: "In *this* situation or decision, how can I best show my gratitude to God for all that He has given me?"

This intentionality in structure does not mean a dramatic reworking of a preacher's established style. It may be incorporated into existing approaches with only subtle shifts. While an in-depth analysis of how these principles interact with well-known sermon models would be instructive, it is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a few preliminary thoughts and possibilities are offered here as examples.

Paul Scott Wilson describes his four-page model as moving from trouble to grace—our 'no' to God (and God's 'no' to us) to God's 'yes' to us.[112] This could be tweaked to include a "fifth page" of grateful response, painting a picture of our subsequent and responsive "yes" to God.[113] Eugene Lowry's homiletical loop already follows the first structural principle, moving from the fourth step "experiencing the gospel," to the fifth, "anticipating the consequences."[114] Simply linking these expressly with an appeal to gratitude will offer greater clarity on their relationship and the motivation behind practical changes. In a similar way, in Henry Mitchell's celebratory approach to preaching, grateful response can be the natural outflow of the joyful climax.[115]

While they do not prescribe a structure per se, Haddon Robinson, Sidney Greidanus, and Thomas Long each suggest

that it is important for preachers to consider not only what a sermon wants to *say*, but also what it wants to *do.* They describe these as idea and purpose, theme and goal, and focus and function, respectively.[116] Preaching for grateful response calls attention to *how* the sermon will do its work in listeners—at least when the goal is a change in behavior. While it would be an overstatement to claim that the idea/theme/focus should always be the grace of God, and the purpose/goal/function should always be some form of grateful response, this could certainly become a regular pattern in preaching.

What is essential, though, is not that the idea of grateful response come to the forefront of every sermon, but that it becomes a background principle for preaching in general, and that the basic pattern of *grace–gratitude–response* becomes an ingrained way of thinking about the Christian life—both for preachers, and their listeners. Learning to think in these terms will naturally affect all kinds of sermons, whether inductive or deductive, expository or topical.

For Further Study

Further consideration of how preaching for grateful response interacts with other homiletical models and strategies promises to be fruitful. There remains much work to be done in other areas, as well. The goal of this paper has been largely practical, rooted in the difficulties that preachers face in motivating their listeners. While biblical justification for employing gratitude as a motivator was briefly outlined, deeper theological reflection is needed. John Calvin wrote extensively on the role of gratitude in the Christian life, especially as he considered what he called the "third and principal use of the Law." His theology of union/participation offers an important safeguard against a human-centred approach to spiritual formation. Insights from his theology can further enhance the concept of preaching for grateful response.[117]

Furthermore, while we looked briefly at Paul's letter to the Romans, space did not permit a deeper examination. A more robust study of how Paul evokes and invokes gratitude in this letter are needed.[118] We have reflected on how he appealed to gratitude at the beginning of chapter twelve. However, initial observations indicate that in his first eleven chapters, Paul employs all three strategies we have explored. He describes the incredible gift of Jesus, makes it clear that it was completely undeserved, and enlarges the goodness and love of God—in a way that brings each home on a personal level, targeting hearts as well as minds. For example, his use of different voices in painting a picture of human sinfulness seems to be intended to bring his readers from cognitive proposals to personal conviction. He moves from third-person description ("*They* have become filled with every kind of wickedness," Rom 1:29), second-person confrontation ("*You*, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else," Rom 2:1), and first-person confession ("*I* do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do," Rom 7:15). In-depth analysis of how Paul leads his readers to the point of offering their bodies as living sacrifice could provide additional insights for preachers.

Final Words

This paper has not presented a new model but has simply called attention to an old pattern. Bryan Chapell writes of preaching which stimulates greater love for God:

> This is how Scripture has always motivated and empowered obedience. Even Moses preceded the Ten Commandments with a recounting of God's deliverance, not only so that the Israelites would not believe that their salvation had been by their hands, but also so that their hearts would turn toward God.[119]

What we do—and what our congregations do—matters not because it affects God's feelings toward us, but because it expresses our feelings toward God. As Ignatius pointed out more than five centuries ago, love ought to express itself more by deeds than words. Where fear and duty are no longer effective, gratitude has the power to break through the body armour of entitlement and pierce the hearts of long-stagnant Christians. Empowered by the Holy Spirit and rooted in the gospel, preaching for grateful response has great potential for preachers who are frustrated by the lack of transformation they see in their own lives and those of their listeners. It represents a stable pathway between the pitfalls of legalism and antinomianism, a simple framework for discipleship, and an effective way to lead our listeners—and ourselves—to become living sacrifices. May we learn to say, with utmost sincerity and overflowing gratitude, *suscipe Domine universam*: "receive, Lord, all." Amen.

NOTES

1. Ignatius of Loyola, *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, ed. George E. Ganss, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 177.
2. Dallas Willard, "Live Life to the Full," *Christian Herald (UK)*, April 14, 2001, https://dwillard.org/articles/live-life-to-the-full.
3. See, for example: H. Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958); Milton Crum, *Manual on Preaching: A New Process of Sermon Development* (New York: Morehouse, 1988); Eugene L. Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon As Narrative Art Form*, Expanded Edition. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000); Paul Scott Wilson, *Setting Words On Fire: Putting God at the Center of the Sermon* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008); Paul Scott Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching*, Revised Edition. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2018).
4. Well-known theologians such as Augustine, John Calvin, and Karl Barth have also identified gratitude as an important key to spiritual formation.
5. Crum, *Manual on Preaching*, 16.
6. Stephen Farris, *Preaching That Matters: The Bible and Our Lives* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 17.
7. Arthur Van Seters, *Preaching and Ethics*, Preaching and Its Partners (St. Louis: Chalice, 2004), 16.

8. Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, Third Edition. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 198.
9. Wilson, *Four Pages of the Sermon*, 195.
10. R. E. Allen, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, Eighth Edition. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990).
11. Stephen Farris, "Preaching Law as Gospel," in *Papers of the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Academy of Homiletics* (Presented at the The Academy of Homiletics, Toronto, 1998), 8.
12. Reading the letter aloud as a sermon in English would take approximately 60–90 minutes, depending on the preacher's pace and style.
13. Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 745. Moo describes these as "two sides of the same coin," emphasizing that application is integral to the letter and its purposes, not somehow an "add-on" or afterthought to the "main business" of grace.
14. Emphasis added. It should be noted that there is some debate about whether or not "in view of" God's mercy is the proper translation. Literal reading is "by the mercies of God." This may be understood as "with appeal to" but could also indicate "by means of." It is clear from Paul's "therefore" that he is tying the grace he has been talking about together with the obedience he is about to describe, and as will be demonstrated in this paper, appealing to grace as a motivation for actions fits well with his cultural environment. See James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, Word Biblical Commentary 38B (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 709.
15. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 749.
16. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, Purity*. 104. James R. Harrison (*Paul's Language of Grace*, 2) agrees: "By the first century AD χάρις had become the central leitmotiv of the Hellenistic reciprocity system."
17. Zeba A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (New York: De Gruyter, 2004), 132–135.
18. B.J. Oropeza, "The Expectation of Grace: Paul on Benefaction and the Corinthians' Ingratitude (2 Corinthians 6:1)," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 24, no. 2 (2014): 216.
19. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, Purity*, 105–106.
20. Ibid., 109.
21. The Graeco-Roman cultic system is often characterized as being based on the transactional principle of *do ut des*, "I give that you may give." However, Barclay argues that while there is truth to this, it does not do full justice to the relationship between humans and gods, which could also be initiated by an unsought divine favour. John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 27.
22. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, Purity*, 122–123.
23. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 70–75.

24. Ibid., 74.
25. Ibid., 183–4.
26. Ibid., 23.
27. Ibid., 558.
28. David W. Pao, *Thanksgiving: An Investigation of a Pauline Theme* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2002), 44. He argues that the Hebrew understanding of grateful response was at least as influential on Paul as the culture of the Graeco-Roman world.
29. "Moralism isolates a single human quality, gratitude, and makes it the motive for a life of discipleship. Certainly, thanksgiving plays a major part in the lives of Christians, but human gratitude forms a shaky bridge between God's action in Christ and the new obedience of the Christian life." Lischer is not against gratitude per se, but against upholding human response as the primary driver of the Christian life, without the empowering grace offered in the gospel. Richard Lischer, *A Theology of Preaching: The Dynamics of the Gospel*, Revised Edition. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 45.
30. See, for example: J. Harold Ellens, *Radical Grace: How Belief in a Benevolent God Benefits Our Health* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007); Robert Emmons, *Thanks!: How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2007); Diana Butler Bass, *Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2018); Ann Voskamp, *One Thousand Gifts: A Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011); Margaret Visser, *The Gift of Thanks: The Roots and Rituals of Gratitude* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009).
31. Christopher Peterson and Martin E. P. Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 554.
32. Ibid., 555.
33. Therefore, if indebtedness is experienced as a negative emotion, it is likely not gratitude, but a sense of obligation or a desire to be "even." Robert C. Roberts, "Gratitude and Humility," in *Perspectives on Gratitude: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, ed. David Carr (New York: Routledge, 2016), 60–63.
34. Robert C. Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions: A Psychology of Christian Virtues* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 143.
35. For a brief overview on scholarship related to gratitude as a moral motivator, see Michael E. McCullough et al., "Is Gratitude a Moral Affect?," *Psychological Bulletin* 127:2 (March 2001): 250–1.
36. Robert A. Emmons, "Is Gratitude Queen of the Virtues and Ingratitude King of the Vices?," in *Perspectives on Gratitude: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, ed. David Carr (New York: Routledge, 2016), 151.
37. Ibid., 147.
38. Mary Jo Leddy, *Radical Gratitude* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 28.
39. Peterson and Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues*, 564.
40. Emmons, "Queen of the Virtues?," 147.

41. Peterson and Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues*, 564.
42. Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions*, 143–4.
43. Emmons, "Queen of the Virtues?," 141. Emphasis added.
44. Ibid., 141–2.
45. Because of this, there have been attempts to describe a kind of "transpersonal" or "yogic" gratitude that embraces a generic sense of thankfulness for the life one has, as well as the support given by people and "the universe" that allows it to continue. However, it seems this posture is actually closer to simple happiness than what is traditionally thought of as gratitude, which assumes a giver to whom thankfulness can be addressed. See Jeremy David Engels, *The Art of Gratitude* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018); Peterson and Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues*, 555.
46. Peterson and Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues*, 558.
47. Gerald M. Fagin, *Putting on the Heart of Christ: How the Spiritual Exercises Invite Us to a Virtuous Life* (Chicago: Loyola, 2010), 29–35; Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions*, 136. refers to this a learning to see with "grateful eyes."
48. Fagin, *Putting on the Heart of Christ*, 28.
49. Ibid., 10. Emphasis added. In addition to helping individuals become more aware of the gifts they have received, expressing thanks is also a way of raising their awareness of the Giver, the third criterion.
50. Of course, one may be grateful for the job itself, or the generosity of the wage, or other things which may be associated with the ability to earn a paycheque—but it is still different than the thankfulness felt for a gift.
51. Emmons, "Queen of the Virtues?," 149.
52. John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 309.
53. The father is dismayed. Not only does this son not consider togetherness a gift in itself, but he also fails to notice the father's liberality: "everything I have is yours" (Luke 15:31).
54. Hichem Naar, "Gratitude: Generic versus Deep," in *The Moral Psychology of Gratitude*, ed. Robert Roberts and Daniel Telech (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 15–23.
55. While gratitude and religiosity are often thought to correlate, one recent study found no noticeable increase in gratitude-motivated prosocial response between non-religious and religious people—even when the religious people were explicitly reminded of their beliefs. See Jo-Ann Tsang, Ashleigh Schulwitz, and Robert D. Carlisle, "An Experimental Test of the Relationship Between Religion and Gratitude," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 4, no. 1 (2012): 40–55.
56. Naar, "Gratitude: Generic versus Deep," 26.
57. Ibid., 24–5. He compares this to a married couple whose life-long love for each other is rooted in emotion, but is not dependent on its continual operation to be real.

58. Philip Sheldrake calls the *Exercises* one of the most influential texts in the history of Christian spirituality *Spirituality: A Brief History*, Second Edition. (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 125. While some aspects of Ignatius' theology and methodology are decidedly Roman Catholic (e.g. his incorporation of prayers to Mary and his occasional language of penance and satisfaction for past sins), as a whole his *Exercises* are Christ- and gospel-focused and contain important insights for all Christians, including Evangelicals.
59. Quoted in Gilles Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises: A Method Toward a Personal Experience of God as Accomplishing within Us His Plan of Salvation*, trans. Mary Angela Roduit and George E. Ganss (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1988), 41.
60. George A. Aschenbrenner, *Stretched for Greater Glory: What to Expect From The Spiritual Exercises* (Chicago: Loyola, 2004), 4.
61. Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, 40. It is only by beginning at this soteriological starting point does Ignatian spirituality lead to its well-known approach to finding God in all things (319–20).
62. While many have tried to boil the *Spiritual Exercises* down to their essence (e.g. the imitation of Christ, the metanarrative of the biblical plan of salvation, or the essential role of human freedom) Haight argues that there is no formula that synthesizes their entirety. Roger Haight, *Christian Spirituality for Seekers: Reflections of The Spiritual Excercises of Igantius Loyola* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2012), 68–9.
63. "Gratitude is a central theme in the *Spiritual Exercises*. This is most clearly seen when we look at the structure of the final Meditation, the Contemplation to Attain Love, through which Ignatius attempts to deepen our love of God by expanding our sense of God's generosity to us." Wilkie Au and Noreen Cannon Au, *The Grateful Heart: Living the Christian Message* (New York: Paulist, 2011), 47–8; Fagin agrees: "Though there are only a few explicit references to gratitude in the *Spiritual Exercises*, gratefulness is at the heart of the dynamic and movement of the *Exercises* and the experience of the one making the *Exercises*." *Putting on the Heart of Christ*, 29.
64. Roger Haight, *Christian Spirituality for Seekers: Reflections of The Spiritual Excercises of Igantius Loyola* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2012), 66.
65. George E. Ganss, "General Introduction," in *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 25. Although raised in a Catholic environment, to this point Ignatius knew little of Christ because of the inaccessibility of the Scriptures to those who did not understand Latin. Like most people, he had to rely on popular books in the vernacular like *The Life of Christ* in order to learn more about who Jesus was and why he had come.
66. Brendan Comerford, *The Pilgrim's Story: The Life and Spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola* (Dublin: Messenger, 2017), 16.

67. Ignatius of Loyola, *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, ed. George E. Ganss, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 71. It was at this point that Ignatius also began to pay greater attention to the stirrings within, noticing that times of comfort (consolation) came after thinking about the things of God, while times of depression (desolation) overtook him when he focused on the things of this world.
68. Ganss, "General Introduction," 29–30. Most of his mystical experiences were "intellectual" (rather than corporeal) visions, offering insights and a quickening of his understanding to comprehend the mysteries of God and the gospel.
69. Fagin, *Putting on the Heart of Christ*, 28.
70. Ganss, "General Introduction," 31. This eventually led him to gather a community of like-minded men and found the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) as a community of people "totally dedicated to [Jesus], bearing his name, and carrying on his work" (42).
71. Ignatius continued to revise his original notes over the course of his life, however by 1535 he had developed them to a form very close to the version we have today. Ibid., 37.
72. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, 130.
73. Ibid., 129. Ganss explains that there is long-standing controversy over whether the ultimate goal of the exercises is "election" (making a significant decision) or "perfection" (growing spiritually). See note 11 on 389–90.
74 Ibid., 137–140.
75. Ibid., 146, 150.
76. Ibid., 167.
77. Ibid., 174.
78. Ibid., 130.
79. Ibid., 131. Ignatius notes that this is subtle enough to be practiced in public without drawing the attention of others.
80. Ibid. Emphasis added.
81. Ibid., 138.
82. Ibid., 139.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid., 139–142.
85. Ibid., 140–141.
86. Ibid., 138.
87. Brené Brown describes guilt as "I did something bad," and shame as "I am bad." While behavior-based guilt can be helpful and transformative, she argues that shame is damaging and unhealthy. While this is certainly true on a psychological level, there is a theological shame that goes hand in hand with the gospel. Biblically, I have not only done things that are bad, because of the fall, there *is* something wrong with me—and every other human being. The gospel overcomes this shame, not by denying it, but by addressing it. Further work needs to be done to distinguish a healthy biblical sense of one's own

fallenness and the kind of emotionally damaging shame that is rightly critiqued by many today. See Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly:How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead* (New York: Avery, 2012), 71–72.
88. George A. Aschenbrenner, *Stretched for Greater Glory: What to Expect From The Spiritual Exercises* (Chicago: Loyola, 2004), 59.
89. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, 148.
90. Ibid. Emphasis added.
91. While Ignatius emphasizes God's graciousness, he is not afraid to portray God as a just judge who sends angels and humans into the fires of hell. However, he makes it clear that a fear of hell and judgment is only useful for a Christian "if through my faults I should forget the love of the Eternal Lord." Ibid., 141.
92. Ibid., 150.
93. Ignatius of Loyola, *Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, trans. William J. Young (Chicago: Loyola, 1959), 55.
94. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, 353.
95. Ibid., 134.
96. Au and Au, *The Grateful Heart*, 7–8. They describe this as combining "ascetical" and "aesthetical" spirituality.
97. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, 176–7.
98. Ibid., 121.
99. Au and Au, *The Grateful Heart*, 49.
100. Fagin, *Putting on the Heart of Christ*, 68.
101. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, 138.
102. Ibid., 147.
103. Ibid.
104. Ibid., 148.
105. Ibid., 168.
106. Ibid., 176.
107. Ibid., 176–177.
108. Ibid., 177.
109. Ibid., 176.
110. Dennis M. Cahill, *The Shape of Preaching: Theory and Practice in Sermon Design* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 9. He suggests that a preacher's approach to form is particularly affected by three things: her view of Scripture, view of humans, and theology of preaching (49–55).
111. Fred B. Craddock, *As One Without Authority* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 52–53.
112. Paul Scott Wilson, *The Practice of Preaching*, Revised Edition. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 168.
113. Paul Scott Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching*, Revised Edition. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2018), 15–16.

114. Eugene L. Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon As Narrative Art Form*, Expanded Edition. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 26.
115. Henry H. Mitchell, *Celebration & Experience in Preaching*, Revised Edition. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008), 40–45. As one of the most notable homileticians who have given attention to the dynamics of emotional experience in preaching, his work has implications for preaching for grateful response that need to be further explored.
116. See Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 37–44, 108; Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), loc 3379-3396; Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, Second Edition. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 108.
117. Calvin's theology of grateful response is a major part of my dissertation (in progress).
118. David deSilva offers an interesting precedent for this in his work *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle "to the Hebrews"* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000). He looks at Hebrews as a sermon, meant to stir up gratitude and call for response.
119. Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, Third Edition. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 318.

THE ROLE OF IMAGINATION IN EXPOSITORY SERMON CONSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

While expository preaching is a biblically faithful model, this method of preaching can result in boring recitations of research. In order to bring life to expository sermons, this article argues that imagination serves an important and necessary role in expository sermon construction. First, this article presents an original definition of imagination as it relates to expository sermons. Second, a biblical survey of terms relating to imagination reveals that Scripture advocates for its use, as well as how to use the imagination. Third, this article addresses potential pitfalls when engaging the imagination and offers boundaries to ensure appropriate use. Fourth, this article addresses the level of importance of imagination to the sermon construction process. Fifth, every aspect of sermon construction benefits from imagination, as this section demonstrates. Finally, the reader will receive practical tips for improving imaginative powers.

INTRODUCTION

Expository preaching serves the church by finding a biblical author's original meaning and translating it to a contemporary congregation. While this method of preaching is biblically faithful, expository preaching can become a cumbersome

recitation of research rather than a powerful proclamation of God's Word. Such lecturing couched as preaching leads to boredom, and Dr. Robert Smith alleges that boring preaching is a sin.

So how can a preacher avoid the sin of boring preaching while heralding exegesis? The Bible expositor can bring sermons to life by utilizing imagination.

Homiletics textbooks approve and encourage the use of imagination. Yet few of these books give a definition of imagination. It is nearly impossible to find one homiletics textbook that gives an explicit, biblical basis for use of imagination in sermon preparation or construction, though some offer hints and implicit Bible references. Therefore, a preacher wondering if, and how, to use imagination in preaching is left wanting, perhaps discouraging the preacher from the appropriate use of imagination in a sermon. In contrast, those who do use their imaginations may need guardrails to protect them from eisegesis or improper allegory. And even those who believe that reliance on imagination is important may be unsure how to implement it into the sermon.

With these concerns in mind, this article argues that imagination serves an important and necessary role in expository sermon construction. First, the reader will need to reach a definition of imagination, particularly as it relates to the subjects of exegesis and homiletics. Second, a biblical survey of terms relating to imagination determines whether Scripture advocates for its use and, if so, how. Third, potential dangers involving the use of imagination by preachers are set out, as well as suggestive boundaries to ensure appropriate use within the confines of proper exposition. Fourth, this article addresses the level of importance of imagination to the sermon construction process. Fifth, the reader will discover that every step of the expository sermon process, from exegesis to sermon construction, can benefit from imagination. Finally, this article offers practical tips for improving the preacher's imaginative prowess. At the conclusion of the article, the reader will understand the role of

imagination in expository sermon construction and be able to impart actual methods for application and improvement in imaginative preaching.

DEFINING IMAGINATION

To determine the role of imagination in expository sermon construction, one must have a working a definition of imagination as it relates to homiletics. Several homileticians offer deficient definitions or meanings devoid of relation to preaching. In his seminal work on the imagination in preaching and teaching, Warren Wiersbe provides a general definition of the imagination, neglecting any homiletical meaning.[1] Wiersbe defines imagination as "the image-making faculty in your mind, the picture gallery in which you are constantly painting, sculpting, designing and sometimes erasing." Similarly, Truls Akerlund quotes Walter Brueggemann's definition as "the capacity to generate and enunciate images of reality that are not rooted in the world in front of us."[2] In *Text-Driven Preaching*, Robert Vogel defines the imagination parenthetically as "the image-making and image-perceiving capacity within us."[3] Unfortunately, these definitions do not address preaching, the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, or the conscious involvement of the mind and they allow for images of fancy or desire.

Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix advance the definition farther than the previous explanations. They write, "Imagination is the capacity of the mind to receive a bombardment of ideas and impulses that well up from the subconscious mind. Imagination provides the capacity to "dream dreams and see visions."[4] There are several positive aspects about this meaning. First, it places imagination in the realm of the mind, distinguishing the conscious mind from the subconscious mind. Additionally, the authors make a connection to a biblical text, Joel 2:28. Lastly, the authors connect imagination to the practice of meditating on Scripture. They suggest, "As you meditate, put your imagination to work on the Scripture passage as an additional positive step

toward creativity."[5] The most obvious weakness of this definition is the absence of the Holy Spirit's influence on the preacher."[6]

John Broadus, author of *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, claims, "Imagination is the imagining function of the mind. It is thinking by seeing, as contrasted with reasoning. It begins with the accumulated elements of experience, observation, and knowledge."[7] Later, Broadus adds, "Imagination should be thought of not simply as the imaging function of the mind, but that function controlled by facts, with the end result of placing facts in new combinations and relationships."[8] Broadus' definition looks to the mind as the incubator of imaging, whereas Vines and Shaddix attribute images and impulses to the subconscious mind. Broadus also claims the imagination organizes and arranges these images into combinations and relationships. Yet Broadus also misses the opportunity to add the Holy Spirit.

One of the best definitions of imagination comes from Henry Ward Beecher in his *Yale Lectures on Preaching*. First, he aligns imagination with faith. Beecher writes, "Imagination of this kind is the true germ of faith; it is the power of conceiving as definite the things which are invisible to the senses, of giving them distinct shape. And this, not merely in your own thoughts, but with the power of presenting the things which experience cannot primarily teach to other people's minds, so that they shall be just as obvious as though seen with the bodily eye."[9] Later he states, "The imagination, then, is that power of the mind by which it conceives of invisible things, and is able to present them as though they were visible to others."[10] Beecher explicitly credits imagination as a result of faith, which is seeing the invisible. But Beecher also includes the imagination of listeners as part of the definition. The preacher engages his imagination to form images so that he can then seek to help the listeners form those same images in their minds. Like the other definitions, this one also does not mention the work of the Holy Spirit.

Having reviewed the literature, this article must settle on a definition. It must be one that addresses the work of the

conscious and subconscious mind. It also must reference work of the Holy Spirit on the preacher. Additionally, the definition should include the ingredients of imagination, such as experiences, observations, and knowledge. Finally, it must address the purpose of transmitting the image into the imaginations of the listeners. Thus, this paper defines imagination, for purposes of homiletics and sermon construction, as follows:

> Imagination is the capacity of a preacher by faith, and with the filling of the Holy Spirit, to call upon the experiences, observations, and knowledge within one's subconscious mind for the purpose of organizing and arranging them during a time of intentional conscious thought or meditation into a picture or image that describes or represents the concept considered and allows for its transmission, through communication, to another person's imagination.

BIBLICAL SURVEY FOR DESCRIPTIVE OR PRESCRIPTIVE ADVOCACY FOR IMAGINATION

Having proposed a definition for imagination in sermon construction, the next issue requiring resolution is whether the Bible advocates the use of imagination in preaching and, if so, whether it does so prescriptively or descriptively. To begin with, there is prescriptive advocacy for the use of imagination in sermon construction from 1 Timothy 4:15. In 1 Timothy 4:11-15, Paul challenges Timothy, who is serving as pastor of a congregation, to the following:

> Command and teach these things. Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was

> given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.

The word immerse comes from the Greek word *μελετάω*, which means to meditate. Tracking *μελετάω* through the Septuagint (LXX), one will discover that the writers use this word to represent two Hebrew words.[11] The first use relates to Genesis 6:5, which says, "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Intention represents the translation of the Greek word from the root of *μελετάω*. The Hebrew rendering of *μελετάω* is from the root יֵצֶר, which means imagination. Thus, the Scripture demonstrates in this verse that imagination can work negatively.

Fortunately, there is another Hebrew word that is associated with *μελετάω* that places a positive spin on the text. In Joshua 1:8, the writer says, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." The word meditate, while sharing the Greek translation of *μελετάω*, appears through a Hebrew word that has the root of הָגָה. God commands Joshua to meditate on the Scriptures day and night, just as Paul challenges Timothy to immerse himself in the Scriptures. This same root word is found in Psalm 1:2, which reads, "[B]ut his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night." Thus, one can see that Paul is commanding Timothy to immerse himself on the Word of God through meditation.

But what do immersion and meditation have to do with imagination? In *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Don Whitney writes, "The kind of meditation encouraged in the Bible differs from other kinds of meditation in several ways. While some advocate a kind of meditation in which you do your best to empty your mind, Christian meditation involves filling your

mind with God and his truth."[12] In other words, biblical meditation calls on the Christian to immerse his or her mind on the Word of God. He continues, "And while Christian history has always had a place for the sanctified use of our God-given imagination in meditation, imagination is our servant to help us meditate on things that are true."[13] So Whitney sees a role for imagination in the meditation needed for Bible reading. Pastor John MacArthur also relates meditation and imagination. In his book *Preaching*, MacArthur asserts, "Meditation is an important, final step in the process. Meditation entails focusing the mind on one subject, involving reason, imagination, and emotions."[14] Thus, MacArthur sees imagination as one of three necessary components to effective meditation. Because of Paul's challenge to a New Testament pastor in 1 Timothy 4:15 to immerse, or meditate on Scripture, and in light of the commands from Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:2 for meditation, the Scripture prescriptively advocates for the role of imagination as a function of meditation for pastors today engaging in the teaching of God's Word.

If one is not persuaded of Scriptures prescriptive advocacy of imagination, there is more than sufficient evidence for descriptive advocacy. Wayne McDill sees the use of imagination throughout the Bible. He writes, "As the Bible writers have done, we must translate spiritual reality into earthly images which can be grasped by the mind of man. Our faith calls for the truth to be visualized."[15] The Old Testament abounds with such imagery, especially the Psalms and Wisdom literature. But even in narrative works, the writers use imagery in various ways. In 2 Samuel 12:1-4, Nathan addresses King David's adultery and murder through use of an imaginary story involving a poor person whose kid lamb was stolen and eaten by a wealthy man. Through the prophet's use of inspired imagery, the message "went straight to David's heart and turned his life back to God's way. He identified with the experience and emotions of both men in the parable, having been both a poor shepherd and a rich, powerful king."[16] Thus, Nathan's reliance upon imagery serves as a descriptive example for imaginative preaching.

In "How to Include Imagination in Sermon Prep," Jeffrey Arthurs sees imaginative writing in two other Old Testament texts. He affirms the imagery of Proverbs 19:12, so the reader can "feel the dew on the grass." He also calls on preachers to "huddle in your imaginations in the rainstorm in the open square" in Ezra 10:9.[17] The Old Testament is not written in cold, rationalistic propositions. God chooses to express portions of his Word through imagery, with concrete and sensate language, in the Old Testament. Therefore, the preacher is on solid ground to rely upon his imagination in sermon construction.

Regarding the New Testament, one need only look to Jesus and Paul to see the use of imagination in exposition. In *Recapturing the Voice of God*, the author boldly proclaims, "The parables of Jesus come from the very imagination of God. This means that every detail and nuance, every character development and plot first existed in the imagination of God."[18] What an amazing and profound observation! The parables of Jesus do not come from history or current events, but from his creativity and imagination. For this reason, Thomas Liske advocates for the use of imagination in preaching. He writes, "There should be a liberal use of imagery in sermons not merely because Christ, the Master Preacher, used figurative language, but because of the nature of imagery itself."[19] Thus, these fictionalized stories come from the imagination of the Son of God, the Master Preacher, for the purpose of teaching and preaching to hearers and offer descriptive advocacy for imagination in sermon construction. Likewise, John R.W. Stott identifies Paul as an expositor that addresses a congregation with imagination. He states:

> Paul referred to his preaching of the Cross to the Galatians as a public portrayal before their very eyes of Jesus Christ as the one who had been crucified (Gal. 3:1). Now the crucifixion had taken place some twenty years previously, and none of Paul's Galatian readers had been present to witness it. Yet by his vivid proclamation Paul had been

> able to bring this event out of the past into the present, out of hearsay into a dramatic visual image. It is to stimulate people's imagination and to help them to see things clearly in their minds.

Stott recognizes the imagery Paul uses to put the cross in the forefront of the Galatian readers' minds and hearts. Paul's use of the phrase "before their very eyes" is not one of deception but of description. He wants the church to see the crucifixion of Jesus in a real way through their imaginations. With these examples from Jesus and Paul, the preacher who engages in imaginative preaching finds New Testament warrant.

In summary, the Bible advocates both prescriptively and descriptively for the role of imagination in sermon construction. Through Paul's admonition to Timothy, Paul also charges preachers today to immerse themselves in the Word of God through meditative and imaginative thought. Though this instruction is singular, it is powerful and relevant. Additionally, the Bible provides numerous descriptive authorities for the use of imagination in preaching. Both the Old and New Testaments show examples of preachers and inspired authors drawing upon their imaginations to paint a picture in the minds of the readers or hearers. Because the Bible advocates for its use both prescriptively and descriptively, preachers should ensure the addition of imagination in their sermon construction process.

IMAGINATION'S LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE TO EXPOSITORY SERMON CONSTRUCTION

Since the Bible appears to advocate for the preacher's use of imagination, one may be inclined to omit a discussion about imagination's level of importance to expository sermon construction. If the Bible commends it, one should follow it. Yet advocacy and importance are not synonymous. Just because something is warranted does not make it essential. Interestingly, there is significant variation among homiletics textbooks

regarding imagination's level of importance to the sermon process. There are those who believe that the imagination is unimportant to biblical sermon construction. There are others who recommend it but fall short of requiring it. Others argue that the use of imagination is essential for an effective sermon. These positions will be addressed in turn.

Bryan Chapell and Thomas Long argue that imagination serves little to no purpose in sermon construction. To be fair, Chapell notes that imagination can be useful when preaching narratives,[20] but he claims that a "minister's imagination is a poor place to discern what a biblical passage means."[21] In other words, Chapell allows for imaginative transmission, but he opposes imagination in the exegetical process. Long not only joins Chapell in his view, but he goes further. David Fleer, writing about Long, notes that Long abandons interest in pleasing listeners through persuasive techniques, which include use of the imagination. Particularly, he writes, "Long judges that, on occasion, teaching, 'a necessity,' renders as inappropriate the 'sweetness' of pleasing."[22] Clearly, Chapell and Long find little or no regard for imagination in sermon construction, while allowing that Chapell makes some minimal room for its use in preaching narratives.

On the other hand, William Evans and J. Spencer Kennard seem to recommend imagination as a useful tool, but they avoid requiring it in expository sermon construction. Evans writes, "The imagination, within a limited sphere and carefully safeguarded, may be drawn on as a fruitful source of picture making."[23] Thus, Evans supposes imagination in sermon constructive to be discretionary rather than mandatory. He does reference imagination's result of picture making as "fruitful," which tends to demonstrate his commendation of its implementation. Similarly, Kennard has a discretionary view of imagination. He says, "Imagination and enthusiasm, which may be regarded as twin sisters, are valuable factors in arousing the will."[24] Factors are not elements and, therefore, are not necessary to the substance of a claim. Therefore, Kennard holds

imagination out as a factor among others that preachers may wield to persuade listeners. As such, Evans and Kennard recommend the use of imagination in sermon construction.

But the greater weight of evidence, based on the number of homiletics books that advocate this position and the arguments presented, favors imagination as essential for expository sermon construction. Warren Wiersbe includes imagination in his definition for biblical preaching.[25] In *Biblical Preaching*, Haddon Robinson heralds, "Effective biblical preaching requires . . . imagination."[26] Famed pastor Charles Spurgeon told his students, "We must throw all our . . . imagination . . . into the delivery of the gospel."[27] Ralph Lewis and John Broadus use even stronger language to demonstrate the necessity of imagination in preaching. Lewis writes, "A well-trained imagination is indispensable to the public speaker. The secret of creative speaking lies in an active imagination."[28] The reader will note that inclusion of the word active in Lewis' proclamation, dismissing any notion that the preacher's imagination comes passively through the subconscious. Broadus, in his seminal work *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, affirms, "Beginning at the point of technique it may be said that imagination is of indispensable value in the construction of discourse. To give familiar materials any fresh interest, they must be brought into new combination."[29] For Broadus, imagination is indispensable not just for illustration, introduction, or conclusion, but for all aspects of constructing an expository sermon. Travis DuPriest adds an interesting twist on this conversation. He reminds the reader that "[t]he Word we preach and the way we preach it shape who God is in the mind's eye . . . so from the pulpit we preach the God we imagine."[30] What reason can be offered that more clearly places imagination in the category of essential in preaching? In order to effectively preach expository sermons and transmit that message into the minds of listeners, imagination is essential.

POTENTIAL DANGERS AND APPROPRIATE SAFEGUARDS FOR IMAGINATION IN SERMON CONSTRUCTION

While the use of imagination is essential to effective expository sermon construction, the preacher must be alert to potential dangers when implementing it and set appropriate safeguards to prevent eisegesis or manipulation. The most obvious, and dangerous, problem for imagination in sermon construction is the potential for eisegesis. A preacher understands that the "creative imagination," as Graeme Goldsworthy puts it, is not meant "in the sense of making up some fiction."[31] Rather than imagination, Broadus understands such an "ungoverned, unprincipled process" as "fancy."[32] Thus, Goldsworthy and Broadus approve a use of the imagination so long as it does not drift into fictional fancy. In the realm of biblical hermeneutics, this fictional fancy is termed eisegesis.

Many homiletics texts warn about the use of eisegesis, particularly regarding the imaginative process. In *Engaging Exposition*, Daniel Akin, Bill Curtis, and Stephen Rummage argue, "The faithful expositor must not eisegete the text, reading into it the preconceived notions of his imagination or interests."[33] Later, the book references that the preacher's "goal should be to ferret out the indication of the text, not to foist upon it some imagination of his own."[34] Likewise, Raymond W. McLaughlin opines, "Another hermeneutical problem reported was that of reading one's own meaning into a text of Scripture."[35] Chapell asserts that imagination in interpretation leaves the meaning of Scripture in the hands of the reader. He says, "[I]f anything in Scripture can mean whatever our imaginations suggest rather than what Scripture determines, then our opinions become as authoritative as the statements of God and we can make the Bible say anything we want."[36] This improper use of imagination produces a fictional meaning for the text, rather than a faithful interpretation from the original writer's intent. Renowned expositor D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones affirms this concern, stating, "The danger is that imagination tends to run away with us and one can easily cross the line from which it has been helpful to that point, once more, where it draws attention to itself and you have

lost contact with the Truth which gave origin to it."[37] Pastor John MacArthur notes, "Where creativity is strong, so is the danger that it can turn a preacher away from the exposition of Scripture. We need to guard against this without suppressing legitimate creativity."[38] Thus, MacArthur sees the danger of imagination, as these other authors do, but he allows for its use so long as it is guarded.

The appropriate safeguard against eisegesis is for the imagination to remain within the confines of proper biblical exposition of the text. In his book *Him We Proclaim*, Dennis Johnson suggests an apostolic, Christ-centered hermeneutic "that places appropriate checks on the preacher's hyperactive imagination, thereby assuring listeners that the message is revealed by God, not merely generated by human creativity."[39] In other words, proper exegesis and exposition serve as a check on the unlimited and ungoverned use of imagination in sermon construction. John R. W. Stott makes this connection as well, writing, "So then, in our sermon preparation, we must not try to by-pass the discipline itself. We have to be ready to pray and think ourselves deep into the text, even under it, until we give up all pretensions of being its master or manipulator and become instead its humble and obedient servant. Then there will be no danger of unscrupulous text-twisting."[40] As one can see, Stott applauds the use of thinking, meditating, and imagining in sermon construction. But Stott admonishes the preacher to the discipline of praying and thinking within the confines of the text's original intent, not in fanciful fiction created within the mind of the preacher. Of course, having a broad understanding of biblical doctrine also serves to safeguard the use of imagination in preaching. Michael Pasquarello III argues, "Doctrine is therefore the necessary grammar of Christian discourse that helps to protect correct reference to God and disciplines our propensity to idolatry."[41] By confining the imagination within the proper understanding of the text, within the boundaries of biblical doctrine, the danger of eisegesis from

the use of imagination in sermon construction can be appropriately safeguarded.

Another potential danger of imagination in preaching concerns the transmission of the preacher's content to the listeners for the purpose of manipulation. This concern for manipulation serves as the basis for Duane Litfin's work, *Paul's Theology of Preaching*. He writes, "My point is that the goal of preaching should be so to present the gospel that the listener comprehends, sees, is grasped by the issues involved. This may well include and even require the use of emotional appeals, but those appeals will be directed toward helping the listener to comprehend, not toward inducing him to yield."[42] In other words, manipulation represents an improper use for imagination, particularly if used for purposes of persuasion in preaching. John Nicholls Booth joins in Litfin's concern, saying, "To excite an audience to tears or laughter merely for the sense of power provided is only a refined manifestation of the characteristics of a childish bully."[43] These harsh critiques against manipulation appropriately recognize the potential danger of a preacher's use of imagination solely to obtain a reaction out of listeners. This conduct should be avoided.

The appropriate guardrail against imagination as manipulation is reliance on the Holy Spirit. In *Preaching and Sermon Construction*, Paul Bull affirms the Holy Spirit as the safeguard against improper persuasion. He writes, "No art of persuasion can be of any value unless it is at every moment penetrated through and through by the light and power of the Holy Spirit."[44] The preacher should not force a picture into the minds of the congregation but allow the Holy Spirit to illumine both his mind and the minds of the listeners. Wayne McDill concurs, proclaiming, "The preacher, then, must draw the picture of spiritual reality which the imagination can present to the 'eyes of the heart.' The Holy Spirit then spiritually 'enlightens' that picture as truth so that faith is awakened, and the believer is able to 'see' what is otherwise unseen."[45] These comments explain this paper's insistence upon the Holy Spirit's inclusion in a definition

of imagination for homiletics. The preacher must trust the work of the Holy Spirit to take the pictures that are formed in the mind through meditation and transmit them to the hearers, so they see what the preachers sees within the confines of the original meaning of the passage. The Holy Spirit is necessary to the imaginative process to overcome the temptation to manipulate.

Some authors, however, see an actual danger regarding imagination in preaching that is unexpected. This danger is that the preacher refuses to use imagination in sermon construction at all. While Jeffrey Arthurs acknowledges the possibility of misuse in imagination, he writes, "[A] more frequent problem is the suppression of imagination. We chop the literature of the Bible into smidgeons of data, re-form it as an exegetical McNugget, pickle it, package it, and call it "exegesis."[46] This danger is the regular complaint against expository preaching. The preacher researches the text, obtains the original intent of the author, but simply regurgitates the facts gleaned from the research without creativity or imagination to his congregation. Some preachers may do that because they feel that imagination and imagery take away from the dignity of the preaching moment. But Ronald Sleeth disagrees. In *Persuasive Preaching*, he notes, "Dignity does not mean dullness. He has every right to make his material not only interesting but exciting. It is heartening to see a skillful preacher take an old theme and come at it in a new way."[47] While some may claim that imagination in preaching may lead to "sensationalism," David Burrell has a different take on this concern. He writes, "The charge of sensationalism is generally made by dried-up ministers who cannot get an audience."[48] This stinging rebuke recognizes that there is a danger that those who refuse or do not know how to implement imagination into the sermon construction process may view others with disdain because of their own shortcomings or misunderstandings. While certain dangers abound, the preacher can employ his imaginative capacities in expository sermon construction by remaining within the boundaries of the original meaning of the text and through reliance on the Holy

Spirit to enlighten the minds of the listeners and help them receive the images conceived within the preacher's mind.

IMPLEMENTING IMAGINATION INTO EXPOSITORY SERMON CONSTRUCTION

Perhaps the reason why some preachers avoid the exercise of imagination during sermon construction is simply because they do not know how to use it. Illustrations within the introduction, conclusion, and even in the body seem like a logical place to employ imagination. But are those the only places where the use of imagination is appropriate in forming the sermon? The preacher can, and should, implement imagination in every aspect of sermon construction. The imagination has a place in sermon preparation, introductions, explanations, illustrations, applications, and conclusions.

Imagination should begin in the exegesis process. Of course, the danger of eisegesis looms and has been previously addressed. But the imagination plays a significant part in helping the preacher understand and experience in his mind the interpretation of a text. Paul Bull writes, "[W]hen we say that a preacher must see his subject with his imagination, we mean that he must see it as it really is in God's mind, stripped of the illusions which gather round a concept as soon as it is conceived in a human brain."[49] In other words, the preacher is not making up what he believes the passage should say. Instead, he conceives a vision in his creative mind of what the original author reveals. Stott says, "To begin with, we have to transport ourselves back, by the use of both our knowledge and our imagination, into the biblical writer's context, until we begin to think what he thought and feel what he felt."[50] In Stott's view, gathering data and knowledge is insufficient for proper exegesis. The imagination is needed to help the preacher experience the meaning. Howard and William Hendricks dedicate an entire chapter to the use of imagination in biblical interpretation. They denounce preachers' failure to avail themselves of imagination, saying, "Often when

we come to the Scriptures, we use the least imaginative, most overworked approaches possible."[51] In an earlier chapter on atmosphere, they state, "Reading for atmosphere involves picking up the setting and feelings from the biblical text."[52] This is an exercise for the imagination, not just the intellect. Engaging the imagination allows the preacher to discover the mood the original author intended to evoke through the text as well. Jeffrey Arthurs asserts, "We can identify that mood by reading slowly and imaginatively. Even though hermeneutics texts offer few tools for exegeting the affective quality of texts, I believe that most preachers possess enough sensitivity to identify the dominant mood of the passage."[53] Thus, exegeting the text goes beyond information gathering and research. Complete biblical exegesis requires the preacher to bring his imagination, under the filling of the Holy Spirit and within the confines of the text, to experience the feelings and moods the biblical author intended to convey.

After thoroughly exegeting the text, the imagination has a role in every aspect of expository sermon construction. The introduction of the sermon brings the first opportunity for use of imagination, and it also offers the preacher a chance to gain the listeners' attention. Judith McDaniel argues, "[T]he opening three minutes provide the listener with an 'appetizer,' an inkling of the stance from which to consider the issue being presented."[54] Because of the importance of earning a hearing early in the message, the preacher should use his imagination to form a gripping and biblically appropriate introduction. Pastor John MacArthur alleges, "Only a preacher's imagination and creativity limit the kinds of effective introductions."[55] Broadus recommends the pastor create an introduction out of his own imagination. He writes, "[T]he preacher should use his imagination. In other words, he should create his own introduction. Out of the stored materials in his mind he can develop an introduction that fits the sermon."[56] One of the most effective tools to develop an introduction are vivid illustrations, which will be addressed later. Regardless, the introduction is a

place that requires the preacher to involve his imaginative capacities.

Within the body of the sermon, the explanation of the biblical text is likely the place that preachers think imagination would not apply. But nothing could be further from the truth. John Broadus writes:

> Another use of imagination . . . is in realizing and depicting what the Scriptures reveal. One can only make history real by an imaginative revival in his own mind of the scenes, persons, and events of the past, by thinking oneself back into a period, or bringing it forward to our own time, and mentally observing and participating in what transpires.[57]

Broadus not only advocates imagination in exegesis, but also in depicting it for the hearers in the explanation segment of the sermon. Broadus claims, "Historical imagination, in reproducing the past, is one of the most powerful allies of preaching."[58] One sees an example of this historical reproduction in Acts 7:1–48, where Stephen provides a vivid description of the Old Testament covenant history from Abraham to Solomon. Wayne McDill, in *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, dedicates an entire chapter to "deal with the preacher's skill at vividly and imaginatively portraying biblical and contemporary scenes and stories."[59] Clearly, the preacher's imagination can play a significant role in the explanation of the biblical setting and meaning of the text to a congregation. McDill also recognizes the importance of imagination to the learning process.[60] Merely passing the research from the preacher's exegesis to the congregation will not leave a lasting impact. But if the preacher employs his imagination to paint pictures of the biblical settings, characters, and events, he will have a more probable hope of listener retention regarding the contextual situation. Some may be concerned that adding imaginative details to biblical explanation may distort the author's original intent. But McDill

disagrees. He writes, "Some preachers may be reluctant to tell biblical stories with such realism. It may seem to be adding to Scripture to tell more than is there. There is no violation of the sacredness of Scripture to retell its stories imaginatively. It may be a violation of biblical intent to tell them in such a way that nobody can believe them."[61] Therefore, the implementation of imagination in the explanation phase of the sermon is helpful and needful.

The most obvious sermon segment for the implementation of imagination is in the use of illustrations. McDill addresses this segment, writing, "Beyond appealing to intellect, you will appeal with illustration to the imagination."[62] Illustration serves to take the idea from the text previously explained and express it as an analogous picture in the listener's mind.[63] The preacher cannot use abstract or fuzzy concepts when seeking to connect the dots between illustration and explanation. Instead, as Scott Pace recognizes, "In order for illustrations to be visually effective, we must . . . use specific and sensate language that enables our hearers to visualize the images."[64] In *Engaging Exposition*, Akin, Curtis, and Rummage require illustrations be "colorful and compelling, capturing the heart and imagination of the listener."[65] Jesus, the Master Teacher, uses numerous illustrations in his first public discourse (Matt. 5–7). Illustrating offers an easy and appropriate venue for implementing imagination into the preaching moment.

Application also demands the use of imagination in expository sermon construction. Adrian Lane finds a correlation between application and creativity from the Old Testament prophets, Jesus, and apostles in content and form.[66] Despite his concerns regarding imagination, he admits, "Application requires creativity and courage: creativity to imagine the battles of daily life fought with the truths of God, and courage to talk about this reality on a personal level."[67] He also recognizes the requirement of involving the imaginations of the congregation in order to arouse interest.[68] McDill agrees with this assessment, placing the burden of application on the "thinking of the

preacher."[69] He suggests preachers visualize, through use of the imagination, a picture of a person applying the sermon's main point.[70] In *Why Johnny Can't Preach*, the author states, "Fill their minds and imaginations with a vision of the loveliness and perfection of Christ in his person, and the flock will long to be like him."[71] Because the conclusion of an expository sermon shares the need for implementation of imagination in the same way that the introduction and application sections do, the reasons will not be repeated. Based on the above, the preacher should involve his imagination in every aspect of crafting an expository sermon.

PRACTICAL TIPS TO IMPROVE THE PREACHER'S IMAGINATION

Because of the essential nature of imagination to expository sermon construction, it behooves a preacher to improve his imaginative capacities. Paul Bull concurs, writing, "A preacher has much need to train and educate the powers of imagination, for there in the heavenly places, where an idea forms into an image, is the home of the real."[72] Fortunately, there are several methods for improving the preacher's imagination for expository sermon construction. In this section, the following practical tips will be offered: prayer for the Holy Spirit's illumination, intentional thinking, observation, reading, and writing.

The first and most vital step the preacher can take to improve his imaginative capacities is to pray for the Holy Spirit's illumination. As Jeffrey Arthurs points out, "[T]he Holy Spirit illumines us to see what we are looking at in the text."[73] They can pray that the Holy Spirit will fill them with wisdom, vision, and illumination, so they can picturize the original author's meaning and communicate it into the listener's imagination. Imagination under the direction of the Holy Spirit is likely what the authors of *Power in the Pulpit* meant by "sanctified imagination."[74] Preachers who fail to submit their minds to the Spirit's control risk using imagination without the appropriate safeguards

discussed previously. Therefore, the preacher's imagination can grow through the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit through prayer.

A preacher can also grow his imagination through the discipline of intentional thought. Spurgeon strongly advocates intentional thinking. In *Lectures to My Students*, he asserts:

> Thinking is better than possessing books. Thinking is an exercise of the soul which both develops its powers and educates them. Without thinking, reading cannot benefit the mind, but it may delude the man into the idea that he is growing wise. Thought is the backbone of study, and if more ministers would think, what a blessing it would be![75]

Spurgeon recognizes that thinking is an exercise or, more accurately, a discipline. Bull agrees with this recommendation, as he applauds meditation as a "good method" to train and discipline the imagination.[76] William Evans advises preachers to reflect, or think, prior to constructing the sermon. He writes, "Reflect before beginning to write a single word of the sermon. And in reflecting one must value his own thought."[77] Thinking requires planning and commitment. Because of the busyness of ministry, preachers may surrender their thinking time for the practical aspects of ministry, leading to dull, boring presentations of research in the sermon. But for those preachers who want to craft persuasive and fresh expository sermons, setting aside time to intentionally think and meditate will grow their imaginative capacities.

Another important step a preacher can take to grow his imagination is through observation. Spurgeon instructs his students to be observant. He writes, "[M]uch that a minister needs to know he must learn by actual observation."[78] He tells them to "keep your eyes open; and gather flowers from the garden and the field with your hands."[79] Several other homileticians advise observation of nature. Broadus instructs readers to study nature.[80] Henry Ward Beecher says, "A man's

study should be everywhere, in the house, in the street, in the fields, and in the busy haunts of men."[81] If a preacher is observant of the details of ordinary life, he will possess a rich source of imagery to employ in his imaginative endeavors. Webb Garrison states, "Preaching material is everywhere. In order to find and use it only two things are necessary: seeing eyes and a nimble imagination. Like writers and artists, you should cultivate the habit of frequently looking at the ordinary aspects of life through the eyes of a stranger."[82] Author David Christensen affirms the practice of observing people to better understand their longings.[83] When observing, the preacher peppers the object or scene with questions, seeking to exhaust his mind of every possible point of interrogation. Simon Blocker writes, "Such persistent inquiry makes for open mental eyes, develops power to think, to study, to estimate, to decide."[84] Through consistent observation, the preacher's imagination will grow into a collection of images readily available for sermon construction.

The preacher can expand his imagination through the discipline of reading. Preachers might take this suggestion to mean reading the Bible more or devouring other spiritual sources. But Broadus brings a different viewpoint. He recommends, "Study imaginative literature (drama, poetry, fiction) in order to learn not only what people of imagination are able to see, but where they see it and how they portray their vision in vivid scenes and gripping imagery."[85] In other words, preachers who want to increase imaginative capacity must read widely. William Evans concurs, recommending that preachers read "suggestive books" for inspiration and adaptation.[86] Not only does John Booth agree with Broadus and Evans about reading fictional literature, but he also recommends reading sermons from other imaginative preachers. He says, "For ten cents a copy printed sermons may be secured from the majority of the nation's pulpit figures. Here are unparalleled opportunities to study first class models of effective oral speech. Read one or two of these just before sitting down to produce your own sermon."[87] While getting a physical copy of sermon

manuscripts costs more than ten cents a copy today, the internet provides countless sermons of great preachers of the past at no charge. The preacher has no good reason why he cannot read sermons from imaginative preachers. By making time for reading, the preacher will expand his imagination.

The final practical tip for improving the preacher's imagination is writing. Writing is laborious. It takes time to think and time to scribble marks on a page. Some preachers may argue that they do not even have time to draft a sermon manuscript, let alone write about things beyond the sermon. But writing serves to crystalize the imaginative process. John Booth states, "By conscious thought during the writing process the preacher can train his imagination to range, in lightning flashes, through the world's storehouse and pick out fitting analogies and suggestive pictures."[88] The preacher can note observations in a journal, write from preplanned prompts, or just write freely about anything. Any writing done consistently will build the imagination muscle. William Evans suggests the preacher carry a notebook with him wherever he goes, notating observations and sounds. He challenges preachers to "not allow one day to pass without making some record, no matter how small, of something you have observed."[89] When it comes to sermon construction, Wayne McDill advises preachers to write out immediate observations, possible subjects and completements, and a profile of the listener.[90] While writing, as well as the other practical tips, requires time and effort, the preacher will reap the rewards of a growing imagination available to implement in his expository sermon construction.

CONCLUSION

The preacher's imagination, therefore, plays an essential role in expository sermon construction. While potential dangers lurk in the imaginative realm, the preacher can ensure effective and proper use of imagination by staying within the confines of the text and relying on the Holy Spirit's filling. The Bible commends

and demonstrates the use of imagination in preaching through Old Testament prophets, Jesus, and the apostles. Each aspect of sermon construction should be touched by the preacher's creativity. In that way, listeners' interest in the sermon will be gained and maintained. Improving the imagination takes commitment and discipline, but this paper provides practical tips to assist the preacher in this area. One can imagine how lively and interesting the sermon can become when the imagination is exercised throughout the sermon's structure.

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Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary seeks an **Associate Professor or Professor of Preaching** (tenure-track or tenured) position to start August 1, 2024. Details for this position can be found at apply.interfolio.com/131342

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BOOK REVIEWS

GREGORY K. HOLLIFIELD
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BOOK REVIEW EDITOR'S NOTE

Cognitive bias takes many forms. Chronological snobbery is but one that affects nearly all of us on some level. It is the belief that the thinking, art, or science of an earlier time is inherently inferior to that of the present. Chronological snobs assume the latest to be greatest and the past to be naïve at best. Readers suffering from this bias have little time for old books.

The Bible is ancient. Scholars, including an innumerable company of preachers, have studied and written about it for thousands of years. Their research continues. And while we have witnessed exciting new developments in the field of homiletics as our discipline has gleaned from the fruits of other fields, we must beware of chronological snobbery when it comes to the voices from our own past.

Starting in this edition, our *Journal* will include reviews of at least one book from years gone by. These titles will be approved, not assigned, by the Book Review Editor as they are submitted by this journal's readership. EHS member John Duncan, who suggested the addition of this new feature, gets us started by offering a review of two works by the late Calvin Miller.

If you wish to review a book from our discipline's history or, like John Duncan, to review two or more works by the same author as part of a single submission, please email your proposal to the Book Review Editor. The same submission guidelines will apply as for reviews of recent publications. Acceptable titles may

have been originally written from the second century to the first decade of the twenty-first. Reviews of little-known gems to history's bestsellers are all welcome.

Preaching to a Divided Nation: A Seven-Step Model for Promoting Reconciliation and Unity. By Matthew D. Kim and Paul A. Hoffman. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2022. 978-1-5409-6474-8, 193 pp., $24.99.

Reviewer: *R. Larry Overstreet, Retired, Corban University School of Ministry, Salem, OR.*

Kim and Hoffman clearly enunciate why they wrote this book in its Introduction (1-6). They identify the divisive issues currently facing American culture as including ethnicity, economics, gender, politics, and abuse of power. They argue that these same concerns are harmful to the church, and they intend to offer preachers "some guidance, skills, and tools for those bumping along with us" (3).

That guidance, which is the great strength of the book, is detailed in seven steps, with each described in one of the seven chapters of the book. These include: The Theological Step: The Sins of Pride and Prejudice; The Contextual Step: America's Past and Present Reality; The Personal Step: Facing Our Sin and Acknowledging Our Prejudices; The Positional Step: We Are Heralds, Not Heart-Changers; The Methodological Step: A Homiletic for Reconciliation and Unity; The Practical Step: Pre-Sermon, Mid-Sermon, and Post-Sermon Practices; and, The Categorical Step: Biblical Themes and Texts. Each chapter ends with vital "Questions for Reflection" and challenging "Practical Next Steps." The concepts presented in these chapters, the challenges raised, and the potential solutions presented do indeed offer guidance, skills, and tools for dealing with the main disputes facing today's preachers. Some conservative readers, whether political or theological, may immediately put up a "red

flag" when Kim and Hoffman favorably quote Raphael Warnock to begin chapter 1, since he is a progressive Democrat and believer in black liberation theology. The quotation itself, however, is worthy of consideration.

For the evangelical pastor, a welcome characteristic of each chapter is the inclusion of well-chosen and carefully applied biblical texts. Although a reader may occasionally differ with Kim and Hoffman's understanding of a particular text, as I did as a complementarian while they appear to be egalitarian, the overall scriptural emphasis is appreciated. An area which needs clarification is their statement, "A major contributor to the cycle of systemic sin in our nation stems from existing educational, pedagogical, and scholarly structures" (32). While all of this may be correct, it ignores the deeper cause of systemic sin, which is the inherent sin nature each person possesses.

Following their conclusion (133-137), Kim and Hoffman add six brief appendices providing specific suggestions related to achieving their goals. The seventh appendix is the most valuable since it provides six abbreviated sample sermons on specific issues faced by the contemporary church: classism, ethnocentrism, political division, reconciliation, sexism (by Hoffman), and unity (by Kim).

This reviewer would have appreciated greater clarification on a particular direction of the book. Its title indicates *Preaching to a Divided Nation*, but most of its content (correctly in this reviewer's opinion) is not directed toward the nation but the church. Pastors do not commonly, if ever, preach to the *nation*, but we do preach to our churches. Our churches are the places where reconciliation and unity must begin.

A few content matters should be addressed if the book is reprinted. Neither Kim nor Hoffman is included in the book's Index. Yet, both are referenced in footnotes multiple times throughout the book. A glaring problem occurs on page twenty-eight, when Kim's book *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence: Understanding the People who Hear Our Sermons* (Baker, 2017) is recognized on the page without any identification that he is the author. In addition, a grammatical error occurs on page thirty-

eight in the sentence, they "maintain that until recent decades the impact of these destructive forces have been ignored…." Since the subject of the sentence is singular ("impact"), the verb "have" should be changed to "has." Furthermore, the Latin "sui generis" (67) may impress some readers, but many may not grasp its significance of being "unique" or "its own kind." Additionally, as a reader whenever I see a "first," I look for a "second." A "first" occurs on page eighty-five (referencing Matt. 22:36-40) and should be followed by an omitted second" on page eighty-six (referencing Matt. 28:18-20). The problem recurs on page ninety-two, where it is difficult to identify where a "second" should even be.

This is a helpful book for pastors to read in our current politically, sociologically, and philosophically divided times. Those divides affect the church, and the Scriptures deal with the issues that cause the divisions. Kim and Hoffman help preachers see the way toward solutions, using God's given Scriptures as our authority.

Celebrities for Jesus: How Personas, Platforms, and Profits are Hurting the Church. By Katelyn Beaty. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2022. 978-1-5874-3518-8, 193 pp., $24.99.

Reviewer: *Scott M. Gibson, George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University, Waco, TX.*

In *Celebrities for Jesus: How Personas, Platforms, and Profits are Hurting the Church*, author Katelyn Beaty presents a full and rich exploration of the place of celebrity in the American evangelical world—one which preachers and teachers of preaching will want to be aware. Beaty begins the book by stating that "the very nature of celebrity, especially in a digital era, is that it hides its power behind the illusion of intimacy" (7), and "celebrity is a distinctly modern phenomenon fueled by mass media" (7). She develops these themes throughout the book.

The book is part research, part confession, part personal reflection, and part lament. These elements do not work against each other. Instead, this honest and closely developed project demonstrates solid research and thoughtful analysis.

The book is divided into three sections with chapters under each part. The first part is "Big Things for God." Chapter 1 is "Social Power without Proximity." Here, Beaty defines what she means by celebrity: "For the purposes of this book, I'd like to offer a definition of 'celebrity' as *social power without proximity*. We put celebrities on pedestals, from which they influence, inspire, entertain, and exhort us" (17-18). Next, chapter 1, "The First Evangelical Celebrities," focuses on Billy Graham's at times both comfortable and uncomfortable engagement with celebrity. She ruefully reflects, "Graham has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. He shared the gospel with stars, and in doing so, became one himself" (36). Then, chapter 3 explores the celebrity of megachurch pastors, particularly Bill Hybels among others.

Part Two is titled "Three Temptations" and includes chapter 4, "Abusing Power," a compelling exploration of celebrity and the megachurch carapace that often protects the isolated celebrity. Next, chapter 5, "Chasing Platforms," is a fascinating peek into the world of Christian publishing and the way book publishers perpetuate celebrity. Then, chapter 6, "Creating Persona," explores the loneliness celebrities experience.

Part Three includes chapter 7, "Seeking Brand Ambassadors," which surveys the conversions of the famous to Christianity and how their celebrity is leveraged for the faith—for good or ill. Then, finally, chapter 8, "The Obscure Messiah and Ordinary Faithfulness," serves as the conclusion to the book, seeking to find a solution to the epidemic of celebrity culture in American Christianity. In the final paragraph of her book, Beaty writes:

> Maybe recovering from celebrity's toxic effects means accepting that our lives will be mostly a series of "unhistoric acts" whose final effects remain unknown to

> the world. Maybe it means casting off the big ideals of living big lives for God and accepting that our greatest moments of faithfulness may be achieved in complete obscurity. Maybe it means getting back down to the roots—to something as small as a mustard seed. To a faith that is hidden and unnoticed, barely visible to the human eye. The kingdom of God is not coming through bright lights and loudspeakers and impressive buildings and multimedia teaching series and PR specialists and strategic partnerships and virtual content. It is not coming through entertaining anecdotes and polished talks and bestselling books. It is not coming through any strategy. It's not even coming through you and me. We don't build or usher in the kingdom of God. We merely attest to its reality in our lives. If only we would get out of the way (175).

This helpful book provides an insightful contribution to the current conversation about the nature and place of evangelicalism—and calls us to make needed changes in our perceptions and in our practices as preachers and followers of Christ.

Preaching the Manifold Grace of God: Theologies of Preaching in the Early Twenty-First Century, Vol. 2. Edited by Ronald J. Allen. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2022. 978-1-7252-5962-1, 330 pp., $41.00.

Reviewer: *Jared E. Alcántara, George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University, Waco, TX.*

In *Preaching the Manifold Grace of God: Theologies of Preaching in the Early Twenty-First Century*, Ronald J. Allen curates the second volume of a two-volume set on theologies of preaching and their impact on practice. As editor, he partners with eighteen collaborators in this volume. Allen retired in 2019 from Christian Theological Seminary (Indianapolis, IN) where he taught

preaching for thirty-seven years (1982–2019). He has authored or co-authored more than forty books and one hundred articles and book chapters. Post-retirement, he still maintains an active writing and research agenda in homiletics.

The previous volume of *Preaching the Manifold Grace of God*, Volume 1, contained twelve essays that explored theologies of preaching from a historical-theological perspective and was reviewed in a previous issue of this *Journal.* This second volume contains chapters on theologies of preaching in "contemporary theological movements" in the twenty-first century (xi). Each chapter follows a similar structure: "summary of the main theological ideas of the family, the purpose and characteristics of preaching associated with that family, a case study of the movement's approach to preaching in action (a sermon), a brief evaluation of the strengths and limitations of each theological family, and a short bibliography for further reading" (xiv).

In his introduction, Allen describes the healthy balance that he hopes to achieve. On the one hand, readers should recognize that "[p]reaching is a thoroughly theological act" that reveals our understanding of God, the Bible, our listeners, and the world (xi). Our theologies need to be explored, interrogated, and respected. On the other hand, readers should realize that their contexts shape their theology and practice in ways they do not always comprehend. Our contexts need to be recognized, named, and located. "There is no universal theology of preaching," Allen writes. "Instead, there are multiple approaches to the theology of preaching" (xi).

Unlike the first volume which examines theological differences in historical-theological families, this volume attends to theological differences among the following twenty-first century theological movements: evangelical, liberal, neo-orthodox, postliberal, existential, radical orthodox, deconstructionist, Black liberation, feminist, womanist, Latinx liberation, Mujerista, Asian American, Asian American feminist, LGBTQAI, Indigenous, postcolonial, and process theology. EHS's own Scott M. Gibson contributed the chapter on evangelical preaching.

As a result of reading this book, pastors will expand their knowledge of twenty-first century homiletical traditions, particularly movements that lift up the importance of race, ethnicity, and gender as interpretive lenses. They will learn new terms and develop new insights through studying the history, scholarship, strengths, and weaknesses associated with these movements. In addition to learning about minoritized communities, they will learn about shifts in white-majority theologies such as the Radical Orthodox movement (chapter 6). Pastors of color will have an opportunity to access multiple chapters by minoritized homileticians, including minoritized women, whose contributions center stories and experiences in communities of color. Likewise, majority-culture pastors will learn (some for the first time) about theological movements in minoritized communities and their connections to homiletics.

Every reader will be introduced to a tradition or movement that is completely new and unfamiliar to them. For instance, this reviewer benefited greatly and learned much from reading Raymond C. Aldred's chapter (16) on "Preaching in the Indigenous Theological Families." Only a few resources have been published on this preaching tradition, so it was refreshing and exciting to see a recent homiletical contribution.

Some readers may struggle with maintaining interest and retention as this book spans 300-plus pages and considers eighteen different theological movements. Others who lean toward a more conservative theology and practice may struggle with the Mainline-centric focus as well as the sections and chapters on feminist theology, liberation, and human sexuality. Some readers of color may struggle to find their traditions in the chapters on minoritized theological movements because the emphasis is placed almost exclusively on liberation and the eradication of -isms without much attention to other themes such as salvation, holiness, or evangelism.

Even so, Allen's collection achieves its goal, the balance that he seeks in the Introduction. The same preaching that is a "thoroughly theological act" is *also* widely diverse and divergent in its interpretation, expression, and location. All one must do is

read the list of theological movements in this volume to see how much diversity and divergence exists in twenty-first century preaching.

This book exposes readers to ongoing conversations in homiletics and contemporary theology, and it closes important knowledge gaps. Because of its length and subject matter, it would likely function best as a reference text and resource in an academic setting, perhaps in an advanced M.Div. course on preaching traditions in which a breadth of theological diversity is represented or in a Ph.D.-level course on theology or hermeneutics.

Preaching from Inside the Story: A Fresh Journey into Narrative. By Jeffrey W. Frymire. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2022. 978-1-6667-3277-1, 188 pp., $28.00.

Reviewer: *Kristopher Barnett, Clamp Divinity School at Anderson University, Anderson, SC.*

Jeffrey W. Frymire holds a Ph.D. in homiletics from Fuller Seminary and serves as Associate Professor of Preaching and Dean of the Chapel at Asbury Seminary in Orlando, Florida. In *Preaching from Inside the Story: A Fresh Journey into Narrative*, Frymire seeks to "give preachers permission to use their God-given creativity in the service of Biblical preaching through a storytelling approach to narrative" (xix). He blends scholarly research and practical application in service to the goal. *Preaching from Inside the Story* is the author's second book on narrative preaching, following *Preaching the Story: How to Communicate God's Word Through Narrative Sermons.*

The most recent volume begins with a chapter recounting his own journey into narrative preaching. Frymire's mother introduced him to storytelling at an early age. Later, professors and mentors like James Earl Massey helped him appreciate the intersection of homiletics and narrative. Chapters 2-4 explore the weighty topics of narrative hermeneutics, neurobiology, and

philosophy of story, respectively. Frymire provides solid and insightful research on these topics while maintaining a personal and practical tone. Each chapter points the reader to homiletical application. Chapter 5 concludes the first section and summarizes the author's contributions to narrative homiletics.

The book's second section provides five sample sermons by the author that include insights linking back to the discoveries outlined in the first section. The number of sermons and the clear explanations accompanying them help the reader "hear" how the principles work in actual sermons.

Preaching from Inside the Story covers similar ground to other works in narrative preaching that might be more familiar to EHS members. For example, *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative* by Steven D. Matthewson and *Preaching Old Testament Narratives* by Benjamin H. Walton work well to introduce the concept of narrative preaching. As the titles imply, those works focus specifically on Old Testament narratives, while Frymire includes both Testaments. In addition, Frymire's chapter on neurobiology and his work on Aristotle's philosophy of story provide unique contributions to the field, or at least, uniquely framed contributions to the field.

Frymire appropriately focuses on the text serving as the foundation of the sermon. His theology of narrative preaching states, "A narrative/storytelling sermon is based in a text and in its context. It is not stringing together a series of stories from other sources as you 'drive by' the text" (7, footnote 4). Frymire emphasizes telling the biblical story rather than simply telling stories that tangentially connect to the Bible.

Some of the most vital contributions appear in chapter 5. Frymire encourages preachers to develop a narrative sense in this chapter while engaging a storytelling lens. The narrative sense refers to the way preachers view biblical stories (95). Frymire presents a spectrum of five storytelling lenses (Flatlander, Landscaper, 3-D Set Designers, Cinematographers, and Insiders), encouraging preachers to move toward the Insider lens so congregants can participate in the biblical narrative (96-98). He wants preachers to explore an alternative structure in sermon

construction by communicating through story rather than points (7, footnote 4). He asserts that the storytelling approach invites listeners to participate. "Rather than being an empty vessel into which points are poured, the listener becomes an archeologist accompanying the preacher in the discovery of wisdom found in the ancient artifacts of the Biblical account" (27).

While retracing his journey into narrative preaching in chapter 1, Frymire recounts a discovery. The discovery came while he explored exilic Jewish worship practices. Following O. C. Edwards and Alexander Deeg, Frymire contrasts Halahkah (logic) and Haggadah (story) preaching styles. While reflecting on these styles, Frymire asserts, "I realized that I had stumbled upon this origin story of the narrative sermon." (19) This intriguing claim needed further development. Narrative preaching might be rooted in exilic worship practices. However, it also seems that pre-exilic prophets like Nathan in 2 Samuel 12 practiced some form of narrative preaching. Oral transmission of the Torah prior to the written word could also be evidence of early forms of narrative preaching.

Preaching from Inside the Story attains the goal of providing permission for preachers to practice a storytelling approach to narrative. In addition, this work offers insight into cultivating storytelling in the pulpit by studying the text with a narrative sense and communicating the text with a storytelling lens. Frymire communicates with the experience of both a preacher and a professor. Preachers seeking to hone their skills in narrative preaching would benefit from this book, as would instructors trying to overcome fears that students bring to narrative texts.

Resonate: How to Preach for Deep Connection. By Lisa Washington Lamb. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2022. 978-1-6667-3557-4, 140 pp., $23.00.

Reviewer: *Gregory K. Hollifield, Memphis College of Urban and Theological Studies at Union University, Memphis, TN.*

To diagram a sentence, one must first identify its subject and verb. In inflected languages, the subject and verb are often a single word. To parse it, one must account for the verb's person, number, tense, voice, and mood.

Our uninflected English word "preaching" is both a noun and a verb. Multiple works in the field of homiletics dissect preaching as a noun, considering its subjects (including the person of the preacher and the Bible as preaching's subject matter) and objects (including its audience, aims, and outcomes). Nothing until now, in this reviewer's awareness of the literature, has thought to parse preaching as a verb. This is the genius of Lisa Washington Lamb's book.

The table of contents summarizes clearly what the reader can expect. Each chapter unfolds an aspect of the preacher's calling relative to the different parts of a verb: 1) Preacher as Witness and Host: The Power of First-Person Speech; 2) Preacher as Shepherd: The Promise of Second-Person Speech; 3) Preacher as Proclaimer: Declaring God's Goodness with Third-Person-Singular Verbs; 4) Preacher as Sage: Teaching Wisdom with Third-Person-Plural Verbs; 5) Preacher as Storyteller: Fueling Faith by Narrating the Past; 6) Preacher as Priest: Discerning the Work of God in the Present; 7) Preacher as Visionary Prophet: Walking into the Future with Hope; 8) Preacher as Leader: Choosing and Using Modes of Influence; and 9) Preacher as Catalyst: Sparking Transformation in the Active and Passive Voice.

To illustrate how each chapter develops its theme, the first chapter takes up the first-person aspect of preaching. Preachers are called to serve as witnesses to what they have discovered in the text, what they have personally experienced of God, and what others report of their experiences with Him through their own stories. All of this is preaching in the first-person-singular.

As a member of both the human family and believing community, the preacher also functions as host. He speaks of our common condition, including our beauty as God's image bearers, ability to change, sin and brokenness, longings, anxieties,

sufferings, and diverse perspectives. This is first-person-plural preaching. It lays bare what we are. It calls for second-person preaching to point the way forward and third-person preaching to describe what God has done.

Lamb's purpose is not that one should work his or her way through the paradigm that the book provides "as a perfunctory checklist each week, but instead that it would drive [the reader] to a deeper pursuit of God-honoring excellence in [the reader's] proclamation, rooted in love for the people who listen" (xxi). Lamb's hope is that this process will yield wisdom and joy for readers as they live into their vocations to speak good news. "That, in turn, will foster a more profound sense of presence and connection" with those the preacher loves and addresses (xxi).

Two audiences for this fine little book come immediately to mind. The working pastor who preaches in the same voice week after week without even realizing it will benefit greatly, not to mention his poor congregation, from considering the other persons, voices, and moods that make up the task of preaching. Professors of preaching will find Lamb's book to be a helpful tool for stretching their students' conception of their sacred calling, as it shows how by changing the verbal stance of their sermons they will serve in a variety of roles that promise to connect them more deeply with their hearers and their hearers to God.

Taking Kierkegaard Back to Church: The Ecclesial Implications of the Gospel. By Aaron P. Edwards. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2022. 987-1-7252-5958-4, 210 pp., $28.00.

Reviewer: *Alex Kato, Crossroads Bible Church, Bellevue, WA.*

Aaron Edwards' *Taking Kierkegaard Back to Church* is an insightful and sometimes playful presentation of new/old ideas for preaching and church life. Six of the eight chapters are previously published articles, making the book a series of suppositions rather than a sustained argument, but this fits Kierkegaard's

eclectic style. Both examining Kierkegaard's writings and hypothesizing what he might have said or done, Edwards suggests that contemporary American evangelicalism—despite often characterizing itself as marginalized—may be entangled with comfort and power like eighteenth-century Danish Christendom, requiring a new hearing of Jesus' teachings.

Personally, the concept of "defamiliarization" (45) brought into focus a need I had recognized only peripherally heretofore: To help longtime churchgoers truly encounter a biblical text, preachers must first show the hearers that they do not understand or live by the text as much as they assume they do. Similarly, preachers must grapple with their own "idealism," the extent to which they prefer the thought of an obedient Christian life more than the actual living of it, much like the arms-length obsession of Kierkegaard's pseudonym, Johannes Climacus, for Cordelia (151). Other Kiergegaardian concepts like "appropriation" (45), "subjective-objective dialectic" (81), and "ecclesial individualism" (175) illuminate new avenues for further homiletical reflection. Characteristically, they defy quick assimilation, but their eventual effect could be paradigmatic.

Because of its meandering approach, the book is unlikely to fit in homiletics syllabi. It ventures beyond homiletics into various ecclesiological matters, with preaching in view roughly half the time. It will most help competent preachers seeking new ideas who are comfortable with the discipline of philosophy (though it does not require familiarity with or technical knowledge of any school or philosopher, including Kierkegaard). In terms of difficulty and ecclesial tradition, it is geared for a tiny sliver of society, but that sliver includes most EHS members. Uncomfortably insightful at times, in good Kierkegaardian style, it defamiliarizes preaching and the Christian life, suggesting possibilities for new growth in teaching, preaching, and faith.

New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament, Second Edition. By Ben Witherington III and Jason A. Myers. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2022. 978-1-5326-8968-0, 380 pp., $45.00.

Reviewer: *Thomas Kitchen, Edinburgh Theological Seminary, UK.*

Is rhetoric merely, as Quintilian put it, "the art of speaking well"? This very question is discussed and dissected in the second edition of Witherington's (and now Myers') volume.

Beginning with an overview of oral culture in the ancient world, the book then traces the history and methodologies of rhetoric and continues by studying the rhetoric of many books in the New Testament, including the Gospels, Acts, six of Paul's letters, the "catholic" or general letters, and Revelation (the latter of which has been added for this new edition). Bringing the book to a close are two appendices which do not appear in the first edition—"The Elementary Exercises," which discusses what aspiring rhetoricians would have been taught and when; and "An Unapologetic Apologetic," a paper which uncovers "even very complex rhetorical techniques [that] are in play in the NT" (297), specifically Greco-Roman techniques.

The book truly is impressive and courageous in its scope, especially considering all the above is covered in 320 pages, not including the bibliographies. These bibliographies attest to the need for this new edition, as the section is enormous—forty-four pages compared to the first edition's five. This is a well-researched work.

At the end of each chapter is a set of "Questions for Reflection." These may perhaps not be particularly helpful for those more expert in the field, but for those who are students and laymen, a time to digest the book's contents within this particular format is welcome.

It is difficult to find fault with this book, and I am reluctant to stretch myself and find one. Those more proficient and

knowledgeable will no doubt find remarks and conclusions with which they disagree. However, this particular book was written for those new to the field of rhetoric and in need of an overall picture. In this sense, the work succeeds wonderfully.

We are told that the apostle Paul sometimes appears not to be a particularly educated man. "[B]ut when we grasp the rarity of [his] education, writing, speaking, and letters, then the apostle with thirteen letters attached to his name jumps out as a rather highly educated person" (10). Witherington and Myers conclude therefore that the New Testament is a collection of books full of highly educational material, well worth reading and studying, as well as being the good news of Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, we find that "[r]hetoric was a tool useable with the educated and uneducated, with the elite and the ordinary, and most public speakers of any ilk or skill in antiquity [who] knew they had to use the art of persuasion to accomplish their aims" (4). Regardless of whether we view ourselves as elite or ordinary, *New Testament Rhetoric* teaches us to keep learning and mining the greats truths of Scripture and to proclaim them, all while remaining aware of the cultural and social norms surrounding us. I recommend the book heartily.

The Beauty and Power of Biblical Exposition: Preaching the Literary Artistry and Genres of the Bible. By Douglas Sean O'Donnell and Leland Ryken. Wheaton: Crossway, 2022. 978-1-4335-7044-5, 304 pp., $23.99.

Reviewer: *Derek Kitterlin, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College, New Orleans, LA.*

The Beauty and Power of Biblical Exposition is a personal *festschrift* by O'Donnell in honor of his Wheaton College professor Ryken, including contributions by Ryken on the topic of each chapter. Chapters are based on Ryken's source material and his own experience and perspective gained through many years as a pastor. O'Donnell explains the purpose of his book using the

metaphor of "reversed thunder." He writes, "[U]nderstanding what happens in the pastor's study, as he seeks to understand, and then explain, illustrate, and apply God's Word, can help everyone who regularly teaches God's Word tap into the surge behind the storm" (15).

O'Donnell lists seven convictions that he shares with Ryken regarding a literary approach to the Bible: (1) it is essential to good preaching; (2) helps avoid reductionistic preaching; (3) acknowledges that meaning is communicated throughout the Bible using various literary forms; (4) equips the preacher to help his congregation relive the text as fully as possible, so as to live out the message of the text; (5) offers an awareness and appreciation of the artistry of God's inspired word; (6) opens the entire canon to exploration and exposition; and (7) adds freshness and enjoyment to our reading and preaching, along with an antidote to the misinterpretation of Scripture (15–22). Together, O'Donnell and Ryken identify two main goals for their book. First, to "inform and inspire pastors to understand that 'attentiveness to the literary dimensions of the Bible should be foregrounded in expository sermons'" (23). Second, "to supply a foundation for preachers to move from sermons filled with merely abstract theological propositions and proof-texted moral applications to sermons that are fresh, relevant, interesting, and accurate-to-the-authorial intention—words of God's Word that relive the human experience and revive a love for God and others" (23). In this reviewer's estimation, they accomplish both goals.

O'Donnell's reliance upon Ryken's scholarship imbues the book with a plethora of literary knowledge. His summaries and guidelines for implementing Ryken's thought helped their work to achieve its first goal. Their second goal was accomplished, at least in part, as the authors dedicated significant space to discussion of various biblical genres. Their homiletical section is informative but not methodological.

To appreciate how *The Beauty and Power of Biblical Exposition* unfolds, imagine yourself being an art student touring an exhibit of a particular master's work. The curator-instructor

tells you what to look for in the art and what you should include in your own artwork. She does not explain all the techniques for achieving these effects, only that you should aspire to create them. So it is with this book. Ryken is the artist. O'Donnell is the curator. He explains Ryken's work and teaches the reader what should be in the sermon. He leaves it to the reader to figure out how.

Gospel Witness Through the Ages: A History of Evangelism. By David M. Gustafson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2022. 978-0-8028-7728-4, 461 pp., $39.99.

Reviewer: *Todd H. Hilkemann, George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University, Waco, TX.*

Evangelism "is not accidental, coincidental, or additional but essential to the church's nature" (1-2), so insists David M. Gustafson, professor of evangelism and missional ministry at Trinity International University. In a straightforward and mostly descriptive style, Gustafson aims to "expand readers' perceptions of the evangelistic task…to appreciate and learn from the contributions of earlier generations of Christians, and to shape our identity as gospel witnesses today." Furthermore, he hopes to alert the church "to the mistakes and abuses of the past" which have harmed her gospel witness (vii).

Writing as a "Protestant in the Pietist-revivalist tradition" from an "evangelical conviction to proclaim the gospel to the whole world" (15), Gustafson draws upon a robust set of secondary and primary sources to highlight evangelistic "persons, movements, and methods" throughout church history (10). His monograph traces a roughly chronological and mostly Western history of evangelism. He begins with a brief survey of the proto evangelism of the Old Testament but focuses most of his attention on the Christian story beginning with the New Testament through today. His survey fills in some gaps in church history as he foregrounds evangelism. For example, when

discussing theological controversies, he highlights the evangelistic implications of those debates. When he reviews the formation of the creeds, he emphasizes their evangelistic function, as "easy-to-use means in order to share the gospel with others" (66). As he describes John Wesley's robust prayer life, he notes how Wesley's "dependence on the Holy Spirit and prayer were vital to evangelism" (247). Most of the familiar characters and eras in Western Protestant church history make an appearance. Gustafson helps readers to see them in the light of evangelism. He also introduces readers to a number of lesser-known figures.

In eleven of the twelve chapters, *Gospel Witness* describes evangelistic efforts during a specific era. In chapter 11, "Global Indigenous Evangelism," the author identifies evangelistic efforts led by indigenous Christians "in Africa, Asia, and Latin America" (343) from the early 19th through the mid-20th centuries. Gustafson persuasively demonstrates that "there has not been a single form of gospel witness but multiple forms" (418). He provides examples of evangelism through word (preaching, teaching, writing, and translating) and deed (prayer, art, small groups, miracles, music, hospitality, discipleship, athletics, media, and social action). His treatment stresses the creative and contextual breadth of evangelism throughout church history.

Gospel Witness has many strengths. It provides an important insight into the sometimes bi-focal nature of evangelism. Beginning with Christendom, "Evangelism became not merely a matter of preaching the gospel to those who were ignorant of the person and work of Jesus Christ but a matter of convincing nominal Christians that they needed to be converted to Christ" (81). Portions of the book, especially the extended citations of primary sources, may inspire (re)new(ed) evangelistic zeal. Gustafson includes a wide variety of theological perspectives. Many Western Protestants will be able to identify part of their own denominational story. The "Discussion Questions" at the conclusion of each chapter are especially thoughtful. Gustafson mostly avoids commentary, but his questions encourage meaningful reflection for "informed and

thoughtful" (416) evangelism in the church today. Preachers may find new characters to explore and new ways to understand familiar figures. Furthermore, they will be challenged to recognize that preaching plays an important part in evangelism, but only a part. Thus, they will consider how their own preaching faithfully and contextually proclaims the evangel while also equipping and inspiring others to do so in creative ways.

This book has two primary weaknesses. First, Gustafson's summaries of church history sometimes overwhelm his observations about evangelism. At times, the evangelistic implications of an individual are relegated to a few sentences in a paragraphs-long summary. For those who are already conversant in Western church history, the summaries may seem like a review. Second, Gustafson's history is an uneven one. His book primarily traces a Western Protestant evangelical history of evangelism while mostly overlooking other branches. Beginning with the 18th century, most of the book focuses on evangelism in the United States, a subject about which Gustafson has clear expertise. His important chapter on "Global Indigenous Evangelism" feels inadequate since, as Gustafson notes, "the Global South …[is] Christianity's new epicenter" (414). Gustafson includes important stories of a few women, African Americans, and Latin@ Americans, but this reviewer wanted more of those stories. Yet these weaknesses are tempered by the subtitle "*a* history of evangelism." Gustafson disavows any notion that this is an "exhaustive or comprehensive account" (11). When read as *a* history, *Gospel Witness* is an important contribution that will enlighten and challenge preachers, church leaders, and scholars.

What Do We Do When Nobody Is Listening?: Leading the Church in a Polarized Society. By Robin W. Lovin. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2022. 978-0-8028-8232-5, 162 pp. $19.99.

Reviewer: *R. Larry Overstreet, Retired, Corban University School of Ministry, Salem, OR.*

Lovin is an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church and a retired professor of ethics from Southern Methodist University. He writes from the perspective of mainline Protestantism and as someone concerned about the deepening polarization in American life, including life in the church.

In Part I: Divisions (chapters 1-2), the book asserts that readers need to understand how polarization has developed in our society and how that has affected contemporary churches. Lovin then moves to a discussion of how the church should function in a polarized society. He suggests that churches may incorrectly mobilize public opinion to "protect" their identity, or they may withdraw to "exist within political society," but not be part of it (47). In contrast, Lovin presents his case for a sociological and ethical model which he believes will redirect the church to build unity in a polarized and divided society. In contrast to be either on the "left" or the "right," Lovin argues that the church needs to function to bring back effective moral discourse.

Part II: Listening (chapters 3-5) stresses that Christians need to listen to the word of God (chapter 3), to the world (chapter 4), and to those who have not been heard (chapter 5). To Lovin, hearing God's word "involves encountering God's action in every experience and being ready to respond to God's action as we encounter it in that event" (84), which is remarkably different than careful exposition of the Scriptures themselves. This involves developing faith, hope, and love through a theocentric faith which will impact the totality of American society for the good.

Listening to God's word will enable the church to listen better to the world. To illustrate how this occurs, Lovin uses Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life and death as a template for the church to follow as it helps society form practical virtues.

Adam Hamilton, in the book's Foreword, refers to Romans 12:2 in a manner that makes the reader expect Lovin's book will seek to establish a biblical framework rather than one from a philosophical/sociological perspective. Unfortunately, that does not occur. Although writing as a professing Christian,

and seeking to strengthen the American church, Lovin approaches the subject differently than most solidly evangelical believers will find useful. While he frequently mentions the "church," "Christians," "theologians," the "word of God," and leans heavily on the example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, he does not directly appeal to Scripture itself until page eighty-six. From there to the end of the book, Lovin refers to eighteen texts of Scripture which he applies to his emphases, without detailed exegesis of any of them.

Lovin's final ten pages are his exhortation for changing the church to impact its culture. He suggests churches "are in a good position to bring these projects to wider attention, because what they do often involves recognized human needs and builds on collaborating with other groups," and in doing this "the church bears witness to the ultimate unity of all things in God" (153). For evangelicals, a glaring deficiency in his entire approach is a complete lack of gospel emphasis, which alone can change a person's heart. This weakness permeates the book and leaves a Bible believing preacher crying for a better solution. For this reason, many readers will find this a disappointing book.

How to Preach Proverbs. By Jared E. Alcántara. Dallas: Fontes, 2022. 978- 1-9480-4878-1, 246 pp., $18.49.

Reviewer: *Matthew D. Kim, George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University, Waco, TX.*

In this excellent series, flowing out of a study group in the Evangelical Homiletics Society, Jared E. Alcántara, professor of preaching and the Paul W. Powell Endowed Chair in Preaching at Truett Seminary, has produced another solid volume on genre-sensitive preaching. In *How to Preach Proverbs*, Alcántara excavates the rich soil of biblical wisdom to both inform us on the significance of proverbs and how to preach them effectively.

The book lays out a sharp structure including seven topics (genre, imagery, characters, themes, timing, integrity, and

justice) that receive their own due chapter. Alcántara opens each with a story, anecdote, example, or illustration which leads nicely into a well-defined strategy on the given topic. For instance, in chapter 1, Genre, his strategy is: "Do What the Genre Does." From there, he shows and tells how this strategy can be achieved by submitting practical tools.

Chapter 7 on "Justice" was my favorite. As preachers, we tend to avoid Alcántara's suggestion to "Adopt a Prophetic Tone" either due to fear of what might come out of our mouths or feeling like it is not our place to do so. His homiletical courage to guide preachers in this way is worthy of commendation. Justice is not as polemic or taboo a subject as our various Christian contexts can make it seem to be. It is biblical, faithful, and within the purview of speaking on behalf of God, which all preachers are called to do, albeit with grace and wisdom.

Another key feature which I appreciated is how each chapter concludes with three salient resources: "For Further Study," offering a short bibliography, a "Talk About It" section with valuable conversation starters (a great idea to support introverted pastors), and a "Dig Deeper" moment where Alcántara imparts practical ways to develop skills on these various chapters.

In the two Appendices, readers will find excellent tips from Rebecca W. Poe Hays, a professor of Christian Scriptures at Truett Seminary, on giving sermonic attention to Proverbs 31:10-31. Following that are three penetrating sample sermons from the author, Ralph Douglas West, and Ingrid Faro.

This review cannot do justice to the depth and scope of the command which Alcántara demonstrates on preaching this important biblical genre. He has distilled an often-complex genre into digestible parts. The book is clear, concise, content-rich, and imaginative. My only wish is that each chapter had a designated sample sermon to explore additional possibilities of preaching on Proverbs (acknowledging, of course, a publisher's restriction on word counts). That said, Alcántara continues to resource the church and academy with substantial biblical, theological, and

homiletical works that synthesize theory and practice. Highly recommend this book!

Divine Laughter: Preaching and the Serious Business of Humor. By Karl N. Jacobson and Rolf A. Jacobson. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2022. 978-1-5064-6867-9, 152 pp., $19.99.

Reviewer: *Christopher Kearney, George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University, Waco, TX.*

Divine Laughter by Karl Jacobson, senior pastor at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Minneapolis, and his brother Rolf, professor of Old Testament and the Alvin N. Rogness Chair of Scripture, Theology, and Ministry at Luther Seminary, is one of the newest additions to the *Working Preacher Books Series*. In it, they address the often-overlooked subject of humor in the Bible and how preachers should make use of it to better explain God and the biblical text.

The Jacobsons begin by identifying what stand-up comedians have in common with preachers. Both groups see the world askance, use the power of intrusion, and practice their own forms of truth telling. As interesting and helpful as these insights are, the book truly excels in dividing and defining the different types of laughter seen in Scripture. For example, the laughter of God's enemies at God and God's people is distinguished from the righteous laughing and rejoicing in moments of restoration. The brothers emphasize that good laughter is not at the expense of others.

The authors survey biblical humor as found in various genres and practiced by a cross-section of people, including narrative and wisdom literature, prophecy, John the Baptist, Jesus, Paul, and others. However, the Jacobsons' best work is done in their analysis of the prophets, specifically Amos. Their textual exegesis and suggestions on how to read from Amos aloud dives deep into the Hebrew text and allows for a fresh reading of the prophet's words.

To what will be the surprise of many readers, Sarah in Genesis 18 is repeatably referenced as a positive example of laughter. The authors suggest that Sarah is not laughing at God but laughing with God. One might question their decision to use that event as the key argument of their book. This interpretation seems to minimize God's subtle rebuke of Sarah. Still, this is only a minor criticism, as the authors' main points are well supported in other passages.

A caution to bear in mind while reading *Divine Laughter* is that what one person finds humorous may not be funny at all to the next person. For example, the Jacobsons find Abimelech catching a glimpse of Isaac and Rebekah having sex outside his window as a humorous event. Perhaps, but this reviewer imagines that not everyone in the pew will find it so amusing. This example serves as a good reminder that discretion must be exercised when highlighting humorous textual elements in the sermon.

The Jacobsons' overarching point is that the preacher should be moving toward a homiletic of joy. This is because humor has the power to bring people together as well as disarm them. They do not demand that humor be used in every sermon, but only that the preacher should read the Bible unafraid to find humor in it.

Their last chapter provides helpful suggestions on preaching in general. Here, the brothers urge every preacher to find their unique voice, rely on their individual strengths, use the power of silence, be personal, and be unafraid to laugh. Two sample sermons by each of the authors appear in the book's appendix. Overall, *Divine Laughter* provides a breath of fresh air into preaching methodology, which can often be stuffy and overly serious.

The Visual Preacher: Proclaiming an Embodied Word. By Steve Thomason. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2022. 978-1-1506-6473-2, 114 pp., $19.99.

Reviewer: *Jonathan Nason, New Hope Church, Queens, NY.*

In *The Visual Preacher: Proclaiming an Embodied Word*, Steve Thomason offers a simple and practical guide for how to employ visual elements of various kinds in the sermon. Although the book is narrowly focused on incorporating multi-faceted visual elements in all aspects of the sermon preparation and delivery process, it serves as a good reminder to all preachers of the importance of helping congregants "see" Jesus in their sermons, even if it is just by use of vivid language in illustrations and biblical exposition.

The book consists of two parts. Part one is made up of three chapters focused on the "Foundations of Visual Preaching." Part two similarly consists of three chapters focused on the "Visual Sermon."

Chapter 1 lays the theological foundation for visual preaching. Thomason argues that "The Word of God is always intertwined with a dynamic visual element" (14). Likewise, "[t]he purpose of preaching is to embody the Word…[and] good preaching embodies the Word so people can see it" (8). The emphasis on *seeing* the Word in preaching is the main goal of this book. Thomason states, "my goal for this book is to offer you practical ways to combine visual communication with the Word of Scripture and the words of your sermon, so that when you are done preaching, your listeners will say, 'We have seen Jesus'" (11).

In chapter 2, Thomason answers the objection that one must be an artist to do visual preaching. He offers practical tools and advice on how a preacher can utilize visual study methods during sermon preparation and explains how these tools can turn into visual elements in the teaching of the text.

Chapter 3 focuses on the use of visual elements, such as mind mapping and creative storyboarding, while constructing a sermon. Mind mapping is helpful for those who are not linear thinkers and is a useful brainstorming tool for those who are. Creative storyboarding is another tool for linear thinkers who want to incorporate visuals in their sermon preparation.

Chapter 4 argues that everything in the worship space is a potential visual aid to preaching. The preacher's body, decorations in the auditorium, items in the hallway, and physical illustrations on stage during the sermon are discussed and examples are given.

Chapter 4 talks specifically about artistic images in the sermon. Thomason goes into detail about how to create a visual arts team at one's church to help the preacher with visual elements. If that is not possible, he recommends specific crowdsourcing websites that can be used free of copyright restrictions. For someone who is unaware of these resources or unsure of how to display their images in PowerPoint or other display software, this chapter will be especially helpful.

Chapter 6 discusses the filming and broadcasting of sermons, either live or following postproduction editing. For someone with limited knowledge of framing, lighting, and video cameras, this chapter is a good beginner's guide.

In sum, *The Visual Preacher* would be helpful to those readers desiring to use more visual art, other than PowerPoint, in their sermons or for someone who possesses no experience with technology in sermon presentation. Other than that, there is nothing novel about the book. It does a good job of consolidating widely available information about visual elements in preaching but offers little more.

Speaking Across Generations: Messages That Satisfy Boomers, Xers, Millennials, Gen Z, and Beyond. By Darrell E. Hall. Downers Grove: IVP, 2022. 978-1-5140-0308-4, 176 pp., $14.59.

Reviewer: *Nicali K. Yeputhomi, George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University, Waco, TX.*

As a campus pastor, Darrell Hall experienced the challenges of preaching to a congregation consisting of different age groups. In his book *Speaking Across Generations*, he argues convincingly that every generation communicates differently and that preachers

must be prepared to speak effectively to all generations at once, namely, elders, boomers, Xers, millennials, and gen Zs.

"The seasoned preacher still wants to appeal to the young. The preaching phenom yearns for the respect of the aged," observes Hall. Figuring out how to manage each generation's communicational distinctives led to the publication of his book. His research came from focus groups within his Atlanta congregation and a nationwide survey in collaboration with the Barna Group.

In chapter 1, Hall discusses how every generation sees the same things differently and how a knowledge of generational science can help preachers speak effectively to each one. Generational science studies how people born within a certain time frame share in their experience of historical events that, in turn, shape their worldview.

Chapter 2 delves into generational intelligence, which has to do with understanding the values and perspectives that shape the language of a generation. Generational intelligence enables preachers to move from being unilingual to becoming polylingual, an important trait for preaching effectively across generations. The author continues his discussion of language in chapter 3, as he explains how one must know more than phraseology in order to understand a language. True understanding requires a deeper knowledge of the thought formation and reasoning of a group as demonstrated through its distinct rhetoric.

Chapters 4 through 8 employ the tools of generational science to identify how language functions within the generations studied. The arguments in these two chapters are backed by solid research and end with a sample sermon to show what preaching in each generation's language would look like.

Chapter 9 shifts the discussion from what it takes to become an intergenerational preacher to an emphasis on the importance of churches becoming intergenerational. Chapter 10 calls preachers towards "embodying an intergenerational culture which will influence our preaching as well as the way we carry out the rest of our duties." The book concludes with an

exhortation for readers to preach in such a way that satisfies "people's hunger for justice, understanding, wisdom, and meaning."

Hall writes as a millennial and presents his arguments with both the freshness of a young leader and the pastoral maturity that supersedes age or generation. His writing style is clear and simple. Readers will benefit most from his discussion of how each generation's experiences of historic events have shaped their language and outlook.

There are a few areas of Hall's work that need further development by way of practical application. His two final chapters end weakly, with a discussion that is much too general. Overall, the book promises to equip preachers to address hearers from each generation alone or all generations at once. This reviewer looked forward to learning how to do the latter especially but felt disappointed after reading the entire volume.

Overall, *Speaking Across Generations* broadens the reader's understanding of the congregation from a generational perspective and the preacher's responsibilities towards it. Packed with many interesting insights and fresh ideas, church leaders will benefit from reading Hall's work.

Jeremiah and Lamentations: A Commentary for Biblical Preaching and Teaching. By Duane Garrett and Calvin F. Pearson. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2022. 978-0-8254-2567-7, 499 pp., $38.99 (hardback).

Reviewer: *Francisco Cotto, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, IL.*

Seemingly, Jeremiah and Lamentations are rarely preached for good reason. Jeremiah is a book that appears to "have no structure whatsoever" (58). It is not assembled in chronological order and "its organizing principles have eluded readers" (58). The meaning of the five dirges in Lamentations is easily understood, however it is challenging for the preacher to understand the "implied message of the book in the canonical context and to construct messages for Christian congregations

that are both true to the book and relevant to contemporary life and worship" (432). Biblical books that are hard to interpret and difficult to relate to modern audiences are often ignored by preachers. Authors Garrett and Pearson want to change that. Their commentary is among the latest in the Kerux Commentary series from Kregel, designed to provide rigorous exegesis and homiletic helps that will enable preachers to proclaim the theological truths of the biblical book(s) under consideration.

Careful exegesis will sometimes lead commentators to go against conventional wisdom. Garrett and Pearson show a willingness to do this respectfully, whether it is choosing to divide passages differently than is common (198) or attempting to understand the new covenant by pursuing a mediating path between covenant and dispensational theologies (285-89). These portions of the commentary are well reasoned. There are deep excursuses on several issues of interpretation, including the sabbath (206-207), the connection of Jer. 31:15 and the Slaughter of the Innocents in Matthew (272-273), and the similarities and differences between the suffering servant of Lamentations 3 and Christ (465-67). The thorough and compelling exegetical work presented by the authors often led this reviewer to read the commentary for intellectual and spiritual stimulation, not solely to construct a review. The reader will certainly benefit from an excursus on the use and meaning of "heart" (לֵב) in Jeremiah because of its importance throughout the book.

It is a challenge for any preacher to apply and creatively present the big idea of the sermon in a compelling way. Garrett and Pearson follow the same format of other volumes in the series by ending each preaching section with suggestions for "Creativity in Presentation." The recommendations given in this volume are uneven, with several attempts at application reading more like suggestions for exhortation. Instead of offering practical ways for the big idea to be implemented in the life of the hearer, the applications are often simply ways for the preacher to encourage the audience to take the big idea seriously. Examples of some of the ideas for being creative in presenting the sermon include planning to move to specific areas on the

stage (159) and varying when prayer is done during the message (241). Those suggestions should be a regular part of any preacher's sermon planning week-to-week, regardless of the passage expounded.

Any commentary on Jeremiah and Lamentations ought to instill confidence in the jittery preacher that they are books which can be successfully preached in contemporary churches. Garrett and Pearson accomplish this. Any preacher who consults their commentary will have a greater understanding of the text and find help in relaying Jeremiah's timeless truths to a modern church audience.

Preaching: A Simple Approach to the Sacred Task. By Daniel Overdorf. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2022. 978-0-8254-4722-8, 240 pp., $20.99.

Reviewer: *Kevin Maples, Theologians Without Borders, Auckland, New Zealand.*

As promised in the subtitle, Overdorf delivers a simple but solid approach to sermon preparation and delivery. Seven of the eight chapters walk the reader step-by-step through Overdorf's method. But the opening chapter, "CONVICTION Drives Preaching," lays his theological foundation. This chapter makes explicit what many novice preachers have lived but may have never considered: what we believe about God, His word, and our task determines what we preach and how we preach it. Overdorf paints a compelling vision of the holy moment of preaching in which the Holy Spirit empowers the preacher to deliver God's word to announce the salvation of Christ, a moment of eternal consequence for hearers.

The remaining chapter titles are good descriptions of the steps in Overdorf's method: "RESEARCH the Scripture text," "FOCUS on a single idea," "SHAPE the flow of thought," "DEVELOP each segment," "BOOKEND with an introduction and conclusion," "POLISH with descriptive language," and

"EMBODY the sermon in the preaching event." His method follows the well-worn path of other evangelical homileticians. Instead of wading through novel or trivial ideas, readers will be immersed in tried-and-true concepts, such as Haddon Robinson's "big idea," that can aid them in moving from the text to the pulpit.

Overdorf writes with exceptional clarity, revealing his experience in guiding new students through the preaching process. The heart of a pastor pulsates throughout each chapter, creating a warm, endearing tone. Due to the simplicity of the book, it is best suited for undergraduate introductory classes.

The book contains a handful of bonus articles. Though they contain excellent information, they do not fit into the flow of the book. Included in these articles is a timely discussion of plagiarism in the pulpit. While addressing this problem, Overdorf gives practical advice on how to use sources with integrity.

One of the book's many strengths are the exercises at the end of each chapter. They will help readers begin to process and apply the information they just encountered. The aspect of the book that this reviewer found to be most helpful was the examples that Overdorf gave of the preparation process. Many books have examples of sermons, but readers are still left to wonder how to imitate the development of those sermons. Overdorf's examples allow students to peek behind the curtain and see how he prepared the sample sermons at the end of his book.

1 & 2 Kings: A Commentary for Biblical Preaching and Teaching. By David B. Schreiner and Lee Compson. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2022. 978-0-8254-2558-5, 315 pp., $31.99 (hardback).

Reviewer: *R. Larry Overstreet, Retired, Corban University School of Ministry, Salem, OR.*

This work by Schreiner and Compson is a recent addition to the Kerux Commentaries series. The goal is to combine a biblical scholar with a homiletician as writers of each volume. Its purpose is for a reader to thereby glean both the text's meaning, as understood by its original readers, and the text's relevant application to the modern listener.

The first major section offers an "Overview of All Preaching Passages," showing how the volume will present twenty-three suggested preaching sections (of widely varying Scripture text lengths). These pages provide brief statements of a text's exegetical idea, theological focus, preaching idea, and preaching pointers. At first this seems like a valuable contribution—until a reader encounters all of this identical material repeated at the beginning of each commentary section. Then, it seems unnecessarily tedious.

The volume then moves to an "Introduction to 1 & 2 Kings." Much of this material will be familiar to those who have read an introductory Old Testament textbook or other commentaries on Kings. For those who have not, much of the information here will be beneficial.

The bulk of the commentary is presented logically and flows well. It begins with "Exposition" of the text, followed by its "Theological Focus," and finally by "Preaching and Teaching Strategies." Clear headings signal precisely what topic is being considered as the reader progresses through the text of Kings, observing its broad interpretation, especially as it connected with its original readers—Jews returning from the Babylonian captivity. Each section is punctuated with sidebars and "Translation Notes" and concludes with thoughtful "Discussion Questions."

For preachers, each "Preaching and Teaching Strategies" section provides direction toward "Exegetical and Theological Synthesis," a "Preaching Idea" (sermon's theme), "Contemporary Connections" (which answers: "What does it mean?" "Is it true?" and "Now what?"), and "Creativity in Presentation." Personally, this reviewer found many of the suggested sermon outlines to be inadequate because of: (1) a clear

lack of connection between the theme and the outline presented; (2) many outlines being so brief that they afforded no significant help; and (3) a lack of coherence between points in the suggested sermon outlines. In contrast, the clear points of application set forth in the "Now what?" sections are precise and timeless in their relevance.

The staunch theological conservative will find some areas of the text significantly troubling. Following are six examples. First, in discussing authorship and date of writing, the writers present alternate views but come to no conclusions (42-43). Next, the writers seem overly impressed by positions held by "a clear majority of scholars" (42), ignoring those who hold to conservative positions (for example, R. D. Patterson and H. J. Austel, "1 & 2 Kings," *EBC*, Zondervan, 1988). Third, an implicit defense of "Deuteronimistic History" is presented, indicating Deuteronomy was written in the sixth century BCE (44), with no discussion of the alternate view that Moses actually wrote Deuteronomy (as affirmed by both Jesus [Matt. 19:7-8] and Paul [Rom. 10:19]). Fourth, the reference to Solomon building the Temple 480 years after the exodus (1 Kings 6:1), referred to as a "ceremonial number" (110), has a footnote instructing readers where they can find discussions of "the problems of the early date" but no direction toward conservatives who hold to the accuracy of the 480-year statement. A similar situation occurs when 2 Kings 14:7 asserts that Amaziah killed 10,000 Edomites, and it is suggested that this "may be a stylized number" (250). No defense of Scripture's accuracy is postulated. In contrast, a volume such as John J. Davis, *Biblical Numerology* (Baker, 1968) which supports Scripture's accuracy of numbers is ignored. Fifth, a discussion of Pharaoh Shishak favorably presents Israel Finkelstein's position that the description of Shishak's invasion of Jerusalem (1 Kings 14) is "a literary creation" (177-78), rather than taking Scripture as authoritative. Sixth, a footnote discussion of the difficulties of chronology in Kings asserts that "any precise chronology or reconstruction of the Omride and Davidic lines is unobtainable" (232). Others would argue, in contrast, that Edwin R. Thiele's *The Mysterious Numbers of the*

Hebrew Kings (originally published in 1951, with several following publication dates), along with others who built on his thesis, solved those problems.

A disconcerting part of the book relates to the sixty-seven printing errors that this reviewer observed and reported. Setting that matter aside, although this book has numerous strengths, this reviewer cannot recommend it. Other commentaries provide better interpretation of Kings, and volumes like the *NIVAC* contribute significantly to bridging the gap between the written text and modern listeners.

Psalms, Volume 1: The Wisdom Psalms. By Charles H. Savelle Jr. and W. Creighton Marlowe. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2021. 978-0-8254-5846-0, 227 pp., $27.99 (hardback).

Review: *Joshua Peeler, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Albany, LA.*

In their work, Savelle and Marlowe examine fifteen psalms. They argue that each of these psalms is wisdom literature and divide their book broadly into two major sections: psalms about God's righteousness and psalms about God's word. The goal of their volume, and the wider Kerux series, is to combine careful exegesis in search of the biblical text's original meaning with contemporary application.

At its best, the book serves as a quick reference guide. Because it addresses only fifteen psalms, many genres within the psalter are not considered. Instead, a few specific examples of wisdom psalms are examined to make broader points about their place in the Bible and use in preaching. Consequently, this commentary should not be used as the only or primary resource in academic writing or sermon preparation.

Savelle and Marlowe present four key components of each psalm analyzed: the exegetical idea, theological focus, preaching idea, and preaching pointers. The exegetical idea is the concept discussed in the text itself, that is, the central idea of the text. The theological focus addresses the overarching placement of the text

in the historical metanarrative of God's work throughout history. The preaching pointers, or suggested methods for preaching the passage, are the most practical sections. (I have personally used several of these pointers already in the crafting of various messages.) The section on the preaching idea of each passage is also beneficial as it suggests a sermon's main idea in one full sentence. Preachers may want to use the authors' preaching ideas and pointers to refine their own work.

The commentary includes short sections on literary structure and themes. These quick explanations provide helpful insights that will assist pastors in their interpretation and the presentation of the gospel through their messages. Awareness of a psalm's key themes before undertaking a detailed study will enable the preacher to examine the passage with an eye towards a particular theme. Select elements from the presented themes are used as chapter titles in Savelle and Marlowe's guide and can be used by the preacher to inform sermon points, titles, or applications.

The authors include basic analysis of some of the Hebrew vocabulary within each psalm considered. These word studies are one of the weaker areas of their work for two reasons. First, their select words and phrases are often of little help to understanding the wider point of the verse or overall message of the psalm. For example, when discussing Psalm 19, the authors examine the meaning of "rejoicing of the heart" (166). In this instance, the phrase's meaning is clear enough in English translations and does not require detailed treatment. Second, the terms that the authors select do not consistently include the most relevant terms in the passage. Examples of this were observed in the authors' commentary on Psalms 1, 73, 91, and 119 (see pages 81-88, 121-128, 129-138, 171-178).

Ultimately, this volume should be used in tandem with other commentaries. It lacks the necessary depth to be used as a primary source. However, that does not render it ineffective or impractical. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, this reviewer found the guide to be both practical and helpful in crafting sermons on some of the psalms treated in its pages. Pastors would do well to

add this book to their libraries, while understanding its limitations. That said, Kenneth Langley's *How to Preach the Psalms* would be a more advisable purchase for pastors considering a sermon or series drawn from the sacred psalter.

God is in the House: A Fresh Model for Shaping a Sermon. By John Woods. Carlisle, UK: Langham, 2022. 978-1-83973-272-0, 221 pp., $22.99.

Reviewer: *Timothy Y. Rhee, George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University, Waco, TX.*

Drawing from the vast riches of over forty years of preaching ministry, John Woods, training director for the School of Preachers Trust, offers a condensed and yet substantial manual for composing effective sermons. Altogether, *God is in the House* aims to "take the image of a house and use it to describe how a well-built sermon can be put together in such a way that the listener is drawn in to hear the message" (7). To accomplish this, Woods draws from different biblical images of God as builder to illumine helpful insights on a variety of homiletical topics.

In Part One, "Getting Ready to Build," Woods focuses on the vital moments that come before composing a sermon. In sum, preachers must study the Scriptures carefully and, in doing so, ground their messages in authorial intention. In the same breath, Woods similarly contends that they must delight in the "faithful habits of Bible reading, study, meditation, and prayer" (12).

Part Two, "The Zones of the House," shifts to discussing the actual substance of the sermon itself. Beginning with a front door, various suggestions for compelling sermon introductions are given. Woods then draws a parallel between bedrooms and the structure and movements of a sermon. Ultimately, when preachers shape their sermons in alignment with Scripture's floorplan, hearers are invited in and shown around the house room by room (74). Following, Woods likens the "connectors" of the home, such as the Wi-Fi, to sermonic transitions, which help

preachers remain clear and lucid. Moreover, with regards to sermon illustrations, tools such as film, music, and multicultural commentaries are encouraged to beautify preaching in like manner to wall-art and windows. Finally, in terms of an exit door, Woods challenges preachers to have well-defined strategies for sermon conclusions where they do not merely stop but finish well (126).

In Part Three, "Four Vital Considerations," Woods expands his analogy by discussing several ways to ensure "the house" of one's sermon never loses its "it" factor. To begin with, he encourages the development of various competencies such as emotional and cultural intelligence to meet the pressing needs of listeners. He also touches on the importance of breathing and pauses, as well as embodied preaching that elevate the multi-sensory aspects of Scripture. Furthermore, he also urges preachers "to deliver a felt Christ and communicate living truth" by way of Christ-centered preaching (168). All things considered, Part Four, "Sample Sermons," provides three sermon examples, each with Woods' own reflections, as well as a concluding chapter on preaching at funerals.

The strengths of this book are many. In fact, my sole critique is that perhaps Woods has tried to pack in too many good things, to the point that less might be more for certain readers. Nevertheless, I am also sympathetic in knowing that this is the culmination of a life well preached! On one note, Woods is masterful in the way he seamlessly integrates a robust biblical theology to support each of his arguments. Furthermore, it is also evident that Woods is well-read, often reaching beyond the scope of evangelical scholarship to compose a more nuanced and robust homiletic. This especially shines in his willingness to explore the realm of homiletical aesthetics, arguing, "It is possible for the preacher to construct an impressive palace of words, but words alone are never enough" (139). He then goes on to expound various ways to evoke the imaginative realm by way of taste, touch, and aroma. Finally, Woods' constant pastoral reminders regarding the importance of prayer alone are worth

the cost of the book. For example, he writes, "[Prayer] is our vital breath, and every breath we take has been given by him" (174).

God is in the House will greatly encourage and serve all preachers, ranging from students of preaching to the most seasoned of homileticians searching for fresh insight and inspiration. While Woods does not necessarily say anything new, his ability to integrate his own experiences with a wide range of homiletical voices makes this a unique contribution to the broader field of homiletics.

Galatians. By Matthew S. Harmon. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021. 978-1-6835-9563-2, 531 pp., $49.99 (hardback).

Reviewer: *Fieldon J. Thigpen, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA.*

The Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary series, edited by T. Desmond Alexander, Tom Schreiner, and Andreas Köstenberger, considers the theology of the Bible as a whole by investigating its parts. Contributors hold to the infallibility of Scripture from a distinctly evangelical perspective, explore the contribution of their book to the theology of the whole Bible, and aim to present application for Christian practice and proclamation. Matthew S. Harmon has contributed the volume on Galatians. Having earned his Ph.D. in Biblical Theology from Wheaton in 2006, he is currently professor of New Testament studies at Grace Theological Seminary and serves as one of the teaching elders in his local church.

Harmon's commentary contains three major sections: Introduction, Exposition, and Biblical and Theological Themes. The Introduction is a concise twenty-one pages in which he argues for Pauline authorship, an early dating prior to the Jerusalem Council, and a South Galatian audience. Though relatively brief, the section is well researched and heavily referenced with diverse resources in the footnotes.

The Exposition portion of the book is roughly three hundred and fifty pages of commentary. The outline of Galatians is broken down into subsections in which Harmon presents the "context," "structure" (verse-by-verse commentary), and "bridge" (contemporary application) of each pericope. Readers will find Greek and Hebrew skills helpful, though not necessary as English translations are provided. The author's commentary reflects his solid grasp of Paul's Jewish background and knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. He makes repeated mention of Paul's inner-biblical quotes, allusions, and echoes from the Old Testament.

In the paragraphs devoted to "structure," Harmon's dissertation work on the influence of Isaiah on Paul's theology in Galatians is on display as early as his comments on 1:4. Here he argues that the apostle's phrase "gave himself for our sins" is a reuse of Isaianic language from Isaiah 53 (32). The author frequently includes content footnotes to describe the Hebrew language parallels within the Greek text in order to situate the original Old Testament contexts more clearly and to frame Paul's theology. The "bridge" paragraphs serve as brief forays into application, each of which points toward the importance of moving from theological reflection to practical application in personal discipleship.

The "Biblical and Theological Themes" portion of the volume is approximately one hundred pages of excurses on nine different biblical theological topics germane to Galatians. Examples include Salvation History, the Law, and Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Galatians. In each instance, the author traces the biblical backgrounds of the given theological theme and highlights how the theme is presented in Galatians.

Harmon's work is a worthy addition to the EBTC series as it is truly a biblical theological commentary which seeks to present an understanding of Galatians within the larger framework of the entire canon. Harmon often provides detailed analysis of the text and then follows it with a succinct and sharp summary which can be particularly beneficial for preachers. One such example is his two-page discussion on false teachers (83–84)

followed by a three-sentence summary statement (85). As homileticians strive to condense heavy research into clear and concise statements, many will find Harmon's work helpful.

Preachers who decide on a sermon series through Galatians will be enriched by the author's direct Introduction, insightful analysis of the Jewish influences within Galatians, theological connection of Galatians to the biblical canon, and pastoral summary statements designed to guide readers towards personal application. The EBTC volume on *Galatians* would be useful as a pastor's commentary, an undergraduate or seminary textbook in an exegetical course on Galatians, or even as an in-depth Bible study guide for church members who are more advanced in their study of the Scriptures.

Illustrating Well: Preaching Sermons that Connect. By Jim L. Wilson. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2022. 978-1-68359-589-2, 168 pp., $19.99.

Reviewer: *Mark O. Wilson, Southern Wesleyan University, Central, SC.*

Jim Wilson, who serves at Gateway Seminary in California, provides practical guidelines for sermon illustrations in *Illustrating Well: Preaching Sermons that Connect.* The book draws from research conducted by a team led by Wilson himself into the usage and effectiveness of various types of illustrations.

After presenting a biblical/historical case for utilizing illustrations, Wilson provides four helpful metaphors explaining their function as bridges, windows, lights, and pictures. He then outlines four characteristics of effective illustrations (asserting that they should be familiar, clear, interesting, and appropriate) and provides a helpful green, yellow, and red-light rubric to assist preachers in assessing whether their illustrations meet these criteria. Wilson wisely reminds readers that illustrative material should always illuminate, rather than overshadow, the biblical text.

The bulk of the book presents Wilson's findings after his team reviewed a number of manuscripts uploaded to an online sermon database and tabulated the frequency of various illustration types. These sermons contained an average of 2.43 illustrations each which, after analysis, were broken into two major clusters: frequently and infrequently used types. Eighty-five percent of the illustrations fell into "frequently used" cluster, composed of four categories: personal, fresh (current/familiar people and events), biblical (drawn from the Bible narrative itself), and hypothetical ("imagine if. . . or "suppose that. . .").

Wilson's team found that personal illustrations were used most frequently (24%) with "fresh illustrations" (22%) following at a close second. The "fresh illustration" label was new and helpful to this reviewer, conflating some types he had previously differentiated. Wilson has previously championed the "fresh illustration" concept in other endeavors, such as his website: www.freshministry.org which contains several samples. Readers may be surprised that biblical illustrations ranked third in the research, as it was the *most* frequent type of illustration appearing in this reviewer's recent research into the preaching practices of thriving congregations. Since the sample size of both studies was small, the jury is still out.

It was a relief to see that "classical illustrations" fell into the "lesser used" cluster. While there are occasions when a familiar, but worn, illustration is useful, Wilson's claim that fresh is always better than stale is true! Illustrations, like peaches and green beans, are less tasty from a can. The "lesser used" cluster also included historical and fictional illustrations, as well as object lessons. This reviewer especially appreciated Wilson's encouragement to consider using more stories from church history, as they serve the dual purpose of illustrating the point as well as teaching the historic context and foundations of our faith traditions.

The book investigates each illustration type and provides practical guidance for how preachers should (or should not) utilize it. For example, while Wilson acknowledges the potential effectiveness of personal illustrations, he warns against making

ourselves the heroes of our own stories and suggests that they should not be used unless they are authentic, proportionate, and suitable. Throughout the book, ample examples are provided to demonstrate effective and ineffective uses of the various illustration types. The placement of illustrations and differences in using them for deductive versus inductive (or narrative) preaching are also addressed. Preachers who wish to freshen up their sermons and connect more engagingly with their listeners will find a helpful resource here.

Charismatic and Expository Preaching: A Case Study of Two Preaching Methods within the Local Church. By Lewis D. Mathis. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2022. 978-1-66679-399-4, 139 pp., $24.00.

Reviewer: *Thomas Rho, George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University, Waco, TX.*

Inspired by his observations of contrasting congregational responses to charismatic and expository preaching, Lewis D. Mathis, an associate pastor at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church and a 2021 D.Min. graduate (Biblical Studies) of Liberty University, explores whether the charismatic style of preaching "can be incorporated into a form of expository preaching that is biblically sound and theologically acceptable as a new movement of the Holy Spirit for the church in the modern age" (6-7). Throughout the book, it is clear that Mathis is motivated to see churches reach and teach people through an effective, engaging method of preaching. His book attempts to offer the church one possible way.

Mathis begins his work by laying out his approach to his inquiry. In chapter 1, he introduces his understanding of expository and charismatic preaching. His characterizations of the two methods of preaching are heavily influenced by his personal observations at his church and the literature that he reviews in this chapter. He also describes the case study that he

conducted to test his hypothesis about the ability to faithfully integrate charismatic and expository preaching.

In chapter 2, Mathis defines expository and charismatic preaching. He starts by using F. B. Meyer's definition of expository preaching. He supplements this initial description with insights from authors such as Faris D. Whitesell and Merrill F. Unger. Mathis's treatment of charismatic preaching is significantly more substantial than that of expository preaching. In this section, Mathis answers his research question: "Charismatic preaching is mesmerizing, and one can see it as a spiritual movement of God if the charismatic preacher holds to the very foundation of expository preaching" (33). He then goes on to summarize the charismatic movement and to highlight the primary issues, such as spiritual gifts, that divide charismatic preachers from expository preachers. He concludes this chapter by asserting that the two styles of preaching can be integrated because of the common need for the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 3 introduces the research methods used to test Mathis's hypothesis and further analyzes the debate between expository and charismatic preachers on the Holy Spirit's work. He acknowledges that "many biblical scholars point to errors in the charismatic interpretation of Scripture concerning the Holy Spirit and the gifts the Spirit provides for the church" (80). Despite these interpretative differences, Mathis asserts again that expository and charismatic preaching can be integrated because the common thread that holds them together is the need and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 4, the most interesting part of the book, reviews the results of the author's case study. He conducted his research within three churches, each of them different in their preaching style. These differences are reflected in the answers to Mathis's interview questions and are worthy of consideration. Mathis also collected and analyzed questionnaires given out to members of each church. His findings and the overall argument of his book would have been aided by the inclusion of more churches, but as Mathis points out early in this chapter, the pandemic prevented him from widening his research.

In chapter 5, the author reviews his findings and reiterates that the integration of charismatic and expository preaching is tenable both theologically and practically. He concludes that the two styles of preaching can coexist because "both charismatic and expository preachers stand on God's word and yield to the Holy Spirit" (113).

This book was written with the intention to help local pastors who believe that charismatic theology is not compatible with expository preaching. The book might help some charismatic preachers who are hesitant to preach expository sermons, but overall, the book was unconvincing. First, it was unclear what charismatic preaching is. Mathis points out distinctives about charismatic worship and theology, but he does not define charismatic preaching in a way that seems to be incompatible with expository preaching. Second, Mathis mistakenly characterizes expository preaching as inherently cessationist. He does this primarily by citing John MacArthur's issues with the charismatic interpretation of key biblical passages while holding up MacArthur as a representative of expository preaching. Third, Mathis's sweeping statements about the congregants' responses to charismatic and expository preaching lacked evidence. His argument would have been stronger with more examples to substantiate his claims.

Preaching: The Art of Narrative Exposition. By Calvin Miller. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. 978-0-8010-1290-7, 284 pp., $19.99 (hardback); *The Sermon Maker: Tales of a Transformed Preacher*. By Calvin Miller. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002. 978-0-3102-5509-3, 156 pp., $16.25 (hardback).

Reviewer: *J. David Duncan, The Church at Horseshoe Bay, Horseshoe Bay, Texas*.

Calvin Miller (1936-2012) pastored the Westside Baptist Church in Omaha, Nebraska for twenty-five years and taught homiletics at two seminaries. He once preached a masterful sermon at

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary titled "I Wanna Get Washed" from the book of Habakkuk. He framed the sermon with a single image decorated with a solitary quote.

Habakkuk (1:2) cried out, "O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear?" He then prophetically and poetically responded by raising the need for revival, repentance, and awe before God, saying, "But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him" (2:20).

Miller opened his message with a quote from the musical Godspell (1973): "I wanna get washed." He then painted a picture of what it was like to bale hay as a boy in Oklahoma and the longing for a wash in the metal outdoor shower at the end of the day. The hay glittered his body with wheat, chaff, chiggers, and itching alfalfa. Miller recalled the sheer joy of a shower at day's end—the scrubbing off and washing away of the itching, burning irritants. From there, his sermon challenged hearers to repentance, revival, and the blood of Christ as the cleansing power to equip Christ's servant in preparation for Christ's service.

Miller outlines his preaching philosophy in his book *Preaching*. Here he speaks to the heart of the "image-driven sermon" and warns against "older sermon styles" (16). The book highlights his philosophy of "narrative exposition" (20-22). He claims that many hearers feel the old, expository style of preaching to be "boring" (20). Whether that claim is actually true, Miller boldly proclaims his style as art—the creating of an image in the sermon and the painting, crafting, and shaping of the sermon like a work of art. In discussing the art of narrative exposition, he asks, "How frequently should you use a motif (for example, "I wanna get washed!") within the sermon?" His response, "This is a question of art, and the answer is a matter of artistry…" (109).

Miller's approach to preaching requires deep study (exegeting the text, the preacher, the call of the sermon, the audience, and the scripture's story). Although he personally worked hard at exegeting the text accurately and expounding it faithfully, Miller was less John MacArthur (the weighty

expositor) and more Fred Craddock (the narrative storyteller speaking with narrative flow). Each style serves its gospel-proclaiming purpose. Ultimately, the preacher must choose his or her style under God's call. Always, though, "Preachers are those who are called to be artists of persuasion" (146). The preacher persuades the listener to follow Christ.

Preaching offers practical insights, creative ideas, anecdotes, quotes, and significant depth to improve the preacher's communication of the gospel for God's glory. One added bonus that makes this book especially memorable is that it leaves the reader with the sense that its writer knows God, knows preaching, and has walked through the valley of the shadow of preaching in its dark lows and climbed the mountain in its glorious heights. It also comes with a penetrating question for every preacher: "Do we ever reach the stage when we preach entirely for the glory of God with no investment of our own need to be celebrated?" (210)

Before *Preaching* (2006), Miller released *The Sermon Maker: Tales of a Transformed Preacher* (2002). If *Preaching* details Miller's philosophy of preaching, *Sermon Maker* pictures the journey of one preacher, Sam, from an expository preacher to a "sermon maker." The book aims to show how to "marry exposition and metaphor in such a way that people will listen" (9). Sam is a preacher making his way from being a purely expository preacher to an interesting, informative, new style of narrative expositor.

More than likely, Miller is narrating his own journey in this book from being a young pastor into becoming a mature pastor-priest-preacher. As a pastor, the preacher cares for the sheep, the congregation. As a priest, the pastor listens, nurtures, and feeds the sheep with the tenderness of a shepherd. As a preacher, the pastor understands the text, its context, his or her local context, and the hearts of hearers in their pain and joys, hopes and dreams. The book's format takes some getting used to with helpful preaching insights and quotes from homileticians and preachers on the lefthand pages and the story of Sam on the right. Miller's insights and his narration of Sam's journey

emphasize personal devotion in preaching, a passion for Christ, and reliance upon the Holy Spirit. After all, "a good preacher brings to the pulpit good sermons from his (or her) private devotion" (121).

Always witty, Miller concludes, "Whenever God smiles on good preaching, all angels are obligated to grin" (151). These books offer two ways of looking at the same topic—narrative exposition that is image-driven.

The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society

History:

The Evangelical Homiletics Society (EHS) convened its inaugural meeting in October of 1997, at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, at the initiative of Drs. Scott M. Gibson of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Keith Willhite of Dallas Theological Seminary. Professors Gibson and Willhite desired an academic society for the exchange of ideas related to instruction of biblical preaching.

Specifically, the EHS was formed to advance the cause of Biblical Preaching through:

> promotion of a biblical-theological approach to preaching increased competence for teachers of preaching integration of the fields of communication, biblical studies, and theology scholarly contributions to the field of homiletics

The EHS membership consists primarily of homiletics professors from North American seminaries and Bible Colleges who hold to evangelical theology, and thus treat preaching as the preaching of God's inspired Word. The EHS doctrinal statement is that of the National Association of Evangelicals.

Purpose:

The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society is designed to engage readers with articles dealing with the best research and expertise in preaching. Readers will be introduced to literature in the field of homiletics or related fields with book reviews. Since the target audience of the journal is scholars/practitioners, a sermon will appear in each edition which underscores the commitment of the journal to the practice of preaching.

Vision:

The vision of the Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society is to provide academics and practitioners with a journal that informs and equips readers to become competent teachers of preaching and excellent preachers.

General Editor:

The General Editor has oversight of the journal. The General Editor selects suitable articles for publication and may solicit article suggestions from the Editorial Board for consideration for publication. The General Editor works cooperatively with the Book Review Editor and the Managing Editor to ensure the timely publication of the journal.

Book Review Editor:

The Book Review Editor is responsible for the Book Review section of the journal. The Book Review Editor contacts publishers for books to review and receives the books from publishers. The Book Review Editor sends books to members of the Society who serve as book reviewers. The reviewers then forward their written reviews to the Book Review Editor in a timely manner. The Book Review Editor works in coordination with the General Editor for the prompt publication of the journal.

Managing Editor:

The Managing Editor has oversight of the business matters of the journal. The Managing Editor solicits advertising, coordinates the subscription list and mailing of the journal, and works with the General Editor and Book Review Editor to ensure a timely publication of the journal.

Editorial Board:

The Editorial Board serves in advising the General Editor in the publication of articles for the journal. The Editorial Board serves as a jury for articles considered for publication. The Editorial Board consists of no more than five members. Board members are approved at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Homiletics Society and hold a two-year appointment.

Frequency of Publication:

The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society is published twice a year: March and September.

Jury Policy:

Articles submitted to the Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society are blind juried by members of the Editorial Board. In addition, the General Editor may ask a scholar who is a specialist to jury particular articles.

The General Editor may seek articles for publication from qualified scholars. The General Editor makes the final publication decisions. It is always the General Editor's prerogative to edit and shorten said material, if necessary.

Submission Guidelines

1. Manuscripts should be submitted in electronic form. All four margins should be at least one inch, and each should be consistent throughout. Please indicate the program in which the article is formatted, preferably, Microsoft Word (IBM or MAC).

2. Manuscripts should be double-spaced. This includes the text, indented (block) quotations, notes, and bibliography. This form makes for easier editing.

3. Neither the text, nor selected sentences, nor subheads should be typed all-caps.

4. Notes should be placed at the end of the manuscript, not at the foot of the page. Notes should be reasonably close to the style advocated in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* 3rd edition (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1988) by Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achtert. That style is basically as follows for research papers:

   a. From a book:

   note: 23. John Dewey, *The Study of Ethics: A Syllabus* (Ann Arbor, 1894), 104.

   b. From a periodical:

   note: 5. Frederick Barthelme, "Architecture," *Kansas Quarterly* 13:3 (September 1981): 77-78.

   c. Avoid the use of op. cit.
   Dewey 111.

5. Those who have material of whatever kind accepted for publication must recognize it is always the editor's prerogative to edit and shorten said material, if necessary.

6. Manuscripts will be between 1,500 and 3,000 words, unless otherwise determined by the editor.

Abbreviations

Please do not use abbreviations in the text. Only use them for parenthetical references. This includes the names of books of the Bible and common abbreviations such as "e.g." (the full reference, "for example" is preferred in the text). Citations of books, articles, websites are expected. Please do not use "p./pp." for "page(s)," or "f./ff." for "following." Precise page numbers or verse numbers are expected, not "f./ff."

Captalization

Capitalize personal, possessive, objective, and reflexive pronouns (but not relative pronouns) when referring to God: "My, Me, Mine, You, He, His, Him, Himself," but "who, whose, whom."

Direct Quotes

Quotations three or more lines long should be in an indented block. Shorter quotes will be part of the paragraph and placed in quotation marks.

Scripture quotations should be taken from the NIV. If the quotation is from a different version, abbreviate the name in capital letters following the reference. Place the abbreviation in parentheses: (Luke 1:1-5, NASB).

Headings

First-level Heading
These indicate large sections. They are to be flush left in upper case, and separate from the paragraph that follows.

Second-level Heading
These headings are within the First-level section and are to be flush left, in italic in upper and lower case, and also separate from the paragraph that follows.

Notes

All notes should be endnotes, the same size as the main text with a hard return between each one.

Submission and Correspondence

Manuscripts should be sent to the attention of the General Editor. Send an email with attached Word document to: scott_gibson@baylor.edu

Address correspondence to Scott M. Gibson, General Editor, Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society, Baylor University's Truett Seminary, One Bear Place #97126, Waco, TX 76798-7126

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Please Note

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