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Publishers should send catalogs and review copies of their books to Abraham Kuruvilla, Dallas Theological Seminary, 3909 Swiss Avenue, Dallas, TX 75204.

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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.

HONORING HADDON W. ROBINSON

SCOTT M. GIBSON
General Editor

From the mid-twentieth century to the present, Evangelical Homiletics has been immensely influenced by the writings and preaching of Haddon W. Robinson. Robinson, the Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Hamilton, Massachusetts, is best known in homiletics circles for his authoritative textbook on preaching, *Biblical Preaching*, first published in 1980.

Haddon Robinson's reach has been far and wide. *Biblical Preaching* alone has been translated into numerous languages and is used in the classrooms of Bible Colleges and seminaries around the world. Robinson has lectured on the thoughtful practice of preaching at scores of colleges and seminaries in North America and overseas. Most impressive, there is an army of men and women who have trained under Haddon Robinson as master or doctor of ministry students. They have all been instructed in the philosophy and practice of "Big Idea" preaching. These students encompass the globe.

To state that Haddon Robinson is the Dean of Evangelical homiletics is not an exaggeration. Evangelical homiletics is in debt to Robinson's insistence that preachers are to stay true to the biblical text—and preach the text! Mining the central idea of the biblical text becomes the basis for the idea of the sermon that is preached. Therefore, to preach biblically is to preach the text. This is the beauty of preaching and Robinson provides a constant reminder of his commitment to the Bible as preachers are to preach it.

This issue of *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* is dedicated to honoring Haddon W. Robinson upon his 80th birthday. Friends and colleagues of Haddon Robinson have joined together to provide a tribute to this highly regarded brother and father in Christ and Dean of Evangelical Homiletics. Together the contributors highlight the place of this scholar and preacher and also express their gratitude for his influence and leadership. Some of the articles are personal while others reflect the push of Robinson to explore the wider field of homiletics. In all, readers will gain a deeper appreciation of the impact of Haddon W. Robinson as expressed by the contributors.

Following the tributes to Haddon Robinson are the book reviews. These rich reviews provide insightful critique on publications in the field of homiletics or books that have an impact on preaching. Readers will benefit from the perceptiveness of the reviewers.

Please read the remainder of *The Journal* and celebrate with us as we

thank God for the life and ministry of our esteemed colleague, Haddon W. Robinson. Happy 80th Birthday, Haddon! Thank you for blessing us with your ministry, for we thank God for you! *Soli Deo Gloria!*

FOUND: THE KEYS TO EXPOSITORY PREACHING

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Director of the Haddon W. Robinson Center for Preaching
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ABSTRACT. The article is Scott M. Gibson's convocation address delivered at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, upon his induction as the Haddon W. Robinson Professor of Preaching and Ministry in October 2004. Minor editing updates have been added.

INTRODUCTION

President Kaiser, Dean Corey, Haddon Robinson, Colleagues, Students, distinguished guests, dear friends and family, thank you for this honor. I am grateful to God for what he has done. He has taken a young boy of 14 who did not know Jesus and drew him to himself and shaped him through many hands—my home church, pastors, mentors, friends, the churches I served, my education, my students—to bring him here today thirty-three years later. I'm humbled. Thank you and thank you, Lord.

I'm here today to give an address. I deliver an address because I am the first holder of the Haddon W. Robinson Professorship of Preaching and Ministry. Thank you, Haddon for this honor. Words cannot express my gratitude to you for your love, friendship, mentoring, and modeling. I am eternally grateful.

As you can see in your order of service now is the time for me to deliver my address. Do you see the title? It's an impressive one, isn't it? I came up with it myself. Found: The Keys to Expository Preaching.

"What," you may ask, "is the key to expository preaching?" What is it that you've found, Gibson? What is it that has made the difference in preaching? Well, I went on a little adventure to answer that question. I have to tell you, I am half embarrassed to admit, but just last week while Haddon was gone I broke into his office. I fingered through his files. I searched his desk. I was desperate. I knew this service was coming up and I really wanted to find the key to expository preaching. Since I know Haddon is a pretty good preacher, I thought I'd try to find out his secret—especially since I'm going to be holding a professorship in his name. I'll tell you what I was looking for. I was looking for his notes. What is the key to expository preaching? I want

you all to listen carefully. Listen now—The key to expository preaching is—I found Haddon Robinson's notes!

We all know that Haddon is renown for his no-notes preaching. But, ladies and gentlemen, I have found Haddon Robinson's notes. What are they? Haddon Robinson's notes help us to see the key to expository preaching, and it is this: Haddon Robinson strikes the keynote for preaching in our time. Haddon Robinson himself hits the keynote for preaching at this point in evangelical history. Haddon Robinson strikes the keynote for preaching in our time.

When Haddon Robinson steps up to preach he comes with his Bible in hand and his sermon in his heart. He shares the text and he shares of himself. Even though we do not see any paper notes, he has had and continues to have a noted effect in the field of homiletics.

Haddon, you've quipped when I've not been able to join you for lunch or not been able to meet with you, "You can step on me going up the ladder, but I'll be there on the way down." I consider it a privilege to be installed into a professorship named in your honor. But, like John the Baptist, for the moment, I want the spotlight shifted away from me to you. I must decrease and you must increase, and ultimately, the Lord be praised.

What, then, are the keynotes of Haddon W. Robinson? The first keynote is the note of influence.

THE KEYNOTE OF INFLUENCE

We can only fully appreciate Haddon Robinson's resounding predominance in preaching today by coming to understand how he developed into this person of influence.

Haddon William Robinson was born on March 21, 1931, to William Andrew and Anna Robinson, immigrants from Ireland. They made their home in the Mousetown district of Harlem, described by *Reader's Digest* as one of the most dangerous areas in the United States.[1]

Haddon's mother died when he was ten. He became what we now refer to as a "latch-key kid," raised by his father. His father was a dedicated Christian who worked during the afternoons and evenings. Haddon's grandfather had come to faith as an adult who, while staggering home drunk one night past a church heard them singing:

> There is life for a look at the crucified one.
> There is life at this moment for thee.
> Look sinner look unto him and be saved,
> Unto him who died on the tree.
> Look, look, look and live
> To him who died on the tree.

When he heard those words he was converted and gave his life to Christ and later became a laypreacher. Haddon's son, Torrey comments to his sons in the dedication of the book that he and his father did together, *It's All in How You Tell It*. Torrey reflects:

> By God's grace, that story, that faith was passed on to your great-grandfather, to your grandfather, and then to your father. Now that story has become your story.
>
> It is our prayer that your children and your grandchildren may know the truth of that story as they see it lived out in you.[2]

But the truth of the gospel came to Haddon not all that gently. The rough neighborhood in which the Robinsons lived had its influence on the young boy. He associated with a gang. One night his gang was gathered for a rumble. Somehow, the police were tipped off and arrived on the scene.

A policeman approached the group in which Robinson was a member. He searched the boy and found that he had an ice pick tucked away in his clothing. "What do you plan to do with this?" barked the officer. "Chop ice," said Robinson. The officer pushed him and sent him sprawling. That night changed young Haddon Robinson's life. He left the gang which was no doubt an answer to his father's prayers.

During this time he came into contact with John Mygatt, a Sunday School teacher at the Broadway Presbyterian Church. Robinson went there to play basketball but he got a lot more than a few good shots. Mygatt made the lessons exciting.

John Mygatt loved his class of boys. He was one of the few people from the church who came to the Robinson home to visit. The Sunday School teacher made a lifelong impression on the boy from Mousetown.

Sometime during his early teens Haddon Robinson prayed the sinner's prayer and gave his life to Christ. Then, at age 16 he left for college at Bob Jones University. While in college he became interested in preaching, spending Friday evenings in the library reading books of sermons and books about preaching. During this time his interest in preaching and his skill at practicing it grew. When he graduated he received the top award given to a senior for preaching. He gave a sermon on John 3:16.

Then, in 1951, following college, he went to study at Dallas Theological Seminary and married his college sweetheart, Bonnie Vick.

During his final year at Dallas Seminary he taught informal classes in preaching since the seminary did not offer courses in homiletics. He left Dallas in 1955 for the First Baptist Church of Medford, Oregon, where he was assistant pastor. Robinson planned to be an evangelist, and after only a few years in Oregon, Dallas Seminary asked that he come back to teach preaching

at the school. He spent 19 years at Dallas.

Robinson completed a master of arts degree at Southern Methodist University in 1960 and his doctor of philosophy in speech communication at the University of Illinois in 1964.

In 1979, Haddon Robinson became president of Denver Theological Seminary, and published his textbook on preaching, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* in 1980. *Biblical Preaching* is now in its second edition. Over 250 Bible colleges and seminaries use the book. It has sold over 150,000 copies.[3]

After twelve years at Denver Seminary, Robinson was invited by Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary to become the first occupant of the Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professorship of Preaching. He assumed the position in 1991.

For the last thirteen years [as of 2004] Haddon Robinson has continued to extend his influence in the field of preaching. He has taught hundreds of neophyte preachers in the Master of Divinity program. In addition, he has mentored scores of seasoned preachers in the Doctor of Ministry program. He has written articles on preaching and continued an active preaching schedule.

As a teenager Haddon Robinson wrote the following in his diary about the preacher Harry Ironside, "He preached for an hour and it seemed like twenty-minutes; others preach for twenty-minutes and it seems like an hour. I wonder what the difference is?" Haddon Robinson has spent the rest of his life trying to answer this question. We see it in his web of influence—as a redeemed person, and his passion for preaching, his teaching of preaching, and his publications about preaching.

His book, *Biblical Preaching*, was welcomed in 1980 with enthusiasm. One reviewer stated:

> Robinson has made a very helpful contribution to the teaching of the art of expository preaching.... A serious reading of this discussion and practical testing of its counsels should enhance the ability of the exegetically qualified and theologically informed preacher to expound Scripture to God's glory, the salvation of sinners and the edification of Christ's church.[4]

Another reviewer, aware of Robinson's insights and the significance of his contribution to homiletics wrote:

> When you read this book you will want to have pen and pencil in hand so that you can mark the many "I wish I had said that" kind of statements it contains. You will also want to mark portions to which you will want to return later for further reflection.[5]

He continues:

> Beginning with the establishment of the identity of expository preaching and showing that, while most conservative preachers give assent to it, in reality they do not practice it, Robinson walks the preacher through the steps necessary to prepare sermons that truly are expositional/expository. Probably the unique contribution that Robinson makes to the process is the concept of stating the sermon "idea" in subject and predicate form. While this is not new to the field of rhetoric (it can be traced back to Aristotle) few homileticians have related the concept to sermon preparation.[6]

These authors, among others agree: Haddon Robinson strikes the keynote for preaching in our time. We see this in the keynote of influence. Yes, Haddon Robinson strikes the keynote for preaching in our time.

What comprises this influence? What is it about Haddon Robinson's perspective on preaching that has made a difference? This leads to the second keynote.

THE KEYNOTE OF COMMITMENT TO THE BIBLE

In his 1980 book, *Biblical Preaching*, Haddon Robinson wrote:

> The man in the pulpit faces the pressing temptation to deliver some message other than that of the Scriptures—a political system (either right-wing or left-wing), a theory of economics, a new religious philosophy, old religious slogans, a trend in psychology. A preacher can proclaim anything in a stained-glass voice, at 11:30 on Sunday morning, following the singing of hymns. Yet when a preacher fails to preach the Scriptures, he abandons his authority. He confronts his hearers no longer with a word from God but only with another word from men. Therefore most modern preaching evokes little more than a wide yawn. God is not in it.[7]

He continues later, "First, and above all, the thought of the biblical writer determines the substance of an expository sermon."[8] He considers the process of exposition to be that of a philosophy rather than a method. He comments:

> Expository preaching at its core is more a philosophy than a method. Whether or not a man can be called an expositor starts with his purpose and with his honest answer to the question: "Do you, as a preacher, endeavor to bend your thought to the Scriptures, or do you

use the Scriptures to support your thought?"[9]

"Ultimately," writes Robinson, "the authority behind preaching resides not in the preacher but the biblical text."[10]

Fifteen years later Harold Bryson acknowledged Haddon Robinson's basic philosophical commitment to the Bible and to preach what the Bible says. He observes:

> Haddon Robinson, writing in 1980, proposed a substantive idea for expository preaching. Robinson said expository preaching was "the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers." According to this definition, expository preaching was more a philosophy than a method. The expositor's paramount concern was for the message of the text and how to communicate that message.[11]

More recently Michael Quicke affirmed Robinson's premise. Quicke wrote, "Robinson correctly states that expository preaching 'at its core is more a philosophy than a method.'"[12]

However Robinson acknowledges that a step by step process is necessary, that is why he wrote his book. Do you notice the title of the book? It is called *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. By following a stage to stage approach Robinson guides the preacher in the application of the philosophy. Robinson offers a process for sermon development. He acknowledges such a process is necessary—and may be surprising—to the preacher. He observes:

> My Aunt Ginny was one of the great cooks of the twentieth century. That wasn't solely my verdict. All the members of our extended family share that opinion. On Thanksgiving or Christmas we would all assemble at Aunt Ginny's house to enjoy a world-class dinner, arguably the finest feast served in New York City that day. The turkey, the stuffing, the potatoes, the gravy were all superb, but the crowning moment of the meal came when Aunt Ginny served her desserts. If there is a Platonic ideal of mince or pumpkin pie, Aunt Ginny's came as close to it as any chef on earth.
>
> You cannot imagine how stunned I was, therefore, to learn that my

> Aunt Ginny used cookbooks. In fact, she confessed that she got her piecrust recipe from Betty Crocker. And, furthermore, she didn't seem repentant! I thought that no world-class cook would ever take advice from someone else. Why would she follow a formula concocted by Mrs. Crocker when she could follow her own instincts for making desserts? But my Aunt Ginny was a modest woman. She knew she didn't know everything there was to know about cooking, and other devotees of the stove and oven could help her to excel.
>
> Ministers can learn a lot from my Aunt Ginny. No matter how long we've been crafting sermons, none of us has achieved perfection. [After delivering some sermons that fell like wounded ducks before they reached the first row of pews, I've often wondered if I know anything about preaching!] All of us can still learn from others. A preacher or a teacher would do well to read at least one book on preaching every year. To coin a commercial phrase, we need to think about preaching again for the first time.[13]

Haddon Robinson has helped us to do just that and his work in the field of homiletics is an invaluable contribution. But Robinson's commitment is to the Bible and he wants preachers to think about preaching the Bible again for the first time. It is true: Haddon Robinson strikes the keynote for preaching in our time.

Not only does Haddon Robinson hit the keynote of influence and the keynote of commitment to the Bible, but also he strikes the keynote of relevance to the listener.

KEYNOTE OF RELEBANCE TO THE LISTENER

Haddon Robinson is committed to relevance. He wants preachers to link Sunday morning's world with Monday morning's world. Sermons are to be applied to their listeners. He comments, "A preacher, therefore, should forget about speaking to the ages and speak to his day. An expository preacher confronts people about themselves from the Bible instead of lecturing to them from the Bible about history or archaeology." He continues, "Effective application thrusts an expositor into both theology and ethics."[14] Robinson would acknowledge that connecting the dots to application is not always easy. He reflects on one of his sermons:

> It was a disastrous sermon. A church in Dallas invited me to preach on John 14. That's not an easy passage. It is filled with exegetical questions about death and the Second Coming. How do you explain, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive

you unto myself"? How is Jesus preparing that place? Does Jesus mean we won't go to be with him until he comes back? What about soul sleep? I spent most of my week studying the text and reading commentaries to answer questions like these.

When I got up to preach, I knew I had done my homework. Though the issues were tough, I had worked through them and was confident I was ready to deliver solid biblical teaching on the assigned passage.

Five minutes into the sermon, though, I knew I was in trouble. The people weren't with me. At the ten-minute mark, people were falling asleep. One man sitting near the front began to snore. Worse, he didn't disturb anyone! No one was listening.

Even today, whenever I talk about that morning, I still get an awful feeling in the pit of my stomach.

What went wrong? The problem was that I spent the whole sermon wrestling with the tough theological issues, issues that intrigued me. Everything I said was valid. It might have been strong stuff in a seminary classroom. But in that church, in that pulpit, it was a disaster.

What happened? I didn't speak to the life questions of my audience. I answered my questions, not theirs.[15]

Being aware of one's listeners has been an important consideration for Haddon Robinson. Not only does he believe that the preacher is to be biblically driven but he also wants the sermon to be listener-focused. This commitment to application, to relevance, is a principle that has driven Robinson for decades. He wants the sermon to make a difference in the lives of his listeners.

To remind him of his listeners Robinson has this bit of doggerel on a plaque on his desk:

As Tommy Snooks and Bessie Brooks
Were leaving church one Sunday,
Said Tommy Snooks to Bessie Brooks:
"Tomorrow will be Monday!"

For Robinson, the Bible does not stay in the long ago and far away. The preacher must show his or her listeners how the truth of the text makes sense today. He asserts, "All preaching involves a 'so what?' A lecture on the

archaeology of Egypt, as interesting as it might be, isn't a sermon. A sermon touches life. It demands practical application."[16] He continues:

In the final analysis, effective application does not rely on techniques. It is more a stance than a method. Life changing preaching does not talk to people about the Bible. Instead, it talks to the people about themselves—their questions, hurts, fears, and struggles—from the Bible. When we approach the sermon with that philosophy, flint strikes steel. The flint of someone's problem strikes the steel of the Word of God, and a spark emerges that can set that person on fire for God.[17]

The keynote of relevance to the listener is characteristic of Haddon Robinson's commitment to biblical preaching. Haddon Robinson strikes the keynote for preaching in our time.

Haddon Robinson strikes the keynote of influence, the keynote of commitment to the Bible, and the keynote of relevance to the listener. All of these notes underscore my assertion: Haddon Robinson strikes the keynote for preaching in our time.

CONCLUSION

Haddon Robinson confessed, "I have come closer to being bored out of the Christian faith than being reasoned out if it.... I think we underestimate the deadly gas of boredom. It is not only the death of communication, but the death of life and hope."[18] His influence, commitment to biblical preaching, and to the listener has help preachers to remain fresh and encouraged in their preaching. God made a difference in Haddon Robinson's life and, through him, God has used Haddon Robinson to make a difference in the lives of others.

"Haddon Robinson's influence has made a difference in preaching," declares one preaching professor.[19] Colleague and friend Alice Mathews notes:

> One person towers above all others as the primary influence on my thinking about preaching. That person, of course, is Haddon Robinson. It was in auditing some of his courses in the early 1980s that I began to understand the magnitude of the preaching task. It was he who forced me to think about the intersection of preaching and gender in the late 1980s when he asked me to talk to his Doctor of Ministry students about women as listeners. It has been in the ongoing radio work with him and Mart DeHaan for *Discover the Word* that I have learned to practice some of the basic principles of communication theory that lie behind the preaching task. More recently, it was the opportunity to work with him on the revision of *Biblical Preaching* that finally helped me to nail down some things

about preaching in my mind.[20]

In the foreword to *Making a Difference in Preaching*, the late Keith Willhite wrote:

> Haddon Robinson himself is a preacher of difference. Anyone who has had the joy of listening to him preach has listened to interpretive insights, masterful images, and similes and illustrations that sharpen the point or the big idea with amazing precision.
>
> Years ago, a seminary classmate remarked, "I think God made Haddon Robinson and then he made the rest of us—two runs of production." I responded, "I think he made Haddon Robinson, then a bunch of other preachers, and then the rest of us. We were two runs removed." My classmate agreed.[21]

Many others agree and this occasion has underscored it: Haddon Robinson strikes the keynote for preaching in our time.

Haddon Robinson strikes the keynote of influence, the keynote of commitment to the Bible, and the keynote of relevance to the listener.

But we can't stop there. For, as you remember, my desire, and I know Haddon's hope is that the Lord might ultimately be glorifed today, in his life, and in this professorship.

Haddon's favorite hymn captures my sentiment, and I'm sure his:

> When I survey the wondrous cross
> On which the Prince of glory died,
> My richest gain I count but loss,
> And pour contempt on all my pride.
>
> Forbid it Lord, that I should boast,
> Save in the death of Christ my God;
> All the vain things that charm me most,
> I sacrifice them to His blood.
>
> See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
> Sorrow and love flow mingled down:
> Did e'er such love and sorry meet,
> Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
>
> Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> That were an offering far too small;
> Love so amazing so divine,

Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Haddon Robinson strikes the keynote for preaching in our time.

NOTES

1. A shortened version of Haddon Robinson's biography is found in my introduction to *Making a Difference in Preaching*. See, Scott M. Gibson, Introduction in *Making a Difference in Preaching: Haddon Robinson on Biblical Preaching*, ed., Scott M. Gibson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 11-15.
2. Haddon W. Robinson and Torrey W. Robinson, *It's All in How You Tell It: Preaching First-Person Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 3.
3. Karen Steele of Baker Book House, email to Scott M. Gibson, 19 October 2004.
4. Carl G. Kromminga, Book Review, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* by Haddon W. Robinson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980. *Calvin Theological Journal* 16:2 (November 1981): 288.
5. Paul R. Fink, Book Review, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* by Haddon W. Robinson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980. *Grace Theological Journal* 3:1 (Spring 1982): 149-150.
6. Ibid. 150.
7. Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 18. Regarding gender-specific language Robinson reflects in the second edition, "I've also changed my language to reflect my theology. God doesn't distribute his gifts by gender. Both women and men have the ability and responsibility to communicate God's Word. I have always believed that, but the language in my first book reflected a distinct male bias. To those women who have used my book in spite of that, I express my thanks for their grace. In this revision I hope I have demonstrated the fruits of my repentance." *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* second edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 10.
8. Ibid. 20.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid. 23.
11. Harold T. Bryson, *Expository Preaching: The Art of Preaching Through a Book of the Bible* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 25.
12. Michael J. Quicke, *360 Degree Preaching: Hearing, Speaking, and Living the Word* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 28.
13. Haddon W. Robinson, Foreword in *Preaching with Relevance: Without Dumbing Down* by Keith Willhite (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 12.
14. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 27.

15. Haddon W. Robinson, "Blending Bible Content and Life Application," in *Making a Difference in Preaching*, ed., Scott M. Gibson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 85-86.
16. Ibid. 88.
17. Ibid. 94.
18. Quoted from David W. Henderson, *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth to Our Changing World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 19.
19. Timothy S. Warren, book review of *Making a Difference in Preaching*, Scott M. Gibson, ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999) in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158.629 (January-March 2001), 127.
20. Alice P. Mathews, *Preaching That Speaks to Women* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003).
21. Keith Willhite, Foreword in *Making a Difference in Preaching: Haddon Robinson on Biblical Preaching*, ed., Scott M. Gibson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 9.

TRIBUTE TO HADDON ROBINSON

DAVID L. ALLEN
Dean, School of Theology; Professor of Preaching; George W. Truett Chair of Pastoral Ministry and Director of the Center for Expository Preaching
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
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As a young pastor in my first year at my first church in 1982, I read Haddon Robinson's book *Biblical Preaching*. I found it to be theological accurate, homiletically helpful, and chock full of wit and wisdom for the preacher. From that day until this, I have always read anything flowing from the pen of this dean of evangelical homileticians who has taught the art of preaching for more than fifty years at three different seminaries. *Biblical Preaching* is one of the top-of-the-line textbooks on preaching. I have used it as one of my key textbooks since the late 1980's when I began to teach homiletics. Its influence on the evangelical preaching world and beyond is virtually incalculable.

I first met Haddon Robinson only a few years ago, but I have had the opportunity to hear him preach in person on several occasions over the years. He never disappoints. An excellent wordsmith, especially when preaching narrative texts, Haddon Robinson has a knack for pushing nouns against verbs in a way that turns the ear into an eye. His descriptive powers are legendary. Who can forget his sermon on David's sin with Bathsheba? We felt we were right there in the palace with David the day he looked out over the parapet and saw Bathsheba bathing. We were in the palace hallway when David walked by and glancing at himself in the brass mirrors, saw the flecks of grey in his hair and knew there were more years behind him than ahead of him. We were in David's private chamber when he received the note from Bathsheba handed him by a guard which read: "I'm pregnant;" signed, "B." This is vintage Robinson. He brought home to us all Mark Twain's adage that the difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightening and the lightening bug.

I remember hearing him talk about how, as a young man, he wondered why it was the case that he could listen to a preacher preach for 20 minutes and seemed like an hour, then he listened to someone preach for an hour and it seemed like 20 minutes. He then said he had devoted his life to answering that question. I suspect he has gotten closer than most of us in answering it. He has also taught more than his share of young preachers how to preach expositionally in a stellar career spanning over fifty years.

Only heaven knows how many preachers have been directly or indirectly influenced by this titan in his field. Scarcely a homiletics professor in the entire evangelical world remains untouched by his influence. He casts a giant shadow.

One thing I have always appreciated about Haddon Robinson is his commitment to a high view of biblical authority, his hermeneutical common sense, and his desire to let the Word speak for itself. In addition to this, the illustrative and application warp and woof of his sermonic masterpieces reveals the truth of the maxim that the essence of art is to conceal art. Robinson is clearly a master at his art. Those of us who have watched him work continue to be amazed at how easy he makes it look. Yet behind every sermon are untold hours of exegesis, analysis, writing and rewriting. I have always maintained that clarity has to be crafted. Robinson's preaching clarity is the work of his laborious crafting. His kinds of sermons don't just happen. He always tries to stay true to the substance, the structure and the spirit of his text. Unlike some modern preachers, I doubt Robinson ever endured the disgrace of having his sermons received with blank stares and feelings of boredom. Haddon Robinson always had a knack for a quiet eloquence that couches the content of his expository preaching. When he preaches, people listen. He knows how to capture just the right balance of Aristotle's rhetorical triad logos, pathos and ethos.

Today's pulpits sport their fair share of curiosities, mediocrities, and atrocities. Nonsense, eloquent or pedestrian, might be frequent fare in some church pulpits today, but Haddon Robinson has remained a steady voice for genuine biblical preaching. Preaching today, especially in many pockets in the evangelical church, is better for the contributions of Haddon Robinson. Only eternity will reveal the far-reaching impact and influence of this great homiletician, who by his writing, preaching, and life, teaches us all that striving to do great preaching is far superior to striving to become known as great preacher.

CELEBRATING THE INFLUENCE OF HADDON W. ROBINSON

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It is a good thing for a young man to measure himself against his heroes. Not having had the privilege of studying under Haddon Robinson directly, my awareness of the man was garnered from a distance. Perhaps that distance gave him an even greater mystique when I got up to present my first paper at the inaugural meetings of the Evangelical Homiletics Society and saw the great man in the front row. I *so* wanted him to be pleased—not solely because of my desire to avoid professional embarrassment, but primarily because I respected his contribution so deeply. I knew that Haddon's approval was like a good *homiletical* seal of approval, guaranteeing the validity and usefulness of whatever I might have wanted to communicate. As I recall, his response was characterized by an integration of truth and grace, a way of being that described our ongoing, though infrequent connections over the next few years.

No one has influenced evangelical homiletics more in the last 30 years than Haddon Robinson. Having taught in three of the most significant evangelical seminaries over several decades and after traveling to countless other schools around the world to serve as a conference and modular course teacher, it is hard to imagine anyone who has prepared a greater number of influential evangelical preachers and leaders. *Biblical Preaching* is still the seminal text in the field more than 30 years after it first appeared. His insistence that every sermon ought to offer one "big idea" has done more than anything I can think of to create a more accessible and faithful preaching of the biblical word for our times.

His advice about the "big idea" was then and continues now to be significant. It also impressed by its evident good sense. Biblical texts are complicated and allow for a number of preaching emphases, but effective communication of these texts rest upon the preacher's ability to offer the intention of the text by means of a single, memorable concept. This nod to the listener is not to say that the listener is allowed to form the meaning of the text, or that the text can admit to a number of variant meanings. It is to say, however, that the listener will be better able to apprehend and appropriate the meaning of a biblical passage when it is communicated by means of a

single proposition.

The genius of Robinson's approach is that it allows preachers to build sermons that are more respectful of the listener without compromising the authoritative nature of Scripture. I appreciate that he was able to help free us from the need to satisfy some external concept of depth proven by complexity. Rather, he showed us how to honor the depth of the text by sharpening its focus on a single concept that could be appreciated and applied by listeners today. Simplicity is not opposed to profundity. Depth in preaching can be enhanced when the preacher can condense the richness of a text into a pithy and portable conception.

An emphasis upon the big idea leads naturally toward the listener's implementation of the textual implications. Application is built into a fully formed big idea statement. Every semester I take my students to Robinson's instruction that homiletic ideas need both a subject and a complement. We must recognize both what the text is talking about, but also what it is *saying* about what it is talking about. It is this simple insistence that keeps our preaching both rooted in the Scripture and grounded in life.

Preachers concerned with preaching biblically run the risk of lapsing into an unintended sense of abstraction. The fact that we speak about a large God, transcendent and objective, can lead us into a quality of preaching that might seem worshipful, but is in the end more hypothetical than it is practical. Robinson helped us appreciate that it is not less worshipful to preach in such a way that people appreciate how a sermon is to be appropriated in life.

The emphasis upon what a text says about what it was talking about offers the key to the understanding of a text's application. Robinson's well-known article, "The Heresy of Application" reminded us that more heresy is preached in the way by which we apply our sermons than in our explain our sermons. It is because of the unnatural distinction we tend to make between exegesis and application that we fall into this difficulty. If preaching becomes a kind of two-stroke function we risk this unintended dis-integration.

If, however, we are to follow Robinson's conception we are able to make application an organic outcome of the work of exegesis. The key is to read our texts with a view not solely to its timeless meaning but it's homiletic meaning in the context of the listener's life. It was this consistent effort to discipline the applied side of the sermon by the truth of the text that gave Robinson's own preaching such integrity.

Many of us who teach others to preach harbor an inner insecurity about the quality of our own preaching. If Haddon ever felt such concern, and I have no knowledge that he did, he could have saved himself the bother. Haddon Robinson didn't only talk about preaching. The man himself could preach. His teaching and writing about preaching was born out of the practice of his preaching. His lessons were learned the hard way, through the trial and error of his own preaching to audiences of all kinds. Long before

"authenticity" became a buzzword, Robinson practiced the congruity of his preaching with his life.

In one of my earliest seminary experiences, we were required to memorize Robinson's definition of preaching, that it is "the presentation of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a grammatical, historical, literary study of a passage in it's context..." (You could likely recite it yourself.) It was the last part of the definition that had the largest impact on me—that this concept be applied first to the preacher, then through him or her to the listeners. This sense that preachers were listeners themselves, the first listeners, with as much responsibility as anyone else to make personal application of the text.

I have occasionally heard Haddon speak about his background, a kind of hardscrabble upbringing in the tenements of New York City, not normally the seedbed of nationally prominent preachers. Yet it may be that this is the experience that gave his preaching its sense of authenticity. Robinson understands life. For him preaching is not solely about the proposition in its pure and abstract form. It is that, but he understands that the proposition finds its value when it is located in the listener's life. Life application is not added-on to the text. It is the context into which the text is read, understood, and appreciated. It cannot be extricated from the textual meaning or intent, nor should it be. The implication is that preachers have to have actually lived life in order to be any good at their preaching. This is another way of saying that the biblical concept must be applied "first by the preacher." Robinson's own preaching qualifies fully on this point.

This emphasis is being challenged these days by preachers whose passion for the text leads them to a disregard for the listener in the attempt to exalt the Word itself. In our desire to give primacy to the sacred text, we end up treating application as extraneous. Robinson is having none of this. It is his concern for the text that actually leads him to give such attention to the listener. The concern for the listener cannot be divorced from the intent of the text in real life context. Anything else is an abstraction.

Preaching that gets beyond such abstract forms can explode upon a church. Another well-utilized piece in my classrooms is Robinson's short article on *Holy Expectation*. Why is that we seem surprised when someone actually responds to our preaching, when a young man comes to faith, or a family is restored? Why is it that we don't seem to expect that God will do what he says that he will do? We're handling dynamite, he said, and then we're surprised when it "goes off."

I have seen this power in my own church. My pastor meets each year with Robinson and a group of his former doctoral students to discuss the preaching of a particular section of the word of God. In this way, I have benefitted from Robinson's influence as a "second generation" listener. The preacher that I hear bears the marks of an integrated textual authority and

application.

My pastor, a Robinson student, also teaches preaching to others at a local Bible college. This is, perhaps, the greatest aspect of Robinson's legacy—the number of his students who are now teaching preaching throughout North America and the world. I doubt it is an exaggeration to suggest that the majority of those who teach preaching in North American seminaries and colleges were either taught or directly influenced by Robinson. He has clearly left a mark. That this mark honors both his Bible and his Lord is testimony to the quality and focus of his ministry and mission.

Tributes like this can be embarrassing, I would imagine, for the one being honored, preferring that the spotlight would shine elsewhere. For that reason, we would honor Haddon by placing our emphasis upon his concepts more than upon his person. What I have been talking about is the homiletical pioneer, Haddon Robinson. What I am saying about what I am talking about is that we appreciate his influence on our preaching and that we commit to carrying the flame.

TRUE PREACHING IS BIBLICAL PREACHING: A TRIBUTE TO HADDON ROBINSON

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With a man as gifted as Haddon, with so many accomplishments, with such a long tenure of service to God and the Church, it is hard to know what to focus on in paying tribute. There is Haddon's mentoring of preachers, his Twain-like sense of humor, his influential *Biblical Preaching*, his wisdom, and his modeling of homiletical excellence. There is his devotion to Bonnie, his humility, and his listening ear. But taking to heart Haddon's mantra that "less is more," let me focus this tribute just on one feature of Haddon's homiletic that has become part of me and part of so many preachers around the world: true preaching is biblical preaching.

The Word of God is a fire that burns away chaff, a hammer that breaks up stony hearts, a mirror that shows the true self, a lamp that illumines the path, seed that grows and bears fruit, water that washes us, bread that feeds us, and a sword we use to battle the devil. Haddon believes this. His allegiance is to the Word, and his goal in preaching is to deliver that Word accurately. Of course, accurate preaching does not imply sterile and unimaginative preaching. I wish I had space here to honor Haddon's creativity because another of his mantras is that "it is a sin to bore people with the Bible;" but in Dr. Robinson's homiletical estate, creativity is a house servant, while accuracy is lord of the manor.

The simple tool of what Haddon calls the "exegetical idea" has been a godsend to me and my students. With it we articulate an accurate summary of the text. This provides the foundation for an expository sermon. I think there is genius in the simple elegance of asking: what is the author talking about, and what is he saying about what he is talking about? That second phrase, the "complement," drills a sermon deep into the text. We do not simply preach themes from the Bible—even if they are orthodox and edifying—we preach the specific ideas the human and divine authors intended.

That's what Haddon believes, what he has trained generations of preachers to do, and what he does himself. He preaches the Word.

Some of my favorite sermons from the Robinson corpus are from 1 Corinthians 13. He preached that series at Gordon-Conwell Theological

Seminary. In one of those sermons, while preaching the Word, demonstrating that less is more, and that expository preaching does not need to be boring, he reminded us that "love is kind." That was all he said in twenty-some minutes. True, he developed the idea, illustrating it this way and that (another theme worthy of tribute—Robinson's skill with illustration), but at the end of the day all that he said was simply, "Love is kind." I heard that sermon years ago, but I haven't forgotten it. If by the Spirit I display a modicum of kindness, Haddon will have played a part. That's because he preaches the Word, the very Word that can save us.

HADDON W. ROBINSON: A PERSONAL TRIBUTE TO CHARACTER, CONTRIBUTIONS AND CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE

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When I concluded the presentation of my first paper to the full assembly of the Evangelical Homiletics Society and offered to field questions, two people raised their hands. The first was Sidney Greidanus, and the second was Haddon Robinson. Although I did not know either personally, I certainly did know of them–and that is probably why my knees weakened. However, after managing to answer the first question acceptably, I turned anxiously to Haddon Robinson. His question was more of a thoughtful, probing statement to which I agreed and offered one observation. When he smiled and nodded in agreement, I experienced immense relief, coupled with a sense of affirmation as I returned his smile. That was a very special moment for me.

Haddon W. Robinson has affirmed many students, preachers, and others throughout the years. While I cannot write as a former student, faculty colleague, or even as a close friend of Haddon Robinson, I can speak as an observer, admirer, preacher, and teacher of preaching. As such, I consider Haddon Robinson to be the John A. Broadus, the Andrew W. Blackwood of our time. Michael Duduit of *Preaching* declared, "Haddon Robinson is one of the most influential persons in the homiletical world."[1] Robinson also has received several significant recognitions as one of the twenty-five most influential preachers in the past twenty-five years (*Preaching*), one of the top ten most influential preachers from 1956 to 2006 (*Christianity Today*), and one of the twelve most effective preachers in the English-speaking world (2008 poll, Baylor University). In addition, he was the recipient of the E.K. Bailey Living Legend Award in 2008.

Haddon Robinson's influence as a preacher has been enhanced by his teaching, writing, and speaking. Holding a Th.M. degree (Dallas Theological Seminary), M.A. degree (Southern Methodist University), and Ph.D. (University of Illinois), Robinson taught homiletics for nineteen years at Dallas Seminary and has been serving as the Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological

Seminary since 1991. He is an effective and exemplary teacher of preaching. How do I know that? First, I know that because I have listened to the papers presented by his former students, read their articles and books, and discussed preaching with them. It is obvious that their giftedness, creativity, and ideas rest on a solid homiletical foundation shaped by a master teacher, among others. Secondly, I have watched the performance of a former Gordon-Conwell Seminary student who transferred into our Ph.D. preaching program and have appreciated his organization and interpretation of his homiletical research and his frequent citation of concepts learned from studying under Haddon Robinson. Finally, my understanding and teaching of preaching have grown through reading his books and articles, as well as through listening to his Evangelical Homiletics Society presentations.

However, reflective of his teaching and significant among his contributions to preaching is Haddon Robinson's best-selling book *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. Like Broadus' *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* in 1870, Robinson's *Biblical Preaching* in 1980 has been widely read as a textbook. Michael Duduit considers *Biblical Preaching* to be "the book on expository preaching…, a pivotal book in shaping our understanding of expository preaching in so many of today's churches."[2]

Biblical Preaching has also been a pivotal book in shaping and widening Robinson's influence and reputation. Although he has published other books on preaching, such as *Biblical Sermons*, *It's All in How You Tell It* (with Torrey W. Robinson), and *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching* (edited with Craig Brian Larson), Robinson is known best for *Biblical Preaching* with its unique homiletical terminology, such as "The Big Idea" (the central, unifying idea at the heart of an effective expository sermon) and the developmental question, "So What?" (pertaining to sermon application and relevance), as well as his view that "God speaks through the Bible" and that sermons should therefore be text-centered and audience-focused messages.[3]

How closely associated with Haddon Robinson are the concepts and terminology in *Biblical Preaching*? At one annual EHS meeting, I bought a book entitled *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching*. As I walked toward Haddon Robinson to get him to sign the book, I fortunately noticed that the book was edited by Keith Willhite and Scott M. Gibson. While the book was based on Robinson's homiletics and was dedicated to him, he was not the author but the inspiration behind its content. However, this kind of association indicates one reason why leading evangelical professors of preaching, when surveyed concerning who was the most outstanding professor in their field, gave the name of Haddon Robinson more than any other preaching professor.[4]

Yet in *Biblical Preaching*, Robinson penned an interesting revelation:

> When I started teaching, I did not intend to write. All I wanted to do was find enough usable advice to provide my students a way to proceed as they prepared to preach.[5]

Students, preachers, and professors of preaching can all rejoice that Robinson went beyond his initial intention and put his thoughts, ideas, and concepts about preaching into writing.

However, Haddon Robinson's contributions have gone beyond teaching and writing pertaining to homiletics. He has authored books such as *Grief: Comfort for Those Who Grieve and Those Who Want to Help*. He has written regularly for *Our Daily Bread*, hosted the television program entitled "Film Festival," and co-hosted "Discover the World" (formerly the "Radio Bible Class" and now broadcast on numerous radio stations around the world). According to the Gordon-Conwell Seminary website, he has edited the *Christian Medical Society Journal*, the *Theological Annual*, *Preaching*, and *Christianity Today*. Additionally, he has had various articles published in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, *Christianity Today*, *Moody Monthly*, and other publications. He has also served on the editorial board of the *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* and as President of the Evangelical Theological Society (1983). Yet, it should be noted that his multifaceted abilities afforded him opportunities to make significant contributions in leadership as a former President of Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary (1979-1991, now know as Denver Seminary) and as a former Interim President of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (July 2007-August 2008).

Despite all of his noteworthy accomplishments and contributions, I commend Haddon W. Robinson for one other contribution which has touched my life and the lives of his students, faculty colleagues, many preachers, and others—i.e., his character. Certainly, his character must be described as Christ-like because he has remained through the years so noticeably Christ-centered. Growing up in New York's Harlem tenement district of Morristown could not have been easy for him. But, the Christian home of his parents and the spiritual influence of others helped shape him morally as a person. Another influential factor had to be his teenage conversion to faith in Christ, which would result in his attending Bob Jones University in South Carolina. While attending Bob Jones, he felt a conviction that he would become a preacher. So, he began to listen to preachers and to read books on homiletics and books of sermons. Before graduating, he received an Outstanding Preacher Award, certainly a portent of many honors to come because of his preaching and teaching of preaching.[6]

Yet, if we acknowledge that Haddon W. Robinson is worthy of all of the many honors which have been bestowed upon him (and which will be given in the future), we must pay tribute to his steadfast and exemplary character, which has been seen through the years in his commitment to God's

Word and to Christ, both in public and in interpersonal interactions. One such instance for me was when I heard in an EHS session some years ago of the very caring actions Haddon took to be with his wife Bonnie in her great time of need. That was character—and I was deeply moved.

Another evident indication of character has been in the area of service. Even this brief tribute has underscored a life of dedicated service by Haddon Robinson. Some years ago as a Rotarian, I learned to repeat two mottos with the other Rotarians at the end of our weekly noon meetings: "Service above self" and "He profits most who serves best." Concerning those two mottos, I would have to say that one is true of Haddon W. Robinson—he has truly put service above self. However, with regard to the second motto, I would say that we have profited most because he has served best. And, that is a tribute to character

NOTES

1. Michael Duduit, www.preaching.com.
2. Ibid.
3. Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980,), 18, 22, 26.
4. Keith Willhite and Scott M. Gibson, eds., "Introduction and Dedication," *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the Bible to People* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 7.
5. Robinson, 10.
6. Willhite and Gibson, 7-8.

TINKER TOYS AND HADDON ROBINSON

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The first time I ever brought a sermon manuscript for Haddon to evaluate was the longest hour of my life. It was October of 1999. I was in my final year of the Master Divinity program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He read through my manuscript for about 20 minutes without uttering a single word. I sat opposite him and watched him read…and read…and read. He flipped the page back and forth a few times. For a man who doesn't gamble, he's got a great poker face. Finally, he spoke! He showed me how to handle my thought—how to arrange the pieces so they connected and supported my central idea. Then, he preached one movement of my sermon. That's what I was waiting for. I wanted to understand his thought process.

For the last few years, I've had the pleasure of assisting Haddon with his PR601 course, the basic introductory preaching course at Gordon-Conwell. I've taken his basic course in preaching eight times now! And I still love watching him think about preaching.

I'm especially fond of the "Tinker Toy" lecture, even though I've heard it eight times. Haddon, of course, doesn't call it by that name. Its technical name in the syllabus is "The Essentials of a Well-Planned Sermon." Haddon struts into the classroom with Tinker Toys in hand. He says, "you know what they say about old professors…they never leave….they stay and just tinker around."

Then he holds the round wooden spool between his finger and thumb and tells the class that effective communication always has three things: unity, order and progress. And even though a sermon is a unity, unlike a painting, the audience gets it bit by bit—one phrase, one movement at a time. There's an order to the way we communicate the biblical ideas and good preachers show how one part relates to the previous one. A good sermon is a unity.

He hands a young woman sitting in the front row the wooden spool, then he releases a fistful of yellow, red, green and blue sticks before her. He asks her how she'll get from the introduction to her first movement and from the first movement to the second one. She clenches the spool in one sweaty palm and with the other hand she picks up a red stick in a pincer grasp…

then she starts to build.

It's the Tinker Toy lecture—when students start to understand the essentials of building a sermon. The foundation is laid for sermon-building.

But Haddon never toys with preachers. He's not merely tinkering with the mechanics of preaching. He thoughtfully builds preachers and teachers of preachers. He's a serious builder of preachers.

I appreciate the nature of Haddon's building material: Young people—students with little or no experience in preaching, or in life, for that matter. He's from the Tinker Toy generation and I played with LEGOS made out of plastic. A span of more than 40 years separates us. No doubt, not a dribble, but an ocean of age separates us.

But he continues to be a relevant building force in the lives of young people. He can relate to a 25 year old as well as he can relate to his own peers. A builder of homes knows that green lumber is not yet ready to be used to frame a house. The wood needs time to dry and season. If green lumber is used to frame a house, as it dries over time it warps and cracks.

But, green lumber in the hands of an experienced craftsman can produce magnificent results. My great-grandfather, a Polish immigrant to Salem, Massachusetts, built a curved wall in his home. He used green lumber because of its pliability. He bent it and shaped it to form exactly what he wanted. The process took months, but he worked at it bit by bit, every day. The final product was stunning.

Haddon understands the value of shaping a young mind. Let's face it. Building with green can be challenging when you're gray. But Haddon does it with ease and agility. He has listened to thousands of 'first sermons' and as we like to tease, he hasn't lost his faith! He connects with younger generations despite the gap in age. He continues to build and relate to me in my world. His words are relevant to my life at home with my husband and our two small boys and to my ministry. He's not out of touch with my life as a "mommy minister," or "preaching mommy." That always strikes me as surprising, because perhaps a bigger divide than age, is gender. Young? That's fine. But young *woman*? Now you're pushing it! But it's true. Haddon is a builder of young, female preachers. His building material is surprising: green, female.

I've never asked him about his view on women in ministry. All I know is that he's spent a good deal of time building me.

He appreciates that men and women think differently. He knows the value of the mind of a woman at the table, the lectern or the pulpit.

I've been the recipient of his good will and good humor as he's supported me in my preaching ministry. He recently preached at the church in which I'm on a preaching team. He began by saying, "I want to thank Pat Batten this morning. She taught me everything I know about preaching."

When I give a lecture for one of his classes, he sits among the students and listens. I appreciate that. Yes, teaching his material in front of him is slightly nerve-racking, but he's building me into a teacher of preachers. He has never torn me down. His feedback is clear and given gently. He's known for saying "you've got to give ten 'attaboys for every you jerk." I've gotten countless 'attagirls.

I'm grateful that Haddon hasn't wasted these later years in life with just tinkering. He's still building. And now there's a structure in place that is solidly expository. It's a beautiful structure—young and old; different shades of color and culture; male and female. Although the structure is diverse, it is a unity. It is united by a common commitment to exposition and biblical authority. And from this structure, God's word is preached in cities and suburbs; in rural areas and regions near and far…and lives are changed.

PREACHING'S BIGGER IDEA

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Anyone who has studied preaching with Haddon Robinson will always remember that the big idea of preaching is, "Every sermon must have a big idea." As students of preaching we certainly appreciate and use Haddon's emphases on developmental questions, sermon forms, abstraction ladder, application and other essential points as we prepare and preach sermons. But for most of us who learned to preach under Haddon's tutelage nothing about his pedagogy of preaching is more dominant than the central role of the sermon's big idea. When we think of Haddon and preaching, we think, first, of the big idea. In fact, in 1998 some of his colleagues collaborated on a book to honor Haddon for his contributions to biblical preaching. The title of the book is, *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching*.[1]

In his book, *Biblical Preaching* Haddon wrote, a chapter entitled, "What's the Big Idea?" In that chapter he stated that, "To ignore the principle that a central, unifying idea must be at the heart of an effective sermon is to push aside what experts in both communication theory and preaching have to tell us."[2]

When he wrote, "My Theory of Homiletics" in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching*, Haddon wrote that, "If preachers are ever to get sermons, they must get them as ideas." And, "The Bible and the sermon are both forms of literature and both communicate ideas."[3]

How many congregations have discovered and begun to live by a Bible passage's meaning because their preacher struggled through the sometimes mind-wrenching process of hammering out the text's big idea? Wrestling with all the details of that text, the preacher applied Haddon's process of identifying its big idea by asking:

> [T]wo essential questions. The first is, "What exactly is this person talking about?" The full, complete answer to this question is the "Subject" of a passage or of a sermon. The answer to a second question, "What is this person saying about what is being talked about?" leads to the "Complement" of the idea because it completes the subject. The subject and complement together lead to the idea of

the text and of the sermon.[4]

Haddon's goal is that preachers will never preach a sermon until they have clearly stated the big idea of the biblical passage and then turned that idea into the homiletical idea of their sermon. I am (and I suspect his other students are) grateful to Haddon for this significant and essential contribution to our ministry as preachers of God's word.

But I don't believe his emphasis on identifying the big idea is Haddon's greatest contribution to his students of preaching. As I reflect on twenty years of working with Haddon in the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell, I believe that identifying the big idea of a preaching passage is Haddon's *second* greatest contribution to homiletics. "So what trumps that?" you might ask. Look at his books and articles, reflect on his class sessions, consider his conversations about preaching and what could possibly be more prominent in his thinking on homiletics than identifying and presenting the big idea of a preaching passage?

We may have missed preaching's bigger idea because it doesn't have a designated chapter in *Biblical Preaching*. There isn't a seminar dedicated to it in the Doctor of Ministry curriculum. But it's there. It permeates the curriculum from the first interview a potential student has with Haddon to the final thesis defense. Those who hear Haddon's heart will agree that he is committed to a Bigger Idea of preaching.

I'm not aware of a chapter in the Gospels that describes Jesus teaching the apostles how to preach. It's hard to imagine that he didn't do so, but none of the gospel writers recorded it. We're left to imagine if, and if so, how Jesus taught his disciples to preach. But we never have to wonder if Jesus invested in cultivating the preachers' character. Luke recorded a message where Jesus addressed the importance of the minister's character and it provides insight into this essential bigger idea.

In chapter six of his gospel, Luke records a critical moment in Jesus' ministry. After spending the night in prayer, Jesus called his disciples together and named twelve of them as apostles (Luke 6:12-16). After doing so, he went to "a level place." A great crowd gathered and Jesus ministered to them by teaching them and healing their sick (17-19). Then, Luke tells us, Jesus "Looked at his disciples…" and preached a sermon to them. Darrell Bock wrote that in this sermon, "…Jesus sets forth his ethic for daily life in detail."[5] I. Howard Marshall stated that, "The Sermon on the Plain is a shorter version of the Sermon on the Mount…."[6] Luke wants us to understand that after appointing the twelve apostles, Jesus specifically spelled out how his followers should live.

In the conclusion of that sermon Jesus told "*A*" parable recorded in verses 39-49.[7] Although this parable is part of the sermon, Luke interrupted the sermon by inserting the fact that this concluding section is a parable. Second, the concluding parable has a different tone. The whole sermon, up

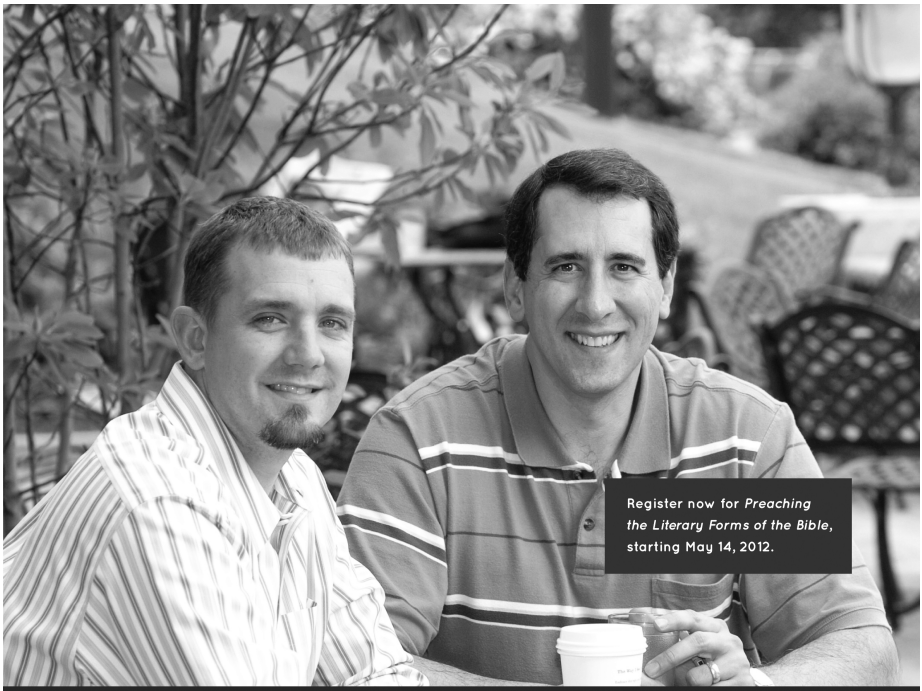
to this point, had been in the second person and had been giving specific instruction about how Christ's followers should live. He switched to the third person early in the parable as he moved from discussing how his followers should live to how they should help each other live. The standard he presented in the sermon was so high, that anyone who seriously considered living this way could easily feel overwhelmed. He concluded the sermon by telling them how they could live by such a standard.

In his concluding parable, Jesus talked about those who could help his listeners achieve the standard he had presented. He talked about who we should (or should *not*) follow (39). He talked about who we should (or should *not*) choose as a teacher (40). He talked about how we can help each other remove flaws from our lives (41-42). So in the first section of the parable (39-42), he discussed the helping functions and those who should serve as helpers. From our perspective as preachers, we must see that by the very nature of our preaching ministry we function as those leaders, teachers and therapists.

In the parable's next image (43-45), Jesus presented the requirement for bearing good fruit. He stated the point of the image in verse 45, "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks." His summary of fruit-bearing focuses more on the point of his concluding parable than it does on the point of the whole sermon. Otherwise, why even include the topic of bearing fruit? This reference to fruit-bearing and the focus on what comes out of one's mouth has less to do with the overall emphases of how we live as Christ's followers and more to do with how we bear fruit as helpers of those who desire to live as Christ's followers. But in either case, the fact Jesus made is that only those who are "Good-at-heart" will be able to bear good fruit. And Jesus didn't assume we would deduce from his *positive* image of bearing good fruit that the opposite was also true. He actually *stated* that if we are not producing good fruit from a good heart, we become dangerous leaders, destructive models and inept therapists who will produce bad fruit because we have bad hearts.

It seems logical that those confronted with this sermon would, by now, be asking, "How can I be a good leader, a good teacher, a good helper–a good person?" If I want to live the kind of life Jesus presented in this sermon–and if I want to help others live this life–how do I become a tree that bears good fruit, a person whose mouth speaks helpful words? Apart from the answer to that question, Jesus' conclusion to the parable (and to the sermon), loses its punch.

Before giving the final image in the parable, Jesus asked a powerful question to focus attention on the point of his conclusion (v.46). He asked, "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?" With this



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question, Jesus offers his listeners two–and ONLY two options. You can call me Lord and do what I say; or you can do what you want and not call me Lord. There is no third option. You cannot call me Lord and not do what I say.

Jesus helped his listeners choose the right option when he presented the fifth image of his parable. If we miss the connection between the "Do what I say" of Jesus' question and the twice repeated, "Hear who hears my word" statement (verses 47 and 49) that introduces the stories in the final image of the parable, its whole point falls flat.

So Jesus didn't include a course in homiletics here, but he pointedly stated the bigger idea of preaching. "The crucial question for the Preacher is not 'who do you teach,' but 'who teaches you?'" To effectively *do* ministry, we have to *be* effective ministers. Character validates function.

By necessity, a preaching course has to teach preaching skills. Hundreds of Doctor of Ministry students who learned to preach under Haddon Robinson's tutelage enthusiastically declare that they have developed those skills. Feedback from their congregations affirm the students' testimonies.

In my conversations with Haddon's students in their final Doctor of Ministry residency I hear them express appreciation for what they learned about preparing and preaching effective sermons. Their testimonies at the closing ceremony of their program echo those conversations. They express appreciation and admiration to Haddon for his expertise in the preaching craft. Haddon has mentored and guided them in developing the skills they need to preach effective, life-changing sermons.

But after the conversations and testimonies about preaching, there's often a pause, a bit of reflection, a more serious tone. They speak–not so much as student of preaching–but more as human beings, as pastors, as colleagues in ministry. They speak of something more profound, more important, more…cherished that they learned from Haddon. While he was teaching them the big idea of preaching, he was modeling the Bigger Idea of the Preacher. Jesus taught it, "The crucial question for the Preacher is not who you teach, but who teaches you." That was what came through most powerfully from Haddon. He lived it. He modeled it. To have powerful impact for Christ on other people, you first have to be a good person. That, more than anything else, is what they walk away with. They have been led, taught and counseled by a Good Man.

Kouzes and Posner wrote that the first law of leadership is, "If you don't believe in the messenger, you won't believe the message."[8] If this is true of leaders, how much more of messengers. I won't venture a guess at how many times I've heard students say—in one way or another—that as much as they appreciate how much they've learned about preaching from Haddon's books and sessions, their deepest gratitude and highest respect for Haddon comes from what they learned by observing his life.

Up close and personal, they have worked with him all day long, in

two week blocks, in three different residencies. They watched him interact with his colleagues. They heard him present lectures. They observed him as he responded to questions, disagreements and challenges. They've seen him when he was fatigued at the end of a day at the end of the week. They've endured his tough evaluations of their preaching. They've conversed with him on breaks. They've sat in his one-on-one sessions where he lovingly, but honestly "reproved, rebuked, exhorted, with great patience and instruction." What they observed in the unwritten, unplanned curriculum was the Bigger Idea of preaching. They saw what it means to be a godly human being.

Kouzes and Posner are right. Haddon, thanks for making us all learn how to be more believable. You intentionally and consciously taught your students (and your fellow teachers) how to prepare and present the big idea of a scripture passage. For that we are genuinely grateful. But without trying, you less consciously and less intentionally modeled the Bigger Idea that we can believe your message because you are always so believable yourself.

NOTES

1. Keith Willhite and Scott M. Gibson, eds., *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the Bible to People* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998).
2. Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 2nd Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 37.
3. Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson, Eds., *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 58.
4. Ibid., 58.
5. Darrell Bock, *Luke* (IVPNTC; Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1994), 120.
6. I. Howard Marshall, *Commentary on Luke*. NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 243.
7. Although it includes five images and a question, Luke introduced the final movement of Jesus' sermon as *a* parable. Luke also introduced the stories of the lost sheep, the lost, coin and the lost son as "This parable" in Luke 15. In both parables, each story or image makes a point of its own, but they produce a bigger and more powerful idea when combined into th\n parabolh\n tau/thn as Jesus intended.
8. Kouzes, James and Posner, Barry, *The Leadership Challenge*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 38.

HADDON ROBINSON: A TEACHER OF PREACHERS

BRYAN CHAPELL
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A project that became foundational for my doctoral studies in speech communication involved comparing the contributions and distinctions of the textbooks on preaching then on the market. At that time, I did not know that field or its major contributors and came upon Haddon Robinson's *Biblical Preaching* without expectation or bias. Immediately, I knew that I had found gold.

What distinguished *Biblical Preaching* from the other books is its sage simplicity. Expressing simple truths in clever ways or profound truths in difficult ways is not particularly difficult. But expressing profound truth in simple terms is the mark of homiletical genius and the great contribution of Haddon Robinson to the field of evangelical preaching. Others are as committed to faithfulness to Scripture, and others are as informed in the disciplines of communication. Haddon brings these distinctions to the preaching task as well as any other scholar, but what distinguishes his work is the way that his great pastoral wisdom is compressed into terms so plain.

Students of preaching often read Haddon's work and say to themselves, "Of course," or "That's just common sense," not realizing that Haddon has just demonstrated for them in writing the goal for which they should strive in preaching: making great truths accessible to all. Some preachers strive in their preaching to be honored, others know the task of faithful preaching is to honor God's Word by making sure God's people can receive it. The great Reformation preachers said that it was the responsibility of pastors to preach to "the necessities and capacities" of the hearers. These divines understood that it is far better for the preacher to be understood than to be worshipped, especially when what must be understood is necessary for the hearers' eternal salvation.

A preacher once introduced another by saying, "I love Dr. Smith because he is not so concerned that we know that he knows the Word; instead, he is more concerned that we know the Word." For similar reasons I love Haddon Robinson. His greatest concern is that others know God's Word. I witnessed this priority in him several years after studying *Biblical Preaching* in graduate school. John Koessler of Moody Bible Institute provided the opportunity for me to work with Haddon on a project that combined our

books in a digital format. I remember being awed by the master, but treated as a peer by him. Haddon's gentle humor and warm manner not only enveloped me and put me at ease, but also taught me again of the power of profound truths simply stated.

As we progressed on the project, Dr. Koessler told us that we would be given the opportunity to summarize our books in a recorded introduction. I labored to find and refine excerpts from my book that would enable me to reflect key themes with precision and erudition. I really just wanted to appear respectable next to the great Haddon Robinson. So, I read my script with as much weightiness as I could muster and, then, it was Haddon's turn. He used no script. Instead, he leaned forward in his chair and spoke in the assuring tones of a grandfather about how students grasping a few key concepts and depending on God's Spirit would be able to preach with power. I was entranced with the effect. I remembered what Haddon said more that I what I had said, and I was simultaneously comforted and made confident as a preacher by his instruction.

I have had many opportunities to work and correspond with Haddon in subsequent years, but that moment of sage simplicity stands out in my mind for its ministry to my heart and its instruction to my life. I will be forever thankful to Haddon Robinson for his commitment to making sure that our preaching is biblical, for his willingness to continue to grow in method while remaining true to the message of Scripture, and for his commitment to mentoring future preachers and future teachers of preaching. But I am most grateful for his example of sacrificing apparent esteem for real ministry. He has given himself for the message of the Savior, and in doing so has ennobled the preaching task for generations to come. There is no greater honor for a teacher of preachers.

A LIFE BUILT ON THE WORD: A CELEBRATION OF HADDON ROBINSON

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Although we recognize that none of us is essential to the work of God in our world, it is nevertheless interesting to imagine how some fields of endeavor would be different if a specific individual had never appeared on the scene. For example, if Thomas Edison had never been born, how much longer would people has sat in the dark? Without Alexander Graham Bell, would we all still be using the telegraph to send messages? Sometimes, a man or woman comes along and God uses them in a unique way to advance some enterprise.

From a Kingdom perspective, there are few enterprises more significant than the preaching of God's Word, and there are few individuals who have had a greater influence on evangelical preaching in our day than Haddon Robinson. It would be difficult to overestimate his influence on the shaping of biblical preaching in the closing years of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st.

Last year as part of a celebration of 25 years of publication, *Preaching* magazine (which I serve as Executive Editor) recognized the 25 most influential preachers of the past 25 years. Among the top ten—alongside names like Billy Graham, Chuck Swindoll, and John R.W. Stott—is Haddon Robinson. Here is what we said about him at that time:

> Haddon Robinson has used the classroom and printed page to exert a profound influence on the American pulpit during the past 25 years. His text *Biblical Preaching* (Baker) is the most widely-used preaching textbook of the last quarter century, helping to prepare thousands of young preachers to develop "Big Idea" sermons. (In the March-April 2010 *Preaching*, the book was cited as the most influential preaching book of the past 25 years.)
>
> As a professor of preaching at three prominent evangelical seminaries, Robinson further influenced many of those who now teach preaching in colleges and seminaries. Michael Milton writes, "Arguably the greatest preacher in North America, Dr. Robinson

has influenced pulpits all over America and through his ministry at Gordon-Conwell and Denver Seminary before that."

The E.K. Bailey International Conference on Expository Preaching—an event drawing primarily African-American pastors and preachers—annually celebrates a "Living Legend" among preachers, and that honor was bestowed upon Haddon in 2010. His influence reaches across denominational and ethnic lines to make an impact on the way we preach the Word in our own day.

I am one among the many preachers who have been influenced by Haddon Robinson. How has he made such an impact on the shape of preaching in our day?

HIS WRITING IS BUILT ON THE WORD

Rarely has a single text exerted such a profound influence on a field as has the book Biblical Preaching. For nearly a century, John A. Broadus' classic text *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* was such an influential book, with multiple editions used in many colleges and seminaries. As use of Broadus' book began to fade, other texts came along and were adopted here and there, but none became "the" textbook for preachers until *Biblical Preaching* was published in 1980.

Why did Robinson's book become so influential? Essentially, he offered a clear picture of what an authentically biblical sermon should look like, and offered practical steps in creating such a message. He helped us understand what expository preaching is and what it is not, and showed that any preacher can achieve that goal through faithful study and a commitment to effective communication.

Certainly his definition of expository preaching became the definitive one for the past generation of evangelical preachers: "Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers."

That definition helped both novice and veteran preachers understand the keys to effective biblical exposition:

- That the core of the sermon is a single biblical concept—what he calls the "Big Idea"
- That the Big Idea emerges from careful study of the biblical text
- That the sermon is dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit in the life and mind of both preacher and hearer
- That the expository sermon requires application of that Big Idea.

Most students of contemporary homiletics would agree that Robinson's most significant contribution to the field is his emphasis on the Big Idea – that "biblical concept" which emerges from the text and which becomes the foundation on which the rest of the sermon is built. It was not the first suggestion of such a device as a rhetorical tool – for many years, textbooks on preaching had referred to the *proposition*, the *central idea*, the *thesis*. But Robinson's terminology and explanation stuck, making the concept work for new generations of preachers seeking a way to make their messages both biblical and understandable.

Indeed, many preachers now talk about "Big Idea" preaching in contrast to other models. Other writers have since adapted the concept and altered the terminology – Don Sunukjian, for example, talks about the Take-Home Truth – but Robinson's key concept is at the heart of most expository preaching and the way it is taught today.

Yet Robinson makes it clear that effective exposition is not built on a specific formula, but on a philosophy with which we approach the Word and seek to communicate its truth. What has made Robinson's writing so significant with three decades of preaching students is that he has helped us recognize the necessity of rooting our sermons in the truth of biblical revelation, and has given us a process by which to carry out that task.

HIS PREACHING IS BUILT ON THE WORD

While most seminarians know Haddon Robinson through his writing—particularly *Biblical Preaching*—those of us who have been blessed to hear him recognize him as one of the most able preachers of his generation. Unlike the old line, "Those who can do, those who can't teach," Robinson can both teach and do when it comes to preaching!

I remember the first time I ever heard him preach. I knew of him but we had never met. My wife and I were visiting in New York City that weekend, and attended the Calvary Baptist Church, expecting a normal Sunday service. Instead, Haddon Robinson was there as the guest preacher, and he preached a compelling message that brought the biblical text to life. Since then I've been blessed to hear him several times, and have never been disappointed. His messages are always faithful to the text, well presented, and engaging with real life issues.

Robinson is not a classic orator with exaggerated phrasing and grand gestures. His preaching is conversational; he tells us a story drawn from scripture, or talks about a passage almost as if sitting across the table sharing with a friend. There are deep insights from the text, but they are not told to impress the listener with the preacher's great learning but to move the listener to some truth, some decision—to a Big Idea.

HIS LIFE IS BUILT ON THE WORD

Those of us who know Haddon Robinson through the homiletical community know him through his writing and preaching. We can see in his preaching and scholarship a faithfulness to the biblical text. But it is clear that his commitment to biblical truth goes beyond his professional life; Haddon Robinson's life, family and ministry reflect a deep commitment to Christ and a reverence for God's Word.

Through his service in the church in the form of theological education – at Dallas Seminary, Denver Seminary, and now at Gordon-Conwell Seminary—Haddon has both taught and mentored some of the most effective preachers of the day. And he has multiplied that service to the Kingdom as a teacher and mentor to those who are now themselves teaching new generations of church leaders in many college sand seminaries across America and around the globe.

It is hard to believe that Haddon Robinson reached his 80th birthday this year; at an age when many teachers are long into retirement, Haddon has continued to teach and lead to the glory of God. We can all be thankful for his life and ministry for eight decades—years spent in service to the church, to his students, and more importantly to the Word and to the Lord. May we continue to benefit from his life, his writing, and his preaching for many years to come.

A PERSONAL TRIBUTE TO HADDON W. ROBINSON

J. KENT EDWARDS
Professor of Preaching and Leadership
Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program
Talbot School of Theology
BIOLA University, LaMirada, CA

Haddon,

No one has had a more profound impact on my life and ministry than you. I discovered you when I was desperately trying to find out how to preach effectively, but I learned far more from you than preaching tips. Your emphasis on the 'big idea' shaped not only my sermons, but my ministry, my marriage and my life. I learned from you that there is nothing more important in all of life than figuring out what the main things in life are… and setting out to accomplish them. A focused life, like a focused sermon, makes a far greater impact. You kept me from the error of wasting my years by "running down the rabbit trails" of life.

When Nola and I made the move to work with you at Gordon-Conwell, your influence on my life increased dramatically. Those years that we spent working together were the most significant of my life. During those years I discovered from you that you not only spoke well, but that you lived well. I saw that your character and your public persona meshed. In a time when image and externals are so highly prized, it became obvious to me that your only concern was pleasing your Lord.

One of the most significant insights into your character came one day when I noticed that many of the plaques and honors that you had received over a lifetime of outstanding service had been thrown into a box in the corner of your office. I was shocked by this. I was also transformed. You told me that the reason you did that was because God would not share his glory with another...and you wanted God to be glorified. That day changed me. It made me want to encourage people to applaud God, rather than me. It showed me how to deflate my ego.

Perhaps the greatest lesson you taught me, Haddon, was how to be a friend. I remember one day when political intrigue was swirling around campus and it appeared that I would pay a steep personal price for the unorthodox changes I had engineered to help the school move forward. I remember meeting in your office and you telling me that you would support me. That if negative repercussions came you would quit the school in protest.

I knew that you did not want to quit. I knew how much you valued your ministry of teaching and touching student's lives. Yet you were willing to give up all that to help me if I needed it.

As I looked into your eyes that day, I knew you meant what you were saying, and I began to understand what it means to be a friend. Jesus said in John 15 that "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

I have read many books, taken many classes and endured many exams…but that day you taught me one of the greatest lessons of my life. Thank you for being my friend that day, Haddon. Thank you for being my friend today.

Your friend,

Kent

BEAUTY AND SIMPLICITY IN THE BIG IDEA: AN ESSAY IN HONOR OF HADDON W. ROBINSON

MATTHEW D. KIM
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INTRODUCTION

My initial encounter with Dr. Haddon Robinson came while taking his introductory preaching course, Preaching: Principles and Practice in Preparing Relevant Biblical Sermons, at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. As a bright-eyed and bushy-tailed M.Div. student preparing for the pastorate, I soaked in all that Dr. Robinson instructed us regarding the art and science of preaching. Knowing little about the actual preparation of sermons, I thought preaching appeared rather simple. Ignorantly I mused, how difficult could it be to find something to say from the Bible and then deliver God's message to the congregation?

In one of his first lectures, Dr. Robinson shared with the class that there are two types of preachers. One type of preacher preaches for 20 minutes but it feels more like an hour. A second type of preacher communicates for an hour but the sermon feels like 20 minutes. He shared, "One of my primary goals in studying homiletics through the years was to figure out what makes the difference between these two preachers." While there are many factors in effective biblical preaching, I grasped quite early on that Dr. Robinson was the second type of preacher. My quest that semester was to ascertain what made Robinson's preaching and pedagogy so efficacious.

In this short essay, written in honor of Haddon Robinson, I would like to remark on his foremost contribution to the field of homiletics—what I designate in this piece as the beauty and simplicity in Robinson's big idea philosophy of preaching. In the latter part of the essay, I will impart some personal contributions that Dr. Robinson has made in my life both as a professor and as a person.

THE EMERGENCE OF HOMILETICS AND ROBINSON'S LEGACY

From the 1950's onwards, the field of homiletics began to emerge as a recognized and distinct theological discipline. The study of preaching no longer stood under the fuzzy umbrella of pastoral ministry, applied theology, or practical theology. Homiletics became the glue in theological education

that integrated the seemingly disparate disciplines of church history, biblical studies, hermeneutics, theology, counseling, and practical ministry. Preaching would include knowledge and praxis of these various fields of ecclesiastical study.

A primary text in homiletics courses in that era was H. Grady Davis's book *Design for Preaching* published by Fortress Press in 1957. Davis opened preachers' eyes to a number of helpful sermonic concepts including the substance and form of the sermon; the anatomy of the idea; and writing for the ear. In the 1950's, the focus of the sermon was on the preacher's responsibility to communicate the idea of the text and was not concerned to such extent with what listeners actually heard.

Later, in the 1960s and 1970s, homileticians shifted their gaze and began to lock into the listeners' experience and how experience influenced how congregants heard and responded to sermons. The era of the New Homiletic championed by homileticians such as David James Randolph, Fred Craddock, David Buttrick, Eugene Lowry, and others valued the truth found in language and experience as equal to or perhaps even superior to the truth of the Scriptural text. It is toward the end of this season of homiletical tension between the truth of the text and the truth of experience that Haddon Robinson wrote the first edition of his landmark homiletics textbook, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages,* published by Baker Books in 1980.

Biblical Preaching became a breath of fresh air in the homiletical enterprise for the evangelical cause. Robinson demonstrated how preaching was not either speaker-oriented or listener-centered but rather a thoughtful engagement with both frames of reference. In *Biblical Preaching*, Robinson defines preaching in this way: "Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers."[1] Throughout *Biblical Preaching*, Robinson articulates a vision for preaching that is inclusive of faithful biblical exegesis as well as a conscientious understanding one's listeners. He recognized that to preach effectively the preacher required knowledge of and interaction with both the Scriptural text and real people.

BEAUTY IN THE BIG IDEA

As someone who has committed himself to the study of homiletics, I have read numerous textbooks on the art and craft of preaching. They have served me well in my calling to preach God's word. However, Robinson's *Biblical Preaching* stands out as the leading homiletics text for students of preaching in the evangelical world. According to Robinson's philosophy of

preaching, he advocates that preachers in their study of the Bible ought to determine the main idea of the pericope or passage. He calls this main idea the big idea or the central idea. This big idea of the text is what the preacher communicates to the listeners in the sermon.

The beauty of the big idea concept is that it allows the preacher to focus on "keeping the main thing the main thing." Oftentimes as preachers we wonder what subject God wants us to preach on at a particular worship gathering. We can fall prey to proof-texting and borrowing a snippet of the Bible out of context to convey what we really want to say. We can preach psychological or therapeutic sermons that appease the soul or endorse unsanctified lifestyles. From a Scriptural point of view, however, the big idea philosophy prevents us from such homiletical error. According to Robinson's definition, we allow the Scripture to speak truth into our lives first which will transform *us*. We must grapple and deal with the ugliness of *our* sins. Our lives become a beautiful reflection of Scriptural truth that is lived out in the preacher (with the help of the Holy Spirit) who can then model for the congregation God's instructions for his beloved people. Thus, the beauty of the big idea philosophy is found in its ability to remain faithful to God's teachings as the truth of Scripture renovates the hearts and minds of preachers and listeners to mirror the image of the triune God and to bring to fruition God's kingdom purposes.

SIMPLICITY IN THE BIG IDEA

Not only is there a profound beauty to the big idea philosophy, the outworking of Robinson's homiletic method is quite simple. His philosophy of preaching, in its most basic form, seeks to be clear, clear, and clear. We have all heard sermons where we leave the sanctuary wondering what the preacher was talking about. Maybe we have been guilty of confusing listeners along the way due to a lack of sermonic clarity. We say too much and transfer too much information void of lucidity and tangible application.

One of Robinson's leading contributions to homiletics is in his assertion that every sermon should have one clear idea drawn from a biblical text that can be stated in a succinct and memorable way. How one determines that big idea occurs via combining what Robinson calls the subject and its complement. The subject concerns what I'm talking about. He then explains: "A subject cannot stand alone. By itself it is incomplete, and there it needs a complement. The complement 'completes' the subject by answering the question, 'What am I saying about what I am talking about.'"[2] While the simplicity of the big idea philosophy does not excuse a preacher from rigorous analysis of the "historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context," the process of determining the subject and complement of a text ensures that we will communicate the God-given idea and intention of

a passage. In addition, throughout *Biblical Preaching*, Robinson masterfully shows how the oft complicated process of sermon preparation is not as daunting as it appears and how the creation of a sermon can be an endeavor that both novice and experienced preachers enjoy and continually seek to improve on. We give you thanks Dr. Robinson for the beauty and simplicity of the Big Idea preaching philosophy.

PROFESSOR, AUTHOR AND MENTOR

Up to this point I have written about Haddon Robinson's theoretical contribution to the field of homiletics, as I conclude I would like to share a few personal illustrations that reveal the remarkable influence he has had on my life as a professor, writer, and mentor.

During my first assignment for an introductory preaching course, Dr. Robinson asked the class to deliver an explanation exercise where we studied a more complex passage of Scripture and taught it to the class. I decided to teach the class from Genesis 15 regarding God's covenant with Abram. After teaching my lesson, during the usual stint of constructive comments, Dr. Robinson got up from his chair and visually showed me how I could gesture in such a way to show rather than tell my audience what God did when he passed through the animals that were cut in half. In that moment, I realized that Dr. Robinson was not simply an excellent preacher but someone who cared deeply about future preachers who would communicate God's truth to a disinterested world.

I have also been shaped profoundly by Dr. Robinson's writing ministry. Not only is he well known for his homiletics textbook, *Biblical Preaching*, he has also authored numerous volumes germane to the Christian life. Concepts and stories in two books in particular have settled deeply in my mind. The first book is *What Jesus Said about Successful Living: Principles from the Sermon on the Mount Today*.[3] In this work, Robinson fleshes out biblical principles for everyday life from Matthew 5-7, what we commonly refer to as Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Robinson envisions a Christian life where we become salt and light in every interaction and in every relationship especially in the areas of the marketplace and personal finances. This book changed the way I view Christian discipleship in a world where biblical teaching often collides with worldly philosophies of greed and material success.

The second influential volume is *Decision Making by the Book: How to Choose Wisely in an Age of Options*.[4] Drawing from biblical teachings and illustrations, Robinson crafts a practical guide to the Christian life where we do not have to be afraid of God's sovereignty in the world. Rather, he articulates how we can move freely within the will of God and enjoy God's boundaries and his blessings. This book challenged my thinking while navigating God's plan for my life in seminary, post-seminary studies, and

today in pastoral ministry.

Finally, over the last dozen years, I have had the great privilege of sitting down with Dr. Robinson to learn from him in more informal settings whether in his seminary office or at an Evangelical Homiletics Society conference. To be frank, I was always intimidated to engage in conversation with one of the leading Christian statesmen of our day. In each encounter, however, I gathered quickly that Dr. Robinson is extremely accessible, kind, and even self-effacing. He possesses authenticity and a humble demeanor. He thoughtfully listens to what people have to say but at the same time is not afraid to speak his mind in loving fashion. He has modeled for me what it means to be a true under shepherd of the great Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Dr. Robinson has left his fingerprints on my life and on the lives of so many pastors, professors, Christians and even seminaries and Christian organizations around the world. He changed not only the future direction of homiletics but has enabled the entire Christian community to grow closer to the Jesus Christ, the Savior. We cannot thank him enough for his life, his scholarship, his wisdom, his testimony, and his service.

NOTES

1. Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 21.
2. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 41.
3. See Haddon W. Robinson, *What Jesus Says about Successful Living: Principles from the Sermon on the Mount for Today* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 1991).
4. See Haddon W. Robinson, *Decision Making by the Book: How to Choose Wisely in an Age of Options* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishers, 1998).

THE GIFT OF TRUTH: AN APPRECIATION OF HADDON ROBINSON

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The first time I heard Haddon Robinson preach was at a small Bible conference in Western Michigan. I was a fledgling pastor at the time. Every year the church board of my tiny Midwestern congregation encouraged me to go to a pastor's conference somewhere but I was reluctant. I had attended a large pastors' conference in my first year of ministry and left feeling more discouraged than when I had first arrived. The high profile plenary speakers, who all seemed to lead churches that numbered in the thousands, and the hyperbolic expectations set by the workshop titles, left me feeling like a failure.

This little Bible conference seemed a perfect compromise. My young family slept in a quaint wooden cottage at night. We listened to preaching in the morning and the evening, and in between we spent most of the day at the beach. No competitive pressure. No feelings of insecurity. My only fear was that the speaker might be dull but Robinson seemed like a good bet. I had never heard him preach before but knew he was the author of the textbook we had used in our homiletics class in seminary.

Dr. Robinson's sermons did not disappoint. I was so impressed that I asked if we might be able to get together during the week. "I want to get your advice about something," I explained. My real goal was actually more ambitious. I did not want advice so much as I hoped to make an impression. In the preceding months I had grown restless with my church. Small and rural, it did not seem like an adequate field for someone with my prodigious talents. I wondered whether it had been a mistake to accept their call. Perhaps if I had waited longer or circulated my resume among a wider field, I would have caught the attention of a more "significant" church.

He agreed to meet with me over lunch the next day. Our conversation began awkwardly. He asked a few questions about my background. Where was I serving? What seminary had I attended? The usual questions those in ministry ask one another when they meet for the first time. But I stumbled through my answers, intimidated by his presence and unsure of how to express what I really wanted to say. A dynamic preacher, conference speaker, author and professor, he represented everything I hoped to become. The

night before I had lain awake in bed, imagining how this meeting would unfold. I would be witty and erudite as I talked about my frustration with the church. Dr. Robinson would be sympathetic. "John, I know just the church for you," I imagined him saying. "It has a few thousand members, but with your ability, that shouldn't be a problem. Let me contact them." Or better yet, I imagined him inviting me to send my resume to Denver Seminary where he served as president. Perhaps there was a spot on the faculty for someone like me.

Instead, my complaints sounded uncomfortably like whining. His facial expression did not radiate sympathy. At best, he seemed impassive, perhaps even a little bored. It was like telling a story to someone who already knows the ending and realizing mid way through that it wasn't a very good story to begin with. But by then it was too late. I was already committed. The food was on the table. I had to finish. I eventually spluttered to a halt and waited for Dr. Robinson to respond.

He sat in silence for a moment, gazing out the window at the lake. I wondered if he was wishing he were on the beach. "I am familiar the seminary you graduated from," he finally said. "It's not well known. When you combine that with the fact that you have only been at your church a few years, it seems likely that any church you go to now will probably be much like the one you already serve."

My heart sank. I attempted a few half-hearted objections and eventually gave up. But Robinson continued, his voice seeming to come to me from a distance, as I pecked at the crumbs on my plate and half-heartedly contemplated the prospect of returning to my little church the following week. "You know there is nothing wrong with spending years in a small place perfecting your craft" he said. "It's a good opportunity to work on your preaching. It's a good place to raise children too."

That evening I complained to my wife Jane about our conversation:

"He could at least have been a little sympathetic to my situation," I grumbled.

She listened in silence, a sign that she did not entirely agree.

"He's right, you know" she said at last.

"I know he is" I replied sullenly. "That's what I hate the most about it."

This initial encounter with Haddon Robinson epitomizes much of what I have come to appreciate about his ministry over the years. First and foremost, it reflects his characteristic frankness. I suspect that an older generation would describe him as "forthright." I came seeking advice (disingenuously it turns out, though I doubt that I would have admitted it at the time) and he offered something immensely more valuable. I was given

the gift of truth. Dr. Robinson is one who has learned how to "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15).

For his students, this is often experienced within the context of sermon evaluation. Dr. Robinson's honest assessment of student sermons is the stuff of legend. Everyone I know who has studied homiletics under him has at least one story to tell, whether about themselves or someone else, describing Dr. Robinson's bracing analysis of their performance in the pulpit. Robinson's brand of unvarnished sermon critique may sometimes seem harsh to those who have grown up in a culture where every team gets a trophy and students are labeled excellent simply because they showed up for class. But preachers are in the business of telling the truth. They need to hear the truth about their own preaching before they subject others to it.

Preaching is fraught with difficulties. One of the greatest is the challenge of being self-aware. Many preachers do not have an accurate sense of their own performance during the sermon. Young preachers almost never do. They mistake the rush of adrenalin for the motions of the Spirit and assume that the energy they experience while delivering the sermon is automatically shared by those who hear it. Which of us has not occasionally puzzled over the expressions of disinterest on the faces of our audience during the sermon? Preaching is intrinsically interesting to the preacher. Not so to the listener.

Preachers are particularly vulnerable to narcissism. This should not come as a surprise to us. What other personality type would be drawn to a vocation which requires its practitioners to deliver weekly uninterrupted monologues? Combine this with a post-modern mindset which believes that my story is the most important story and you have a recipe for self indulgence. The preacher's business is to speak the truth in love. But first they need to hear the truth about themselves and often the truth about their own preaching if they are to accomplish this effectively.

In my first encounter with him, Haddon Robinson not only dealt with me frankly, he treated me generously. I am sure there were other more important things that called for Dr. Robinson's attention during the conference. At the time, he was leading Denver seminary through a major change in its educational philosophy. Perhaps he would have preferred to use the time to attend to administrative details. No doubt there were other more prominent guests vying for his attention, some of whom might even have been potential donors for the school. In a few hours he would be called upon to deliver another sermon. If he did not need the time to review, he might have enjoyed a few minutes to relax. He could have summarily dismissed me.

Or he might have merely pacified me by offering me a sugar pill and sending me happily on my way with a few empty words of encouragement and a promise to "keep me in mind" should anything arise. Instead, he took

the time to ask a few probing questions and rightly diagnose the condition of my soul. Instead, he cared enough to offer a real prescription, even though he must have known it would be a bitter pill for me. I thought the problem was discouragement. Robinson correctly discerned that I was afflicted with natural ambition mixed with the pride of youth and the impatience of a novice.

I realize that a few honest words shared over lunch does not make Haddon Robinson Mother Theresa. I am certain that he has no recollection of our encounter that day (as is often the case with life transforming conversations). But this encounter combined with subsequent experience has shown that Dr. Robinson is someone who disciplines himself to put the interests of others before his own. He is one of those rare persons who is more interested in Christ's kingdom than he is in his own career. Haddon Robinson is widely regarded as one of the world's best living preachers. His writing and teaching have shaped thousands of preachers and affected millions of sermons. Yet despite the magnitude of these accomplishments, his life's goal has been a fairly simple one. "I have often wondered how one person can preach for a few minutes and it feels like an hour, while another can preach for an hour and it only feels like a few minutes" Robinson himself once observed. "I have spent my life trying to find the answer."

Several years after my meeting with Robinson, a former student of mine called to ask for some advice. He had accepted a call to serve on the pastoral staff of a church in upstate New York and the first couple of years had been rocky for him. He was frustrated with the senior pastor's leadership and wondered if it might be a good time for him to look for another ministry position. He had only been at the church for a few years. I listened for a while and then gave him my blunt assessment of the situation.

"You can make a move," I said, "but given your level of education and experience the church you go to will probably be pretty much like the church you're in now."

I could tell it wasn't the answer he had hoped to hear. I think it made him angry. I listened as he explained why it was necessary for him to make the change now, primarily blaming the senior pastor's weak leadership. I grunted a few times, hoping that it sounded sympathetic, then I interrupted him.

"The problem isn't your senior pastor," I said, "the problem is you. And the issue isn't his leadership style, it's your own pride."

I'm sure I sounded harsh.

"You know," I said, "it's not a bad thing to spend a few years learning how to submit to someone else's leadership. It will make you a better pastor in the end."

We talked awkwardly for a few more minutes and then hung up. He eventually left the church, but like me it was later instead of sooner. A few

months after our conversation he called me again and thanked me for telling him the truth.

"I didn't like it at the time," he said. "But it was what I needed to hear. Thank for caring enough to tell me the truth."

Thank *you*, Dr. Robinson.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HADDON!

BRIAN LARSON
Editor of PreachingToday.com
Carol Stream, IL

I'm grateful to have this opportunity to call to mind some memories of a few of our times together and to share a small slice of the influence you've had on me.

I remember being an associate editor for Leadership Journal in the early '90s and going with Marshall Shelley to the Hilton Hotel near O'Hare and spending a day and a half interviewing you for the Mastering Ministry book series and then having the fearsome responsibility of editing your words! Who was I to edit you?

I recall another day or so spent together sometime around 2002 as we met with Kevin Miller and a few others to plan what should be included in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching*. We will always be grateful for your generosity in lending your time, counsel, and name to that project.

I recall many enlightening phone calls for interviews and your gracious response to the many requests that I've made of you over the years. Thank you for being patient and understanding with this editor.

In all these personal contacts, I have marveled at your energy and genuineness—and, of course, your probing mind in relentless pursuit of understanding and living what the Word of God says.

I remember sitting in my living room a month or so ago listening to the live Moody radio broadcast of your sermon on Hosea, and having my heart moved again by the love of God. I recall a few weeks ago reading once again your sermon on 1 Corinthians 13, the sermon that says love keeps no record of wrongs, and being moved once again by this wonderful exposition.

Which brings me to the subject of your influence on me. I will always be grateful for the understanding I received from the article "The Heresy of Application," which was a complete eye-opener to me, and for your vision in the book *Biblical Preaching* of what expository preaching is: more a philosophy than a method. Thank you for teaching me that the power is in the Word, and I simply need to open up what is in the text. Thank you for the wisdom that I've received in everything else I've ever read or heard from you, for each and every teaching has benefitted me in many, many things.

Haddon, thank you for teaching me how to take the Word more seriously, with more discrimination, than I had previously known. In our conversations and interviews, in reading what you've written and preached,

I was exposed to a level of thinking about Scripture and its application that I had never experienced before. You asked the questions I didn't even know to ask, and you were able to answer more than any human should be able to answer.

What Michael Jordan, Bob Cousy, or Larry Bird is to a man who loves basketball, what Albert Pujols, Carl Yastrzemski, or Brooks Robinson is to a man who loves baseball, so, Haddon, are you to me and to so many others who love God's Word and its clear proclamation. "Whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven," (Matthew 5:19). To God be the glory.

THE PRIVILEGE OF WORKING WITH HADDON ROBINSON

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Thirty years is a long time to work alongside another person. While it's true that "iron sharpens iron," it's also true that clashing work habits and ways of thinking can become grit in the machinery of co-laboring. Haddon Robinson and I—fallible human beings that we are—have experienced that grit as we've worked together for more than three decades. But we've also experienced the synergy of a shared vision for God's kingdom, which enabled us to work together in spite of our fallen humanity. Looking back on those decades for *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society*, I am grateful for the privilege of working with and learning from a great mentor and friend.

HADDON AS SEMINARY PRESIDENT

I first knew Haddon as an able administrator. As the newly minted president of Denver Seminary (1979), he early realized the need to revamp the development office at the school. This called for a new office of public relations separate from but in tandem with the hiring of a well-trained VP of development and support staff. My husband, Randall, and I had just returned to the USA from seventeen years of missionary work in Europe, and with two children in college, I needed a job. On Vernon Grounds' recommendation Haddon asked me to interview for the new position of director of public relations. I had to admit that I didn't have a clue what that entailed, but he assured me that the school would make sure I had the training needed, and on January 12, 1981 I reported for duty.

It turned out that Haddon had a very clear idea of what I would need to do: start a good quarterly magazine (i.e., write articles, learn about graphic design, work with printers in the arcane world of inks, colors, papers, etc.), start an audiotape ministry for pastors called Expositapes (i.e., learn about studios, recording, marketing, etc.), organize in six weeks a huge banquet (1,700 people attending) with Chuck Swindoll as speaker (i.e., learn about hotel banquet functions, oversee all details of the meal and program as well as publicity and organization of ticketing, etc.). And oh yes, also start

work on alumni relations and a few other details. I went to work each day terrified.

In those days Haddon was a whirling dervish of activity and creativity. When people asked me what it was like working with him, I usually described it as standing on a street corner with a fistful of at least ten Fourth-of-July sparklers, all lighted and sending sparks off in every direction. But all the fireworks had one purpose: to create useful ministries to people, both lay and clergy. Haddon's mantra in those days was that if you minister to people, they will minister back to you. Don't just ask for money. Do something helpful for donors.

While I had heard Haddon preach on a couple of occasions and knew that I would not be bored, I didn't think of him then primarily as a preacher. But his book *Biblical Preaching* had just come out and he invited me along with several others to work through parts of that book with him. I had been a lay Bible teacher for several decades and I was keenly interested in learning how better to handle the Word of God. But find the Big Idea in any passage? It was all so new, and I resented it whenever his idea of the Big Idea trumped my idea of the Big Idea. But what I learned (gradually) about Haddon was that he thrived on discussion: if I could argue my case for my interpretation, he was ready to hear it. That was a new experience for me. It was also a new experience that in the early 1980s a man was willing to listen, really listen, to a woman pursue a line of argument.

In time the new development thrust at Denver Seminary was working smoothly and Haddon's attention turned to long-range strategic planning. By then I had turned the public relations office over to someone else and was working on other projects with Haddon as part of the leadership team. His vision for theological education included a training program for spouses of our seminarians, an assignment that I loved. But his vision for the faculty also included cross-disciplinary team-teaching in classrooms, the expanding use of emerging media, etc. By 1990 he concluded that while he could "see the city on the hill" for theological education, it would need other leadership to take the school to it. When Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary invited him to become the Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching in 1991, he left Denver for Boston. For the seven of us on the leadership team, "Camelot" was ending.

As a president in the 1980s Haddon was extraordinary. He led by listening, not by rendering top-down executive orders. We learned a lot about effective leadership as we found our voices and spread our wings with his encouragement.

HADDON AS RADIO HOST/BIBLE TEACHER

Meanwhile in 1989 RBC Ministries in Grand Rapids, Michigan, had

come calling: they wanted Haddon as the new teacher on the daily Bible-teaching program, Radio Bible Class. But Haddon had a different idea. He told them that the world had changed and that listeners didn't need another talking-head. It was time to teach the Scriptures through conversation. The RBC folks bought that, but then he let the other shoe drop: the teaching trio must include a woman in the conversation. In the late 1980s that was still a radical idea. But it was the "price" of getting Haddon as lead Bible teacher, and with some misgivings I was brought in to join the conversation. That was twenty-one years ago, and during these two decades with co-host Mart DeHaan, the three of us have worked together, teaching through Bible book after Bible book for the program now called Discover the Word.

Haddon is a rigorous expositor of the Scriptures. The thousands of students who have studied homiletics under him over the five decades he has spent in the classroom know that! But he is also tuned in to his listeners. Whether on the radio, in the classroom, or in the pulpit, he has forced students and colleagues to forego trite language and empty phrases that put listeners to sleep. In the studio, he was stern about one thing: each of us had to *listen* to one another. We couldn't sit there focused on the next great thing we were going to say. If he caught one of us not listening, he'd stop the taping and reprimand us. For the integrity of the program, this had to be genuine conversation.

But the conversation also had to stay with the biblical text in front of us. Working closely with Haddon on the outlines prepared for each radio program, I have had a front-row seat to see the way his mind works with a text. While we haven't always agreed on how a text should be understood (and there have been some noisy arguments), I have never doubted his love of Scripture, the power of his insights, and his commitment to communicating clearly what the Bible teaches. The mail we receive from Discover the Word listeners underscores their appreciation for that clarity as they grow through the program in their walk with God.

HADDON AS FACULTY COLLEAGUE

The word *colleague* is a cousin to the word *collegial*. As a faculty member at Gordon-Conwell Haddon is remarkably collegial. Though he is a distinguished professor, he never "pulls rank." In fact, he goes out of his way to open ministry and professional doors for his colleagues. He has done that for me and for countless others over the three decades I've known him.

In the classroom his decades of experience turning seminarians into competent preachers brought many applicants to the schools where he has taught, and has resulted in waiting lists of students eager to get into his classes. Haddon can be tough on those who don't give preaching their best shot, but he also is patient and compassionate toward those who make

a serious effort to master what at the outset may seem baffling to them. It is the marriage of a strong theological training (Th.M., Dallas Seminary) with a rigorous study of cultural factors impacting listeners (Ph.D. in communication theory, University of Illinois) that gives his teaching the heft for which he is internationally known.

Haddon's classes are highly interactive. He's not afraid of tough questions (having heard most or all of them over five decades in the classroom) and he elicits, even pushes for a testing of old assumptions about texts and their interpretation. His insistence at getting at and staying with the core or central idea of any biblical passage may leave budding preachers wondering what to do with all the nice but extraneous ideas they'd like to dump into their sermons. But in the end, those who pay attention to his teaching turn into A-1 preachers—a great gift to the Church.

HADDON AS A FRIEND

Because Haddon highly values and practices the skill of listening to others, scores of people have turned to him as a friend who is willing to enter into serious conversation with them. He doesn't traffic in pat answers. He asks good questions. Those who are privileged to count him as a friend value that honesty and integrity. He's not garrulous, a hale-fellow-well-met. He can seem stand-offish at times, even gruff. But behind that exterior is a compassionate man who cares about people and the problems they deal with. With it comes a lovely humility in spite of the many successes he has enjoyed over the decades.

With his wonderful wife, Bonnie, Haddon prays for all of us, for our families, for our work, for the state of the Church and for God's kingdom. I personally am grateful for the sharp thumbprint Haddon has put on my life. He has enriched both my mind and my soul over the years, and I thank God for the opportunity to work with such a challenging and loyal friend.

A TRIBUTE TO HADDON ROBINSON FROM A HOMILETICAL GRANDSON

WINFRED OMAR NEELY
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I have never had the privilege to take a preaching class with Haddon Robinson! Yet, he has exercised a huge influence on my ministry as a professor and practitioner of preaching. I am one of his grateful homiletical grandsons. When I was asked to write a tribute in Haddon Robinson's honor, my heart welled up in gratitude to the LORD. It is an honor and a privilege for me to write a tribute in Dr. Robinson's honor.

Haddon Robinson's influence in my homiletical life began in 1985. At the time I had been in the preaching ministry for eleven years, without any formal homiletical training. One afternoon I was sitting in my kitchen; sitting on my kitchen table was a box of textbooks. A couple of days earlier a Bible college gave me the textbooks. One of the books caught my attention: *Biblical Preaching* by Haddon Robinson. I had no idea about how the book was going to transform my thinking, my life, my preaching, and the lives of people who sat under my ministry. My discovery of Robinson's book on that day was providential.

I read the book in a few days. Within a week, I started thinking about passages of Scripture and sermons on the level of ideas. The Spirit of God opened my mind to understand entire passages of Scripture. He opened up texts to me and they sparkled as I saw jewels of big ideas of the rarest radiance flashing from biblical texts. The Sunday of that week, however, I was scheduled to preach at a church. In the process of walking up to the platform to preach, I had a painful epiphany: "I don't know what my passage's big idea is and my message does not have a big idea." So I preached a running commentary message with some application. I never did that again. Ever since then I have always looked for big ideas in passages and tried to communicate those ideas in my sermons. Haddon Robinson's book helped me grow in a major way as a preacher.

Fifteen years after my first encounter with Robinson's book, after twenty-six years of preaching, and after ten years of missionary service, I took my first preaching class at Moody Graduate School. My instructors were Donald Sunukjian and Harry Shields. Both of these professors studied homiletics under Haddon Robinson. On the dedicatory page of his book

Invitation to Biblical Preaching, Sunukjian says, "To….Haddon Robinson, early mentor and friend." Of course, one of the textbooks for that class was Haddon Robinson's *Biblical Preaching*. The other text was Duane Litfin's *Public Speaking*. Litfin also studied preaching under Haddon Robinson and considers Robinson to be a friend and a mentor. I took two preaching classes with Shields and Sunukjian. Their skillful instruction and help resulted in a major turning point in my homiletical journey. I grew as a preacher. My congregation benefitted, and expressed gratitude to the LORD for my progress. Robinson's impact on me was mediated through other preaching professors, his homiletical sons in the faith.

In 2001, I started teaching homiletics at Moody Bible Institute. I am a part of the Pastoral Studies Department. MBI's pastoral studies department embraced Haddon Robinson philosophy and methodology of expository preaching. As a result, Haddon Robinson's influence has touched every student that takes a preaching course in the pastoral studies department at MBI. The same is true in the classrooms of a number of evangelical Bible schools and seminaries in the United States. These students leave these institutions and many of them are serving Christ across the globe, multiplying Haddon Robinson's impact on the advance of Christ's kingdom.

In addition to teaching introductory courses in expository preaching, my department chair John Koessler, asked me if would teach a course on preaching Old Testament Narratives. I agreed to teach the class. Preparation for the course demanded that I do research in the preaching Old Testament Narratives. Before the semester started, I sat down with Harry Shields, my former homiletics professor. I asked him if there were any books he would recommend for the course. One text that Dr. Shields recommended was Steve Mathewson's book, *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narratives*. Mathewson's book is one of few texts written on preaching Old Testament narratives; it is also one of the best texts written on the subject. In his book, Mathewson says, "This volume will build on the methodology presented in Haddon Robinson's classic textbook *Biblical Preaching*. Robinson breaks the task of sermon preparation into ten stages. This present volume will follow the same strategy."[1] In one of the best texts written on preaching the Old Testament stories, Haddon Robinson methodology is applied and built on in helping a new generation of preachers learn how to preach the Old Testament narratives.

Since my interest in preaching Old Testament narratives was deepening, while I was completing my doctoral program at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, I decided to take a course on preaching the Old Testament Narratives with Paul Borden. I learned from Borden that Haddon Robinson had a huge impact on his work as a professor and practitioner of preaching. Paul Borden was another example of one of Haddon Robinson's homiletical sons being used of God to help preachers grow as communicators

of God word. After the class with Borden, I had a new understanding of how to manage dramatic tension in storytelling. Borden has taught this course at TEDS for years. Through Borden's capable classroom work, Robinson's influence is multiplied through men and women who are now preaching with insight and imagination the Old Testament narratives in pulpits across the planet!

Robinson discussed the value of the expository sermon form as a story told. He notes:

> You connect with a modern audience when you tell a biblical story with i*nsight* and *imagination*. …Anyone who loves the Bible must value the story, for whatever else the Bible is, it is a book of stories. Old Testament theology comes packages in narratives of men and women who go running off to set up their handmade gods, and of others who take God seriously enough to bet their lives Him. When Jesus appeared, He came telling stories.[2]

Robinson also tied the future of our culture to story when he noted:

> The future or our culture may depend on the *stories* that capture the *imagination* of minds of this generation and its children.[3]

In between my first encounter with Robinson's book, and my encounter with Robinson's homiltetical sons, my wife and I served ten years as missionaries in Senegal, West Africa. One of the things I did was teach some national leaders the skill and art of expository preaching. I used Robinson's classic text as the basis of instruction. I taught these students how to find big ideas in texts, and how to develop those ideas into expository sermons. The subsequent preaching of these national pastors and elders was a blessing to Senegal's national believers and missionary community. After one of my missionary colleagues listened to one of them preach, he asked me if I told him what to say. I told him, "No. We just taught him Robinson's philosophy and principles of biblical exposition." Armed with hermeneutical and homiletical skills, the preacher was able to mine the text himself and present God' words in an engaging, meaningful, and relevant manner! These communicators have effective preaching ministries to this day in that West African nation. I learned a vital lesson about Robinson's approach to preaching from my missionary work: His principles are transferrable. They will work in any culture.

A few weeks ago, the Spirit of God reminded me again of Haddon Robinson's influence in my life. It was 8:56 AM. I was sitting on the front row of Harvest Bible Chapel in Naperville, IL. The Sunday morning service was about to start; in about 40 minutes I would mount the platform and

preach on the Rich Fool of Luke 12. My preparation for the message was a powerful experience. The Spirit of God spoke to me through my study of the passage, causing and enabling me to make some changes in my life. As sat on the front row, reflecting on the LORD's work in my soul in the message preparation process, I remembered Haddon Robinson's definition of expository preaching:

> Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage of Scripture in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.[4]

I pondered the words "which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher." God's dealings with the preacher are at the center of the message preparation process. I am grateful to Dr. Robinson for the reminder and the insight.

Several years ago, during one of his visits to Moody Bible Institute, Dr. Robinson was kind enough to meet with the Pastoral Studies Department. I still carry the memory of our time together. Dr. Robinson was kind us, and we listened to his wisdom. All of us left that meeting with a deeper appreciation for Dr. Robinson humble attitude, gracious ethos, and his willingness to be a blessing to others.

I could say much more about Dr. Robinson's effectiveness in the pulpit. He is one of the ablest preachers in the English-speaking world. I could say much more about the insightful forwards he has written for numerous preaching textbooks. I could say much more about his impact on how many of us teach homiletics—much more could be said and needs to be said in Dr. Robinson honor. But suffice it to say that under God, Haddon Robinson has exercised more influence for good on preaching than any other person in the last one hundred years. He has shaped for good both professors and preachers, and through his writings, and through his homiletical children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren his influence will continue for many years to come. In this grateful grandson's judgment, if the 21st century church reaches an historical high moment in biblical proclamation, it will be due in great measure to the ministry and legacy of Haddon Robinson!

NOTES

1. Steve Mathewson, *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 26.
2. Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 129-130.

3. Ibid., 130.
4. Ibid., 21.

RHETORIC AND PREACHING: FRIENDS OR FOE?

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Haddon Robinson brought the concept of the main idea into the world of those who preach the Bible verse by verse. He relies upon the universal understanding that ideas are foundational to communication and those ideas have a noun/verb format, which he calls the subject / complement. True biblical preaching begins with the exegetical idea and then moves to the homiletical idea, which insures that the preacher is preaching what the Bible says and not what he wants it to say. This concept of a main idea can be seen as a rhetorical influence upon preaching. Is this bad? Should rhetoric influence preaching? Some throw out all of rhetoric, including the main idea, because it is rhetoric and not preaching. I recall an unpublished review of *Biblical Preaching* after it first came out in 1980 which voiced the concern of older expositors who saw the concept of the "big idea" as moving away from the text. Some popular preachers will informally say that they do not practice the format of having a central idea. Often this is said because of the rejection of the negative influence of rhetoric upon preaching. Is our preaching religious rhetoric that carries the same negative feelings of political rhetoric? Is rhetoric the larger set and preaching is the sub-set; or is preaching a different topic all together? Should ideas like the main idea be brought from rhetoric into preaching? Does this lead to the rhetorical tricks of high-pressured marketing? By looking at the historical relationship of homiletical studies to rhetorical studies we can have a healthy caution of how it can hurt preaching and we can more confidently embrace how it can help.

EARLY CHURCH

The relationship of preaching to rhetoric was an important issue for the early church. Because of the ubiquitous nature of rhetoric in the Roman world, the Early church was asking: Are Christian preachers simply rhetors with a Christian topic? Or should Christians reject rhetoric as a device to persuade people apart from God's work? The following passage from First

Corinthians can be taken as a rejection of the influence of rhetoric upon preaching. If this is so, then the guidelines set by the New Testament will separate preaching from rhetoric. Thus, it bears close scrutiny:

> And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For, I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. (1 Corinthians 2:1-5, NAS)

The heart of the interpretive problem is the meaning of "in persuasive words of wisdom." What exactly is the apostle rejecting as characteristic of his preaching? In *St. Paul's Theology of Rhetorical Style: An Examination of I Corinthians 2.1-5 in Light of First Century Greco-Roman Rhetorical Culture*, Mike Bullmore points out that the word "demonstration" is a translation of the Greek word *apodeixis,* which was used both by Aristotle and Quintilian.[1] We must not imply that Paul was using the term as did Aristotle and certainly not as Quintilian who had not been born. However, we can at least say there are some common rhetorical terms being used, which implies that Paul was speaking about rhetoric. The audience to whom he wrote would have understood these rhetorical terms because the Isthmian games were held each year in Corinth which were accompanied by speeches. Rhetoric was not foreign to the Corinthians.

Bullmore takes the position that there was a specific "Corinthian" sophistic rhetoric which was characterized by empty oration presented for the purpose of persuasion through the use of style rather than content. Thus, Bullmore says that Paul wasn't against rhetoric, but when he wrote "persuasive words of wisdom," he was speaking against a specific kind of Corinthian rhetoric.[2] The difficulty with this view is the lack of evidence that a separate Corinthian rhetoric existed. Another problem is anachronistic. What Bullmore is attributing to first century Corinthians sounds more like Platonic rejection of the sophists, that we heard in the Gorgias dialogue of the fifth century B.C. Thus, I suggest that Bullmore is incorrect in his identifying a specific kind of rhetoric; however, I estimate he is right in his assessment that a key in understanding this passage is the word "in." He takes this preposition as describing the means by which Paul effectively proclaimed the message of Christ.[3] Bullmore believes that Paul did not reject the use of rhetoric, but rather he was clarifying that the Spirit's power in the hearer was the source of the effectiveness not the power of Rhetoric. In Bullmore's interpretation, preaching can still have a beneficial relationship to rhetoric in

general.

Another view is that of Duane Litfin, who rejects the notion that the rhetoric which Paul was opposed to was a "sophistic rhetoric" which relied on style rather than content for persuasion. He says it wonderfully: "It is simply too facile to stereotype classical rhetoric in overly negative terms as a bag of oratorical tricks for manipulating an audience, or to trivialize it as little more than the technique of embellishment, bombast or purposeless prose."[4] Litfin presents the concept that the rhetoricians of Paul's day felt free to adapt or change the content of their discourses according to the situation in which they spoke. This, to him, is the point of rhetoric that Paul rejected. An adapting of the message was unthinkable to the apostle, and thus, he spoke of not "coming in words of wisdom" or rhetoric. Litfin interprets Paul as not rejecting rhetoric in general, but rather rejecting the rhetoric that adapts the content. He bases this upon his summation that classical rhetoric was in essence the adapting of the speaker to the audience in order to accomplish a certain predetermined result.[5] It seems that Litfin takes the concept of adaption to mean that the content of the message should be adapted to the audience in order to persuade them. This "persuasion at all costs," as Litfin summarizes, would allow the rhetor to make substantial changes not only in his style but also in his content, even to the point of changing the meaning, in order to bring about persuasion. This is what, Litfin says, the apostle rejected. It strikes me that to say classical rhetoric is summarized by adaptation to the point of changing the meaning in order to persuade, contradicts the point of rhetoric. Rhetors would adapt their content to some degree, but if adapted too much it ceases to be persuasion. It is as if the audience doesn't change but the content does. Litfin seems to be saying that Paul used rhetorical devices, but refused to change the content of the message.

The issue is not rhetorical skills, but relying upon them as what faith rests upon. It is the good news of Jesus' life, death and resurrection that faith must rest upon. When the Apostle Paul spoke on the Areopagus (Acts 17) he was using a rhetorical concept when he related the Christian message to the Athenians experiences by referring to their alter to an unknown god. Even the "simple" straightforward presentation of the gospel is rhetorical. For Paul the foundation for the change in the listener was the truth of the Gospel, though he may use rhetoric to get that truth across to the listener.

Thus, Christian preaching, in its beginning stages, and rhetoric in general are not in opposition to each other. Both see rhetoric as a tool: for the rhetor it was a tool to bring about persuasion, for the Christian preacher it was a tool to present the truth. Though early Christian preaching used rhetoric, it is not a subset of rhetoric because it has a different purpose. There are numerous records of sermons in the early Church by its great preachers, such as Origen and John Chrysostom, but after Paul's comments, there seems to be no preserved writing that addresses the relationship of preaching to

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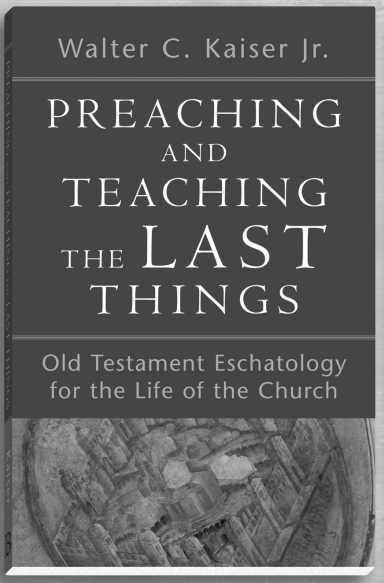

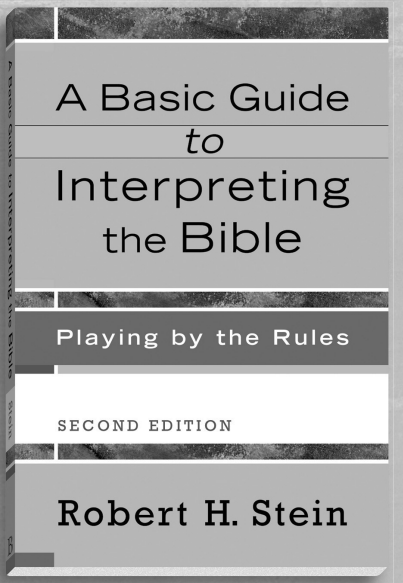

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rhetoric until Augustine, some three hundred years later. However, during these same centuries rhetoric was enjoying some of its greatest systematic codification under Quintilian.

During the first three centuries of the first millennium it would seem that a Christian rhetoric should have emerged, for the Christian church experienced growth and influence over the entire Roman Empire and beyond. While a Christian theology, philosophy and even ecclesiastical structure emerged, a Christian theory of rhetoric remained unwritten. Among the world religions, Christianity has a unique mandate from Jesus Christ: to preach the good news to every person. Since preaching was so clearly commanded by the founder of Christianity, surely a philosophy or theory of how to do this would have been established during Christianity's first 300 years. The Greeks and Romans in whose culture Christianity mainly grew had many recognized teachers of rhetoric and well established philosophies. This secular rhetoric could have served as a foundation for a theory of preaching. Why did the Christians neglect writing about the art of preaching? With the overwhelming numbers of sermons preached in Church buildings and in thousands of homes gatherings every Sunday, shouldn't there have been a guideline as to how to preach? The simple answer is articulated by Murphy when he says that the early church was more concerned about what was taught rather than how it was taught. The church believed that the Scriptures had within them the power to transform lives. Thus, all the preacher had to do was present the content of Scripture, with little or no regard as to how it was presented. Besides this reason, the church's major struggles with persecution and doctrinal issues kept the focus on seemingly more vital issues.[6] The absence of a Christian rhetorical theory was, in part, due to the primacy of content over methodology. This could lead one to the conclusion that rhetoric and preaching had little relationship to each other during this early part of the first millennium. Some of the Church fathers had been trained in rhetoric,[7] but they did not write about the relationship of rhetoric to preaching: they just preached, apparently using their rhetorical training.

AUGUSTINE

The one that changed this was Augustine. His background as a teacher of rhetoric before coming to Christianity gave him a foundation that enabled him to articulate how preaching and rhetoric can come together. This is exactly what he does in *De Doctrine Christiana.* His opening paragraph clearly states that he seeks, firstly to address how to discover what the Scriptures teach and secondly, to address how to teach or communicate what was found. These purposes are re-emphasized when he restates them in the early paragraphs of book IV. Augustine's careful stating of his theme has often

been mistranslated in such a way that misses important subtleties of the Latin words and could give the reader a mis-directed concept. He states "There are two things necessary to the treatment of Scripture: a way of discovering those things which are to be understood, and a way of teaching what we have learned. We shall speak first of discovery and second of teaching."[8] This translation is often used and by some, it is the standard to which they refer.[9] Augustine's statement reveals a two-part approach in which the first leads one to discover the truth in Scripture, and the second instructs how to teach it to others. In this quote, D.W. Robertson translated the Latin word *profundo* as *teaching*. While this is certainly within the broad meaning of the Latin word, it is an interpretation of the metaphor that Augustine uses. *Profundo* means to pour forth or to cause to flow.[10] Augustine is using a metaphor to communicate what takes place after the discovery is made in Scripture. Augustine sees teaching, preaching or communicating as a process of letting information flow to the hearer. Other translations, which are closer to the metaphorical picture, bear this out: Edmund Hill translates it "To put across to others,"[11] and R.H.P. Green translates it, "the process of presenting."[12] It is important to note that Augustine's view is still emphasizing the content, rather than the method because this affects how he uses rhetoric.

Augustine relies heavily upon Cicero as he presents three types of speech for sermons: grand, middle, and low. He is also indebted to Cicero for the three purposes of a sermon: to teach, to delight, and to move. An interesting absence in Augustine's work are the five canons of rhetoric that one finds in *Ad Herennium* and restated by Quintilian and others. Perhaps the reason for this neglect of the five cannons is that the beginning point for the rhetor is invention of the topic for the discourse, which is a search for relevant, pre-existing topics found in previous writers or in the experience of the rhetor or his audience, while the beginning point for the early Christian sermon is restricted to the discovery of the topic in Scripture. While this is a difference, Augustine clearly brought the two fields together. He used rhetoric to guide and enhance the style and delivery of a sermon. The relationship of rhetoric to preaching is very close in Augustine's thinking. Thomas Conley mentions that Augustine's attitude toward rhetoric as expressed in *The First Catechetical Instruction*, chapter nine, was just short of contemptuous.[13] This far overstates what Augustine was saying. He does place truth and rhetoric into an either /or structure which could lead one to think that rhetoric is to be avoided in favor of truth, but the choice is not the rejecting of one, it is the preference of one over the other. "And from this, too, it follows that they ought to prefer to hear true rather than eloquent discourses, just as they ought to prefer to have wise rather than handsome friends."[14] Truth is most important to Augustine, but the primary position of truth does necessarily bring contempt for rhetoric.

From Augustine, in the 4th and early 5th centuries to the 14th century, there were only a dozen, or so, extant books that addressed the teaching of clergy which had sections related to preaching. There were also several books that even addressed preaching exclusively.[15] None of these works overshadowed or replaced the influence of Augustine. At the beginning of the ninth century, Rabanus Maurus critically looked at the classic writers, also wrote for the clergy: *On the Instruction of the Clergy*. This book covers a broad range of topics related to clergy and in his section on preaching he basically restates Augustine.

In the early 12th Century, Guibert published a book that, from the title, one would think that it is a detailed manual regarding the creation and presentation of a sermon, but *A Book on How a Sermon Is to Be Given* speaks more of how to interpret Scripture than it does how to present it. Alan of Lille again raises our expectation with *The Art of Preaching*. In chapter one he defines preaching as that which is "offered to many in public, and for their edification." He continues, and says that preaching must be "dependant upon reasoning and corroborated by authoritative texts."[16] In the rest of the first chapter, he exhorts the preacher that in the area of style and delivery, it is best to keep the "blessed middle." After this brief chapter he then has forty-three chapters that give examples of how to preach to certain groups such as soldiers, lawyers, and widows. In the middle of these examples, he devotes a chapter to "who should preach" and then another chapter "to whom should a sermon be delivered." In Alan there is a hint of a departure from past homiletical thought. Prior to Alan of Lille, preaching was the presentation of God's Word with reasoning seen as a helper to present the word. Alan seems to be elevating reasoning when he says that a sermon is "dependant" upon reasoning. This subtle shift gives rhetoric a closer relationship to preaching. If what the preacher is presenting is based upon reason and not just the presenting of God's Word, then this gives greater opportunity for rhetoric to influence preaching.

This departure from Augustine's "profundo," or letting the Word flow through the preacher, is seen more clearly in a more influential work by Robert of Basevorn in the early 14th century. Robert of Basevorn published the *Form of Preaching* in 1322.[17] The significance of his publication is the amount of time he devotes to the actual art of preaching. He looks at persuasion issues and covers various methods or structures of sermons. He has extensive guidelines for the division of a sermon, or we might say its structure, and comments on delivery and style calling these "ornaments." His definition of preaching which he states at the outset of Chapter One is "Preaching is the persuasion of many, within a moderate length of time, to meritorious conduct."[18] This definition is a departure from the Augustinian concept that preaching was the presentation of God's Word. Augustine believed that preaching should result in the moving of people to good

conduct but that was a result of the preacher presenting God's Word to them. Basevorn, in chapter 16, does teach that the theme of a sermon should come from the Bible, but there is a difference in presenting what the Bible says and preaching a theme that came from the Bible. When a preacher creates the theme of the sermon and uses the Bible to support that theme, he is stepping fully into the world of rhetoric. If the preacher is restricted in his invention to the Scripture, he is different from the rhetor, who has fewer restrictions in choosing a topic. The rhetor "invents" the topic based upon the audience, situation, his role, the occasion and the purpose of the speech. The preacher in contrast may shape the topic according to these exigencies, but the invention of the topic is restricted to those from the Scripture. However, if the preacher uses the Bible as support for his invention, he is no different from the rhetor that uses reason or some specific human authority to validate what he is saying. Because of this shift in the philosophy of preaching, Basevorn is free to develop preaching more fully, relying upon rhetorical concepts. While he doesn't quote the rhetoricians of the past, his work is more fully developed with specific guidelines than even Augustine. This closer relationship to rhetoric created an ideological environment in which preaching books could place more emphasis upon rhetorical principles.

BEYOND AUGUSTINE

During the first part of the 13th century, Thomas Chabham, who is also referred to as Thomas of Salisbury, wrote *The Sum of the Art of Preaching* (*Summa de arte predicandi*). This work is an example of how preaching and rhetoric were becoming very closely aligned. Chabham's preaching manual has two parts: the first addresses various topics regarding the Christian ministry such as "perils to the faith" and "fallacies of the devil," with the second part focusing on the art of preaching, including topic such as "preaching and invention", and "Artistic Narrations." In this second part, he relies heavily upon *Rhetorica Ad Herennium,* quoting it many times.[19] Here the relationship of rhetoric and preaching is hand in hand with preachers taking directions directly from a classic text on rhetoric. Augustine and others quote and rely upon the classic rhetors, but Chabham is applying rhetorical principles directly to the preacher.

At the beginning of the Renaissance the concerns and content of preaching were changing. The shift seen in Robert of Basevorn's small step away from the direct presentation of Scripture increased in popularity and became known as the university sermon, due to its popularity around the university centers in England and France. This was a subtle, but important, shift in preaching theory for it gave the preacher the task of coming up with the content of the sermon based upon a topic that the Bible addressed. The preacher was becoming a rhetorician who "invented" and spoke about sacred

topics, rather than one who simply proclaimed the content of the Scripture.

One of the more influential figures of this era was Erasmus, a cleric who wrote extensively about rhetoric and brought preaching and rhetoric even closer. It is notable Erasmus' *Ecclesiastes* is a four volume work that covers a broad range of rhetorical topics which are related to preaching. He addresses: the character of the preacher, guidelines for exegesis, sermon structures, pulpit techniques, ideas to expand a sermon, comments on style, and due to his audience being priests, he gave instructions regarding mass. This was an extensive training manual for preachers.[20] In the sections on structure and style, he clearly relies heavily upon classical rhetoric.

Perhaps the more famous of the reformers is Martin Luther, whose influence is still echoed today in all protestant denominations, but whose preaching has not been given the attention that this influence merits. In his *Luther's Rhetoric*, which is an analysis of the Luther's style based upon the rhetorical theories of Burke and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, Neil Leroux bemoans this lack of study.[21] While Leroux looks back at Luther's work from the perspective of contemporary theories to demonstrate that Luther was adept at using rhetorical skills, other studies have been done tracing the appearance of classical rhetorical principles in Luther's writings and sermons.[22] While these are helpful studies they do not shed any light on whether Luther intentionally applied principles of classical rhetoric. This can be better understood by looking at the record of Luther's informal dialogues and comments which were recorded by his students and colleagues, known as *Luther's Table Talk*. In the following quote, he seems to advocate that a preacher should have some training in rhetoric:

> A good preacher should have these properties and virtues: first, to teach systematically; secondly, he should have a ready wit; thirdly, he should be eloquent; fourthly, he should have a good voice; fifthly, a good memory; sixthly, he should know when to make an end; seventhly, he should be sure of his doctrine; eighthly, he should venture and engage body and blood, wealth and honour, in the word; ninthly, he should suffer himself to be mocked and jeered of everyone.[23]

The other great reformer that stands out in most people's minds is John Calvin. In the book *Calvin's Preaching*, Thomas Parker infers various homiletical concepts from John Calvin's sermons and other writings, since we have no record of his directly addressing the subject of preaching. Calvin mentions that preachers should preach simply what the Scriptures say and should practice what they taught. Apparently, there was an assumption that those who were in process of becoming preachers would have a general education at a university which would include some training in rhetoric.[24]

Calvin and others in the reform tradition, such as Zwingli, did not preach in the style of the university sermon which had emerged in much of Europe. Instead of crafting a sermon around a theme, Calvin let the text of Scripture craft the sermon, which became standard for him and others closely associated with him. The central doctrine of the text was presented, then defended and then applied. This type of preaching was more in the spirit of a simple homily like Augustine and Chrysostom. In commenting on reformation preaching, Thomas Ford quotes a work by Peter Rudolphe, written in French which he translates for his English readers, citing Calvin's rejection of rhetoric being used to harm the message of the Church. Calvin thought that eloquence was a gift from God and it was fine thing for it to be used in the proclamation of the Gospel. However, he did condemn three groups those who misused rhetoric: those who disguised truth, those who thought their own wisdom was superior to the Gospel and those who exchanged the simplicity of Scripture for their own complex way of speaking.[25] So, while Calvin does not condemn rhetoric he doesn't advocate its use, nor does he link it to preaching.

Philip Melanchthon, the famous pupil of Luther, speaks more extensively about rhetoric than did his teacher. He writes in his *Praise of Eloquence* (1523) that the preacher is to be just that, a person of eloquence, who understands and uses rhetoric. He exhorts the preacher to embrace rhetoric when he writes that an "artful method of speaking be learned."[26] He gives some direction in rhetoric, but it seems that he is relying upon the preacher to do his own work in rhetorical studies. Melanchthon guides his students to speak clearly and plainly by using words that "eloquent men have handed down to posterity. . .that are free from obscurity."[27] He encourages them to give eloquence attention and not see it as quacks using their ointments, which is reminiscent of Plato's famous comparison of rhetoric to cookery. He gives several paragraphs to the importance of rhetoric and its power, but doesn't give specific guidelines, other than to encourage his students to have good examples such as Homer and other classical writers. He continues this motivational type of speech saying, "those who possessed by a love of piety should take upon themselves the duty of learning to speak correctly for the sake of Christ and the general need of the Church.[28]

THE ENLIGHTENMENT TO THE PRESENT

Preaching and rhetoric during the Renaissance were becoming very closely aligned so much so that the next era of rhetorical studies is dominated by clergymen. The three dominant figures in rhetoric during the Enlightenment and into the nineteenth century were George Campbell, Hugh Blair and Richard Whately. It is significant that all of these men were ministers: Campbell and Blair in the Church of Scotland and Whately in the Anglican Church. They each wrote extensively in the areas of both

theology and rhetoric. These practitioners of preaching are known more for the contributions they made to the field of rhetoric than to the discipline of preaching.

In *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776), Campbell's concept of vivacity or lively speech emphasized the importance of an audience having an experience during a speech. The orator was to recreate a situation in such a way that the audience would experience, to some level, the sensations and feelings of a person actually in such a situation.[29] Campbell often makes a passing reference to the relationship of those rhetorical principles to preaching. When he does this, he uses the term "Christian Orator."[30] Apparently, Campbell saw that rhetoric and preaching were so closely aligned that he applies the guidelines for the classical orator to the Christian preacher. In his mind, there was Oratory or Rhetoric and a sub-category of that was Christian Oratory. To be sure, he still saw the difference between the orator and the preacher in the results of the speech or sermon: the sermon was to change a life not just an attitude or action.

In Blair's *Lecture on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1817), he emphasized the importance of proper "taste" in discourse. He defined taste as "The power of receiving pleasure from the beauty of nature and of art."[31] This pleasure that one receives is the heart of communication. As one hears or reads, change is brought about through the beauty of the words, images, and sentence structures speaking to a person's heart. One needs to be careful to not to see this *Belles* concept as just style and structure, for Blair does affirm that logic and content are part of this beauty. In his lectures, he distinguishes pulpit speech as a kind of elevated public speaking and is unwilling to place it under rhetoric.[32] However, in the chapter that follows he points out what is common to pulpit speech and other kinds of speaking such as guidelines for an effective introduction, the division of a speech, and being clear and distinct. His work does contain a chapter on Pulpit Eloquence in which he articulates that pulpit speech is different from public speaking, in that the sermon has sacred subjects and these subjects are more challenging due to the repetition of these subjects over the course of preaching every Sunday. He goes on to spell out five guidelines for the sermon. My summary of them is: (1) Unity, (2) Be as precise as possible, (3) Never say all that can be said on a subject, (4) Be interesting, and (5) Don't use the "in vogue preaching" as a model.[33] While these are wonderful guidelines for sermons they are equally applicable to any speech. Blair seems to keep preaching and rhetoric more separate than does Campbell, but Blair clearly sees the preacher as benefiting directly form rhetorical training.

Richard Whatley (1787-1863), who rose to the position of archbishop of Dublin, contributed to the field of rhetoric in the area of argumentation theory. In his *Elements of Rhetoric* (1828), Whately attempts to undo the separation of logic from rhetoric:

> I remarked in treating of that Science, that reasoning may be considered as applicable to two purposes, which I venture to designate respectively by the terms "Inferring," and "Proving;" i.e. the ascertainment of the truth by investigation, and the establishment of it to the satisfaction of another…[34]

For Whately, logic discovers truth and rhetoric proves that it is truth to an audience. He presents what composes a valid argument, such as the importance of signs or observations and the role of testimony in persuasion, which for Whately is information from a source that one accepts as truth. He does not make an overt connection between rhetoric and preaching, but many of his examples come from scripture or are related to spiritual issues such as referring to New Testament testimonies and the illustrations of Paul and Jesus.[35] The remainder of his work on rhetoric emphasizes style and delivery. While Whately contributed to the field of rhetoric, he was primarily a preacher, which shows that, for him, preaching and rhetoric were closely related disciplines.[36]

Not long after the last edition of Whatley's *Elements of Rhetoric* (1846) was published, there appeared a highly influential textbook on preaching, John Broadus's *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (1870), which was used well into the twentieth century as a textbook for preaching and remains in print. In the preface Broadus states his dependence upon rhetorical studies: "The author's chief indebtedness for help has been to Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian and to Whately and Vincet."[37] Though the book relies heavily upon rhetoric, it was not written as a textbook for rhetoric, but for preaching. Another preaching textbook published the same year is Robert Dabney's *Sacred Rhetoric*. He, along with Broadus, unreservedly acknowledges his indebtedness both to classical and more recent rhetors, such as Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and Campbell.[38] The difference that these two authors point out is the same difference that was pointed out by Augustine: the subject of the sermon comes from a sacred text, not from the preacher's own invention. These two representative 19th century books about preaching show that while preaching theory relied heavily upon rhetorical studies, preaching is thought of as a separate but closely related discipline.

The close relationship of preaching to rhetoric seems to separate in the twentieth century. This separation is indicated by practitioners and professors of the craft who rarely mention rhetoric in textbooks or other contexts when a philosophy of preaching is discussed. A sampling of four representative practitioners, two from the first half of the century and two from the second half of the century, shows that rhetorical studies were not acknowledged as part of preaching. These four authors were chosen because of their reputation as successful preachers and because they represent the broad spectrum of beliefs in the Christian Church.

At the beginning of the twentieth century George Campbell Morgan (1863-1945) made a lasting impression upon preaching due to his clear explanation of and dependence upon Scripture.[39] In his biography, written by his daughter-in-law, Jill Morgan, rhetorical training or any dependence upon rhetoric is never mentioned. His preaching style was once observed as apparently being without rhetoric, but the observer then went on to describe that Morgan could sustain an argument and be irresistibly attractive, which shows that he was a skilled orator though not identified as such:

> He will not attempt to overpower you with rhetoric, or entertain you with ancient anecdotes, or surprise you with dexterous illustrations, or dazzle you with brilliant quotations. Not at all. But he will – for nearly an hour – build up a solid, sustained, carefully thought-out and apparently unanswerable argument, which you would not expect to be irresistibly attractive.[40]

Not only did his delivery seem to out of character with traditional oratory, but in his short text on homiletics, entitled *Preaching* (1955), he never mentions rhetoric or any rhetors. His success as a speaker is an indication that certain rhetorical concepts such Augustine's requirements that a sermon teach, delight and move, were present in his sermons, but Morgan does not think it necessary to mention these or, perhaps, he was unaware of them.

Harry Emerson Fosdick pastored Baptist, Presbyterian and interdenominational churches. His last pastorate was the Riverside Church in New York (1926-1946) which was housed in a twenty-two story building in the heart of the city, built with major funding from John D. Rockefeller.[41] There were often lines of anxious people waiting for seating to hear him, and he was a pioneer in the effective use of radio for broadcasting his sermons. He is not only recognized in preaching circles, but also in the field of speech and communications. In a book series on great American orators, which includes politicians, religious leaders and others, begun in 1989 and now having more than thirty volumes published, Fosdick was the second orator chosen to be studied. Fosdick, like Campbell, does not mention rhetoric in reference to preaching but he does attribute his college training in speech and oratory as being very beneficial to him.[42]

Moving to the latter half of the twentieth century, the trend to move preaching away from rhetoric continues. Fred Craddock, a professor of preaching at Emory University and a well-recognized homiletician in mainline denominational circles, seems to rely upon well-known rhetorical concepts, both in his preaching and his writing. In his textbook on preaching, entitled *Preaching,* he cites what qualities should be in a sermon as: Unity, Memory, Recognition, Identification, Anticipation, and Intimacy.[43] While each of these has its roots in rhetorical studies, he does not mention any

connection. Though not a restatement of the five canons or a summary of Burke's concept of identification, it would not have been hard to make a connection. To be fair, Craddock was not trying to make a statement about the relationship of these two disciplines, but the noticeable absence of any reference to rhetoric seems to indicate that in his thinking, rhetoric and preaching are not so closely linked as to merit even mentioning rhetoric.

Another contemporary homiletician, whom one would not expect to mention rhetoric at all due to his associations with the more fundamentalist end of the Christian spectrum, is Jerry Vines, the retired pastor of the 20,000 member First Baptist Jacksonville, FL. He is in the mold of G. Campbell Morgan, for his sermons are filled with Scripture and he strives to preach only what the Scriptures say. In contrast to Morgan, Vines mentions rhetoric in a favorable way in his textbook on preaching. The book *Power in the Pulpit* (1999) is co-authored with Jim Shaddox, who at the time of writing was a professor of homiletics, so the emphasis on rhetoric, which is very short, might be the influence of the co-author. In the chapter in which they present a historical foundation for preaching, Vines and Shaddix very briefly mention how classical rhetoric influenced early Christian preaching to move from an informal homily to a structured sermon.[44] Later, under the subject of style, they clearly affirm that rhetoric is a "legitimate area of study for a pastor."[45] They go on to discuss the importance of style, but there are no references to any works of rhetoric. So, while they affirm the use of rhetoric by a preacher, their use of rhetorical studies is minimal.

The relationship of preaching to rhetoric can also be measured through textbooks on preaching. Textbooks by famous practitioners have already been mentioned, but often the most used textbooks are written not by the practitioners, but by theorists or teachers of homiletics. According to Duane Litfin the most used textbooks in the first 75 years of the twentieth century were: Grady Davis' *Design for Preaching* (1958), Broadus' *On Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (1870), Ilion T. Jones's *Principles and the Practice of Preaching* (1956), Reuel Howe's *Partners in Preaching* (1962), and Herbert Farmer's *The Servant of the Word* (1942).[46] Of these five textbooks, the only one that contains significant comments on rhetoric was Broadus, who was published in 1870. In the spirit of Plato, Grady Davis (1958,) says that preachers who only studies form and structure but not content, are in danger of becoming a rhetorician.[47] Currently, Haddon Robinson's *Biblical Preaching* (1980/2001) boasts of more than 250,000 sales, which for a homiletical textbook is amazing, yet in this influential book, there is no mention of rhetoric. The remaining two are equally silent.

Robinson's book has remained the most used textbook as indicated by a 2010 article in *Preaching Magazine*, with David Buttrick's *Homiletic* (1987) listed as the second most influential book.[48] David Buttrick is not known as a gifted preacher, but is more known for than innovative expression of

his philosophy of preaching. Rather than a traditional structure of a central thesis and main points, he refers to the sermon as having *Moves* which he ties closely to the way that people think and discover truth. He mentions the word *rhetoric* several times but only in passing such as referring to a rhetorical strategy, but doesn't develop his concept of rhetoric. He only has a three page section entitled, *Rhetoric of Moves,* in which he touches upon audience analysis, importance of context, and meaning coming from association, but does not refer to any sources for his thought. So, while he speaks of rhetoric and has perhaps been influenced by linguists and rhetoricians, he does not link preaching to rhetoric as closely as did a previous generation of homileticians.

CONCLUSION

It is important for homileticians to remember that historically preaching can be enhanced and hurt through the study of rhetoric. When rhetoric began to influence preaching in the high medieval era, preaching did move away from the clear proclamation of the biblical text. This moving away from the text has caused many to reject the use of Rhetorical Studies to inform homiletics. While this is a good caution, the historical relationship between preaching and rhetoric shows that rhetoric can be a good friend to preaching, but it is a friend and not its father. When we consider Haddon Robinson's emphasis upon a main idea, it must be admitted that it is a rhetorical concept, but it does not violate the purpose of presenting the text. The key lies in the source of establishing the idea. Rhetorical studies should be embraced by homileticians, but not whole-heartedly to the point that preaching becomes mere sacred rhetoric.

NOTES

1. Mike Bullmore, M. (1995). *St. Paul's Theology of Rhetorical Style : an Examination of I Corinthians 2.1-5 in Light of First Century Greco-Roman Rhetorical Culture* (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications,1995), 212-13.
2. Ibid., 222.
3. Ibid., 220.
4. Duane Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 245.
5. Ibid., 245.
6. J.J. Murphy, J. J., *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 282.
7. Cyprian, Origen, and Chrysostom were all trained in rhetoric. For great-

er detail on these and others see David Larsen, *The Company of Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel), 70, ff.

8. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* (D.W. Robertson, Jr. Trans.) (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1958), 1.
9. John Patton (1977) in his article "Wisdom and Eloquence: The Alliance of Exegesis and Rhetoric in Augustine," exclusively uses Robertson's translation and cites passages based upon the page numbers of that translation. This anecdotal example along with the long publication status of 33 printings since 1958 puts this translation as common and accepted.
10. D. Simpson, *Cassell's Latin Dictionary* (New York: Wiley, 1968), 477.
11. Augustine, *Teaching Christianity* (E. Hill, Trans.) (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1996), 1.
12. Augustine, *On Christian Teaching* (R.P.H. Green, Trans.) (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1997), 1.
13. Thomas Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 75.
14. Augustine, *The First Catechetical Instruction* Joseph P. Christopher (Trans) (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1952), 33.
15. For a more comprehensive treatment see David Larsen's *The Company of Preachers*, 104-130.
16. Alan of Lille, *The Art of Preaching* (G. Evans, Trans.) (Kalamazoo, MI: Cisteracian Publications, 1981), 17.
17. J.J. Murphy, *Three Medieval Rhetorical Arts* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), 111.
18. Ibid., 120.
19. Ibid., 322.
20. R. Himelick, ed. and trans., *Erasmus and the Seamless Coat of Jesus* (Lafayette, IN: Purdue UP, 1971), 213.
21. Neil Leroux, *Luther's Rhetoric: Strategies and Style from the Invocavit Sermons* (Missouri: Concordia Academic Press, 2002), 17.
22. See Lewis Spitz in Oberman and Brady's *Itinerarium Italicum*, 385-86.
23. Martin Luther. *The Table Talk of Martin Luther*, Hazlitt, W. (trans.) (London: George Bell & Sons, 1574/1878), 182.
24. T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin's Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 38.
25. Thomas Ford, "Preaching in the Reformed Tradition," in L. Taylor's, *Preachers and People in the Reformation and Early Modern Period* (65-90) (Boston: Brill, 2003), 74.
26. Wayne Rebhorn, ed. and trans., *Renaissance Debates on Rhetoric* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2000), 99.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., 109.
29. George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (L. F. Bitzer, Ed.) (Carbondale:

Southern Illinois UP. 1776/1963), 81.
30. Ibid., 108.
31. J. Golden and E.P.J. Corbett, *The Rhetoric of Blair, Campbell, and Whately* (Carbondale, Il: Southern Illinois Press, 1990), 37
32. Ibid., 99
33. Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (New York: George Long, 1817), 316-320.
34. J. Golden and E.P.J. Corbett, *The Rhetoric of Blair, Campbell, and Whately* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press, 1990), 281.
35. Ibid., 331.
36. Ibid., 274.
37. John Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (E. C. Dargan, Ed.). (New York: A.C. Armstrong and Son, 1944), xiii.
38. Robert Dabney, *Sacred Rhetoric* (Richmond, VA: General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, 1870/1902), 5-6.
39. Though there is no record, one can only wonder if he was named after George Campbell the Scottish cleric and influential rhetor of the eighteenth century.
40. A. Gammie, *Preachers I have Heard* (London: Pickering and Inglis LTD, 1945), 198-99.
41. Clyde Fant and William Pinson, *20 Centuries of Great Preaching: An Encyclopedia of Preaching* (Vols. 8, 9, & 12) (Waco, TX: Word, 1971), 8.
42. The editors of this series are Bernard K. Duffy who is professor of communications at California Polytechnic State University and Halford R. Ryan who is professor of Speech and English at Washington and Lee University.
43. Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 153-69.
44. Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix. *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody, 1999), 144.
45. Ibid., 229-30.
46. Duane Litfin, "The Five Most-Used Homiletical Texts," *Christianity Today* (August 11, 14, 1973), 14.
47. H. Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), 9.
48. Michael Duduit, "The 25 Most Influential Preaching Books of the Past 25 Years," *Preaching*, 25:5 (2010): 18-19.

A TRIBUTE TO HADDON W. ROBINSON

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It is a privilege to honor my professor and mentor, Dr. Haddon W. Robinson, using two, vivid memories of my time studying and teaching with him. The first recollection is frightening; the second humorous. Both allow me to showcase Haddon's contribution to the field of homiletics and also to my own life and ministry.

FIRM CONVICTIONS

"You will never preach another sermon like that in my classroom!" That was the first and, thankfully, the only time I heard Haddon roar his displeasure. It was the early 1990's and a little over twenty of us made up Haddon's first Doctor of Ministry class at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, MA. One of our classmates had delivered an in-class sermon for one of our residencies. The student preached with great zeal and passion; he communicated well. When he finished, Haddon was furious and shouted: "You will never preach another sermon like that in my classroom!" Maybe Bonnie, Vicki, or Torrey had seen this side of him before, but we hadn't. The entire class was stunned. I don't know who was more afraid, the pastor who was getting grilled or the one who was slated to preach next!

Haddon's prophecy displayed his commitment to making sure that preachers who speak on behalf of God, in fact say what God has said. We all knew from the start that he would not tolerate non-biblical sermons on his watch. He firmly believed that God had given him a responsibility to train us to speak accurately for God from Scripture and he took that responsibility seriously. He would not allow a preacher to play fast and loose with Scripture in his classroom. His approach forced us to understand what a pericope meant and, therefore, what it means. It's possible that Haddon's greatest contribution to homiletics was forcing all under his tutelage to take seriously the responsibility of relaying what God was saying to His Church.

His display of righteous indignation lit a fire under me and had a

profound influence on my ministry as a pastor and professor. Haddon's zeal to represent God well enhanced my pastoral ministry by urging me to work harder in the study and during the sermon. I knew Haddon would probably never listen to one of my sermons on any given Sunday morning in church so I wasn't afraid of his critique. But he made it clear that God would be there each weekend and that I was responsible to be faithful with the trust He had given me. Haddon helped instill in me a healthy fear of God with respect to my ministry. For twenty years I've approached Sundays with the goal of preaching biblical sermons, sermons that would withstand the critique of my Master and my mentor.

The passion that Haddon displayed in that classroom also enhanced my teaching of preaching. As I witnessed his brief, intense work with my classmate, this thought hit me: "I want to continue to teach preaching, but am I ready to go head-to-head with preachers for the sake of God's reputation?" How many other theology, exegesis, or ministry classes require that kind of in-your-face exchange? If you've never been a pastor on the receiving end of sermon critiques, it's like getting cavities filled without Novocain. Haddon's handling of that situation encouraged me to work harder to explain biblical preaching to pastors and pastors-in-training. I saw Haddon work hard with students so they would "get it." I never saw him display such anger toward a student again; I regularly saw him extend kindness and graciousness to help a pastor find his or her way to better hermeneutical/homiletical practice. I saw him demand rigor and preciseness which, to this day, makes me work harder in the classroom for God's sake.

As a side note, Haddon's tenacity was displayed at our first Evangelical Homiletics Society business meeting at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Some readers may remember the time we spent working to outline our Statement of Faith and By-Laws. Haddon hadn't said a word throughout the meeting. As we moved closer to approving the wording of official documents, Haddon took issue with one particular phrase, maybe even a word within the phrase. I confess to thinking all through the meeting that he must not have cared too much about the details we were discussing. He had been inactive up to this point. But, he had been listening and thinking and he wanted to describe the Evangelical Homiletics Society precisely at the start. Haddon kept lobbying for a certain wording. After several minutes of dialogue back and forth on the issue, some brave soul from across the room said to him in exasperation, "Haddon, let it go." He didn't. I wanted to adopt that kind of drive for excellence in the pulpit and the lectern.

IMMEASURABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

"You can't attack the king in his castle!" Haddon directed those

words to me with a tone that was half laugh, half roar. Students were delivering their sermon introductions that day in class and one had just sat down to hear an evaluation. It was early in the fall semester and I was as green as any Sabbatical-in-Preaching Mentor could be. For anyone who loves to teach preaching, being in Haddon's classroom is homiletical heaven. Haddon gave the student a very stern and thorough review. Then, he looked over at me and said, "Randy, what do you think of his introduction?"

Stop there for a moment and put yourself in my shoes. Haddon had just given the student a thorough review. What's left to be said? What could I possibly add? Even if I had something substantial to add, would the student even hear it since he already heard from the king?! Some demonic force controlling my voice box said: "I think you were nitpicking." For a split second, we all waited for Haddon's reaction. Then came the roar: "You can't attack the king in his castle!" Then we all roared in laughter.

It was one of those defining moments for me and it says much about Haddon's contribution to homiletics and to my life. To all of us budding homileticians, Haddon was larger than life and still is. Yet, for years he has graciously allowed many of us to enter his classroom/kingdom and become his proteges. He actually treats us as colleagues, even though we all know we are students with the best seat in the house. Haddon was secure enough, not only to allow us to enter his classroom, but also to value our thoughts and methods. From the very beginning he has given me significant time to teach. Haddon is never threatened by others' material and willingly gives up his own lecture time. And then, what stands out to me even more is how he listens, interacts, and treats us as colleagues in front of his students. He creates an environment in which I feel like I have something to contribute.

The collegial atmosphere that Haddon creates and encourages in his classrooms rubs off on the pastors who arrive for homiletical training. In recent years Haddon graciously has allowed me to team-teach homiletics with him in Lancaster Bible College's Haddon Robinson School of Preaching. Every opportunity with him reinforces the need to humbly serve our Lord. Let's face it; the pastors have come to study with him, not me. Yet, Haddon never monopolizes the classroom conversation. He creates a collegial environment with his proteges that affects the students. More than one pastor has declared on a course evaluation sheet that one of the highlights of the class is observing the relationship that goes on between Haddon and the preaching mentors. That example of the Body of Christ at work has a profound influence on the pastors and their relationship with their own church leaders. He has taught many of us to excel, lead, and humbly serve.

Actually, Haddon always creates a collegial environment, even outside the classroom. I consider it to be one of the traits that defines him. During the fall semester of 1996 Haddon invited me to serve with him as a Sabbatical-in-Preaching Mentor. During that time I had several opportunities

to observe how Haddon lived outside of the classroom. The thing that struck me most was not how he dealt with students, but how he dealt with co-workers. He was gracious to every employee that he rubbed shoulders with at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. I didn't expect him to be mean, but I guess I also didn't expect him to be as kind to everyone as he was in conversation. All semester long I watched Haddon sincerely greet others and extend care. It made a huge impression on me and, by the grace of God, I've tried to convey such care to my ministry colleagues.

A few years ago when Haddon and Bonnie relocated to the Lancaster, PA area, Haddon and I were discussing the possibility of a new program at Lancaster Bible College. He said to me that he knew he was on, what he referred to as "his last ministry lap." On a handful of occasions since then I've heard him talk about his goals for that lap. It seems that the older he becomes, the more concern he has for teaching pastors how to preach better sermons. He despises the fact that some preachers are boring people with the Word of God. He considers it a sin. To this day he is working hard to teach pastors how to preach biblical sermons. To this day he graciously allows a number of us to teach alongside him so that his ideals and methods will continue. (Surely someone has researched to find out exactly how many homileticians Haddon has trained.) He remains a hard-core homiletician because he cares deeply about the health of Christ's church and the fame of God's great name.

HADDON ROBINSON TRIBUTE

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Name the most influential preachers and theologians in early Christian history—men like Ambrose of Milan, Augustine of Hippo, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, Chrysostom, Gregory the Great—and you'll discover each was an accomplished teacher of rhetoric before assuming their vocational responsibilities in the church. They even wrote textbooks on preaching in which they sought to integrate their secular understandings with the demands of Christian preaching. For lesser minds and ministries like Cassiodorus, The Venerable Bede, and Alcuin, rhetoric was modeled and taught as a valued ministry tool. For centuries it was an essential element of a well-designed education. But with the coming of the modern age, American public schools found rhetoric archaic. It fell out of favor and was dropped from the curriculum. Seminaries and colleges followed suit. Finally the Christian revivalists' emphasis on the preacher's passion and piety displaced the foundations of rhetoric's argument and arrangement. With a relatively homogenous American audience that accepted the basic assumptions of Nicene Christianity and required little proof, no one noticed. All preaching—and particularly expository preaching—slowly lost its way. As the world entered the modern age, people began to question the age-old assumptions. Without a clear strategy to drive its engine, preaching began to founder and came under attack from all sides. Some argued for a radical change in the form of the sermon, that its focus and implications ought to be left to the listeners' intuition. Others asserted that preaching had been made obsolete by the technological advances in communication. Then a sea-change occurred.

Haddon W. Robinson had come to faith in Christ, gone to seminary, pastored and sought further education in the arts of persuasion. Whether he knew it or not, he walked the path of the ancient ones who had led the church centuries before. When he became a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, he brought the ancient learning with him. Like the famous bishops before him, he restated the time-tested strategies in simple words for an audience that had forgotten them. At the climax of his experience at Dallas Theological Seminary, he shared it with the world as *Biblical Preaching* (1980) which became a watershed work in the history of modern evangelical homiletics.

Haddon changed Dallas Theological Seminary forever. He became the catalyst for a new understanding of homiletics in the design and delivery of sermons. His emphasis on the summarizing the point of a message in a single statement (variously called the Main Idea, the Big Idea or the Central Proposition) was also adopted wholeheartedly by the teachers of biblical exegesis for whom a passage's exegesis was now incomplete without the formulation of the exegetical Main Idea of the text. This development allowed an unusual level of integration between exegesis and homiletics at Dallas Seminary. Informally it provided a common language and a consistent philosophy for those departments involved in the sermonic process, despite differences in method created by their different tools and products. Formally it allowed for the close, curricular integration of exegesis and homiletics and for a time the teaching of both required all students to take courses taught by both biblical and pastoral faculty in which the integration was demonstrated and required of students as they produced exegetical studies and transformed them into preached sermons.

Beyond the school's precincts, Haddon's writings spoke so clearly that they gave new energy to the work of expository preaching. Pastors seeking a better understanding of their craft had a simple handbook for sermon development. Even those with no formal theological or pastoral training found a new vision for their work and a useful, self-help guide.

Beyond the classroom and its curriculum, Haddon provided a model for the next generation of seminarians at Dallas Seminary. Students with a passion for preaching placed a new value on the traditional disciplines of rhetoric and the contributions of disciplined communication studies. A generation of graduates fanned out across the country to study at leading universities. They enhanced the paradigms learned from Haddon and integrated them with the demands of the modern pulpit, testing them weekly in their sermons. Slowly these students entered the teaching profession. The rippling waves of influence moved through the pastoral training curriculae in many institutions as their students in turn mediated Haddon's influence. Slowly the art of expository preaching was refocused and infused with the science of persuasion, guided by Haddon's simple strategies. Their textbooks and articles reflect all that Haddon taught. The formation of a formal, international society to encourage the study and teaching of expository preaching as defined by his work bears testimony to his influence. The timeless nature of the tools provided has proved invaluable for the analysis of new trends and the critique of new proposals and the trends. Like every reformation before it, this movement in homiletics represents the recovery of something lost, a return to the classics, a voyage "Back To The Future."

At the beginning of the 21st century, Haddon W. Robinson has emerged at the head of a revival in the art and science of expository preaching, recognized both for his own skill as a preacher and for his influence on the

craft of preaching. Students and teachers who have never known Haddon personally or may never read what he has written a work any the product of his pen benefit from the direction he set.

I am one of those. I first came as a student to Dallas Theological Seminary the year after Haddon had left to provide leadership to Denver Seminary. I was part of that first class that had a new textbook under his name. His voice was confident and clear. After graduation I pastored and preached with Haddon at my shoulder. Then later I joined the department he had chaired and even chaired it for a time. Although my academic studies had not taken me into his specific areas of expertise, his clear presentation and logic made it easy to follow my colleagues who had invested themselves in the ancient wisdom. We learned, laughed and worked constructively together. Many like me (without the advanced study in the disciplines that inform good preaching) have staffed training institutions around the world with little more than what we learned from and through Haddon to equip our students. We are a testimony to the quality of what he taught and wrote. Haddon defined our priorities and imprinted himself on our methods. He has left his mark on the church founded by His Lord and nurtured by the Spirit. He has joined the honored company of great Christian preachers.

In another thousand years (Lord willing), I wonder what his icon will look like…?

HADDON ROBINSON'S LEGACY

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Having studied for the master of divinity at Trinity Evangelical Divinity Schoo. in the early 1970's and then interned with John Stott at All Souls in London in the middle years of that decade, I did not receive Haddon's teaching in person. Instead when I travelled into Eastern Europe in the 1980's to preach and teach behind the Iron Curtain some who were engaged in that work used his materials and commended them to me. So, some time later, while in the U.K., I picked up a copy of *Expository Preaching: Principles and Practice, a unique how-to book*, the pink-covered edition of *Biblical Preaching* published there by Inter-Varsity Press.

Back in the States, I took it with me to Camp Shamineau in northern Minnesota where my family had some time to unwind and I quickly devoured it. I recall to this day how excited I was by its contents. It greatly helped me fill the gaps between text and sermon in ways I had somehow not managed to grasp earlier. Specific insights in its pages—and those of the second edition and other of Haddon's writings—have shaped my preaching, teaching, and writing since that day. But that is only one part of Haddon's legacy for which we are all in his debt.

As a department chair at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School I have some responsibility for recruiting homileticians to our faculty. Everywhere I find an exceptional candidate for such positions, the influence of Haddon Robinson—and of those he has helped equip—is evident. This reminds me of the Apostle Paul's assertion, "you yourselves are our letter of recommendation" (2 Cor. 3:2). Haddon's fruitful legacy is both literary and human and I am profoundly grateful for both. The church is to some extent closer to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ because of Haddon Robinson's stewardship of the gifts the Lord Jesus lavished on him. To God be the glory.

HADDON ROBINSON AND CATHEDRAL THINKING

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The spires of the Sagrada Familia reach over 500 ft in the air. The edifice is one of the most distinguishable landmarks in Barcelona, Spain, and while technically not a cathedral, the church is of cathedral size. Construction began in 1882 and was soon after assumed by the brilliant architect Antoni Gaudi. Gaudi took a medium that was traditionally approached with gothic architecture and crafted it in the modernisme genre. It is magnificent.

A work of this size demands great planning, a great mind, huge financial resources, and the most valuable commodity: time. While the Empire State Building took less than 14 months for completion, ancient cathedrals took generations to build. A generation would live and die, only satisfied that the foundation was laid and a few feet of stone rose from the ground. Another generation would be satisfied that the edifice rose a little higher, and perhaps another generation would see it near completion. For a great structure to be built, generations had to adopt the mindset that every generation would play a part with the last one being able to see it to completion. Only the patient were able to set the cross on the spire.

For a generation of preachers to be raised up, preachers whose reach will span high and influential, the church will have to adopt cathedral thinking: each generation playing its part to encourage the called to keep building on the original foundation. Perhaps this is the best way to understand the legacy of Haddon Robinson.

This is not to suggest that Robinson is the foundation; Christ is. Rather, Robinson's life demonstrates a commitment to longevity like few others. He is not the head waters of the stream, but his teaching so caused the tide to rise that all of us called to be preacher-teachers have been raised. Robinson's life demonstrates cathedral thinking.

A FRIEND ONCE REMOVED

In 2004, I left the pastorate to teach preaching full time. I became a colleague of Calvin Pearson, who was a D.Min. student of Robison. At the time, I would take a limited amount of notes in the pulpit. Through conversations with Calvin, I grew convinced of the value of no notes of any

kind in the pulpit. I believe that Robinson had influenced Pearson to this position. I still remember the Sunday I looked at my notes for the last time and then slipped them in the back of my Bible, where they stayed for the rest of the sermon. It is a practice I still use each Sunday and one that I lead my students to as well.

Similarly, when I first stepped into a classroom to teach preaching, I did not realize how I would be helped by Robinson's classic text, *Biblical Preaching*. In the first few semesters of teaching, I reflected on my own experience and convictions in the classroom but soon found the many places where my thinking was thin. Then I turned to the pages of this simple monograph to find that, in words etched out with simplicity, Robinson had already expressed what my students needed.

Perhaps what helped my own thinking the most were the models of sermon structure (deductive, inductive, inductive/deductive). This idea deepened my conviction to allow the structure of the text to become the structure of the sermon. It is one thing to espouse the conviction of an inerrant, infallible text. It is another thing to provide a student the means to allow that Word to breathe through them with absolute fidelity to its own expression. It's not surprising then, that in an attempt to communicate these things, the teacher became the student. So, while I never formally sat under his teaching, I felt as if I were sitting at his feet, since dispensing his material made me more convictional about the principles in my own preaching; like a friend with decades of experience who could express things with greater clarity than I could. For that I am most grateful.

THE SHADOW

Interestingly, the Sagrada Familia Church still stands incomplete. While Gaudi worked on it until his death it remains under construction more than 120 years later, with the projected date of competition in 2026. He started something he was not able to finish. And that's just fine. After all, if you are building for generations, then time is your friend. Another generation gets to rise up and build, haunted by the shadow of those who have already built so much.

Thank you Haddon Robinson for a life well lived. And thank you most of all for your foreboding shadow, which motivates us to keep building for generations to come.

A TRIBUTE TO HADDON ROBINSON

DON SUNUKJIAN
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As I think about Haddon's influence in my life, a montage of events appear over the past 50 years:

- The first day in his class at Dallas Seminary, when I immediately sensed, "I want to learn to preach from him."
- Playing board games at his home, and babysitting for his children.
- My determination to be in *his* lab section for preaching, rather than in one where a TA would be listening to our sermons.
- Sitting in his office, after I had become that TA, and having him re-orient my life by suggesting I consider a doctorate in communications with the thought of returning to teach at the seminary someday.
- The many times he generously cited me in his writings or included me in his anthologies.
- His reaffirmation of my gifts and calling when I returned to teaching from the pastorate, with the comment, "You gotta play the hand God dealt you."
- His continual inclusion of me in Gordon-Conwell's Doctor of Ministry program, and even his recent tactful suggestions as to how I might improve my section of the course.

He has been God's instrument and a good friend for many years.

A TRIBUTE TO DR. HADDON W. ROBINSON

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I first heard of Haddon Robinson from my undergraduate mentor, Dr. John Reed. We were having dinner, along with my wife Beverlee, in a Gasthaus in Darmstadt, Germany, in the winter of 1972. I was stationed with the U. S. Army near Heidelberg and John was on a two-week training duty with the Texas Air Guard as their Chaplain. A year earlier John had left his position as Chairman of the Speech Department at Cedarville College (now Cedarville University) to teach under Haddon at Dallas Theological Seminary. John had a seminary degree, had pastored a church, and had earned a Ph.D. in communication, so I believed he knew what he was talking about when he convinced me that Haddon had insights into preaching that made more sense than anything he had ever been exposed to, insights that were consistent with classical rhetorical theory and the faithful exposition of the Scriptures. Because I had been considering seminary, I started looking into the possibility of studying under Dr. Robinson. If I was going to learn to preach, I wanted to learn from someone who could teach me the theory as well as the skill. I am pleased to say that John's estimation of Haddon's gifting and capability was accurate.

Back when I entered Dallas Seminary in 1973, preaching was held in high regard, as reflected not only in the school motto taken from 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the Word," and but also as demonstrated in the number of preaching courses that all Th.M. (Master of Theology) students were required to take. Today our students need to take fewer than half the number of preaching courses that were required under Haddon's watch. That fact testifies to the respect Haddon was granted by the administration and faculty and the influence he exerted over the curriculum. I moved through the preaching course prerequisites as quickly as I could so that I could be exposed to Haddon's model and method as soon as possible. When I took my first preaching course during the summer of 1974, I sensed that his model was both rhetorically sound and his method practically feasible. Although I have made adaptations to accommodate my own perspective and practice, the heart and soul of Haddon's schema may be clearly perceived in my homiletical instruction and in my periodic sermons.

LEARNING TO THINK

One of Haddon's first challenges to us students was that we actually learn to think! I remember him saying, "Five percent of the people think. Ten percent of the people think they think. Eighty-five percent of the people would rather die than think. If you are going to be a preacher you must learn to think." As soon as I heard that tease I knew I was going to be an eager adherent of this philosopher/teacher/preacher/coach. Under Haddon's classroom instruction and pulpit influence I did learn to think much more intentionally and clearly and to articulate my thoughts with greater confidence. When I prepared a dramatic monologue on the life of D. L. Moody as part of my thesis project under Haddon's oversight, he not unsurprisingly asked, "Now what's the big idea of this monologue? What are you talking about through Moody? And what are you saying about what you are talking about?" He pushed me to think through the entire presentation, paragraph by paragraph, to insure that every element contributed to that single idea. That exercise caused me, for the first time in my academic career, to sense the power of an extended message that employed unity, order, and progress.

During that first preaching course I was exposed to several elements of Haddon's method that seemed especially helpful. The following four have remained at the front of my thinking and, I trust, my practice for the last thirty-seven years. First and foremost was the concept of the big idea. I knew that any good speech or sermon needed a single, unified theme, but I had understood neither the theory behind it, nor a practical method at getting to it. The subject plus the complement leading to the big idea concept gave me a strategy for approaching and understanding any form of communication, a strategy that has never failed me. I can remember driving Beverlee nearly crazy that summer, asking the subject-complement questions of everything: a television commercial, a news report, a book, a movie, a billboard, a car, and even clothes. "Do you see the outlandish outfit that mother has on? What's she talking about? Maybe, her "attractability" factor, do you think? What's she saying about what she's talking about? Is she saying that she's as "attractable" as her daughter? I think she is saying she needs therapy." I'm happy to say that Beverlee survived and that I never got the method out of my mind. The big idea strategy had the added benefit of helping me through my Ph.D. studies at The Ohio State University. Whenever I encountered a difficult passage in the literature I was studying I would ask of each page or paragraph, "What is it talking about? What is it saying about what it is talking about?" I was always able to make sense out of those required readings. Some of my fellow students thought I was brilliant. I just smiled at their inaccurate assessment and went on using my secret strategy. Honestly, I would not have survived the program without that critical communication

tool. Thank you for that, Haddon.

Second, the concept of the developmental or functional questions enabled me to determine where the emphasis had been placed in any given text and showed me where I needed to place my emphasis in any given sermon. I saw what the biblical author was doing with his big idea in terms of explanation, validation, and/or application. I realized that each part of the sermon—a verse of Scripture, a word study, an illustration, or a quotation—was necessary for a purpose, that is, in order to answer one or more of the developmental questions. I also came to understand that every sermon must have application (Developmental Question III) in order to be a sermon. If my message consisted of only explanation and/or validation, it would be merely a lecture, not a sermon. So, I learned to drive every big idea toward an implied or spoken imperative. While many of Haddon's big ideas have possessed a covert relevance, all of them have implied an applicational imperative. If this or that is true, then, "So what?"

A third element of Haddon's preaching theory and practice that surfaced during that first semester was the importance of a preaching style that was both clear and captivating, but not to the point of distracting the listener. The preacher's choice and use of words could bring home the message of the biblical text to the listeners' heads and hearts, or they could float the truth right over their heads and beyond their grasp and good. Haddon's insistence on full sentence outlines and fully developed manuscripts—which were sagely critiqued—forced us to select each word and arrange each sentence with its desired effect in mind. All who heard Haddon preach experienced the benefits of such attention to style. His sermons were as clear as ice, yet burning with intensity and imagination. "How does he do that?" we would ask. His answer was, "Hard work." And such rewarding work it is.

Fourth, Haddon's definition of expository preaching provided a framework for all the commitments, knowledge, and skills that preaching has demanded over the years. Although I have refined his definition from time to time to address some of the questions and concerns of my students, his original wording is both timeless and universal. True expositional preaching is communicational, biblical, conceptual, exegetical/theological, Spiritual, personal, and applicational. There is not much more to add to that. Any preaching that is authoritative and relevant will incorporate these essential elements.

ALL THE ELECTIVES

I took all the electives available under Haddon, including his advanced expository preaching course, which he taught in his home on a weekly basis during the fall of my final year at seminary. The course was much more like a graduate seminar on preaching than my typical seminary

courses. We talked a lot of theory and chased rabbit trails, though Haddon always brought us back to center before the evening was over. Because the class was much less formal than my other courses, we felt free to ask more personal questions of our preaching mentor. We learned as much about the man and about the work of the ministry as we did about preaching *per se* during those evening discussions. The result, for me, was that I could not possibly separate preaching from the man or the man from the ministry. I sensed that God had brought them all together for His purposes.

Of course, all this input came before *Biblical Preaching* was published. The information came to us through class notes and through Haddon's exemplary preaching. Chapel was always packed when Haddon preached. I would sit with my friends and fellow students and listen carefully, not only for God's message to us, which was always so powerfully felt, but also for the "master's" method. Then we would eat our lunches together and dissect the sermon's big idea, structure, major support material, use of the Scriptures, and so on. On more than one occasion the group drafted me to meet with Dr. Robinson in his office to verify our hypotheses. What a learning experience that was. Then I would report back what I had discovered. While some teachers of preaching can spin the theory in a way that benefits the students, not all are able to demonstrate that theory in their own practice. And then, there are those preachers who can preach with great skill and spiritual benefit, but who cannot explain what they are doing or how. Part of what has made Haddon's influence so extraordinary was his ability both to teach the theory and to practice the skill with spiritual benefit.

PERSONAL INFLUENCE

Haddon's collegial relationships sent a clear signal to faculty and students alike. We witnessed the benefits of dialoguing with colleagues from other disciplines than homiletics. Haddon intentionally maintained personal and intellectual friendships with faculty members from other departments and divisions of the seminary. He sought their help in grasping the intricacies of biblical Hebrew and Greek and shared his insights into communication with them. Several of the required preaching courses were taught in interdisciplinary cooperation with the language and/or theology departments in an effort to truly integrate our seminary education. This interdepartmental interdependence reinforced the notion that faithful preaching required personal spirituality, broad biblical knowledge, facility with the biblical languages, and a theologically grounded and engaged mind, along with homiletical skills.

There were a few times when Haddon addressed some personal issues with me. He saw where some rough edges needed to be smoothed and some relational areas where I needed development as I prepared for pastoral

ministry. I didn't always see things in quite the same way, but I appreciated the effort and the risk Haddon took to nurture more than the preacher in me. Thank you for that.

Over the years, Haddon's insights have continued to influence my preaching theory and practice. His writings have been perceptive and challenging, especially those that have addressed the application of the text. Quite early in my weekly preaching duties I learned that application would remain the most demanding, yet most necessary element of my responsibility as a preacher. While remaining connected to the meaning of the text, I had to relate that meaning to my listeners in such a way that they would know how to respond personally. Haddon has helped me think through that difficult process.

One of the measures of a great mentor becomes evident when his protégés carry forward and develop his ideas. While most of Haddon's students extend his legacy through their weekly pulpit ministry, a significant number of his disciples teach in educational institutions, write books, publish articles, and speak at conferences and seminars. I have no idea how broadly this generative influence reaches, but I do know that Haddon is viewed as the champion of evangelical preaching in many circles, especially within the fellowship of the Evangelical Homiletics Society.

Finally, during the years I was a full-time pastor and preaching twice every week, I often found myself overwhelmed with the demands of my calling. Sometime during those challenging days I picked up an article Haddon had written, just for me it seemed. He reminded his readers that God had not called us to be great preachers, but faithful. What a wonderful word of grace that was. Not great, necessarily, but simply faithful. And as I reflect on Haddon's life and his contribution to the church of Jesus Christ, I cannot but conclude that he has become great among us because he has been faithful. Thanks be to God for such faithfulness.

DRAWING TRUTH FROM THE TEXT: THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF HADDON ROBINSON'S HOMILETICAL METHOD

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Some wag once noted that preaching is "talking in the midst of another's sleep." That may apply to some who occupy the pulpit but never to Haddon Robinson. After sixty plus years of preaching, Haddon has given thousands of sermons but I seriously doubt if anyone ever fell asleep when he was speaking. For the past generation he has simply been the Great Expositor of God's Word. His oratorical style, word choice and, of course, his unique ability to 'turn the phrase' made it nearly impossible for listeners to drift off to another realm. Moreover, Haddon always seemed to have the perfect illustration to make the right point. Whether it was an anecdote of how Bloody Mary, the infamous Tudor Queen, feared the preaching of John Knox more than all the soldiers of France or his description of the world's most complicated clock in Copenhagen, Robinson always knew how to make abstract biblical truth both clear and concrete.

But in my opinion, his underlying strength as a brilliant expositor lay in the insights he always gleaned from the Scripture. The causal listener or uninformed Christian may have never noticed but those of us who do this for a living have been continually amazed at Haddon's ability to draw profound truths out of the text. My suspicion is that the key to his skill in this regard has been twofold. The first has been his commitment to biblical authority and the second his intellectual honesty. Only someone who treats the Bible with the utmost respect and yet is unafraid to ask it hard questions can surface such insights.

COMMITMENT TO BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

For example, in a sermon on the parable of the sheep and goats from Matthew 25, Haddon began by asking some general questions of Jesus' story. He wondered out loud why, on Judgment Day, believers would be called sheep and disbelievers goats. He then noted that after meditating on it for fifty years, he still didn't know. He also asked why some are told they're goats

when they never really understood exactly what Christ wanted them to do. But these questions merely set the stage for his key insight into the story. He said that he had recently revisited this text and discovered something new:

> Not only do the goats ask the question, "How come we're goats?" The sheep ask, "When did we see you hungry and feed you, and thirsty and give you something to drink, and a stranger and took you in, give you clothes when you were naked, take care of you when you were sick, visit you in prison?" The sheep are as confused as the goats.[1]

Robinson was absolutely right and he went on to paraphrase the Lord that it was only the small, unremembered acts of kindness on the part of the sheep that defined them as the redeemed. While the entire parable turns on this point it only became clear when Haddon pressed down on the details.

A second sermon, one that I require all my homiletics students to analyze, is based the advent of Hezekiah's reign told in 2 Kings 18. Although he was only twenty-five years old, Hezekiah wanted to initiate a renewal among God's people. This meant eradicating Israel's idolatry by destroying the sacred stones, cutting down the Asherah poles and removing the high places. But he went one step further; he broke into pieces the bronze snake that Moses had used to heal the Israelites when they were in the wilderness. As Haddon pointed out, this was a good snake. It had been a visible tool of God's grace for His people, not an immoral remnant of the Canaanites. But 700 years after the time of Moses, it had hardened into an idol so the new king tore it down and broke it to pieces.

That's an exciting story, one that carries a good deal of interest on its own. But the expositor's job is to talk to people about themselves from the text and Haddon's insight into what that snake represented for Israel at the time of Hezekiah made this text intensely relevant to the church of our day. He argued, accurately in my view, that the snake represented a positive time in the past that had become calcified in the present. Without a doubt some people wanted to hold on to that snake because it represented God's work but now God wanted to do something new so that snake had to go. This has been a dilemma for God's people through the ages, including our own. So, in order to drive home that point, Haddon argued that the contemporary church must kill its own snakes so that it can reach the current generation. Ecclesiastical forms must change or even die so that Christ's kingdom can advance. As Robinson said:

> If you have a favorite old, dead, bad snake and you're willing to split a church over it, for God's sake, kill it! For the church's sake, kill it! For the sake of the society and the world, kill it! For your

> own sake, kill it, and let God do something fresh and new and vital in our day.[2]

Another sermon that Haddon preached with great effectiveness on many occasions covered the famous story of the Good Samaritan. In the first movement of the message he pictured how the lawyer planned to elevate himself at Jesus' expense. The key to his longed-for ascent was the question, 'Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?' After quoting the lawyer's question, Robinson burst forth with an amazing exegetical insight. Robinson states:

> I admire Jesus' restraint. Jesus doesn't say to him, "That's a stupid question." The nature of an inheritance is that you do nothing for it. Someone gives it to you. They die and all you have to do is receive it. But Jesus didn't say that. Jesus said, "You're a lawyer. You know the Old Testament law. What do you think it teaches?"[3]

It's important to pause for a moment and examine in detail how Haddon handled this portion of the text. Surrounding Jesus' initial response was the theological and cultural context in which this dialogue took place. As Haddon noted, the lawyer was almost certainly disappointed by Jesus' response because instead of engaging in a sophisticated theological argument Christ sent him back to Bible 101. In response, the lawyer blurted out what *everyone* in that day and time knew: to inherit eternal life you had to love God and your neighbor and, not surprisingly, Jesus agreed. But having been hung on the rope of his own question, he quickly spit out the follow-up 'Who is my neighbor?' Robinson noted that by asking this second question the man now moved on to a definition of terms. And here, once again, Haddon's insight into the text cut across our own lives because it forced us to identify ourselves, not with Jesus, but with the lawyer! He says:

> How many times do we come face to face with a clear requirement of Scripture, but instead of obeying it, we get a discussion group started. If we can talk about it long enough, maybe we can bend Scripture to fit our lives, rather than fit our lives to the Scripture. In that spirit, the lawyer asks the question, "Who is my neighbor?"[4]

As everyone knows, Jesus answered the man's question with the story of the Good Samaritan. At this point Robinson demonstrated some brilliant insight into the biblical text in two important ways. The first was by moving beyond the lawyer's question to an analysis of the viewpoint of each character in the story. He walked his listeners through the viewpoint of the man who has been mugged, the priest, the Levite and then focused his

attention on the Samaritan. This approach allowed him to take his audience to the same place that Jesus took the lawyer: the one who loved his neighbor was the one who saw his need and helped him out.

INTELLECTUAL HONESTY

But Robinson's second insight was even more sublime. He focused on the phrase 'the one who *saw* his need' to drive home the truth that Christian love is subjective; it resides in the heart of the one acting in love. Because God has shared His love with us, our eyes have now been opened to the needs of others and we've been empowered to meet their needs. Implicit in this truth was the subtle call to draw close to Christ because, as Haddon observed, 'What you are determines what you see and what you see will determine what you do. That's a fact of life.'[5]

Of all the sermons Robinson preached over the years, perhaps his most famous is "Don't Doubt God's Goodness: A Case Study in Temptation."[6] It's based on the story of the Fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3, a theologically pregnant narrative essential for understanding the whole story of the Bible. One of the main reasons this sermon gained such fame is because, in a mere six verses, Haddon unpacked the essence of temptation. In doing so, he surfaced a series of profound theological insights that, somewhat reminiscent of *The Screwtape Letters*, identified the devil's strategy to destroy men and women.

First, he noted that this story is uniquely qualified to serve as a case study because it contained no independent variables. Unlike us, Adam and Eve had no poisoned blood in their veins that automatically drew them towards temptation.

Moreover, they lived in Paradise, the Garden of Eden, where everything was pronounced 'good'. This never-to-be-repeated environment made the narrative the perfect place to study how temptation works. I have no idea if Robinson discerned all this on his own but I do know that only someone who has thought long and hard about a passage, as well as looking at numerous commentaries, would see these unique circumstances.

Second, Robinson noted that when the tempter comes, he always disguises both his person and purpose. Satan never shows us who he *really* is nor does he state his goals. Instead he wants to discuss theology: 'Did God really intend that? Is God really like that? How could God keep that from you?' If you're honest about the temptations you face in your own life you know that this description of what the devil whispers in your ear is spot on.

Third, and of greatest importance, Haddon showed that the devil is all about attacking both God's word and His character. By planting the seeds of doubt in Eve's mind about what God really said and what God really meant, Satan was able to undermine her trust in God's goodness.

Oftentimes when we as pastors and preachers define sin we focus on the outward action and that is not always bad. But as Robinson demonstrated from his exegesis of Genesis 3, the essence of sin is questioning the goodness of God and His provision for us as His people. The truth of this text helps to form a formidable defense against the evil one as well as building trust in the character of our Heavenly Father. Oh, that we had more of such teaching today for the sake of the church as well as for the sake of our own souls!

On more than one occasion I have heard Haddon Robinson paraphrase some comments that A.W. Tozer once made that what we think about God is the *most* important thing about us.[7] Robinson and Tozer are both right. Our view of God is the determining factor of our lives. And one of the primary ways that we can grow in our knowledge of Him and what He wants for us—as well as for His world in which we live—is to study His Word in all its depth to the best of our abilities. For the past six decades Haddon Robinson has done exactly that. We are forever in his debt as a model and a mentor of brilliant expository preaching based on his consistently insightful exegesis of the biblical text.

NOTES

1. Haddon Robinson, "Surprises at the Judgment," *Preaching Today*, no. 186, 1999.
2. Haddon Robinson, "When Good Snakes Become Bad Snakes," *Preaching Today*, no. 145, 1995.
3. Haddon Robinson, "A Case Study of a Mugging," *Preaching Today*, no.102, 1992.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Haddon Robinson, "Don't Doubt God's Goodness: A Case Study in Temptation," in *Best Sermons* 1, ed. by James Cox (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1988), 145-153.
7. A.W. Tozer, "The Lord Giveth Knowledge," in *The Set of the Sail*, ed. Harry Verploegh (Camp Hill, Pennsylvania: Christian Publications, 1986), 48-49.

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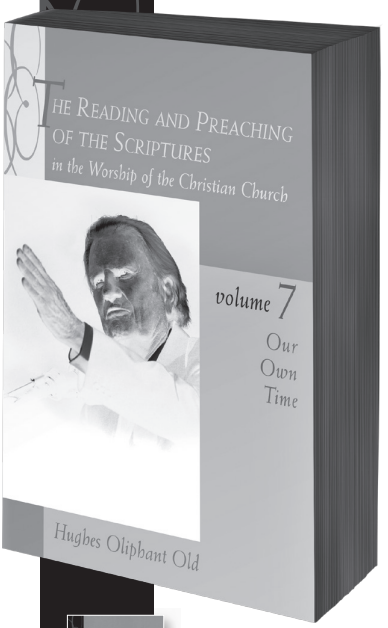

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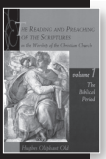

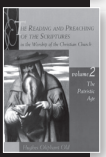

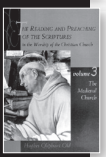

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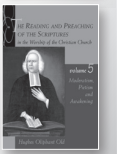

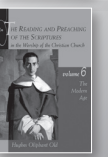

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BOOK REVIEWS

Building Below the Waterline. By Gordon Macdonald. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2011, 978-1-59856-669-7, 256 pp., $21.95.

Reviewer: *A. K. Kuruvilla, North Hills Community Church, Taylors, SC*

Building Below the Waterline is a collection of essays that MacDonald has written over time for the *Leadership Journal*, covering a wide range of topics on leadership. The imagery of the title is borrowed from the world of bridge building where, during construction, a casual observer might not recognize any progress while massive amounts of masonry and concrete is laid on the foundation below the waterline. In his introduction, MacDonald emphasizes that endurance of effective leadership is dependent on the work done below the waterline, in a leader's soul.

The essays are divided into two sections, the inner life (below the waterline) and the outer life (above the waterline) of a leader. On the development of the inner life, MacDonald discusses an assortment of topics including cultivation of virtue, understanding your motivation, extreme faith, trust as root of leadership, time away from ministry and prayer. The topics discussed in the section on the outer life include the power of public prayer, dealing with difficult situations, saying hard things, moral failure, handling church conflict and leaving the ministry at the appropriate time. Each of these essays stands alone and is not linked in any deliberate way.

As a collection of thoughts on various aspects of leadership, MacDonald shares a number of things he has learned and experienced along his long journey through ministry leadership. These essays are particularly valuable for pastors and ministry leaders who might not have had many years of experience. The chapters are short, making it easy for the time-challenged to read in installments. Numerous quotations, anecdotes and illustrations from personal life not only make it enjoyable to read, but also breathe life into the ideas being presented. The layout of the text is conducive to easy reading as well. Questions for reflection follow each of the essays. They are useful for both personal reflection and small group discussion.

Since effective preaching is generally intertwined with effective pastoral ministry and leadership, the various angles on leadership discussed in this book may be readily applied to improve effectiveness. Although this is not a book that develops a single thought, or delves deeply into a particular aspect of leadership, it is valuable to any ministry leader for reading and reflection with a view to strengthening leadership, particularly the aspects of

life that are invisible to the outside world, those below the waterline.

Getting the Old Testament: What it Meant to Them, What it Means to Us. By Steven L. Bridge. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009, 978-1-59856-045-9, 227 pp., $17.00.

Reviewer: *Kenneth E. Bickel, Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana*

Steven Bridge's desire for this book is that it might represent a work that could be "simultaneously sensitive to Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim perspectives" (xiii). Somewhat consistent with that ecumenical spirit, the author embraces without reservation the JEDP assumptions of the Documentary Hypothesis. Thus, readers would do well to realize that this paradigm greatly influences the assertions posited by the author. His quest to declare "What it Meant to Them" (referencing the subtitle for the book), proceeds with no apparent doubts about the authenticity of the JEDP theory.

To his credit, Bridge is clearly committed to the hermeneutical premise of authorial intent. He discusses this value in a context where he illustrates well how readers can construct their own meanings from the text when they are not intently seeking to understand what the original author(s) meant in the context of the passage under consideration (5).

In the eyes of this reviewer, it is unfortunate that Bridge's attempts at understanding the authorial intent of a given passage are shaped by his unwavering commitment to the JEDP theory. Throughout the remainder of his book, he presents case studies, focusing on specific passages, to demonstrate the importance of discerning original contexts (and therefore original intents).

His first two case studies focus on the creation story (Gen 1 and 2). He surfaces the very real tension that exists for thinking Christians, that of resolving the conflict between biblical affirmations about the origins of the universe, versus the claims of a majority of contemporary scientists that discounts the biblical report. He seeks to resolve this conflict by pointing to his assumptions on genre, historical context, and the explanation that he provides in light of the JEDP theory. The author would certainly desire that his convictions be respected; unfortunately, he shows little respect for those who might disagree with his convictions.

His third case study focuses on the Noahic flood. To resolve the tension that arises among modern readers who might seek to define the reasons why the flood account should accepted as authoritatively accurate, he says: "The problem of historicity is rather easily overcome if one approaches Gen

6–9 … as a painting rather than a photograph. The intention of the original author(s) was not to answer the questions of twenty-first-century scientists but to communicate to their own contemporaries something about the nature and character of God." (40). The author later asserts with great confidence: "Like the creation stories, the great flood is not meant to be taken literally. The biblical authors never intended to reproduce history photographically, for the analysis of twenty-first-century inquiry, but impressionistically, for the spiritual instruction and edification of their contemporaries" (51).

The case studies that follow are consistent with his presuppositions. The studies contain relevant illustrations from contemporary life that connect to the insights the author gleans. They also contain some beneficial insights into the literary units he chooses to address. The author's work on the Torah is enlightening (chapter 5). He subsumes all of the individual laws into eight broad categories that are worthy of consideration. This reviewer is aware of other helpful categorizations of the Old Testament law; Bridge's categorizations provide a useful contrast.

The author takes the stance that the prophecies found in the book of Daniel were written after the events took place (128). In the midst of his insights related to the prophecies of Daniel, the author careens off into what appears to be a tangent that is of great personal interest to himself, namely, consideration of Michael Drosnin's *The Bible Code*. This Bible code is premised upon the principle of "the Equidistant Letter Sequence" (120). The author seeks to explain this principle in Appendix G of the book. Those readers interested in seeking embedded truth in the Scriptures by means of numeric algorithms might be attracted to this tangent; this reviewer was not.

Chapter 9 and appendices H, I, and J, focused on the Book of Proverbs, contains some superb material. For many, this material alone might well be worth the price of the book.

This book is not for those who have not been well-trained in Old Testament studies. Readers must have some substantive background in order to find those nuggets of gold.

A Company of Women Preachers: Baptist Prophetesses in Seventeenth-Century England. Edited by Curtis W. Freeman. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011, 978-1-60258-318-4, 824 pp. $69.95.

Reviewer: *Jeffrey Arthurs, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA*

This academic tome reproduces thirteen publications from six Baptist women from seventeenth-century England. The publications

represent three genres: oracular speeches (prophecy), conversion narratives (spiritual autobiographies), and controversial tracts (exhortations, warnings, and advice). Within those large categories are other genres, most notably hymns and poetic visions.

The writings of the six women are remarkable for their citation of and allusion to Scripture. These prophetesses knew and used their Bibles as they defended Baptist theology, in particular a "low-church" ecclesiology and a Calvinistic approach to conversion. They threw themselves into polemics on issues like believer's baptism and the use of written or extempore prayer, not hesitating to debate contemporary male divines. However, readers expecting an aggressive proto-feminist stance may be surprised that the six women rarely kicked against the goad of their culture's patriarchy (xii); but readers expecting that women were seen and not heard in England of that day will also be surprised that Baptist women *did* prophesy and teach. Between 1640 and 1660 there were about three hundred prophetesses in England (17).

The reproduction of the thirteen publications is done with minimal editing, maintaining the archaic spelling and syntax of the seventeenth-century. This makes for difficult reading. The reproduction also purposefully avoids commentary, although the editor introduces each of the six authors with brief historical notes. He also provides a well-researched introduction (1–41) to the history, theology, and literature of women preachers of that day. An extensive bibliography and two indexes, Scripture and name/subject, are included, as one would expect from a highly academic work.

Within the narrow confines of this work's goal—"simply to let these prophetic women speak for themselves" (ix)—it succeeds. Readers desiring more critical engagement will have to use the footnotes and bibliography for their own research.

Grounded in the Living Word: The Old Testament and Pastoral Care Practices. By Denise Dombkowski Hopkins & Michael S. Koppel. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, 978-0-8028-6368-3, 290 pp., $20.00.

Reviewer: *Brandon Cash, Oceanside Christian Fellowship, El Segundo, CA*

If you are looking for homiletical wisdom, then *Grounded in the Living Word* is not the right choice. Nevertheless, in addition to homiletics, some readers of this journal also teach classes on pastoral care. For them, this book may function as an effective discussion starter in such courses.

In this book, Hopkins and Koppel seek to address the apparent disconnect between pastoral care and biblical interpretation. They insightfully diagnose the problem characteristic of so many pastors and denominations

that have drifted away from an authoritative view of Scripture: "Pastors wanted to be seen as professionals along with psychiatrists and social workers, so they borrowed psychiatric and behavioral science language and avoided theological and biblical language as much as possible. They assumed that the Bible had little to say and was even embarrassing when used in pastoral care situations" (10). While the authors' observation is spot on, their solution is, at times, problematic; it seems that Hopkins and Koppel themselves view Scripture more as a dialogue partner than as God's authoritative word. For example, "While no single interpretation can claim precedence over any other, neither does anyone function in isolation from other interpretations and communities. This approach allows room for intersections between the Bible and pastoral care to surface" (18). This is the fundamental weakness of the book. (Those familiar with Brueggemann, his Old Testament theology and hermeneutical tendencies will recognize his influence.)

Hermeneutical differences aside, the book does possess worthwhile qualities. The formatting of the chapters makes it easy to follow and the location of the discussion questions and group exercises within specific sections maximize their utility. The emphasis on the power of community (throughout) and the potential of intergenerational ministry (chapter 4) are wonderful correctives to the me-first individuality characteristic of our culture. And while the use of Scripture is shallow at times, their utilization of particular psalms in pastoral care situations is rich (e.g., Psalm 88 on 120-123).

One final takeaway that was new to this reviewer was "Bibliodrama": "a form of role-playing in which the roles played are taken from biblical texts…it is a form of interpretive play" (174–175). Participants are encouraged to work through a spectrogram (a group of statements such as "I'm very good (one) or not at all good (ten) at seeing what I don't want to see"), and then step into the role of the biblical figure as they read through the story. This intentionality brings with it perspective which creates a new awareness. After working through the story, participants are encouraged to "shake off their role … and return to the here and now," where they are then asked to reflect upon a group of questions. This reflection time results in application and appropriation of the passage.

While the book may have a different understanding of what it means for God's word to be "living," there is some fruit to be picked by those who teach courses on pastoral care.

Worship Words: Discipling Language for Faithful Ministry. By Debra Rienstra and Ron Rienstra. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009, 978-0-8010-3616-3, 288 pp., $22.99.

Reviewer: *Matthew D. Kim, Logos Central Chapel, Denver, CO*

Resources on Christian worship are becoming quite plentiful in contemporary ecclesial culture. *Worship Words* is a noteworthy contribution to this collection. In this important volume, the Rienstras offer the church an insightful and provocative study to guide church staff, pastors, worship leaders, and lay members regarding the many dimensions of planning worship services, and encourage readers toward the conscientious and skillful employment of language and words for the glory of God.

The book is divided into twelve main chapters. The first seven lay the theoretical groundwork, and the final five are geared toward creative application with respect to language used in corporate worship services today. Each chapter concludes with helpful exercises that invite further reflection and dialogue, both personally and within group settings.

In chapter 1, "The Dimensions of Language in Worship," the authors convey the importance of the language employed in our church's worship and what those words communicate both directly and indirectly to those gathered in corporate worship. "The words of the sermon serve to teach and explain. The words of an opening hymn might express praise and a poetic way, but also remind us of generations past who worshiped the same God with that same hymn. The words of an improvised intercessory prayer express the holy longings of the leader on behalf of the congregation, in the words of our praise-and-worship songs express our individual dedication, love, and thankfulness" (28). This initial chapter focuses on four central features of language: the expressive, aesthetic, instructive, and memorial, and how language and word usage become formative tools that speak to these different dimensions.

In chapter 2, "Worship as Dialogic Encounter," Rienstra argues that: "Worship is a dialogic encounter, a loving conversation between God and the people of God" (44). Oftentimes, in churches, the dialogue occurring between God and humanity takes the following form: God invites us to worship; we confess our sins; God speaks to us; we respond ingratitude; we remember God's grace at the Lord's Supper; and God sends us out into the world (45). In this chapter, the authors challenge the all too frequent haphazard and thoughtless use of language in contemporary worship songs and prayers rendered to God.

In chapters three through seven, the Rienstras tackle common problems in word usage which they describe as: On Chatter and Patter (chapter 3); On Repetition (chapter 4); The Puzzle of Authenticity (chapter 5); Watch Your Figures: Metaphor in Worship (chapter 6), and Naming God: Meeting the One Who Is (chapter 7). Each of these chapters seeks "to offer a careful evaluation of language often heard in churches" (61), and

how our language can be chatty, sloppy, repetitive, inauthentic, confusing, and incomplete, at times. After naming various problems in language, the authors later provide helpful solutions for readers to contemplate and utilize for the benefit of their churches.

In chapters eight through twelve, we are invited to incorporate into our worship services: something old (tradition), something new (new incarnations of the gospel for today's culture), something borrowed (worshiping with the global church), and something blue (the ministry of lament). The authors point out in these chapters the tremendous opportunities available for the utilization of language and speech that uplifts individual souls, corporate communities; in doing so, the triune God is glorified.

Last, but not least, practical suggestions are offered in appendices 1–3: Practical Advice for All Occasions: Ten Tips; Worship Planning Process; and Assessing Songs for Congregational Use. The reader will definitely not want to miss these important tips and tools to deepen one's thinking and planning of worship services.

Worship Words is a stellar book on the subject of worship. The authors adeptly and seamlessly string together personal illustrations, research from church culture, and literature on worship studies to grapple with an important but often overlooked subject—our usage of language and words in corporate worship. As preachers and teachers of homiletics, we want to be meticulous and considerate with the words we use, not only from the pulpit but at all times. *Worship Words* will give you, your churches, and students the ability to constructively critique the worship words being used in the sanctuary today, and to be able to speak sagaciously and with more Spirit-filled precision tomorrow.

Becoming Whole and Holy: An Integrative Conversation about Chbutorsristian Formation. By Jeannine K. Brown, Carla M. Dahl, and Wyndy Corbin Reuschling. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011, 0801039258, 197 pp. $24.99 (paper).

Reviewer: *Timothy J. Ralston, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX*

The work is based on the assumption that spiritual formation suffers from the same fragmentation of approach fostered by postmodern thought and culture at the beginning of the 21st century. As an example of re-integration the authors engage each other in a conversation concerning spiritual formation from their differing expertise: Brown (professor of New Testament, Bethel Seminary), Dahl (professor of formation, Bethel University), and Reuschling (professor of ethics and theology, Ashland

Seminary). Their goal is "to propose ways of conceiving of human formation (becoming), wholeness, and holiness informed by the insights of the social sciences, biblical hermeneutics, and ethics" (1).

Beginning with the question, "What does it mean to be human?" the conversation assumes the answer, "whole and holy." The conversation then follows a three-fold pattern identified by the contributors, entitled "offering, reception and integration." First, each contributor explores the question of defining and developing human wholeness and holiness with reference to constructs extracted from her respective discipline; each author offers her case in two chapters. Following this, the other two receive the presentation with brief responses. Finally, in conclusion, together they offer suggestions for integrative connections between the three disciplines and answer the question.

The authors argue for "an egalitarian view" of their respective disciplines, treating the three approaches to the question as equal manifestations of divine truth and, therefore, giving each an equal voice in the presentation and discussion (but without criticism from each of each). This egalitarian view of truth is further emphasized by the order in which the approaches are explored: social sciences, biblical hermeneutics, and ethics. The three proposals for wholeness and holiness might be summarized as follows: love and hospitality that manifest a generous concern and care for others (social sciences), a journey of becoming facilitated in community by dependence upon God's work and eschatological goal and discernment of the appropriate holy response to the world (biblical hermeneutics), and the mirroring of the Trinity in equitable relationships (ethics).

As a snapshot of the longer discussion between the participants, a reader may feel somewhat disadvantaged, but the contributors generally speak in simple language that is both clear and engaging. Despite their original commitment to egalitarianism in discussion, throughout the authors demonstrate a commitment to biblical coherence, using examples from the biblical text as affirmations or illustrations of their assertions. In many places, too, the authors offer insights that are intriguing and powerful, particularly for those who bring a significant biblical-theological background to the experience.

Nevertheless the work suffers from several deficiencies. First, terms are used without clear definitions or with inconsistent definitions. For example, the central concept of holiness is treated inconsistently: the first contributor defines it as "differentiated individuals living in authentic encounter with God and others" (46); the second as "imaging God" (67); the third as moral virtue (132); elsewhere holiness appears as a means for spiritual formation, rather than the goal. Defining wholeness and formation are similarly disparate: for Dahl, formation encompasses the total (i.e., multidimensional) human growth and development, an approach which

allows for the broad exploration of possibilities; Brown specifically addresses the spiritual dimension of human formation; Reuschling speaks to the moral aspects of human development. Obviously some consensus, or at least clear distinctions acknowledged, concerning the definitions of the central terms of the discussion would be helpful. Secondly, despite the title the work itself offers little integration. The conversational attempt at integration consistently offers more mutual affirmation than clear correlations or challenges, as if all significant difficulties in the process have already occurred out of audience earshot. Thirdly, while social and theological constructs may prove helpful and the authors offer biblical illustrations of their assertions and all will recognize the human hermeneutical biases and limits on the interpretation of the Bible, some may find the egalitarian assumption as stated by the authors a violation of *sole scriptura,* displacing the primacy of Scripture for such inquiries. Finally, while written simply, non-specialists may find the discussion academic, without practical assistance and, therefore, of limited pastoral value.

The Collected Sermons of Fred B. Craddock. By Fred B. Craddock. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011, 978-0-664-2357-7, 304 pp., $30.00.

Reviewer: *John Koessler, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, IL*

Most preachers have delivered at least one series of sermons that they believe would make a good book. Few publishers would agree. The general rule in publishing is that good sermons make bad books. In the majority of cases, the rule holds. Good preaching is designed for the ear. Books are written for the eye. No one knows this better than the homiletical master, Fred Craddock. In the introduction to this volume, Craddock notes: "Hearing is a world away from reading. A sermon is heard among listeners, one most often reads sermons alone" (xiii). Most sermons are marked by repetition, tangential observations and a conversational style that must be edited out before they can be published in book form.

Craddock's collection successfully violates publishers' rule. It captures the living voice of the preacher, preserving the peculiarity of the preaching moment without being awkward. It also successfully evokes the personality of Craddock himself. For this reason, Barbara Brown Taylor advises readers who hope this book will enable them to preach like Craddock to proceed with caution, warning that "to preach like Fred Craddock you have to *be* Fred Craddock" (viii). Nevertheless, preachers can learn a great deal from these sermons.

Craddock's genius is his ability to convey the experience of the text

by means of experience—both his own and that of the audience. Craddock is a master storyteller who knows the importance of concise description and carefully crafted language. He is an artist who can weave a collection of seemingly unrelated anecdotes into a tapestry that reflects the essence of a biblical text. He is successful not because he is a good talker but because he is a skilled observer and a good listener. "Exegesis of texts begins in a sense of distance between oneself and the text," Craddock explains. "This distance is to be respected, and even enjoyed as one enjoys listening in on a conversation" (xiv).

In other words, Craddock succeeds not because he closes the distance between the audience and the text but because he magnifies it. Craddock's style is narrative but not merely illustrative. He does not use the text as an excuse to tell stories. The biblical text is the center of gravity in his sermons. His stories make sense and hold together for the listener because they disclose the idea of the text. Craddock sympathizes with his listeners without pandering to them. His sermons are audience focused without being audience centered. He is able to capture the listener because he has first carefully listened to the text.

This collection of sermons can serve as a master class in inductive preaching. But that is not where I would begin. I would encourage you to read these sermons for your soul. That experience alone is worth the price of the book.

On Your Mark: Reading Scripture without a Teacher. By William J. O'Malley. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2011, 9780814633502, 207 pp., $19.95.

Reviewer: *Abraham Kuruvilla, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX*

Fr. O'Malley is a Bible teacher at Fordham Preparatory School. Having taught high-schoolers for four decades, this gospel "commentary" promises the ability to Mark "without a teacher." "It is devised for beginners at reading the scriptures without a teacher, whether the beginner is fifteen or fifty" (ix).

The first 31 pages provides succinct background material for the gospel of Mark, including a chapter on reading texts in general—paying attention to figures of speech; the importance of attending to "story truth" (the insight they provide into reality, as opposed to pure historical information); etc. I especially liked O'Malley's assertion that "[t]he gospel writers were not just reporters; they were also *commentators.* They were not merely setting down facts but, by their treatment, trying to bring out their *significance*" (15).

Each chapter of the gospel gets its own chapter in the book, which

concludes with "review questions" and a "for reflection" section. The questions were not particularly helpful, and the reflections were hit-or-miss, mostly miss. They did not struggle with the "whys" of the text: Why is this text here and what is the author *doing* with what he is *saying*? Rather, in a shotgun approach, verses are randomly turned into quasi application points. For instance, dealing with Mark 1:9 and Jesus' baptism, O'Malley asks: "Have you personally ever suspected, perhaps skeptically, that *you* might be called to a bigger life, a larger contribution than what you might have safely contented yourself with before?" (46). Or, with regard to Jesus forgiving the paralytic: "[I]t is inescapable that we have to forgive sins readily too" (55). Unfortunately, despite his earlier assertion that the gospel writers were bringing out the significance of the facts, no real significance is brought out in the reflections. For a preacher, this is key. I found myself regularly scribbling "So?" on the margins of the author's commentary. What was the significance of Mark's juxtaposition of several controversy dialogues in Mark 2, for example? In fact, not many connections are made at all, between pericopes or between chapters and sections.

Yet, O'Malley does make some astute observations: Mark 3:13 uses the word "made"—Jesus "made" disciples, alluding to the appointment of Moses, Aaron, and the priesthood; with regard to 3:34–35, the author probingly asks what could be more important than the will of God in our lives; he notes the piling up of details regarding the Gerasene demoniac's oppression (4:3–4), and the fact that his desire to "be with" Jesus was the same verb the Lord used to describe the task of his disciples (4:18); etc. The relative infrequency of these gems make the $20 a bit hard to justify.

Overall, the tenor is somewhat liberal. For instance, "the historical Jesus himself discovered who he really was only gradually, just as we must discover our real selves." This, despite Mark's report in the second chapter of the gospel that Jesus proceeds to forgive a paralyzed man, while agreeing with the scribes that only God could forgive. Indeed, Mark even has an evil spirit recognize Jesus as "the Holy One of God" (Mark 1). And so on. In another place, 10:19, O'Malley is too quick to attribute error to Mark's pen when he put down "do not defraud" in Jesus' list of the Ten Commandments, instead of "do not covet" (10:19). Could there not be a reason for this pointed alteration?

The entire book is written in an easily readable, homey style (even including a four-letter expletive, "h*?!"); one gets the impression, despite the subtitle, that an avuncular teacher is right there, peering at the pages of Mark with you, over your shoulder. All in all, an interesting approach, though it probably does not belong to the preacher's top-10 "go-to" tools for the Gospel of Mark.

The Way of Goodness and Holiness. By Richard M. Gula. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2011, 978-0-8146-3347-2, 170 pp., $18.95.

Reviewer: *Ken Langley, Christ Community Church, Zion, IL*

With road or journey as controlling metaphor, Richard Gula shows pastors what it means to be good and holy. He starts by setting our moral GPS at a destination—ministerial spirituality marked by authentic humanness, imitation of Christ, practicing the faith, and developing virtue. Then in the second and main section of the book, he examines the virtues necessary for reaching that destination, and in the final section, he looks at helpers along the way, with emphasis on the friends, mentors, models, and community with whom we travel.

Gratitude, humility, fidelity, self-care, discernment, piety, humor, wisdom, prudence, justice, compassion, generosity, and courage are discussed in turn. Gula's exposition of each demonstrates mature pastoral experience and long reflection on what it means to practice these habits of the heart (he has taught spiritual formation for many years). He concludes his discussion with a bullet list of practices that cultivate and express each virtue. Though the word "bullet" may be off-putting ("What? Are we reducing virtue to a to do list?"), this feature is actually quite thought-provoking; Gula comes up with some fine suggestions.

Some of these practices are rooted in Roman Catholic spirituality, but evangelical pastors will find that most of the book is readily applicable. "Readily," not "easily"! Practicing virtue is tough, and Gula doesn't pretend otherwise. He knows the temptations, failings, and foibles of pastors: we love to be in control, we think we don't need help, we can all too easily disguise or rationalize laziness. This book can be a convicting read. It can also be an irritating read, as when the author champions gay rights or confuses government redistribution of wealth with biblical justice.

The Way of Goodness and Holiness would make a fine discussion guide for a group of ministerial interns or a good devotional guide for any pastor who wishes to be more intentional about spiritual growth.

The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching. By Kenyatta R. Gilbert. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011, 978-0-8006-9627-6, 170 pp. $16.00.

Reviewer: *Winfred Omar Neely, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, IL*

The African American preaching tradition is one of the most powerful and creative preaching traditions developed in North America. But little scholarly reflection had been given to a marginalized people's preaching tradition. That changed in the 1970s with the monographs of Henry H. Mitchell and Cleophus J. LaRue. With this work, Kenyatta Gilbert adds his voice to the conversation. Gilbert is a professor and a practitioner of preaching, a steward of the African American preaching legacy of several generations.

The book has seven chapters: an introductory chapter, and six chapters that address various aspects of his topic. All of the chapters are provocative, but the introductory chapter and chapters 1 and 2 were outstanding.

Chapter 2 is a moving overview of African American preaching from the period of North American slavery to that of the Civil Rights Movement. In this chapter, Gilbert also relates how African orality shaped African American preaching: "Numerous cultural signatures—rhythmic cadence, intoning, whooping, measure speech, use of metaphor, word picture, playfulness, gravity— … emanate from the influence of the early slave preachers, and perhaps more so from their precursors, the medicine man and conjurers" (35).

The Holy Spirit sanctified African oratory in the interest of spreading the gospel, promoting God's kingdom, developing a distinctive preaching tradition, preserving an entire people, and changing the course of an entire nation by the preaching of Martin Luther King, Jr. But Gilbert overstates his case when he implies in the chapter's title that the venerable African American preaching tradition is vanishing. In fact, in many places African American preaching is actually thriving, and promises to grow in influence on society.

According to the author, contemporary African American preaching should have three elements: a prophetic element, a priestly element, and a sagely or wisdom element. Gilbert calls this approach to preaching trifocal preaching. His thesis is: "Preaching from the three voices of prophet, priest, and sage is the single most important task in the revitalization of African American churches and communities. … [T]rivocal preaching is African America's theo-rhetorical currency for staving off communal death" (110). Gilbert also defines African American preaching as "a ministry of Christian proclamation … about God's good will toward community with regard to divine intentionality, communal care, and the active presence of hope—that finds resources internal to black life in the North American context."

Gilbert's agenda is commendable, but his book has some serious weaknesses. First, Gilbert's prose is sometimes recondite, making some

his good ideas inaccessible to the average homiletical student. Second, his definition of African American preaching is problematic. He reduces African American preaching to Christian proclamation *about* God. But in any community the preaching of the word of God is the word of God. In biblical preaching, ultimately the communicator is God himself. The idea that "hope finds resources internal to black life" is an uplifting statement, but it is not scriptural. The gospel always points to Christ, and never finds resources "internal to black life" or any other ethnic or racial life for that matter. Third, trivocal preaching per se may not be the solution. It can be argued that the greatest need in the African American community, or in any community, is anointed expository preaching, Spirit-empowered preaching that relates the whole Bible to the people's lived experiences. If a church and a community put the entire Bible into practice in every aspect of life, remarkable revitalization would occur. Fourth, Gilbert maintains that the preacher must have something meaningful to say about a number of issues including "violence perpetrated against persons because of their gender or sexual orientation" (83), without telling us what those meaningful statements should be.

In spite of the book's weaknesses, the work is a thoughtful and informative read!

Preaching with Sacred Fire: An Anthology of African American Sermons, 1750 to the Present. Edited by Martha Simmons and Frank A. Thomas. New York: Norton, 2010, 978-0-393-05831-4, 960 pp., $45.00.

Reviewer: *Timothy S. Warren, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX*

Martha Simmons earned a M.Div. from the Chandler School of Theology at Emory University and a J.D. from the New College of California School of Law. She created *The African American Lectionary* and edited *Preaching on the Brink: The Future of Homiletics*. Frank A. Thomas holds a Ph.D. from the University of Memphis, D.Min. degrees from Chicago Theological Seminary and United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, and currently serves as senior pastor of Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church in Memphis, Tennessee. He has written several books including *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God: The Role of Celebration in Preaching*. Simmons and Thomas co-edited *9.11.01: African American Leaders Respond to an American Tragedy* and publish the journal *The African American Pulpit*. Working together again on this substantial volume, these anthologists have demonstrated the epitome of homiletical scholarship of its kind.

The editors divided their history of African American preaching

into six distinctive time periods: The Beginnings of African American Preaching: 1750-1789; Social and Religious Emancipation: 1790-1865; From Reconstruction to Deconstruction: 1866-1917; World Wars, Freedom Struggles, and Renaissance: 1918-1950; Civil Rights and Direct Action: 1951-1968; From Black to African American and Beyond: 1969 to the Present.

Each time period is introduced with a 4–17-page historical/cultural overview in order to provide contexts for the ninety-two featured preachers, to highlight their essential themes, and to characterize their varied styles of communication. A brief biographical introduction precedes each of the preachers' speeches, addresses, sermons, or sermon excerpts, and a single paragraph situates each message in its immediate rhetorical setting.

In addition, Simmons' 20-page exposition of "Whooping: The Musicality of African American Preaching Past and Present" defines and distinguishes the practices of this distinctive art form. Another 26-six pages of "Other Notable Preachers" follows, providing the names, birthplaces, birth/death dates, denomination/faith affiliations, and brief biographies of another 163 preachers. A substantial bibliography, including unpublished works and media sources, rounds out the anthology.

From the designations of the six historical periods, as well as the titles of the individual sermons, readers can anticipate that many "sermons" are as much politically, culturally, and socially driven as they are biblically based and spiritually nurturing. That is, perhaps, a major message of this volume: these secular/sacred perspectives *should* merge and harmonize in true preaching, which concerns itself with one's practical state of being as well as one theological commitments. The sins of slavery, segregation, racism, and sexism provide sufficient fuel for the preacher's flaming words.

Preaching with Sacred Fire promises to become one of the most important books on preaching in general and perhaps the best on African American preaching in particular. No other anthology of African American preaching approaches its depth and breath. It is exceptionally well written and meticulously researched. This is what academic studies in the field of homiletics that analyze a period or style of preaching should look like.

This work offers an abundance of references for further study in African American preaching. It illustrates a richness of preaching styles with its panorama of history, its depth of theology, its flights of emotion-laden language, its storehouse of ideas, and its transcendent relevance. Scholars will feast off this provision for decades.

Young preachers, or old, of any ethnic background would do well to read aloud and seek to emulate the masterful invention and melodious flow of these representative sermons. As preachers strive to find, or refine, their preaching voice, imitating the best of African American preaching should provide a fertile training ground.

Finally, anyone who reads these sermons will find himself or

herself blessed. There is spiritual nourishment in the words and images of the majority of these sermons. So, the text might well be used devotionally, meditating on one sermon a day to build up the soul and encourage the heart. Any time invested in this volume will prove profitable.

Preaching and the Emerging Church: An Examination of Four Founding Leaders: Mark Driscoll, Dan Kimball, Brian McLaren, and Doug Pagitt. By John S. Bohannon. CreateSpace, 2010, 978-1453694589, 318 pp., $18.76.

Reviewer: *Timothy S. Warren, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX*

This is the self-publication of Bohannon's Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary Ph.D. dissertation. His concern over the expansive impact of the emerging church movement, especially considering its influence on preaching, precipitated the decision to place this critique of four of its most widely acknowledged leaders/preachers into the rapidly developing discussion as quickly as possible.

After a brief introduction the book develops three parts. In part 1, Bohannon overviews the history of the emerging "conversation," identifies its pioneering leaders, and locates it squarely in the "shift from modern to postmodern culture" where "traditional practices of Christianity cease being the only way to do church or to know God" (25–26). The author submits the names of four leaders/preachers in the emerging conversation who played a "formative role during the early stages of the movement" and who have "continued public influence" (44–45). Bohannon views Brian McLaren as "a generous orthodox preacher that dislikes perspicuity," Doug Pagitt as "a radical revisionist preacher who desires to re-imagine pulpit ministry," Dan Kimball as "a winsome . . . relevant preacher," and Mark Driscoll as "a staunch puritan reformed preacher known for his provocativeness" (59).

In part 2, the author presents each preacher's theological message in terms of the Bible and the Gospel, their mentality/philosophy in terms of his beliefs and values regarding preaching, and their method in terms of preferred style of communication. Each preacher receives a chapter of detailed, and fair, analysis, carefully documented with hundreds of quotations and footnote references.

In part 3, Bohannon critiques his subjects in terms of their strengths and weaknesses based on two presuppositions: 1) "the tenets of historic, Protestant, Evangelical, orthodoxy," and 2) "all true biblical preaching … is expositional preaching" (164). As in his analysis, Bohannon's critique is amply supported with quotations and detailed footnotes.

McLaren and Pagitt receive severe censure from the author.

Regarding the Bible, they "teach an *eisegetical*, misguided hermeneutical view of Scripture by making its primary emphasis a philosophical, revolutionary, social calling . . . [aligning] with the social gospel, liberation theology, or postmodern multiperspectivalism" (180–181). Regarding the Gospel, "If McLaren's message blurs the line between gospel truth and heresy, then Pagitt's version of the good news message re-chalks the line and then assertively crosses it" (188). Regarding preaching mentality, the two "revisionists" promote "preaching to postmodern sensibilities . . . as dialogue . . . with a posture of humility . . . as one without authority" (194). Regarding preaching method, "Their chosen methods of packaging and delivering messages, which can be captured in two essential forms – narrative and dialogue – is both consistent with their revealed preaching ideology and seemingly the best choice to express their theology" (216). In summary, their "low view of Scripture leads to a culturally driven conversation concerning an unorthodox gospel" (272).

Kimball and Driscoll fare better as they "affirm the divine inspiration of the Scripture . . . its usefulness and sufficiency" and "submit to Scripture as the authoritative source for Christian belief (orthodoxy) and practice (orthopraxy)" (233). For both "relevants," the Gospel is "the heart and soul of Scripture as represented by the apostle Paul's pocket-size account written to the church of Corinth (1 Cor 15:3–4) … truth—as given in Scripture and passed down through the ages in its present orthodox, traditional, and/or evangelical form" (241). Regarding preaching mentality, preaching "[is] a central component of the church and its mission," (246). Regarding methodology, both "anchor their preaching in expositional methods that communicate the truth of Scripture … wed to authorial intent and scriptural authority … contextualizing the message in the best means possible for effective communication" (254). In summary, their "high view of Scripture leads to a text-driven heralding of an orthodox gospel" (272).

Any evangelical preacher or teacher of preaching should consider Bohannon's carefully researched and surprisingly accessible critique. One's theology, philosophy, and methodology interrelate and will be revealed in practice. We must take care not to sacrifice faithful preaching at the altar of pathological theology, speculative philosophy, and/or novel methodology.

The Bible, Live: A Basic Guide for Preachers and Teachers in Small Churches. By Vernal Wilkinson. Denver: Outskirts, 2011, 978-1-4327-6639-9, 166 pp., $16.95.

Reviewer: *Andrew Thompson, The Chapel United Methodist Church, Brunswick, GA*

Wilkinson aims to provide an "effective model of preparation" (iii) for preaching to ministers who have not had the benefit of seminary education and who work in small churches. He covers a wide swath of topics: the theology of preaching, the process of Bible study and exegesis, a review of competing models of preaching, a guide for constructing a sermon outline, and tips for effective delivery. Along the way, he adapts these concepts and their discussion to the specific needs of the preacher in a small (and probably rural) church.

The topic of ministry in a small church is where Wilkinson is at his best. It is clear that he has not only experienced the unique benefits and pitfalls of small church ministry, but that he possesses hard-won wisdom about how a new pastor in such a community can integrate himself as an effective communicator. His chapter "On the Small Church" offers fifteen pastoral insights and how they relate to preaching. These are the kind of ideas that make immediate sense, but which would usually have to be learned by experience (including mistakes). Here Wilkinson provides a valuable service to small parish ministers.

His discussions of exegesis and preaching, however, form a disappointing contrast to his practical wisdom. Most of his assertions in this regard consist of brief summaries of other authors—at times too brief to be helpful to a reader unfamiliar with the topic at hand. Wilkinson, it seems to me, has tried to accomplish too much in roughly 150 pages, and the resulting confusion is at times all too evident. It is manifest on at least three levels: first, he expresses key ideas unclearly. For instance, in his chapter on Preaching and Teaching, he does not actually define the two terms at all, and I had to re-read the chapter several times before understanding that he conceived of teaching as the academic precursor and core of preaching (which he also calls "exposition" without alerting the reader of the change in terminology). Second, his discussion lacks the application required of a truly practical guide. To highlight just one example: in discussing sermon outlining (which he contends should always be in the "problem-question" format) he gives 14 different samples of outlines based on passages (103-113). Yet he fail to give adequate information about how a preacher could develop those outlines from the passage. I would have liked more discussion of how Wilkinson developed each outline from its text, and what considerations moved him to choose that particular form. This kind of rapid-fire example-minus-instruction makes the book feel more like a review of preaching concepts than a manual for growing preachers.

But the deepest level of confusion lies at the heart of the book's structure. In the final analysis it is unclear how the various parts of Wilkinson's book relate to one another. Part 2, for instance, guides the student from a biblical passage to the theme or main idea of that passage.

Then part 3 organizes teaching into a five-step process (approach, focus, information, analysis, application). But immediately following, part 4 reverts back to developing a main problem in the form of a question, and creating an outline. Part 5 covers the introduction, conclusion and illustrations; but it is part 1 that is entitled "Organizing the Sermon." All this tends to leave the reader a bit lost.

Wilkinson's work, then, while offering helpful wisdom for minimally trained preachers in small churches, does not give the preacher the clear and comprehensive guide he will need when facing the task of delivering biblical, clear, and engaging sermons.

Making Your Way to the Pulpit: Hethcock's Homiletics Goes to the Parish. By Jerrilee Parker Lewallen. Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf & Stock, 2011, 978-1-60899-068-9, xviii + 161 pp., $21.00.

Reviewer: Ben Walton (D.Min. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA)

Jerrilee Parker Lewallen seeks to preserve and perpetuate the homiletic philosophy of her preaching mentor William Hethcock, who taught homiletics for many years within an Episcopal context at University of the South and, after retirement, at Virginia Theological Seminary. An outflow of Lewallen's D.Min. thesis, the book describes and reflects on the method and usefulness of Hethcock's approach to homiletics.

Hethcock's method is an interesting mix of expository preaching's commitment to biblical authority and the assumptions of the New Homiletic about the listener. The approach may rightly be called expository because it seeks to proclaim and apply the message of a biblical text. Hethcock recognizes that biblical texts can be difficult to interpret, but never suggests than meaning is polyvalent. While he shares, with the New Homiletic, the belief that preachers need to adjust their approach to reach contemporary listeners who feel that they can determine for themselves what is or is not authoritative, Hethcock never suggests that the audience is a valid determiner of a biblical text's authority.

At the center of Hethcock's approach is a four-step process for moving from biblical text to contemporary life. The first is to determine the original message of the text. The second is to discover the human condition that the text's message was written to address. The third is to figure out what form(s) that human condition takes today. The fourth is to proclaim the text's message to those that experience the situation(s) identified in step three.

Following Craddock, Hethcock holds that sermons are effective

only when listeners "hear" them. Throughout the book, Lewallen highlights Hethcock's guidelines for achieving this end. Hethcock stresses that effective sermons only have one point and that this point, or focus sentence, should be developed in the body of the sermon more like an unfolding narrative than a lecture. This focus sentence itself ought to be stated twice, once as the first sentence of the sermon and once in the conclusion. He recommends preaching from a manuscript, and sees little value in using humor, raising questions, or sharing personal stories. A proponent of "supportive confrontation"—a way promoting transformation by addressing human sin in ways that reveal the good news—Hethcock argues that every sermon must identify something that listeners can know or do to promote change.

Lewallen has done preachers a service by making Hethcock's approach to homiletics more accessible. For those within the New Homiletic tradition who desire a way to faithfully preach Scripture, this book is an excellent resource. The book is also useful to homileticians generally because it reveals the wisdom and reasoning of a seasoned teacher of preaching.

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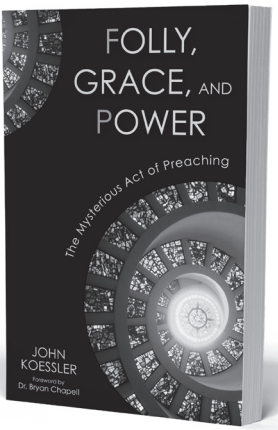

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—Jeffrey Arthurs,
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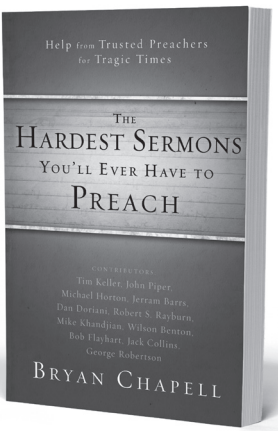

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The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society

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

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

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

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

Purpose:

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

Vision:

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

General Editor:

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

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

Frequency of Publication:

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

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3. Neither the text, nor selected sentences, nor subheads should be typed all-caps.

4. Notes should be placed at the end of the manuscript, not at the foot of the page. Notes should be reasonably close to the style advocated in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* 3rd edition (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1988) by Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achtert. That style is basically as follows for research papers:

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   note: 23. John Dewey, *The Study of Ethics: A Syllabus* (Ann Arbor, 1894), 104.

   b. From a periodical:

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   Dewey 111.

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