The Journal of the
Evangelical Homiletics Society

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The Journal of the
Evangelical Homiletics Society

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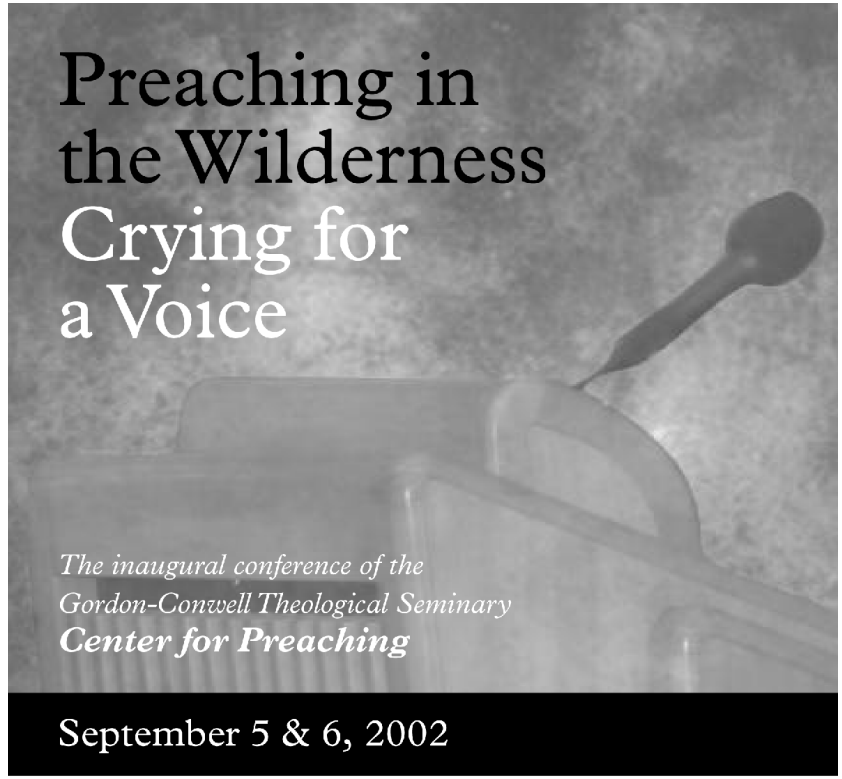

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The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society is the publication of the Evangelical Homiletics Society. Organized in 1997, the Evangelical Homiletics Society is an academic society established for the exchange of ideas related to the instruction of biblical preaching. The purpose of the Society is to advance the cause of biblical preaching through the promotion of a biblical-theological approach to preaching; to increase competence for teachers of preaching; to integrate the fields of communication, biblical studies, and theology; to make scholarly contributions to the field of homiletics.

Statement of Faith: The Evangelical Homiletics Society affirms the Statement of Faith affirmed by the National Association of Evangelicals. It reads as follows:

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.

A New Journal for Teachers of Preaching and Preachers

by Scott M. Gibson

Welcome to *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society.* Since the founding of the Society in 1997 the leadership intended to establish a journal. The time has finally come.

Why a new Journal? We believe we have something to say about preaching. We have something to say to the church and to the academy. We bring a perspective that honors God's Word and respects the audience. We are thinking men and women who are committed to the exegesis of the text and the exegesis of the listener.

The format of the Journal will include articles, the occasional sermon, and book reviews. Our unique contribution will be to cultivate your commitment to relevant biblical exposition. I hope you will be encouraged and challenged by what you read from issue to issue.

The lead article in this first edition of the Journal is by Vernon Grounds, Chancellor of Denver Seminary. Dr. Grounds was one of the presenters at the inaugural Evangelical Homiletics Society meeting held in 1997 at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts. His address, "Some Reflections on Pulpit Rhetoric," is stimulating. Readers will gain insight from this seasoned veteran of the faith and will be provoked to become better preachers.

Jeffrey D. Arthurs of Portland, Oregon's Multnomah Bible College writes the second article, "The Place of Pathos in Preaching," a paper delivered at the 2000 Evangelical Homiletics Society meeting at Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, Florida. Arthurs explores the vital role pathos plays in preaching and provides suggestions for preachers in exercising it.

The third article, "'But I Did Such Good Exposition': Literate Preachers Confront Orality," is by Grant Lovejoy of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Lovejoy examines the difficulty preachers have with exposition. This is a topic that has received little attention and Dr. Lovejoy gives us thoughtful analysis of orality and exposition.

Finally, Victor D. Anderson's "Improving Spiritual Formation in Expository Preaching by Using Cognitive Moral Development Theory" challenges preachers to preach expository sermons that result in effective transformation in the listener.

Preachers preach sermons. We like to hear and read good ones. Inaugurating the Journal is a sermon by Bryan Chapell, president of Covenant Theological

Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. The sermon, "To Make God Come Down," is based on Luke 17:1-17. Chapell shows how the power of God can come down in a believer's life. The sermon was preached at the Evangelical Homiletics Society meeting at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas, in 1998.

Finally, preachers, teachers of preachers, and pastors need to be aware of books published in the area of preaching and related disciplines. We want to benefit ourselves, our listeners, and our students. Book reviews will help to accomplish reader awareness. They will comprise part of the Journal and are included in this issue.

I welcome letters and article submissions, and I welcome your comments. Mind you, this is the first issue, the first attempt. Be patient. Be kind. Thank you for giving the Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society a try. The board and I pledge to make this Journal helpful to the church and to the academy. We all have a lot to learn. I am glad to be a student with you.

Pray for our efforts and pray for increased membership in the Evangelical Homiletics Society and our readership.

(editor's note: Scott M. Gibson is Assistant Dean and Associate Professor of Preaching and Ministry at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA.)

Some Reflections on Pulpit Rhetoric

by Vernon Grounds

Henry Ward Beecher, the eloquent pastor of the once great Plymouth Congregational Church in Brooklyn, New York, attracted scores of visitors whenever it was announced that he would be preaching. One Sunday morning he had been scheduled to occupy his pulpit, but illness kept him at home. When the guest-preacher appeared, it was speedily apparent that Dr. Beecher would not be delivering one of his dynamic sermons. Immediately many of the visitors began to rise and head for the exits. But the guest-preacher, whose name unfortunately I cannot tell you, was more than a match for their gross behavior. He strode to the pulpit and said, "All those who came to worship Henry Ward Beecher may now depart. Those who came to worship God will please remain."

Pity the poor substitute speaker who obviously a second choice is not really capable of filling shoes too big for his smaller feet.

Well, whoever had been first invited to deliver this address at your Society's initial session apparently could not accept. So here I stand about to embark on a task for which I am not really qualified. But I am happy and flattered at my age to be standing before you. And, all dubious humor aside, I appreciate the privilege. I will follow the example of that country boy who could never get enough molasses. He had a passion for that glue-like sweetness. He stumbled across a whole barrel-full of it one day and hoisted himself up to its rim where he perched precariously consuming that delectable goo. He lost his balance, however, and toppled down headfirst into the barrel. When he managed to stand up, molasses engulfed, he piously prayed, "Lord, make me equal to this opportunity." That, dear brothers and sisters, is likewise my prayer — only I offer it sincerely. And I congratulate the organizers of your society for their concern and vision. They are hopeful, as we all are, that sessions like these may issue in a better fulfillment of the Pauline imperative, "Preach the Word."

Before launching into the body of my lecture, let me sketch with merciful brevity my background and experience in the task of oral communication. While in high school I engaged actively in both intra and extramural debates. I also gave some speeches at community affairs and even partici-

pated successfully in the oratorical contest sponsored annually by the New York Times. That contest involved writing and delivering an address on the constitution of the United States. The chairman who introduced me in the county finals did not correctly announce that I would declaim on "The Immortality of the Constitution." Instead he solemnly informed the audience that I would discuss "The Immorality of the Constitution!" My apologies to you, Thomas Jefferson.

During my high school days I gained some speech experience by serving as the president of the largest Christian Endeavor Society in New Jersey and by often sharing in my church's services.

At Rutgers University I majored in language and literature and, after a definite commitment to Jesus Christ, began to preach frequently. In fact, on weekends I traveled with a quartet here and there along the East Coast. The four young brothers in that quartet presented a fine program of Gospel music, and I gave the message. Eventually, not yet in Seminary, I became the pastor of a little church, and of course was under necessity of preparing a new sermon for every Sunday. What kind of diet I fed that patiently suffering congregation I shudder to recall. Despite my total lack of training and theology, I carried on an expository ministry gradually working my way through several books of the Bible, even venturing to do a detailed study of its last book. I expounded the symbols of Revelation with a bold confidence I now lack. Most of my exegetical insights did not, I can guarantee, help the Holy Spirit understand better the text He had co-authored. They must have made Him either laugh or weep.

In Seminary I took as required 2 or 3 semesters of homiletics. But without being harsh I have to say that they were virtually worthless. We had to read the long-time standard authority on preaching, that rather stodgy volume by John Broadus, *The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*. Aside from reading that, we students each spoke several times. That was all. Our professor, a dedicated Presbyterian pastor, then about as old as I am now, had only one criterion for evaluating our performance. How many times have you preached this through? Once rated a C, if I remember correctly; twice a B, three times an A.

But on my own as a pastor I gained a minimum of sermonic skill. The sheer pressure of my schedule compelled me to develop at least a modicum of homiletical know-how. I preached Sunday morning, gave a different message Sunday night (it was hectically scribbled out after Sunday dinner), taught a Sunday School class, conducted a midweek service, officiated at wed-

dings and funerals, and for a few years had a radio broadcast after our Sunday night church service. On the side I pursued a Ph.D. My Sunday morning preaching was more or less expository as I went through a book of the Bible in fairly systematic fashion. In the evening I would do a series of sermons usually 12 in number on topics like "Great Questions about Jesus Christ" or "The Biggest Barriers to Christian Belief." I can't honestly report that I invariably led God's flock into lush pastures of edifying truth. The sheep I served as shepherd often had to be satisfied with clumps of weeds and thistles. Yet I constantly labored to improve the quality of my pulpit ministry.

After nearly a ten-year pastorate I became a theological professor. Eventually, while teaching a heavy schedule of courses, found myself playing the role of Seminary administrator. This did not preclude weekend preaching engagements, participation in Bible conferences, interim pastorates, addresses at banquets and necessarily denominational functions.

Well I've subjected you to this autobiographical boredom in order to assure you of my empathy for burdened pastors who aspire rightly to be increasingly effective homileticians. I regard that as a noble aspiration indeed.

I

Now let me get down to the brass tacks of this lecture which will reflect no doubt a rather archaic orientation to the homiletical task. I start by asserting that a sermon is an oral communication intended for a listener's ears, not for a reader's eyes. Does that strike you as the most obvious of truisms? Surely every churchgoer knows a sermon, even if only a brief homily, is a form of verbalization which impinges on a person's auditory apparatus. It's a flow of linguistic sounds each lasting a split-second before it dies away, although hopefully the meaning it helped to convey may live on in human memory even for a lifetime. Shy, then, am I belaboring the obvious? Because I find myself still struggling with this foundational truth of homiletics. I honestly doubt that after my 60 plus years of preaching I have mastered an A in the sermonic alphabet. Educated in an academic system which stresses the written word and which made me learn by books, I am chronically tempted to view any sermon I am to deliver as an essay to be read, a printed treatise which requires my most polished rhetoric. I can almost visualize the person I am addressing looking on over my shoulder at my text - he's looking rather than listening. That imaginary critic is as interested in my use of language as my high school English teacher was and her concern

was that I express myself like a contemporary Ralph Waldo Emerson. So I continue to write what I'm going to preach, choosing my vocabulary with care, honing my sentences, and worrying about style almost as much as substance - not quite as much to be sure, yet almost. This may not be your problem, but confessedly it is mine. As I have already mentioned, my college major was language and literature, a program for which I have always been grateful. Yet it produced in me a veritable obsession with the how of my manuscript, taking for granted the what of my message.

Please don't misunderstand me. I believe that at the beginning a man's ministry of preaching he ought to write his sermons. Granted it's a time-consuming labor. Nevertheless it is a discipline which pays off with clarity of thought, facility of expression, and accuracy of grammar. But I'm warning you on the basis of my own experience that a man's undue devotion to rhetoric can inhibit freedom of speech, block spontaneity, and thus result in stilted, stultified communication. Yes, ask me about that. When in days gone by I was dictating a letter to my secretary, I always included the precise punctuation I wanted and I subconsciously still punctuate any address I hear.

In a formal address, an oral communication like a sermon eschewed contractions, never split an infinitive, never began a sentence with and, and never end one with a preposition. Well, all such rhetorical nicety blights effective communication:

> Because of my experience, I'm (note the contraction!) recommending a book, *Just SAY the Word*, which its author, G. Robert Jacks, subtitles Writing for the Ear. He's taught homiletics at Princeton Seminary for over 30 years and thus has extremely helpful advice to offer. At least I as a pedant found his approach helpful.
>
> Over the years, I've heard some wonderful sermons. I've also heard some duds. Some have been so extemporaneous they sounded as if the preacher hadn't prepared anything. Some have been such wondrously crafted literary pieces they sounded as if the preacher wanted to sound wondrously crafted and literary. Some have sounded as though the preacher were giving a lecture or reading a term paper. That's because the preacher had written a lecture or a term paper. And some have captured the attention and the imagination and set the spark to ignite faith in the hearer. That's because they were written to be listened to, and to appeal to the sense-world of the hearers . . . .

. . . Then, in grade school, Miss Primly laid down the laws of correct grammar. More of same in high school, and in college we were under the tutelage of Turabian. [Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*.]

And we were carefully taught. No sentence fragments. None. Run-on sentences are an abomination and you should never use them because you'll get marked down when the teacher grades your paper. Don't use contractions. It's not a good idea to ever split infinitives. A preposition is something you should never end a sentence with. And don't begin sentences with "and." Never, never, never repeat yourself.

The problem is: that's the way we're supposed to write, but it's not the way we talk to one another. And when we write that way for speaking we too easily come up with some pretty awful-sounding stuff. Because when we speak we do use sentence fragments. Lots. We speak run-on sentences all the time, and no one ever says, "Hey, you shouldn't do that!" We use contractions. We split infinitives and we end sentences with prepositions. We begin sentences with "and" and we repeat ourselves. And we probably do a lot of other stuff that would make Miss Primly and her clan absolutely aghast. [G. Robert Jacks, *Just SAY the Word* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), pp. 1-2.]

I'm trying to profit by his wise advice by overcoming my ingrained habits. Now whenever I am preparing to preach I remind myself that the day after I've given my sermon - maybe a few hours afterward - only a rare soul will remember anything I have said except a bit of humor or a gripping illustration. How, then, can I make that momentary audible impression which by the Holy Spirit's power will bring God's truth to impinge on the lives of my hearers?

II

For a second thing, let me stress that a sermon is an oral communication which unapologetically claims to be the affirmation and application of divine truth. No Biblical preacher pretends to be an infallible interpreter of God's infallible Word. As a Biblicist, he recognizes his limitations. He knows that he is afflicted with prejudices, blind spots, and idiosyncrasies of mind and heart even if he cannot infallibly identify them. Yet prayerfully he prepares his message and then with appropriate fear and trembling ventures to deliver it authoritatively with the conviction that "Thus saith the Lord." Humbly

aware that his teaching may stand in need of correction, he nevertheless refuses to let his trumpet give forth an uncertain sound. Eschewing arrogant dogmatism, he views himself as God's ambassador to whom the Word of reconciliation has been entrusted. Yes, he confesses that Scripture has mysteries, depths, and problem-passages which baffle his insight. But regarding its centralities he is unwavering. He appreciates the tribute which skeptical philosopher David Hume paid to the Presbyterian pastor whose church he attended with some regularity. Twitted by his fellowunbelievers for this strange incongruity he defended himself by saying, "I don't believe what he preaches, but he does. And once a week I like to hear a man say what he believes." So a sermon - I mean a Biblical sermon - is predicated on the firm persuasion that Scripture is God's Word. So the preacher proclaims it authoritatively as divine truth. He verbalizes what he sings.

Oh word of God incarnate,
Oh wisdom from on high,
Oh truth unchanged, unchanging,
Oh light of thy dark sky.

We praise thee for the radiance
Which from thy hallowed page
A lantern to our footsteps
Shines on from age to age.

III

I assert, next, that a sermon is an oral communication designed to convey at most a small cluster of truths not the whole council of God. Indeed, the former president of our Seminary in Denver, Haddon Robinson, is right, and he's a master homiletician, a sermon ideally ought to share one big idea. I know that the doughty puritan preachers had their points, sub-points, and sub-sub-points with a bewildering multiplicity of corollaries and applications. Yet while that weighty kind of pulpiteering may be admired, it is not to be imitated. Perhaps it might be suitable for a Sunday School class of serious Bible students, yet in today's short-bites culture, I'm afraid it would produce spiritual indigestion as well as emptying both church's pews and coffers.

(Parenthesis. I wondered to myself: should I use that word? Is coffers utterly passé?)

Back to my mainline of thought! A profusion of points, a too complex exposition of a passage or text is liable to prove fatal to lucid communication.

As I was writing the sentence you have just heard, I initially added a half-dozen elaborating phrases. Then I stopped, reflected, and put a sizable period. In oral communication no single sentence ought to run the length of a paragraph. Short assertions, concise questions are better by far. And I battle to keep my sentences brief and clear. It's a battle I've yet to win.

Well, let me resume what I was going to say before that decisive period. A profusion of points, I was going to remark, results in wandering attention, mental fatigue, too heavy a burden for even a retentive memory, and in all likelihood a muddled understanding of what in the world the preacher was getting at. Profusion of points is the sworn foe of clarity, and the greatest of homiletical virtues is clarity.

Should I at this juncture, I asked myself, pause for a relaxing bit of humor? I decided I should. And at the same time I would be illustrating the value of hackneyed material, always assuming that, however frayed a story may be to fellow-preachers, some of our listeners have not yet heard it. I therefore, in stressing the need for sermonic lucidity, remind you of that young pastor who with his beautiful wife moved to a new parish. Every Sunday she sat conspicuously in the front row, listening with apparently rapt attention to her husband's discourse. As he waxed more and more eloquently she would murmur with admirable affection, "Kiss! Kiss!" Members of the congregation were duly impressed with her devotion. Perhaps they were even more grateful than impressed when they learned that "Kiss!" was her admonition, "Keep it simple, stupid!"

Yes, a sermon should embody simplicity of structure and style, a simplicity which may artfully camouflage profundity of truth. Simplicity, lucidity, clarity are homiletical virtues, and the greatest of these is clarity.

IV

Let me emphasize, in 4th place, that a sermon is an oral communication which by its very nature demands the most attention-arresting, attention-sustaining delivery of which a preacher is capable. Homileticians in the past resorted to Latin terms in order to analyze the components of effective speech. They discussed logos, ethos, and pathos. By logos they referred of course to the employment of reason, the marshaling of facts, the power of persuasive argument. By ethos they referred to a speaker's own person, his genuineness, his sincerity, the congruence of his character with the case he was making. If there was a discrepancy between character and speech content, the most skillful of orators was labeled a sophist, a charlatan. By

pathos the old rhetoricians referred to skill in moving the heart, the ability to touch the springs of human volition and motivate some desired action. They were conscious of the difference between motivation and manipulation, as the Apostle Paul clearly indicates he was, asserting in 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with the demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power."

Yet, though caution must be exercised in recourse to pathos, we cannot and will not effectively communicate God's truth unless we do everything possible to reach human hearts, call forth human volition, and mobilize human energies and resources. I'm not forgetting the influence of the Holy Spirit nor the absolute necessity of prayer. I am merely highlighting the crucial importance of delivery. For regardless of logos and ethos, a sermon will not accomplish its purpose if it is passionless, dull and dry, too exclusively cerebral, lacking in enthusiasm, presenting God's truth as if it were a lecture on mathematics or astronomy. The whole person of the preacher needs to be engaged in his proclamation of truth. Body language with its gestures, its facial expressions, its eyes that speak even though they are silent - in short, body language is a means of communication. So also is a preacher's voice regarded as an instrument capable of a wide range of variation from machine-gun like rapidity to a reflective whisper. So as well is his own emotionality which can send vibrations of empathy throughout his audience.

All preachers are by no means gifted with natural eloquence and/or dramatic ability. But any preacher who knows that he lacks these gifts can cultivate his delivery skills without becoming an awkward and obvious imitator. And for the sake of the Gospel he ought to work and work hard on his delivery.

If I were starting over in the ministry, I would do what is now being done quite routinely. I would tape my sermons and listen to myself with a view to correcting and improving my preaching. If at all possible, I would film myself as I function in the pulpit. Then I would enlist the help of some unsparing critic to point out where I ought to change. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend," according to Proverbs 27:6. And critical wounds administered by his personal solicitation will make the wounded pulpiteer a more able communicator of God's healing truth.

Will you tolerate still another story? Twin brothers were discussing their vocations, one a preacher, the other a baseball pitcher.

"I don't understand what makes the difference between our salaries," complained the preacher-twin. "I'm educated. I went through college and seminary, and I only earn $25,000 a year. You quit college to play baseball, and here you are earning $500,000 a year. How can you explain the difference?"

The pitcher-twin thought for a few seconds and then replied, "I don't know, but maybe it's a matter of delivery."

No comment is needed.

V

In the fifth place, let me remind you that a sermon is an oral communication which cries out for illustrative windows to let the light of God's truth shine through. Suppose, to give an example which shows the need for examples, I am expounding the third chapter of Romans with its deep and pivotal doctrine of justification. Listeners trying to follow my labored teaching may find it slightly opaque. No they may find it impenetrably opaque. Then I tell the story which a friend shared with me attributing it to Dr. James Kennedy of the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Revolting against the tyranny of Russia's czar, a tribe of Muscovites defeated and decimated is driven into the forest. They lack food, so their very limited supply is rationed. But someone manages to steal from the supplies which are under the chief's own supervision. He lays down a law. Anyone caught stealing will be stripped and beaten. The thief is caught - the chief's mother. He faces a dilemma. He loves his old mother and can't bear the thought of beating her. Yet as chief he must be faithful to the very law he has laid down. How does he solve his problem? He strips off his coat and shirt, hands the whip to one of the strongest men in his following, and commands, "Beat me." He is faithful to the demands of his own law yet spares the mother he loves. So on the cross the divine law-Giver meets the demands of His law by taking the place of the law-breaker and Himself bearing the penalty.

Granted that this story does not cover all aspects of the atonement. No illustration does. It nevertheless brings out the truth of Christ's substitutionary death which is the heart of the good news of God's justifying grace. And what this story does in illuminating a particular truth is what illustrative materials are introduced to do. If they don't serve that purpose, they are gratuitous and should not be brought into a sermon simply to entertain or to eke out a meager message.

Illustrative materials, as you know, may be anecdotes, parables, historical

episodes, personal experiences, poems, hymns, statistics, in short whatever will illuminate our teaching, whatever will bring arresting vitality to interest-killing dullness. Illustrations may even be manufactured, provided we make clear that they are not literally true and we preface them with "Let us suppose" or "It's as if" or "Can you imagine?" But under no circumstances must a preacher be guilty of palming off fiction as fact. Sometimes, though, a pulpiteer will not just exaggerate. He may even claim that what he is relating happened to himself when it didn't. And he may defend his falsehood because of its pragmatic value, contending that it has helped to get some truth across to his people. Let me therefore affirm that as an over-all principle whether in preaching a sermon or living a life pragmatism is no justification for any departure from ethics and in particular the moral absolute of truth-telling. What a blatant contradiction! To tell a lie in order to make God's truth more understandable and gripping!

But let's not minimize the value of illustrative material. By no means. It's worth a preacher's time and effort to find and file such material. An outstanding practitioner of sermon illustrating is my friend, Leslie Flynn, for over 40 years pastor of the Grace Church in Nanuet, New York. He is also an illustration of how this labor pays off. He has published dozens of his sermons as books, very helpful books, helpful because they are full of appropriate illustrations. I recommend strongly, if good and relevant illustrations seem hard to find and file, that you get one of his many books and discover how he managed to do it. That book with an introduction by Haddon Robinson is entitled, *Come Alive with Illustrations*. It demonstrates that the job of collecting and classifying illuminative material for sermons can be successfully carried out by a busy pastor without research assistance.

VI

Finally! I pause to let the significance of that adverb sink in. Finally is a blessed word which some people listening to us in our pulpiteering are anxious to hear but which, alas, we may render meaningless by continuing to preach on and on. Well, finally, let me make some brief comments about a number of homiletical issues each of which merits extended discussion. In my opinion they should serve as guiding principles in our proclamation of God's truth.

If I have a fitting sense of the seriousness and dignity of my task, I will remember that I am dealing with the eternal realities of God's being, will, purpose and therefore the Gospel of redeeming grace. I will remember too, that I am therefore dealing with the awesome reality of our relationship to

God through His Son and His Spirit, and no more momentous responsibility can be imagined. I will also remember that my obligation is to bless rather than impress my hearers. I admit that whenever I speak even as on this occasion, I sincerely desire to bless my listeners, yet, sinner that I am, I likewise want to impress my audience. As a result there is a motivational struggle which must be left to the cleansing of my heart by the Holy Spirit.

Remembering my obligation, I repeatedly quote to myself the words of Scottish theologian James Denney. "No man can at the same time convince his audience that he is clever and that Jesus Christ is mighty to save."

I remember furthermore, though this thought may not always be at the forefront of my consciousness, that as God's ambassador I stand in the gap between heaven and hell. So I must preach

As sure never to preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men.

My brothers and sisters, I have been privileged to share with you my reflections on our common task which is not only a heavy responsibility but a holy privilege. I prayerfully hope these octogenarian reflections have been of some help to you who are now carrying out the Pauline imperative, "Preach the Word!"

(editor's note: Vernon Grounds is Chancellor at Denver Seminary, Denver, CO.)

The Place of Pathos in Preaching

by Jeffrey D. Arthurs

Abstract

Preaching that addresses the emotions along with the mind is more effective than preaching which speaks only to the mind. This truth seems self-evident, yet pathos receives little attention in homiletics texts. This paper explores why pathos is vital in preaching and suggests ways to upgrade our use of pathos.

Introduction

"To say that it is possible to persuade without speaking to the passions, is but at best a kind of specious nonsense."

(George Campbell, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*)[1]

Pathos means "feeling or emotion."[2] When used in discussions of persuasion, it is "all those materials and devices calculated to put the audience in a frame of mind suitable for the reception of the speaker's ideas."[3] Pathos deserves a central place in homiletical theorizing and practice, a higher place than it currently receives. I will argue that claim in the first section of this paper and make some suggestions in the second section, but before getting into the body of the paper, I need to make a disclaimer: This paper does not pit pathos against logos. I believe that preaching must include a strong cognitive element or else it is not preaching. Without a dominant idea derived from a biblical text, supplemented with other ideas, a sermon is merely "sound and fury signifying nothing."

However, while preaching cannot be less than the communication of a biblical idea, it should be more. De Quincey compared the two arts of rhetoric, logos and pathos, to rudder and sail. The first guides discourse and the second powers it.[4] Even a traditionalist like John Broadus argued that preachers need "the capacity for clear thinking, with strong feelings, and a vigorous imagination" to produce "forcible utterance."[5]

An entire paper devoted to pathos may raise red flags since emotional appeal is the stuff of demagogues, so let me extend my disclaimer to say that no ethical communicator uses pathos to induce an audience to act contrary to reason. That is manipulation, not persuasion. Jonathan Edwards wrestled with this issue in response to charges of sensationalism in the Great Awakening. His answer sets the tone for this paper: "I should think myself in the way of my duty, to raise the affections of my hearers as high as I possible can, provided they are affected with nothing but truth, and with affections that are not disagreeable to the nature of what

they are affected with."[6] Ethical (and effective) communicators use pathos to prompt people to act in accord with the truth.

This paper is not a plea to discount or circumvent logos. Neither is it a plea to bypass the role of the Holy Spirit in preaching. It is an argument that the Holy Spirit converts and sanctifies the whole person, not just the mind, and the Holy Spirit appeals to the mind and emotions to move the will. As Hogan says:

> There must be a cognitive element, of course, in every sermon, since every true sermon must be based upon an accurate understanding of some portion of Scripture. . . . But preaching must not stop there. There must also be an affective element, for no truth is revealed merely to be understood. . . . God is making a claim upon our lives, and ordinarily one responds to that claim not merely because one understands it, but because the heart is stirred by it.[7]

Effective preaching has a strong affective element. The first section of this paper presents why I make this claim.

Why Does Pathos Deserve a Central Place in Preaching?

Pathos Influences Decision Making

The old dichotomy between logic and emotion, the head and the heart, does not reflect how humans actually make decisions. As rhetorical scholar Roderick Hart argues, "To contrast people's 'logical' versus 'emotional' tendencies is to separate human features that should not be separated in analysis since they cannot be separated in fact. When people react to anything . . . [they] react with all of themselves."[8] Arnold and Wilson state simply that "people do not reason or feel, they reason because they feel, they feel because they think they have reason."[9] The dichotomy between pathos and logos may be useful in the academy, but in the marketplace the two cannot be separated.

Even if we allow the dichotomy to stand, we find that pathos influences the will more than logos. This was Cicero's observation: "Mankind makes far more determinations through hatred, or love, or desire, or anger, or grief, or joy, or hope, or fear, or error, or some other affection of mind, than from regard for truth, or any settled maxim, or principle of right."[10] What is "reasonable" for listeners depends more on how well they believe the proposal will fulfill their desires or how congruent it is with their current attitudes than upon canons of formal logic. C.S. Lewis states, "People don't ask for facts in making up their minds. They would rather have one good, soul-satisfying emotion than a dozen facts."[11] Dozens of communication theories support this contention.[12] For example, "balance theory" explains human behavior by observing how people attempt to maintain a feeling of comfort and consistency when their beliefs or values contradict each another. Kenneth Burke's theory of "guilt" is similar as it demonstrates how people purge feelings of culpability. Even though I disagree with Maslow's determination when

he argues that needs lower on his hierarchy must be fulfilled before we give attention to higher needs, I agree with his fundamental argument that internal drives and aspirations influence what we do. Simply stated, people do what they want to do, and what they want to do is more closely linked to pathos than to logos. Out of the heart flow the issues of life.

God in the Scripture Uses Pathos

At this point, the reader may be lifting his/her eyebrows, thinking that Athens has too much to do with Jerusalem in this paper. The argument so far may sound like an advertising handbook: Just discover the hidden needs of your listeners, present your product so that it seems to fill those needs, and make sure you bypass rationality in the process. As I stated in the opening apology, many persuaders use pathos unethically. I place advertisers high on that list. But the fact that they manipulate with emotion does not mean that preachers should jettison it. Pathos is primary in human decision making because God made us to respond to emotional appeals, and he himself uses pathos. He motivates us through awe of his immensity, fear of his holiness, confidence of his goodness, and joy of his grace. Pathos is crucial, not incidental, to God's communication. As Robinson says, "Some passages are alive with hope, some warn, some create a sense of joy, some flash with anger at injustice, others surge with triumph. A true expository sermon should create in the listener the mood it produced in the reader. . . . The task of the poet, the playwright, the artist, the prophet, and the preacher overlap at this point - to make people feel and see."[13] From the earnest pleading of Charles Spurgeon, to the pastoral warmth of Jack Hayford, to the exuberance of E.V. Hill, effective preachers represent God - his ideas and emotions. When preachers use pathos (and logos and ethos), they handle the Word skillfully.

Before turning to suggestions of how preachers can incorporate more emotion into their preaching, one other observation helps establish the place of pathos in preaching.

Today's Cultural Shift

The well-documented shift to postmodernism in Western culture includes skepticism toward rationalistic logic. Modernists trusted logic and were comfortable with propositional truth, but postmoderns are more likely to adopt an "imaginative/feeling perspective that sees 'feeling' and 'imagining' as a more integrating key to the whole of reality than either 'knowing' or 'willing.'"[14] Postmoderns desire an experience of reality, not statements about it. In this way, postmodernism is closer than modernism to Biblical Christianity.

The "new homiletic," perceiving the postmodern shift in epistemology, or perhaps influenced by it, advocates that preachers focus on creating an experience for their listeners.[15] That experience should engage the emotions as well as the mind, and it should proceed by indirection with narrative, induction, or images. This is

the way people think and how they experience life; therefore (says the "new homiletic"), we should preach this way. As Buttrick states, "Homiletical form is usually experimental, because preachers are developing rhetoric to match the shape of a new, forming human consciousness."[16] The "new human consciousness" of postmodernism suggests that we should heighten the affective element in our sermons.

What are evangelical homileticians to make of this? In my opinion, as long as the sermon heralds God's message (which necessarily implies that the sermon embodies an idea), we should embrace the methodology of the new homiletic as a means of heightening the place of pathos in preaching. Unfortunately, most of our training equips us to exegete and communicate the ideas of the text, not the feelings. Therefore, in the final section of this paper, I suggest three ways to upgrade the place of pathos in our preaching so that our sermons will not be, as Ralph Waldo Emerson described his own lectures: "Fine things, pretty things, wise things, but no arrows, no axes, no nectar, no growling, no transpiercing, no loving, no enchantment."[17]

Upgrading Pathos

The three suggestions which relate to the three standard areas of sermonizing are: exegesis, delivery, and arrangement.

Include Identification of Mood as Part of Exegesis

Literature prompts emotions as well as communicates ideas. Effective heralds attempt to embody all of God's message; therefore, they should identify the dominant mood(s) of the text. "While the emotion of a writer may be more difficult to pin down than ideas and their development, every passage has a mood."[18] 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. Simply by keeping in mind that the text aims to create an experience, not just transmit an idea, preachers should be able to identify the dominant mood of the passage.

However, if a preacher feels "literarily challenged," I suggest reading in the disciplines of rhetoric and oral interpretation. Rhetoric identifies a writer's purpose and symbolic agency for achieving that purpose, and oral interpretation deals with embodying that purpose for an audience.[19] Another field to pursue is "the Bible as literature,"[20] and another field could be reader-response theory. Although much maligned in evangelical circles, reader-response criticism helps interpreters identify the effects texts prompt in readers. [21]

But to reiterate, I believe that specialized study in "affective exegesis" is not necessary for most preachers. We simply need to add a few more questions to our

checklist when doing exegesis: "What is God trying to do with this text," and "how does pathos help achieve that goal?" We should ask not only "what does it mean," but also "how does it make me feel?" Identification of the mood is the first step toward communication of that mood. I have recently begun to state at the top of my sermon notes not only the subject and complement of the passage, not only my preaching idea and purpose, but also the primary mood. Identification of the mood in exegesis helps me embody the mood in delivery.

Embody the Mood in the Sermon

Once the preacher has identified the affective content of the text, then he/she should embody it. I use the word "embody" because much of the communication of pathos occurs non-verbally. When preachers genuinely feel the mood(s) of the text, the audience will notice and may respond. Rhetorician and preacher Hugh Blair said, "The only effectual method [of moving the listeners' emotions] is to be moved yourself. . . . There is an obvious contagion among the passions."[22]

There is nothing new in this insight. All effective preachers know it intuitively, but few if any can explain why it is so. Plato used theological categories to describe the power that a "rhapsode" (or singer/reciter) has over an audience.[23] He said that the Muse inspires the poet, who inspires the rhapsode, who inspires the audience. The Muse is like a magnet which translates its power through various iron rings to the spectators. In contrast to Plato's theory, twentieth-century theory uses psychological categories to explain the "contagion among the passions." For example, oral interpretation scholars speak of "empathy." When a performer "feels with" the literature, physical response occurs. The audience perceives this response (although the perceiving is often unconscious) and adopts the same attitude.[24] Whatever reason for the "contagion," we know that it is indispensable to preaching. Dabney says that the "law of sympathy" is the preacher's "right arm in the work of persuasion."[25] Effective heralds demonstrate that the truth has gripped them and that it should grip the listeners. Effective heralds embody the text.

But this is easier said than done. Each of us has his or her own habitual emotional state. This state may or may not correspond with the mood of the text. A mellow preacher will have trouble embodying the climax of the ages described in Revelation 21. A stern preacher who does not "submit to the atmosphere and spirit of" 1 Peter 1:3-9 will turn radiate hope into guilt for not having that hope.[26] In addition to the problem of habitual moods, the preacher's varying moods may or may not match the tone of the text. One week we are depressed, another week we are thankful. We feel hypocritical (and probably are hypocritical) if we attempt to embody a foreign mood. Therefore, the only solution is to actually empathize with the text. We must think and pray and imagine ourselves deeply into the text so that it rules our hearts and minds, and then we must speak naturally, not fearing to reveal our feelings in public. "Unless there is some measure of emotional involvement on the part of the preacher and on the part of his hearers, the kerygma can-

not be heard in its fullness, for the kerygma speaks to the whole man, emotion and all, and simply does not make sense to the intellect and will alone."[27] Of course, embodying the mood of the text will look different for each of us since preaching is truth through personality, but listeners will still be able to tell if we are emotionally attuned to God's message.

Can "embodying" be taught? Yes and no. There is some value in drills which refine delivery, and exercises can help speakers be more comfortable projecting emotion, but the key is not technique. It is genuinely feeling. Teachers should raise consciousness about pathos in preaching, help their students identify the affective elements of the text, model "embodying," and exhort student preachers to "let it out." They need to know that "ordinary people listen for a preacher's feelings as much as his ideas, perhaps more. That is simply part of the power of the spoken word."[28]

Surface Need

To upgrade the power of pathos in our sermons, we should give special attention to surfacing need in the introduction. This suggestion, like the previous one, is simply a reminder, but it is a reminder worth making. Surfacing need is crucial to oral communication. Early in the sermon, the audience must feel their need for the Word, otherwise the engine of pathos stalls. Classical rhetoricians spoke of the need to rouse emotion in the "peroration" (the finale), but modern theorists such as Monroe with his "motivated sequence" argue persuasively that listeners grant attention only to what interests them, and what interests them is what they feel they need. Therefore, to bring the world of the text into the world of the listeners, the preacher must demonstrate early in the sermon how the truth addresses felt needs. All learning begins at the feeling level.

What tools are available for identifying need? Many, such as soliciting "feedforward," but perhaps the most powerful tool is simply imagination. Henry Ward Beecher went so far as to argue "the first element on which your preaching will largely depend for power and success . . . is imagination, which I regard as the most important of all elements that go to make the preacher."[29] We should imagine the emotions of the text, and we should imagine the needs of our people. Imagination increases identification, and identification is nearly synonymous with effective communication.

Pathos deserves a high place in homiletical theory and in preaching. When it works hand in hand with logos and ethos, powerful and holistic communication occurs. Effective heralds identify and embody the moods of the text while they speak to needs. Effective preachers value pathos and use it to the glory of God.

Notes

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5. In Wayne McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 10.
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10. Thonssen and Baird, 360.
11. In Wayne Martindale, and Jerry Root, *The Quotable Lewis* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1989), 482.
12. See Charles V. Larson, *Persuasion: Reception and Responsibility*, 6th edition (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1992).
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14. John A. Sims, "Postmodernism: The Apologetics Imperative," in *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Encounter*, David S. Dockery, ed. (Wheaton, IL: Bridgepoint, 1995), 332.
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17. In David L. Larsen, *Anatomy of Preaching: Identifying the Issues in Preaching Today* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1989), 71.
18. Robinson, 82.
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24. Lee and Gura 126-128; and Otis J. Aggertt and Elbert R. Bowen, *Communicative Reading*, second edition (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 146-150.
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"But I Did Such Good Exposition": Literate Preachers Confront Orality

by Grant Lovejoy

Abstract

Exposition uses ways of knowing, thinking, and expression that are second nature to highly literate people. But exposition is difficult for oral communicators to understand, remember, and share with others. Oral communication preferences predominate in the world, yet homiletics gives that fact scant attention.

Introduction

A cartoon in a ministers' journal showed an assistant rushing into the pastor's office carrying a rectangular object. Breathlessly he announced, "Pastor, they've found the black box from Sunday's sermon!" Most of us have occasionally wondered why a particular sermon crashed and burned. Sometimes the answer is obvious: poor preparation, weak content, lifeless delivery, or congregational apathy. We are not surprised when we fail under those conditions. What gnaws at us are apparent disconnects with the audience when everything about the sermon seemed promising. It was a solid exposition of a relevant text. It was carefully outlined, explained, illustrated, applied, and delivered with spiritual passion. Yet for some reason people seemed unmoved by it.

As we seek the cause(s) of the ineffectiveness, we should investigate a factor that is seldom considered: the dynamics of orality and literacy. If researchers of orality and literacy are correct, then certain kinds of expository sermons are using thought forms and communications strategies that are foreign to half of the adults in the United States and Canada, not to mention most teens and children. We may be doing good expository preaching of certain types and failing to connect with listeners because of it.

Understanding "Exposition"

Usage within Homiletics

To discuss this situation constructively, we must first discuss what exposition is. In *Expository Preaching* Harold T. Bryson offers an excellent review of the etymology of "exposit" and related terms and the varied ways that they have been used in western homiletics since the thirteenth century.[1] A careful study of entries for "exposit," "expositor," and "expository" in the definitive *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) confirms Bryson's assertion that the etymological meaning of these words is straightforward. They come from a Latin root which means "to put out" or "to put

on display." From A. D. 1300 onward the terms were used in a consistent way with reference to acts of writing and public speaking. Exposition is "the act of expounding or explaining" that results in an "interpretation" or "explanation." An "expositor" is "one who sets something forth" in detail or "lays open" something, often the meaning of a document or symbol.[2] Many preachers and homileticians have used and continue to use "expository" in this basic etymological sense. We have excellent reason to do so. Preachers who understand the issues can prepare sermons that fit this definition of exposition and that do not clash with the realities of orality.

But as Bryson points out, some homileticians have sought to refine the definition of "expository sermon" by concentrating on the form of the sermon. Writing in 1911, David Breed rejected running commentary as a form of expository sermon on the grounds that a sermon must have a rhetorical form. Numerous other homileticians have suggested that an expository sermon derives major points and sub-points from the text.[3] These homiliticians thereby tie the definition of "expository" to a particular homiletical treatment of the text. Bryson argues persuasively against linking expository preaching with a particular sermon form, but this emphasis continues nonetheless.[4] Many preachers would have difficulty creating an expository sermon without an outline. As will be argued below, many listeners struggle to comprehend sermons that have outlines and the patterns of thought that typically accompany them. Here lies the difficulty that this paper is addressing.

Another effort to refine the meaning of "expository" also raises concerns. Both Bryan Chapell and John MacArthur, for example, have enlarged the definition of expository preaching in another way. They have said that treating the text in a detailed way is an essential characteristic of exposition. Chapell says, "No significant portion of the text is ignored . . . expositors . . . do not leave [the text] until they have surveyed its entirety with their listeners."[5] This is not an optional matter. "Exhausting the text is a distinction of expository preaching that obligates the preacher to deal with the entire passage."[6] Similarly, MacArthur insists that preaching expositionally means "preaching in such a way that the meaning of the Bible passage is presented entirely and exactly as it was intended by God."[7] An emphasis on thoroughness in dealing with the text is not a problem, in and of itself. It is a commendable emphasis, especially given Chapell's qualification that "not everything has to be covered in equal detail."[8] But when combined with certain established homiletical habits, most notably the tendency to make the message more analytical and the outline more detailed as we explore every facet of the text, this focus on exhaustiveness may also become an impediment to effective communication in a high-orality context.

So "expository" has its basic etymological meaning plus additional connotations, two of which have just been mentioned. But there is yet another dimension to our discussion of what exposition is, namely how "exposition" is used by researchers

dealing with orality and literacy, and the effects of literacy on human cognition and communication.

Usage outside Homiletics

Neil Postman, a communications theorist and social critic who chairs the Department of Culture and Communications at New York University, contends that exposition is a skill that is inseparable from typography and, implicitly, literacy. In his book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Postman laments the decline in Americans' ability to carry on sustained high-level discourse about important topics. In effect he argues that the American capacity for exposition is far less than it once was. Postman blames modern technology, especially television, for this decline. He describes exposition:

> Exposition is a mode of thought, a method of learning, and a means of expression. Almost all of the characteristics we associate with mature discourse were amplified by typography, which has the strongest possible bias toward exposition: a sophisticated ability to think conceptually, deductively, and sequentially; a high valuation of reason and order; an abhorrence of contradiction; a large capacity for detachment and objectivity; and a tolerance for delayed response.[9]

Note his three-fold description of exposition. First, it is a mode of thinking, that is, a patterned, habitual, learned way of processing ideas. Second, it is a method of learning. Through processes inherent to exposition we conduct inquiry, acquire facts and understandings and internalize them in the activity that we call learning. Third, exposition is also a means of expression. In this respect his description of exposition coincides with our homiletical one, focused as it is on setting forth the meanings of texts. But his description goes beyond our simple etymological definition.

Postman asserts that exposition is marked by a cluster of skills and values that give it a distinctive character. These skills and values permeate much expository preaching as well. Expository preaching is usually conceptual, deductive, and sequential. It values reason and order and seeks to avoid contradiction. In demeanor expository preaching often seeks to communicate an objective (and therefore somewhat detached) approach to the text, though this does not mean that the speaker is without convictions or passion for the truths contained in Scripture. But commonly used language such as "We see in the text," or "Notice in verse 5 . . ." does imply that the preacher is viewing the text as an object. Scripture is treated as external to the preacher, something to be "opened up" on the homiletical dissection table. This is characteristic of exposition as Postman describes it and as many preachers practice it.

For our purposes it is not necessary to decide whether Postman's description should replace the narrower etymological use of the term described previously. The importance of Postman's work lies in the fact that his description of exposition does fit some, perhaps most expository sermons. As will be argued shortly, the more a sermon fits Postman's description of exposition, the more likely it is to fail as a means of communicating with highly-oral people, that is, those who function without reliance on literacy and the thinking skills it fosters.

So the ways of learning, thinking, and communicating that are second nature to most homiletics professors are dependent on high levels of literacy. We have had literacy skills so long that we forget what it was like before we acquired them. So we seldom recognize the literateness of our homiletical methods. We expect our students to use these skills in preparing and presenting sermons, perhaps unwittingly to the detriment of their listeners.

Orality and Literacy

Although literates typically assume that a message fulfilling the standards of literate discourse will be readily understood by all audiences, research into orality and literacy indicates that this is an erroneous idea. Crucial work in this field was done by Walter Ong, former University Professor of Humanities and Professor of Humanities in Psychiatry at Saint Louis University. He has written extensively on the subject, but his best-known work is Orality and Literacy. In *Orality and Literacy* Ong contrasts primary oral cultures, those that have little or no acquaintance with literacy, with literate cultures. He surveys a wide range of anthropological and linguistic literature to demonstrate that literacy does far more to a culture (or individual) than merely enable reading and writing. His central contention is this: "Without writing, the literate mind would not and could not think as it does, not only when engaged in writing but normally even when it is composing its thoughts in oral form. More than any other single invention, writing has transformed human consciousness."[10] Many mental processes literates take for granted are foreign to oral cultures. "An oral culture simply does not deal in such items as geometrical figures, abstract categorization, formally logical reasoning processes, definitions, or even comprehensive descriptions, or articulated self-analysis, all of which derive not simply from thought itself but from text-formed thought."[11] These are many of the mental functions that Postman equates with exposition. Ong would not expect oral communicators to comprehend exposition or to be able to do it in "standard," that is, literate ways.

Careful study of people living in primary oral cultures reveals how distinctive are their values about communication and their patterns of communication. For example, people who do not use reading and writing do not "know" anything that they cannot recall from memory. Consequently if they want to retain vital information,

they must think memorable thoughts. "In an oral culture, to think through something in non-formulaic, non-patterned, non-mnemonic terms, even if it were possible, would be a waste of time, for such thoughts, once worked through, could never be recovered with any effectiveness, as it could be with the aid of writing."[12]

Ong identifies several distinguishing characteristics of thought and expression in primary oral cultures. For instance, orally based thought is highly formulaic, utilizing set phrases and clauses, proverbs and epithets. To a literate ear it may sound hackneyed and full of clichés. But these traditional expressions are crucial in oral communication; they ease the burden of communication. "Once a formulary expression has crystallized, it had best be kept intact. Without a writing system, breaking up thought - that is analysis - is a high risk procedure."[13] In a similar vein, orally based thought is highly redundant. If readers lose the train of thought in a book, they can easily turn back and pick up the thought where they lost it. That is impossible in oral communication. Likewise, if acoustical problems garble a sentence, listeners may be lost. So oral communicators carefully loop back to repeat what has already been said. Redundancy "is in a profound sense more natural to thought and speech than is sparse linearity. Sparsely linear or analytic thought and speech is an artificial creation, structured by the technology of writing."[14] Oral communication may thus seem annoyingly repetitive to literates and literate communication may leave oral communicators struggling to recover meanings that were uttered but once.

Oral thought and expression are closely tied to the lived experiences of the oral community. They have little ability with or appreciation for abstract and speculative information. Principles detached from practical living have little appeal to them. Literates can create abstract categories and itemize things in lists separate from the way those things are encountered in experience. But "an oral culture has no vehicle so neutral as a list."[15] Literates struggle to accept the fact that to a primary oral communicator a "simple list" is not simple and is not a natural or useful way of remembering information. The same is true for outlines. Moreover, "oral cultures know few statistics or facts divorced from human or quasi-human activity."[16] As African pastor John Oginga put it, "There is no idea without a head." To oral communicators like him, no idea exists in a free-floating abstract state. Every idea is attached to the person who uttered it and the context in which it was uttered. The more strongly ideas are rooted in whole events and concrete experiences, the better their chance of being remembered.

Oral thought and expression strike literates as being "extraordinarily agonistic," according to Ong.[17] He explains that their communication may seem highly combative, as evidenced in their eager competition in trading epithets and barbed insults, as in David's exchange with Goliath. Moreover, they frequently utilize vivid and enthusiastic descriptions of struggles, battles, and the accompanying phys-

ical violence. The highly relational nature of oral cultures causes conflicts to be felt and communicated intensely. On the other hand, Ong says, their praise for their friends and heroes is equally elaborate. "The fulsome praise in the old, residually oral, rhetoric tradition strikes persons from a high-literacy culture as insincere, flatulent, and comically pretentious."[18]

Oral communicators are also very present-oriented. For them words have their meaning in the specific ways in which they are used in the present, including the accompanying facial expressions, intonation, gestures, and the like. Primary oral communicators have no dictionaries and are not interested in definitions.[19] In this connection Ong cites the experiences of researcher A.R. Luria among peasants in Uzbekistan and Kirghizia in the early 1930s. As Luria reports in *Cognitive Development: Its Cultural and Social Foundations*, peasants saw little reason to give him definitions. His interviews with them went like this:

Luria: "Try to explain to me what a tree is."
Peasant: "Why should I? Everyone knows what a tree is, they don't n e e d me telling them."
Luria: "How would you define a tree in two words?"
Peasant: "In two words? Apple tree, elm, poplar."
Luria: "Say you go to a place where there are no cars. What will you tell people [a car is]?"
Peasant: "If I go, I'll tell them that buses have four legs, chairs in front for people to sit on, a roof for shade and an engine. But when you get right down to it, I'd say: 'If you get in a car and go for a drive, you'll find out.'"[20]

Literates' concern with definitions may puzzle oral communicators; nevertheless, definitions remain a staple of expository preaching. In one more way we discover that the gap between orality and common forms of expository preaching is wider than most preachers know.

It is tempting to think that these issues do not affect contemporary preaching. After all, Luria's work was done decades ago and far away. Furthermore, Ong's work focuses on "primary oral cultures," that is, societies "untouched by writing."[21] He acknowledges that most societies today have an awareness of literacy and that "it takes only a moderate degree of literacy to make a tremendous difference in thought processes."[22] But homileticians cannot dismiss orality so quickly, because Ong also cautions that even after oral communicators have learned to recognize the habits of thought employed by literates, they may still find literate ways of thinking quite foreign. They will not use those ways when left to themselves.[23] Even after people have learned to read, literate ways of learning and thinking replace oral ones only gradually and incompletely. Few people are purely oral or purely literate. Most are some combination of the two.

This preference for oral methods among those with literacy is sometimes called "residual orality." It refers to those who have been exposed to literacy and perhaps learned to read and write, but who have not continued to read and write regularly. Such persons revert to oral means of expression and learning. Such reversion is a well-known phenomenon in literacy research. The International Adult Literacy Survey of twelve countries reveals that "literacy skills can be lost if they are not used throughout life."[24] Although residual oral communicators are not incapable of handling lower-level literate forms of communication, they nonetheless prefer oral forms of communication. They find highly literate communication (even if it is spoken) difficult to follow.

Researchers do not know precisely how many people in North America have a preference for oral rather than literate forms of communication, but available research suggests that they constitute a majority of the population in the United States and Canada. In 1993 the United States National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released the results of the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS). The survey tested participants in their ability with prose (editorials, magazine articles, brochures, fiction), documents (job applications, payroll forms, bus schedules, maps, etc.), and quantitative tasks (texts containing arithmetical operations). The survey then ranked participants on a scale of 1 to 5, representing illiterate, functionally illiterate, semi-literate, literate, and highly literate, respectively. Careful testing of a representative sample of U.S. adults revealed that 48-51% of them performed at the two lowest levels of literacy. Nearly a third of adults in the U.S. tested out at the semi-literate level. Thus only about 20% of the adult population ranked at levels 4 or 5, that is, literate or highly literate.[25]

Canada has done three studies similar to NALS. The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) done in 1994 used the same approach as the NALS, testing prose, document, and quantitative skills. IALS reported that 46-48% of Canadian adults age 16 and older scored at the two lowest levels of literacy. It ranked another 33% of Canadians adults as semi-literate. Approximately 28% of Canadian community college graduates scored at levels 1 or 2 and another 42% of them scored at level 3.26 The IALS survey thus confirmed that though there is a correlation between educational attainment and literacy, years of schooling are not inevitable predictors of literacy skill. An audience composed of high school and community college graduates may still have a significant number of people much more at home with oral communication. The question is not simply whether people can read, but how well they learn through literacy-influenced forms of communication. As the second IALS report puts it, "literacy means more than knowing how to read, write, or calculate. It involves understanding and being able to use the information required to function effectively...."[27] It is this concern for understanding God's truth and being able to put it into life that drives homiletical concern with the issues of orality and literacy. This distinction also means that it is unwise for

preachers to dismiss the issues of orality and literacy simply because their audiences can read.

Orality is even more prevalent outside the developed world. UNESCO figures indicate that in 1990 developing countries had an over all illiteracy rate of 35.1%. Reported illiteracy rates were 52.7% for sub-Saharan Africa, 48.7% for Arab states, and 53.8% for Southern Asia.[28] But literacy expert Daniel A. Wagner says that this data is suspect:

> UNESCO has relied almost entirely on data provided by its member countries.... These countries in turn typically rely on national census information, which most often determines literacy ability by the proxy variable of self-stated years of primary schooling or through self-assessment questionnaires. Many specialists would agree that such measures are likely to be unreliable indicators of literacy ability.[29]

Many of those who were counted as literate because they had completed primary schooling may nonetheless function at very low levels of literacy. So the percentage of people in developing countries with a strong oral communications preference is likely to be much higher than the reported rate of illiteracy. North American seminaries with students from developing countries may be teaching those students ways of preaching that are ill suited to the contexts to which they will return. Likewise western missionaries to the developing world have seldom been alerted to this phenomenon.

Teaching and Preaching to Oral Communicators

One possible way of responding to these realities is to try to raise the literacy level of people, starting with seminary students. We can press them to cultivate the thinking skills associated with literacy. Then we can encourage them to preach sermons that will stretch their listeners' abilities to handle analysis, abstraction, and conceptualization. We can refuse to "dumb down" our messages and demand that listeners reach up to our level. This approach has its appeal; we do want others to have all the benefits of literacy and the understandings it makes possible. But this is not a good option.

Trying to raise literacy through sermons runs counter to the principle of the incarnation. Jesus took on the limitations of humanity in order to disclose the nature of God more fully and perfectly. He adapted his own communication to his audience (Mk. 4:33-34). Trying to raise literacy levels through preaching risks diverting preachers from their task of proclaiming God's word. Literacy work can be a marvelous ministry and Christians ought to lead out in it. The question is whether the pulpit should take on the task. The historical record suggests that

preaching in literate forms is not a very helpful technique for teaching literacy.

Insisting on maintaining literate approaches also makes literacy an unbiblical barrier to faith. Christianity arose and flourished in an oral environment. In his foreword to John D. Harvey's *Listening to the Text*, Richard N. Longenecker points out that "there has recently arisen in the scholarly study of the New Testament the realization that both Greco-Roman society and the world of Judaism were largely oral in nature."[30] Harvey himself surveys the extensive evidence of orality in the first century A.D. culture and in the writings of Paul.[31] The early church could not have developed as it did if it required literacy of its adherents or made literate forms of training a prerequisite for its leaders. This realization has major implications for how we teach preaching both here and in overseas seminaries surrounded by oral cultures.

A more productive approach to the issue is to seek forms of communication that are more accessible to oral communicators. An obvious first step for preachers is to utilize biblical narratives as texts and retain those texts' narrative character in the sermon. Oral cultures store most of their heritage, religion, traditions and values in story form. This may well be why approximately two-thirds of the Bible is narrative. If preachers follow the suggestions by Greidanus, Long, Lovejoy, and Graves to respect the literary genre of the biblical text and seek to preserve its communicational dynamic in sermons, then they take a big step forward in dealing with orality.[32] That commitment, coupled with a commitment to preach the whole counsel of God, will lead to approximately half of our sermons being narrative-based and narrative in style. There is no need to make the mistake of some who insist that every sermon be narrative. After all, the Bible has other genre to suggest other types of sermons. But we should make a significant place for narrative in preaching–more than the occasional narrative sermon done simply for variety's sake.

It will take a conscious effort for some of us not to convert biblical narratives into standard (literate) analytical expositions of texts. The act of outlining a sermon on a narrative text, as suggested by Larsen may in fact erode a sermon's orality.[33] This danger is especially real for preachers already steeped in a highly literate homiletic. In principle we can outline a message and retain its narrative character. But it is preferable to use other conceptual models for the narrative message. Lowry, Buttrick, and Holbert have made useful suggestions in this regard.[34] We do better when we think of plots rather than points.

In classroom assignments it is desirable to discuss orality and its implications. It is also worthwhile to have every student prepare at least one narrative message. Students who struggle mightily to construct an acceptable sermon outline often handle narrative sermons very well. This may indicate that they are still quite oral in their own communicational patterns. If so, we can treat this as something to be

celebrated and cultivated rather than a weakness to be eradicated. While we hope that every student shows proficiency in each type of sermon, we can also help students find the approach to preaching that their background and gifting enable them to do best.

A more challenging step for some homileticians will be to appreciate the traits that orality imparts to a sermon. As discussed above, we will need to develop an appreciation for sermon style marked by fulsomeness, repetition, high emotion, frequent use of formulaic language, inclusion of words and phrases because of their euphony rather than their cognitive contribution, patterns of organization that are anything but syllogistic, and the like. White homileticians who have taught African-American students may already have grappled with some of these phenomena, for African-American preaching has traditionally had high orality. African-American homileticians already understand many of these practices. What Bruce Rosenberg calls "folk preaching" also has high orality.[35] In adapting to orality it is not necessary or advisable to jettison all homiletical standards. Some accepted standards apply across all lines and others will be retained because of their appropriateness for those who preach in literate contexts. But if we take orality seriously, we must acknowledge and accept that the ways of literacy are not the only ways to communicate in speech. We can sensitize our students to the differences and help them learn to adapt their manner of preaching to the communicational preferences of their congregation. In so doing we make the good news more accessible to the other half of the population.

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Improving Spiritual Formation In Expository Preaching By Using Cognitive Moral Development Theory

by Victor D. Anderson

Abstract

In light of the realization that preaching has failed to be optimally effective in inducing Christian spiritual formation, this paper suggests how homileticians seeking to increase the transformative effectiveness of their expository sermons may utilize selected components of Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of Cognitive Moral Development (CMD). After briefly orienting readers to Kohlberg's construct, the paper seeks to show how CMD theory may be utilized effectively in three areas: (1) clarifying transformation as the goal of expository preaching; (2) improving audience analysis; and (3) designing sermons to induce transitions to higher stages of moral reasoning.

Statement of the Problem

Deep inside, I have a suspicion that preaching in America is not all it should be or could be. I would like to think that preaching is improving, and indeed, there are many indications that this is so. At least resources for improving preaching continue to become more pervasive. Books on preaching technique flood the shelves of our favorite stores. Several times per year, successful preachers provide instruction and motivation at national preaching seminars. Books, journals, and web sites distribute sermon outlines and sermon manuscripts that have been meticulously refined and proven to be "successful." The newly formed Evangelical Homiletics Society and the new Doctor of Ministry in Homiletics program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary should prove valuable for advancing homiletical theory and practice. We might even conclude that these resources are bearing fruit, since, on any given Sunday, thousands of people across the land fix their concentration on dynamic preachers in huge auditoriums and on television screens.

Yet, deep inside, I have this suspicion that preaching in America is not all it could be or should be. Evangelical preachers sincerely desire to see people become more like Jesus Christ. But evidence of society's moral failures provokes questions about how effectively this vision is being accomplished. Statistics on marital infidelity and Christian divorce continue to indicate a problem out of control. Christians admit to cheating on tests in school, cheating on income taxes, and playing dishonestly both in sport and in business. Churches struggle under the tension of disharmony, a tension that too frequently results in church splits. And Christians

with life patterns of moral failure suffer catastrophic emotional problems, often resulting in hospitalization and, at worst, suicide.

Combining knowledge of these moral failures with their own personal disappointment over stilted spiritual growth, Christians have turned away from sermons as the primary source for bringing transformation. Believers now look to small groups, worship, and personal study to stimulate their growth. Christian educators have so forcefully contended for the merits of small group interaction and accountability that few people look for the preacher to be God's effective tool for bringing about life change. This disillusionment shows itself in people attending two small group meetings on Sunday and skipping the preaching service. It is evidenced in churches that have turned preaching into an evangelistic (or pre-evangelistic) forum for seekers. It is demonstrated in individuals who saunter into the church auditorium, plop in a back row seat, and hope to hear a good story or two over the next thirty minutes. I fear that even preachers themselves have bought into an erroneous conclusion that substantial real life change comes only in small groups or personal study rather than through a confrontation with God's truth in the sermon. The disillusionment with preaching demonstrates that I do not stand alone in my concern that preaching is not all it could or should be.

How do we respond to this realization that preaching frequently fails to achieve its desired effect? Certainly, we do not degrade small groups for their effectiveness; rather we applaud small groups and personal study as God's tools for making people more like His Son. Nor should we adopt a reductionistic argument that all Christian moral failures are immediately traceable to a failure in preaching, thus rendering preaching not viable. Discarding preaching is not an option for those who take the Bible seriously. Rather, the data beg for an inquiry into how sermons might better form in people the character qualities of Jesus. The purpose of this paper is to provide some new insight in this inquiry, insight provided from the theory of Cognitive Moral Development.

Purpose, Scope, and Orientation

Purpose

In light of the realization that preaching has failed to be optimally effective in inducing Christian spiritual development, this paper suggests how homileticians seeking to increase the transformative effectiveness of their expository sermons may utilize selected components of Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of Cognitive Moral Development. In walking this path, I travel a relatively silent road. While focusing on homiletics in a Th.M. program (1981-86), I never was exposed to Cognitive Moral Development (CMD) theory. Since that time my career as an educator in homiletics has provoked me to read current publications on preaching; yet, I do not recall ever seeing a book or article relating CMD to homiletics. A search of the

ATLA religious database at the time of writing this article shows not a single article or book on how preaching may be informed by CMD.[1] This is virtually an unexplored area; however, I believe that new insights from CMD can prove helpful to homileticians.

Scope and Orientation

I have chosen to limit the scope of the paper in several ways. First, the paper deals with expository preaching in the evangelical tradition. By that statement I mean to clarify that not all preaching is in view here, only that which takes seriously the Bible as God's revealed authoritative word and which attempts to interpret and explain the Scripture according to principles of historical, grammatical, and literary interpretation. Expository preaching takes many forms, but its heart is an attempt to communicate the meaning of the text as it was intended in its historical context and the implications for that meaning in today's world. While this paper touches on biblical and theological areas as needed, its focus is not a theological critique of preaching or of CMD.

Second, I am dealing with only one aspect of human development, the moral aspect. Other worthy areas such as cognitive development, psycho-social development, faith development, and religious development also may prove helpful in improving the effectiveness of expository preaching; however, they are not covered in this paper.

Third, within the field of moral development, this paper limits its discussion to the cognitive theory of moral development as initiated by Lawrence Kohlberg and advanced by his followers. Other aspects of moral development could also inform expository preaching, and they are worthy subjects of inquiry for another paper.[2] Here I will restrict the discussion to contributions from the Kohlberg tradition.

Readers also must understand that I do not intend to provide a comprehensive discussion of CMD. Others much more qualified than I have engaged in analysis and refinement of Kohlberg's theory.[3] Because I am writing for homileticians, I have selected those areas of the theory that most inform expository preaching. Those seeking critique of Kohlberg from philosophical, methodological, or theological perspectives will need to turn elsewhere[4]

The paper seeks to show how CMD theory will help homileticians in three areas: (1) CMD theory clarifies our goal of spiritual formation in expository preaching; (2) CMD theory encourages us to assess the level of spiritual formation for each person in our audience; and (3) CMD theory directs us to induce transitions to higher stages of spiritual formation through preaching. It is to the first area that I now turn.

Utilizing CMD Theory to Refine the Goal of Transformation

In the previous section, I suggested that expository preaching is not readily accomplishing its goal of spiritual formation in many people who listen to sermons each Sunday. In this section, I argue that one of the reasons for this failure may be that the goal itself needs sharpening. If that is true, then preachers may well gain insight from CMD theory in adding precision to the goal of spiritual transformation. Below, I begin by looking at the need for goal clarification, proceed to insights from CMD theory, and then conclude with applications and implications for expository preaching.

The Fuzzy Goal of Expository Preaching

Perhaps the most fundamental reason preachers do not hit their goal is because the goal of expository preaching often is not defined with sufficient precision. Evangelical homileticians agree that the goal of preaching has something to do with seeing people become more like Jesus Christ. Several years ago the Council on Biblical Exposition (COBE) defined exposition this way:

> Bible exposition is persuasively and urgently communicating the exact and full meaning of the text of Scripture in terms of contemporary culture, *with the specific goal of helping people understand and obey the truth of God* (emphasis added).

Another homiletician, Ramesh Richard, defines even more explicitly the responsibility of the expositor to work toward transformation:

> Expository preaching is the contemporization of the central proposition of a biblical text that is derived from proper methods of interpretation and declared through effective means of communication *to inform minds, instruct hearts, and influence behavior toward godliness* (emphasis added).[5]

These definitions are helpful in so far as they go, and I have required my own students to digest them and to memorize them. However, I do not think they go far enough. Are there some specifics about COBE's *helping people understand and obey the truth of God* and Richard's *influencing behavior toward godliness* that, though implicit, ought to be made explicit? I believe so. Without that specificity, the superior goal of transformation competes with several other admirable but subordinate aims that are more easily accomplished. Preachers may design sermons simply to teach biblical content. At other times, expositors develop presentations to help an audience cope with life in a more effective and positive fashion. On some occasions, the primary objective may simply be to keep peoples' interest for thirty-five minutes so they have a good experience in church. Yet, none of these subordinate objectives should keep preachers from their overall goal of spiritual transformation.

What do we mean by this fuzzy goal of spiritual transformation? Is it simply greater obedience to biblical commands? Certainly, obedience (moral behavior) is a vitally important element in transformation, and for many of the people who sit in the pew, greater outward obedience would be a remarkable achievement. However, outward obedience alone does not tell the whole story. We know that the move from Old Covenant to New Covenant placed a stronger explicit emphasis on the internal morality of people. We understand that Jesus emphasized the internal workings of the heart in His Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5) and in his dealing with the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Mt. 6). Yet seldom do homileticians think specifically about the internal changes that should occur through a sermon. Perhaps we hope that outward obedience reflects a prior change of heart. I suspect that expositors (including this one) too often settle for increasing outward obedience to Christ from our audience, hoping against odds that the improved outward obedience is a direct result of spiritual inward transformation. Or perhaps we are content to leave changes in the internal dimension to the work of the Spirit rather than to a strategy of the preacher.

In his stimulating article, "Preaching for a Change," Joseph Stowell III clarifies the transformative goal of preaching. Particularly relevant for my point is Stowell's emphasis on transformation in the mind of the listener. Notice his use of the words "think" and "reflect:"

> Effectiveness focuses on the intended results of preaching. The end game of God's Word is not just to make us smart or theologically astute but rather to effect change. It is about leading listeners to *change their minds and hearts*. To repent of sin. To relate to God and others more constructively. To grow in our capacity to reflect the reality of Christ in our lives. To *think* more clearly about him and who he is. To *think* more clearly about who we really are. (emphasis added)[6]

Stowell's emphasis on the cognitive elements of transformation points us in the right direction. Yet we still are left with questions about specific cognitive changes that ought to occur. To answer those questions, we turn to Cognitive Moral Development theory. In doing so, our discussion turns from the more subjective realm of theology to a more objective orientation in the empirical study of human development. By moving in this direction, I lay the groundwork for clarifying an otherwise fuzzy goal of preaching.

Insights from CMD Theory

For the purposes of this discussion, I focus on just three of the main tenets of CMD theory: (1) The isolation of reasoning from behavior and content; (2) the existence of qualitatively different stages of moral development; and (3) the idea that moral reasoning develops through life.

The Isolation of Moral Reasoning

Building on Developmental Theorist Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, Kohlberg initiated a study of the processes whereby, as children grow older, their cognitive structures change to accommodate different processes of moral reasoning. Theoretically, these reasoning processes can be isolated from any moral content (such as Biblical, Koranic, democratic, or otherwise) that may inform their workings. Further, the focus of his research is not on outward behavior, but on inward reasoning. CMD inquiry analyzes the different reasoning processes people use to form judgments about moral issues. In his survey of a wide spectrum of Kohlberg's writing, Chazan concludes the following concerning Kohlberg's isolation of form from content:

> Kohlberg's system clearly is not about the inculcation of specific behaviors or norms; he consistently rejects the notion of moral education as teaching a specific bag of virtues. Even in the late Kohlberg, where we find less attack on morality as specific contents and greater encouragement of the development of specific moral actions, the emphasis remains on the actions as exemplars of a style or procedure.[7]

Kohlberg does not argue that content and behavior are unimportant in the overall scheme of morality.[8] Rather his emphasis, and the important point for this paper, is that moral reasoning is distinct from content and behavior.

For those of us who focus on biblical content and behavior, such a distinction initially seems untenable. Yet upon further reflection, we intuitively realize the value of separating one's reasoning process from moral content and outward behavior. For example, suppose a father is assessing the behavior of his 5-year old daughter Sally and his 15-year old son John. Both children have just responded to their mother with proper respect in their tone of voice. But they have done so for entirely different reasons. Sally responded properly with the hopes that she would get a cookie; Johnny because he is convinced it is his duty to honor his parents in this manner. If Johnny had used Sally's reasoning, our hypothetical father may not be very pleased, for he senses that the older child is capable of more mature moral reasoning. It is this facet of moral reasoning (as distinguished from moral content or behavior) that Kohlberg isolates in his research.

Qualitatively Different Stages

Kohlberg's theory takes shape around three levels of cognitive moral development, the Preconventional, the Conventional, and the Postconventional (Fig. 1).

Level	Basis for Reasoning
III. Postconventional	Moral value resides in conformity of the self to shared/sharable standards, rights, or duties.
II. Conventional	Moral value resides in maintaining the conventional order and the expectations of others.
I. Preconventional	Moral value resides in external forces rather than in persons and standards.

Fig. 1 - Three Levels of Moral Reasoning

Individuals in the Preconventional level reason from the perspective that morally correct choices are the demands of an external law or person. Making the right decision is motivated by desires to avoid punishment or satisfy one's own interests, not the conventional interests of society. At the Conventional level, people move beyond a self-interest orientation and to a concern about the conventions of their society. Pleasing other people, keeping the authorities happy, and keeping the institution working become primary motivations for making morally correct judgments. Some people develop beyond this concern for conventions of society to the more principled reasoning process of the Postconventional stages. In these stages, people internalize principles and become more others-focused. The individual makes autonomous judgments to adopt universal principles of justice and equality.[9]

Kohlberg's research led him to subdivide each level into two stages that discriminate reasoning within the level (Fig. 2). He observed that as children develop, they move in succession from one stage to another, exhibiting distinct patterns of moral reasoning at each stage. This is not to imply that everyone achieves Stage 6 reasoning. Research reveals that a majority do not go past Stage 4.

Level	Stage	Reasoning for Doing Right
III. Postconventional (Ages 13 to young adult)	6 - Universal Ethical Principles	Personal commitment to moral principles believed to be universal. Following self-chosen ethical principles.
	5 - Social Contracts & Individual Rights	A feeling of contractual commitment, freely entered upon, to family, friendship, trust, and work obligations.
II. Conventional (Ages 10 to 13)	4 - Social System & Conscience	To avoid the breakdown of the system "if everyone did it." Desire to keep institution going.
	3 - Interpersonal Conformity	Belief in the Golden Rule. Desire to live up to the expectations of others.
I. Preconventional (Ages 4 to 10)	2 - Individualism	To serve one's own interest even when others competing interests exist. Get what is fair.
	1 - Heteronomous, Morality	Keep rules to avoid punishment and consequences.

Fig. 2 - Six Stages of CMD Theory

For the purpose of this paper, the details of each stage are not critical. Rather, more important is the overall concept that each stage features a perspective on moral decision-making that is qualitatively different from the next stage. The quality of decision-making or the perspective of people is distinct in each stage. Every person locates most of their decisions at some particular stage of development, and that stage is linked to the individual's cognitive structures. Obviously, this also means that not everyone is at the same stage at the same time.

Development of Moral Reasoning

Kohlberg's research demonstrated that as people grow from birth to adulthood and their cognitive structures develop, they also move successively to higher stages of moral development. Conceptually this involves a change from a heteronomous perspective in which there is a unilateral respect for authority to an autonomous perspective in which internalized moral principles motivate judgments. Thus the move is from an external authority base to a more profound internal base, with a new view of self developing at each stage.

I will examine the mechanics of stage transition in CMD later in the paper. First, I turn again to the goal of expository preaching. From the preceding cursory summary of levels of moral reasoning, I will surface insights to aid in clarifying the meaning of spiritual transformation.

Applications and Implications for Expository Preaching

Kohlberg's theory provides homileticians with an empirical basis for defining transformation not just in terms of inculcating more doctrine, and not just in terms of external obedience, but with a realization of the dynamics of cognitive moral development. Spiritual formation, while not completely explained by the theory, benefits from this emphasis on increasingly higher moral reasoning. In spiritual transformation, we seek a renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:2), a renewal in which the mind not only prefers biblical content but also utilizes more principled and internalized reasoning processes.[10] Intuitively we understand that people who reason by these internalized principles are more likely to stand in the trials of their faith than those people who reason at a lower level. Further, the Bible itself provides a basis for encouraging development of moral reasoning.

Biblical Support

Kohlberg's theory accords well with biblical data. For example, twice in Romans 13 Paul's arguments seem to support the logic of higher stages of reasoning similar to that presented in CMD theory. In the first discussion, he urged readers to be in subjection to the governing authorities. In the conclusion to his argument, he stated three motivations for obedience, and each motivation easily could be viewed in terms of Kohlberg's stages. The Apostle writes as follows:

> Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities. . . . For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong . . . But if you do wrong, be afraid . . . He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Wherefore, it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake (Rom. 13:1-5).

In these verses, Paul has referred (1) to avoiding the wrath of government authorities - a Stage 1 sort of reason, (2) to avoiding the wrath of God - a higher stage of reasoning, and (3) to conscience maintenance - perhaps a Stage 5 or 6 reason. While any of the reasons might be sufficient to motivate the proper behavior of submission to authorities, the first reason is not as strong (high) as the last. A person who submits only out of fear for government authorities is likely to break the law if he thinks his crime will go undetected. "Perhaps I won't get caught," he reasons. But the person who reasons on the basis of conscience, will always have the presence of that conscience to haunt him with guilt or commend him with innocence. Obviously, that reason will endure through any sort of situation involving submission to governmental authority.

Later in the chapter, Paul used another multi-reason motivation for why readers should refrain from adultery, murder, stealing, and coveting. His first rationale is that such restraint is summed up in the saying (not law), "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Rom. 13:9). Then he added a second moral reason: This is fulfillment of the law. For a third rationale, he stated that this love should be done because of the principle that "salvation is nearer than when we believed." In CMD terms, we might see each of these reasons directed toward people who have different moral reasoning processes, one based on external law (Mosaic Law), one based on social contract (the saying), and one based on internalized universal Christian principle (salvation drawing near). All three reasons are valid for motivating the right behavior, but the third reason is most valuable because it is a principle that has a universal reach and an internal orientation. The point here is not that the Apostle had CMD theory in his mind, but that the concept of distinct stages of moral development is not alien to how the Bible presents some of its arguments. In each of these two cases, the order of Paul's progression may also support Kohlberg's concept that lower stages are more external authority-based and higher (more desirable) stages involve internal principles.[11]

A Clarified Goal

If expositors accept Kohlberg's theoretical constructs concerning the distinction between behavior and reasoning, concerning the idea of qualitatively different stages, and concerning development from lower heteronomous stages to higher principled stages, what is the impact on the goal of expository preaching? I suggest that spiritual transformation always be conceived in terms of both internal reasoning and external behavior. Spiritual transformation, then, is the Spirit-induced change[12] that causes people to become increasingly more like Christ both internally and externally - inwardly with attitudes, motivations, and reasoning, and outwardly in the observable application of God's principles. Thus, the goal of expository preaching is to work toward effecting this kind of transformation – a transformation that includes the moral reasoning structures of those who hear the Word

of God. By striving for higher levels of moral reasoning in their congregants, preachers may find that morally correct behavior is more consistently engaged, even as testing situations become increasingly difficult for their people.

Implications

If expositors accept this sort of definition of transformation, they can embrace the benefits of empirical CMD research. For the last twenty-four years, research has been quantifying how Christians are not progressing to higher stages of moral reasoning. Stoop's research (1979) of high school students revealed that conservative Christian education accelerates students to Stage 4 and then stalls there.[13] Could it be that sermons in the church were not inducing further development in these students? Citing eleven different CMD research projects performed between 1976 and 1988, Dirks summarized the gloomy findings:

> Most studies . . . have observed inverse relationships between conservative Christianity and moral reasoning.... When the scores of evangelical students are compared with those of nonevangelical and non-Christian students, the frequency of principled reasoning among evangelicals is noticeably lower.[14]

Expositors should be alarmed that their suspicions about ineffectiveness in inducing transformation have been confirmed and quantified with CMD research. But the purpose of this paper is not just to sound the alarm. Fortunately, there is more to CMD theory that is of benefit to homileticians, and I now turn to insights that can be applied to audience analysis.

A New Perspective: Utilizing CMD Theory in Audience Analysis

CMD research indicates that every person takes on distinct perspectives in regard to making moral judgments, and that these perspectives change throughout life. With this realization, a thoughtful expositor views the audience not as a homogeneous set of minds to be filled with the same content, but as a heterogeneous collection of moral philosophers, all grappling to understand the world according to their individual structural stages. In her discussion of the patterns of moral development, Stonehouse states this perspective clearly:

> The human mind is not an empty box which admits more and more information. The human mind is active. It works with and organizes the information which it receives. The result of this organizing is a certain perspective or way of looking at things and making judgments. The mind is not a mirror which passively and accurately reflects the outside world. The mind is more like an artist who paints a picture of his interpretation of what he sees.[15]

On the one hand, expositors taking this perspective of an audience will have greater respect and empathy for the listeners. Such an expositor, recognizing that people are developing their moral reasoning, may be more sympathetic to the long difficult struggle of sanctification that is in process. On the other hand, an expositor with this CMD perspective recognizes that every idea conveyed in the sermon is "painted" onto the canvas of a listener's mind from one of several different moral perspectives. Unless a speaker makes clear and explicit the desired moral reasoning, each listener will interpret the moral issues from their own perspective and apply their own reasoning processes.

Perhaps an example will clarify the point. Suppose an expositor is standing at the door to an auditorium, welcoming people as they enter. As they shake the pastor's hand, several people refer to the previous week's sermon about not stealing. Responses are as follows:

#1 "Thanks for the sermon last week. I didn't steal because I knew I'd never get away with it. The police would catch me and throw me in jail."

#2 "Thanks for the sermon last week. It kept me from stealing that rich old lady's money. I would have done it, but I was afraid I might hurt her too much by pushing her down and grabbing her purse."

#3 "Thanks for the sermon last week. I chose not to steal the money because I know I'd feel bad if someone did that to me."

#4 "Thanks for the sermon last week. It kept me from stealing the money because it made me realize that if everyone acted that way, no one could be trusted. That is not the sort of society we should have."

#5 "Thanks for the sermon last week. In some ways I felt I could justify stealing that money. But I decided not to do it because of the testimony of our church. I didn't want to jeopardize my relationship with everyone here by causing a public spectacle."

#6 "Thanks for the sermon last week. I resisted temptation to steal money because my life principle is to glorify God and meet Him with unstained hands in a future day."

Once the expositor recovered from the shock of having so many comments about last week's sermon, how might he respond? A person with no knowledge of CMD might be equally impressed with each response. Perhaps he would think that this sermon was crafted particularly well since so many people exhibited proper behavior. However, an expositor familiar with CMD theory may evaluate the responses quite differently. He would recognize that each person was speaking from a successively higher stage of moral development. These people are not equally mature,

even though they exhibited the same behavior. In fact, the expositor may be particularly concerned abut people making the first three responses, recognizing that these parishioners are in danger of compromising their moral behavior if the opportunity for stealing works more in their favor. If the first respondent was 5 years old and each subsequent reply came from someone 5-7 years beyond the previous, the homiletician might not be too concerned, for he realizes that cognitive structures are still maturing in these people. However, if all the respondents were age 25 and higher, our CMD-informed expositor may decide to preach another sermon against stealing next week!

The value of CMD theory in audience analysis is that an expositor will better understand the listeners. This understanding brings insight in sermon preparation as well as in evaluation. Compared to a preacher without CMD knowledge, a homiletician informed by the theory is more likely to verify that people are not only doing the right thing (moral behavior), but that they are doing the right thing for the highest reasons (moral judgment).

Implication for Sermon Design

Having analyzed an audience from the perspective of CMD theory, what will be the impact on the expositor's sermon design? This discussion serves to reinforce that sermon clarity and specificity must extend to the level of moral reasoning. There may be times when an expositor finds it valuable to give several reasons from all three levels (Preconventional, Conventional, and Postconventional) to make certain that people at each stage have a reason they can grasp. More important is that moral reasoning at the upper two levels always be explicit for listeners.

What happens if expositors simply preach good biblical doctrine and fail to make moral reasoning explicit? Wolf's finding was that religious educators who deliver morally correct content without explicit reasoning, not only fail to improve moral development, but negatively affect moral development. Such education is counterproductive. His conclusion calls educators to develop methods of instruction that impact moral reasoning rather than simply introject moral content into people:

> [I]t appears that the problem is not in the content of religious or moral education, but rather, it is in the method of teaching religious and moral values which has not changed since . . . the late twenties, and as such, the content of religious education has been in the form of introjected values. . . . The message to those who work in religious education is, prepare every student to be one who searches and knows for himself and does not leave his own introjected values unexamined.[16]

The same message applies to homileticians. Prepare every listener to be one who

searches and knows for himself; in other words, make moral reasoning explicit. Simply providing the right thing to do (moral content) without the moral reasons for doing it may well be counter-productive.

Stage Transitions and Sermon Design

In the previous pages, I have highlighted a few basic tenets of Kohlberg's Cognitive Moral Development theory and shown how those tenets can be of benefit to the homiletician, both in clarifying the goal of expository preaching and in analyzing the audience. Up to this point, I have not mentioned how people move from one stage to the next. I turn to that subject now in an attempt to demonstrate additional benefits of CMD for the homiletician. I begin by surfacing principal ideas from the theory and then show several ways that this knowledge can be applied to the preaching endeavor.

Stage Transitions in Cognitive Moral Development

How does the human mind respond to new information? Developmental theorist Jean Piaget answered that question with the concepts of assimilation and accommodation. When the mind is confronted with new information, it actively attempts to organize the data into existing cognitive structures. If it is able to achieve this acceptance of data without too much difficulty, it does so. The information may be altered in some ways to fit into the existing structures, but the mind will assimilate it. On the other hand, other new information does not fit well into existing categories. The mind attempts to assimilate it, but the amount of distortion that will occur to the information is deemed unacceptable. In short, the mind experiences a state of disequilibrium, a dissonance that requires relief. Relief comes in the form of accommodating the information with newly organized cognitive structures. This reorganization of cognitive structures is dependent on interaction with the environment.

With this concept as a background, Kohlberg theorized that moral development proceeds along similar lines and depends on interpersonal and social experiences, including role-taking. In moral development, structures of the mind carry on a dialogue with structures of the environment.[17] To stimulate this dialogue, and thereby moral development, educators can enhance moral reasoning through moral discussions, discussions that focus on solving dilemmas. Kohlberg's theory rests heavily on the use of moral dilemmas, both for measuring moral development and for stimulating it.

Research from Rest and from Turiel has shown that people prefer to be exposed to reasoning that is one stage above their predominant stage of moral reasoning.[18] This serves to pull reasoning upward. However, if reasoning is presented two stages above the predominant stage, it is indecipherable and rejected.

One of the aids to exposing people to dilemmas and diverse reasoning is through interaction with socially expanded perspectives. Kohlberg felt that increasing social stimulation had a direct impact on moral development:

> Participation in various groups . . . [stimulates] development. . . . Various people and groups . . . [stimulate] general moral development. . . . The more the social stimulation, the faster the rate of moral development.[19]

Briefly, moral development occurs as cognitive moral structures are newly organized to accommodate more autonomous forms of reasoning to solve moral dilemmas. This accommodation is stimulated by social interaction with peers and others from varying perspectives who encourage different role playing for the individual and encourage upward development. With these ideas in the foreground, I now turn to show how they may be utilized by homileticians.

Application of Stage Transition Theory to Expository Preaching

How can homileticians use Kohlberg's theory to stimulate moral development from the pulpit? Here we examine how three of Kohlberg's findings work for the benefit of expository preachers: Crafting moral dilemmas, Crafting interactive sermons, and Utilizing diverse sermons.

Crafting Moral Dilemmas

CMD theory offers an important explanation for the cause of insufficient moral development. Development fails because biblical ideas simply are being assimilated rather than accommodated by the audience. Preachers concerned about stimulating moral development therefore must strive for a response of accommodation; they seek in their listeners reorganization of cognitive structures so that new patterns of moral reasoning can occur.[20] How is that accomplished?

Kohlberg's theory informs homileticians that the best way to stimulate development is by creating moral dilemmas or crises with which the listener can interact. Creating dilemmas requires careful planning and a confrontational but loving form of sermon. In rhetorical terms, such sermons are crafted with sensitivity to dissonance and its resolution.

CMD research indicated that real-life dilemmas are more effective than hypothetical situations. In "Preaching for a Change," Joseph Stowell III provides valuable insights for locating and constructing such real-life dilemmas.[21] He notes that preachers must survey the personal context, the local context, and the universal context for situations with which the listener will interact. Investigating the universal context may prove most fruitful because the great dilemmas of life are found

there. Stowell lists the following: Temporalism vs. Living in View of Eternity, Materialism vs. Living with Spiritual Priorities, Tolerance/Relativism vs. Absolutism, Sensualism vs. Self-control, Hedonism vs. Pleasing God, and Self-centeredness vs. Self-sacrificing. A homiletician must always be scanning for ways that the Biblical text challenges these different points of moral dilemma.

Perhaps the best way for a preacher to keep dilemma in front of the audience is through strategic use of narrative. Story engages listeners and places them inside the dilemma, forcing them to be involved in role taking. Narratives can be from a third person account, or they can take the form of a first person dramatic monologue, a form I personally have found effective. Another option is to introduce the sermon topic with a contemporary situation mini-drama, as is done in many seeker service formats. In any of these forms, a preacher can draw the audience into different issues of moral reasoning and stretch listeners toward higher moral stage levels.[22]

From Kohlberg's theory, homileticians gain a fresh motivation to utilize moral dilemmas to press for accommodation. However, the expositor must try to calculate the optimum amount of dilemma that a listener can process. If too much moral stress builds up, the message will be rejected completely or sufficiently altered to render it untrue.[23] At the other end of the spectrum, an expositor must avoid presenting too little dilemma, particularly through communicating a simplistic authoritarian perspective that squelches moral reasoning. The worst thing a preacher can do for developing moral judgment is to communicate, "God said it; I believe it; That settles it!" Such a statement seems to communicate an admirable attitude of simple faith and submission to the Word. Yet, on further analysis, homileticians recognize that such a statement does nothing to stimulate the mind of a believer. Further, if the research is correct, consistent communication of this idea may well inculcate biblical values at the expense of all moral development, creating a fragile Christian who is unable to stand in the winds of opposition.

Crafting Interactive Sermons

I previously explained CMD's contention that interaction between the individual and the social environment stimulates moral development. This tenet also has importance for expository preaching. The homiletician should seek to develop a preaching atmosphere that is interactive. Whether this interaction is verbal or not, it must be intellectual. In other words, the mind of the listener interacts with the mind of the preacher in an ongoing mental conversation.

How is it possible to develop such an interactive mode in a sermon? In the language of the rhetorician, the answer to this question deals with a speaker's *presence*, the audience's sense that a speaker is interacting with them intimately as individuals, not remotely as a project. A preacher with presence engages the minds of lis-

teners to create a "silent dialogue" between himself and the audience.

To accomplish this, a homiletician must predict, as much as possible, the kinds of reactions that may leap from the mind of the listener. With careful pre-sermon audience analysis, an expositor may hypothesize the most likely objections, emotions, and points of confusion that will develop in the course of a sermon presentation. With this knowledge, an expositor capitalizes on these objections, emotions, confusion points, etc., to heighten interaction.

A second method for making a sermon interactive is to engage the audience with rhetorical questions and extended pauses during which people can think and reflect. (Sermons full of sound and fury seldom engage much intellectual moral dialogue.) Homileticians who appreciate this sort of interaction may well opt to give the audience a moment of contemplation instead of another mountain of information. Such a dialogue will be evidenced by nods, groans, chuckles, sighs, etc. from the audience as they wrestle with dilemmas posed by the preacher. Borrowing from the language of critical pedagogy, I suggest that the sermon is a site of struggle, not of the political nature but of the moral kind.

Along similar lines, an interactive environment is stimulated by an atmosphere of receptive freedom as opposed to exclusive autocracy. A speaker who presents himself as a co-learner rather than as an authority or a technician of the text, will invite inquiry to the threatening territory characteristic of higher levels of moral reasoning. Additionally, interaction can be designed into the church program by including time for post-sermon verbal interaction. This may occur in the same service immediately following the message, in another room as a discussion group, or even on another day as a review and discussion. According to CMD theory and research data, these forms of peer interaction would stimulate moral development.

Utilizing Diverse Sermons

There remains a final application of CMD theory as it relates to stage transition. CMD research indicates that people with exposure to broader social input and more diverse moral rationale, are more likely to advance into higher stages of moral development. This implies that the local church congregation also must be exposed to greater breadth and diversity. This can be accomplished by scheduling guest preachers who are from a different ethnic group, a different culture, a different socio-economic class, or a different theological persuasion. Another source of diversity are missionaries connected with the church. In failing to schedule cross-cultural missionaries as preachers, churches may be missing a great source for insight from a broader perspective. To develop moral reasoning, people need to hear other preachers who will stimulate their moral reasoning from new perspectives. Further, expository preachers themselves must prepare sermons that expose people

to a broad range of ideas. Their own sermon preparation must include research from diverse perspectives. Moral dilemmas and interaction will be strengthened as homileticians challenge listeners from perspectives that are new, fresh, and stimulating.

Concluding Remarks

Much more could be written about how homileticians can utilize elements of Kohlebrg's theory of Cognitive Moral Development.[24] However, this paper has revealed how even basic understanding of the rudiments of CMD can provide benefits for the processes if preparing and delivering expository sermons. Specifically, preachers (1) can target spiritual transformation that clearly displays higher levels of moral reasoning as well as higher levels of external moral behavior, (2) can engage in more informed audience analysis that leads to addressing moral reasoning at various levels, and (3) can design and deliver sermons that stimulate moral development with interactive moral dilemmas. These dilemmas are particularly effective when preachers employ narrative and engage broad perspectives.

In this paper I have attempted to explain my conviction that while the preacher is a bridge builder from text to audience, while he is a counselor to provide guidance for people's behavior, while he is a prophet to proclaim the light of God in a dark place, he is more than all of these. Perhaps a more comprehensive metaphor is the preacher as a *transformative proclaimer*. To bear that mantle requires a commitment to transformative strategy, a strategy that can be aided by the research of the CMD field.

For a preacher to function as a transformative proclaimer, he must make a great commitment to the preaching task. It is a commitment to hard work and concentration. Yet, as Stowell writes, any other sort of preaching falls short of God's intention:

> Preaching to convey information is predictable and unthreatening. Preaching to effect transformation is hard work and risky business. Yet that is the whole point of preaching. An effective sermon is measured not by polished technique but by the ability of the preacher to connect the Word to the reality of the listener's life. Preachers and sermons can be funny, entertaining, intriguing, intellectually stimulating, controversial, full of impressive theological and doctrinal footpaths, and authoritative. But if ultimately the outcome does not result in a *changed life* because of an encounter with truth, then it has not been what God intended preaching to be (emphasis added).[25]

We must settle for no less than a life that is changed both in external behavior and in inward moral reasoning.

Notes

1. A search ("moral development" and [preaching or homiletics]) of the massive WorldCat database revealed only two books that might touch on the relationship between Kohlberg's theory and preaching. One of these books centered on "liberal preaching." My study seems to be entering uncharted waters.
2. A valid question at this point is why choose Kohlberg's theory rather than another element of moral development as a focus of study. Obviously, I feel that his theory of CMD does make contributions that can benefit homileticians. Further, Lawrence Kohlberg is the initiator of a theory that has spawned voluminous research and publications over the last twenty years.
   For an affirmation of Kohlberg's importance see Barry Chazan, *Contemporary Approaches to Moral Education: Analyzing Alternative Theories.* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1985) p. 68, and William Kurtines and Joacob Gewirts (ed.). *Moral Development. An Introduction.* (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1995), 17.
3. Although now dated, Stoop's Ph.D. dissertation from the University of Southern California, 1979, "The Relation Between Religious Education and the Process of Maturity Through the Developmental States of Moral Judgments" provides a brief but helpful review of the early literature around Kohlberg's theory.
4. For a list of articles that have issue with Kohlberg on various elements of his theory, see Dennis Dirks, "Moral Development in Christian Higher Education," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 16:04:324-331.
   Recent critiques (not mentioned by Dirks) have focused on the inability of CMD scores and DIT scores to predict behavior (Donald Robin, Gus Gordon, and Charles Jordan, "The Empirical Performance of Cognitive Moral Development in Predicting Behavioral Intent," *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 6:493-515) and on the unwillingness of Kohlberg to admit stage regression in the face of philosophical and empirical evidence (Geoffrey Partington, "Cultural Invariance and the Denial of Moral Regression: A Critique of Piaget and Kohlberg," *International Journal of Social Education*, 11:105-119).
5. Ramesh Richard, *Scripture Sculpture: A Do-It-Yourself manual for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 17.
6. Joseph Stowell III, "Preaching for Change" *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching.* Keith Willhite and Scott M. Gibson, ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 126.
   Those already familiar with Kohlberg's framework, may see in Stowell's statement a leading toward the post-conventional level.
7. Barry Chazan, *Contemporary Approaches to Moral Education: Analyzing Alternative Theories.* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1985), 81.
   While I agree with Chazan's statement, I observe, with many others, that Kohlberg lives in a tension over the distinction between form and content. His empirical side seeks the division. But the philosophy of moral inquiry doesn't really permit it. Kohlberg's use of justice seems to accept a moral content, especially at the higher stages. From a philosophical standpoint, it may not be tenable in any meaningful way to conceive of form without content. (See the following note.)
8. Kohlberg actually believed that philosophically he was dealing with moral behavior because people at higher levels of moral development would act in congruence with their reasoning. "[T]he Platonic-Kohlbergian approach does not assume that its emphasis on moral deliberation is at the expense of moral action; instead, it is an emphasis on both moral deliberation and action"
9. Because of the purpose of this paper, I have been intentionally brief here. For fuller discussions of the levels and stages, see Lawrence Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development. Vol. 2: The Psychology of Moral Development.* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), 174-176; William Kurtines and Joacob Gewirts (ed.). *Moral Development. An Introduction.* (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1995), 31-36 and Dennis H. Dirks, "Moral and Faith Development," *Foundations of Ministry: An Introduction to Christian Education for a New Generation.* Michael J. Anthony, ed., (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1992), 123.
10. I am carefully avoiding Kohlberg's language of autonomy out of concern that it may imply an unbiblical attitude of self-reliance. The emphasis on moving away from external heteronomy of lower stages is a good one. But what does the Christian move toward? In a strictly logical sense, the semantic antonym to heteronomy may well be autonomy. But that term may work against the Bible's emphasis of submission of self. I prefer to say that, at the highest stages, a person lives by deepening internal conviction that brings greater submission to the rule of Christ in a person's life. (Perhaps I am substituting Kohlberg's value of justice with a more comprehensive value of submission to Christ.) I choose this wording recognizing that I may thereby blur the distinction between the highest stages of moral and religious development (per Oser), a blurring that may be inevitable.
11. While it is beyond the scope of this paper, I believe that a good case can be made for seeing certain Bible personalities living with a Stage 6 perspective. When Abraham obeyed the Lord's command to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22), he demonstrated a personal commitment to a universal moral principle of obeying a direct command from God regardless of the moral dilemma he perceived and the consequences. Job, likewise, at least initially, defied the lower level reasoning of his wife and friends in order to live by his principle that God would not unjustly condemn the righteous. (As time went on, he regressed to a lower reasoning and accused

God of injustice.) Finally, Daniel repeatedly faced dilemmas with respect to Babylonian law, but he solved the dilemmas based on internalized principles of showing allegiance to Yahweh in every situation.

12. If the natural man develops morally (and cognitively, religiously, and faith-wise) according to natural processes, and if sermons are humanly designed to stimulate the growth, it is fair to ask, "What is the role of the Spirit in all this?" I take it that the unique role of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life is to implant and grow faith that enables individuals to accept biblical morality as content. All fully capable human beings seem to develop faith, religious judgment, and moral judgment. But only the regenerate can submit to the true God and His principles to fill those structures. The natural man thus can understand (in the general sense of the word) biblical data; yet, only believers are supernaturally empowered to submit to it.
13. Stoop.
14. Dirks, 326.
15. Catherine M. Stonehouse, *Patterns in Moral Development.* (Waco: Word, 1980), 14.
16. Richard Wolf, "A Study of the Relationship between Religious Education, Religious Experience, Maturity, and Moral Development." Ph.D. dissertation, School of Education, Health, Nursing, and Arts Professions, New York University, 1979. 96-98.
17. Kohlberg, 57.
18. Iordanis Kavathatzopoulos, "Instruction and the Development of Moral Judgment." Ph.D. dissertation. Uppsala University, 1988. 20.
19. Kohlberg, 74,78.
20. This is not to say that every sermon must pursue accommodation of new ideas or moral reasoning. Rather, certain occasions (determined by audience, text, etc.) call for a strategy of assimilation, that is, the constructing of a sermon designed more for assimilation than for accommodation. Such sermons are not going to shake categories with new truth or new reasoning, rather, these sermons are designed to reinforce existing cognitive structures. Perhaps this is equivalent to strengthening conviction. Such sermons proclaim, "Having believed this truth, you must believe it more deeply and passionately in the depths of your soul." While there may be assimilation in the cognitive realm, there could be accommodation of more intensity in the affective realm.

    This type of sermon helps guard against moral regression to lower stages of reasoning. Partington defended this idea in his analysis:

    > If my claim is right that moral regression from a higher to a lower stage in Piagetian or Kohlbergian terms, far from being impossible, is a common process, educators will need to consider if and how it would be possible to safeguard against regression, as well as to stimulate cognitive moral development. This effort is likely to be successful only if there is an additional strong inculcation of good moral habits, along Aristotelian, Judeo-Christian, or other lines.

    Despite disagreeing with Partington's use of the word inculcation, I agree that sermons can guard against moral regression. I understand inculcation, like indoctrination, to mean that values are thrust upon the listener in an authoritarian fashion without moral reasoning being made explicit. However, I contend that a sermon designed for assimilation is not necessarily an inculcation. Rather, sermons designed for assimilation should reinforce existing moral reasoning by making that reasoning explicit. The habituation to which Partington refers should be a habituation of moral reasoning that leads to habitual behavior.
21. Stowell, 135-139.
22. Current research in this area lists a couple of other benefits of using narrative to create dilemmas. While they write from a postmodern perspective in *Narrative and Storytelling: Implications for Understanding Moral Development*, Mark B. Tappan and Martin J. Packer explain how use of story can help listeners reconstruct their own new personal story, one where they develop a new self with a higher form of moral reasoning. On a different line of analysis, Hoffman demonstrated that moral development is motivated by empathy, and narrative is an effective means of creating empathy in the listener.
23. Partington, 105-119.
24. I have chosen to leave out of this discussion the ways that CMD may affect the preacher's personal development. The preacher should be reaching for the highest stages of moral development in his own life. Several ideas related to this could be explored. A preacher at high levels of moral reasoning provides himself with more moral credibility before the audience, a non-cognitive factor in stimulating moral development. Further, as the preacher reaches higher development, he is able to stimulate his audience with broader perspectives in moral reasoning. Additionally, a preacher extending to higher levels of reasoning likely will engage in a more thorough exegesis of the text. Specifically, the text can be read from the perspective of people at different stages and by determining if the characters in the text are operating at different moral stages or stage transitions.
25. Stowell, 125.

(editor's note: Victor D. Anderson is a theological educator with SIM in Ethiopia.)

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To Make God Come Down

by Bryan Chapell

Scripture: Luke 17: 1-17
Introduction

"Mom on strike." That was the sign 36-year-old Michelle Triebow of Belleville, Illinois put in her yard. Tired of the whining, back talk and lack of cooperation from her family, this young mother went on strike. She put the sign in the front yard and moved out of the house ... into the tree house in the back yard. From there she vowed not to come down until things had changed.

Some local television reporters picked up the story and interviewed Michelle. But what I found just as interesting as her comments was what her husband said when he was interviewed. He said, "I have the kids doing their chores again. And, I've told them to cool it with the sarcasm. We are trying to make amends and do whatever we can to get her to come down."

On a human level, the husband's remarks make perfect sense. When we have had a problem with someone, failed to meet their expectations, or caused their upset, we typically resolve to make amends. This perfectly reasonable human response runs us into trouble, however, when we try to approach God this way. When we know we have failed or frustrated him, we long to make amends. We do not want God to be on strike. We long for him to come down from whatever "tree house" of heaven he occupies and re-enter our lives with his care, power and blessing. But what will cause this? How can we make God come down when his standards are so high?

To get a view of how high his standards are you have only to glance at the opening verses of this chapter. First, Jesus tells his disciples that they must cause no sin (see verses 1-3a). Next, he says they must confront others' sin (see verse 3b). Finally, he says that they must be willing to forgive any sin (see verses 3c-4). These really are high standards.

The disciples know that the standards that Jesus has outlined are high - so high as to be unreachable. In response to his statement of standards they say, "Increase our faith" (verse 5), which is just kind of a sanctified way of saying, "You are going to have to help us out here, Lord, if these really are your expectations."

Jesus responds to the disciples by indicating that they are correct in assuming the power that will be required to serve him is a matter of faith. He says, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you" (verse 6). Yes, the power of God does come down as a result of faith. But faith in what? The parable and account that follow are designed to tell us what will move God to act in our behalf.

I. The Motive of God's Goodness.

What will move God to favor his people with his power and his presence? Jesus begins to explain by annulling some all too common misconceptions. His parable tells us that...

- God is not moved by the deeds that we do.

The parable used to explain biblical truth troubles us. The master that Jesus uses to represent his own attitude seems so unsympathetic. Not only does the master not invite the servant who has worked all day to his table, Jesus also says the master owes the servant no thanks. In fact, Jesus says of the servant, as well as of his followers, that even when we have done all that we should do, we should still say, "We are unworthy servants, we have only done our duty" (verse 10).

Perhaps these harsh-seeming words will make more sense when we transfer the parable to a more modern setting. Imagine that you were to go into a restaurant and be served by a waitress who had been working hard all day. Even if you were to acknowledge that she was doing a good job and had a right to be weary, you would still be surprised if along with your meal she were to bring an extra plate and chair to your table. You would be further amazed if she then sat down to dine with you. Her serving you well would not be reason enough for her to think that she had earned a place at your table. She was simply doing her job, her duty, and that would not make her suddenly worthy of joining your family.

This far-fetched example is actually not quite as bizarre as the point that Jesus is making in the context of Jesus' culture. At that time, being invited to a nobleman's table was a high honor ... tantamount to having the privileges of the man's own household. A more accurate modern analogy (than the restaurant example) would result from considering your reaction to a Realtor, who after arranging the purchase of your home, thinks he has a right to move in. Imagine the scene: Your moving van has just unloaded your furniture into your new home, and suddenly another moving van pulls into the driveway. In the passenger seat of the second van is your Realtor. You ask the Realtor, "What are you doing?" Imagine what your response would be if he were to say, "Well, I helped you buy this home, so now I am moving in," You would reply, "Now, wait a minute. You were just doing your duty, and that does not earn you the right to my house." Jesus is saying something very sim-

ilar to his disciples and to us: "Simply because you have done your duty does not give you a right to the household of heaven."

Though these modern analogies may help us make more sense of his words, Jesus does not intend to give any less offense to his listeners in his parable. Remember Jesus is speaking - not to the Pharisees - but to his own disciples. His words turn them from ever considering their obedience, however great its measure or duration, as ever qualifying them for heaven's household or making them worthy of divine acceptance. The same message applies to us. Our efforts before God will never earn us entry into his kingdom or require the favor of his heart. However much we may want - or feel the need - to trophy our good works in order to merit God's acceptance, our accomplishments remain incapable of obligating his approval of us.

A few weeks ago, I visited in the home of a pastor who had various large game trophies from Africa displayed around his home: a zebra skin, an antelope hide, the foot of a great elephant turned into a sitting stool. All the trophies were very impressive, and I asked him to tell the origin. The pastor began to explain where each animal was taken, but then, even as he was speaking, it became obvious that he also was sensing the hidden questions that were on my and other guests' minds. We were thinking, "Aren't these endangered species? Though these are impressive large game trophies, isn't there something inherently wrong in displaying them?" Sensing our questions (which he had probably answered for many previous guests), the pastor offered qualifications for each of the trophies he presented. He said, "These animals were shot before they were rare, before there were restrictions upon such hunting, and I personally did not shoot them. My father-in-law did." In effect, the pastor was forced to apologize for the very trophies that he displayed.

This parable forces us to do the same. Though we may want to display the trophies of our righteousness, obedience and stewardship, we are forced to recognize that there is not sufficient goodness in anything we do to require God to move in our behalf. Initially, this is not a pleasant discovery. We want to be able to compel God to honor us by comparing our goodness to the actions of others. Innately we who think that we have achieved more, consider ourselves more deserving of divine favors. Thus, when we find that we cannot trophy our good works without qualification, we become frustrated for two reasons: we discover we have lost our basis of comparison with others, and we have lost our basis of leverage with God.

For these reasons we can well identify with Luther, that "rising up from works of righteousness" to belief in grace "is an exceedingly bitter thing" because it robs us of all cause for pride in self and all basis for control over God. We discover that because of the "great disproportion" (as the Westminster Confession of Faith says) between our best works and God's true holiness, we are unable to broker our righteousness for God's forgiveness or favor - our bargaining chips of good works have

no currency with God. I cannot bank on a great career because I vow to study hard; I cannot guarantee an absence of family difficulties because my devotions are consistent; I cannot secure success with my faithfulness. God will be no man's debtor. Our attempts to barter for his kindness with our goodness, great efforts and long-standing resolutions will not move him.

In my humanity I do not always want to believe this. I want to believe that God will be good to the Seminary I serve, to the family I love, and to the career in which I strive because I am good. My reasoning abandons me, however, when I truly compare my righteousness to Christ's standards and ask, "Have I really caused no sin, confronted others' sin, and forgiven any sin?" When I face the reality of the inability of my works to merit God's favor, then I recognize I must depend upon his goodness and not mine. At times this is scary because it lifts control from me, but there is no other choice when I recognize the true character of even my best works... according to Scripture they are only "filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6).

John Calvin said, "To man we may assign only this: that he pollutes and contaminates by his impurity those very things which are good. For nothing proceeds from a man, however perfect he be, that is not defiled by some spot. Let the Lord then call to judgment the best of human works: he will indeed recognize in them his own righteousness by man's dishonor and shame" (*Institutes*). In repeating this I do not want you to think that God never desires or blesses our goodness. Walking in God's ways is itself a blessing. My concern is that we all recognize, however, that his blessing flows from his mercy rather than from our merit. Recognize also that we cannot guarantee that the mercy will flow according to our plans simply because we conform in some degree to God's standards. Our works do not obligate God to care for us in the way that we think is best. God is not leashed by our goodness nor at our command through our merit.

But if our works in themselves will not move God to care for us, what will? The Bible makes it clear in the account that immediately follows the troubling truths of this parable. In his dealing with the ten lepers we learn that while God is not moved by the deeds that we do, ...

- God is Moved by the Desperation We Own.

As Jesus travels along the border between Samaria and Galilee, a group of lepers begin to call out to him "in a loud voice" (see verses 11-13). Do you remember why they had to cry out "in a loud voice?" According to the customs of that day, when someone was determined to have leprosy, he had to leave his home. He could no longer know the warmth of his own family's touch. Further, he could not enter a place of worship. He could no longer go to that most natural of places to seek comfort for his soul and to petition God for help. Such a person even had to go outside the walls of the city and, lest anyone get close enough to contract the conta-

gion, he had to call out, "Unclean, unclean!" A leper was not only deprived of health, but was also denied any touch that would bring comfort to his skin, or his heart, or his soul. In this desperate condition ten lepers cry out, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us" (verse 13).

And what does he do? What does Jesus do when these desperate people plead with him to show them mercy? He does. Jesus shows pity to those who have nothing to claim but desperation. He is moved by a desperate cry for help.

What is the message to you and to me? God is not moved by the deeds that we do, but by the desperation that we claim as our own.

Our own human relationship may reveal how powerful is the claim of desperation in moving a heart toward the mercy that we need. My wife and I have friends whose teenage son for the last four years has lived in rebellion against them and against God. During those four years there have been uncountable rationalizations for unacceptable conduct, and innumerable promises of "straightening up," "doing better," and "living right." But each justification, though it may initially have made sense, turned out to be a righteous veil for actual wrongdoing. Each promise, though it may have been briefly honored, has been broken. So much pain, embarrassment and discouragement has been inflicted on these parents that the wife confided to us that she did not know if she loved her son anymore. Her heart had grown hard against her own child. What softened it again was a cry of desperation.

One day the son sat in the family room looking at a family photo album with pictures of better and happier days past. He came across one picture that he asked his mother to view with him. The picture showed the teen as a young child under the approving smile of his mother. The teen pointed to the photograph and said, "Mom, when I look at this picture, I understand why you don't know how to love me anymore. When I look at this picture of you, there is such hope in your eyes for me, but I have dashed all your hopes. Mom, please forgive me that I have dashed all your hopes." And what did she do? Her hardness broke, and she embraced him with her heart renewed in love for him. She did not delude herself that their would be no more troubles. What moved her were not claims of not having really done anything wrong nor fresh promises to do better. What moved her was the statement of absolute desperation from her child. This is what moves God, also.

God's heart is moved not when we present works that fail to recognize how far short of his holiness they actually fall, nor when we promise that we will do better in the future. The nature of the Gospel that we confess is that, though there is no reason for God to love us, yet he does. Until we recognize that there is no reason God should be moved to love us, other than the need we bring, we have no Gospel to preach or claim. Our faith is most evident not when we trophy our goodness, but when we cry out, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us."

The one who cries out in desperation is in more hope of divine favor than the ones who would claim their own righteousness before God. What this means is that the homosexual on TV, dying of AIDS, who in honest desperation says, "Sexual attraction was not the primary reason for my lifestyle; I would have loved anything that loved me back," may be closer to heaven than I on the days that I am so pleased with my preaching, my position and my righteousness. I must confess readily and repeatedly my own hopeless condition. What makes me willing to do this is the knowledge that it is my desperation that inclines God's heart toward my own. The awareness that he does not turn away from my desperation is what actually draws me toward honest confession and deep repentance. When I know that God will not turn away from me when I cry out for his pity, then I am more willing to identify the monsters of sin in my own heart - my avarice, my anger, my ambition, my lust, my unforgiveness, my doubt - and say, "You are mine. I own you. You are why I am so desperate for my Savior's mercy." Such honesty is what moves God's pity.

I recognize that this is dangerous preaching. To claim that what we do has no inherent power to move God will immediately cause some to question whether we are obligated to do anything for God. If what we do has no power to move God to favor us as members of his house, then why should we move to honor him? Along with understanding the motive of God's goodness, we need to learn ...

II. The Motive of Our Goodness

What should motivate our goodness? The actions of the leper who returns to give thanks to Jesus instruct us. These actions that Jesus commends teach us that a proper willingness to honor God springs not from a desire for gain, but rather from a delight in gratitude.

- *Turning from a Desire for Gain...*

is evident in the leper's return to Jesus. There is sacrificial risk in the leper's willingness to return that we may not recognize in our over-familiarity with the story. He risks both a change in his health and a change in the Physician's demeanor.

The risk of a health change is a consequence of the rapidness of the lepers' changed condition. Recognize that an aspect of the miraculous healing is its swiftness. Jesus commands the lepers to go to the priests who will declare them cleansed of their disease (verse 14a). In the very act of going to show themselves to the priests who will declare them clean, the lepers are healed. As they are on their way, the leprosy departs (verse 14b). Then, one leper seeing his cure, turns back to say thank you before the priests make the declaration (verse 15). The risk in doing this, of course, is what has changed so quickly, could change back just as quickly.

Consider if you had been the one healed. If you had been denied family and affection for months or even years - had you been denied the warmth of home, neighbor and worship - would you not have wanted above all other things to get the clean bill of health that returned you to your home as soon as possible? Would you not have rushed to the priest who would declare you clean before something else happened? The leper has only to go a few more steps to stand before a man who has the authority to restore all that is precious in his life, yet the leper returns to lie at the feet of One who apparently has none of this world's respect (verse 16a). Something more powerful than his own self-promotion motivates this leper that he would risk another change in his health to return to Jesus. But this is not the only risk.

The leper also risks a change in Christ's demeanor. To this point, the lepers have been treated as a group by the Jewish holy man who has healed them. But the one who returns to offer thanks is not Jewish (see verse 16b). He is a Samaritan – a race hated by most Jews. In returning to Jesus, the Samaritan can now be singled out. What if this Jew named Jesus were now to say, "Oh, I didn't recognize there was an infidel among the Jews I healed," and then he were to undo the miracle. Self-protection seems also to have vanished from this leper's motivations. There is no apparent personal gain in his return to Jesus, and there is great risk that indicates that he is not motivated by self-promotion or self-protection.

This message coordinates with the one already made clear in the preceding parable. What we do for God cannot make God our debtor, and should never be done primarily for our gain. Any other message actually precludes the possibility of our obedience honoring God. For if the primary reason that we are serving God is for our personal gain, then whom are we really serving? Only self. Too many Christians fail to realize this. They serve God in order either to get a favor from him (in which case their real motive is self-promotion), or they serve to keep "the Ogre in the Sky" off their backs (in which case their real motive is self-protection). In each of these cases, the motive behind the actions is nothing more than sanctified selfishness and, thus, the efforts do not actually honor God. What they think is gaining them "brownie points" with God is actually to their demerit in heaven's accounting, which considers the motives of the heart as well as the actions of the hand.

But now a dilemma seems to fall upon us. If our actions neither move God to love us nor should be pursued for our own gain, then why should we do them? The Heidelberg Catechism honestly asks, "[Since] we have been delivered from our misery by God's grace alone ..., why then must we still do good?" The answer: "... So that in all our living we may show that we are thankful to God for what he has done for us, and so that he may be praised through us." This is precisely the motivation evident in the leper. He turns away from the course of the others in his group because of his compelling desire to express his gratitude to Jesus. By his actions and Christ's commendation, the leper teaches us what should move us to serve

God, turning from a desire for gain and ...

- Turning to a Delight in Gratitude

The Scriptures record that the leper returned praising God in a loud voice (verse 15). The wording is important because it reflects the way in which he had previously called out his desperation - also in a loud voice (vs. 13). The Scriptural truth echoing is that to the degree that we recognize our need, to that degree our praise of God will find appropriate expression. If we do not perceive our need great then we will not rightly give ourselves to the praise of our Savior. Only when deep gratitude for the deliverance our Savior offers captures our hearts do we so fully fall before him and so gladly dedicate the strength of our lives to his glory.

Detroit-area pastor, Steven Andrews, tells a similar story as this of the time that his daughter brought home a chocolate teddy bear from a gift exchange at her school. The next day the girl's mother opened the door of her daughter's bedroom only to discover a three-year old son was there. He had been caught red-handed chomping down his sister's chocolate teddy bear. Immediately the boy backed against the wall like a cornered criminal knowing that there was no hiding his guilt (or his chocolate-smeared hands and cheeks). He began to sob uncontrollably at having been caught. Undaunted the mother told the little boy that he would have to tell his sister what he had done when she got home from school.

The afternoon was torture for the little boy as each passing minute seemed like an hour of wondering how his sister would react to his crime. When his sister finally came through the door, the anxiety that had built in the little boy burst from him in a torrent of tears and confession. He cried, "Sally, I'm so sorry, I ate your teddy bear." He was a sorry sight standing there sobbing in his guilt. Blessedly, the one to whom he confessed was the kind of big sister who was always looking for a chance to love up her little brother. So she took him up in her arms, kissed him and said, "It's okay, Johnny, I will love you anyway and always."

Though he was still crying, the little boy began to giggle. Tears were still running down his cheeks for his shame, yet at the same time he was laughing for joy. With a vigor made more strong by the joy the tears made deep, he then hugged his sister with all the strength that was in him.

This is a wonderful picture of every Christian who rightly perceives the nature of God's grace. When we face the reality and seriousness of our sin, we too are rightly broken to the point of tears due to our guilt. This degree of desperation only makes our joy more deep, however, when we recognize that our God is still willing to say, "Do not despair, Child; I will still love you anyway and always." The love and gratitude that such a gracious pardon generates then becomes the motive for embracing our Lord and his purposes with all the strength of our being. The

joy that beacons through the tears of repentance moves us to new obedience. In such renewed service we discover the truth of the biblical principle that "the joy of the Lord is our strength."

I mention the power of the joy of pardon because of its necessity in the message any of us would share the Gospel with in the pulpit, counseling room, class, kitchen or workplace. If our teaching of grace causes us to make light of sin ... to slight the requirements of the Savior ... then we have not really understood the monstrosity of our sin, the vulnerability of our hearts, and the necessity of holiness in lives that would experience the blessings of righteousness. But if we have become mired in a guilty depression .. have begun to equate orthodoxy with endless despondency over our shame, or have identified piety with unrelenting sadness, then we have not grasped the grace that marks the Gospel and is distinguished by joy. We are obligated to proclaim the whole Gospel, neither slighting the seriousness of sin nor shading the wonders of grace. The fullness of the Gospel must characterize our own lives for those to whom we minister will be characterized by the springs from which we drink.

Guilt-driven pastors produce guilt-ridden people.
Guiltless pastors produce shameless people.
Grateful pastors produce grateful people, zealous for God's purpose.

The balance God requires is best maintained by those ministers of the Gospel who know that both the tears of repentance and the joy of pardon are required to produce the gratitude that empowers the Christian life. This balance comes when we understand that God is not moved by the deeds that we do, but rather pours his mercy on those who confess their desperation and delight in his praise.

Jesus said to the Samaritan, "Your faith has made you well" (verse 19). What faith? The Samaritan has not repeated any Apostle's Creed or proclaimed the deity of Christ. All he has done is fallen at Jesus' feet and, in essence, said, "Everything that is now right about me, you did."

"Ah," you may say, "that's not very much faith. Why, that's practically a mustard seed of faith compared to the kind of mountainous faith that we expect to see in the Bible." But Jesus said that if you have faith "as small as a mustard seed" ... then you will see the power of God come down. May the power of the Gospel be evident among us because such mustard seed faith characterizes our lives and our words. May the confession of our hearts be, "Everything that is right about me, Jesus did." When this is what we believe and proclaim, the power of God will come down.

(editor's note: Bryan Chapell is President and Professor of Practical Theology at Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO.)

Book Reviews

The Balance of the NIV: What Makes a Good Translation. By Kenneth Barker. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999, 0-8010-6239-X, 141 pp., $13.99, paperback.

Many years ago I was enjoying Sunday dinner at the home of an elderly couple from our church. "Pastor," the gentleman said, "one thing we appreciate about you is that you always preach from the pure King James Version of the Bible." I presume he meant it at as a compliment.

"Thank you," I said, "but I don't always do so. I have chosen to preach from the KJV because it appears to be the Bible that most of the people here prefer. In my own study of the Scripture, I prefer the New International Version." It was as if I had detonated a bomb in the middle of the dinner table. The man was offended and disappointed, and he spent the next year trying to convince me and everyone else in the congregation of my folly.

Kenneth Barker's book, *The Balance of the NIV: What Makes a Good Translation* is an apologetic for the *NIV*. "Which translation?" is a primary question for preachers who intend to preach the Bible. Barker's book aims to help preachers appreciate the merits of the *NIV* in the attempt to affirm confidence that when we preach from the *NIV*, we are preaching from the Word of God.

Since 1986, the *NIV* has been the best selling English translation of the Bible with over 120 million copies in print. Barker, formerly the director of the *NIV* Translation Center, is in a good position to offer insights into the development of the text. His close association with the project, however, means that the book is not disinterested.

Barker uses the idea of balance as the organizing principle for his book. It would be his contention that "balance" was the organizing principle for the translation itself. He takes pains to show how balance guided the selection of the original translation committee from a broad denominational heritage. He also takes pains to describe the extensive committee process. Several levels of participation were built in to ensure quality and accuracy in translation. Barker also describes the rationale undergirding the choice of original texts that would support the work. In every case, the *NIV* teams emphasized a "middle road" translation philosophy, not willing either to be slavishly literal or overly dynamic in the search for cultural equivalency of language and concepts. Barker's discussion of translation philosophy is, perhaps, the most valuable part of the book, particularly for preachers who struggle every week to know how far to push the re-description of biblical texts.

An interesting aspect of the book is Barker's discussion of specific translation difficulties and how the committees chose to resolve them. This section spans more than forty pages. Each text is indexed in the back of the book, providing a useful resource for preachers who want to look up their Sunday text when faced with translation concerns.

Finally, Barker offers several pages of questions and answers to address most of the criticisms that have been directed at the *NIV* over the years. Questions like, "Was there really a need for a new Bible translation like the *NIV*?" are fairly considered and answered.

In sum, *The Balance of the NIV* is a case study for those interested in translation issues, a resource for preachers who want to understand specific texts in scripture, but mostly it is an apologetic defense for the worthiness of the *NIV* as a faithful rendering of God's Word.

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Preaching With Freshness. By Bruce Mawhinney. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1997, 0-8254-3198-0, 258 pp., $12.99, paperback.

This is a most unusual book on preaching not because of the content, but because of the form. It is a novel. This book on "freshness" is written in a fresh style. The author tells the story of Pastor Paul Andrews whose preaching is so stale that he is on the verge of being forced out of his church. The worn pastor seeks help from a retired seminary professor who rebukes, instructs, and transforms Pastor Andrews' preaching.

Preaching with Freshness contains 30 short chapters each explaining one or two principles for fresh preaching. For example: use a rifle, not a shotgun (the power of a single purpose); phrase your central idea as an aphorism; create internal dialogue; use word pictures; and develop a specific plan for finding illustrations. The seminary professor demonstrates how most of these techniques are exemplified by Jesus. Besides giving advice on sermon mechanics, this short novel exhorts the reader to redeem the time by saying "no" to activities that clamor for attention, redirect that time to the high calling of preaching, and mentor other preachers who have lost their freshness. Thus the book includes more than technique. It also has elements of a philosophy or theology of preaching.

The book's most striking feature, its form as a novel, is not its greatest strength. The plot and character development are thin and the conversations contrived. Like Plato's dialogs, the conversations in Freshness are transparent vehicles for the author to present his argument. But even with these weaknesses, this book is more engaging than a standard work on homiletics. In that sense, the form "works."

Another striking feature of *Preaching With Freshness* is its obvious reliance on Jay Adams, who wrote the foreword. The characters interact with each other as if they were role playing in a nouthetic counseling session, and most of the homiletical insights can be found in Adams' *Preaching with Purpose, Pulpit Speech*, and his work on sense appeal with language.

I recommend this book. It is a quick, entertaining read, and it is full of concrete advice.

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The Moment of Truth: A Guide to Effective Sermon Delivery. By Wayne V. McDill. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999, 080541827-X, 197 pp., $19.99, paperback.

Wayne McDill is professor of preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Drawing from twenty years of experience in homiletics, he has produced his sixth book (a clear, interesting, and helpful exploration of preaching as face-to-face, communication). *The Moment of Truth* claims to be about delivery, and it does provide excellent insights about that narrow subject area, but it really covers much more than that. It is an application of the insights of speech and interpersonal communication to preaching. The endnotes and bibliography reveal McDill's familiarity with basic sources in speech communication as well as homiletics. The first definition of "delivery" in *Webster's New World Dictionary* is "a giving, handing over, or transfer," and the fifth definition is "the act or manner of giving a speech." *The Moment of Truth* discusses delivery in the first sense as it explains the intricate transactions that occur in oral communication.

Chapter One, "God's Plan for Preaching," is a concise, evangelical theology of preaching. God is presented as "self-revealing," and to the degree that the sermon proclaims God's self-revelation as found in the Bible, the sermon is an extension of revelation. Furthermore, preaching is "a primary strategy in the cosmic war of God against the forces of evil" (21).

Chapter Two, "The Person of the Preacher," expounds an incarnational model of preaching captured in Brooks' famous phrase: "truth through personality." From this lofty perspective on preaching, McDill is able to survey mundane issues such as the preacher's speech patterns, example, and family background.

Chapter Three, "Knowing Your Audience" is a concise guide to audience analysis and adaptation.

Chapter Four, "The Challenge of Oral Communication," is a fifteen-page summary of the transactional model of communication (the sender "encodes" a message, "transmits" it to a receiver who "decodes" it, etc.

Chapters Five and Six deal with nonverbal communication. Topics include vocal production (with diagrams of how we breath, resonate, and articulate), as well as many aspects of physical delivery such as movement and gestures. McDill stresses that "in a face-to-face speaking situation, nonverbal messages dominate the communication" (107).

Chapter Seven, "Preaching Style" explains the intersection of the preacher's personality and his/her manner of delivery. It also argues for the "conversational style" as opposed to an unnatural "ministerial tune."

Chapter Eight, "Effective Presentation," explains five techniques of using notes: impromptu (no notes and no preparation), memorization, manuscript reading, extemporaneous with notes, and extemporaneous without notes. McDill presents a balanced and strong argument for the last technique.

Chapter Nine discusses how to design the sermon for oral communication with inductive and deductive methods, stressing a common theme of the book (sermons are experienced in time). They are processes, or transactions, flowing like a river. Effective preachers carry listeners along in the experience of the sermon.

Chapter Ten, "The Preaching Moment," is something of a catch-all chapter. The main idea

is that when the moment of truth comes (when the preacher stands to deliver the Word) he/she should focus on the audience, not on self, adopting an "exhortative" not "adversarial" stance. This will result in the best persuasion.

I highly recommend this book for preachers, student-preachers, and teachers of preaching. McDill correctly stresses that in oral communication, the nonverbal channel dominates the verbal. Preachers need to reckon with this fact, and *The Moment of Truth* helps us do so as it races across the landscape of oral communication. The breadth of terrain covered more than makes up for lack of detail. If readers want more information on, say, inductive arrangement or vocal production, the endnotes and bibliography can guide them. Working from the awareness that preaching is face-to-face communication, McDill tells us how to deliver well.

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Pastor to Pastor: Tackling the Problems of Ministry. By Erwin Lutzer, Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998, 0-8254-3164-6, 126 pp., $8.99, paperback.

Would you ever like to have a heart to heart talk with an experienced pastor about ministry problems? Reading *Pastor to Pastor* by Erwin Lutzer affords such an opportunity. Dr. Lutzer is the senior pastor of the historic Moody Church in Chicago. A popular lecturer and author, he shares through *Pastor to Pastor* his wisdom and heart concerning difficult situations sometimes faced by pastors. The situations discussed include both intrapersonal and interpersonal problems which may arise in one's church and ministry, such as problems with envy, burnout, priorities, preaching, failure, politics, a congregation's expectations, problem people, Christian loafers, church splits, counseling, and surviving a skirmish. Other topics include the call to ministry, worship, public invitations, theology today, restoring the fallen, Christ's blueprint for the church, and the influence of the church in today's world as well as the influence of the world on the church.

Pastor to Pastor is practical and helpful in its content. The author's style resembles his preaching: direct, concise, clear, and biblical. His selective exposition of Scripture facilitates insight and fosters personal reflection, as also does his interesting illustrations. While not everyone may agree with the author in all points, readers will appreciate the author's evident concern to encourage pastors in their spiritual growth, interpersonal relationships, and ministry. In this regard, readers will discover carefully thought-out suggestions, expressed with sensitivity and reflecting an obvious depth of experience. Readers also will benefit from the author's own "lessons learned" and personal admissions.

At first glance, readers may not see an ordered pattern to the book's topics and chapters. Yet, *Pastor to Pastor* begins where other pastoral ministry texts often start, which is with a discussion of one factor crucial to a pastor's effectiveness, i.e., the call to the ministry. Following that opening topic come others, organized as if flowing forth from a threaded discussion whereby one topic leads to the next. Finally, the reader is led to the concluding topic which, as the author states, "represents the highest priority on God's agenda and is

His blueprint for completing His plans on earth," i.e., the church (rf., p. 119). In every chapter, the author writes from a Christ- centered theological and philosophical perspective and includes reasonable but spiritual challenges for readers to consider.

Reading *Pastor to Pastor* will no doubt enable pastors to be more capable in ministry. However, the book's greater impact will probably come in the areas of personal encouragement and spiritual renewal. Thus, while *Pastor to Pastor* is easy to read and not lengthy or tedious, readers should follow Warren Wiersbe's advice in the book's Foreword: "Don't speed-read this book. Pause, ponder, pray, and grow!"

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One Size Doesn't Fit All. By Gary L. McIntosh. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999, 0-8007-5699-1, 175 pp., $9.95, paperback.

The thesis of Gary McIntosh's book *One Size Doesn't Fit All* emerges through the interaction of two pastors. One of the pastors is a young, disillusioned minister who runs out of ideas how to encourage growth and spiritual development in his church. In his frustration he seeks the counsel of a seasoned pastor known for his expertise in church growth and his mentoring skills. The weekly interaction builds McIntosh's typology of Church Sizes which sketches the essential distinctions in growth patterns among small, medium, and large churches. The typology is a product of McIntosh's study of church growth and his consultation experience with more that five hundred churches throughout the Unites States and Canada. The concepts delineated in the typology extract eleven critical factors that describe the life of a church.

McIntosh hinges his typology on a system where he groups churches by size. A small church consists of 15-200 attendees. The medium church is comprised of between 201 and 400 worshippers. And a church is considered large when it has 401+ people in attendance in an average Sunday morning service. The statistics in church demographics indicate that 80% of the churches in North America fall into the "small" category. The others share equal pieces of the remaining 20 % of church goers, at 10% each. It appears that small churches are the norm. However, it is the large churches that have been growing, their number quadrupling since 1950. While the numbers of small and large churches are increasing, the number of medium churches is declining. The weight of the statistical evidence leads the author to contend that small and large churches are stable entities, while medium size churches are "transitional" in nature. Unless they grow bigger, they plateau and most often decline in size.

The author asserts that churches have different needs depending on their size. What follows from this assumption is that different sized churches must employ strategies specific to their size in order to grow and develop. The Typology of Church Sizes supplies brief descriptions of the key factors providing a prescriptive grid for formulating a church growth strategy. Some of the elements in the typology focus on aspects such as: church orientation, structure, leadership styles, decision making process, growth patterns, the role of staff,

and both the obstacles and strategies for growth in the context of change. At each step in the building of the typology, McIntosh's consultation experience pays rich dividends. The author's key factors are right on the mark in identifying the essential functional elements delineating the life of churches in various stages of their development.

The merit of the book is found in its accurate description of the typical North American churches of various sizes. However, the book's merit is also its Achilles' heal. The essential problem with typology of church sizes is that it draws its conclusions from the status quo of the churches found on this continent. In this sense, the study has descriptive value. But the book is not intended to merely describe the church landscape. It endeavors to provide a prescription for growth and disciple making. It is this attempt at establishing prescriptive principles based largely on the descriptive data that casts a long shadow on the book's value. What is needed in order to establish valid prescriptive principles is some absolute measuring line against which the data could be assessed. Such a line, as the author argues, is not prescribed in God's Word. As a result, there is no "ideal" church size we could point out to determine the validity of the growth-determining factors. In the absence of the biblical prescription, we are left to extract principles for growth from the way churches operate.

The fundamental problem with this way of looking at church growth is that it stands in danger of warranting the pathological. There has been a growing chorus of voices in the past quarter of a century warning of the deficiencies and shortcomings of North American Christianity. The church life on this continent is far from satisfying and is miles away from the biblical standard. And if growth statistics are any indication, the church attendance has declined in the past several years. Following Barna's evaluation, for instance, the church attendance grew about 5% between 1987-1992. However, because the population growth during that time was at about 6%, the church growth has failed to keep pace with the population at large. In absolute terms then, the church appears to be attracting more people. In relative terms the growth of Protestant Churches seems to be in a slow decline.

And the growth ratio is only one of the indicators that all is not well with church life. The growing divorce rate among believers, the decline in biblical literacy and other symptoms point to a serious virus eating away at the soul of North American Christianity. In light of these considerations , taking the patterns from the function of the existing churches in their present format may serve in the preservation of the status quo. However, it may be radically misguided in giving the right prescription for growth.

The other "Achilles' heal" of the book can be found in its vague treatment of the concept of "church growth." The idea of church growth is never clearly defined. As a result, church growth examples are given in general terms without differentiation between various aspects of growth. At this juncture, it is worthwhile to note that the genuine growth described in the Bible comes from conversion growth. Unless growth is understood in terms of old sinners becoming new believers, the growth in our churches may be a result of reshuffling the same cards among different players. Transfer growth gives an illusion of growth, while leaving us to play with the same deck of cards.

In fairness to McIntosh, he states that the disciple making process is meant to bring new people into a relationship with Jesus. This process of making disciples is the process of

church growth. In the same breath, however, the author gives examples of church growth coming as a result of a shift in response based on the church typology without differentiating transfer growth from conversion growth.

The book seems to be plagued by a kind of theological schizophrenia that comes from a lack of a clear distinction between its prescriptive and descriptive elements. On the one hand, McIntosh correctly admits that church growth is a journey and not a destination. What is more, he contends that "we cannot cause growth, we can only create a climate in which growth takes place." On the other hand, the author asserts that "according to his figures, most churches could grow around 5 percent a year if they retooled and refocused their resources on making disciples." It seems like growth could be manufactured after all.

In other parts of the book, McIntosh runs into similar problems. In the context of a discussion pertaining to church structure, for instance, the author describes a small church as a single-cell church. The essential quality of a single-cell church is that its decision-making power is centered in a single family or families. In order to grow, McIntosh suggests, the church must add new members to the governing board in order to draw some of the decision-making power from the key families. The discussion seems misguided in identifying the problem in church structure with its location in a single family. The problem, as I understand it, is not with the decision-making power being in the hands of a key family or families but rather in the misuse of that power. So, the key to growth may not necessarily be adding people outside of the family to the leadership team, but rather prescribing a different conduct to the people in leadership. The discussion requires some biblically based analysis of the concept of leadership.

The book suffers from its lack of proper theological anchoring. It assumes what it ought to prove first. For instance, in its treatment of leadership, McIntosh identifies four ingredients of effective leadership: position, authority, influence, and control. While these may well be the building blocks of effective leadership, they are not the building blocks of the biblical leadership. The faulty view of leadership rears its ugly head again in a story of a pastor who strategically works his deacons over to agree with his desire to purchase a parcel of land. One by one, he gets them to follow his plan. In response to the objection of the younger pastor that this sounds a lot like manipulation, the older pastor shoots back that it's genuine leadership. "Manipulation," McIntosh argues, "happens only when people no longer have a choice." But by that definition, manipulation can never happen because people always have a choice. Manipulation does not depend on whether people are left without a choice. Instead, manipulation happens when people are given the illusion of choice while all along being maneuvered to accomplish the wishes of the leader. Again, the example shows a desperate need for the biblical teaching to bear on the teaching of the book.

In conclusion, it must be said that McIntosh's book correctly identifies many of the qualities distinguishing churches in their various stages of development. The book contains helpful descriptions of the status quo of the North American Churches. Where the book falters is in its lack of clear, biblically informed path from the descriptive data to the prescriptive principles charting the way to growing healthy churches.

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Making Sense of the Old Testament. By Tremper Longman III. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988, 0-8010-5828-7, 154 pp., $12.00, paperback.

A mark of intelligence is clarity. Scores of academics can transform straightforward concepts into convoluted problems. Few scholars can communicate complex ideas without descending into the murkiness of obscurity. Tremper Longman III is one of the few. With clear brisk sentences and helpful illustrations Longman explicates important Old Testament issues in a way that non-specialists can understand and appreciate. Longman's gift is easily appreciated and less easily replicated.

Making Sense of the Old Testament is organized in three discreet sections. The first provides an overview of the attractions and obstacles of the OT as well as a helpful presentation of key interpretative principles. Longman touches a felt need in the second section when he raises the question: "Is the God of the Old Testament also the God of the New Testament?" He contrasts the warrior God of the O.T. with the God of the N.T. who instructs disciples to turn the other cheek and then addresses the discontinuity in the context of covenant. In the third section, Longman addresses the thorny issue of O.T. application. He provides preachers with a valuable strategy as they strive to legitimately apply the O.T. to the 21st century.

While this is an excellent work, this reviewer was disappointed with the first interpretive principle Longman suggests in section one. While laudably urging interpreters to discover the original author's intended meaning, Longman also maintains that there are times when the writers of Scripture do not consciously express God's intended meaning. His willingness to distinguish "between divine and human intention" is disconcerting. The reader would be well served to remember G.B. Caird's caution:

> We have no access to the mind of Jeremiah or Paul except through their recorded words. . . . We may disbelieve them, that is our right; but if we try, without evidence, to penetrate to a meaning more ultimate than the one the writers intended, that is our meaning, not theirs or God's.[1]

Perhaps the most valuable portion of this book for E.H.S. members is the rare and valuable third section where Longman strides into the area of application. Application is the concern of the preacher. Academicians may choose to treat truth entirely in the abstract, but preachers cannot. Women and men come to church asking "How does God want me to live?" Preachers have to answer this question. Every week.

Unfortunately, however, the history of evangelical preaching is checkered with illegitimate application. All too often, congregants have been hurt as well as helped by the way Scripture has been applied from the pulpit. Damage is done when preachers apply the finger of God's word in an inappropriate way. God is made out to say what He never intended to say. After evaluating the application paradigms of theonomy and dispensationalism, Longman proposes a third genre-sensitive approach. This section of Longman's work is both refreshingly biblical and maddeningly brief. What it will accomplish, however, is to spur E.H.S. readers on to more serious reflection of a vital and woefully neglected area of homiletics: legitimate, biblical application.

Professor Longman writes *Making Sense of the Old Testament* with the mind of an evangelical scholar and the heart of a man in love with his God. The result is well worth reading.

Notes

1. G. B. Caird, The Language and Imagery of the Bible, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980) 61.

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Ministry Nuts and Bolts. By Aubrey Malphurs. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1997, 0-8254-3190-5, 192 pp., $9.99, paperback.

No organization can move forward unless its members understand where and why they should move. Groups without goals wallow in stagnation. Purpose is so important that it transcends the traditional secular/sacred divide: "it's as critical for congregations as it is for corporations." Perhaps more so. Today's harried parishioners ask their pastors: "Why should I give my resources to this church? Where are we going? Why are we going there?" People want their parish to have purpose. In *Ministry Nuts and Bolts*, Aubrey Malphurs helps the contemporary church by helping its leaders understand and harness the power of purpose.

Malphurs encourages church leaders to utilize a four-step methodology in formulating purpose. For him, purpose is best developed when pastors, in conjunction with lay church leadership, take the time to outline:

the core values of their ministry
the mission of their ministry
the vision of their ministry
the strategy of their ministry.

A strength of this book is that rather than forcing readers to adopt "his" pet purpose statement, Malphurs encourages each congregation to custom design a biblical purpose statement that expresses their ministry values. The variety of church credos provided in an appendix is helpful.

Ministry Nuts and Bolts does struggle at points, however. It strains under the weight of excessive detail and readers can become lost in the minutia. Malphurs presents his four steps in exhaustive and sometimes exhausting detail. It becomes difficult at points for readers to keep sight of the main points the author is communicating.

Most significantly for E.H.S. members, however, this book strains under the artificial juxtaposition that Malphurs creates between preaching and purpose. His assertion that "the idea that pastoral ministry is to be equated with the pulpit is fallacious and unbiblical" catches us off guard. While pastoral ministry is more than preaching, it certainly is not less than preaching. And while Malphurs qualifies his comments later, his assessment of contemporary preaching-centered ministry remains firm: "That dog won't hunt."

The exegesis that Malphurs employs to support the reduced role for the pulpit is unsatisfying. His assertion that "a quick survey of the epistles reveals that Paul, and others who often functioned in pastoral roles spent as much time evangelizing the lost as they did preaching and teaching" is mystifying. While readers may be unsure as to what "others" Malphurs may be referring to, we do know that when the Apostle Paul donned the pastoral mantle he gave himself to preaching. In his farewell address to the Ephesian elders Paul defended his three-year ministry on the basis that he had proclaimed the whole counsel of God.

Contemporary pastors can have a high view of Scripture while providing clear and relevant goals for their congregations. They need not be asked to choose between purpose and pulpit.

Ministry Nuts and Bolts contributes to the kingdom by helping church leadership discover where God wants them to go and why. Those readers who heed Malphurs' careful counsel regarding purpose will be well served.

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Baker's Funeral Handbook. Edited by Paul E. Engle. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996, 0-8010-9010-5, 188 pp., $16.99, hardback; Baker's Wedding Handbook. Edited by Paul E. Engle. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994, 0-8010-3225-3, 183 pp., $16.99, hardback.

Paul E. Engle, a former editor at Baker Books now at Zondervan, has compiled two helpful resources for not only those who are just beginning pastoral ministry, but also for the seasoned veteran. Both handbooks are full of approaching the task of weddings or funerals from various situations and angles.

The handbooks provide service orders from different denominational perspectives: Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Church of the Nazarene, Christian and Missionary Alliance, and others. *The Funeral Handbook* gives attention to services for special situations, including a service on the occasion of a stillborn, miscarriage, or infant death. It was a source assisted me in the construction of a recent funeral I conducted. *The Wedding Handbook* provides alternative services for the pastor to consider, which opens possibilities for the pastor to explore in his or her wedding ceremonies.

The Wedding Handbook has a section on wedding meditations. I prefer to vary what I say at weddings, but the meditations provide insight on how one goes about shaping a wedding meditation.

The Wedding and Funeral Handbooks also have additional material for the pastor to consider as he or she puts together either ceremony. I encourage my students and pastor friends to collect wedding and funeral manuals for their library. The Baker series by Paul E. Engle are certainly handbooks well worth having on one's shelf. They will come in handy when preparing for either occasion. I know they have for me.

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The Effective Invitation: A Practical Guide for the Pastor. By R. Alan Streett. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1995, 0-8254-3788-1, 252 pp., $12.99, paperback.

While many books have been written on the subject of evangelism, relatively few have been devoted to the evangelistic invitation. This volume by R. Alan Streett is both comprehensive in its choice of topics and convincing in its argumentation. It is the product of one who has served as a professor of evangelism in the classroom as well as the pastor of a local church. He firmly believes that Gospel preaching ought to include a call to change and that some type of public invitation is both appropriate and necessary.

Streett has touched on virtually every topic related to evangelistic invitations, though sometimes briefly because of the relative brevity of the book. He devotes chapters to the theology of the Gospel (1-2), the biblical basis of the invitation (3), the historical practice of evangelistic invitations including an entire chapter devoted to Billy Graham's use of them (4-5), an apologetic for public invitations (6-7), methodology (8-9), music (10), and dealing with children (11). There is also an appendix of hymns suitable for invitations as well as an extensive and helpful bibliography of approximately two hundred related titles. The book is well-documented with numerous endnotes.

A potential reader might wonder if the book would include an attempt to justify the use of public invitations, or would this be simply a "how-to-do-it" book based on an unquestioned presupposition regarding their correctness. To its credit, the book demonstrates both an awareness of those who would argue against the use of invitations and a good effort to interact with and refute their arguments. This was done first in a general way by laying a solid theological, biblical, and historical foundation for the invitation system. It was done also in a specific way by interacting with the concerns of D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones whose ". . . arguments against the public invitation can be considered representative. . ." (Streett, 131). In this section, the author evidences sound reasoning and clear thinking as he firmly, yet respectfully, takes exception to the arguments expounded by Lloyd-Jones in his *Preaching and Preachers.*

The final third of the book moves beyond theoretical and philosophical matters to an enlightening presentation of methodology. Again, I was pleasantly surprised to discover multiple methods being offered as suitable depending on the occasion and circumstances. Streett does not suggest a cookie-cutter approach where "one size fits all." This flexibility is summarized nicely as follows:

> Different models can be adapted to different circumstances. Some invitational methods are conducive to a small church setting, while others are more adaptable to the large evangelistic campaign. A call for people to come forward, for example, is not always appropriate or even practical. Setting up a private appointment with the pastor or guest evangelist may be more advantageous in many instances, (Streett, 169).

On the subject of the public evangelistic invitation, this volume stands head and shoulders above others. Its only weakness is a lack of discussion about the full-orbed nature of Christian preaching as far as desired response is concerned. There seems to be an assump-

tion that all preaching is to be evangelistic preaching and that invitations are meant only to call people to Christ as Savior. Streett's discussion on the nature of preaching as kerygma is somewhat weak. Although he mentions the disagreement between C.H. Dodd and Robert Mounce regarding kerygma and didache, he seems to ignore the implications of Mounce's perspective as far as response to preaching is concerned. In the context of the local church, shouldn't preaching be edificational as well as evangelistic, challenging Christians to a deeper level of commitment in many areas of life? If so, shouldn't there be invitations which are not conversion-related but commitment-related? The author, while warning against giving evangelistic invitations when the terms of the Gospel have not been adequately proclaimed, fails to mention using suitable invitations for sermons not meant to evangelize. The reader is left to wonder whether the absence of a discussion on this is due to Streett's philosophy of preaching, or is it simply a matter of the book's limited purpose.

Even with this shortcoming, this book is highly recommended. It will assist those who wish to better understand the reasons for giving invitations as well as those who wish to develop a variety of related skills.

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The Company of the Creative: A Christian Reader's Guide to Great Literature and Its Themes. By David L. Larsen. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999, 656 pp., 0-8254-3097-6, $29.99, hardback.

David Larsen is Professor Emeritus of Preaching at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He has many other publications including *The Company of the Preachers*. This book of 640 pages is exactly what its title and subtitle describe. It is a guide to a wide scope of literature that Larsen considers worth the time of the Christian reader to peruse. It covers a vast array of good and great literature. The work includes a name index with more than 1,500 entries with an extensive subject index. There is also a title index for poetry, prose and drama. The menu includes the Greek and Roman shapers of ideas; Dante and the medieval masters; dramatists from Plautus to Ibsen; the Miltons and Brownings of many lands and epic novelists from Hugo to Solzhenitsyn.

Many of those whom God has called to pastoral ministry come out of professional or preprofessional undergraduate studies. Often these individuals are weak in courses that deal with literature. Suddenly they find themselves people of The Book immersed in a career of constant communication. This lack of depth in the humanities can make them thin in the creation and expression of ideas. Larsen invites them and all of us into the company of the creative. The common denominator of this important book is not the expression of Christian religious thought, although many Christian writes are include, but rather the creative communication of significant insights.
This is a book to be savored. Most would have difficulty carving out time to read consecutively from cover to cover. It is more of a volume that we might give an hour or two a week. With a prolonged exposure to this excellent annotated bibliography many of us will

be led into the reading of the books created by the creative. This exposure to great ideas will aid us in our lifelong process of becoming worth listening to.

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How to Preach a Sermon: An Electronic Guide from Formation to Delivery. By John Koessler and Steven Albrecht. Grand Rapids: Baker Bytes, 2000, 0-9010-0265-6, CD-ROM for WINDOWS and MACINTOSH, $19.99.

This multimedia program introduces a philosophy of preaching; summarizes basic homiletical concepts; checks comprehension en route by pop quizzes; and supplies some step-by-step instruction on formulating the big idea, framing the outline, applying the points, illustrating the sermon, and developing introductions and conclusions. It supplements these instructions with quotations from standard texts. All this is punctuated with video clips of exemplary preachers including Drs. Bryan Chapell and Haddon Robinson who introduce the course and upon whose books it is based. How to Preach a Sermon aims to benefit students, pastors, and lay pastors.

The strengths of this product are many. It does not advocate a short-cut to homiletical success despite its slightly overstated title. It is based on the solid homiletical theory well articulated by Chapell in *Christ-Centered Preaching* and Robinson in *Biblical Preaching*. The multiple-choice pop quizzes remind one that the content is to be retained by the student, the how-to sections supply immediate feed-back by way of correct answers, and the video clips reinforce and exemplify the theory almost immediately after it is articulated. The readings, though few, supply much-needed amplification.

There are several limitations of this "Electronic Sermon Instructor" that the prospective student or homiletics professor would do well to note. Some of these relate to the medium itself. For instance, on my first trip through the CD I missed the interviews because they were not included in the index and missed the "Readings" for the same reason only discovering them later on the tool bar. Picture and sound do not always synchronize smoothly, and some users may not be able to get the program to fill their computer screen. Most of these are mild frustrations that need not negatively impact the benefit of owning and using this guide once all its features are found.

On the other hand, at least one limitation is more substantive. This guide attempts to combine and condense insights from two texts that already display admirable economy of expression. The result is a product that doesn't tell us quite enough. For instance, printed both texts emphasize the centrality of the Bible in preaching and devote considerable space to its study for preaching. The Electronic Sermon Instructor, as *How to Preach a Sermon* is also called, says far less. Since premature sermonizing is often the bane of faithfulness to the text of Scripture, this underemphasis is regrettable. Moreover, there are times when words like "subject" which is a technical term for Dr. Robinson but not for Dr. Chapell are used with insufficient clarification in this Guide. Having said that, Dr. Koessler's condensation provides a valuable review of the terrain. But like a map with insufficient detail it

may frustrate its user. Or, preferably, it may move him or her to seek out a more detailed map, in this case the texts on which this CD-ROM is based. So, use and recommend this tool for review; do not rely upon it for foundational instruction.

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Preaching With Passion. By Alex Montoya. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2000, 0-8254-3346-0, 160 pp., $10.99, paperback.

What does it mean for a preacher to be passionate? How do preachers cultivate passion in their preaching? Alex Montoya tackles these questions in his book *Preaching With Passion*.

Montoya describes passion as the "power, the drive, the energy, the life in the delivery of the sermon." Passion begins with the truth of God, but then expresses itself with zeal and conviction in the delivery of the sermon. According to Montoya, passion is essential to good preaching and also to the health of the church. People need to be fed more than dry, lifeless exegesis; they need the living Word of God delivered to them in a heart-felt, passionate way.

This book is no endorsement of empty enthusiasm. Indeed, in his introduction, Montoya mentions the need to strike a balance between solid exegesis and heart-felt emotion. Montoya's concern appears to be with the lack of heart-felt preaching in the church today. In the forward, John MacArthur writes: "Alex Montoya addresses . . . preachers whose content is just fine, but whose delivery is flat and passionless, more befitting the usual caricature of a classroom lecture than a prophetic message from almighty God." Montoya does a good job calling us out of the lecture hall and reminding us of the heart-felt nature of the preaching task.

Montoya arranges his book by devoting each chapter to a different characteristic of passionate preaching. He outlines eight characteristics of passionate preaching: spiritual power, conviction, compassion, authority, urgency, brokenness, whole being, and imagination. By spiritual power, Montoya means the power of the Holy Spirit. A passionate preacher is one who is filled with, and demonstrates the presence of, the Holy Spirit. Conviction is the strong belief one has in deep truths of the faith. Compassion refers to the preacher's love and concern for the listener. Authority refers to the authority of God's Word, which serves as the basis of the preacher's appeals and exhortations. Urgency is what the preacher conveys as a result of God's impending judgement for our sin. Brokenness involves the sanctification of the individual preacher. Preaching with the whole being means preaching with heart, eyes, voice, arms, and torso. Lastly, preaching with imagination means making good use of the English language, including figures of speech, illustrations, and stories.

Montoya's approach is balanced. He gives almost equal time to each of the eight characteristics, and he never says that one characteristic is more important than any of the others. He does, however, order his chapters in a responsible way, suggesting an order of descending importance, with a discussion of spiritual authority in chapter one, and ending the book

with his last chapter on imagination.

Overall, Montoya offers a good, but cursory look at what it means to be passionate in preaching. I especially appreciated his suggestions at the end of many of the chapters on how to acquire the particular characteristic discussed. Such suggestions reveal the author's "teacher's heart" (Montoya teaches preaching at Master's Seminary in California) and demonstrate his effort in this book not just to define passionate preaching, but to help preachers to become passionate.

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Confirming the Pastoral Call: A Guide to Matching Candidates and Congregations. By Joseph L. Umidi. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2000, 0-8254-3902-7, 154 pp., $9.99, paperback.

Based on research done by the author and colleagues, this book seeks to help pastors and churches utilize good methods in the search process for church staff. Dr. Umidi is a consultant to churches engaged in searches for pastors, and he brings his personal experience into his writing. The style is easy to read, and the research which undergirds the book is commendable.

Several chapters are worth the price of the book. Chapter one contains valuable statistics outlining the problems in matching pastors with churches. Chapter six has excellent material on the pastor's integrity. Chapter eight is helpful in describing a good "courting process." And, chapter ten contains excellent questions which are helpful both to the pastoral candidate and the search committee in the interview process.

Likewise, the appendices are quite helpful, including forms and reference points for pastoral candidates and search committees. However, the first appendix is an outline for a "concert of prayer" and does not relate directly to the topic of the book; it seems to be strangely placed.

On pp. 88-89 there is a clever assessment of how search committees might have evaluated a number of Biblical leaders. It is a telling indictment of the worst of search committees.

Although the author is a seminary professor, on occasion he is critical of the training seminaries provide. On p. 39 he states: "Our emerging leaders don't need more exegetical or theological training. Instead, they must develop the ability to understand culture, particularly church culture." If pressed, he would no doubt want to qualify that statement. Elsewhere in the book he comments that the "rigors of academia" do not prepare people for the real work of ministry (p. 99). His words illustrate the need for seminaries and churches to work together in educating and training people for ministry.
Further, when he lists a number of doctrinal issues search committee should look for when examining candidates' resumes, at least half the questions he poses address management issues, not doctrinal ones.

These criticisms, however, should not discourage search committees and pastoral candidates from making good use of this excellent resource. Might I suggest he do a sequel on helping pastoral candidates know how to read a church's self-study? The author's background and interest qualify him for such a book. Material on this topic would be a good addition to this book.

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Visually Speaking: Radio and the Renaissance of Preaching. By Jolyon P. Mitchell. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999, 0-567-08701-8, x + 294 pp., $29.95, paperback.

Jolyon Mitchell is well-qualified to address the intersection of two related arts: radio speaking and preaching. He formerly was a producer for the BBC World Service and currently is a lecturer in communication and theology at Edinburgh University. He is also a preacher. His primary research question is "What can preachers learn from radio broadcasters?" (1). His interest in the subject was revived when he produced Garrison Keillor's Radio Preachers, traveling through the American south to record and interview colorful preachers who broadcast on small stations.

Like many homileticians before him, Mitchell argues that the shifting communication context in the United States and Great Britain should influence preaching. He is thoroughly familiar with Buttrick (*Homiletic*) and demonstrates wide reading in recent homiletics drawing upon authors such as Craddock, Lowry, Paul Scott Wilson (*The Practice of Preaching*), and Lucy Rose (*Sharing the Word*). He makes good use of Ong, *The Presence of the Word*, to argue that preachers must shift with our culture into "secondary orality" (a blend of orality and print cultures), and he presents a thoughtful and balanced critique of Willimon (*Peculiar Speech* and *The Intrusive Word*) and Ellul (*The Humiliation of the Word*).

Whereas modern homileticians have focused on the influence of TV and movies, Mitchell focuses on radio. This contribution to homiletics is unique and justified, for radio speech has more in common with preaching than do the visual media of television and film. Like radio, preaching underwent a crisis of popularity and confidence but made a strong recovery. Like radio, preaching is primarily verbal and aural, not visual. Mitchell contends that preachers can learn from radio speakers. The primary lesson the author would have readers learn is to use "visual language" (language that prompts listeners to imaginatively enter the world of the biblical text). TV displays with pictures, but radio suggests with words, thus Mitchell argues that radio is more engaging than television. It prompts the audience to use their imaginations. Mitchell wants preachers to do the same.

Visually Speaking is divided into three parts. Part I, "Preaching and Radio" (chapters 1-4), documents how radio has made a comeback by adjusting to technology. For example, radios are now portable, and listening has become privatized. The family no longer gathers around the radio set in the living room to share a common experience. Now we listen in our cars or with our walkman sets. Radio speakers have shifted their styles to reach individuals. For radio, and Mitchell recommends for preaching as well, a proclamatory style is out, and a

conversational style is in. Even though radio speakers are mass communicators, they sound like they are talking to individuals. In contrast to radio's evolution to adjust to technology, pictorial language is one of radio's enduring qualities. It has always been crucial for success. According to Mitchell, pictorial language should be an enduring quality of preaching as well.

Part II, "Case Studies from British and American Religious Radio" (chapters 5-7), tests some of the author's hypotheses to see how successful broadcasters have used visual language. Mitchell praises the metaphorical, narrative, and iconographic language of British broadcasters Ronald Wright, C.S. Lewis, Angela Tilby, and Lionel Blue, but he has little good to say about American radio preachers. They are labeled the "singing preacher," the "athletic preacher," "blowing preachers," the "radio faith healer," and the "radio prophet." By and large, these preachers use "highly coded terms" and extreme "para-linguistic factors" (such as shouting and blowing). Their followers understand and value these styles, but most American radio preachers claim to use radio for evangelism. Their language and delivery probably alienate outsiders.

Part III, "Translation and Embodiment" (chapters 8-10), explores the theology of visual language, arguing that preachers should adopt a "dynamic equivalence" and incarnational approach to build bridges between the audience and the biblical text. The analysis and documentation of Part III is less rigorous than Parts I and II, but this is not to say that Part III is superficial. Mitchell simply seems more at home in homiletics and radio than in theology.

Each chapter is heavily documented with scores of endnotes, and a forty-seven page bibliography demonstrates how carefully Mitchell has situated his argument especially in communication and homiletical literature.

This book's strengths are many. It is very well organized, clearly written, interesting, and superbly documented. It deals with a narrow and neglected issue (what preachers can learn from radio speakers) and it argues charitably and cautiously. This kind of qualification is typical of Mitchell: Even though he obviously admires C.S. Lewis, he concedes that some of "the radio academic's" broadcasts are too densely argued to be grasped in oral communication. Lewis' "Radio Talks" bear some marks of written discourse even though Lewis tried to write for the ear. Mitchell concedes that Lewis' broadcasts would be unlikely to hold many present day listeners' attention (98).

Visually Speaking originally may have been a doctoral thesis, but Mitchell has revised the text into a readable and helpful book for preachers, not just homileticians. The final chapter applies the lessons learned from the previous chapters with four terse imperatives: Preachers should "listen," "picture," "translate," and "edit." This advice is not new in the field of homiletics, but grounded in theory and case studies, it is an excellent reminder that preachers must analyze and adapt to today's media milieu.

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