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Evangelical Homiletics Society

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Contents

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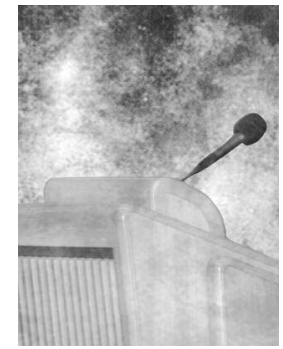

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The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society is the publication of the Evangelical Homiletics Society. Organized in 1997, the Evangelical Homiletics Society is an academic society established for the exchange of ideas related to the instruction 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.

Getting Started

by Scott M. Gibson

Sometimes we struggle with getting started. Some of the world's greatest movements were like that. They began small and then grew to large organizations. Typically, one or two people germinate an idea and then the excitement about the idea spreads. But sometimes it spreads more slowly than anticipated. Sometimes the beginnings are marked by baby steps rather than giant steps.

Last December we launched this new publication, *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society*. Our first issues have come slowly. That does not mean that we are not making progress, but it does mean that the progress is more slower than anticipated. The burden of teaching, preaching, writing, editing of another journal, and a difficult sabbatical contributed to the almost false start to the regular flow of the *Journal*. For this, I apologize. I realize that I can only do a limited number of tasks and when the balance gets to be too much, everything suffers.

But now, we are back on track. We are ready to get started again, with renewed strength and progress.

In this issue we are treated to an essay by John Tornfelt on the chiastic structures of the Psalms. He discusses how we might understand the use and function of chiasms and determine how we might better preach this rich poetic portion of Scripture.

A second article concerns honorariums. Jeff Arthurs conducted a survey of members of the Evangelical Homiletics Society asking them questions about compensation for preaching. You will find his survey interesting and may be better able to determine your standards for giving and receiving an honorarium.

The sermon in this edition is by Endel Lee, the immediate past-president of EHS. Endel is known among us as a warm hearted brother and leader. His sermon, "When Your Soul Quakes," was delivered at the October 2002 Evangelical Homiletics Society gathering at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL.

Finally, as is our practice, the remaining section of the *Journal* is comprised of book reviews. Our hope is that these reviews will enable readers to make informed choices about the books they will eventually read and use in the classroom.

Many of our members are aware of the death of co-founder and past president of the Evangelical Homiletics Society, Keith Willhite on 16 April 2003. The next issue of the *Journal* will be a tribute to Keith's life and work.

Thank you for your interest in preaching and in the task of teaching men and women the challenges of preaching His Word. My hope is that this journal will contribute in a small way to what God has called you to do and be.

Preaching The Psalms: Understanding Chiastic Structures For Greater Clarity

by John V. Tornfelt

(editor's note: John V. Tornfelt is Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministries at Evangelical Theological Seminary, Meyerstown, PA.)

Abstract

Although in ancient Israel psalms were primarily intended to be heard in a linear fashion, a number of psalms also exhibit a secondary chiastic arrangement (a-b-c-b'-a'). This arrangement was not only aesthetically pleasing to the audience but it also provided the psalmist with an opportunity to treat themes twice in a psalm. For example, when a chiastic structure is followed, the unmatched center (a-b-c-b'-a') is normally the centerpiece of the psalm and where the central truth is found. Moreover, one unit from the first half of the psalm can be considered together with its matching unit in the psalm's second half in order to more fully understand the theme of the psalmist. By paying attention to chiastic structures, the expositor can preach from the psalms with greater clarity.

Introduction

When asked why she was so devoted to the psalms, one woman responded: "You do not love the psalms because you understand them; you love them because they understand you."[1] She was so right! It is one reason why preaching the psalms offers such promise for pastors who invest their time to search out their truths. God's voice can be heard. It is as if the words and phrases come from the heart of God. You find yourself in conversation with the psalmists. In some instances, you are in agreement with these ancient writers while at other times you are delighted, confused or perhaps, angry.

The psalms speak about life, not as you might imagine or prefer it to be but as it is encountered. They are strikingly realistic and "filled

with such images (which) provide a frequent point of contact with human experience."[2] Your soul is captured in a peculiar but wonderful way. You come away with a sense the psalmist knows more about you than you do.

I appreciate Howard Baker's perspective about the power of the psalms:

> The psalms rescue us from our fear of facing certain conditions of soul. They rescue us, too, from our fear of walking through interior confusion or discomfort. The psalms call to us, out of the depths of our human struggle, to connect with God. Praying the psalms gives us a well-rounded vocabulary with which to voice the soul's deepest cries. We can expect to find grace on this path because God inspired this prayer book for our sake, and it was the prayer book of Israel, of Jesus and of the early church. We can move from superficial living into the depths of God's compassion, and here we meet God heart-to-heart, facing in our happiness and despondency, truthfulness and lying, integrity and hypocrisy.[3]

We are to preach the psalms also because they are a theological book containing profound truths about the person of God. But unlike the historical books, prophets, gospels or epistles, the psalms are more like spiritual journals than systematic theologies. As Philip Yancey writes, "They are not so much representing God to the people as the people representing themselves to God."[4] Nevertheless, the psalms are no less authoritative, and are able to challenge and guide in personal and seemingly less structured ways.

But how are preachers to approach the psalms? More than a few preachers are not certain. Though this genre is not intentionally neglected, it is not dealt with as frequently as other types of biblical literature. Greg Parsons states, "Yet though the psalms are perennial favorites widely read for devotional purposes, for counseling and ministering to the sick, and for public worship, they apparently are rarely preached or taught."[5] But why a hesitancy since psalms have an ability to "give voice to the furthest corners of the human heart and offer words of comfort and healing to the deepest wounds, light to those

who walk in shadow?"[6] Walter Kaiser observes, "There is no doubt that the poetical forms in Scripture will always pose more problems for the exegete than most sections ever will."[7]

One explanation may be confusion in that the psalms can be difficult to follow. Though a reader may be inspired by the psalms, the flow of thought can seem disjointed. The psalmist can appear confused, repeating himself without apparent reason. At times, you wish the psalmist would just finish off his thoughts! Though you identify with the psalmist in his feelings and thoughts, his words remain inconclusive, open-ended or untidy. Consequently, preaching the psalms may seem problematic and you would just as soon look elsewhere for next Sunday's sermon.

Yet Elizabeth Achtemeier is persuaded there is an ongoing, serious need to preach the psalms. They are in danger of being lost in our churches. Achtemeier writes:

> We are in danger of losing the Psalter in our churches; indeed, many have already lost it, and so it is no accident that many people in our congregations do not know how to pray. We pray these days, in unbridled fancy, to almost any kind of god or goddess – to a great soul of nature, an impersonal power, the projection of our desires. But the psalmists pray to a God with a very particular, personal character, who has made his person and will and goal known in the specificities of the holy history. We pray in all sorts of languages – that of street gangs and feminists, of stuffed shirts and pietists, of nature worshipers and self-idolaters. The psalmists pray in the utter frankness of the redeemed, the eloquent passion of the loved, the pained agony of the judged – in short, in the language of a peculiar people whose life has been set apart, molded, sometimes, pounded, always wept over and sustained and transformed by a God who has chosen to dwell in their midst…what a sermon from the psalms must do is to enable us to see we are that people – indeed, to enable us by the action of God through the sermon to become that people. We not only *can* preach from the psalms we *must* preach from them, for their praises and prayers and piety must become ours as the people of Jesus Christ.[8]

Structural Analyses

Before preaching the psalms careful exegetical work must be done. In *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, David Dorsey proposes three steps for this exegetical work: 1) identification of the constituent units; 2) consideration of how the units have been arranged; and 3) understanding the relationship between structure and meaning.[9] As important as identifying these steps may be, it can be arduous because of the nature of Hebrew poetry. As a form of literature, poetry is usually denser or more concentrated than ordinary language. Laurence Perrine understands it as a type of language that says more with "higher voltage" and "greater pressure per word."[10] Regarding this compactness, Robert Alter says Hebrew poetry is "a system of complex linkages of sound, image, word, rhythm, syntax, theme, idea…an instrument for conveying densely-patterned meanings, and sometimes contradictory meanings, that are not readily conveyable through other kinds of discourse."[11]

Similarly, J.P. Fokkelman states:

> Poetry is the most compact and concentrated form of speech possible. By making the most of his or her linguistic tools, the poet creates an immense richness of meaning, and this richness becomes available if we as readers know how to handle the density: how we can cautiously tackle complexity, probe the various layers one by one, and unfold them.[12]

Yet as dense as poetry may seem, the psalms emotionally express "a distinctive, sometimes radically new, sense of time, space, history, creation, and the character of individual destiny."[13] Still, it is the preacher's task to find his or her way through these layers so as to explain their truth to the people of God. To this end, Thomas Long remarks:

> The ways in which the psalms, through their poetic language, interact with the reader's perception, while complex and densely layered, are neither magical nor beyond analysis. When the preacher as interpreter performs a close reading of a psalm, certain poetic devices, characteristic ways of structuring language to achieve certain effects, begin to surface. Paying careful attention to these linguistic strategies can

> reveal to the exegete not only how the psalm is doing its work, but also much about what the psalm is seeking to say and to do.[14]

Constituent Units

When analyzing the structure of an Old Testament book such as the psalms, Dorsey suggests the first step is to determine the *constituent units*. Ancient writers designed and intentionally structured their literary units for the benefit of their listeners. Today, when analyzing these units, preachers must be careful not to artificially impose their own units on the text but seek to understand the mind and heart of the biblical author.

The constituent units in some books (*i.e.* Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Hosea) are difficult to determine because literary units are not well-marked. (See chapter two in Dorsey regarding literary units.) However, the psalms are unique and differ from most Old Testament books in being comprised of 150 individual units which are identifiable by titles and superscriptions.[15]

Arrangements of Literary Units

Dorsey states the second task in structural analysis is recognizing how the literary units are arranged by the biblical writer. The most common schemes in the Old Testament literature are *linear, parallel* and *symmetrical*.

Linear patterns are frequently found in historical books and follow an a-b-c-d-e arrangement. This sequence is easier for modern listeners to follow because it is patterned after a narrative or story (*i.e.* 1 and 2 Kings). Arrangements can be either chronological (*i.e.* sequential account) or non-chronological (*i.e.* collection of independent but related pieces).

Parallel patterns are seen in Hebrew poetry with statements juxtaposed in varying relationships. For centuries, scholars equated such parallel arrangements with poetry. According to Bernhard Anderson (2000), such poetry had been noted by early commentators as Josephus, Philo and Augustine.[16] However it was Robert Lowth (1753) who pointed out the importance of *parallelismus membrorum* (parallelism of clauses) and led the way to contemporary studies in literary arrangement.[17] In

Isaiah: A New Translation with a Preliminary Dissertation and Notes, Lowth commented:

> The correspondence of one verse or line with another I call parallelism. When a proposition is delivered, and a second is subjoined to it, or drawn under it, equivalent, or contrasted with it in sense, or similar to it in the form of grammatical construction; these I call parallel lines; and the words or phrases answering one to another in the corresponding lines parallel terms.[18]

Following Lowth's groundbreaking work, further research was done exploring how parallelism creates poetic effect. T.H. Robinson developed Lowth's views and affirmed parallelism to be of greater importance than rhythm.[19] Stephen Geller supported Lowth while advocating rhythm and strophic structures were also critical in the determination of meaning.[20] Alter refers to this parallel patterning as a linguistic phenomenon which promotes the perception of a correspondence between words and concepts which involves the repetition or substitution of things which are equivalent on one or more linguistic levels.[21] Biblical scholars such as James Kugel have disagreed with Lowth, perceiving inconsistencies and contending Lowth understood the matter rather simplistically. Kugel argues that lines are parallel not because B is meant to be parallel to A but because B typically supports A, carries it further, backs it up, completes it, and goes beyond it. Though the difference is slight, it is an important nuance in explaining why paralleling can appear to be so inconsistent.[22] Commenting on Kugel, S.E. Gillingham says he was "probably right to see parallelism less as one particular method used by Hebrew poets than as an adaptable rhetorical device used for 'seconding' or 'closing' poetic units."[23] Gillingham also states there is "little evidence the poet was constrained by particular binary thought-patterns."[24] In addition, Adele Berlin agrees with Kugel in contending it is not parallelism itself which so much characterizes poetry but the preponderance of the parallelism. In other words, parallelism is not the defining characteristic of poetry though there is a significant amount of parallel structures. As Berlin states parallelism "appears to be the constructive principle on which a poem is built."[25]

Regardless of such differences, parallelism is the most obvious trait of Old Testament poetry. Kaiser emphasizes Lowth's understanding has never been superseded. He writes, "From Lowth's day to this, it has never been seriously questioned that parallelism, as he defined it, is the dominant stylistic feature of poetry in the Old Testament."[26] Tremper Longman says it is not simply a literary ornament but the key to unlocking the depth of expressions found within the psalms.[27] However such parallelisms are not as easy to perceive as linear arrangements because listeners have to remember earlier points to catch the repetition. Yet as Dorsey states, parallel patterns have several advantages with one being repetitiveness making it easier for speakers and listeners to remember. Repetitiveness also provides an opportunity to compare, contrast, reiterate, emphasize and illustrate particular ideas. Though parallel patterns vary, authors used them to engagingly make their points.[28]

But what is the purpose of parallelism? Why is it employed when an idea can be expressed once and clearly understood? Is it not being redundant? Fokkelman asks if it isn't primitive? Responding to his own query, he says modern man's questioning smacks of intellectualism and a Western world sense of superiority. This attitude is incorrect and "can be weeded out only if we take the poetic aspect of poetry seriously and cease to make it subservient to historiography, theology, or other disciplines that feel slightly uncomfortable with literature."[29]

Fokkelman uses the metaphor of binoculars to express the value of parallelism. Individuals have the advantage of seeing "in stereo." Parallelism creates two separate images which can be superimposed and offer two opportunities for a biblical truth to become evident. He states: "Only those who look closely and have patience will discover and savor the role played by dissimilarity, its surprises, and its richness of meaning."[30] Fokkelman's position is similar to Kaiser's who emphasizes a *semantic parallelism* which is a parallelism of meaning, not simply form. It was the intention of the psalmists to emphasize thought in their poetry rather than the grammatical structuring.[31] Such parallel patterning is characterized by an a-b-c // a'-b'-c' arrangement which can be *synonymous* or *antithetical*.

In *synonymous parallelism*, the second line repeats the idea of the opening line without significant addition or subtraction. Psalm 25:1-2 follows this pattern:

a to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul
a' in you I trust, O my God
b do not me be put to shame
b' nor let my enemies triumph over me

Similarly, Psalm 27:1 demonstrates synonymous parallelism but in an alternating arrangement:

a the Lord is my light and my salvation
b whom shall I fear?
a' the Lord is the stronghold of my life
b' of whom shall I be afraid?

With *antithetical parallelism*, the second line contrasts or negates the thought of the first line. In Psalm 20:7-8 we find this pattern:

a some trust in chariots and some in horses
b but we trust in the name of the Lord our God
a' they are brought to their knees and fall
b' but we rise up and stand firm.

Symmetrical parallelism has a common arrangement of (a-b-b'- a' or a-b-c-c'-b'-a') and features two sets of constituent units in which the secondary unit matches in the reverse order (echoes or mirrors) the previous unit, demonstrating coherence and completeness. Psalm 22:22 exemplifies such an arrangement:

a I will declare your name
b to my brothers
b' in the congregation
a' I will praise you

The above examples are characterized by one-to-one correspondence or even parallelism. However, arrangements can be uneven where an unmatched central unit (a-b-a' or a-b-c-b'-a') connects or links together the constituent sets in verses or within the entire psalm.[32] Psalm 102:1-2 demonstrates such an arrangement:

a hear my prayer
b O Lord let my cry for help come to you

c do not hide your face when I am in distress

b' turn your ear to me when I call

a' answer me quickly

Regardless of the type of symmetry, these arrangements are characterized by repetition and provide order, balance and a sense of stability to the psalms.

Structure and Meaning

A third step is to consider the impact of structure on a poem's meaning. Biblical authors used structure to intensify their ideas. John Walsh writes: "The 'meaning' of a work of literature is communicated as much by the structure of the work as by surface 'content.'"[33] Shimon Bar-Efrat offers a similar comment: "Structure has rhetorical and expressive value: it is one of the factors governing the effect of the work on the reader and in addition it serves to express or accentuate meaning.[34]

Linear structures are found in Exodus where Moses used a chronological arrangement to follow the history of Israel. This straightforward structure was used to trace the Israelites' escape from Egypt and their protracted journey through the wilderness of Sinai. Similarly in contemporary literature, the core idea or most important event is often situated toward the end of the account.

Structured repetitions, parallel (a-b-c-a'-b'-c') and symmetric (a-b-c-c'-b'-a'), are other literary forms intentionally utilized by the biblical writers. According to H. Van Dyke Parunak, one reason is that biblical literature is "essentially aural…intended to be understood with the ear, and not with the eye.[35] Commenting on Parunak, Sidney Greidanus writes:

> Whereas modern authors can give clues to their intended meaning by emphasizing words and phrases with italics or bold print and de-emphasizing items with parentheses or with placement in footnotes or appendices, ancient authors did not have that graphic dimension at their disposal. Hence both with respect to indicating the limits of a literary unit as

> well as giving clues to its intended meaning, ancient authors were dependent on other than modern, graphic techniques. Since their techniques had to be perceived aurally, they consisted primarily of structural patterns that could be sensed by ears attuned to those patterns.[36]

Second, structured repetitions enabled a writer to make a lasting impact with the positioning of his words. Rather than the conclusion being the prominent position, the center of the psalm can be a more natural location. Whether there is an "unmatched" unit in the parallelism or a balanced symmetrical scheme, the central unit is used as the climax or turning point.

Third, matching units surrounding this center were intentionally developed by Hebrew writers to emphasize their ideas. These units contained ideas which elaborated on the prominent thought. The matching units were designed to highlight, compare, contrast, elaborate, reverse, reciprocate or resolve. In so doing, psalmists were able to reinforce ideas without explicitly restating them.[37]

Chiastic Structures

One feature of parallelism in a number of psalms is the chiasm, a term from the Greek word *chiazein* which consists of "a placing crosswise" of words. According to Nils Lund, the term is "used in rhetoric to designate an inversion of the order of words or phrase which are repeated or subsequently referred to in the sentence."[38] John Welch states that chiasm means to "mark with two lines crossing like a X (chi)."[39] Greidanus states if the two mirrored halves of a simple chiastic structure are placed one under the other and lines drawn connecting the corresponding elements, the lines form a shape resembling the capital Greek letter X.[40]

Other definitions of chiastic structures have been suggested. Robert Alden describes a chiasm as the inversion of the order of words in two corresponding parallel phrases.[41] Kaiser understands a chiasm as an inversion of parallel terms in successive lines so that lines 1 and 4 correspond to each other as do 2 and 3.[42] According to Longman, chiasms are the most interesting and frequently encountered categories of parallelism.[43] Yelland views a chiasm as "a passage in which the second

part is inverted and balanced against the first…a type of antithesis."[44]

Psalm 1 is an example of a chiasm in which a,b is followed by antithetical statements in b',a':

a righteous will keep themselves separate from the wicked (vv. 1-2)
  b secure and fruitful state of the righteous (v.3)
  b' insecure and barren state of the wicked (v.4)
a' wicked will be kept separate from the righteous (vv. 5-6)

But what is the purpose of chiastic arrangements? C. Hassell Bullock contends a biblical writer can call attention to ideas that were at the core of his thoughts by the manner in which he structures them in his poetry.[45] According to Greidanus, the purpose of chiasms is "to reveal the theme of a passage because it focuses on the pivotal thought around which the passage turns."[46] Parunak's understanding is similar. "Chiastic structures frequently have a unique center item…(its) location makes it suitable for emphasizing whatever is placed there…to focus the reader's (or hearer's) attention on the item of interest."[47]

Regarding chiasms, Welch states:

> As the structure expands in number of elements, the abrupt repetition by which the last elements of the first of the system become the first elements of the second half can draw unusual attention to the central terms, which are repeated in close proximity to each other. An emphatic focus on the center can be employed by a skillful composer to elevate the importance of a central concept or to dramatize a radical shift of events at the turning-point. Meanwhile, the remainder of the system can be used...as a framework through which the author can compare, contrast, juxtapose, complement, or complete each of the flanking elements in the chiastic system.[48]

Regardless of the terms used (*i.e.* core thought, emphatic focus, theme or unique center), Bullock, Greidanus, Parunak and Welch understand chiastic structures to be so designed that the central truth is conspicuously situated in the middle of the arrangement.

Three-Part Symmetries

In three-part symmetries, the unmatched central unit reveals the pivotal thought of the psalmist while the opening and closing units underscore this theme.

Psalm 72

a prayer for judgment, prosperity and long life for the king (vv. 1-7)

"he will defend the afflicted; save the children of the needy"
"mountains will bring prosperity"
"endure as long as the sun"

b prayer for the king's rule over all nations (vv. 8-11)
"he will rule from sea to sea"
"kings will bring tribute...present gifts...bow down"

a' prayer for judgment, prosperity and long life for the king (vv. 12-17)

"he will deliver the needy…the afflicted"
"let grain abound throughout the land; on the tops of hills"
"may his name...continue as long as the sun"

This psalm contains a simple chiastic arrangement in which the central truth (b) pertains to the king's ascendancy over the nations (vv. 8-11). The matched repetitions in vv. 1-7 and vv. 12-17 (a, a') emphasize how the king's reign will be with justice for the afflicted and needy, lead to prosperity, and eventuate in long life for the monarch.

Four-Part Symmetries

Four-part arrangements are more common in the Hebrew Psalter. These chiastic arrangements allowed the biblical writer to repetitively match units for literary emphasis.

Psalm 2

a frightening counsel of kings who plot against the Lord and his anointed (vv. 1-3)

"kings of the earth take their stand...against the Lord"

b statement by God of his selection of the king (vv. 4-6)
"I have installed my King on Zion"

b' statement by the king of his selection by God (vv. 7-

9)
"I will proclaim the decree of the Lord"
a' joyful counsel for these helpless kings to serve God (vv. 10-12)
"kings, rulers of the earth...serve the Lord"

Psalm 2 deals with the reversal of fortunes between some pagan kings and the king of Israel. In vv. 1-3 (a) there is a plotting by the kings against God and his people while in vv. 10-12 (a'), there is a significant turn of events with these kings now being commanded to serve the Lord. In the central units (b, b'), statements are about how the Lord thwarted their plans. In vv. 4-6, the psalmist offers words from God's perspective while the king's viewpoint is stated in vv. 7-9.

Five-Part Symmetries

Similar to three-part symmetric arrangement, five-part chiasms allowed the psalmist to focus on his central idea and highlight it with the surrounding matched repetitions.

Psalm 22
a initial complaint (vv. 1-8)
"forsaken me"
"so far from saving me"
"do not answer"
b plea for help (vv. 9-11)
"do not be far"
"there is no one to help"
c description of a dreadful situation (vv. 12-18)
"surrounded...poured out like water...bones out of joint...heart has turned to wax...strength is dried up...people stare/gloat...divide my garments"
b' plea for help (vv. 19-21)
"be not far"
"help me"
a' concluding praise (vv. 22-31)
"has not despised or disdained the suffering"
"has not hidden his face"
"listened to his cry for help"

This psalm is David's prayer for deliverance as he encounters strong enemies and major illness. David effectively used repetition is this chiastic arrangement to emphasize his situation. Repetition was antithetical (a, a') where David poured out his complaint against God (vv. 1-8) and his praise for God's deliverance (vv. 22-31). Yet his appeals in vv. 9-11 and vv. 19-21 (b, b') are synonymous ("*be not far...help*"). Verses 12-18 (c) are at the center of the prayer and highlight the desperate situation in which David has found himself. This position of his plight serves to accentuate the terrifying conditions.

Six-Part Symmetries

Like a four-part chiasm, this symmetrical arrangement does not offer an uneven central position but allows for the reiteration of points through the repeating of matching points.

Psalm 115

a call to praise (v.1)
"*to your name be the glory*"
b taunt of the nations (vv. 2-3)
"*Where is their God?...Our God is in <u>heaven</u>*"
c pagan's trust is in idols (vv. 4-8)
"*...<u>trust</u> in them*"
c' Israel's trust is in the Lord (vv. 9-11)
"*...<u>trust</u> in the Lord*"
b' response to the taunt (vv. 12-16)
"*Maker of <u>heaven</u> and earth...highest <u>heavens</u> belong to the Lord*"
a' call to praise (vv. 17-18)
"*We extol the Lord*"

Psalm 115 contrasts God and the useless idols of unbelieving nations. In the central units (c, c'), the psalmist compares the nature of the trust of the two groups (vv. 4-8 and vv. 9-11). Though the Israelites have been taunted by pagan nations in vv. 2-3 (b), God responds in vv. 12-16 (b') to such taunts and protects his people. The psalm is bracketed (v. 1 and vv. 17-18) with respective calls to praise and extol the Lord (a, a').

Seven-Part Symmetries

The most common parallel pattern is the seven-part scheme in which the center will function as a climax, high point, or resolution.[49] Seven-part symmetries are like three-part and five-part chiasms with uneven symmetrical arrangements. The central truth is surrounded by matched repetitions which emphasize this pivotal idea.

Psalm 30

a promise to praise (v. 1)
"I will exalt you…for you lifted me out of the depths…did not let my enemies gloat"

b report of appeal and rescue by God (vv. 2-3)
"called to you...from going down into the pit"

c statement on the favor of God (vv. 4-5)
". . his favor lasts for a lifetime"

d confidence in the Lord (v. 6)
"I will never be shaken"

c' statement on the favor of God (v. 7)
"...when you favored me"

b' report of appeal and rescue of God (vv. 8-10)
"I called to the Lord...if I go down into the pit?"

a' promise to praise (vv. 11-12)
"I will give you thanks forever"

Psalm 30 focuses on the psalmist's confidence in God (v. 6). The psalmist appeals to God to rescue him in vv. 2-3 and vv. 8-10 (b, b'), and God responded favorably in vv. 4-5 and v. 7 (c, c'). God's intervening action has prompted David to promise the Lord (a) that he will continue to offer praise to him (v. 1), a promise which is then echoed in vv. 11-12 (a').

Preaching the Chiastic Psalms

Based on an awareness and understandings of chiastic psalms, how might preachers proceed in crafting their sermons? In principle, the sermonic procedure should be similar to that of other literary forms in which careful investigative research is accomplished, an exegetical central truth stated, outlines are created, a preaching central truth is formed, illustrations and applications developed, and a manuscript is written.

When crafting a sermon from a chiastic psalm, several issues need particular consideration. One issue pertains to understanding the psalms as whole literary units as intended by the biblical authors. In *Biblical Preaching* Haddon Robinson writes, "In poetic literature such as the Psalms, a paragraph roughly equals a stanza or strophe (*unit*) of a poem. While at times we may choose to expound only a single stanza, normally we will treat the entire psalm. In selecting passages for the expository sermon, therefore, a general principle to follow is this: *Base the sermon on a literary unity of thought*.[50]

As previously stated, Bullock, Dorsey, Greidanus, Parunak and Welch support the idea that chiastic structures are designed so that the major idea of the psalm is conspicuously situated in the middle of the arrangement. Chiastic units have a unique center, intentionally designed by the psalmist, to be the focus of their attention. From the chiastic structuring, you can discover the central truth of the sermon. But as in all effective preaching, you still need to work at stating this central truth in a way which will be memorable for listeners.

Second, understanding the parallel structures of psalms does not necessarily mean all sermons should contain parallelism. Understanding the structures is an exegetical tool which does not need to be carried into the pulpit. However, preachers benefit by attending to such structures, being certain their sermons reflect the chiastic arrangement as purposed by the biblical writer. Thomas Long states:

> …the preacher must pay attention in interpreting the psalm to the ways in which the psalmist, through parallelism, unfolds and nuances the central ideas and images around which the psalm is built. The effect of parallelism on the reader is that those ideas and images begin to take on life in her or his imagination. The sermon should seek to create a similar effect for hearers, even if the rhetorical strategies employed are quite different.[51]

Third, determine where to place the central truth. This key thought can be variously positioned, depending on how you plan to develop the sermon. According to Robinson, arrangements can be deductive, inductive, inductive-deductive, and subject-completed.[52]

In a deductive approach, the central truth is placed in the introduction or first major point of the sermon with specific life applications being provided. The sermon is developed in a clear, linear way with sub-points proving, supporting or applying this central truth. If you prefer to approach a psalm inductively, then life experiences may be your starting point from which you move into a psalm, waiting until the conclusion to offer the central truth. Since the psalms are filled with experiential feelings and thoughts, there is an abundance of fertile ground for the preacher to develop before offering a central truth. With the inductive-deductive approach, the central truth is not expressed until the middle of the sermon. As in the inductive approach, there are ideas and images contained within each psalm with which to creatively surround the central truth. Finally, there is the subject-completed arrangement in which the subject of the central truth needs to be completed. Commonly used by preachers, this approach can be utilized but as in any sermon, communicators must guard against imposing their thoughts upon those of the psalmists.

The following examples are offered as possible approaches in preaching the chiastic psalms. For each psalm, I have offered the chiastic arrangement, exegetical central truth, preaching outline which includes a preaching central truth (CT) and transitional statements. Alternative arrangements are possible (even preferred!) but I propose four examples for consideration.

Three-part Chiasm: Psalm 57

Prior to becoming king of Israel, David had a difficult relationship with the reigning King Saul. Though David sought to honor Saul, the troubled king was jealously in pursuit of him. When David had opportunity to put an end to his difficulties and kill Saul while in the cave of En-Gedi, he acted honorably. He could not bring himself to harm God's anointed leader. Subsequently, Psalm 57 is David's heartfelt plea for God to intervene in this ongoing and stressful situation.

Chiastic Arrangement:

a plea for God to help (vv. 1-5)

prayer: *"He sends from heaven and saves me...his love and his faithfulness"*

refrain: *"be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let*

your glory be over all the earth"

b report of deliverance (v. 6)

"spread a net...dug a pit...fallen into it themselves"

a' praise to God for his help (vv. 7-11)

prayer: *"love...reaching to the heavens...faithfulness reaches to the skies"*

refrain: *"be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth"*

Exegetical Central Truth:

The central truth of this chiasm is found in v. 6 and refers to God's deliverance of David from his foes. This central truth may be stated: "Though enemies had maliciously set a trap for David, they had fallen into the trap themselves."

Preaching Outline: *deductive arrangement*

Though the exegetical outline is an a-b-a' arrangement, the psalm can be rearranged for preaching purposes into a b-a-a' sequence. With such a deductive arrangement, the preaching central truth is stated in the Introduction with David speaking of enemies plotting but being foiled as God reversed their schemes. In Point I, the character and intervening ways of God are described. Point II in the preaching outline is a chiastic echo of Point I which offers words of gratitude based upon God's faithful intervention.

"*God can bring about a reversal of what may seem to be the inevitable*" (v. 6). (CT)

("We get a picture of this truth from David when he was surrounded.")

When surrounded by your enemies, you can cry out to God for help (vv. 1-5).

You can cry for mercy to the God who faithfully keeps his promises.

God will respond in love and faithfulness to your pleas.

When matters are still unresolved, praise remains an appropriate act.

("But let's not forget how God has a way of stepping

into our situations.")

II. When your enemies are defeated, offer God your thanks for his help (vv. 7-11).

A. You can praise God who is faithful in keeping his promises.

In love and faithfulness, God responds to your pleas.

C. When God has resolved matters, continue with your praise.

Four-part Symmetry: Psalm 3

This psalm is David's response as he is fleeing from his son Absalom who is usurping power. Statements are made about his plight in (vv. 1-2) which are balanced by his appeals in vv. 7-8. In response to their taunts, David is trustful and confident, emphatically insisting that God will bring about his deliverance (vv. 3-6).

Chiastic Arrangement:

a (foes) enemies have arisen (vv. 1-2)
"many are my foes...many have risen against me"
"God will not deliver him"

b statements of trust (vv. 3-4)
"shield around me...lifts up my head"
"cry aloud...answers from his holy hill"

b' statements of confidence (vv. 5-6)
"sustains me"
"will not fear"

a' Lord...arise (vv. 7-8)
"Arise, O Lord!...you have struck all my enemies"
"Deliver me, O my God"

Exegetical Central Truth:

The central truth is found in the synonymous parallel statements of trust and confidence in vv. 3-6. With enemies surrounding him, David realizes his plight and is concerned for his own safety. The central truth can be stated: "When surrounded by his enemies, David is not fearful because God had already surrounded him."

Preaching Outline: *inductive arrangement*

The preaching outline is structured inductively to highlight the intense feelings expressed in vv. 1-2 and vv. 7-8. Point I deals with the reality of foes who mock God and taunt us. We await God's release from such opposition (a, a'). The preaching central truth is not stated until the end of Point II (vv. 3-6) (b, b') after David offers some foundational theological truths.

You may feel surrounded by people who are against you (vv. 1-2; vv. 7-8).

Your foes in life can be many.

Opponents can cause you to fear as they tauntingly claim that God will not intervene.

You want God to arise and help you out of your difficult situation(s).

("We overhear David as he makes statements of trust and confidence.")

II. When surrounded by opposition, thinking about God is the place to start (vv. 3-6).

God is someone you can trust.

"shield of protection around me...lifts up my head"

"cry aloud...answers from his holy hill"

You can be confident.

"sustains me"

"struck all my enemies"

"Arise, O Lord!"

"Deliver me, O my God"

"When surrounded by your enemies, remember that God was the first one to surround you." (CT)

Five-part Chiasm: Psalm 51

This penitential psalm emphasizes David's plea for forgiveness (vv. 6-12) and is highlighted in v.9 (c) where he beseeches God to *"hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity."* The matching units in vv. 1-2 and vv. 16-17(a, a') offer complementary grounds for forgiveness and restoration. Another set of matching units is seen in vv. 3-5 and vv. 13-15 (b, b') which balance David's confession with a vow to continue to speak of the Lord's ways.[53]

Chiastic Arrangement:

a basis for requesting forgiveness (vv. 1-2)
"mercy…unfailing love…compassion"
"wash…cleanse"

b confession of transgression and sins (vv. 3-5)
"know my transgressions…my sin"

c prayer for cleansing and restoration (vv. 6-12)
"cleanse me...wash me"
"hide your face from my sins...blot out all my iniquity"
"create in me a pure heart"
"renew a steadfast spirit"
"restore to me the joy of your salvation"

b' vow to confess God's ways to transgressors and sinners (vv. 13-15)
"teach transgressors your ways...sinners will turn back"

a' basis for forgiveness (vv. 16-17)
"not delight in sacrifice...burnt offerings"
"broken spirit...broken and contrite heart"

Exegetical Central Truth:

The central truth for Psalm 51 is: "After recognizing the depth of his sin and iniquity, David asked God to cleanse him, renew his heart, and restore the joy of salvation."

Preaching Outline: *inductive-deductive arrangement*

The preaching outline is inductively-deductively arranged to focus on David's request for God's cleansing and restoration (vv. 6-12). Though your listeners may have not been involved in adulterous relationships as David was with Bathsheba, everyone has violated God's principles (and tried to conceal it). After introducing the background material, Point I emphasizes the theological basis for a renewed relationship with God (vv. 1-2). Point II exemplifies the deep confession by David of his waywardness.

Point III is the turning point as David pleads for God to make

him clean. After being on the run for so long, people need to know that they can start over and how the Lord deeply desires it for them. The confession of Point II is echoed in Point IV although in these verses (vv. 13-15), it is more a vow to speak out and offer hope to individuals still needing godly restoration. The preaching outline concludes with Point V (vv. 16-17) where David mirrors his initial thoughts of the need to acknowledge sin with broken spirits and hearts of contrition.

(Since vv.18-19 is an addendum, it is not necessary to preach. It is uncertain as to its contribution to the psalm. Still, it could be acknowledged in the presentation.)

Your God welcomes your return (vv. 1-2).
God is merciful, loving and compassionate.
God makes you clean in his sight
("But there is more to forgiveness than under standing the nature of God.")

You need to acknowledge how you have turned against the Lord (vv. 3-5).
A. You are naturally inclined to go against God's ways.
B. You violate God's purposes by choice.
("But God has some very good news for you.")

III. "*Regardless of how wrong your life has been, it is never too late to come clean and start over*" (vv. 6-12). (CT)
A. You can plea for forgiveness.
"*cleanse and wash me*"
"*hide your face from my sins*"
"*blot out all my iniquity*"
B. You can ask God to renew your life.
"*create in me a pure heart*"
"*renew a steadfast spirit*"
"*restore to me the joy of salvation*"
("Yet there is more to your pleas and requests, and it is in your desires.")

IV. You vow to see others turn back to the Lord (vv. 13-15).

You desire to let others know there is a way back.
You hope to see people choose God's purposes.
("One final thought regarding your starting over.")

V. Your God is welcoming you back (vv. 16-17).
   A. God is not interested in your sacrifices.
   B. God is looking for hearts that are broken and contrite.

Seven-part Chiasm: Psalm 18

David is celebrating God for his deliverance in the face of opposition. The opening unit of praise (vv. 1-3) is mirrored by the closing unit in vv. 46-50 (a, a'). There is a matching unit in vv. 4-19 and vv. 33-36 (b, b') where God sensationally rescues David from his enemies and then how David turns around to defeat these foes. There are also matching units in vv. 20-24 and vv. 31-32 (c, c') which speak of the psalmist's blameless character and the blamelessness of God. The highlight of the psalm is in vv. 25-29 (d) where David emphatically gives God the credit for the victory. This attribution leads David to offer the psalm's central truth of how God exalts the humble but humbles the proud.

Chiastic Arrangement:

a praise (vv. 1-3)
"*my rock… my salvation*"
"*deliverer…saved from my enemies*"

b God's rescue of the psalmist from enemies (vv. 4-19)
"*I called to the Lord…I cried to my God for help…he heard my voice*"
"*shot his arrows and scattered the enemy…bolts of lightning routed them*"
"*Lord was… my support*"
"*brought me into a spacious place*"
"*rescued me from my powerful enemy…foes who were too strong for me*"

c God helps the psalmist because he was blameless (vv. 20-

24)

"I have kept the ways of the Lord…not done evil"

"laws are before me"

d God exalts the humble but humbles the proud (vv. 25-29)

"save the humble"

"bring low…haughty"

"turn darkness into light"

"with my God I can scale a wall"

c' God is blameless and helps those who turn to Him (vv. 30-31)

"his way… is perfect"

"word of the Lord is flawless"

b' psalmist's defeat of his enemies (vv. 32-45)

"they cried but there was no one to save them"

"shield of victory…"

"right hand sustains me…stoop down to make me great"

"broaden the path beneath me"

"pursued my enemies and overtook them…did not turn back until destroyed"

a' closing praise (vv. 46-50)

"…my rock…my Savior"

"Savior… saves me from my enemies"

Exegetical Central Truth:

The central truth is: "God humbles the proud when they are exalting themselves but God exalts the humble when they are not proud."

Preaching Outline: *subject-completed arrangement*

This outline has a subject-completed arrangement in which the subject (but not necessarily the complete central truth) is stated in the sermon's introduction. The subject is then fol-

lowed by several points which complete the subject. This type of sermon is "stitched" by a key word or phrase (*i.e.* characteristics) which coordinates or links the major points. In this preaching outline, that phrase is: "If you are humble…"

The sermon's central truth can be stated in the introduction (*i.e.* "God humbles the proud when they exalt themselves, and exalts the lowly as they humble themselves") which is determined from vv. 25-29. However it is a transitional statement-question which points both the preacher and listeners into the rest of the sermon and leads to answering the statement-question, "What are some of the characteristics of a person who is humble?" (inductive raising of the CT question)

People who are humble don't have illusions about themselves (vv. 1-3; vv. 46-50).
God is your rock and refuge.
God is your Savior.
("There is more to claiming God as your rock but as your defender.")

II. People who are humble, know that God is on their side (vv. 4-19; vv. 32-45).
God hears your cry for help.
God scatters the enemy, supports, and rescues you from the enemy.
God sustains you, widens the path, and overtakes the enemy.
("There is a third characteristic of someone who is humble.")

People who are humble, strive to walk blamelessly (vv. 20-24; vv. 30- 31).

A. God's ways are being kept, evil is shunned.
B. God is blameless, his ways are perfect.

Conclusion

The psalms offer challenges and opportunities for every preacher. Communicators of the Word dare not neglect them because they have the ability to say to anyone who reads and mediates on them, "He's talking about me!" In their unique and complex way, the psalms speak not only the truth about God but the truth about life. In a simple yet

penetrating manner, this genre reveals the person of God as well as the dreams, hopes and fears of our lives.

Preaching based on an awareness of the chiastic structures of the psalms can be a delight. Though the preparatory process is similar to preaching narratives, prophecies and epistles, there are complexities inherent to chiastic psalms. Communicators must be knowledgeable of their peculiarities if their sermons are to be faithful to the ancient text. But for individuals who invest their energies, the psalms prove to be a remarkable source of wisdom. Hopefully, this paper provides insights and guidelines which preachers will utilize in their proclamation.

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Survey of Honoraria
Of the Members of the Evangelical Homiletical Society

by Jeffrey D. Arthurs

(editor's note: this article was written by Dr. Arthurs while he was on the faculty at Multnomah Bible College, Portland, OR. In August 2002, Dr. Arthurs began serving as Associate Professor of Preaching and Dean of the Chapel at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA.)

Introduction

I have a recurring nightmare that happens while I am awake. The nightmare takes place when I am on the phone with a pastor who has asked me to preach at his church or at a retreat. The pastor asks a perfectly natural question and when he does, I turn into a gibbering fool. The conversation goes like this:

Pastor: We're looking forward to your coming. Do you have any special needs?

Me: Yes, for this message, I like to use Power Point. Is it available?

Pastor: No. (Laughing) We're going to enter the computer age sometime, but we don't have a system yet.

Me: How about an overhead projector?

Pastor: Sure! We'll have it set up and ready to go. Is there anything else?

Me: (I feel it coming). Uh, no.

Pastor: Great. Now, we like to give our guest preachers an honorarium.

Me: (The tension is mounting). Uh huh.

Pastor: Do you have a set amount that you charge?

Me: (My mind starts to spin). Well, uhm, no, not really…

Pastor: Well, what do you suggest?

Me: (Various gibbering sounds).

Pastor: Pardon me?

Me: (More gibbering).

Summary of the Survey

To provide some perspective on the issue of honoraria, with a view toward helping preachers devise a personal policy, twenty-three members of Evangelical Homiletics Society filled out and returned surveys at a recent annual conference. First is listed the question, then the Averages and Totals, followed by the range. Here are the findings:

How much does your home church give guest preachers?
Average: $178
$75-$400 (three at 400)

How large is your home church?
Average: 779 (adults, Sunday morning)
100-5000

Where is your home church?
Northeast-4
Midwest-5
Southeast-2
South-2
Southwest-5
Rocky Mountain-1
Northwest-2
Canada-2

How much do churches typically give you when you preach as a guest?
Average: $159
$75-$400

Do you think that this amount is fair?
Yes-14
No-3
Undecided-1
It depends-2

How long have you been in the ministry?
Average: 21.5 years
4-50 years

Do you have a set fee you request?
Yes-0
No-23

Do you have a conviction against requesting a specified amount?
Yes-14
No-9

Discussion of the Survey Results

Home Church: There does not seem to be a correlation between the size of the congregation and the amount of the honorarium. The survey respondents come from churches of vastly different sizes, ranging from 100 to 5000 adults on a typical Sunday morning, but the range of honoraria is limited, from $75.00 to $400.00. The average honorarium home churches give guest preachers is $178.00.

As with the size of the home church, geography does not seem to be a significant factor correlating with the size of the honorarium. Home churches are located in all sections of the United States, and two are in Canada.

Years in the Ministry: Neither is there correlation between the number of years the preacher has been in the ministry with the amount of the honorarium. The preachers who filled out the survey are an experienced group. The average number of years in the ministry 21.5, but apparently this factor is not significant in the minds of those who decide how much honorarium should be given.

Guest Preaching: The average amount the respondents receive when they preach in other churches is $159.00, slightly lower than what their home churches give. The lowest amount typically received is $75.00. Many respondents stated a range they have been given with one speaker sometimes receiving as much as $400.00 for a single message.

Fair? Most preachers who took the survey felt that the honoraria they receive are fair. Fourteen respondents said "yes, I believe this amount is fair," three said "no," one was undecided, and two simply stated, "it depends." Three respondents did not answer this question. The fact that most of the respondents are satisfied with their honoraria helps explain the unanimous response to the next question.

Set Fee? All twenty-three preachers answered, "no" to the question, "Do you have a set fee you request?" Of those twenty-three, fourteen have a conviction against asking for a set fee, and nine do not. Some reasons given for the conviction against stipulating a fee are: "demanding a set fee makes me feel mercenary"; "if God has gifted me to share His Word-free of charge-I hesitate to charge when sharing the gift"; "I don't want to embarrass or refuse" a church who can't afford much; "I am called to preach"; and "God takes care of my needs."

Many of the fourteen who have a conviction against setting a fee mitigated their conviction by explaining that they do accept honoraria when offered, and they do stipulate that their expenses be covered.

Formula? A final question not appearing in the table above was asked: "Do you have a formula for determining how much to request?" Five respondents have such a formula. Four of the five request a simple flat fee per service. The other respondent suggests an average of one dollar for each person who attends.

Implications

1 Corinthians 9 teaches clearly that apostles have the right to be supported materially by those they minister to spiritually. 1 Timothy 5:17-18 teaches that the elders of the church, especially those who labor at preaching and teaching, deserve their wages. While neither of these passages speaks directly to the issue of "guest preaching," the principle

emerges that churches should consider it their duty to support preachers. It seems that we are "within our rights" to expect an honorarium. But Christianity is not about rights. It is about grace, love, and service. 1 Corinthians 9 not only declares that apostles have rights, it also presents Paul's example of one who gave up his rights for the sake of the gospel, and therein lies the tension. Churches should bend over backwards to honor God's servants. Preachers should bend over backwards to serve freely.

Perhaps the best way to handle the tension is to not specify a set fee, yet to prepare a statement for churches who ask how much they should give. This statement should summarize the biblical teaching on this issue and suggest a range of honoraria to accommodate churches of various sizes and resources. My personal statement follows this article and is available as a model for anyone who can use it.

Although this survey will not remove all the tension associated with honoraria, I hope that it provides some perspective and inspires us to serve with a clear conscience.

Cents you asked . . .

(A personal word from Jeff Arthurs about preaching honoraria)

I do not put a price tag on preaching. My conviction is that "freely you have received and freely you should give." For other professional services like lecturing and consulting, I do stipulate a fee, but preaching seems different, though I don't really have a chapter and verse that teaches the difference. So, this section is designed to tell you "where I'm coming from" on the subject and then to suggest some guidelines. I hope that you'll receive it in the spirit in which it's intended and we can talk openly from there.

Scripture. 1 Corinthians 9 teaches clearly that apostles have the right to be supported materially by those they minister to spiritually. 1 Timothy 5:17-18 teaches that the elders of the church, especially those who labor at preaching and teaching, deserve their wages. While neither of these passages speaks directly to the issue of "honoraria," the principle emerges that churches should consider it their duty to support preachers. It seems that preachers are "within their rights" to expect an honorarium. But Christianity is not about rights.

It is about grace, love, and service. 1 Corinthians 9 not only declares that apostles have rights, it also presents Paul's example of one who gave up his rights for the sake of the gospel. Therein lies the tension. Churches should bend over backwards to honor God's servants. Preachers should bend over backwards to serve freely.

Stewardship. God has entrusted to me a few small corners of His kingdom in which He expects me to be a faithful steward. I have a wonderful family that includes my wife and a young son. I am a member of a local church, a community of believers with whom I have fellowship and to whom I am accountable. I am grateful to serve as a professor at Multnomah Bible College in Portland, OR, a responsibility that is my primary professional commitment. One of my responsibilities to Multnomah is to preach for churches and other ministries, but this comes after teaching our students. So, to be a faithful steward to my Master, I must ask some questions in light of each opportunity:

1. What is the cost or sacrifice for my family, for my church, for my institution?
2. Is this a wise use of my time?
3. Does this opportunity align with my gifts and passions?
4. Can I honestly serve without any selfish motive?
5. Does my wife want me to do this?

So, Let's Get To The Bottom Line (which may not be the most important line). The following guidelines speak to the issue of honoraria, not reimbursement for expenses incurred in the ministry. It is customary and courteous (and my only genuine requirement) to reimburse mileage or air fare, ground transportation and airport parking, moderate meals, moderate lodging and materials such as photocopies or visual aids.

Based on the Scriptural principles above, as well as my preaching experiences, and information that I've gathered from colleagues and churches, let me suggest the following guidelines. I realize, of course, that no two situations and no two churches are exactly alike:

> If then what seems appropriate is the opportunity is in the Portland area and requires only one day of ministry: $100-200 for one message in one service; an additional $50 for each service (same message).

If the opportunity requires out-of-town travel (by air or car), which typically necessitates an additional day for travel: $200-300 for one message in one service; an additional $50 per service (same message) or $100 per additional message.

If the opportunity requires two-three days, such as a retreat, $400-800 for 3 to 5 different messages.

A Final and Important Word

I must be faithful to the stewardships that I've mentioned. But I do not want money to be a deciding factor regarding ministry. I'm not in it for the money. Money does make it possible for me to be in it. May God give us wisdom to serve Him with upright hearts.

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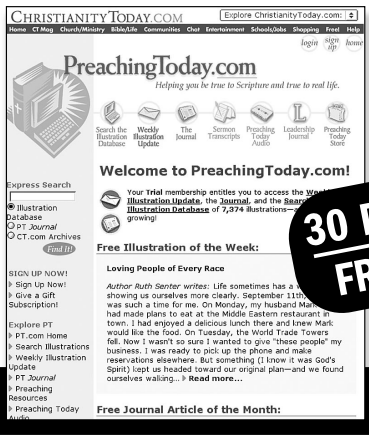

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When Your Soul Quakes
Matthew 26:30-46

by Endel Lee

(editor's note: Endel Lee is Assistant Professor of Preaching and Pastoral Ministries at the College of Undergraduate Studies at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA. The following was Endel Lee's presidential sermon delivered at the 2002 annual meeting of the Evangelical Homiletics Society in New Orleans.)

Introduction

Years ago a great communicator by the name of Winston Churchhill was invited to speak at a graduation ceremony. He went to the platform and began to express to those present his philosophy of life. These are the words he said, "Never quit! Never, never, quit! Never, never, never quit! He extended that challenge to the seventh level. After using only thirty-five words, he quit speaking and walked off the platform. Though brief, he intended to impress upon his audience that no matter how bad it gets, one should never quit.

A more recent philosopher has said, "It is always too soon to quit." Have you ever wanted to quit? I know I have. I remember a few years ago sitting among a group of preachers during a devotion time. Near the end of the preacher's message, he recited a poem. His message was not focused on the theme of never quitting but the refrain of this poem echoed in my mind because I was at a low ebb in my life. I will be honest with you and confess that I don't remember the verses to the poem. I don't know if I can even quote to you the refrain exactly, but I remember its intent because it still reverberates in my heart and mind today. The refrain went something like this, "I wanna quit, but I won't quit." The preacher offered a verse then the refrain, then another verse that described some fragile human circumstance and he came back to that refrain, "I wanna quit, but I won't quit." Another verse, then again he repeated the refrain, "I wanna quit, but I won't quit."

The idea of that refrain stuck with me. Shortly afterwards I began asking, " I wonder if Jesus ever wanted to quit." I searched the Bible and

sensed the Spirit of God leading me to this passage in Matthew 26. I found myself hovering over this text time and time again with that refrain resounding in my mind. I want us to begin reading in verse thirty. You will quickly realize the context here. As we begin reading, we join Jesus at the threshold of the Cross event. He is facing the climactic moment for which He came to earth. I am going to be reading from the New American Standard (NAS) translation. Please follow along in the copy of God's word that you have with you.

Verse thirty reads: "After singing a hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives." It seems that Jesus and his disciples are conversing as they walk from the Upper Room in Jerusalem, across the city and up to the Mount of Olives. On the way, as recorded in verse thirty-one, Jesus said to them, **"**You will all fall away because from Me this night, for it is written, 'I will strike down the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." "But Peter said to him, 'Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away." Translation: I won't quit! Jesus, You can count on me! "Jesus said to him: 'Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' Based on his reply, Peter apparently was not convinced by Jesus' words. Peter said to Him, 'Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You.'" In other words, "I am sticking with you; no matter how bad it gets, I won't quit."

From our twenty-first century perspective, we often chastise Peter for what seems to be arrogance here. However, I want to say to you this morning that Peter was headed in the right direction. He had the right idea. His heart was sincere. Surely the expectation is that he should commit to this degree as a disciple and that he would make such a promise of faithfulness. Peter's problem was that he didn't realize his spirit was willing but his flesh was weak, as Jesus points out a little later in this passage (verse 41). Peter intended to fulfill this commitment but probably within his own power. Therein lies his mistake. We should also recognize Peter as an effective leader here. Based on his initiative the other disciples add their verbal devotion. We are mistakenly unfair to Peter though when we look at this story and chastise him so abruptly and forget to assign similar responsibility to the rest of the disciples. Peter did lead the way, but verse thirty-five reads, "All the

disciples said the same thing too." They joined in on the loyalty claim and began to bellow with Peter, "No matter how bad it gets, we won't quit!"

"Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemene" (verse 36). The evening stroll is over now. Jesus has taught the disciples yet another lesson and now He must get down to the critical business at hand — getting ready to die on the cross. Verse thirty-six continues, "and [he] said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee." Do you realize what a gracious act this is on the part of Jesus? Peter has just made a claim and has led the others to claim likewise that they will never forsake Him. Jesus has told them prophetically that they will not keep their promise. While knowing of their oncoming failure, Jesus still invites Peter, James and John to be His closest companions during one of His most intense prayer times on the earth. These three men had been with Him on the Mountain of Transfiguration, but now He wanted them to see this part of his journey as the Messiah.

The end of verse thirty-seven reads, "He began to be grieved and distressed." We find in other places of Scripture a description of the magnitude for that distress and grief. The Bible indicates that Jesus was so grieved and so distressed in the midst of this praying that something like sweat drops of blood began dripping down from his brow (Luke 22:44). The intensity during these critical moments must have been extraordinary. An old hymn writer described it this way, "Sorrow and love flow mingled down." We see the full expression of that loving flow exemplified by Christ the next day on the cross, but the flow began here this night in the garden as he prayed. Praying is how he prepared Himself to take on the sins of the world, the sins from the time of creation until the time he walked into that garden, the sins from the time he walked out of that garden up to today, and all the sins of the future for as long as God chooses to sustain His creation.

Jesus expressed the magnitude of his grief by saying, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." In other words, be my companions in this critical hour. "And he went a little beyond them, and he fell down on his face and he prayed, saying, 'My Father if it is possible let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I

will, but as You will.'" Translation: I wanna quit, but I won't quit. Can you hear how closely this prayer echoes the refrain, "I wanna quit, but I won't quit." Father, I don't want to go through this and if it is possible to avoid this by pursuing any other option, please let that be the case. However, if that is not the case, then I will go through with it. I wanna quit, but I won't quit.

Verse forty begins, "And He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping." They had already quit. No spears yet, no angry crowd, just the simple exhaustion associated with their human frailty. We probably would quickly condemn them unless we paused to consider that we might find ourselves sharing the same guilt if we had been in this group. "Jesus then said to Peter," this phrase seems to imply that Jesus looked Peter in the eyes and focused on him. We can understand this connection based on the fact that Peter was the one who was leading out just a little while earlier (verses 31-35). He looks Peter in the eye but speaks to more of them, at least James and John and maybe more. The text says, "so you men" indicating a plural address, "so you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? Keep watching and praying (Keep on praying! Never, never quit praying!) that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Then He went away a second time and prayed, saying, "I wanna quit, but I won't quit." Those words literally sounded like this as expressed in Scripture**,** "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done." Again He came and found them sleeping for their eyes were heavy. And he left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more." I wanna quit, but I won't quit. Father if it is possible let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still resting and sleeping? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, and let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand.

Can you identify this morning with the temptation of quitting as it is reflected in this passage, both by the disciples and the example of Jesus? Can you think of episodes in your own life where you really felt like quitting? I will admit to you this morning that there have been at least three such episodes in my life. The first came when I was a young man at Parris Island, South Carolina. I was spending my summer vaca-

tion with the U.S. Marines during boot camp. One morning after I had been there for approximately two months, I found myself marching in an early morning formation to the rifle range at about five o'clock. I had adapted pretty well to the grooves and dynamics of my new environment until this particular morning. The drill instructor was leading us across a large grassy area to the place for our morning training. I remember marching as the commands were given at a low volume in order not disturb others who were still asleep in the barracks and housing area. Left, right! Left right! Left, right, left!

As we got to the grassy field the drill instructor gave a new command in order to make it safer for us to walk across the grass in the dark. After that command, suddenly there was a quietness that came and all you could hear was about sixty pairs of boots quietly shuffling through the wet dewy grass. Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh, swoosh. The sound was calming at first but then the drill instructor broke the silence with his voice. I was not prepared for what I heard next. He began talking about my mama; he was actually talking about all our mamas. He began to call names and say things that absolutely were not true. His chiding infuriated me. This manner of speaking was something my southern culture considered absolutely inappropriate. As a young boy from Alabama, who had not really been out of the South up to this point, I was angry. A welling-up inside of me began to occur that I cannot describe to you. I remember in the midst of his verbal blasts thinking that he was not playing by the rules. I thought to myself, "You're not suppose to act like that." Then the temptation came. The next thoughts were, "You could take him out. They have taught you that much already. He has his back to you. It is dark. There are sixty other people out here. You could clip him from the back and he would never see you coming. You would be back up and in line before he ever knew what hit him. You would certainly be justified to do so because he is talking about your mama and he is not playing by the rules anyway."

Then another group of thoughts caught my attention. "They know you are a Christian. You help as the religious lay leader for this platoon. You have tried to be a witness to them and if you do this you will destroy your testimony; it will be unsalvageable if you act in accordance with your fleshly desires." I knew that if I did what I wanted to do, then no true good would come of my actions. I remember strug-

gling in those moments and that refrain rang true for that instance in my life. I wanted to quit. Quitting is exactly what I would have done if I had broken ranks and vented my frustration. Knowing what I know about Marine drill instructors, I may not have even lived through the morning had I jumped on this guy. At the least, I would have wound up in the brig. In one sense, hitting this person would have been an easier option that would have allowed me to quit right there. However, professing my faith according to the criteria and standard by which I had previously expressed would have ceased to be an option.

I wanna quit, but I won't quit. The thing that saved me in that moment is what we see exemplified right here in verse thirty-nine by Jesus' example. He prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." In the midst of my tension that morning, between the pulling back and forth, I simply prayed and asked God to help me through the situation. "With God's help, I can handle this. I want to quit. He is not playing by the rules. But I won't quit." The rest of the story is that before the end of boot camp I had the opportunity to give my testimony in the chapel service one Sunday morning before I graduated. Had I done what I wanted to do early that morning on the rifle range, I would not have been privileged of providing a broader witness to my entire battalion a few weeks later. I also would have forfeited a future containing twenty-one years of decorated service in the Armed Forces Reserves full of other witnessing opportunities. A prayer like this is the key, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." I wanna quit, but I won't quit!

A second difficult episode in my life is somewhat linked to this first story in an interesting way. When I left Parris Island, a Lieutenant Colonel called me to his office and told me and three other young men something I have never forgotten. He said to us, "Gentlemen, you have experienced the most rigorous thing you will ever go through in your life. You will probably never be pressed, shaken and stressed to this degree again unless you find yourself in the midst of battle." I recall my youthful jesting and thinking to myself, "If this is all life has got to dish out, I am gonna be fine. I have made it this far and the rest should be easy based on what this man said." Little did I know at the time that a Ph.D. was in my future.

I recall one evening in particular about two weeks before I was planning to submit my dissertation for approval. I had worked very hard. The research and documentation was almost ready to slide across the table. At six o'clock on this evening I went by the home of a person I had hired to help with some proofreading. Please remember, at that point in my life, my dissertation was the pinnacle of academic achievement. I had poured countless hours of effort into making it perfect. By all standards of my own measurement, this was the best it could be. In all honesty, I had given her the document with the fantasy that she would probably find only one or two mistakes. I walked in and sat down on this person's couch. She began to flip pages in my dissertation and I could feel my face begin to turn pale. Mind you, I had paid this lady for her insights; I invited her to burst my bubble and she did in a caring and gracious manner. My countenance dropped as I watched her ably point out items I needed to change. They were minor improvements but it became quickly apparent to me that the writing and the form was not the quality that I had thought it was. The dissertation was now simply not good enough.

I remember the great sense of disappointment that came over me as I put the lid on that box and made my way a few short blocks to my home. I went in the house and didn't say much to my family. I climbed up two flights of stairs into our attic where I had written most of the dissertation. I sat it down on my desk and went back down one set of stairs to my bed where I pulled the covers back, crawled in and began to weep. A cloud of depression came over my soul. Satan in his keen way began to wiggle his way into my thoughts saying, "You can't do this. How can you be a teacher of these things when you can't even get it right yourself? You don't deserve to be here. You need to quit. You need to quit right now because you haven't got what it takes." I also was very tired. I had been working on this project for years while also working multiple jobs and trying to raise a family. In my own sense of self pity and exhaustion, I began to agree with the devil. The tears and the sorrow flowed down my cheeks while I quietly whimpered. I was satisfied that I had done enough. I was tired and this just wasn't fun anymore.

In those dark moments, the Spirit of God came to me in that room and the Lord began to whisper to me, "It is not time to quit, not yet. I have brought you too far and we have too much invested to quit now. We

didn't do all this to quit." My reply was, "Oh, but Lord I want to quit, please just let me quit. I am tired; I am exhausted. I don't think I can take another step. Just let me quit." I realize that many of you here can relate to this kind of downward, spiraling momentum. The Lord seemed to whisper in a still small voice, "I know you want to quit, but you can't quit." As I faded into sleep, this prayerful refrain touched my soul and I whispered it back to God with the little bit of strength I had left. I said, "O.K. Jesus, I wanna quit but I won't quit."

The next morning I got up about seven o'clock and I climbed that same set of stairs back up to my attic. I took the cover off of the dissertation and I started making every identified correction. It took me two or three days to go back systematically and make every improvement. This story does have a happy ending. A few days later I drove to Texas and submitted my dissertation. As a result of such effort, I can continue to teach preaching at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Had I not fulfilled the will of God for my life regarding this matter, I would not have the ministry I have today. I probably wouldn't be standing here sharing with this incredible group either. I had already made up my mind to quit because I was weary. During that difficult night, God's grace, mercy and strength sustained me through a prayer like this, "I wanna quit, but I won't quit!" or "My father, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will but thy will be done."

There is a third kind of episode. This kind of episode is not really a single event as much as it is more like a sequence of happenings. I would like to talk with you briefly about such a period in my life. It occurred during this last year. The episode really started before September 11, 2001. I began to struggle with a variety of crises, critical moments, that were coming by me in clusters. All of this building momentum seemed to be intensified by the terrorist tragedy. Other issues spilled out in key relationships with family, or friends, or people at work. All of this mounting concern came together and formed a compounding crescendo of critical moments, a clustered event so to speak, one thing after another in rapid succession without sufficient recuperation intervals. The force of such a cluster is like a flood, lots of little drops put together which form a big wave. Such clusters could be comprised of things like disappointments in people, friends who let you down, or failed leaders. What about when some one you have depended on all your life dies and you feel isolated and alone?

In Matthew 26, we find the potential for such clustering. Disappointment is found in one considered to be a friend. Do you see it? Shortly after he finished praying, Jesus was approached by Judas and Judas kissed him. Jesus said, "You betray me with a kiss." Also, friends let you down. Do you see it? The disciples had committed, "Lord, no matter how bad it gets, we won't quit! We are with you all the way." In just a little while these men have scattered; they run in fear. Nobody, not even Peter, is willing to go the distance to the cross. How quickly his leadership failed. These kinds of clusters meet us today. People disappoint us. Leaders fail. Other kinds of critical moments come as well. What about times when maybe a spouse seems more like an opponent than a companion? Or what about when you are asked to speak in front of a group of your colleagues and you really don't want to do it? You surmise that the risks are too high and the effort too demanding, especially with everything else you have going on in life. Sure, the cluster episodes will come.

This kind of multi-faceted cluster almost overwhelmed my soul at times in the recent months. This past Spring one of those clusters had reached such a magnitude in my life that I woke up one Sunday hearing the crushing echoes of that crescendo in my soul as it banged and pounded at my being. Having this feeling is different from sensing that people are not doing the right things or that they are not playing by the rules. The impact of this spiritual turmoil is not like the second episode I described either, where you have a sense that you are totally exhausted. The sense of this eruption is more about when things just aren't going your way at all and you can't seem to get a break. Bad news keeps unfolding in perpetual motion.

What I had to learn to do in response to these cluster episodes is reach over to my bedside. In the midst of my struggle, I picked up my Bible and turned to where the string now constantly lays at Matthew 26. With the realization that this was going to be a Matthew 26, verse 39 kind of day, I prayed, "Lord, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, yet not as I will, but as You will." That is the choice that lies ahead of you when your soul quakes. "Lord, I wanna quit, but I won't quit." This kind of prayer will be your key to surviving life's hardest seasons.

I want to say to you in light of how we have reflected on this text thus far that there are two theological insights that we need to embrace.

First, we need to understand the reality that none of my experiences that I have related to you, nor anything that you will ever go through in terms of human suffering or agony will ever match what Jesus went through as described in this passage. Jesus is sinless, pure Messiah. He accepted all of the world's sins in order to redeem our lives. We will never experience that kind of spiritual agony. We can never completely identify with what Jesus went through for us, but because of what he did as described here and on the cross, he can completely identify with anything that we will ever go through in our lives. For that reason, we should call upon him to be our companion in the dark night of the soul. To remind us to pray, to guide us in prayer, to sustain us through such prayer so that we might fulfill the will of God for our lives and glorify Him. We need to learn to lean on Him as the Good Shepherd when we find ourselves in the valleys of life wanting to quit.

The second theological insight we should acknowledge this morning is that we may be doing some things that generate suffering and pain in our lives that are outside the will of God. A simple solution in such circumstances is not more prayer; it is not better prayer; it is not more intense prayer; it is not even this prayer that will resolve such tension. The simple solution is for you to stop doing that which is outside the will of God! Resist the temptation to go against God's will and prayer will help you walk the straight and narrow, if you will chose to do so.

I don't know where you are in your pilgrimage today. I don't know what is happening in your life right now, but I do know that as H. Beecher Hicks, Jr. has said, "There is another storm coming." Critical moments probably await you in the future. For some of you, these moments may arrive before the sun sets today. As you approach the horizon and see those moments coming into your life, moments when people will not play by the rules, moments when you get tired and exhausted, or moments when it feels like things just are not going your way, I want you to come back and embrace again the echoing refrain of this prayer. When your lips want to express, "I wanna quit" reach out to the reality of Matthew 26, verse 39 and say something like, "Though I wanna to quit, I won't quit." When your heart faints in exhaustion, you are too tired to go on and it's just not fun anymore, reach out with that refrain and say, "I wanna quit, but I won't quit." Father, I don't want to drink from this cup, but Your will be done!

When your entire being shakes from the clusters landing on you and when you feel your soul quaking, reach out to God and say to Him, "I wanna quit, but I won't quit!" And you know why? Because Jesus didn't quit on me! The songs goes, "He could have called ten thousand angels," but instead, he chose to do the will of God. He chose to die so that we could keep on keeping-on as his representatives in the twenty-first century. If we want to be Christ-like ones, we must follow His example.

Listen very close now! It will not be enough for you just to give a verbal consent to this refrain today. If you stop with only saying, " I wanna quit, but I won't quit," and forget to apply this refrain to your next crisis, then you will have failed just like the disciples did that night. I hope you recognize that all you will have done, if you stop with the verbal gesture, is come back to the very beginning of this story where we started reading. You will be right where Peter and the disciples were at the beginning when they made their similar claim. Remember they also said, "No matter how bad it gets, I won't quit." Do you see that they were to that point also? You must be willing to start with this verbal commitment but then you have to learn how pray this prayer. Ultimately, you must learn how to choose everyday to take this prayer refrain to the level of expressed living as Jesus did. Don't fall asleep like the disciples but choose to do the will of God. Will you embrace and embody this prayer today in the midst of whatever you are facing? I hope you will. Jesus is depending on us to be that example to this generation. "My Father if it is possible let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." "I wanna quit, but I won't quit!"

***Biographical Preaching: Bringing Bible Characters to Life*. By R. Larry Overstreet. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001, 0-8254-3470-X, 256 pp., $12.99, paperback.**

Is biographical preaching expository preaching?

Granted, this question will not keep many of us awake at night. Still, the issue has generated enough heat to raise some controversy in the pages of *Preaching* magazine. In the May/June 2000 issue of that magazine, EHS member Timothy Peck published an article called "Salvaging the Old Testament Biographical Sermon." This piece was in direct response to the work of fellow EHSer Sidney Greidanus who followed up with a piece of his own in the November/December 2000 issue. Now another EHS member, Larry Overstreet, has weighed in with his book *Biographical Preaching*.

Greidanus' concern is that biographical preaching by its nature is prone to anthropocentrism, moralism, and neglect of authorial intent. Overstreet briefly refers to the Peck/Greidanus dialogue in an endnote, suggesting that "much of what Greidanus writes is helpful and stimulating, and the points he makes certainly must be weighed carefully, but his disparagement of biographical preaching is an unfortunate over-reaction to improper excesses of some preachers who have used this approach. (p. 192)." Perhaps this friendly little controversy will help with book sales.

Overstreet, a professor of preaching at Northwest Baptist Seminary in Washington State, is fully convinced that biographical preaching fulfills (or is capable of fulfilling) all the demands of biblical exposition, providing that the text is honored for its divine intention (p. 12). The problem, the author admits, is that the use of biblical characterization as a homiletic foundation can lead to an unavoidable subjectivity. As an example, Overstreet offers Elijah's depression as described in 1 Kings 19. Of course, it can be dangerous to play amateur psychologist with Biblical characters and one might well wonder whether the inclusion of this narrative in Scripture was to remind ourselves to get our rest and eat well or whether the text indicates some deeper divine intention. If the text is respected the biography can be of great help to listeners. If disrespected, the sermon can become little more than warmed over pop psychology. The process "is somewhat subjective," Overstreet admits, "but it cannot be ignored if we are to do biblical preaching designed to address the full needs of our listeners (p. 15)."

The book itself is methodical in its presentation. Overstreet writes clearly. The book features many helpful charts and diagrams that help the reader

appreciate what the writer has in mind.

The general homiletic approach underlying the book is traditional. Throughout the book, Overstreet offers sample sermon outlines that illustrate his intentions. Most are linear and propositional featuring logically developed points and sub-points. Given that most biblical characterizations are discerned from narrative sections of Scripture, one might question whether there could be more place for narrative forms within Overstreet's homiletic.

With regard to one of these outlines based on the family life of Timothy, Overstreet says that the "purpose of this kind of preaching is to actuate, to get listeners to practice in their lives the principles seen in the family life of Timothy — to commit themselves…to salvation, instruction, and service (p. 67)." Overstreet can be affirmed for that intention. Evangelical preachers tend to gravitate toward the prescriptive sections of Scripture. This book reminds us of the value that may be found in preaching from some of the more descriptive elements of the Bible.

The Bible is a book about how God deals with people, like the overstressed Type-A Pharisee and the hemorrhaging woman who tears at Jesus clothes. This is real life and real preaching will take it seriously, no matter the mess it can make. Preaching that makes vivid use of the human stuff in the Scriptures is preaching that people will want to hear. Overstreet's call to preach the people of the Bible is worth hearing for that reason, if for no other.

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***The Evangelism Mandate*. By David L. Larsen. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1992, 0-8254-3089-5, 256 pp., $13.99, paperback.**

The Evangelism Mandate offers a helpful road map that both details the Biblical, cultural, and historical highways of evangelistic preaching, and provides solid direction for preachers and homiletics professors. David Larsen succeeds in his aim "to describe and understand the nature and place of evangelistic preaching in the church today." Larsen draws upon the Bible in light of the wide spectrum of thought from Augustine to Moody in order to determine the primacy of evangelism in the church. Definitions of conversion coupled with several able and practical analyses of culture form a foundation upon which Larsen passionately calls for a "contextualized substance," in the Christian pulpit. Forces that hinder or help this contextual-

ized substance in the pulpit are directly and helpfully analyzed such as, the doctrines of sin and hell, the invitation system, revival, the lordship- salvation controversy, the self-esteem movement, and church growth issues. Larsen then wonderfully ends the book with five tremendous evangelistic sermons from Charles Spurgeon, D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, James Stewart, George Truett, and Billy Graham.

With the sheer breadth of quotes and depth of issues addressed one almost wishes that this book was a two-volume work. Keeping in mind the breadth of subject matter within a limited space will help some readers to overlook occasional nuances that are noticeably absent when discussing, for example, zeal for evangelism, the Lordship controversy, or the invitation system. One such nuance includes Lloyd-Jones' well-documented distinction between an evangelistic campaign and a revival. Such recognition would have helped put Lloyd-Jones' "narrowness" regarding the former into the clearer context of his lifelong labors and zeal for the latter. Subsequently, Larsen could have expanded the mosaic of evangelical understanding for his reader making the deeper issues more apparent.

The Evangelism Mandate is then, a remarkable introduction encompassing the complex historical, theological, and cultural issues of evangelistic preaching, given in accessible terms for today's preacher. A worthwhile use of Larsen's book for teachers could involve an assignment asking the student to (1) read the book, (2) identify the primary people, doctrines, historical events, and competing ideas found, (3) choose a subject from this identified list for further study individually or as a group, and (4) each individual or group shares the fruit of further study on these varied and weighty matters with the rest of the class. The local pastor will also greatly benefit from Larsen's book, finding it a choice read, both in terms of practical content related to preaching and congregational ideologies and in terms of a time-efficient way to introduce oneself to relevant matters which directly influence present ministry practice.

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***Greek for Preachers*. By Joseph M. Webb and Robert Kysar. St. Louis: Chalice, 2002, 0-8272-1244-5, 195 pp., $17.49, paperback.**

Greek for Preachers delivers what it promises. It endeavors to make the Greek text of the New Testament both usable and exciting for preachers. The

preachers whom the authors have in view are those who have never studied Greek, or those who studied the language without much success in bridging the gap from the lexicon to the pulpit. The book supplies a set of glasses for looking at the Greek text with an eye to augmenting the preacher's and the audience's appreciation of the New Testament message. The book gets the preacher back to the text where preaching must find its roots.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part provides a list of essential tools and reference books required for the study of New Testament Greek. The chapter also includes an introduction to the Greek alphabet, furnishing the student with a working knowledge of the language. The second part comes in ten chapters. Each chapter describes a "rule" or a "principle" aiming to help the preacher engage a Greek-English interlinear text. This section is the heart of the book allowing the student to feel the pulse of the biblical language. Webb and Kysar do a fine job at bringing dead grammatical rules to life. The descriptions move beyond mere cognitive apprehension, developing a feel and a taste for the nuances of the Koine Greek. The third, short chapter supplies sample sermons with commentaries.

Books attempting to deal with biblical languages often have a way of scaring the student away from the original sources. The grammar bogs down in a tedium of perpetual repetitions and endless exceptions. Explanations at times are as foreboding as what they attempt to explain. The original language looms large like a monster rearing its ugly head from the pages of the original sources. In short, few books dealing with biblical languages leave the student with a desire to engage the text. Webb and Kysar's book is a welcome exception.

The authors succeed where language studies frequently fail — in giving us both the rules of language and telling us enough about the language to make us want to work with it. The book would not only be helpful to pastors but it may be a useful companion textbook for introductory courses in biblical Greek. It could give the students a view of language that can aid in the digestion of cumbersome grammar and an unfamiliar alphabet. This book can alter the way you read the New Testament and change the way you preach God's Word. Above all, it can help God's people hear from God.

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***Habits of the High-Tech Heart: Living Virtuously in the Information Age.* By Quentin J. Schultze. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002, 0-8010-2322-X, 256 pp., hardcover.**

This book is the full articulation of Quentin Schultze's plenary addresses to the 2001 EHS conference at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. With full documentation from a wide variety of sources, Schultze argues that communication media in the electronic age promote efficiency and control but not virtue. Virtuous communication takes patience, face-to-face community, ties to tradition, and authenticity. These qualities are difficult to employ and develop when we communicate in isolation at our keyboards. With unrelenting vigor Schultze deconstructs technological utopianism claiming that speed-of-light communication has not created a global village, and hordes of information, unusable in their immensity, have not made us more godly. We need to return to the "habits of the heart" first identified by de Tocqueville in the 1830s and augmented by Czech Republic president Václav Havel. The habits of the heart are develop by "voluntary religious associations [which] cultivate moral sentiments that soften [the] self-interest" (17) promoted by the information age.

The flow of Schultze's argument winds through eight chapters. First we need to "discern our 'informationalism'" — which the author calls a "quasi-religion" (21), "a non-discerning, vacuous faith in the collection and dissemination of information as a route to social progress and personal happiness" (26). Then we need to exercise "*moderation* in the tide of incoherent and trivial information which renders our lives morally superficial" (22). Chapters 3-7 tell us how: by paying attention to the wisdom found in Judeo-Christian religious traditions (chapter 3), by laughing ourselves into humility (chapter 4), by being authentic (chapter 5), by striving for diversity rather than technical expertise (chapter 6), and by entering "organic community life" rather than the superficial intercourse of the electronic age (chapter 7). The concluding chapter rehearses these themes and exhorts readers to live virtuously.

I greatly appreciate Quentin Schultze's stance toward the information age. The thesis and argument of the book address Western culture with its growing avalanche of information. Every thinking layperson needs to consider how to be *in* the world of information but not *of* it. The book should be of special interest to preachers and homileticians since we speak and write to audiences born and reared in the information age. This is not to say that the book is easy to read. It moves slowly because of its documentation (over 700 end notes) and redundant internal organization. Readers may feel as I did that the book takes too long to make its (excellent) points. Maybe I'm a victim of the information age,

but I wanted a faster read with crisper organization. If you want the short version, read Schultze's article in *JEHS* 2/1 (June, 2002).

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***New Testament History: A Narrative Account*. By Ben Witherington III. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001, 0-8010-2293-2, 430 pp., $26.99, hardback.**

Ben Witherington III tells a great story in two senses. First, the story he narrates in *New Testament History* is the greatest ever told: the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and the world-transforming movement that flowed from those events in the first Christian century. Second, Witherington is a great storyteller. The rich texture of historical, sociological, and religious contexts in which he locates the story of Jesus and his nascent church, far from dulling the drama in a haze of detail (as books called "history" sometimes do), actually heightens our delight as it deepens our grasp of the tumultuous times in which Christianity was born.

After a prologue in which he addresses the limitations of ancient historical sources and reasonable expectations for the genres of ancient history and biography, Witherington sets the scene in terms of Hellenistic culture, Second Temple Judaism, and the rise of Rome. Drawing on the foundations laid in his detailed studies of Jesus and Paul and his socio-rhetorical commentaries on Mark, Acts, and Paul's Corinthian correspondence, the author weaves the well-known account of Jesus' birth, life and ministry, death and resurrection, and bestowal of the Spirit into the fabric of the political friction, religious tensions, and social conventions of the time.

The text is peppered with excurses offering "A Closer Look" at such topics as the Pharisees, Josephus, Q and the Synoptic problem, crucifixion, and Paul's Roman citizenship. Shaded sidebars provide historical depth drawn from ancient documentary and epigraphic sources on ancient magic, itinerant doctors in antiquity, banquets, business, cities noted in the New Testament, and other themes. Photographs of sites and artifacts, maps, and a sprinkling of chronological charts (e.g., a synchronization of Paul's letters with Acts) visually reinforce and clarify the story.

Witherington's respect for the reliability of the New Testament documents, not only the Pauline epistles but also the Gospels and Acts, is evident

throughout, although his method of historical argumentation entails maintaining a certain critical distance from his sources. Jesus' early ministry, for example is best explained by the hypothesis that in the baptism he had a vision concerning "a messianic vocation of some kind," leading him to conclude that he was God's Anointed One (p. 119). Likewise, Jesus' physical resurrection affords the most historically adequate explanation for the rise of the church after his ignominious death (pp. 160-170). This historical even-handedness leads Witherington to insist that the writings of both Luke and Josephus must be read critically (p. 85), to judge it "likely that 2 Peter was composed well after the demise of…Peter" (p. 395), and to find "least problematic" the suggestion that the Pastoral Epistles were composed by a disciple from Paul's notes soon after the apostle's death (p. 352). One may demure from such critical conclusions or chalk them up to apologetic strategy without dismissing the great value of this work, which I. Howard Marshall rightly compares to F. F. Bruce's earlier *New Testament History* (1969).

Readers of this journal will ask how Witherington's narrative helps preachers. First, it reminds us that God's redemptive achievement in Christ was embedded in real history. It opens a window on the absorbing drama that unfolded in the events themselves, challenging preachers to become so captivated by that drama that they trust it to hold hearers' interest without feeling the nervous need to "spice it up" at every point with illustrations imported from afar. Second, the New Testament epistles, too often preached as though they were timeless or addressed immediately to our twenty-first century audience, can and should be heard in their first-century context, and then the spiritual link connecting the first and twenty-first centuries drawn. Finally, no one who works with words, spoken or written, can fail to enjoy Witherington's delight in pun and alliteration — contrasting "the prefect" (Pilate) and "the perfect" (Jesus), and detailing the "rhetoric of rejection" in Galatians, "conflict and concord in Corinth," "the Peter principle," and "the dominion of Domitian." Witherington has provided both an accessible resource and a worthy model for telling the dramatic, life-giving story of Jesus and his church.

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in California

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***Preaching Luke: Proclaiming God's Royal Rule*. By Keith F. Nickle. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002, 0-664-22239-0, 264 pp., $26.99, paperback.**

The author begins by asserting that when both Luke and Acts are considered, "Luke was the most prolific writer in the New Testament church" (p. 1). Though Nickle refers to the writer of the third Gospel as "Luke," he believes the early church incorrectly equated this individual with the physician who was Paul's companion during some of his missionary travels. The writer of Luke's Gospel is referred to as a "theological historian" whose primary purpose was to demonstrate the purposes of God through Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Nickle sees the third Gospel as supremely concerned with the role of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Christ and his disciples. Likewise, that same Spirit empowers the church today to withstand persecution and persevere in her mission to proclaim Jesus to the world.

Nickle is careful to point out contrasts within this Gospel. The portrait of Mary in the annunciation narratives, for example, is set beside that of Zechariah. Mary "…far surpasses Zechariah, for even when she is troubled and uncertain, she is still open to the creative power of God working in her and through her to accomplish divine purposes" (p. 15). Finding favor with God did not mean for Mary "a life of peaceful tranquillity insulated from turmoil." Sermonically, Mary's experience is a pattern for spiritual formation. Encountering the presence of God brings both *comfort* and *discomfort*. In the midst of divine encounter we too learn that obedience comes at a price.

Nickle effectively combines historical details and preaching insights, as in Luke 10:38-42; Jesus visits the home of Mary and Martha in Bethany. Nickle informs us that Jesus may have been accompanied by as many as one hundred other visitors. Early Palestine was a culture that valued hospitality. Martha's nervousness and angry outburst, then, is not surprising. She was doing her best to tend to the needs of the moment, while Mary seemed content to sit at the feet of her Lord. Jesus, of course, preferred Mary's single-minded devotion to Martha's compulsive drive to prepare the meal. Nickle observes that, "She [Martha] was so concerned about what Jesus would think about her that *she* neglected to attend to what she needed to recognize, know, and think about him — and about God who was being made known in and through him" (p. 125). That will preach.

Nickle is skilled at taking each of Luke's narratives and artfully squeezing the preaching value out of it, as with Luke 24:13-35. After his resurrection, Jesus encountered two dejected disciples on the road to Emmaus. According to

the author, this "account progresses from sorrowful imperception, through joyful recognition, to eager, urgent proclamation" (p. 258). Nickle stresses that *perception* of Jesus only comes after we have listened "to Moses and the Prophets." The meal, which the resurrected Christ shared with these two initially discouraged disciples, serves as a paradigm for the church as believers today encounter, experience, and recognize Jesus through word and sacrament. Then, like the two on the road to Emmaus, worshippers go forth "to announce good news to others."

Though applications are sometimes strained, *Preaching Luke* provides excellent grist for the preaching mill.

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***Journey Through the Psalms.* By Denise Dombkowski Hopkins. St. Louis: Chalice, 2002, 0-8272-1714-5, 176 pp., $26.99, paperback.**

John Calvin, in the introduction to his commentary on the Psalms, said that this book of the Bible is "an anatomy of all the parts of the soul . . . for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror." The venerable Matthew Henry said of the book of Psalms that ". . . so much is there in it of Christ and his gospel, as well as of God and his law, that it had been called the *abstract, or summary, of both Testaments*." And again, "But this book brings us into the sanctuary, draws us off from converse with men, with the politicians, philosophers, or disputers of this world, and directs us into communion with God, by solacing and reposing our souls in him, lifting up and letting out our hearts towards him. Thus may we be in the mount with God; and we understand not our interests if we say not, *It is good to be here.*"

Even with these high accolades, it is the experience of the present reviewer that while Psalms are often utilized for funeral and Thanksgiving services, the typical pastor preaches from this book rather infrequently. One reason for this may be the relative difficulty of preaching well from literature that is poetry. Another may be that while some of the Psalms are uplifting and encouraging, many others contain laments and imprecations that trouble us.

Recent years have seen a renewed interest in the scholarly examination of the book of Psalms and this volume by Denise Dombkowski Hopkins is a welcome

addition to this area of study. The book was originally published in 1991 by United Church Press. Hopkins, professor of Old Testament at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington D.C., has revised and expanded it for its new release by Chalice Press. The result is a highly readable and interesting overview of a portion of Scripture too often ignored by evangelicals.

The content of the book is divided into seven chapters, six of which deal with particular kinds of psalm literature including prayer, praise, law and wisdom, lament, thanksgiving, and enthronement. The second chapter is primarily historical in nature as it traces the place of the Psalms in synagogue worship, the Septuagint, the ministry of Jesus, and the use of the Psalms from the era of the early church through the present day. This second chapter might have been better placed at the beginning of the book as it serves as an excellent reminder of the importance of the Psalms throughout the last three thousand years of Judeo-Christian history as well as a strong motivator to participate in serious study of this part of the canon.

Hopkins has given us a book characterized by scholarly strength in a cross-disciplinary way. The author is familiar with the precedent work of biblical scholars such as Hermann Gunkel, Claus Westermann, Brevard Childs, Samuel Balentine, and Walter Brueggemann. She is particularly indebted to the latter and cites him more than any other writer. While higher criticism, especially source and form criticism, are accepted presuppositions of Hopkins, she seldom allows this to intrude on the messages of the many psalms she discusses.

In addition to being a book of merit in terms of scholarship, this volume also engages the pastoral concerns of pulpit and pew including helpful discussion of worship, spirituality, and pastoral care. Thus, the volume is a useful addition to the library of a pastor who desires to move beyond the limits of academic discussion to the relevant issues of parish life. Brueggemann, in fact, seems to feel that this is the primary purpose of the book. On the rear cover, he states that although his previous work in the Psalms has contributed to Hopkins' efforts, "she herself has moved things along in ways that will gladden the hearts of pastors and will invigorate the faith of those who worship seriously and attentively." In relation to pastoral ministry concerns such as preaching, worship leading, counseling, and sorting through the difficulties of life, Hopkins interacts with notables as varied as Rabbi Harold Kushner, Wayne Oates, Barbara Brown Taylor, William Sloane Coffin, Jr., Donald Hustad, and Robert Webber.

This somewhat slim volume is packed full of useful insights. The author is

careful to give appropriate credit to her sources. Indeed, there are some 343 endnotes covering the 153 pages of the main text. There is also an appendix containing "A Service of Silence and Lamentation for Good Friday or Holy Saturday."

A unique feature of the book is the use of visual art to illustrate concepts under consideration. These vary from line drawings to pictures of quilts. Several are outstanding examples of visual reinforcement.

Two shortcomings are particularly evident to this reviewer. The first is unevenness in the treatment of different kinds of psalms. Psalms of lament received a great deal more attention than other types — they were discussed at length in three different chapters — and it is clear that the author has a special interest in these. Second, there are no indexes to help the reader retrieve useful or specific information. The various psalms discussed are not treated in chronological order but according to broad topic. Further, quite a few other texts are mentioned as well. An index of Scripture references would have been a welcome addition. Similarly, an index of names would assist the reader who desires to do serious research.

Even with these liabilities, Hopkins has given us a very helpful overview of the Psalms. The book is stimulating and even provocative at times. Both the pastor and the scholar will find it to be worthwhile.

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***Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue*. By Robert K. Johnston. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000, 0-8010-2241-X, 226 pp., paperback.**

The title of this book says it all: Robert Johnston feels that *real* spirituality (a play on the word "reel") can be portrayed and developed at the movies (*reels* of film). He argues that movies are often a medium of common grace where God reveals himself and gives viewers experiences of transcendence. The title also captures Johnston's belief that theology should *dialogue* with movies: "At times we need to reverse the hermeneutical flow between theol-

ogy and film. Film's story can affect our understanding of the Christian story, not just the reverse" (80). Johnston feels that Christians historically have taken the wrong stance toward film. That stance has been cautious, suspicious, and negative, not dialogic. The author contrasts himself to critics like James Dobson and Michael Medved (whom he respects), as he tries to swing the pendulum toward a receptive attitude toward movies' themes and images, for in them God speaks.

Grounding his argument in a theology of common grace, Johnston argues that God speaks through pagan sources such as the sailors in the Book of Jonah, and the "raping, pillaging Assyrians" (72) in Isaiah. If God spoke through these sources, says Johnston, we should not be surprised to hear Him speak through Hollywood movies. Johnston also insists that the complete message of the movie be allowed to "speak for itself" *before* viewers analyze and respond theologically. We must listen to "the full message of non-Christians . . . truth and untruth" (72). Johnston applies these principles to dozens of films including *Shane*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *E.T.*, *Becket, The Shawshank Redemption,* and the oeuvres of Woody Allen and Peter Weir. His analysis of *American Beauty* clarifies his stance: "The movie is a dark comedy not for the easily offended. . . . The story is gorgeously bleak . . . laced with profanity and nudity, adultery and drug use. . . . But much like the Book of Ecclesiastes, despair does not have the final word. There is a hard-won serenity that Lester discovers at life's core. . . . The movie can shock us alive to such beauty, however transient. It can overcome our sadness. It did for me" (73-74).

One of the strengths of this book is its crash course in film criticism (chapter 7). The author demonstrates how to allow movies to speak for themselves by doing genre, cultural, thematic, and auteur (author) criticism. He also demonstrates how to appreciate camera work, music, framing, and other techniques of the art. He emphasizes storytelling as the heart of film-making (chapter 6).

A second strength is Johnston's irenic stance toward Hollywood. As a theology professor at Fuller Seminary, he clearly values his field of study. He also clearly loves movies, as do most people in western culture. This love prompts him to embrace movies and expect the best from them, even when he occasionally gives negative critique. His stance will win a hearing among people who love movies, and readers of *JEHS* can learn from his tone and perspective. I believe that we must dialogue intelligently with films and with people who watch films. A closed-minded, head-in-the-sand attitude will create an unnecessary stumbling block in our culture as we preach the gospel.

Another strength is that Johnston provides a theological perspective on why humans are moved by art. Each of us has laughed, wept, or recoiled as we stood before paintings, watched plays, heard music, and viewed movies. Johnston explains these reactions not only by means of aesthetic and communication theory but also by theology. He says that God touches us in the theater. Johnston's view of film is sacramental. God inhabits mundane objects, infusing them with grace.

However, in my opinion, Johnston allows these last two strengths to produce a weakness. His enthusiasm for film leads to tolerance for sin. His summary of the movie *Dogma* is representative: "The story, like the jokes in the movie, is irreverent, but it also affirms the importance of faith, the benevolence of God, and the divinity of Christ. Here is a movie that is not agnostic or un-Christian in viewpoint, even if it is sacrilegious and sexy in design" (45). Johnston apparently believes that paying for and viewing movies that are irreverent, sacrilegious, and sexy is warranted if they lead to an experience of God. Johnston seems hesitant to point out and label themes or movies with negative terms. For Johnston, the problem with a movie is often not the movie itself but the person who watches it. Viewers who react negatively toward nudity or drunkenness on the big screen are "easily offended" (73) and "quick to judge . . . from an imposed point of view" (151); pornography is simply a "particularly offensive example of a movie lacking any integrating perspective" (120).

The author states early that his "book risks being one-sided" (15). It is. The book argues so confidently that movies can be used for good that it largely neglects the fact that movies can also be used for evil. Johnston admits that "not everyone should see all movies. Discrimination is called for" (46), but Johnston himself does not issue that call.

I agree with Johnston that God speaks through unbelievers. I myself have been deeply moved and edified by movies. But I have also been tempted and harmed by images of sex, materialism, and a Godless, empty universe. A full theology of film should include a word of warning. We are to be infants in regard to evil (1 Corinthians 14:20) and resist the schemes of the devil (Ephesians 6:10; 1 Peter 5:8-9). Johnston has not provided a full theology of film; that was not his intention. Instead, he simply issues the challenge that we let films speak for themselves and then bring theology into dialogue. This is the strength and the weakness of the book.

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***On Being A Servant of God.* By Warren W. Wiersbe. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999, 0-8010-9086-5, 150 pp., paperback.**

What does it mean to be a servant in ministry? Warren Wiersbe tackles this question in his book *On Being a Servant of God*.

This is the second time this book has been printed, the first being in 1993. The need for a second printing shows the positive impact the book has made and the value of its content for those involved in Christian service.

This book is geared toward the ministry worker, whether lay or professional. Pastors in particular should find it relevant and helpful.

Wiersbe structures his book around thirty "conversations" about the nature of ministry. Each conversation represents another chapter in the book. Taken together, these conversations describe what serving God in ministry is all about and what is required in order to do it well.

The informal style of the book conveys the sense of chatting over a cup of coffee, listening to a wise friend share his insight on the subject. Ministry, Wiersbe says, is all about being a servant. Without the attitude of serving God and putting his will first, the minister will not succeed in doing what God has called us to do. The depth of Wiersbe's insight reveals the fact that one sits at the feet of a seasoned veteran. (Wiersbe has pastured three churches and authored over 100 books).

This is a simple book, easy to read, yet profound in its insight. It tackles a wide range of relevant topics, including the basics of doing ministry, the divine resources necessary for ministry, balancing family and ministry demands, dealing with criticism, facing disappointment, and knowing when to leave a church. Wiersbe's insight is like a pool of water, shallow enough for new ministers just starting out getting their feet wet, yet deep enough for the most experienced to immerse themselves and be refreshed.

I appreciate the fact that Wiersbe does not gloss over the minister's trials and dilemmas. The advice he gives to overcome the challenges of ministry includes an honest acknowledging of those challenges. In the end, Wiersbe encourages a positive attitude, leaving no doubt in the reader's mind that, though wearisome and painful at times, ministry is definitely the most honorable and significant work a person can do.

The only suggestion for improving this book would be the inclusion of chap-

ter headings. Wiersbe leaves them out, and furthermore, offers no clear sense of order as far as his chapter topics are concerned. Of course, the absence of these elements is also what contributes to the informal "fireside chat" feeling of the book, which is definitely one of its strengths.
Overall, I found this book to be very helpful and the next best thing to sitting down with Warren Wiersbe himself. It is not intended to be an academic discussion, but a relevant and useful guide to those who pour their lives into others. To that end, Wiersbe has once again offered a great resource that will benefit all those who read it.

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***Shepherding the Small Church*. By Glenn Daman. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002, 0-8254-2449-6, 285 pp., $14.99, paperback.**

Shepherding the Small Church by Glenn Daman opens with a compelling illustration contrasting larger churches with smaller churches by telling the respective stories of a large combine and a small combine. "When it decided to find a field to operate in, [the large combine] conducted an assessment of the wheat to find the best place in the field so it could gather maximum yield." This combine was purpose-driven and its chief operator wrote books such as *Becoming Contagious Wheat* and *Rediscovering Combines: The Story and Vision of Willow River Community Combine*. By contrast, the little combine "clanked and rattled as it ran" and "because it was old, it had not adopted many of the newer innovations."

Like all illustrations, this one breaks down at certain points, and it paints the picture between larger and smaller churches with extreme colors. Nevertheless, there is truth to it. Many small church pastors (myself included) read the books and go to the seminars of the large church pastors and say to ourselves, "this guy just isn't where I'm at. Does he really know what it's like here?" Daman's book is a worthy effort to write for the small church pastor.

The book is set up in five stages which, when followed by a church, are designed lead to effective ministry. These five steps include:

(1) *Understand* — understand the community and the church;
(2) *Know* — develop the theology of the church;
(3) *Be* — develop the character of the church in loving God

and people;
(4) *Do* — develop the mission of reaching, discipleship and service;
and
(5) *Envision* — develop and implement the vision of the church.

Throughout the book Daman shows his intimate knowledge with small churches and the pros and cons of them. Every small church pastor will nod his head in agreement as they read, "The contemporary literature stresses that the church, to be effective, must have a dynamic worship service with a worship team, praise choruses sung off overhead projectors, with a contemporary style of music. Yet for many small churches, such worship is impractical (it is hard to sing choruses with a guitar when no one knows how to play, and the pianist has the ability to only play in one tempo: slow)," (94). Daman states further, "[God] also calls the ordinary, the mundane, and average (and below average), the unskilled, the untalented, the uncouth, and the clumsy to enter into a relationship with him and worship him in the sincerity of their faith," (98).

Especially helpful is Daman's definitions of "mission" and "vision." As any pastor who has kept up on the current mission/vision/purpose literature knows, one's head begins spinning if you try and figure out the nuance of each word. Which is long-term and which is short-term? Which is church wide and which is church specific? Which comes from the congregation/leadership and which from the Scriptures?

With clarity Daman cuts through the confusing fog of all the literature when he says, "mission is a general direction and a broad statement of what the church desires to accomplish. Vision itself is specific and distinct to each body. The mission sets the general course, while the vision details how the church will accomplish it. Vision 'puts feet' on the mission," (145). And again, "Vision is the marriage between the biblical purpose and mission of the church and its contextual setting," (210). His breakdown of mission into the three areas of reaching out, discipleship, and service is particularly helpful.

The "Evaluation and Implementation" portions at the end of each chapter, along with the "Ministry Development Worksheets" in Appendix A, are themselves worth the price of the book and would yield tremendous results if given much attention. Diagrams placed throughout the book well illustrate Daman's ideas.

The book has some minor deficiencies which the reader will have to work through. These include (1) *presupposing* a healthy church instead of helping

the small church pastor *develop* a healthy church, and (2) indicating at various times that all small churches are in rural areas (mine isn't). Furthermore, having rightfully placed a high degree of importance on knowing the right theology, why does it come second in his order of steps. Shouldn't our theology influence our analysis of the culture of the church and the community, which he places first in order?

This book won't provide all the answers to the problems that pastors of small churches face (only one book will). But it serves as a fine contribution to the library of books that address those issues.

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***Preaching from the Types and Metaphors of the Bible*. By Benjamin Keach. Grand Rapids: Kregel Classics, 1972, 0-8254-3008-9, xviii + 1,007 pp., $49.99, hardback.**

Kregel continues to reprint trusted and time-proven publications for Christian life and ministry. This one was written more than 300 years ago and first published in 1855 in London, England as *Tropologia: A Key to Open Metaphors, Together with Types of the Old Testament*. The century and half delay in publication was probably caused by the great expense of typesetting and printing such a work that few ministers and other Bible students could afford.

Keach was probably the most famous Baptist of his time. Born in 1640, immersed on the confession of his faith at age fifteen, he began to preach at eighteen. At age twenty-eight, he became pastor of the Baptist Church, Horsleydown, London (1668). His influence extended far from there before he died at age sixty-four (1704). And he, being dead, yet speaketh.

This is one of forty-three works from this gifted writer. Keach confessed that his early efforts to preach on metaphors failed. He took his notes and went back to work. The result was this great volume "designed for the benefit and assistance of young students and ministers" (p. x). "Allegories are. . .intended to. . .explain doctrines, affect the heart and convince the conscious. Nathan made use of a parable to convict David of his sin" (p. viii).
An essay of ten pages on the "Divine Authority of the Bible" follows Keach's

preface and precedes the main body of the text. In the essay, Keach gives seventeen arguments to prove that "the Bible is, of divine original, inspired by the Spirit of God and therefore of infallible truth and authority" (p. xiii). The thousand-page text is divided into two parts. Part One defines thirteen specific figures of speech: metonym, irony, metaphor, synecdoche, catachresis, hyperbole, allegory, proverb, enigma, figures, schemes, types and parables. This survey in three chapters takes about one-fourth of the book. It is an amazing catalog of all kinds of figures of speech in Old Testament and New. Each figure is defined, categorized and subcategorized. For example, a section on "Metaphors taken from Water" (pp. 117-122) is organized into subcategories for the sea, waves of the sea, a stream or brook, and a river. Scriptures expand the outline in such detail as to make a reader marvel that one man alone could do such a work.

Part Two is headed "Source Materials for Preaching from the Types and Metaphors of the Bible." These three-fourths of the great tome offer practical application of the types and metaphors. These chapters group various figures under such titles as "God the Father," "The Lord Jesus Christ," "The Holy Spirit," "The Word of God," "Grace and Ordinances," "The Church," and others. For example, consider Chapter 12 "Ministers and Churches." Subcategories include "Ministers Compared to Angels," "Ministers Compared to Stars, . . .to Labourers. . .to Watchmen. . .to Trumpeters," and a dozen more comparisons. On the comparison to trumpeters, three texts are gathered for commentary. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet." Isaiah 58:1. The other two references are Joel 2:1, "Blow the trumpet in Zion," and 2 Corinthians 4:8, "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for battle?" In parallel columns are eleven observations about trumpeters matched with "Parallel" (application) of that observation. A list of "Inferences" rounds out the treatment.

A preacher today will find the suggestions still useful three hundred years after Keach wrote them. His extensive use of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin will make it a bit more difficult for those not versed in these languages. But where else will a student of God's Word find such a useful hermeneutical guide and such a thorough reference tool for this important area of Bible study?

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***The Vanishing Ministry in the 21st Century.* By Woodrow Kroll. Grand Rapids: Kregal, 2002, 0-8254-3063-1, 171 pp., $11.99, paperback.**

One evening in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, our mission team was winding down from a day of work. We had returned from worshipping with our Bolivian brothers and sisters in Christ, an amazing and lively experience. I was speaking with an elder from my congregation who had this worship experience still fresh in her mind. She compared what she had just experienced to the reality of our congregation back in the States. Her conclusion was simple, "We are so complacent back home."

I recalled that experience as I opened Kroll's book. I think the steel of mission and ministry is being consumed by the rust of complacency. That is the issue Woodrow Kroll addresses in this book. Kroll opens his book by citing how lofty goals had been set for the new millennium and how these goals were severely missed. From that point he proceeds to cite the fact that fewer people are going into mission and ministry as a lifetime calling. The fields are indeed ripe for harvest, yet fewer and fewer workers are going into the field. Certainly, as my elder pointed out, complacency and dying passion for reaching the lost contribute to the declining numbers of individuals going into lifetime service.

It seems to me the intended readership of this book is mainly pastors, educators and church leaders. I believe that there is a better audience: college students and seniors in high school. Rather than revising a previous work Kroll could have shifted his audience writing directly to those who are choosing careers other than lifetime service. He could have presented reasons why young people today should choose the blessing of lifetime ministry.

Kroll chides educators, pastors, churches, Christian colleges and others within reach for failing to recruit young people into lifetime ministry. In the process I believe Kroll leaves two important areas uncovered.

First he failed to address the reality that ministry has become more specialized. Those who would have, years ago, gone into pastoral ministry are now specializing in counseling, music and educational ministries. It is quite possible that those whom, years ago, would not have entered lifetime service because they did not want to be pastors or missionaries are doing so today in specialized areas. Is this good or bad? Kroll never touches the question.

Second, Kroll does not state his definition of lifetime ministry. The implications, however, are clear. He communicates the idea that missionaries and pastors are true lifetime servants while the rest are secular workers. The point that all work is sacred work in the hands of the believer is not well communicated.

Kroll does raise an important issue in this book. It is an issue with which the church does not seem to be dealing well. I agree with Kroll that the church must be more intentional in urging younger believers to consider lifetime service in ministry that includes pastoral and mission work. To his argument I would add the following: The church must also urge those who do not choose pastoral or missionary service to be lifetime servants in the career they choose. All God's people are called to lifetime service no matter what they do or where they go.

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Visual Faith; Art, Theology, and Worship in Dialogue. **By William A. Dyrness. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001, 0-8010-2297-5, 192 pp, $21.99 paperback**

By divine design, worship includes visual dimensions. It certainly did so in the Old Testament economy with all the furnishings and actions associated with the tabernacle/temple. It did so in the New Testament as the Son of God became flesh and taught with parabolic word pictures using soil and a mustard seed, not to mention the sight of sacramental bread and wine. The book of Revelation incorporates powerful Old Testament visual imagery to present dramatic pictures of the worship of the heavenly church triumphant.

Beyond the Biblical record, we have the testimony of church history. Through the ages, the church has used myriads of visual elements to teach and sustain faith in worship. These include objects such as windows, relics, and crucifixes as well as actions such as genuflexions, the sign of the cross, and the elevation of the host. In fact, the enormous breach between the Eastern and Western branches of Christendom a thousand years ago was then and continues to be characterized by bitter controversy over the correct use of visual tools (3-dimensional statues versus 2-dimensional

paintings/mosaics).

The question that remains to be answered has to do with the present. In what ways can the church make use of the visual arts to enhance worship today? It is that question that William Dyrness seeks to answer in this publication, the newest volume in Baker Academic's "Engaging Culture" series. Dyrness, who holds doctoral degrees from the University of Strasbourg and also the Free University of Amsterdam, is professor of theology and culture at Fuller Theological Seminary. He writes here as a "theologian of the arts."

In *Visual Faith*, the author stirs the imagination with the great variety of possibilities for visual art to enhance worship. In the past it was through paintings, sculpture, and stained glass windows. Today, in the wake of MTV and the Internet, we must add drama, video, and PowerPoint. Readers will find Dyrness' work to be a fascinating introduction to the history of art and principles of interpretation and evaluation. This is especially helpful for novices in the field who need to learn to look at the arts "Christianly," as Francis Schaeffer and Hans Rookmaker sought to teach the church some thirty or forty years ago.

But it is not only a question of what the church *can* do. There is also the question of what the church *may* do. This is especially critical for those in the Reformed tradition for whom the Puritan "Regulative Principle of Worship" demands unambiguous Scriptural warrant for worship practices. Dyrness identifies himself with that tradition, and so the reader will expect him to provide that Scriptural warrant in substantial exegetical and historical detail.

The fact that the church has historically used visual aids in worship is not adequate. Neither is it adequate to resort to pragmatic arguments that demonstrate ways in which visual aids can assist worshipers in this present age when people suffer from short attention spans and dependence on pictures. Many in the contemporary worship movement have done this with new worship styles very dependent on visual imagery. Dyrness does provide both historic examples and pragmatic arguments in very satisfying detail. Chapters 1 and 2 deal with visual arts from the early church and middle ages, and then from the Reformation to the 21st century. The book includes numerous illustrative pictures (some in color).

But the Protestant Reformation challenged the church to be very careful of the dangers of idolatry inherent in the abuse of visual images. It replaced visual arts with the prominence of the written Word of God. What is lacking in Dyrness is a more substantial Biblical warrant for the use

of visual arts and practical guidelines to help one avoid what many regard as the abuses of the Roman and Orthodox churches. Without that protection to guard worship, others could just as legitimately argue for the inclusion of sporting activities (25 yard dashes down the center isle?) simply because they "help people worship."

Readers of this journal will be seeking books that more specifically provide assistance in cultivating homiletical skills. Dyrness' book has more to say to art critics than it does to homileticians.

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***The Whispered Word: A Theology of Preaching*. By Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki. St. Louis: Chalice, 1999, 0-8272-4239-5, 118 pp., $15.99 paper.**

The first 70% of this little volume is a series of lectures (in six chapters) delivered to the pastors of The Three Rivers Annual Conference (Illinois) of The United Methodist Church. The last 30% is a series of seven brief sermons by the same United Methodist minister. Suchocki is also Professor of Theology at Claremont. In this little volume, she first develops her process theology of preaching, then she demonstrates it.

"Process Theology suggests that God is everlastingly creative, continuously calling existence into being through an evocative word" (3). The revealed word and the proclaimed word have power to intensify the (hidden) "whispered" word to bring it more to our consciousness. Preaching extends the incarnation of Christ into our time (21). "The Received Word," turns to the process dynamics on the hearer – individually and corporately. Different hearers receive the same sermon as different sermons, yet the many hearers make up one body in organic unity. "Preaching Theologically" is using certain great "themes" or "symbols" of the Christian faith that can be configured into a variety of complementing or conflicting doctrines (39). "Only a dead tradition is impervious to change" (41). We are not to read texts slavishly and agree with the theology in every one.

"Letting the Sermon Go," calls us to "give away" the finished sermon, "outcome unknown. . . .God will use it as God will, touching some when they

need it with a sense of presence" (64). "The Sermon as Worship," is the final lecture. "To worship God is to bring ourselves before God as we are, with all our emotions, and to see ourselves in the light of the nature of the God we worship" (75).
The writer gives us seven of her own sermons to explicate this theology of preaching. As for content, there is one sermon on each of the seven "symbols" that she believes embody the Christian faith. (1) creation, (2) sin, (3) Jesus Christ, (4) new life, (5) community, (6) the work of God in the world, and (7) the hope of everlasting redemption.

Homiletically, all seven examples use an inductive pattern, done well. Three strengths are use of (1) narrative, (2) personal experience, and (3) questions. Narrative treatment is her regular technique for explaining the text. Narrative illustrations are also important to her. Many of her narratives are shared personal experience from her life as a mother and grandmother. Questions draw us along toward the preacher's desired conclusion. Suchocki's feminism will distract some readers. (She prefers the term "Womanist theologian.") Gender-specific pronouns for deity are studiously avoided even if it means correcting John Wesley: "And since [God] is invisible to our eyes, we are to serve God in our neighbor: which [God] receives as if done to [God]self in person. . ." (11). Nevertheless, the little volume is well written in a flowing oral style. It may be useful for students of homiletics as an example of the preaching of a process theologian, an inductive homilitician and a "womanist."

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Yes to Peace: Sermons on the Shalom of God. **By R. Scott Colglazier, ed. St. Louis: Chalice, 2001, 0-8272-4409-6, 166 pp., $18.99, paperback.**

This volume is a collection of twenty-four sermons preached at the beginning of the present millennium. Several were delivered on its first Sunday, January 2, 2000. All were the fruit of the editor's challenge to "preach for peace." Each sermon has a title followed by a brief laudatory description of the sermon's author, a Scripture citation and the short sermon. What follows are questions for reflection and discussion. Half have endnotes. Though contributors include four who serve Presbyterian churches, one Methodist, one Baptist and one Unitarian, one with dual affiliations, most serve Christian

Churches (Disciples of Christ). Five serve on homiletics faculties (of Brite, Iliff, Vanderbilt, Eden and Christian Theological Seminary of Indianapolis).

Though some of these messages were stronger than others, and the idea of collecting significant sermons on peace is commendable. However, this book falls far short of its potential for the following reasons. First, it would have to be described as scripturally shallow at best. Rare was the preacher who wrestled to exegete a passage or developed anything like a biblical theology of peace. Instead, for instance, we hear L. Susan Bond apparently identifying the events recorded in Deuteronomy 8:7-20 with the Babylonian captivity (72). Second, despite apparent efforts to foster some diversity, the volume lacks a contributor from the historic peace denominations. Surely a Mennonite or two could have been invited to participate and thus share the fruit of generations of solid thinking on the subject of peace. Third, though a few of the sermons offered definitions of peace, the concept was applied so broadly as to be fairly innocuous. To be fair, some did assert their opinions forthrightly. Ronald Allen, for instance, writing on page 135, labels as "dishonest" intentional dialogue with a view to conversion of another to one's point of view. Does that mean what Paul did for two years in the lecture hall of Tyrannus was dishonest? Fourth, the volume does not appear to have been checked for factual errors in the anecdotes. See, for instance, the linkage of Alfred Nobel with nuclear power on page 25. These instances made me wary of quoting some other stories that might be adaptable to my preaching.

For these reasons, I wouldn't recommend adding this book to your library.

Greg R. Scharf

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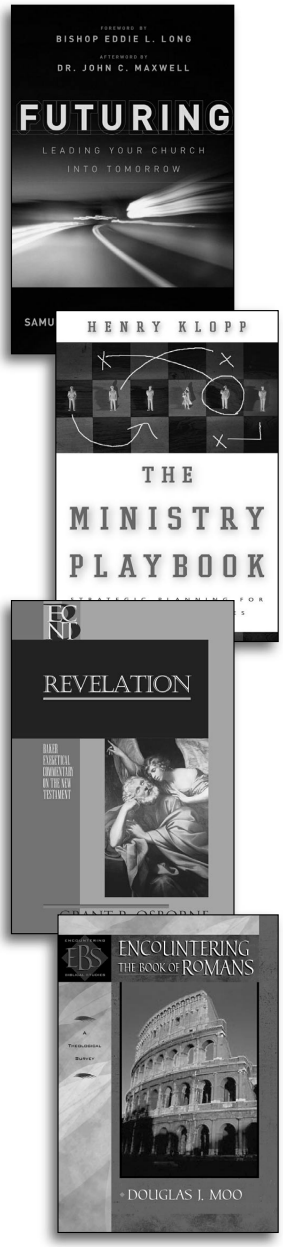
TOOLS for Christian Leaders



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