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The Journal of the
Evangelical Homiletics Society

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Contents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Tribute: Keith Willhite
1958-2003

by Scott M. Gibson

On 16 April 2003 Keith Willhite went home to be with the Lord. After a five-year battle with brain cancer, Keith crossed from this life to the next. The homely adage says, "The best is yet to come." As Christians, we know it's true. And for Keith, it *is* true.

The members of the Evangelical Homiletics Society will miss his warm, gentle presence. His contribution to our gatherings and to the field of homiletics will long be felt.

I miss Keith. We didn't know each other a long time, but our relationship was solid and respectful, like friends who knew each other for years and years. It was a partnership. In December of 1996 Keith and I met for the first time at the Academy of Homiletics conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We literally bumped into each other as we exited one of the sessions. He said to me, "Are you Scott Gibson?" I said, "Yes." Then he introduced himself and said, "Boy, am I glad to see you." From that point onward we were friends.

That afternoon we met over a three hour lunch talking about homiletics, the state of preaching today, and the link to our common mentor and friend, Haddon Robinson.

What came out of that initial lunch was the outline for a co-edited book to honor Haddon Robinson, *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching*, published in 1998 by Baker. The other outcome was the skeleton of what is now known as the Evangelical Homiletics Society. We slated the first meeting to take place at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in October 1997.

The culmination of the formal founding of the Evangelical Homiletics Society was extremely gratifying for Keith and me. I served as the Society's first president and Keith was vice-president. He became president the next year and hosted the gathering at Dallas Theological Seminary in 1998.

During this time, however, Keith began to experience health difficulties. While we worked on the book his condition worsened. Yet, he continued to engage in the editing as much as he was able.

When the surprise celebration for Haddon Robinson's forty years of ministry took place at Gordon-Conwell in October 1998, Keith had already undergone surgery. But he was not held back from attending. The weather was lousy, one of those New England nor'easters, but he arrived just in time to the service to join me on the platform for the presentation of the festschrift we edited in honor of Haddon. We spent a great weekend together as we were both gratified to honor someone who had contributed so much to our lives.

The years that followed were years of ups and downs for Keith. Remission lasted for a while but the cancer came back on occasion, and then, with a vengeance.

Only last summer (2002), though weak and fatigued, Keith agreed to contribute a chapter to a book I edited called, *Preaching at the Crossroads: Evangelical Preaching at the Dawn of a New Millennium*. He wrote, "This is a great proposal. Pray for my planning & writing of the chapter." And in the postscript he wrote regarding the memorandum of agreement signed by the authors, "I signed the agreement 'by faith,' maybe blind faith."

He never wrote the chapter, but later requested that I reprint his *Bibliotheca Sacra* article on preaching and relevance. I did.

On Thursday 17 April 2003 friends and family, received the following email:

Safely Home

> Keith went home to be with the Lord, yesterday, April 16th. We will miss him terribly, but are so thankful that he is strong, and well and completely healed. We are so thankful that Keith died peacefully and had very little pain.
>
> Katie and David are doing well and are being supported by lots of family and friends that have surrounded us these past few days. Please keep us in your prayers.
>
> Many of you know others who would want to know about Keith. I would be grateful if you would let them know. Visitation will probably be Friday evening at Rest Haven in Rowlett (on Rowlett Rd.) and the service will be Saturday, at 10:00 a.m. at Lake Pointe Church in Rockwall, TX. Keith has asked that in lieu of flowers donations could be made to Dallas Theological Seminary, or Cedarville College or a College fund that has been set up for Katie and David. (checks can be made out to the Willhite College fund and sent to our house or to Lake Pointe Church, 701 I - 30, Rockwall, TX 75087 c/o Wendy Akers)
>
> Thank you so very much for your years of prayers, friendship and support. You have been an incredible blessing to all of us.
>
> Denise, Katie and David[1]

The funeral service was held at 10 a.m. on Saturday 19 April 2003 at Lake Pointe Church, in Rockwall, TX. Dr. Mark Bailey, president of Dallas Theological Seminary gave the welcome and later a tribute, which is printed in this issue of the *Journal*. Others who participated in the service were Drs. John Reed and Ramesh Richard of Dallas Seminary, Mike Oliver, Rev. Bill Bryan Chaplain of Dallas Seminary and Pastor Steve Stroope of Lake Pointe Church. Rev. Ray Pritchard, Senior Pastor of Calvary Memorial Church in Oak Park, IL, preached the funeral message.

The theme marking the announcement of Keith's death and the funeral service was "Safely Home." Psalm 62:1-2 was placed on the cover of the service bulletin: "My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from Him. He Alone is my Rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will never be shaken." This is the kind of home for which all who believe in Jesus Christ hope. There it is truly safe.

At the funeral service the hymn, "Safely Home" was sung as a solo. The words are as follows:

I am now at home in heaven;
All's so happy, all so bright!
There is perfect joy and beauty
In this everlasting light.

All the pain and grief are over,
Every restless tossing past;
I am now at peace forever,
Safely home in heaven at last.

Did you wonder I so calmly
Trod the Valley of the Shade?
Oh! but Jesus' love illumined
Every dark and fearful glade.

And He came Himself to meet me
In that way so hard to tread;
And with Jesus' arm to lean on,
Could I have one doubt or dread?

Then you must not grieve so sorely,
For I love you dearly still;
Try to look beyond earth's shadows,
Pray to trust our Father's will.

There is work still waiting for you,
So you must not idle stand;
Do your work while life remaineth —
You shall rest in Jesus' land.

When that work is all completed,
He will gently call you home;
Oh, the rapture of the meeting!
Oh, the joy to see you come![4]

On the morning of the funeral, *The Dallas Morning News* featured Keith's obituary: "Pastoral instructor at Dallas seminary." One of Keith's students, Tim Lundy wrote in a letter to Keith before his death, "Your ministry continues every time I preach. God has used your gifts and multiplied them in the lives of men like me around the world."[2] Another of Keith's students remarked following the funeral, "Keith was just a regular Midwest guy — a kind of man who loved his family and did his job unpretentiously."[3]

From my experience, Keith was that kind guy, too. His legacy lives on in the lives he touched. I don't know why his life was cut short. I do know he's safely home in the presence of the Lord. His life has had an impact on many, including mine. And I wanted our readers to know it, too.

Keith leaves his wife, Denise Willhite, daughter Katie, and son, David.

Keith Willhite was born on 23 January 1958 in Middletown, KY and was the third and youngest child of Ralph and Valentine Willhite. He trusted Christ as savior at nine years of age. Keith earned the bachelor of arts (B.A.) from Cedarville University, a master of theology (Th.M.) at Dallas Theological Seminary, and the doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) in communication at Purdue University.

Keith served as pastor of Manchaca Bible Fellowship in Austin, TX and as senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Temperance, MI. He also assisted in the teaching ministry at Evangelical Covenant Church in Lafayette, IN.

Keith served on the faculty of Denver Seminary, where he was director of the Doctor of Ministry program and taught homiletics. Following Denver Seminary, Keith went to Dallas Seminary to direct the Doctor of Ministry Program, and he taught preaching and ministry research methods. He later served as Chair of the Department of Pastoral Ministries.

Keith Willhite was my friend. I don't use the term lightly — "friend." His winsomeness, steadiness, and Christian character helped to define friendship for me. I am grateful to God for him, my friend and brother in Christ, Keith Willhite.

This issue of *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* is dedicated to God in honor of the work and ministry of Keith Willhite, co-founder of the Evangelical Homiletics Society.

Notes

1. email from kwillhite2@aol.com, Thursday 17 April 2001, 12:52 EDT.
2. Eunaka Kirby Sawyer, "Obituary: Keith Willhite, Pastoral instructor at Dallas seminary," *The Dallas Morning News*, Saturday 19 April 2003: 3B.
3. Mary Demuth, "The truth remains: Life is short," *The Rowlett Lakeshore Times*, Thursday 24 April 2003: 11A.
4. Memorial card, Keith Willhite funeral, 19 April 2003.

Keith Willhite Memorial
A Tribute Delivered at the Funeral
Saturday 19 April 2003

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by Mark Bailey

(editor's note: Dr. Mark Bailey is president of Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX.)

On behalf of the Willhite family I want to welcome you this morning to this memorial service for our beloved colleague, and friend, Dr. Keith Willhite. Your attendance here is a great encouragement to the family, and they so appreciate your presence.

We are here to honor the memory of a man, to join in offering support and comfort to his family, to grieve our own loss, to celebrate Keith's home going, and above all else, to glorify our God by rehearsing the hope we have in Jesus Christ. We pause today in this holy week and how fitting that this service should lie between Friday and Sunday – between the themes of death and resurrection.

Last Wednesday, April 16 at 5:30 PM Keith was freed from his pain and suffering in a quiet transition from this earth. He was 45. The death of a believer is a precious moment in the eyes of the Lord as He welcomes one of His children into his heavenly home. This morning we want to comfort one another as we at the same time celebrate our faith.

The Tribute

Keith Willhite was man and faith and family. Born in Louisville, Kentucky on January 23, 1958, Keith came to a personal faith in Jesus Christ at age 9. His relationship with the Lord grew during his teen years and on into college. He received his bachelor of

arts degree from Cedarville College in 1980 and went on to Dallas Theological Seminary where he earned his Th.M. degree five years later, also serving as Senior Class President. He received his Ph.D. from Purdue University with honors in 1990. He served as the Senior Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Temperance, Michigan, and was a preaching associate at Evangelical Covenant Church in Lafayette, Indiana. He also served as pastor of Manchaca Bible Fellowship in Austin, Texas. As his pastoral reputation grew so did the opportunities for ministry. Dr. Willhite has spoken at more than 250 churches across North America and worked frequently with churches and parachurch ministries as a pastoral and leadership consultant. He enjoyed teaching short-term courses at the Kishnev Bible Institute in Moldova, a former Soviet republic.

Dr. Keith Willhite first served Dallas Theological Seminary as the Director of the Doctor of Ministry program, and then as Chairman of the Pastoral Ministries Department in which he also taught as a professor. He was nationally recognized leader in the field of biblical preaching. A prolific author, Professor Willhite produced nearly twenty articles for scholarly publication and wrote, co-authored, or edited four books. He was a pastor to preachers. He loved the Bible and showed it in the dedication with which he taught his students.

But nowhere was the authenticity of Keith's faith more evident than at home. He verbalized often that beside the Lord his family was all he really wanted in this life. He was a satisfied man. He believed in his family. He was the ultimate cheerleader for his family. He also loved Denise's family as his own. And they loved Keith as if he had been raised in theirs.

Denise's family thanked Keith more than once for the love and care that he showed to Denise. Denise told me the most vivid character trait that Keith lived out before her, especially these

last five years, was his patient endurance. Keith was her best friend and what she will miss the most will be a faithful prayer partner.

Keith was a Teacher – he taught the Word of God to his family at every opportunity. Especially on Sunday evenings when the family would gather for a time of singing and Bible study. Keith taught the importance of applying God's Word to the everyday events of every day life, whether that be sports, school, or friendships. Denise would play the piano and the family would sing. He valued education as seen from his own preparation and encouraged the children to do their best and excel in their own studies. He fostered the atmosphere and created a thirst for learning.

Keith was a great Listener – some of the greatest memories of Keith will be Denise's recollections of Katie sitting on the arm of their wing back chair sharing her heart with Daddy and Daniel climbing into the bed where Keith lay resting his weakening body. His ears were open to the hearts of his family for all they wanted him to know. His sisters have commented that he was more than a brother; he was a friend and counselor to them as well as the rest of the family. He was good friend to many people and stood willing to help others in need.

Keith was also just plain fun. His gift of humor made him a joy to be around. Anyone who knew Keith knew he was an avid fan of the University of Kentucky Wildcat basketball team. In fact, he was oblivious to the fact that UK competed in any other sports. He loved fishing on Denise's family farm.

Finally, Keith loved to worship. He especially loved the hymns and the recordings of Steve Green. Two of his favorite hymns were "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" and "Fairest Lord Jesus." While alive in his body he experienced the first; now he knows the second by experience.

Keith Willhite: A Tribute

by Haddon W. Robinson

(editor's note: Haddon W. Robinson is the Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA.)

I knew Keith Willhite for over a decade. I was responsible for giving him his first job in the academic arena. He directed the Doctor of Ministry program and taught preaching at Denver Seminary. That alone gave us something in common. Those valiant souls who listen to students preach their fledgling sermons and still keep their faith are joined at the heart like members of the Green Berets. Later when I taught some seminars at Denver, Keith picked up the pieces by grading the assignments when the week was over. He went on to supervise the Doctor of Ministry program and teach homiletics at his alma mater, Dallas Theological Seminary. He did the same scut-work chores when I taught some classes in the program there. I was impressed that he served in that supportive role with a gentle spirit and great good humor.

What impressed me most about Keith, however, was the way he handled his final illness. The cancer in his brain did its slow, vicious work, and he sought out the best physicians in Dallas to help him battle against it. Small victories gained with radiation and chemotherapy turned into frustrating defeats. It was a tough, discouraging fight, but Keith never whined. Life can be brutal and all of us can identify with someone asking hard questions

about it. We can sympathize with those who decide to throw in the towel. Yet, in my conversations with Keith he took what life threw at him and refused to buckle under. He stuck to his work until near the very end and he did it with great grace. He had a sturdy faith within his pain that somehow God was behind it all.

Keith Willhite stands out as someone who made up his mind to live until he died. In his life and in his death, because he was Christ's Man he responded to the commitment penned by William Ward:

I will do more than belong — I will participate.

I will do more than care — I will help.

I will do more than believe — I will practice.

I will do more than be fair — I will be kind.

I will do more than forgive — I will forget.

I will do more than dream — I will work.

I will do more than teach — I will inspire.

I will do more than earn — I will enrich.

I will do more than give — I will serve.

I will do more than live — I will grow.

I will do more than suffer — I will triumph.

Reflections on a Life Well Lived

by John W. Reed

(editor's note: John W. Reed is Senior Professor of Pastoral Ministries, Emeritus and Director of Doctor of Ministry Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX.)

Keith Willhite was my student, my colleague, my mentor, and my friend. Of his student days, Dr. Charles Stewart of Purdue University wrote:

> I remember Keith as a person and student with a very inquisitive mind who was unafraid to challenge old ideas as well as new ones. He was always striving to understand human communication and how it has been and continues to be similar and different in the religious and secular worlds. It was a pleasure working with Keith on his dissertation and to observe him developing into an outstanding scholar. Above all, I remember Keith as a warm, caring human being with a great sense of humor who was dedicated to his family and his Christian principles. We e-mailed each other frequently with funny comments and views on the world. I miss these contacts and the ability to laugh when the world seems very crazy at times.

He was my student as well and later became my colleague. Keith's contribution as a teacher is best summed up by one of our recent graduates, Tim Lundy. (Tim is a teaching pastor at Fellowship Bible Church, Little Rock, AR.) In an email to Keith, he said:

> . . . I want you to know the impact you had on me. I owe you a debt of gratitude for your shaping of my life. Your ministry continues every time I preach and your graciousness is remembered every time I think of Dallas Seminary. God has used your gifts and multiplied them in the lives of men like me around the world. Thank you for a legacy of clarity, encouragement and courage.

Those of us who witnessed Keith's grace and good humor in his battle against brain tumors will not forget that remarkable courage and faith. But Keith marked me most profoundly as he mentored me in the art of being a Doctor of Ministry Director. He had a remarkable grasp of what Doctor of Ministry Studies should be and I am grateful for the wisdom he shared with me. Keith was widely respected in the academic world and developed a host of friends. We miss him greatly.

Keith was born January 23, 1958. He graduated from Cedarville University in 1980. He was named Alumnus of the Year at Cedarville University in 2001. He would say that one of his wisest acts was marrying Denise in 1984. Keith graduated from Dallas Seminary with a Th.M. in 1985. After pastoring Manchaca Bible Fellowship in Austin, TX, Keith attended Purdue University graduating with a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Communication in 1990. After pastoring First Baptist Church in Temperance, MI, Keith became director of Doctor of Ministry Studies at Denver Seminary and in 1996 he became Doctor of Ministry Director at Dallas Seminary. In January of 2000 Keith was named Chairman of the Pastoral Ministries Department at Dallas Seminary.

I asked Denise to describe the process by which Keith felt his calling to pastor and to teach pastors. She explained that Keith had a gift in administration. His call to the pastorate came while

in high school and developed at Cedarville University. He was encouraged to teach by his professors in college and seminary. While in seminary, Keith thought of teaching pastors. In his first pastorate he listened to the advice of people like Dr. Duane Litfin, now president of Wheaton College, and worked toward a path that would equip him for the eventual ministry of teaching pastors. He followed the sound advice of pursuing his Ph.D. before children came into the family. Keith found a good fit with Dr. Charlie Stewart at Purdue. After gaining his Ph.D., Keith felt the need for more pastoral experience. In God's timing he entered seminary teaching. The rest is the history of a good and godly man who touched our lives in an unusual way.

Keith's colleagues at Dallas Seminary speak warmly of Keith as an encourager characterized by persistence, perspective and cheerfulness. He led the Pastoral Ministries Department with a humble, gracious, and accepting spirit. Keith's vision and initiative helped to create a professional society for evangelical preachers and teachers. The Evangelical Homiletics Society provides an important means of keeping God and His word before the people as the authority of the sermon. We are all better servants of God because Dr. Keith Willhite served with gentle good humor among us.

I wish to linger a bit longer in my memorial words for Keith Willhite. I am ever grateful for the warm and enduring friendship that developed between us. I visited him regularly during his last days. I was with his family during the end-of-life experiences. Keith died well. He died with a pure heart. He kept his warm good humor to the end. He fought an excellent fight and kept the faith. In the best sense of the word he ended well in the presence of overwhelming circumstances that would cause a lesser man to curse God. Earth is poorer because of the passing of Keith Willhite but Heaven is greatly enriched. We should all pray for a life so well lived.

Tribute to Keith Willhite: Friend, Partner, and Mentor

by Jeffrey Arthurs

(editor's note: Jeffrey Arthurs is Dean of the Chapel and Associate Professor of Preaching and Communication at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA.)

By the time I finally met Keith I felt I already knew him: he was brilliant, a hard worker, a good writer, a gentle humorist, and his Christian testimony was a rock of stability in the ocean of graduate studies at Purdue University. I had heard all of this from friends and faculty as I applied to the Department of Communication. They said, "You'll enjoy meeting Keith since his background is similar to yours;" "Keith has blazed the trail for you seminarians interested in homiletics;" and "Keith can help you with that." The "that" in their statement included academic advising, computer consultation, editorial assistance, pastoral care, well-timed levity, and hand holding for neophytes to *The University*. Keith had already been in the program for two years, so he was an old salt who could keep his balance on the heaving deck. When my wife and I pulled into West Lafayette, Indiana, in the summer of 1989 I couldn't wait to meet this paragon.

I first laid eyes on him at a department picnic. He looked more like a fullback than a scholar, but his affable personality had drawn a small crowd, and he was holding forth in fine style near one of the grills. He greeted me warmly, and soon I was part of his circle. Over the next two years, he befriended me, partnered with me as co-author, and mentored me in the Gnostic mysteries of rhetorical theory, content analysis, and argumentation, not to mention Preliminary Exams, professors' world views, and the National Communication Association.

Kenneth Burke, pre-eminent rhetorician whom Keith and I studied with fascination, speaks of the "representative anecdote" — a single incident which embodies an idea or situation. Here is a representative anecdote which demonstrates the type of friend, partner, and mentor Keith was to me:

At the end of my first semester I was depressed. I had always gone to Christian schools, and the big, secular university was a shock. I felt constantly off balance by the current of secular humanism and relativism, but Keith was my anchor. I could go to him with my sadness, and he always encouraged me. He also helped me with another shock of Ph.D. studies — the work! At the end of my first semester, I was on the borderline between an A and a B in a class called "The Rhetoric of Social Movements" taught by the chair of the department. It was very important for me to get an A because I planned to petition the department to reduce the heavy load of extra courses they required since my Masters Degrees were from unaccredited schools. I had to prove myself, but I hadn't done so yet in Social Movements. I walked the netherworld between an A and a B.

My grade would be determined by a final paper, so I worked on it for weeks. I asked Keith to read my paper and give me feedback before I turned it in, and he said he would, but I didn't actually hand him the paper until the day it was due. He had only a few hours to read it, make comments, and give it back to me so that I could make the changes he recommended. When I took him the paper, I expected him to say: "Sorry, but I have my own deadlines and assignments, and I can't get this back to you so soon. If you had given me a day or two, I could have helped you." He didn't say that. Instead, he took my paper, grabbed a Big Gulp, and headed off to be alone with my paper, saying he'd do his best to help me. And help me he did! His insight and editorial ability floored me, and as a budding rhetorician, his suggestions were designed for my "audience" — the department chair. He edited my paper so quickly that I was able to turn it in

on time. I got a good grade, made an A in the class, and even had that paper published in a journal.

I know that that story is not spectacular (no gun fights, car chases, or broken hearts — although I came close to supplying the broken heart), but the story captures some of Keith's qualities: He was a man of integrity; he did what he said he would do even when it was inconvenient. He was a man who didn't panic; he walked steadily and wasn't thrown off by every bump in the road. He was gifted in academics, and he was a man who lived what he preached by modeling virtues like service, humility, and sacrifice.

I have deep respect and tender regard for my friend. I want to be like him.

Audience Relevance in Expository Preaching

by Keith Willhite

(editor's note: Thanks to Denise Willhite and to Dallas Theological Seminary and editor of its journal, Bibliotheca Sacra *for permission to reprint Keith Willhite's, "Audience Relevance in Expository Preaching,"* Bibliotheca Sacra *149 (July-September 1992): 355-369. Reprinted by permission.)*

Expository preaching seeks to communicate biblical concepts derived from the historical, grammatical, and literary exegesis of scriptural passages.[1] A faithful presentation of the biblical text is primary, as the preacher seeks to bring to listeners the message of definite units of Scripture. Liefeld contends that the "essence of exposition is explanation. If I explain something, I am reasonably free to choose my own method, but I must be faithful to my subject."[2] Without an appeal for a response, however, expository preaching lacks distinctive theological purpose and may function merely as a form of public address.[3] The preacher must relate the Scriptures to people who face diverse situations and needs. Unfortunately much of expository preaching is merely pedantic explanation, almost to the extreme of being an oral commentary.[4] Many expositors attempting to communicate the biblical text faithfully, fail to demonstrate its relevance to their listeners. This is lamentable, for nothing is more relevant for human beings than the revealed Word of the living God. Scripture does not need "to be made relevant"; it is already relevant. Often, however, that relevance must be demonstrated rather than assumed evident to the audience. How to demonstrate the relevance of the biblical message is the subject of this article.

Contemporary rhetorical theory provides grounds for blending two of the preacher's essential tasks: accurately explaining the biblical text, and clearly demonstrating the relevance of the text to the audience.[5] Argumentation, one aspect of rhetorical theory,

can help expositors demonstrate the relevance of their sermons more effectively. Stated in another way, demonstrating the relevance of the biblical message is an argumentative task. Various elements of language may function argumentatively in a communication process to help the preacher demonstrate relevance in expository, sermons. Whether listeners accept or reject a message may depend on how effectively the expositor uses "argumentation" in showing the relevance of the Word.

Argumentation as a Communication Process

Argumentation is a communicative process in which the speaker seeks to posit claims that recreate meaning that is "similar" to the biblical text and relevant for the audience.[6] The expositor aims to "adjust" the audience to the biblical message without adjusting the message to the audience.[7] Expectations of the audience, audience analysis, and the preacher's adaptation of his message to the audience are common homiletical topics.[8] Yet how language may function for the listener is a rhetorical vector often overlooked by those who concentrate on explanation. Rhetorical theory perceives the audience as a participant in a multifaceted communication process.[9] Audience members make "argumentative." demands that a speaker must meet if they are to accept the speaker's claim.[10] Listeners demand evidence, justification of the evidence, and qualification or reservations about the claim.

Several communication scholars including Toulmin view argumentation as a process, the analysis of which must focus on the functions (as opposed to form) of language and the role of the listener as he or she chooses to accept or challenge the speaker's statements.[11] Rather than focusing on the reasoning or logic of the sermon as such, these rhetoricians focus on the reasoning of the audience.

Toulmin is concerned not with the structure or form of a message but with its function. He contends that most logicians

view syllogism as the only appropriate way to substantiate claims to knowledge. That is, traditionally logicians have viewed syllogism as a method of reasoning that produces certain knowledge from the combination of two premises. Toulmin argues, however, that "premises" in syllogisms actually serve diverse functions and thus cannot satisfactorily produce certain knowledge.[12] Believing that formal logic is less helpful in argumentation than philosophers often declare, he focuses instead on the functions of language. This shift from argumentative form to argumentative function also focuses attention on the receiver rather than on the speaker who advances the claim. How the audience receives the message is central.

This perspective relates well to preaching because of Toulmin's concept of audience receptivity. Toulmin did not write about rhetoric, at least originally. However, as Arnold argues, Toulmin seems to treat discourse as an event in which there is a dynamic, intellectual relationship between sender and receiver.[13]

> The instigator has serious, affective intentions toward a respondent. The respondent perceives the utterance as one meant to modify his experience. He knows he has the right to challenge if the grounds for claims seem perplexing or insufficient. He functions as judge on questions of relevance, significance, and sufficiency.... To this extent, at least, Toulmin's conception of an "argument" is a description of rhetorical communication.[14]

What preacher does not yearn for his listeners to think how his message is to modify their experience? What preacher does not want his listeners to comprehend the relevance and sufficiency of the biblical message and to respond accordingly?

Toulmin views relevance from the perspective of audience receptivity.[15] He focuses on the receivers' judgment in all phases

of the argumentative process.[16] Thus audience members will receive or accept only what they determine to be relevant.

Expository preachers must accurately convey the meaning of a Bible passage, but they must also demonstrate the relevance of the biblical text to their audience.[17] Expositors committed to the authority of the Scriptures should seek to help the audience adjust to the biblical message without adjusting the message to the audience. Demonstrating relevance is an argumentative task.

Warren has served preachers well by his paradigm of the preaching process.[18] Building on Stott's metaphor of a bridge spanning from the ancient text to the modern audience,[19] Warren suggests four parts to the preaching process: revelational, exegetical, theological, and homiletical.

> Beginning with Scripture, which is God-given and therefore absolute and authoritative, the first step moves the preacher out of the world of the absolute expression of God's truth, into the world of changing expressions of that truth, and toward the product of the exegetical process. This exegetical process begins to bridge the gap between the world of the text and the world of the audience. The exegetical product is a statement of the text's meaning in terms of structure, proposition, and purpose. The next section consists of the theological process, which moves the preacher from the exegetical to the theological product. The theological product is the statement of universal theological principle that the preacher has discovered in the text through the exegetical and the theological processes. The third section goes from the theological to the homiletical product. This is the sermon delivered to the listeners. The final section in the entire preaching process involves not only the preacher but also the listeners,

> whose lives demonstrate change for having heard and responded to the sermon. The process is not completed until God's people think and act differently for having heard the Word expounded. This is the revelational process, for its goal is to manifest or reveal God's truth by living it out.[20]

Relevance is one of the spans in Warren's bridge stretching between the theological and the homiletical products. By studying and utilizing this "span," preachers can enhance their homiletical skills.

Several of Toulmin's terms delineate how language functions in argumentation. A *claim* is a statement the speaker wishes the listener to accept but which the receiver challenges or potentially may challenge. The challenge may come from questions in the listener's mind that seek for further explanations, proofs, or indications of significance. *Evidence* includes ideas "already acceptable or evident" to the receiver that function as support for a claim and that lead him to accept the claim. Preachers may provide evidence in various ways: explicit reference to the biblical text, application or implications of the text, illustrations, statistics, quotations, or references to collateral passages. Also listeners may supply their own evidence to support (or challenge) a claim.

A *warrant* functions as the bridge between a claim and evidence. A warrant simply clarifies the relationship between the claim and the evidence, indicating why one might perceive the evidence as relevant to the claim. For example if a preacher makes the claim, "Jesus is alive today," evidence to support that claim might include the statement "because He rose from the dead on the third day." The warrant that connects the claim and evidence could be: "Anyone who rose from the dead must be alive."

A *reservation* allows the preacher to cite instances in which he may want to retract the claim. For example he may say, "Unless

God has another purpose for our circumstances, He will deliver us." A *qualifier* designates the level of confidence of the preacher and the recommendation for the level of confidence for the receiver.[21] The expositor may say, "Probably God will not let you suffer to that extreme." Thus he has indicated a high degree of probability in the claim, but not absolute certainty.

A claim, evidence, and a warrant constitute the three essential elements of a "unit of proof." As Ehninger and Brockriede argue, proof is the process of securing belief in one statement by relating it to another statement that is already believed.[22] Many units of proof also include reservations or qualifiers.

Demonstrating the Relevance of the Sermon

To demonstrate the relevance of a sermon, argumentation questions seem more appropriate than exegetical questions.[23] Questions regarding a sermon's claim simply address whether the listener understands the appeal or demand of the sermon. Questions about evidence pertain to how the claim might be supported or what the listener already might perceive as acceptable support for the claim. Questions about warrants consider the suitability of the evidence for the audience. These are some examples.

Claim: What claim does this sermon make on one's life? What does the Bible claim that one should do, believe, obey, or think? What truth does this passage claim?

Evidence: Says who? Will it work? What has happened to those who obeyed or disobeyed this claim? Can one really do that? Is that too extreme? How would one do that where he or she lives? Is there another theological truth that clarifies this truth?

Warrant: Was this claim or evidence culturally bound or is it just as applicable today as in Bible times? Do contemporary believ-

ers possess the same promises as the people to whom this passage was written? Is there "another side of the coin," a truth or perspective that might offer balance to this claim or evidence? Are modern Christians under the same kind of authority and obligation as those to whom this was first written?

When faced with a sermon's claim, a listener may choose to accept the claim, or reject, ignore, or challenge it. Challenges to claims may vary from a request for simple modification (often requiring a reservation or qualifier) to a request for quantitative or qualitative evidence. Of course the receiver's challenge may not stop at the point of evidence. Even when given the evidence, the listener may still accept, reject, or ignore it. Or he or she may request a warrant, that is, sufficient reason to connect the evidence with the claim.

Typically arguments acquire a crux-a turning point at which a listener decides to accept (or reject without further consideration) the claim. The crux of an argument designates the location (evidence, warrant, etc.) at which he or she decides-to respond in a particular way. Often the crux will require a complete "unit of proof" (claim, evidence, warrant). Suppose a preacher advances an argument that provides a unit of proof, including a claim, three pieces of evidence, and a warrant. It is possible for audience members to accept the evidence and still not accept the claim. If a listener were to challenge the argument's warrant, that warrant would begin to function as a claim, which in turn would probably necessitate evidence of its own and perhaps warrants of its own. Thus the listener's challenge to the original warrant would necessitate a new unit of proof. If the listener's challenge were met and the original warrant (now a claim) were accepted, the original warrant would function as the crux of the argument.[24] Much of what constitutes an argumentative link of relevance occurs at the location of the warrant. Evidence probably functions frequently as a crux as well.

An example of argumentative analysis will help clarify the potential of audience receptivity to a sermon. The first of the two outlines that follow is a homiletical outline, and the second is an argumentative analysis of that same sermon. The homiletical outline and argumentative analysis differ in content and purpose. The homiletical outline presents the structure of the sermon, the outline from which the expositor delivers the sermon. The argumentative analysis displays the preacher's classification of the argumentative elements in the sermon. The homiletical outline is followed in the pulpit, whereas the argumentative analysis remains in the study. The argumentative analysis is involved in sermon preparation, and the homiletical outline is the product of sermon preparation.

Homiletical Outline of a Sermon from Psalm 27

Introduction

1. People strive for many kinds of security: home, financial, marital, job, national.
2 "Security" is freedom from risk or danger; it involves a confidence or promise.
3. What people mean by "security" is "absence of fear."
4 The only means to genuine security is a relationship with God.
    a. Most of us affirm that. Yet we have fears, don't we?
    b. Life is full of risks and dangers. Some even threaten life.
    c. How, then, do we acquire and maintain security?
5. In Psalm 27 David, who had great wealth and power, declared without reservation that our proximity to God determines our security (main idea).

Body

I. We are secure in God even if we face overwhelming odds (27:1-6).

A. Fear has no foundation when our security rests in God (v.1).

B. Fear has no foundation when we trust in God's ability to bring victory (vv. 2-3).
(Facing overwhelming odds and sensing that war was imminent, how could David be so confident?)

C. Fear has no foundation when we remain close to God (vv. 4-6).
(In verse 7 the mood swings somewhat, however. Apparently God was not granting David protection promptly, for David made an anxious plea for help. Yet again David's heart affirmed his security in God.)

II. We remain secure in God even when God's timing differs from our timing (27:7-12).

A. We can trust God even when our need is urgent (vv. 7-10).

B. We must seek God even when danger is imminent (vv. 11-12).
(This confidence moved David to cry from his heart, as voiced in verses 13-14).

III. We are secure in God even when God says, "Wait" (27:13-14).

A. David restated his confidence in the Lord (v. 13).

B. David resolved to be of good courage as he waited on the Lord (v. 14).
1. It's one thing to wait; it's quite another to be strong and take heart while you wait. Waiting can be a very insecure situation.

2. Illustration: My struggle with "waiting" for a job.

Conclusion

1. Illustration: A father and son were swimming. The son was being held up by his father, realizing that his safety depended on his father.
2 At times all of us feel we are in deep water — problems abound, a job is lost, someone near us is ill, a relationship crumbles. Our temptation is to panic, for we feel we've lost control. Yet as with the boy in the pool, we've never been in control over the most valuable things of life. We've always been held up by our Father.
3. Our proximity to God determines our security.

Analysis of the Argument of a Sermon from Psalm 27

Claim: Only when we maintain a close relationship with God can we be assured of security in the face of fears.

Evidence 1: David discovered that we are secure in God even if we face overwhelming odds.

Warrant 1: We face numerous fears in life and look for security in various forms (introduction).

Warrant 2: David's experience, though apparently a literal battle, has significant similarities to our encounters with fears.

Warrant 3: Fear has no foundation when our security rests in God.

Warrant 4: Fear has no foundation when we trust in God's ability to bring victory.

Warrant 5: Fear has no foundation when we remain close to God.

Evidence 2: David concluded that we remain secure in God even when God's timing differs from our timing.

Warrant 1: Though God's timing is perfect, this is usually seen only in hindsight.

Warrant 2: God is able to deliver us from fear, even the fear of an imminent battle.

Evidence 3: David found that we are secure in God even when God says, "Wait."

Warrant 1: God may not deliver us on our timetable.

Warrant 2: God may choose (for our good) not to deliver us.

Warrant 3: My experience in waiting for a job. I cannot explain the wait, but there is great encouragement as I hope in God.

Evidence 4: Illustration: Father and son swimming.

Warrant: Many of us are much like the little boy, needing to realize that regardless of the circumstances, we are dependent on God for security.

Reservation: Unless God chooses (for a greater good) to let us endure our fear, He will deliver us.

The analysis of the sermon's argument names the elements of the argument, specifying how the preacher's language may

function. However, identification of the parts merely prepares one to understand what may be the sermon's argumentative aim. Each element in the argument may be classified and its potential strength in the argument described.[25]

This sermon's claim is declarative, for it simply states the case or situation when one wishes to be secure in the face of fears. Also there is an evaluative implication in the claim, for the claim states a condition ("Only when...") on security.

In an expository sermon a variety of elements may function as evidence. As Toulmin, Reike, and Janik have argued; listeners vary in the elements they accept as evidence.[26] The perception of the relevance of a given piece of evidence may vary extensively from listener to listener. The preacher who seeks to argue successfully must learn to recognize the kinds of information that will more likely serve as relevant supporting material for the sermon's claim.[27] He should seek to identify the elements listeners are likely to challenge, and how and why. Thinking about these issues should enable the preacher to include appropriate qualifiers and reservations and to supply suitable evidence or warrants.

In the sample sermon, three pieces of evidence come from the biblical text, relating to David's experience and his reflections about his experience. A fourth article of evidence is an illustration of dependence on God fbr security, regardless of the circumstances (father and son swimming). Whether these evidences are accepted by the listener depends on the nature of the warrants in the sermon.

Warrants specify the relationship between a claim and evidence.[28] A warrant states whether the supplied evidence provides genuine support for the particular claim.[29] Two kinds of warrants function in the sample sermon-authority and analogy. Warrants of authority assert that the claim is acceptable because of the

source of the evidence.[30] Warrants 3, 4, and 5 under evidence 1 are warrants of authority because they expositionally state the truths stated in the psalm. Both warrants under evidence 2 and warrants 1 and 2 under evidence 3 are warrants of authority, though their authority stems from theological affirmations rather than from the text itself.

Warrants 1 and 2 under evidence 1 and the one warrant under evidence 4 are warrants of analogy because they assert a similarity between David's deliverance and the listener's potential deliverance. A warrant of analogy says that the two ideas are somewhat alike or are so similar metaphorically that what is true for one is true for the other, at least in some respects. David apparently faced a literal battle, but such is not the case for most Christians when God delivers them from fears. Yet some aspects of the two experiences are common: both David and the listener have a need, both involve God's intervention, and both include an emotional plea for God's help.

As seen in the analysis of its argument, the sermon also includes a reservation and an indication of the circumstances under which the preacher might withdraw the claim. While one might think the reservation weakens the claim, most argumentation theorists agree that a reservation actually strengthens the claim by specifying conditions under which the speaker would withdraw the claim. Few claims, from an argumentation perspective, possess universal appeal. Absolute assertions, often made in expository sermons, may need to be balanced by statements of reservation, as in the sample sermon.[31]

To summarize, the potential argumentative strength of the sample sermon emanates from a claim that declares what the case is if believers are to experience security in the face of fears. The sermon offers citations from the biblical text, expositional conclusions from the passage, and analogies from experience as evidence to support the claim. Also the sermon provides a

statement that describes the circumstances in which the preacher may withdraw the claim.

The relevance of the application (in belief, attitude, value, or behavioral change or affirmation), evolves from the warrants, particularly the warrants of analogy. These warrants seek to demonstrate the sufficiency of the biblical evidence and the evidence from personal experience to buttress the overall claim. The sermon argues that Christians' fears and their need of security are enough like David's that they should trust God for their security and maintain a close relationship with Him. What provides the crux of the argument for many listeners is the relationship between David's experience and their own experience, the warrants of analogy.

Implications

Several implications for preaching and homiletical research emerge from the argumentation perspective. First, this approach suggests that homileticians must give attention to audience receptivity if they are to be effective in preaching with relevance. Historically, homiletical theorists have viewed expository preaching only as text-oriented discourse and have ignored audience receptivity, at least from an argumentative perspective.[32] Patton and Koch are two of many who have called for the integration of contemporary rhetorical theory and preaching practice.[33] Scholars may find fruitful 1 study in integrating the argumentation perspective with Patton's situational approach, as well as Koch's research on encoding and decoding in sermonic discourse.

Second, this article has suggested that one way to view sermonic relevance is as a link between the interpretation of the biblical passage and the application of belief, attitude, value, or behavioral change or affirmation. This approach suggests that the preacher should make some rhetorical move toward the

audience and their needs rather than presenting "just the facts" or a colorless explanation of the meaning of the biblical passage. Moreover, this perspective suggests that sermonic discourse is an interpretive task, one in which the preacher must make interpretive decisions about what is necessary for explanation and response.

Third, this study attests that argumentation theory may be helpful in sermon preparation. The expositor is hereby challenged to think through the "argument" of the sermon: which claim(s) will the sermon make, how will the claim be supported, and what response(s) does he want the audience to make concerning their beliefs, attitudes, values, or behavior. Since effective preaching calls for demonstrating the relevance of the biblical text, the preacher must prepare that aspect of the sermon just as he prepares to explain the passage. If preachers were to view their sermons as argumentation products in which claims are advanced and supported, persuasive appeals in sermons would be more precise, sermonic arguments would be stronger, and application by the audience would be more likely.

In sermon preparation one may ask, What is the major claim of this sermon? Once that claim is clear, the question is, How might listeners challenge this claim? (They may say, "is that true?" "Prove it." "But it doesn't really work that way." "What has happened to those who have tried this?" "Can anyone really do that?") Next, the preacher can reason, What kinds of evidence will the listeners demand in order for them to. accept the claim?

By asking such questions, the potential communicative benefits include a more precise sermonic claim, evidence that is germane to the audience's likely challenges, elimination of irrelevant supporting (actually nonsupporting) material, and acceptance of the sermon's claim. By achieving these benefits, the relevance of Bible expositors' messages should become more apparent to their listeners.

Notes

1. Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 20.
2. Walter L. Liefeld, *New Testament Exposition: From Text to Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 5. Lifefeld argues further that a biblical expository sermon must assume five characteristics. It must deal with one basic passage, have hermeneutical integrity, cohesion, movement and direction, and application (ibid., 6-7).
3 J.Daniel Baumann, *An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972), 243.
4. See the present author's "Audience Relevance and Rhetorical Argumentation in Expository Preaching: A Historical-Critical Comparative Analysis of Selected Sermons of John F. MacArthur, Jr. and Charles R. Swindoll, 1970-1990" (PhD diss., Purdue University, 1990).
5. Not that theologians or homileticians have ignored rhetorical theory, for both homiletical studies and writings within the field of communication have offered numerous studies of the rhetorical nature of preaching. But a vast majority of homileticians interact with only one school of rhetorical theory, the classical tradition. Many mid-20th-century rhetorical studies in America were criticisms of preachers or preaching. See, for example, William Norwood Brigance, ed., *A History and Criticism of American Public Address, 2 vols*. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1943, 1960), and Marie Hochmuth, *A History and Criticism of American Public Address, vol. 3* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965). These volumes include essays on Jonathan Edwards, Theodore S. Parker, Henry Ward Beecher, Phillips Brooks, Dwight L. Moody, and Harry Emerson Fosdick. Extensive bibliographies on periods and persons of homiletics also fill this collection. These essays fall within the neoclassical traditon of rhetorical criticism and often reflect a "great person" reconstruction of sermon development and effects.

   Two volumes that deserve mention are *Preaching in American History: Selected Issues in the American Pulpit, 1630-1967* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1969) and *Sermons in American History: Selected Issues in the American Pulpit* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), both edited by Dewitte Holland. The first volume consists of 20 essays that describe and interpret major topics of the American pulpit. The second volume analyzes the history of American preaching and presents sermons illustrative of issues discussed in volume one. Another work worthy of mention is Kenneth Burke, *Rhetoric of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970). Though not a treatise on preaching, this book clearly unites rhetoric and religious discourse.

   In the literature on the rhetorical nature of preaching some writings seek to integrate communication theory with preaching. Examples include Baumann, *An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching*; John B. Koch, "The Sermon, Communication Theory, and Seminary Education," *Lutheran Theological Journal* 20 (August-November 1986): 108-15; James Earl Massey, *The Sermon in Perspective: A Study of Communication and Charisma* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976); and John H. Patton, "What Is Religious Communication?" *Homiletic* 3 (1978): 8-12. Patton argues that while biblical exegesis and rhetorical interpretation were separate conceptual categories for Augustine, they are inseparable counterparts in their potential for social influence by means of scriptural interpretation. From at least the time of Augustine the rhetorical tradition in the West has defined religious communication in terms of identifiable subject matter expressed in forms that could penetrate and activate the minds and hearts of listeners. Thus rhetorical theory goes far beyond the classical or neo-Aristotelian perspective.

6. Richard E. Crable, *Argumentation as Communication: Reasoning with Receivers* (Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill, 1976), 5-9.
7. The author is indebted to Professor David M. Berg of Purdue University for this insight (*Communication* 584, Purdue University, fall 1988). The wording of this statement finds its root In Donald C Bryant's description of the function of rhetoric: "adjusting ideas to people and people to ideas" ("Rhetoric: Its Functions and Its Scope," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 39 [1953]: 401-24).
8. Generally the literature describes these audience variables under such categories as knowledge, group identification, and receptivity. Because preachers focus on the reception of arguments within their sermons, the last of these categories becomes most significant. One cannot divorce the receptivity of an audience from its knowledge or group identification, however. Often an audience's knowledge and group identification make the message salient. As Eric Hoffer put it, the members of such an audience function as "true believers" (*The True Believer* [New York: Harper & Row, 1951], 13-20, 75-79).

   While Hoffer wrote specifically about the participants of a mass movement, his principles clearly relate to a religious audience. In his extension of Hoffer's ideas, Roderick P. Hart defined doctrines as "systematic bodies of belief that have been formally stated in writing and publicly proclaimed" ("The Rhetoric of the True Believer," *Speech Monographs* 38 [1971]: 249, n.). Hart distinguished Mormons, Roman Catholics, Communists, and members of the John Birch Society from "quasi-doctrinal" groups on the basis of speaker-audience philosophical commonality evidenced in the discourses he studied. The "doctrine" of evangelicals is found in the Bible, for they believe it is the inspired Word of God.

   As Hoffer noted, "The effectiveness of a doctrine does not come from its meaning but from its certitude. No doctrine however profound and sublime will be effective unless it is presented as the embodiment of the one and only truth.... It is obvious, therefore, that in order to be effective a doctrine must not [merely) be understood, but has to be believed in" (Hoffer, *The True Believer*, 79). As Hart indicated, the speaker depends on indoctrinated listeners for rhetorical contributions (Hart, "The Rhetoric of the True Believer," 251-52). That is, the speaker depends on the listener to supply the warrant. This assumes that as doctrines are essentially bodies of answers, listeners already "have the answers." Moreover, the doctrine defines the nature of the rhetorical relationship maintained between doctrinal spokespersons and their listeners. Expository preaching, venturing to explicate a portion of "the doctrine," is the epitome of such a relationship. Rather than labeling the evangelical audience "true believers" in Hart's strict sense, it is probably more accurate to label evangelicals as "believers." Evangelicals do share a world view and to some extent a behavioral code that binds them in identifiable ways. Yet the closed aspects of the system are much more difficult to document because evangelical churches transcend denominations and include many nondenominational churches. The point of the inclusion of Hoffer and Hart, to be precise, is the respect for and the function of the doctrine. Evangelical doctrine clearly is "believed in," and listeners may supply many of the warrants of the speakers arguments, as Hart discerned. To be accurate, however, the evangelical audience is less organized, has much looser control over its members, and allows "members" to embrace a much more eclectic set of premises than what Hart associated with "true believers."
9. Stephen E. Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958).
10. A communicative approach to preaching assumes that the listener's attention must be sought and maintained and that the listener must be reminded of the relevance of the biblical text.

11. See Douglas Ehninger and Wayne Brockriede, *Decision by, Debate* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1972); Stephen Toulmin, Richard Rieke, and Allan Janik, *An Introduction to Reasoning* (New York: Macmillan, 1979); and Crable, *Argumentation as Communication: Reasoning with Receivers*.
12. Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument*, 107-22.
13. Carroll C. Arnold, *Criticism of Oral Rhetoric* (Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill, 1974), 49.
14. Ibid.
15. Toulmin argues that even formal fallacies may be relevant if receivers choose to accept them as evidence for claims, as warrants to bridge the evidence and claim, or as another functional element in an argument (*The Uses of Argument*).
16. Crable, Argumentation as Communication: Reasoning with Receivers, 15.
17. Even a brief survey of recent homiletical research reveals a concern for communicative relevance. See, for example, John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982); Brian Richardson, "Do Bible Facts Change Attitudes?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 140 (April-June 1983): 163-72; Ramesh P. Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance; Part 1: Selected Issues in Theoretical Hermeneutics," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143 (January-March 1986): 14-25; idem, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance; Part 2: Levels of Biblical Meaning," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143 (April-June 1986): 123-33; idem; "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance; Part 3: Application Theory in Relation to the New Testament," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143 (July-September 1986): 205-17; idem, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance; Part 4: Application Theory in Relation to the Old Testament," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143 (October-December 1986): 302-13. As Sunukjian argues, the issue of audience relevance is important especially for the preacher, for communicative competency and character are the two factors that most determine the preacher's credibility (Donald R. Sunukjian, "The Credibility of the Preacher," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139 [July-September 1982]: 255-66). Stott argues that the expository preacher must be, above all else, faithful to the text of Scripture and sensitive to the modern audience. He proclaims, "This then is the double obligation for biblical expositors: to open the inspired text of Scripture with both faithfulness to the ancient Word and sensitivity to the modern world. Neither obligation is to be at the expense of the other.... If an expositor grasps the meaning of a passage without going on to its message, he has surrendered to antiquarianism, unrelated to the present, real world. On the other hand if he starts with its message, without having first asked what its original meaning was, then he has surrendered to existentialism, unrelated to the past, the historical revelation of God in Christ and in Scripture. Instead, the expositor must first be faithful in working at the meaning of the text, and then be sensitive in discerning its message for today" (John R. W. Stott, "Christian Preaching In the Contemporary World," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 [October-December 1988]: 368). What Stott calls "sensitiv[ity] in discerning its message for today" relates to audience relevance. Richard points up the issues involved in relevance in expository preaching: "Once biblical authority is accepted, numerous questions arise. For example, how does one bridge the temporal, historical, and cultural gaps between the Scriptures and today? ... Is the Bible automatically relevant because it is man's authority? How does one go beyond a study of the content, history, events, trends, culture, philosophy, language, and literature of the Bible to applying Scripture accurately; that is, how can Scripture actually be authoritative today?" (Richard, "Methodological Proposals for Scripture Relevance; Part 1: Selected Issues in Theoretical Hermeneutics," 14-15). As both Stott and Richard indicate, there are two interpretive tasks. First, the expository preacher acts as biblical exegete, seeking to

interpret the meaning of the biblical passage. Second, the expository preacher acts as interpreter of the application needed in a contemporary audience.

For an example of how Toulmin's argumentation paradigm may be used to evaluate sermons, see Willhite, "Audience Relevance and Rhetorical Argumentation in Expository Preaching: A Historical-Critical Comparative Analysis of Selected Sermons of John F. MacArthur, Jr. and Charles R. Swindoll, 1970-1990," chapters 4-5.

18. Timothy S. Warren, "A Paradigm for Preaching," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148 (October-December 1991): 463-86.
19. John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 144.
20. Warren, "A Paradigm for Preaching," 473.
21. Crable, *Augumentation in Communication: Reasoning with Receivers*, 68-70.
22. Ehninger and Brockriede, *Decision by Debate*, 99.
23. Demonstrating relevance assumes exegesis. Exegesis must precede any attempt to demonstrate the relevance of the biblical text. Only when the biblical text is understood properly can genuine relevance be demonstrated. To reverse the procedure Is to tempt the preacher to exegete (more accurately eisegete) the text with some preconceived relevance.
24. Of particular importance in the more detailed scheme of argumentation theory is the manner in which a sermon's argument may be established. The term "establish" may denote validation, making something secure, or causing something to be recognized or accepted. Similarly, where an argument is "established" denotes the point at which the argument may be validated or accepted. Typically this "establishment" results in a distinct unit of proof (claim, evidence, warrant, etc.), for it is at the point of establishment that the argument (the original unit of proof) is challenged. So the analysis would label the original argument a warrant-establishing argument. Establishment should be distinguished from "use," however. Many arguments are "warrant-using" arguments; that is, they employ warrants within the unit of proof, but the warrant does not evoke a challenge.
25. Communication theorists traditionally have taught that there are four classifications of propositions or claims: declarative, evaluative, policy, and classificatory (e.g., Crable, *Argumentation as Communication: Reasoning with Receivers*, 128-32; Ehninger and Brockriede, *Decision by Debate*, 102; and Douglas Ehninger, *Influence, Belief, and Argument* [Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1974], chap. 3). While theorists acknowledge that a given claim may be difficult to "fit into" one of these categories, it is assumed that such classifying can be accomplished and should yield an insight into the argument. Definitions of these claims are essential for understanding their use in expository preaching. An arguer advances a declarative claim when the arguer is prepared to defend the idea that something is the case, has been the case, or will be the case. The expository preacher may assert a declarative claim as a description of God's actions in past, present, or future. For example he may state, "God was both loving and just in His dealings with the nation of Israel in Old Testament times." The preacher may imply a value judgment about what is, was, or will be the case, thus employing an evaluative claim. Evaluative claims assess the case in reference to standards such as quality, degree of goodness, strength, or worth. Because of the nature of preaching, most evaluative claims utilize a standard of judgment that possesses a moral dimension. Policy claims express what ought to be the case. Classificatory claims contend that something is, was, or will be of a particular kind, category, type, or classification.

    While labeling a sermon's claim does yield insight into the argumentation of a sermon, the labels are often less precise than the definitions may suggest. In one sense every expository sermon provides a "policy" in that it presents an application, something to

believe, an attitude to hold, or a behavior to implement. The preacher may declare that listeners should maintain a given attitude, or he may propose that a particular behavior is the appropriate response (policy) to a scriptural passage. Because of a sermon's inherent "ought," only a sermon that does not seek a response could offer something other than a "policy." The preacher may advance a policy by a declarative claim that asserts "this policy is the case," or by an evaluative claim that contends that, based on a given standard, a value judgment yields a particular policy. Moreover, sermonic argumentation, like argumentation in general, may involve more than one type of claim. When a claim is presented to a group of receivers, they will probably judge the claim in different ways. Some may agree completely with the claim and consider the matter beyond question. Others might judge the claim to be a classificatory claim and demand appropriate support, while still others may perceive the claim to be a declarative one and demand other kinds of support (Crable, *Argumentation as Communication: Reasoning with Receivers*, 134).

26. Toulmin, Rieke, and Janik, *An Introduction to Reasoning*, 34.
27. Ibid., 34-35. The ultimate goal of viewing a sermon argumentatively is not to identify all the elements. Such a task is both tedious and inevitably erroneous because the preacher cannot know what every listener will demand as evidence or warrants.
28. Warrants of authority assert that the claim is acceptable because of the expertise of the source of the evidence. Warrants of analogy and warrants of parallelism seek to compare factors that are alike in a sermon's claim and its evidence. A warrant of parallelism seeks to relate what is in the claim and what is in the evidence in a way that says the two ideas are so similar that what is true for one is true for the other. A warrant of analogy says that the two ideas are somewhat alike or so metaphorically similar that what is true for one is true for the other, at least in some respects.
29. Toulmin, Rieke, and Janik, *An Introduction to Reasoning*, 26.
30. Clearly, expository preaching possesses a "built-in" authority in that an expository sermon must seek to explain a biblical passage if it is to be called "expository." To distinguish between the authority of the text and the authority of the preacher is difficult at times, unless the preacher explicitly cites the biblical text. It is worth noting, too, that warrants of authority may function far more effectively for believers than unbelievers (Hart, "The Rhetoric of the True Believer," 249-61).
31. The need for qualifiers and reservations exists not because God's truth is limited or nonuniversal, but because claims often are misinterpreted by listeners. For example the preacher cannot think of an occasion to withdraw the claim "God is love." However, some listeners may interpret that claim incorrectly, assuming it means God tolerates sin under certain conditions of His love. Thus qualifiers and reservations should provide greater precision with what the preacher intends to say.
32. See Willhite, "Audience Relevance and Rhetorical Argumentation in Expository Preaching: A Historical-Critical Comparative Analysis of Selected Sermons of John F. MacArthur, Jr. and Charles R. Swindoll, 1970-1990."
33. Patton, "What Is Religious Communication?" 8-12, and John B. Koch, "The Sermon, Communication Theory, and Seminary Education," 108-15.

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Live it Up!

by Keith Willhite

Ecclesiates 3:1-15

(editor's note: this sermon was preached by Keith Willhite in May 1991. My thanks to Denise Willhite for providing this sermon and for permission to print it in the Journal.*)*

Introduction

How many of you like philosophy? Philosophers are those people who write and teach things about things that they don't understand and make it sound like it's your fault.

But, I like philosophy. I'm intrigued to learn how people of various ages have thought about and interpreted life. I like to see how ideas progress. I particularly enjoy the Classicists. These are people like Socrates, Aristotle, and Plato. These are typical household names, right?

I like to think about causes and effects, reality, existence, and knowledge.

Not long ago, I was reading what is my favorite source of philosophy, apart from Scripture. In this particular philosophical treatise Lucy and Charlie Brown were aboard a cruise ship. Lucy stepped back to philosophize. She said, "Chuck, life is like a great ship! There are people whose chairs face the front of the boat — looking where they are going — they'll be the first there. There are people all along the sides, facing where they are at the present. Still others, have their chairs set up toward the stern of the ship, looking at where they have been."

She continued, “Charlie Brown, on the great cruise ship of life, which way is your chair facing?” Charlie Brown responded. “I can’t seem to get mine unfolded.”

I don’t think that’s a bad position in which to be. Oh, I know we need to have goals and a purpose and direction in life. But, when it comes to “philosophizing” about life, perhaps one of the greatest conclusions that we can draw is that we are unable to account for it all — unable to put it all together — to explain everything!

In fact, the wisest man ever to write God’s Word drew that very conclusion. He sat with his philosophical chair and he took notes for a book that eventually became known as Ecclesiastes. Little doubt exists about the overall theme of the book of Ecclesiastes. It is announced both at the beginning and end of the book: “Everything is ‘meaningless’ or ‘vanity.’”

The Hebrew word translated “meaningless” elsewhere refers concretely to breath, a wind, or a vapor. In Ecclesiastes, several phrases are used parallel to this word: “chasing after the wind,” “no advantage,” and “nothing...gained.”

The word stands for those things that are unsubstantial or without real value; or it can refer to those things that are fleeting or transitory.

Therefore, Solomon sat back in his philosopher’s chair and pronounced that life is meaningless: unsubstantial, transitory, fleeting, of no real value.

Why did Solomon pass such a verdict on this life? Because nothing that he could observe — accomplishment, personal wealth, pleasure, and especially our labor — could produce anything of lasting value.

Now is that comforting, isn't it? To know that the wisest man ever to write in God's Word looked at life and judged that here on earth nothing has lasting significance. But it was this verdict that led him to a very insightful conclusion.

In order for us to understand his conclusion, I want us to take a peak at four of Solomon's philosophical observations. We'll look at four philosophical observations — and then let's see what conclusion Solomon drew from what he observed.

We find the observations in Ecclesiastes chapter three.

What is the first observation?

I. Life includes a time and place for every event (vss. 1-8).

Life includes a time and place for every event. This is illustrated with a list of fourteen opposites. Not, "Take care to get everyone of these events in its proper place." But, life is made up of both parts of each pair. That is, "That's part of life."

Life is full of diverse experiences. Denise and I often comment "You never know what a year or week or day holds." Much of life is routine. Variety may be the spice of life, but it's monotony that brings home the groceries. But then, one of those "days" comes along. You get a phone call in the middle of the night from the hospital. You dash to the car to prevent being late for an important meeting, and you're back tire is flat. Or, you sit back to enjoy the friendly skies and watch your luggage being loaded onto the plane ... right next to your plane. Life is full of diverse experiences. There is a time and place for each one of them.

Because life consists of diverse experiences, it becomes a rather complex venture. And that leads to our second philosophical observation.

II. Live is too complex for our comprehension (9-11).

Here's a question for you: What does the worker gain from his toil? The writer is anticipating a negative answer. He provides a contrast between two perspectives and explains why we would answer negatively.

What we have is our perspective versus God's perspective. To us, life can appear as a burden (verse 10), specifically, labor, our work. Typically we don't sing, "Hi ho, hi ho, it's off to work I go!"

But to God, everything is beautiful in His time (verse 11). From our perspective life is meaningless, but from God's perspective there is order and purpose. What I'm saying is we are not able to see the appropriateness of lasting value of our work. But there's a second contrast.

God has given us an insatiable curiosity about the future and ultimate things. But we cannot fathom God's plan. History is full of attempts to explain, accelerate, or even predict the future. Try as we may, we can never explain the future apart from God's understanding. This doesn't necessarily mean that there are no explanations. Personally, I'm pretty calculated with my plans and objectives but I don't have God's perspective.

We look back at our lives and say, "There was no coincidence; the Lord had to be in that!" That was true for me. When I was at the point of choosing a place to do graduate work, I wasn't sure how it was going to work out. Denise and I were trying to coordinate my work with her transfer. But it did work out. And we thought, "Ah ha! The Lord had to be in that!"

We cannot explain the future or even this life without God's perspective. Now, I don't mean to remove our responsibility from the picture. But, life is so involved and complex that we may not perceive any profit in our labor.

So, the writer moves on and makes his third philosophical observation.

III. Live is designed for our enjoyment (12-13).

Because we are not able to discern the appropriateness of lasting value of our work there is nothing better than for us to enjoy life. Solomon says people are to "be happy and do good while they live."

This is not a last ditch sigh but a philosophical conclusion. "Do good" means to enjoy oneself. But what do we mean by "enjoy life?" Look at verse thirteen. It's conditional: "If anyone eats and drinks and finds satisfaction in all his or her toil, it is a gift of God." We should enjoy our work. We can make our vocation an avocation.

Scripture never describes work or labor as evil in themselves. Rather, work is though of as the natural occupation in the world. Even before Adam's fall, work was given to perform as part of Adam's normal existence. The Bible clarifies that human sin has corrupted and degraded work. Ecclesiastes states that all labor that we do under the sun is vanity. As sinners, we work solely with worldly ends in view, the outcome being a sense of frustration.

The point is, we may never realize the lasting value of our work; in fact, we probably will not. Nevertheless, our work is something God has given to us to enjoy.

Lin Yutang wrote in 1981:

> True enough, we all have obligations and duties toward our fellow [people]. But it does seem curious enough that in modern, neurotic society, [people's] energies are consumed in making a

> living and rarely in living itself. It takes a lot of courage for a [person] to declare, with clarity and simplicity, that the purpose of life is to enjoy it.

But is our inability to appreciate the value of our labor an indication that life is merely arbitrary or capricious? There is a fourth philosophical observation.

IV. Life is not without purpose (14-15).

We see from the text that life is eternal (verse 14a); life is complete (verse 14b), and life is unchanging (verse 15). Sometimes life is even repetitive. The creative and moral ordering of the world doesn't change.

What we find is that life is designed to evoke our worship of God (verse 14c). And our response is reverence. Life is not a meaningless design but God has a purpose. God has given us this life — to enjoy and to cause us to worship Him!

Conclusion

We have an inability to understand the complexities of life. We can't put it all together. We work and work and work, and may perceive no lasting value. By God's design, we can't put it all together.

So what is the conclusion that Solomon drew about life? It is that very inability that should lead to our enjoyment of life and our worship of God! What Solomon is saying is this: Because we cannot discern a lasting value in our labor, we should enjoy life and worship God.

One of the hats that every pastor has to wear is that heat of "answer man." But every truthful pastor knows that there are situations in this life for which explanations do not come easily,

if at all. In some ways, the last year of our lives has been one of these situations.

When I finished my doctoral studies last summer, God had not yet opened a door of ministry to us. So I accepted an invitation to teach at Perdue for the fall semester.

Quite frankly, that was a bit ironic, as we had witnessed one miracle after another in the working of my program to complete the degree a full year ahead of schedule. So, here I was graduated, "credentialed," and no place to go.

I wondered: Why would God have us spend another year at Purdue? How might He use us here?

What began as an "opportunity" — to assume responsibility for a rather significant role in the undergraduate communication program, soon became less than desirable. First, my salary was only two-thirds that I had thought it would be. Second, I was assigned less teaching-assistant-time, which meant added responsibilities for me. Third, instead of the enrollment of my course being the expected 400, it was about 480.

As the war in the Persian Gulf began, the ministry opportunities slowed significantly. Churches seemed to take a posture of "Let's wait and see what happens." I suppose that was wise, given the many unknown factors.

As we look back over the last fifteen months, or so, it has been very slow; often discouraging. Satan has tempted us to believe his lies — that God may not be working His perfect plan any longer.

Even as I have speculated as to why God might have left us in Lafayette, this year, the possible answers are just that — speculation.

I can think of a new couple, Christian graduate students, who c seem to encounter one major trial after another throughout the year. Both Denise and I have been shoulders to cry on. God has used us in their lives. Maybe that's why we've been at Purdue an extra year.

I have thought: Well, maybe the church where God would have us to minister is not ready for us. Either the current pastor has not left yet, or God is working to prepare the church for a new pastor. Perhaps that's why.

Or, Denise has ministered significantly to several of the women in our church through a Bible study. Perhaps God has had us here for that reason.

I don't know the reason. But that exactly the point. I don't know, and I may never know. But what I do not is very important: I know God is perfectly wise. God is sovereign — magnificently in control. And we live life not on our explanations but on God's promises.

What finally penetrated my thick skull is a perspective that God wants me to have right now. It is easy to live in the past because it is familiar; we are comfortable with it. It is even somewhat easy to live in the future because there is hope and promise. But where God wants us to live is in the present.

When I begin to live where I am, doing well what God has given me to do, nothing change, except me. I began to enjoy what I was doing. I became more satisfied, more efficient, more content. Life in the present became enjoyable. I was freed from the "why?" I am freed to serve and enjoy it.

Because we cannot discern a lasting value in our labor, we should enjoy life and worship God.

As long as we're aboard this philosophical ship called "life," God will unfold the chair to face the direction that He intends. He merely wants us to realize that we can't steer the ship. So sit back and enjoy the cruise — God's way!

If you cannot discern the value or the meaning in the lot that is yours in this life, don't fear. But enjoy your labor and in your laboring, worship God.

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Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages, 2nd edition. **By Haddon W. Robinson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001, 0-8010-2262-2, 256 pp., hardback.**

The homiletics primer of choice for over 100 seminaries and Bible colleges is now, finally, in its second edition. Those of us who use Biblical Preaching are smiling! Haddon Robinson, the Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, maintains the two distinctive features of his first edition "the 'big-idea' approach to expository preaching and the ten 'stages' of development that produce a sermon" so why a second edition? Because, in Robinson's own words, he "has changed. I see some matters more clearly now than I did two decades ago. I haven't changed my basic procedure: sermons must deal with ideas or they deal with nothing. . . . [H]owever, I have realized I possess an uncanny ability to make clear things dim" (10). Robinson's wit is one of the delightful features of his book. The changes of the second edition include: simplification of the exercises at the end of the early chapters; gender-inclusive language; greater emphasis on narrative, image, and induction; and an expanded bibliography. The chapter divisions of the second edition are the same as the first, but for those not familiar with Robinson's highly influential textbook, here is a summary:

Chapter One presents Robinson's "Case for Expository Preaching," an explanation and apologia for allowing the "thought of the biblical writer [to] determine the substance" of the sermon (21-22). Robinson does not define expository preaching stereotypically as verse-by-verse commentary, but says it is "more a philosophy than a method" (22). It is an approach or mind set or value. It prompts you to endeavor to bend your thought to the Scriptures rather than using the Scriptures to support your thought. Robinson's conservative evangelical doctrine of Scripture and his traditional hermeneutic under gird his homiletic.

Chapter Two is another explanation and apologia, this time for the concept that Robinson is best known for: "Big Idea Preaching." While nearly every public speaking and homiletics textbook suggests that public messages deal with a central idea, Robinson raises the bar, cranks the volume, and turns up the heat with statements like, "If we will not, or cannot, think ourselves clear . . . we have no business in the pulpit" (41), and "People shape their lives and settle their eternal destinies in response to ideas" (39). This chapter gives helpful examples and exercises for determining an author's idea.

With the foundational concepts laid in the first two chapters, Chapter Three gets into the nuts and bolts of sermon preparation. This chapter explains the first three "stages" of Robinson's method: select the passage, study the passage, and discover the exegetical idea.

Chapters Four and Five cover the next three stages, those stages concerned with adapting the biblical author's idea to the modern preaching context. After discovering the exegetical idea, stage four is to analyze that idea by asking "what does it mean," "is it true," and "what difference does it make" (77ff.) The gap between the ancient and modern worlds starts to be bridged with this stage. Stage five is to restate the exegetical idea as a "homiletical idea," "the most exact, memorable sentence possible" (103). Listeners should not have to try to remember this idea as if they were cramming for a test. Rather, the language should be winsome, contemporary, and personal, like "If you use the law as your ladder to heaven, you will be left standing in hell" (105). Stage six is to state the sermon's purpose as if it were an instructional objective. For example: "Members of the congregation should understand how God loves them and explain at least one way in which that love makes them secure" (111).

Chapter Six describes sermon forms such as deduction, induction, and narrative. Robinson stresses that form must be the servant of function. In other words, the goal of the sermon should influence how we arrange and present content. If your purpose is to explain, then deduction is probably best since it often is clearest. If your purpose is to change opinion, then induction might work best as you gradually carry the audience toward the thesis. Robinson avoids cookie-cutter sermons.

Chapter Seven explains stage nine, how to fill in the sermon outline with support material, and Chapter Eight finishes the ten stages with instruction on introductions and conclusions. Two final chapters discuss language and delivery.

Robinson's book is an excellent primer, the one I recommend and use. The second edition is even better than the first. Robinson has thought himself clear on the mysterious process of birthing a sermon. Novices can cut their eye teeth on this book, and seasoned preachers will see in black and white what they have done intuitively for years. The ten methodical stages with their examples and exercises make the art of preaching accessible.

Perhaps one of Robinson's colleagues will some day create the third edition. If so, I have three suggestions. First, arrange the chapters so that they correspond to the stages. Right now the stages do not begin until chapter three, and then two chapters on language and delivery follow the final stage. Thus,

ten stages are placed into six of the book's ten chapters. First time readers are confused by this. My second suggestion relates to those two final chapters on language and delivery. Why are these not considered "stages"? A sermon must be verbalized and embodied, not merely researched and outlined. Perhaps the ten stages could be expanded into twelve. My third suggestion is to clarify stage four ("analyze the exegetical idea"). It is not clear if the biblical writer's idea is to be analyzed or if the audience's reaction to that idea is to be analyzed. I think Robinson would say "both" (and I agree), but the methodology needs to explain how stage four leads to the development of the homiletical idea and purpose.

If you've read the first edition, read the second. Some light bulbs may turn on for you. If you haven't read the first, jump straight to the second, and see why more than 200,000 copies of this book are in print.

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Preaching in Black and White: What We Can Learn from Each Other. **By E. K. Bailey and Warren W. Wiersbe. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003, 0-310-24099-9, 182 pp., paper, includes audio CD.**

This engaging book is an interview and conversation between two pre-eminent preachers, one black and one white. E. K. Bailey (African-American) is the senior pastor of Concord Missionary Baptist Church in Dallas, TX, and the sponsor of the International Conference on Expository Preaching. Warren Wiersbe (Caucasian) is the former minister of the Moody Church, Chicago, and general director of Back to the Bible. He has written over 150 books and now travels as a conference speaker.
The book is divided into three parts with 12 chapters:

"Part 1, We Talk Together" (seven chapters cover topics such as the dynamics of heritage, sermon preparation, and delivery). "Part 2, We Preach Together" (three chapters are a sermon each from Bailey and Wiersbe on the same text — Luke 19:1-10, with a conversation about their sermons. Note: The audio CD that accompanies *Black and White* is Bailey's full sermon from this chapter). "Part 3, We Learn Together" (two chapters cover "Learning from Others" and a bibliography of black preachers).

This book is a lively read because of the dialogic format. Bailey's and Wiersbe's personalities come through, and the printed transcript is able to capture some of the dynamics of conversation. They occasionally interrupt,

joke, and probe. Their respect and affection for each other is evident. I would have liked some debate or disagreement, but these two men (or their editor!) are too nice to argue in public. Wiersbe is especially deferential to Bailey, much quicker to criticize white preaching than Bailey is to criticize black preaching.

The strength of the book — dialogue captured in print — is sometimes a weakness. The conversation flows and winds so that the book's organization suffers. This is probably inevitable, and the sacrifice is justified to preserve the feel of dialogue.

In terms of content, this book is interesting and valuable. Both men are staunch evangelicals and staunch expositors, but the end products (their sermons on Zacchaeus) are strikingly different. I agree with Wiersbe that white preachers have much to learn from African-American homiletics — the use of imagination, the importance of pathos, and a style suited to aural communication. Bailey's sermon is rife with such features. In fact, it is so imaginative, that the authors need to discuss this issue with more rigor. They both tout imagination (I do too!), but they do not assume the burden of proof in its defense. Imagination in Bailey's sermon clearly helps him capture the spirit of the text and just as clearly takes him beyond the data of the text.

Black and White is refreshing in its emphasis on the character and the devotional life of the preacher (chapter three). As all readers of *JEHS* know, ethos is supremely important in preaching, yet most of our publications emphasize technique.

I enjoyed this book and profited from it. I recommend it as a quick, enjoyable, and profitable read.

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***Discipled Warriors: Growing Healthy Churches That Are Equipped for Spiritual Warfare*. By Chuck Lawless. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002, 0-8254-3159-X, 224 pp., soft cover.**

In his book, *Discipled Warriors*, Chuck Lawless tackles the topic of how to grow a healthy church. He sheds new light on modern church growth theory by viewing church growth from the perspective of spiritual warfare.

This book is best read against the backdrop of other church growth material,

especially Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Driven Church*. Warren states that the church should be organized around five essential purposes: worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, and service. Lawless modifies these five to say that the church should focus on exalting God, evangelizing the world, equipping believers, edifying others, and encouraging one another. Lawless adds a sixth purpose — prayer — which he refers to as encountering God. While Warren classifies prayer as a part of worship, Lawless says that prayer is important enough to be elevated to a separate purpose all its own.

Generally speaking, Lawless's picture of a healthy church closely resembles the one offered by Rick Warren and other contemporary church growth theorists. The distinction Lawless makes between his six purposes and Warren's five seems minor, and one would be hard pressed to find any church growth proponent who would take serious issue with what Lawless is saying. The real contribution that Lawless makes in this book is found not in the purposes he designates for the local church, but rather in the spiritual warfare perspective from which he views them.

Lawless places a strong emphasis on spiritual warfare. He says growing a church is about fighting a spiritual battle against the Enemy. The Enemy tries to foil each of the six purposes of the church, and church leaders must learn to recognize this and stand against it. Lawless does well to help his readers identify the Enemy's strategy. He also describes how a church should respond to the Enemy's efforts, and offers practical suggestions to church leaders who want to implement a similar plan. Overall, Lawless helps us to see the challenges of growing a church from a spiritual warfare perspective and calls upon the church to raise up discipled warriors who are ready to win the fight.

Though his emphasis in spiritual warfare is prominent, Lawless is also good to caution against the excesses and misguided efforts o contemporary spiritual warfare enthusiasts. For instance, in talking about prayer, Lawless cautions against the recent movement of spiritual warfare prayer — a form of prayer in which territorial spirits are identified and prayed against before a church begins evangelizing a specific region. Lawless says there is no biblical mandate for such prayer, and encourages the church to focus its prayers on what God is doing and can do, rather than on the enemy and his demonic helpers.

These occasional cautions remind the reader that Lawless, though very aware of the importance of battling the Enemy, also has a balanced perspective on the issue. A successful church leader knows that the enemy is strong, but also knows that God is stronger and has already delivered the fatal blow to Satan at the cross. Growing healthy churches requires just as much an understanding of this fact, if not more, than an understanding of the power and schemes of the devil.

Chuck Lawless appears to be well aware of this. In the end, he provides us with a picture of the legitimate, spiritual battle that a church leader must face in trying to create a healthy church environment.

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***A Contemporary Handbook for Weddings & Funerals and Other Occasions*. Edited by Aubrey Malphurs and Keith Willhite. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003, 0-8254-3186-7, 383 pp., $15.99, paperback.**

A Contemporary Handbook for Weddings & Funerals and Other Occasions is a great resource for pastors and speakers. The editors explain that the book's beginnings grew out of requests made at the Dallas Seminary Book Center by pastors for good resources for weddings, funerals, and other special occasions.

The book has three main divisions: weddings, funerals, and a catch-all section: other occasions. Under the "Other Occasions" division the editors have collected materials for The Lord's Supper, Child or Familiy Dedication, Baptism, Christmas, Ordination and Installation, State of the Church Message, and Reenactment of an Influential Christian. Each section begins with an "Editor's Note" that suggests how the resources might be used. The book also gives additional resources for other occasions and provides a handy Scripture index.

There are numerous contributors to the book — pastors, speakers, and professors. Malphurs and Willhite comment: "We intentionally sought materials that have been used in fruitful ministry in similar situations but different contexts. Hence, this volume contains very little sense of 'Well, you might consider doing this.' Rather, the resources in this book have been shared on the premise that 'We found this to minister effectively'" (p. 15).

As is the case with resources, some suggestions will appeal to one pastor while the same suggestion may not appeal to another. Reading through the book one gets a sense of the usefulness — or non usefulness — of some of the suggestions. However, a large number of contributors brings richness and variety and allows the thoughtful pastor to find much help from a resouce like this one.

I recommend that pastors purchase this book for his or her library. It serves as a helpful companion to the other service books and manuals one might

have on one's shelf. A pastor's weddings, funerals, and other special occasions will be enriched by the resources in this volume.

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***Honourably Wounded: Stress Among Christian Workers*. By Marjory F. Foyle. Grand Rapids: Monarch, 2001, 0-8254-6023-9, 288 pp., $13.99, paperback.**

This book is a second edition of an earlier work by the author published in 1987. Foyle is a medical doctor who served many years as a missionary, and then returned to her native England to do additional study and medical residency to become a psychiatrist. The book focuses especially on stress experienced by missionaries, but the information Foyle presents is easily applicable to a wider range of Christian workers.

Foyle's research on stress among missionaries is thorough, and the recommendations coming from her research and her observations in the field are invaluable. Special attention is given to generational differences, and even though she describes herself as an elderly woman she has keen insight into the unique perspectives of the younger generation seeking to engage in Christian missions.

The book portrays a basic description of what stress is and how it affects individuals, but also contains helpful information about adjustments to a new culture, parenting issues, interpersonal relationships between Christian workers, aspects of stress unique to being single and to marriage relationships. Attention is given to preparation for ministering to a different culture and to needs of people returning to their own culture after serving abroad. Burnout and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder are described with application to missions. The chapter on depression is excellent, and has information of a general nature that can be applied to many different contexts; this chapter alone is worth buying and reading the book.

Although the book contains helpful information written by an experienced and knowledgeable psychiatrist, it is not technical but is, rather, quite easy to read. Foyle tells many stories about her own experiences, which add reality and humor to the information she gives. People interested in how stress affects Christian workers will find the book both helpful and enjoyable.

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***The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative*, By Steven D. Mathewson, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002, 1-84227-138-5, 260 pp., $16.99 paperback.**

The purpose of this book is "to help preachers excel at preaching Old Testament narrative texts" (p. 14). Mathewson writes from personal experience. He serves as a senior pastor and as an instructor in preaching Old Testament studies. Well-read, Mathewson interacts discerningly with a variety of standard and eclectic works. He acknowledges, "This volume will build on the methodology presented in Haddon Robinson's classic textbook, *Biblical Preaching*" (p. 26). Indeed, Mathewson builds upon Robinson's methodology with some original thinking.

The book is divided into three sections. Part I explains the exegetical process from selecting a text to expressing the biblical author's overarching concept in a single sentence. With keen insight into the dynamics of Old Testament narrative, Mathewson discusses the following: plot elements and motifs; narrated time vs. narration time; dialogue; inner-textual vs. inter-textual setting; and point of view.

The reader is treated to many figures and tables which serve as helpful visual summaries of what was just read. Some can even be employed as tools. For example, table 6.4 "A Summary List of Features to Examine in Old Testament Narrative Texts" (pp. 77-78) is particularly useful when interpreting. User friendly, it reads: "Interpreters who can use Hebrew start here . . .Interpreters who do not use Hebrew start here . . ." (p. 77). Using such a list will become natural over time and will train the interpreter's interest.

Part II deals with the stages of sermon development from the biblical author's overarching concept to the actual preaching event. Beyond Old Testament narrative, Mathewson offers an excellent survey of preaching in general. His focus includes: thought development; packaging the preaching idea; identifying the sermon's purpose; shaping the sermon; induction vs. deduction; preparing an outline; writing a manuscript; application; illustration; entering and exiting; and delivery techniques. Wedded to almost every principle or rule is an illuminating illustration.

Most satisfying is Mathewson's approach to shaping the narrative sermon. "You will plot your sermon by taking your cue from the way the story unfolds. While you will do more that retell the story, you will not do less than that. Ideally, you will follow the same set of tracks as the biblical storyteller" (p. 113). While his book is divided into three parts, Mathewson's sermons do not slavishly follow the standard three point grid.

Part III contains five Old Testament narrative sermon manuscripts. One of the five sermons belongs to Mathewson. Before each manuscript, he introduces the preacher and message. After each manuscript, Mathewson analyzes the sermon and interviews each preacher regarding the sermon and the challenges of preaching Old Testament narrative. Each sermon brings into focus the principles and methodology laid out in the book's first two sections.

Two appendices are included. The first explores ". . .the value of textlinguistic analysis in Old Testament narrative literature" (p. 229). The second lists commentaries and studies especially useful when working with Old Testament narrative. In addition, Mathewson recommends helpful resources at certain points throughout the book. The back of the text contains a bibliography and indexes.

I strongly recommend this solid evangelical work as a valuable contribution to the field. Scholarly, yet easy to read, its thorough contents can and will help the diligent preacher.

Rock LaGioia

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Preaching That Speaks to Women. **By Alice P. Mathews. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003, 0-8010-2367-X, 188 pp., $ 14.99 paperback.**

Although many books have been written on the subject of how to preach, the assumed audience for these books seem to be men. In her book *Preaching That Speaks to Women*, Alice Mathews breaks new ground. Dr. Mathews is fully qualified to break this new ground, as the Lois W. Bennett Distinguished Associate Professor of Educational Ministries and Women's Ministries at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, she is among the top teachers in her field. She is a teacher, a preacher, and has been part of Discover the Word from Radio Bible Class for over a decade. Not only is she qualified from academic and practical points of view, but also from the position of being a listener in the pew. She is more than qualified to address this subject, a subject that up until now has rarely been addressed. Typically, the question has been, Should women preach?, and not How does one preach to women? Mathews chooses the latter and starts addressing the topic at the ground floor and begins to work her way up.

Preaching That Speaks to Women will appeal to a variety of communicators. Its format is clear and concise and moves the reader logically from point to point. From the very beginning Mathews looks at women as a whole. From

the moral decisions they make to their psychological wholeness, and also investigates the epistemological differences between women and men. She also spends time examining the effects of modernism and postmodernism on women. Throughout each chapter and at the end of the book she gives the reader practical tips on how to preach more effectively to a variety of women. As the reader moves through the chapters not only does one have a better understanding of women, but also that Alice Mathews has taken the time to research this topic from many different angles. As she explains her research she does so in a way that does not simply leave the information in the clouds of knowledge, but she also explains how her research applies to the preacher, and in turn how all it applies to the listener. She fleshes out all her chapters by either using her own or other women's experiences. She brings life to this topic in a new and fresh way.

Alice Mathews not only makes this an informative and enjoyable book to read, but writes in a way by which both male and female pastors can truly benefit. With a better understanding of who the women in the pews are, pastors will be enabled to address women's needs from behind the pulpit. This book opens the eyes of men and women preachers alike, and it will begin to revolutionize how preachers view listeners in their pews.

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Preaching to a Postmodern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-First Century Listeners. **By Graham Johnston. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001, 0-8010-6367-1, 189 pp., $13.99, paperback.**

If preaching is standing between the worlds of the ancient text and modern culture, Johnson has done almost half of our work for us. He has exegeted the western postmodern worldview and suggested how to adapt: "My appeal is that biblical communication to a postmodern culture should be approached in the same way that a missionary goes into a foreign culture. No missionary worth his or her salt would enter a field without first doing an exhaustive study of the culture he or she seeks to reach" (10).

In chapters one and two Johnston describes (not defines) postmodernity. It is a reaction to modernity marked by features such as lack of certainty, distrust of authority, play, process, irony, and immanence (27-28). *Preaching to a Postmodern World* does not break new ground in cultural analysis (this was not the author's purpose), but it does summarize many theologians and soci-

ologists. Johnston has read widely and abstracted effectively. Chapters three through six suggest how to adapt without compromising biblical content and theological accuracy. These chapters deal mostly with *what* to preach. Among Johnston's suggestions are to adopt an apologist's stance, keep in mind that the listeners are probably biblically illiterate, and capitalize on the interest in spirituality. Chapter seven is quite concrete as it describes methods and forms for *how* to preach: use induction, story, the arts, dialogue, etc.

Besides tackling an important, focused subject, I see two other strengths in this book. First, it is well researched and carefully documented. The variety of sources and examples ranges from evangelical theologians such as David Wells to current events to pop songs and movies. Johnston has written his book as an argument and it is persuasive and interesting by virtue of his research. Preachers may want to read this book just for the support material they can gather for sermons!

The second strength is balance. Johnston values both exegesis and relevance. His feet are set solidly in both worlds. He avoids mere pragmatism even as his purpose is to improve effectiveness, but effectiveness is carefully defined not as "getting results" but as "bringing the listener to a clear appreciation of the biblical message" (62). Johnston is confident that if we preach clearly, relationally, and with relevance, the seed will fall on some good soil even in the postmodern field.

While these two strengths are commendable, two weaknesses hinder the book's argument. The first is unclear organization. Some of the headings are catchy but vague, such as "The Ultimate Hot Potato" and "Stocking Culturally Damaged Goods." Additionally, while the book moves generally from description of postmodernism to suggestions for praxis, it mixes the two in nearly every chapter. The result is that the reader is left with a pastiche of impressions and redundant ideas, but not with a coherent system or methodology. Perhaps Johnston intended to organize the book this way, writing "postmodernly" on postmodernism, but this reviewer is so modern that he can't process a mosaic as well as an outline!

The second weakness is a tendency to overstate. In his passion to describe the cultural shift of the past 25 years, Johnston sees nearly everything current as postmodern, but postmoderns are not the first or only people to desire community. Neither are they the first or only people to turn to the occult (47) or make an idol of the environment (46). Johnston rightly promotes the communicative power of authenticity (104) and humor (167) to reach postmoderns, but Aristotle did the same 2,400 years ago. In his enthusiasm to urge preachers to adapt, Johnston gives the impression that the world has turned over. In reality, there is nothing new under the sun. Perhaps a more theo-

logical analysis of the human heart would reveal similarity as well as difference between postmoderns, moderns and pre-moderns. All of us worship idols. All of us are made in the image of God. All of us are restless until we rest in Him. To be fair, Johnston did not intend to write a biblical anthropology. His goal was to describe postmodernism, and a single book, like a single sermon, cannot say everything.

I recommend *Preaching to a Postmodern World*. It is the best book I know on the topic, and it will serve you well, especially if read in conjunction with more theologically weighty books like Reynolds, *The Word is Worth a Thousand Pictures*, and Thompson, *Preaching Like Paul*. Johnston has analyzed an important topic in the field of homiletics, and he offers practical help based on that analysis.

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***Speaking the Truth in Love: Prophetic Preaching to a Broken World*. By J. Philip Wogaman: Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998, 0-664-25774-7, 209 pp., $19.95.**

J. Philip Wogaman's, *Speaking the Truth in Love*, grows out of almost three decades of a teaching tenure at Wesley Theological Seminary and a preaching ministry at the Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. The treatise is a call to prophetic preaching in a land where political agendas and cultural decay have muted God's voice reducing it to a mere whisper. Wogaman defines prophetic preaching as speaking on God's behalf. He insists on the necessity of prophetic preaching being both theological and pastoral. The book also explores the place of preaching in the broader context of liturgical worship, augmenting the discussion with the exploration of connections between the theology of preaching and the life experience of the people in the pews. The second half of the book consists of 13 sermons exemplifying the author's attempts at speaking for God in the context of today's complex world.

Wogaman's sentiment of wanting to speak God's word to a world drowning in a cacophony of competing voices is commendable. His advice for crafting sermons with the view to the audience's needs is a welcome reminder that we are called to preach to people ñ men and women trying to make sense of a bewildering array of choices, agendas and temptations. Most of all, Wogaman's demeanor of a preacher speaking from his own brokenness to a broken world gives the book a humble tone.

However, in spite of the author's good intentions of trying to restore prophetic preaching to its rightful place of honor, the vision falls short of its fulfillment. Wogaman's definition of prophetic preaching fails to distinguish it from other kinds of preaching. If prophetic preaching is speaking on God's behalf, then is not all preaching prophetic by its definition? And if so, why not just call people to preaching? The author's attempt to root prophetic preaching in theology by insisting on preaching being biblical fails to get off the ground as a result of an inadequate view of Scripture. The Bible is defined as a repository of the traditions and history of our faith. This view of Scripture tips the scales of revelation in favor of the biblical authors' ascribing meaning to their faith. Consequently, the biblical authority rests not in how it is God in-breathed but rather in how well it is inhaled by the consumers.

The theological deficiencies in the first part of the book rear their ugly heads in the samples of Wogaman's sermons. The sermons are interesting and inspiring, grappling to find answers to life's injustice and perplexity. However, repeatedly the biblical texts prove to be nothing more than pretexts for the author's exposition of ideas that fail to be firmly rooted in the biblical text. What we end up with is some truthful ideas set afloat on the sea of competing claims without a firm anchor of solid biblical interpretation. In the end God's voice is reduced to a mere echo of the chorus of our collective conscience.

Lech Bekesza

Cobble Hill Baptist Church
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***Why Four Gospels: The Historical Origins of the Gospels*. By David Alan Black. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001, 0-8254-2070-9, 118 pp., $11.99 paperback.**

Black identifies his target audience for this book as "pastors and laypeople." He presents and seeks to defend the Matthewan priority of the four gospels, as well as a reasonable explanation for why and how the gospels of Luke, Mark, and John were then written. He refers to his view as the Fourfold-Gospel Hypothesis, following Dr. Bernard Orchard whom Black credits as the scholar who influenced him the most in these matters.

The Fourfold-Gospel Hypothesis flows out of the conviction that there is basically one Gospel which presents the life, works, and teachings of Jesus but that the "Spirit-directed process of inscripturating this fourfold Gospel

involved four main phases...” (p. 15): 1. *the Jerusalem phase* where Matthew’s gospel “met all the apologetic needs of the Jerusalem church in the years immediately following the resurrection when its doctrines were under attack...,” especially from the high priests (p.17); 2. *the Gentile mission phase* where a gospel was written by Luke at the request of the Apostle Paul, one that was both nuanced to suit the mentality of the Hellenistic world and acceptable to Peter and the other pillars of the early Christian church; 3. *the Roman phase* which served to yield a gospel — the Gospel of Mark — that arose out of “the collaboration of Peter and Paul in Rome, a collaboration intended to make sure that the spiritual and doctrinal unity of the universal church was not impaired as a result of the appearance of Luke beside Matthew....” (p. 33); and 4. *the Johannine supplement* which was completed toward the end of the first century with the intent of making “it clear that the primary objective of Jesus throughout His public ministry was the winning over of the spiritual authorities in Jerusalem” (p. 33).

“Since neither Luke nor Paul had been eyewitnesses of the life and ministry of Jesus, and since the tension between circumcision and noncircumcision was still at a precarious level, [the] Gospel of Luke might well have proved extremely divisive if published without the approval... of Peter.” (p. 61) Black posits that “since we learn from 1 Peter (5:12-13) that both Peter and his disciple Mark were in Rome when Paul was a prisoner there in 62, and since we find that the disciples Luke and Mark are mentioned together in Colossians and Philemon..., it is reasonable to conclude that the purposes of Peter’s lectures as we find them in the Gospel of Mark was to give Paul and his churches...the assurance that the Gospel of Luke could validly stand comparison with the Gospel of Matthew” (p. 61). The lectures of Peter referred to immediately above arise out of tradition which “asserts explicitly that [The Gospel of] Mark is the result of a series of lectures given by Peter in Rome to a distinguished audience.... The tradition...is explicit that Mark was on hand as Peter’s aide; and because of the presence of the knights of Caesar’s Praetorium, these lectures were suitable occasions for the use of shorthand writers...to record his words. We are also told by Clement of Alexandria that the audience was so appreciative that they demanded to be given the text of what Peter had said, that Mark was able to satisfy them, and that, when Peter learned of their request, he took no action either to promote or to suppress the text of what he had said” (pp. 59-60). This came to be The Gospel of Mark which served to declare that Luke is faithful to the apostolic tradition, and “Mark itself is therefore to be seen as the document that draws together the respective traditions of the churches..., thus sealing the unity of the western churches of Peter and Paul” (pp. 61-62).

Black provides numerous quotes from principal patristic witnesses to authenticate the chronological sequence of the four gospels that he presents in this

book — Matthew, Luke, Mark, then John. His quotes are direct in their support of that sequence and not easily dismissed. The weakest part of the argument presented by Black is the assertion that The Gospel of Mark appeared to be coincidental (at least initially), yet came to be the very article needed to give Paul confidence to present The Gospel of Luke to gentile churches as a valid testimony to the life and ministry of Christ. The fact that it is the weakest part of the argument doesn't mean that it is impossible. God has a unique capacity for working out His will in unusual and unplanned ways.

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***Stones for Bread: A Critique of Contemporary Worship*. By A. Daniel Frankforter. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001, 0-664-22284-6, 195 pp., $19.95 paperback.**

An engaging and thought-provoking treatment of worship, *Stones for Bread* is a valuable text for anyone interested in rejuvenating their church. For decades, leaders have been encouraged by church growth experts to move in the contemporary direction in response to the changing needs of society. Frankforter states the pressure is significant to "fabricate easily marketed facsimiles of worship — to buy amplifiers, hire rock bands, outfit clergy with clothing from the Gap, substitute amateur theatricals for exegetical sermons, scrap sacraments in favor of support groups, and jettison troubling biblical texts for the smarmy cream of pop poetry" (p. 13).

But he queries whether languishing churches can be shored up simply by tinkering with styles of worship. Does innovative worship bring about greater intimacy with God? Though Frankforter recognizes how the worship arts can assist a congregation to worship in ways that are relevant and contemporary, his bias is obviously for more traditional forms of worship. He is critical of the suitability of rhythmic music and offers few endorsing comments regarding choruses, drama or experiential approaches. In this sense, he is culturally insensitive to the needs of people. In his stereotyping, he ignores the possibility that people can authentically and profoundly worship God in contemporary ways. Yet he contradictorily states the need for churches to discover how their people can honor God with integrity and sincerity in their worship.

Nevertheless, Frankforter is raising valid concerns as churches dabble in contemporary music but with so little understanding. He poses the question: is the appeal of contemporary worship merely a quick and misleading attempt

to fix the more significant issues of our churches? He rightfully cautions us about the harm that can potentially come from accommodating worship to the trends of our times.

Frankforter also raises the possibility that churches may be condescending to their people, assuming if their clergy preach the cost of genuine discipleship they will not flourish. Proponents of contemporary worship contend that churches can most effectively win people to Christ by making the transition from the secular to the sacred as easy as possible. Saving the world necessitates conforming in some ways. But Frankforter counters that congregations are fading or losing their appeal not because of just because of their conformity to culture but in that "they have asked too little — making faith too vague and discipleship too inconsequential" (p. 112). He contends that churches willing to state the costs of discipleship will probably attract fewer souls but will be more productive in every way.

This text is a valuable read for anyone who loves the church and is concerned about trends in contemporary worship. For leaders considering changes in their approach to worship, this book will help guide the process. And for those who have already made the transition, it will be useful in shaping future considerations.

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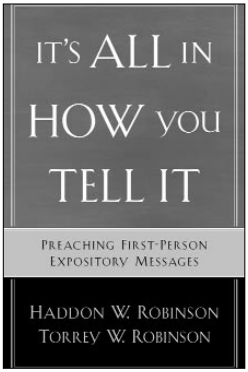

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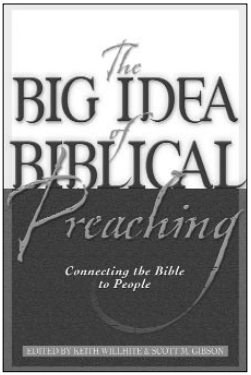

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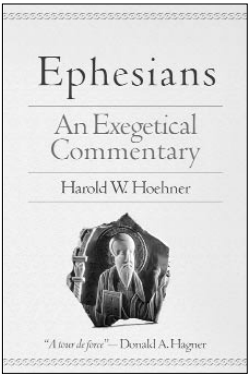

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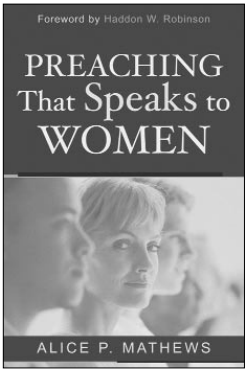

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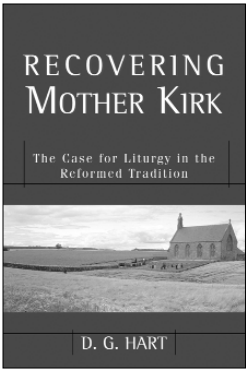

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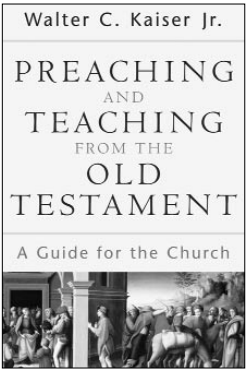

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