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Manuscripts: Though most articles and book reviews are assigned, submissions are welcome. They must by typed and double-spaced. All articles will be juried to determine suitability for publication. Please send articles to the General Editor, Scott M. Gibson, at sgibson@gcts.edu. Letters to the editor are also welcome. Those who have material of whatever kind accepted for publication must recognize it is always the editor's prerogative to edit and shorten said material, if necessary.

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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Please note: Although the articles in reflect the general concerns of the Evangelical Homiletics Society, some details in the articles may not reflect the position of the Editorial Board.

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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.

THE HISTORY OF IT ALL

SCOTT M. GIBSON
General Editor

The theme of the October 2011 Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Homiletics Society focused on the history of preaching. The guest presenter was the respected historian of homiletics, Hughes Oliphant Old. Dr. Old's impressive series, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, a total of seven volumes, is part of the legacy of historians who have labored to chart the place of preaching in the life of the church.

Hughes Oliphant Old joins Edwin Charles Dargan, O.C. Edwards, Clyde E. Fant, William M. Pinson, David L. Larsen, Frederick Roth Webber, Paul Scott Wilson among others who have helped to codify the important role of preaching throughout the centuries. Through his works on preaching and worship, Hughes Oliphant Old will continue to have an impact on the way preaching is understood, critiqued, researched and valued.

In light of the theme of the conference, three papers focusing on history are included in this edition of the *Journal*. First, however, we begin with the paper chosen by the attendees of the conference for the Keith Willhite Award. The award is given for the outstanding paper presented at the conference. The Keith Willhite Award is given annually in memory of the late co-founder and second president of the Society, Dr. Keith Willhite. Randal Emery Pelton was the 2011 recipient as determined by the members of the society at the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary meeting. Pelton's paper on preaching and the cross begins the articles in this edition.

Second, Scott A. Wenig's article on the sermons of Edwin Sandys charts the place of one preacher in Elizabethan England. Wenig provides helpful insights in appreciating the role of Sandys in his context.

Next, Woosung Calvin Choi examines the question, "Has preaching contributed to individualism in the church?" Choi explores the place of preaching as it relates to the church—the many—and individualism—the one.

Following is an article by Greg R. Scharf as he examines the role of convictions and preaching using the historical figure, Heinrich Bullinger as a case study. Scharf draws out lessons from which those who preach and those who listen can learn regarding convictions and preaching.

Finally, a sermon by Russell H. Conwell is included as an historical example of early twentieth-century preaching. Conwell (1843-1925) was a titan among preachers in turn-of-the-century America. His most recognized sermon, "Acres of Diamonds" is estimated to have been preached by Conwell over 6,000 times. In this edition, Conwell's sermon, "Go Forward," (a Rally

Day sermon) is provided for readers to enjoy.

The sermon is followed by a healthy collection of book reviews. The books are reviewed by members of the society and other invited guests. The variety of books reviewed in the area of homiletics demonstrates the richness of publication in the field. Readers will benefit from the reviews as they determine which books they will recommend to their school librarians and also will purchase for their own libraries.

The history of it all is that by God's providence today we are part of the on-going march of time and we, too, will make our own contribution to the legacy of preaching. This society has determined to do just that—"to advance the cause of biblical preaching" now and into the future.

CREATIVELY MOVING TO THE CROSS: ADOPTING THE GOAL WHILE ADJUSTING THE METHOD OF EARLY CHRSTIAN PREACHING

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INTRODUCTION

One goal of early Christian preaching was to read Old Testament Scripture in search of Christ. However, Lienhard writes: "It is something of a shock for modern interpreters to turn to patristic literature and discover the Fathers, who bequeathed orthodoxy to the church, indulging the most fanciful forms of what appears for all the world to be eisegesis."[1] You may have experienced this shock as you consulted the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. This paper argues that, while the goal of preaching Christ is worthy, the method utilized by early Christian preachers needs to be adjusted to enhance the pericope's meaning. The author presents a method of creatively moving to the Cross and illustrates this method from the preaching of Timothy Keller of Redeemer Presbyterian Church on 1 Kings 3:16-28.

THREE STANDARD EXAMPLES

Below are three standard examples from early Christian preaching of creatively moving to the Cross.

Numbers 20:2-13 records how God's people and their leaders, Moses and Aaron, acted in the waterless wilderness of Zin. In a nutshell: the people quarreled with their leadership, the leadership went into the presence of God and received instruction concerning how to provide water, but didn't quite follow those instructions, yet God provided water anyway and told the leadership what would happen because of their unbelief and failure to uphold God as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel.

Because of Paul's interpretation in 1 Corinthians 10:4 ("...they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ"), we would expect early preachers would find Christ in Numbers 20:2-13. Here's how Augustine understood part of the narrative: "The rock is Christ in a sign, the true Christ in the Word and in the flesh. And how did they drink? The rock was struck twice with a rod. The double striking prefigures the two pieces of wood on the cross."[2]

Exodus 4:24-26 contains a puzzling scene as Moses begins to make his way back to Egypt to redeem his people. During a stopover, the Lord who commissioned Moses to deliver His people "met him and sought to put him to death" (v. 24). Thankfully, Moses' wife, Zipporah, knows how to stop the attack. She circumcises their son "and touched Moses' feet with it and said, 'Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!'" (v. 25). In Augustine's, *On the Grace of Christ and Original Sin*, he wrote, "Christ was the rock whence was formed the stony blade for the circumcision..."[3]

One final example comes from Theodoret of Cyr's understanding of Psalm 23. Concerning the phrase, "Your rod and your staff comforted me," he writes, "with one he supports my weakness, with the other he guides toward the right way. You would not be wrong, however, to apply this to the saving cross....This is the meaning...the cross is assembled from two rods, with the upright staff confirming and directing those who believe in him and strengthening those who are weak, and using the crossbar as a rod against the demons."[4]

Christological interpretation of early Christian preaching was characterized by two major tendencies. First, all three examples show the tendency of atomistic interpretation. The preachers found Christ in the details of the narrative, such as the rock being struck twice. Their goal was to preach Christ and they creatively moved from details in the narrative to the cross to accomplish their goal. Second, and more important for this study, these three interpretations show the tendency to engage in what I call *disconnected*, Christological interpretation. In other words, there appears to be no attempt on the part of early Christian preachers to connect Christ to the meaning of the pericope.

In Numbers 20, the discovery of the Cross in the rock being struck twice does not help interpret the narrative. There is no connection between Christ crucified and the sinful response of God's people in the wilderness. The same goes for seeing Christ as the rock from which a cutting instrument was formed in Exodus 4. Seeing Christ does not help interpret the scene in which God is stopped from seeking to kill Moses. Theodoret of Cyr's discovery of the Cross in the shepherd's rod and staff in Psalm 23 did not have any bearing on the meaning of the Psalm, in particular how a believer could claim that the Lord was their Shepherd according to the Psalm.

While I admire and espouse the goal of early Christian preachers to find Christ throughout the Old Testament, I am proposing that an adjustment needs to be made so that the Christological discovery *enhances* the meaning of the pericopes. But, before I present an adjustment, I want to briefly give two reasons why this approach is necessary. The first reason has to do with the implication of Jesus' teaching in Luke 24. The second reason has to do with the results of biblical theology's attempt to locate a canonical center.

TWO REASONS FOR CHRISTOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

First, while teaching His disciples, if Jesus applied His hermeneutic throughout the *entire* Old Testament Scripture, then this kind of creative exegesis was one of the ways He "[began] with Moses and all the Prophets" and "interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27; verse 44 adds "and the Psalms"). If Jesus *only* utilized His hermeneutic in *selected* Texts, then maybe He could get by with the more obvious connections created by quotes and clear allusions.[5] The wording of Luke 24:27, however, favors the need for Jesus to move creatively from *most* Old Testament preaching portions to some aspect of His person and work.[6] Luke says, "all the Prophets" and "in all the Scriptures."

In *most* Old Testament sections Jesus would have had to move creatively to Himself since direct quotes are sparse. Greidanus cites research that shows that the New Testament contains 1604 quotations from 1267 Old Testament passages.[7] If my math is accurate, then that leaves approximately 26,300 unquoted verses in the Old Testament.[8] How would Jesus move, for instance, from those narratives about the kings in Kings and Chronicles to Himself? McCartney and Clayton raise this issue: "Since the NT writers do not cover everything in the OT, we may expect large areas where the typology or sensus plenior has not been indicated in the NT."[9] Those large areas are either off limits to the Christ-centered hermeneut, or we can attempt to move creatively to the cross. However, I stress again that Luke twice said, "all," which suggests that expositors should (must?) find ways to move creatively to the cross if they are to implement Jesus' hermeneutic.[10]

Second, if these creative, Christological connections are not made, then a crucial segment of Scripture's message is absent in most Old Testament preaching portions. I've arrived at this conclusion through interaction with Walt Kaiser's writings, specifically his proposed canonical center. Kaiser argues that in order for biblical theology to function as "informing theology" for the Church, it must have a "canonical center."[11] He states his center as "...God's word of *blessing*...or *promise...to be* Israel's God and to do something for Israel and *through them* something for *all the nations* on the face of the earth."[12] Notice what this canonical center leaves out. It does not tell us what Scripture tells us—*how* God's promised blessing came true. Kaiser's center has left out Scripture's portrayal of Jesus as the One through whom God's blessing/promise would come to the Jew first and also to the Greeks. Kaiser's analysis has left out the Gospel and this affects the interpretation/application of Scripture, especially Old Testament Scripture. This observation becomes an important part of my understanding of how Christ-centered preaching operates. Christ-centered preaching consistently fills in Kaiser's canonical center by showing how God-in-Christ brings His salvation/blessing to those who believe. In the Old Testament this means showing Christ as God's ultimate display of grace, the means by which judgment is averted, and the fuel for the desire and capacity to live according to the stipulations of His

covenant.

A PROPOSED ADJUSTMENT

A proposed adjustment to move creatively to the Cross involves the notion of anchoring Christological meaning to the meaning of the preaching portion.

Now, having presented two reasons for adopting the Christological goal of early Christian preachers, let's discuss a way to adjust their method so the connection to Christ *enhances* the meaning of a preaching portion. In the examples above of early Christian preachers, the connection to Christ was disconnected from the meaning of the preaching portion. They knew they needed to find Christ, but didn't know that Christ taught His disciples how He *completed* the meaning of those pericopes. The narratives, laws, prophetic oracles, and Psalms all *meant something more* than was previously known. I do not believe Jesus was showing them Himself in a way that was disconnected from the meaning of the pericopes. Yet, this is how much Christological exegesis is conducted.[13]

Let's revisit Numbers 20:2-13. Augustine taught that the double-striking of the rock pictured the two pieces of wood that made up Christ's cross. I am suggesting that the connection to Christ needs to be connected to the meaning of the narrative, meaning tied to the plot. How does knowing that their rock was Christ enhance the interpretation/application of Numbers 20? A first reading of Numbers 20:2-13 could be seen as a call for God's people not to quarrel with Him about what He hasn't yet provided. In this reading, the narrative is designed to encourage God's people to believe in His ability to provide for them. The gift of water-from-the-rock is intended to bolster faith. For Paul to identify the rock as Christ appears to be a *meaning-changer*, but look at what this interpretation actually does.

Numbers 20:2-13 still encourages God's people to believe in His ability to provide for them on the basis of what He has provided *in Christ*. Christians who are satisfied with all that God is for them in Christ do not crave evil things and quarrel with Him. My wording comes from 1 Corinthians 10:6 ("Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved."). This second, Christological reading provides a more specific look at why God can and should be trusted—look at what He did for us in Christ. It also provides a reason why those who truly have Christ put to death their evil cravings (Christ satisfies).

The second reading is a true second reading because we've allowed the first reading of Numbers 20:2-13 to communicate foundational meaning.[14] Then and only then can we move to something like: Christians do not crave evil things when Christ satisfies their thirst. In the Numbers narrative God is calling us not to contend with Him because to do so is evidence of a lack of faith in His provision in Christ. Notice, only the *rock* has been redefined, not the *plot*. The meaning and intention of the original mini-plot is kept intact

despite the addition of the larger plot of the Gospel Story. The narrative in Numbers has set the parameters for meaning, meaning that is not violated by the New Testament reference to Christ.[15]

Anchoring Christological meaning to the meaning of the entire preaching portion is a crucial part of adjusting the method utilized by early Christian preachers. The concept of *creatively* moving from an Old Testament preaching portion to the Gospel involves a certain lack of precision. To be creative is to be inventive, imaginative. This does not undermine preaching with greater accuracy because of where we are at this stage of interpretation. If this creativity was employed at the *beginning* of the exegetical process to establish foundational meaning, then we might have problems. But, to the best of our abilities we've anchored meaning to the vocabulary and structure of God's Word (i.e., in the plot, not the redefinition of the rock as Christ).

EXAMPLES OF CREATIVELY MOVING TO THE CROSS

The preacher's quandary may be to eliminate the preaching portions in the Old Testament that contain material quoted in the New Testament and even eliminate the segments containing clear allusions. However, in order to implement Jesus' hermeneutic, one must be ready to move creatively to the cross. Consider the following examples of possible, creative connections.

Exodus 31-34 contains the story of God's people worshiping the golden calf. Part of God's judgment on His people was the order for the Levites to "kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor. In Exodus 32:29 Moses says, "Today you have been ordained for the service of the Lord, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day." In v. 30 Moses goes on to say, "now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

One meaning or intention of the narrative is to urge believers away from the kind of idolatry displayed at Sinai. In order to avoid this kind of sinful behavior, Christians need to believe how God-in-Christ has made atonement for their sin and act according to that faith. The narrative provides a connection to the Gospel by mentioning that the blessing of God could come upon God's people only "at the cost of his son" (v. 29). This is exactly how God provided atonement for our sin, which includes the ability to avoid the sin of idolatry. At the cost of His Son, God made our atonement possible.

Another way to move from the story to the Savior is in verses 30-35 where Moses pleads with God. Moses asks God to blot him out of God's book if He will not forgive their sin. In verse 33, "the Lord said to Moses, 'Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book.'" Thankfully, God did temporarily blot out One who did *not* sin against Him. God did not accept Moses' offer because Moses could not forgive sins through his own condemnation. However, God did accept Jesus' offer and Jesus' death-for-sin stopped the plague caused by our rebellion (cf. Exodus 32:35).[16] Faith in

God's most gracious act is the beginning of loyal worship.

The story of Jonah provides another opportunity for creative, Christological exegesis. Kuruvilla provides a summary of the meaning of Jonah: "Will you be merciful like the God who called you?"[17] Let me suggest a couple of ways to move creatively to the cross from Jonah chapter 4. First, in 4:2 Jonah tells God that he knew He was "slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster." However, on the cross, God did not abandon His harsh intention to kill His Son to pay for our sin. When believers see God extending that kind of mercy at the expense of His Son, it changes them deeply and gives them the desire and capacity to "be merciful" (like God and unlike Jonah). Second, in 4:3 and 8 Jonah's words can be applied to Christ with new meaning: "it is better for me to die than to live." Jesus died as a result of this reasoning and this was the ultimate display of God's mercy. This connection to the Gospel also shows *how* believers can put Jonah's message into practice.

These kinds of creative connections involve no risk; the meaning of Jonah is not changed. I have found a couple of ways to move from Jonah to the cross so that the meaning of Jonah—"Will you be merciful like the God who called you"—can be actualized by Christians by faith. This helps us avoid a moralistic interpretation/application. I can be merciful like God, unlike Jonah, as I am seeing and believing in God's mercy for me displayed in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. *Believers* don't follow Jonah's poor example of being mercy-less. They fight against selfish impulses by faith in Christ in the power of the Spirit.

This kind of Christological interpretation is not an alternative to exemplar preaching, but *Christianizes* it. Often, Christ-centered preaching and exemplar preaching are pitted against one another.[18] I am suggesting that the choice is no longer simply between exemplar or Christ-centered preaching; it's not one or the other, but both/and. I have no doubt that one possible meaning of Jonah is that he was intended as a bad example ("go and do otherwise"). But I do not believe Jonah was intended to function as a bad example without pointing us to the *perfect* example of the Prophet who felt the same pity for the entire world that God felt for the Ninevites.[19]

AN EXAMPLE FROM TIMOTHY KELLER'S PREACHING ON 1 KINGS 3:16-28

In an article entitled, *How to Read the Bible*, Wilkens describes the task of doing creative, canonical exegesis: "The Bible becomes a vast field of interrelated words, all speaking about the same reality: the one God revealed in Christ....The task of an interpreter is to help the faithful look beyond the surface, to highlight a word here, an image there, to find Christ unexpectedly..."[20] I have found no one who does this better, week in and week out, than Timothy Keller. When pastors ask me for a model of Christ-centered preaching, I recommend they listen to the way Keller's hermeneutic

plays out at the end of his sermons. It has been said that some things are better caught than taught. If you listen to Keller regularly you will *catch* his hermeneutic and benefit from the myriad ways in which he moves from the preaching portion to the Gospel.

My first exposure to Keller's preaching was his sermon on 1 Kings 3:16-28 which records the first test of Solomon's newfound, God-given wisdom. Two prostitutes approach Solomon over a dispute concerning an infant. Both mothers were claiming that the boy was theirs. Solomon asked for a sword to cut the baby in two so that each could have half. The real mother is horrified and quickly acquiesces to the other woman. Solomon's tactic revealed the true mother; his wisdom wins the day and his reputation began to grow.

At the end of the sermon, Keller begins to explore how we can copy the poise of the real mother. Keller said, "If she can do it, you can do it." He believes the narrative is functioning as a positive exemplar ("go and do likewise"). Then Keller continues:

> It's not just Solomon pointing us to Christ here. The woman is, too. You know what the woman did? She looked at the throne and said, "No. No. Don't ruin his life; ruin mine; don't tear him into two; tear me into two. So that he can have hope and joy, I will lose and give away all my hope and joy." But don't you realize there was a greater One than that who stood before the eternal throne and He looked at us and he saw the sword of judgment over us; he saw that we should be punished for our foolishness? And what did He say to the throne; what did He say to His Father? He says, "No, don't ruin them; ruin Me; don't tear them into pieces; tear Me into pieces. I will give up all of my joy and all of my hope so they can have joy and hope." And He did....Do you see Him doing that for you....if you have Him as your true King, you will be truly wise?..."

This is Keller's way of showing from the narrative that ultimately the King is wise for us. He is the source of our wisdom to handle life's tricky situations. Then Keller also quoted 1 Corinthians 1:30 "...Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God..."[21]

The way to connect preaching portions to the Gospel is virtually endless—there are almost as many ways as there are preaching portions. Bos suggests that one way to move creatively from an Old Testament preaching portion to Christ is to see the words as spoken to Jesus or by Jesus or about Jesus.[22] Words spoken to Jesus could be in the form of a prayer or request or confession. Words spoken by Jesus need not be direct quotes found on Jesus' lips in the Gospels, but simply words He very well could have spoken due to His circumstances. I moved from the Story to the Savior in Jonah 4:3, 8 along this path. Words spoken about Jesus describe who Jesus is and what He has done to save those who believe.

In Keller's example above, the true mother's action was used to highlight Jesus' action to save us who believe. Keller was able to include the sword, the object of judgment, in his movement from the Story to the Savior. In my first example from Jonah, I connected the Story to the Savior by pointing out that, on the cross, God did not act the way He acted in Jonah. On the cross God did not "relent from disaster" (cf. Jonah 4:2). In the Exodus 32:29 example, I moved from the Story to the Savior through a similar concept: redemption through the loss of a son/Son. Then in Exodus 32:33 a possible connection to the cross exists in the fact that what God said to Moses ("Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book...") thankfully was not true on the cross.

CONCLUSION

In an effort to adjust the Christological method of early Christian preachers, I suggest that the move to Christ should (1) be made *after* the idea of the preaching portion has been established through standard, historical/grammatical/literary exegesis, (2) be connected to the idea established through exegesis, and (3) should enhance the meaning of the preaching portion by showing how God-in-Christ-through the Spirit saves those who believe, including supplying the desire and capacity to live the sanctified life that is often portrayed by biblical characters.

NOTES

1. Joseph T. Lienhard, ed. *Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, ed. Thomas C. Oden, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, vol. Old Testament III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 110.
2. Ibid., 239. In the next paragraph, Caesarius of Arles is quoted, "What does it mean that the rock was not struck once but twice with the staff? The rock was struck a second time because two trees were lifted up for the gibbet of the cross: the one stretched out Christ's sacred hands, the other spread out his sinless body from head to foot. Sermon 103.3."
3. Ibid., 33.
4. Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, ed. *Psalms 1-50*, ed. Thomas C. Oden, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, vol. Old Testament VII (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 180.
5. On a continuum, a quote is the clearest, most solid connection between two Texts/contexts. Next are the allusions, more indirect references. At the other end of the spectrum are creative connections which occur as phrases or concepts leading to some aspect of the Gospel of Christ.
6. Godet writes, "Jesus had before Him a grand field, from the Protevangelium down to Mal. 4. In studying the Scriptures for Himself, He had found Himself in them everywhere (John 5:39, 40)." Cf. F. Godet, *A Commentary*

on the Gospel of St. Luke (New York: I. K. Funk & Co., 1881), 507.For an interesting understanding of the hermeneutic Jesus taught His disciples, see Matthew W. Bates, "Closed-Minded Hermeneutics? A Proposed Alternative Translation for Luke 24:45," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129, no. 3 (2010). On pages 556-557 Bates writes, "For Luke, the hermeneutical imperative is that a *qualified guide* must open the 'mind' of the Scriptures for those who have not yet become sufficiently acquainted with the way of the Lord....neither inward illumination nor a supernatural opening of the mind is needed in order to interpret the Scriptures successfully, but rather a qualified guide who can introduce the would-be expositor to the 'mind' of the Scriptures, that is, to the foundational apostolic kerygma."

7. Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1999), 185.
8. Did Jesus move systematically through the Old Testament story or did He provide several examples to function as a template for their future studies? Your guess is as good as mine. I do not think that Jesus showed His disciples that every single verse in the Old Testament displayed a connection to Him. My understanding is that some preaching portions are lengthy such as Joshua 10-12 which catalogs Joshua's complete victory over the reigning kings in the Promised Land. In such sections you might discover a few creative connections between the narrative and the Gospel. For instance, Joshua 10:24 contains Joshua's instruction to his chief soldiers to place their feet on the necks of the defeated kings. There are several verses in those three chapters which I consider to have *no* connection. The lengthy narrative, not individual, isolated verses, contains the theology for the Church. That theology is developed as Joshua points to Christ having made His enemies His footstool (cf. Psalm 110:1; Acts 2:34-35; Heb. 1:13).
9. Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand : A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Pub., 2002), 167.
10. Not everyone agrees with this hermeneutic. Langley urges, "Let's be sure that when we're preaching Jonah we really preach Jonah and not John; when we preach Ruth, let's preach Ruth, not Revelation. In Christ-centered preaching there's a temptation to let the New Testament take over and not let the Old Testament be really heard." Cf. Ken Langley, "When Christ Replaces God at the Center of Preaching," in *Evangelical Homiletics Society* (Birmingham, Alabama: 2008), 16-17. Snyman writes, "It is not necessary for the New Testament to act as ventriloquist through which the Old speaks merely for the sake of being heard as the Old. Large parts of the Old do not have any christological focus....One should read and hear the Old Testament for its own unique theological message." Cf. S. D. (Fanie) Snyman, "Preaching the Old Testament from a Christian Pulpit," *Calvin Theological Journal* 45, no. (2010): 311, 316. These exhortations and statements must be squared with Jesus' hermeneutic which suggests that

Jonah and Ruth, for instance, were no longer to be preached in isolation from Himself. On page 313 Snyman argues that a "broadened understanding of the Old allows the congregation of Christ to listen from their position in Christ....From their status in and connectedness to Christ, believers listen to how God reveals himself and what he expects from a particular pericope of the Old." I am suggesting that congregants need to be reminded each weekend of their connectedness to Christ. One way to do that is to interpret the Old Testament in a way that shows its connectedness to Christ. Without this connection I fear most parishioners hear God's expectations and leave trying to meet them apart from faith in the Gospel.

11. Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1981), 138.
12. Ibid., 139.
13. An example of this approach can be seen in this theme from a sermon on Genesis 22:1-19 (the story of Abraham offering up his son, Isaac): "The greatest thing you can do for your children is to worship their Creator, the living God who provides for those who fear him." Cf. Steven D. Mathewson, *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2002), 170. Earlier on the page the preacher makes a Christological connection: "Genesis 22 foreshadows the provision of another sacrifice. The same God who provided a sacrificial lamb so that Isaac might live provided the ultimate sacrificial lamb, Jesus Christ, so that God's people might live." I am suggesting that this Christological connection be connected to the theme of worshipping God outlined in the stated theme. A similar approach of finding Christ, but stopping short of connecting Christology to the meaning of the pericope can be seen in Greidanus' treatment of the flood narrative in Genesis 6:9-8:22 (cf. Greidanus, 321-322.), Clowney's treatment of Psalm 22:1 (cf. Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), 134.), and Wenig's treatment of 2 Samuel 11-12 (cf. Scott Wenig, "A Different Exegetical and Homiletical Approach to a Prominent Biblical Narrative: Interpreting and Preaching 2 Samuel 11-12," *Evangelical Homiletics Society* 10, no. 2 (2010): 17, 21.).
14. Green writes, "Without first (grammatical-historical) readings, second readings are not true second readings and dissolve into allegory, readings that have no organic connection [to] the larger narrative." Cf. Douglas J. Green, ""The Lord Is Christ's Shepherd": An Alternative Christological Interpretation of Psalm 23," in *Evangelical Theological Society—Eastern Regional Meeting* (Calvary Church, Soudertown, PA: 2005), 20. Speaking of John's use of Psalm 69 ("zeal for your house...has consume me"), Hays writes, "Such retrospective reading neither denies nor invalidates the meaning that the Old Testament text might have had in its original historical setting. Psalm 69 is fully comprehensible as an expression of Israelite piety: it is a prayer for deliverance in a time of trouble and suffering.

When it is reread, however, in light of the New Testament's story of Jesus' passion and resurrection, it takes on additional resonances beyond those perceptible to its earlier readers." Cf. Ellen F. Davis, Hays, Richard B., *The Art of Reading Scripture* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), 224.

15. Speaking of his Christological interpretation of the story of Daniel and his friends in the furnace, Hays writes, "the sermon illustrates the point that figural reading does not abolish the original historical reference of the text." Cf. Ibid., 310. Hays' point was that the fourth figure in the furnace was a prefiguration of God's presence with and for us in our suffering. Identifying the fourth figure that stayed in the furnace as our Savior does not destroy the meaning of that narrative which helps answer Nebuchadnezzar's taunting question: "Who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?" (Daniel 3:15). The answer: Our God that delivers us is the God that did not deliver His own Son on the cross so we could have the assurance that He will always be with us in our suffering.
16. Davis displays this creativity in her interpretation of Psalm 39. She writes, "the Gospel takes us deeper into this psalm….God must become one of the desperate. So in the fullness of time, God becomes a resident alien in the person of Jesus Christ." Davis makes this connection from the psalmist's statement in verse 12, "As for me, I am a sojourner with you, a resident alien, like all my ancestors." Cf. Ellen F. Hays Richard B. Davis, *The Art of Reading Scripture* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003), 303. On page 308-309 Hays moves to the cross from Daniel 3:25, the famous story of Daniel and his two friends being thrown into the furnace. Hays writes, "Did you notice, though, a strange thing….The one whose appearance is like a son of God does not come out of the furnace of suffering. He is not miraculously preserved from the fire: he remains within it….At the end of this story stands Jesus….Jesus did not escape the clutches of his enemies; he did not emerge unscathed out of the furnace. No, he remained within it. He 'endured the cross, disregarding its shame,' precisely in order to deliver us to freedom and hope." Let me add that when Isaiah 43:2 reads, "…When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you," it's because the flames consumed our Lord on the cross as He suffered under the wrath of God.
17. Abraham Kuruvilla, "Text to Praxis: Hermeneutics and Homiletics in Dialogue" (University of Aberdeen, 2007), 91.
18. See Timothy Peck, "Salvaging the Old Testament Biographical Sermon," *Preaching* 15, no. 6 (2000). Compare Peck's approach with Sidney Greidanus, "The Necessity of Preaching Christ from the Old Testament," *Preaching* 15, no. 6 (2000). I am indebted to Tim Keller's model for this merging of Christ-centered and exemplar preaching. Some of Tim's comments during sermons suggest that he learned this approach from the practice of D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. This doesn't mean that Lloyd-Jones always practiced it, but it means that in Lloyd-Jones' sermons you often see both character studies and Christ exalted. You can see Lloyd-Jone's

method applied in D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Old Testament Evangelistic Sermons* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1995).

19. Concerning exemplars, Chapell writes: "This does not mean that biblical characters have no exemplary qualities for us to emulate (e.g., Rom. 15:4; Phil. 3:17). We must understand, though, that when these positive qualities appear, grace is the cause (Rom. 11:36)." Cf. Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005), 303. I propose that connecting Christ to the preaching portion best explains how the grace of God functions in the life of a believer so that the good example is followed and the bad (grace-less) example is avoided.
20. Robert Louis Wilken, "How to Read the Bibe," *First Things* 181, no. (2008): 27. There is a fine line between novelty and creativity. While I appreciate and share a similar goal of early Christian interpreters and their pre-critical exegesis, I am suggesting a different kind of creativity. The creativity of much early Christian exegesis as displayed, for instance, in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, *creates* essential meaning. The creative relationship between isolated details of a preaching portion and Christ *creates* the meanings of that preaching portion. I am advocating some creativity in connecting the preaching portion to the Gospel, but that creative step only fleshes out meaning that resides in the preaching portion. It does not create meaning that is unrecognizable from the preaching portion.
21. This excerpt is from tape #208, King's Wisdom (Solomon): Pointers to Christ-Signs in History (1 Kings 3:16-28), preached on October 5, 1997 at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. Keller has said that he learned much about preaching from D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. In his sermon, The Approach to the Gospel , Lloyd-Jones displays the creative approach to seeing Christ in the OT that Keller implements regularly: "What a perfect statement that is—'I am come down to deliver' (cf. Exodus 3:8 and God's statement to Moses concerning what He was calling Moses to do). Did I not start by telling you the gospel is to be found in the Old Testament? That is the whole story of the New Testament....God the Son came down from heaven. Why? Because he had seen your affliction and mine....He has come down, he came to deliver, and the only way to deliver was to take your sins and mine and bear them in his own holy, spotless, sinless body on the Cross....There he did it, he has paid the ransom, he has made the atonement, God is satisfied, the law is satisfied, hell and Satan are defeated and Egypt has been conquered." Cf. Lloyd-Jones, 42-43.
22. Rein Bos, *We Have Heard That God Is with You: Preaching the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 171-174. In her sermon, Prisoner of Hope, Davis writes concerning Psalm 39: "We might well imagine that this is the psalm Jesus prayed in Gethsemane…" Cf. Davis, *The Art of Reading Scripture*, 303.

PREACHING TO POWER: OBSERVATIONS ON THE SERMONS OF EDWIN SANDYS DURING THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH I

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ABSTRACT. Historians of the English Reformation have recently recognized that the first generation of Elizabethan bishops faced innumerable challenges in their efforts to implement Protestant thought and practice following the re-introduction of Roman Catholicism during the Marian regime (1553-1558). One of the most prominent of these prelates was Edwin Sandys (1519-1588), respectively bishop of Worcester (1559-70) and London (1570-77) and then Archbishop of York (1577-88). Given his personal history as a notable reformer during the Edwardian regime and the Marian exile, Sandys became a regular preacher at court during the reign of Elizabeth I. In a series of sermons preached at court and in other prominent venues, Sandys laid out his hopes and concerns for further reform to the Queen and her courtiers. This paper will reflect on the most notable of those themes and what his preaching ministry might mean for evangelicals in the early decades of the 21st century.

INTRODUCTION

"With the English pulpit so dependent on government support, it is not surprising that when the government was indifferent, English preaching was indifferent as well."[1] So argues venerable professor of theology and worship, Hugh Oliphant Old, in his magisterial work *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*. Old contends that because the most important sermons in the context of the English Reformation were those preached at court, this made much of sixteenth century English preaching problematic. Even more dramatically in his view, it was nothing short of a disaster under Elizabeth.[2] While Old's perspective is accurate in the sense that the Queen's distaste for preaching probably hindered the flowering of homiletics that came about during the reigns of her Jacobean successors, James I and Charles I, it is hyperbolic to state that there was little, if any, pulpit grandeur during her reign.[3] On the contrary, there were some notable English preachers in the latter half of the sixteenth century, one of whom was Edwin Sandys, respectively bishop of Worcester

(1559-70) and London (1570-77) and then archbishop of York (1577-88).[4]

SANDYS' LIFE

Born in Lancashire sometime around 1519, Sandys entered St. John's College, Cambridge around the age of thirteen. There he came under the tutelage John Bland, a future martyr under Queen Mary. It can be inferred that Sandys adopted his reformed faith from Bland because from that time on he was known as a fervent protestant.[5] After taking his degrees he became master of St. Catherine's College, Cambridge and then its vice-chancellor. His name is on a list of licensed Edwardian preachers and, from 1548 to 1553, he acquired a small number of clerical livings. But with the death of Edward VI in 1553 Sandys was imprisoned in the Tower for twenty-nine weeks as a supporter of Lady Jane Grey. Eventually, he was transferred to another prison, released after some political strings were pulled and quickly fled to the continent as part of the Marian Exiles.[6] He ended up in Strasbourg where he devoted himself mainly to study but appears to have been active in a ministry of preaching because two of his sermons from there have survived.[7]

Following the death of Queen Mary in November 1558, Sandys rushed home arriving in London on January 15, 1559, the day of Elizabeth's coronation. Later that year he was part of the royal visitation of the northern province where, over the course of four months, he preached at Nottingham, York, Hull, Newcastle, Richmond, Kendal, and Manchester. At Bishop Auckland Sandys unleashed his homiletical prowess against the doctrine of the real presence with such force that his kinsman, Bernard Gilpin, who would later become known as the apostle of the North, had difficulty subscribing to the visitation articles.[8] After turning down the diocese of Carlisle, Sandys reluctantly accepted the bishopric of Worcester claiming that to do otherwise would have incurred the queen's wrath and hurt the cause of Christ's church.[9] He served there for ten years, almost all of which were difficult, and was then translated to London.[10] Following a seven-year stint in the capital that was apparently no easier than his previous episcopate, he moved to York where he succeeded his friend Edmund Grindal as archbishop. There, amidst conflict and controversy with both recusants and fellow protestants, Sandys lived out his days and died in July 1588.

Sandys is worthy of attention for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that more of his sermons have survived than for any other Elizabethan bishop. There are twenty-two in a collection roughly covering the years 1555-87, including the two previously noted exilic messages. Some of these are easy to date, others not so much. Three messages were preached at York, two of which celebrated the twentieth anniversary of Elizabeth's ascension, while another was given at an assize. At least six were preached at court before the Queen and another two were delivered in St. Paul's Cathedral on occasions when she may have been present. Eight others were given in London at various times, either to Parliament or at Paul's Cross.

Since sermons preached at Paul's Cross were to the nobility and government in addition to the general populace, we can conclude that at least sixteen of Sandys' messages were directed towards various groups of people in power, most notably Elizabeth herself. The purpose of this paper is to analyze his homiletical methodology and approach as he spoke to those both above and around him in the highly stratified society of Elizabethan England. Moreover, some specific observations will be made about the theological and moral content of Sandys' preaching as well as highlighting some other issues he addressed. Finally, a few applications will be drawn from his example for the practice of homiletics in the early 21st century.

SERMONS TO THE POPULACE AND PARLIMENT

Sandys might best be described as a thematic preacher who chose both his texts and content for specific occasions and audiences. Of the sixteen sermons under investigation, seven were from the Old Testament while nine came from the New but each text was used as a springboard to a particular topic. For example, the first sermon in the collection is based on Isaiah 55:1-3 and was preached in St. Paul's on Christmas Day. In this instance the bishop's focus was intensely evangelistic. He proclaimed a God of mercy who desired all to be saved regardless of their social, economic or political status. This God calls everyone to redemption whether "Jew and Gentile, young and aged, rich and needy, bond and free, man and woman."[11] In Sandys' proclamation of the Gospel there was no hint of divine favor to those of social import, let alone any concept of limited atonement or double predestination. While admitting that every man's will was sinfully corrupted, this was not so by "the eternal decree of his [God's] unsearchable purpose."[12] Instead, any person could receive grace if "God hath framed his heart thereto."[13] Thus, regardless of their particular station in life, Sandys charged his listeners to embrace the promises of this gracious God so that "he shall make an everlasting covenant with us, even the sure mercies of David."[14]

Yet those in positions of power had both political and religious responsibilities in early modern England. To make this clear to the members of Parliament in 1571, Sandys' invoked the prophet Samuel's final plea for the Israelites to fear the Lord and serve Him in truth (I Samuel 12:23-24). In Sandys' view, Samuel functioned as both a priest and a magistrate; as a prophet and a prince. This was God's perfect plan because both were needed for the nation to be blessed.[15] Having laid a biblical and theological foundation, the bishop used the first point of this sermon to reiterate that the dual responsibility of ministers was to pray and preach God's word. But Sandys' primary emphasis was in point two which concerned the role of the magistrate, in this case the members of Parliament. They were to help purge the church of all false doctrine, idolatry and superstition (i.e. - Roman Catholicism), cleanse the flock from simony and nurse the church to health

by rewarding ministers with appropriate pay. In his view, preaching and the work of the gospel had to be underwritten by these elite members of society. For them to refuse this responsibility was to support the gospel with words "but….deny him [Christ] in deeds."[16] We have no idea how this sermon was received but given the historic appropriation of church wealth by Tudor Parliaments most likely not a few MPs were squirming in their seats.

SERMONS AT PAUL'S CROSS

Perhaps the most prominent public pulpit in sixteenth and seventeenth century England was Paul's Cross. It was an outdoor venue next to St. Paul's Cathedral controlled by the government and the bishop of London. Being outside, it allowed for few of the ceremonial elements of worship thereby making it the perfect place to expound God's Word. Moreover, all estates of Elizabethan society came to hear the preaching at Paul's Cross and it was large enough to hold thousands of people. Thus, in an age when preaching was the primary form of social media, the potential of this locale for homiletical impact was enormous.[17]

Each of Sandys' sermons given at Paul's Cross reflects his specific concerns about the state of the church, the ministry and the country at the time they were delivered. Three examples will suffice to show how he leveraged Scripture to address real or perceived problems. The first sermon is undated but its content and extensive length point towards it being preached sometime in 1559-60.[18] Using Luke 21:25 as his text ("There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars," etc.) Sandys' gave a brief history of how God had mercifully blessed the Jews. But they had consistently rejected Him, most notably in the crucifixion of the promised Messiah. Consequently, God judged them over the centuries particularly by fulfilling Christ's predictions about the Roman destruction of the Temple and all Jerusalem. Sandys' main gloss on this text was that God has two visitations; one of mercy and a second of justice. If His people reject the former they will certainly receive the latter. He then turned the tables and applied this directly to the English. They had been the beneficiaries of God's mercy since the advent of the Reformation but had now grown "weary of the Gospel; the food of life is rejected as a thing unsavory…."[19] The protestants were hated and despised and, in Sandys' view, less than one-fourth of the population were willing to follow and obey their new clergy as God's shepherds and schoolmasters. This bode ill for England and would only lead to judgment, the subject to which Sandys devoted the remainder of his message. In great detail he described the ultimate separation of the godly from the wicked and the final state of both groups. The sermon concluded with a charge to be watchful and pray "for we know not what time the Lord will come…."[20] Yet between Sandys' charges of apostasy, spiritual neglect and general immorality, one can only draw a negative impression about the general reception of the reformed faith in the early years of Elizabeth's reign.

Thirteen years later, as bishop of London, Sandys was trying to stem the growing tide of a powerful new adversary, this one from inside the protestant camp. Puritanism arose in the mid-1560s in an effort to effect significant changes in a church "but halfly reformed."[21] By 1572 the movement had blossomed into a full-fledged confrontation with the governing authorities, most notably the bishops. In their *An Admonition to the Parliament*, John Field and Thomas Wilcox had gone so far as to call for the abolition of episcopacy.[22] A year later, using the story of Jesus and the disciples crossing the sea in a boat (Matthew 8:23-24), Sandys publicly confronted the Puritans in a sermon at Paul's Cross. Leveraging the use of typology, which he said he borrowed from Tertullian and Chrysostom, the prelate delivered a barbed three-point sermon that argued for following Christ into the boat (the church), the need to recognize that the boat (church) will always sail in dangerous seas and that Christ shall give those in the boat His help, if they seek it.[23]

After making some passing references to the problems caused by Catholics and heretics, Sandys bore in on those "precise brethren" currently stirring up the stormy winds of dissension and contention. He lamented that the reformed faith should bring forth such schism and then, in classic Sandys' style, appealed to the principle of authority as the solution to this unfortunate conflict. His use of Scripture here is fascinating and, depending on one's perspective, perhaps even hermeneutically unjustified. Quoting the exhortation of the Ephesian city clerk to Demetrius and his riotous craftsmen to make a legal complaint against the Christians (Acts 19:35-40), Sandys' invoked his Puritan opponents to use the church courts and lawful assemblies of England to resolve their concerns. In his view, any refusal to do so revealed their "rebellious and disordered desires" as well as their prideful unwillingness to become fools for the sake of Christ.[24] This exhortation to submit to divinely sanctioned authorities, given here to the Puritans, is one of the interpretative keys to Sandys' life and preaching.

A third sermon, and the last that Sandys gave at Paul's Cross, was preached sometime in August or September 1586. It was occasioned by the discovery of a Catholic plot to assassinate Elizabeth and bring Mary, Queen of Scots, to the English throne. Numerous people were involved but the two main conspirators were Anthony Babington, a young Catholic nobleman and John Ballard, a Jesuit priest and Catholic agent. When the plot became public and the conspirators arrested, now archbishop Sandys was charged to speak publicly on behalf of the Elizabethan regime. He chose as his text Psalm 4:5, "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness," a portion of a psalm written by King David during the rebellion of Absalom. In magnificent style and for the majority of the message, Sandys covered that sad story as well as some other periods of disobedience in Israel's history. But the poignant parts of this sermon reveal the intense Tudor fear of rebellion as well as Sandys' view that England needed to repent of its current spiritual lethargy. In addition to calling for the traitors to be extinguished, he demanded that the magistrates,

ministers and people all offer a righteous sacrifice by turning away from their sloth by bringing broken and contrite spirits before Almighty God.[25] Interestingly, the queen was spared any such rebuke. In the Archbishop's view she was "a gracious and religious lady" who "hath not deserved this treachery…being most mild and merciful, doing good unto all, hurting none."[26] Few, if any, of the thousands who heard Sandys that day would have disagreed. But what appears to the modern mind as "kissing up," was to the archbishop and his listeners simply giving reverence where reverence was always due.

SERMONS TO THE QUEEN

To preach before Elizabeth could be a traumatic ordeal. While it was an honor to be asked, many a court preacher came away visibly shaken.[27] This is not surprising, given the physical context of the court itself and Elizabeth's known reticence towards preaching. The queen herself sat in a private box just a few feet away from the pulpit facing the preacher. If it pleased her majesty, she could either close the shutters to her window or remove herself to the back of the box. But even more intimidating to most preachers was the fact that she never suffered what she perceived to be fools, most notably among her clergy. In classic Tudor fashion, Elizabeth saw all of her subjects as her inferiors and even though the court pulpit was physically elevated, she did not hesitate to bring a preacher down a few notches—or more—for what she interpreted as inappropriate content.[28] Moreover, her religious instincts were never favorably disposed towards reformed religion, making it difficult for most committed Protestants to preach in a manner pleasing to the queen. When she did occasionally approve a sermon it almost always went to press, something that the clergy then, as now, were pleased with.[29]

Edwin Sandys seems to have been the surprising exception to this royal rule of thumb. While unafraid of conflict, and never shy about expressing his theological and ecclesiastical convictions, Sandys always operated under the principle of divinely appointed royal authority. He fervently believed that, in His sovereignty, God decreed society was to be hierarchical in nature with the monarch at the top. While the clergy had the responsibility for administering the sacraments, preaching the Word and promoting ecclesiastical discipline, this was always done under the crown's authority. Although Sandys' arch-episcopal colleague, Edmund Grindal, once challenged the queen on her micro-management of church affairs to his own demise, he never crossed that line.[30] If asked, Sandys mostly liked would have portrayed himself functioning like Isaiah, who exhorted the court of Israel to greater godliness, rather than Jeremiah whose prophetic ministry always placed him in opposition to the Judean kings. This approach can be seen throughout the sermons he preached at court.

In an undated sermon based on Psalm 86:11 (Teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth) Sandys argued strongly for the English

becoming a people who were scholars in the school of God's truth. This meant learning the Scriptures because they are the source of both good doctrine and godly living. But his main point of application was for those in positions of prominence; they must set the example in this regard. As the bishop noted, "You, my lords, you whom God hath placed before, you must go before: for God's love strive no longer, take your places and go on, that the people of God, being guided by you, as by lights, may follow after in the way of truth."[31] In other words, leaders must lead, starting with the queen! And they must lead in a truly reformed fashion, led by the Scriptures.

Another court sermon, this one essentially expository in nature, was preached from James 4:8-10. In his introduction, Sandys made a critical distinction between Paul and James and their respective ministries of teaching. Since Paul had been sent to the ignorant Gentiles, he always focused first on doctrine. But James ministered to the learned Jews and therefore oriented his words towards godly living. With that as his foundation, Sandys' then contextualized his message to this audience. He argued:

> Our times are learned times: God hath blessed our days with understanding: "We are enriched by him in all speech, and in all knowledge." But we know and do not: and that deserved stripes. Miserable it is to be ignorant of Christ, not to know the path which leadeth to heaven. "Yet better it were not to know the way of truth, than not to walk in it being known." I will therefore follow the wisdom of St. James, and with his own words exhort you.[32]

The bishop proceeded from there to walk his way thru the text, making periodic pauses to apply the apostle's words about double-mindedness to various groups such as the heretical Family of Love and those former Roman Catholics who outwardly conformed to the Elizabethan Settlement of religion but who would turn against it in a moment if given the chance. He then moved on to encourage his listeners to draw near to God by repenting from such visible sins as slander, oppression, bribery, usury and simony. But the main emphasis of his message was on rooting out the sin of pride and replacing it with humility. With an incisive pastoral touch, Sandys invoked the audience to look inward and upward to see their need for this virtue. Because God is gracious, he argued, He always responds to the humble repentance of His people. Thus, humility "would cause us to draw near unto Him; if we drew near unto Him, He would draw near unto us; if we did cast ourselves down, He would mercifully lift us up."[33] There is no way to discern how the Queen responded to her bishop's call for humility. But because almost everything Sandys' said in this sermon came from the text of Scripture, any disagreement would have been more with the divinely inspired apostle than with the prelate's application.

As a leader in the Elizabethan church, Sandys always recognized that one of his episcopal responsibilities was to help provide spiritual nurture

for the flock. This concern was never more apparent than in a court sermon he preached possibly around 1570 or a bit later, perhaps not long after his translation to London. The message was based on Isaiah 55:6-7: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found: call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous his own imaginations, and return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He is very ready to forgive." Beginning with something of an apologetic to the queen, Sandys noted that he would be brief since "to a mind well instructed already a short putting in mind will serve."[34] Then, with characteristic boldness, he began one of the strongest messages of his collected sermons. Using the history of Israel as his guide, he compared Elizabeth to Moses, noting how the merciful God:

> …by the hand of his mild and faithful servant delivered his people out of that thralldom, of bond made us free, discharged us from the intolerable tyranny of antichrist, delivered us from the usurped power of popery, from the Romish yoke of servile superstition, that we might serve no longer that man of sin, but our God; not with a slavish mind, but in perfect freedom of conscience; according to his most holy word, and not man's blasphemous doctrine.[35]

He admitted that his words of praise could be taken for flattery but defended them as praise to God for His mercy in providing such a ruler. He said his motive was not to please her majesty but to teach and then he proceeded to do exactly that. In what must have been a passing reference to Elizabeth's excommunication by the pope, Sandys noted how God had blessed England both materially and spiritually and "wonderfully preserved our sovereign, his servant."[36] Yet God's grace always carried with it the responsibility of obedience.

Here Sandys made some of his boldest statements ever when preaching to the queen. God was calling her to obey His word both personally and politically. He wrote, "Princes are not exempted more than others; no, they above others are especially charged to travail therein."[37] Specifically this meant heeding biblical wisdom and providing the church with more teachers of God's word rather than listening to the political theories of contemporary writers like Machiavelli. London was well served in this regard but many other parts of the land, "especially in the north parts, pine away and perish for want of this saving food….Many there are that hear not a sermon in seven years, I might say safely in seventeen."[38] The main problem was that the upper strata of English society were robbing the church of its wealth. This issue of lay appropriation deeply disturbed most of Elizabeth's first bishops and Sandys' saw it as the devil's work. In stark language he argued that to impoverish the ministry was "a device no doubt of Satan, and a practice of his imps."[39]

He hurried on to express his deep concern for another group in

Elizabethan society: the poor. Using Ezekiel's condemnation of Sodom for its pride and utter neglect of the poor, the bishop accused England and her rulers of the same sins. He asked, "Are not these the sins of this land, of this city, of this court, at this day? Are not these bad ways our ways?"[40] This was a serious charge, made to the queen's face. We have no record that she stopped or condemned him and the fact that the sermon was published not long after the archbishop's death speaks to her ability to hear a hard truth if it came from the right source. Perhaps the fact that Sandys quickly concluded the sermon with the promise of God's mercy for the realm if repentance were forthcoming allayed any royal rejoinder. Either way, Sandys' was more than willing to rebuke those in power in an effort to help the powerless.

Two other sermons, both given in York on the twentieth anniversary of Elizabeth's ascension (1579) when she was present, provide further insights into Sandys' theology, the state of English Protestantism and why the queen appeared to give him such homiletical license. The first message, listed as number four in the collection of his sermons, was an exposition of Paul's instructions on praying for rulers in I Timothy 2:1-2. After providing an insightful explanation of prayer and the crucial importance of praying for kings and civil authorities, the archbishop went into a not completely unexpected exaltation of the queen. Not only did he compare her to a number of prominent biblical characters such as Moses and Deborah but in a moment of unrequited emotion noted that she was more valiant in crushing the pope than her father and more sincerely committed to the Gospel than her brother.[41] But given the revolutionary nature of the Henry's Reformation, Edward's reputation as the "young Josiah" and Elizabeth's known distaste for reformed religion, Sandys' claims here ring more of political propaganda than spiritual reality. For her part, the queen must have enjoyed hearing such lofty descriptions of her achievements, however a-historical they may have been.

On this same festive occasion, Sandys also preached what might have been his most imaginative sermon. Based on Song of Solomon 2:15 ("Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom.") he shrewdly made use of typology to interpret the vineyard as God's church and the queen as the skilled caretaker of the vine. In His mercy, God had provided a godly, omni-competent overseer in the queen who surmounted "all former English princes in learning, knowledge, and understanding."[42] Over the prior two decades she had replaced the old religion with the good news of the Gospel, promoted the true sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper and pruned the ministry by the use of ecclesiastical discipline. And despite the slow advance of reform, especially in the North, Sandys' tone was one of unbridled enthusiasm. In his view, "no flock…[was]…better fed, no people more instructed, no vineyard in the world more beautiful or goodly to behold."[43] But going forward, Elizabeth must protect these gains by catching "the little foxes of greedy and cruel papists" that sought to ravage the vineyard.

At this point in Sandys' sermon we run head on into the conundrum of enforcing religious belief in a Christian society. He argued the theological point that God's heart was to turn the foxes into sheep; this was the essence of redemption and the reason why Christ came. Moreover, both magistrates and ministers had the Scriptures, good examples and church discipline to leverage in the work of conversion and spiritual formation. But if none of these proved to be effective, those in power had to administer law and order. Depending on the particular situation, all that remained for the unrepentant little foxes was the legal confiscation of their goods, incarceration, exile or even death. Sounding much like the Marian authorities from which he once fled, the now powerful archbishop proclaimed that the unconverted were "to be cut off or tied up, that they may not destroy others."[44]

What surprises the modern reader, however, is not Sandys' commitment to the enforcement of Protestantism in early modern England; most everyone in that era believed in the religious uniformity of the *corpus christianum*. What seems so shocking is how he ended this particular sermon. Using a tone that comes across as deeply strident even in print, he argued that both the magistrate and the minister were "to root out evil, and to seek the safety of God's vineyard, his beloved church."[45] Politically, the queen and her courtiers were almost certainly in agreement with the archbishop's content. But given that this was an occasion of joy and celebration, the entire conclusion sounds unduly militaristic. At a practical level Elizabeth appears to have ignored his advice. Early in her reign, she made it a principle of her government never to open windows into the souls of her people. As long as there was outward conformity at the parish level, she would rest satisfied and let preachers like archbishop Sandys' fret over those "fox dens" of unrepentant recusants.

LESSONS LEARNED

Taking into consideration the vast social, ecclesiastical and cultural divide separating us from sixteenth century England, there are at least two lessons we can draw from the preaching of Edwin Sandys. The first is to use a pastoral approach when preaching to those in power. Whether it is an individual serving as a church elder, the chair of the board of trustees or a key member of the founder's family, every Christian institution contains some people of great influence. This is a fact of life and those who preach need to be winsome, especially with them. This does not mean showing favoritism as much as it means recognizing institutional reality. Edwin Sandys did that. Despite a well-deserved reputation for being adversarial, he easily slipped into a pastoral role when preaching to Elizabeth, her courtiers and those in Parliament. This approach appears to have served him well, especially with the queen. In a letter to the earl of Shrewsbury, Sandys claimed that in 1579 she took him into her confidence about a potential marriage. If true, it was a rare privilege for a bishop to gain that level of intimate access to her majesty

and reflects that she valued his opinion as a spiritual leader of the realm.[46]

The second lesson is to let Scripture speak, especially when the stakes are high. Whether it is for an evangelistic outreach or speaking on behalf of those in great need, the Bible carries a weight that preachers do not. Sometimes, in our contemporary setting, church leaders rely on their personal ethos, communication skill or charisma to carry the message. While there is nothing inherently wrong with leveraging those as needed, *sola scriptura* must be our guiding light. Sandys knew this. As we have seen, he was not hesitant to use typology or personal praise as part of his homiletical method. But when speaking about the eternal destiny of people or fulfilling Christ's command to meet the needs of the lowly and downtrodden, he always let the literal truth of Scripture be heard.

Just after the turn of the last century, E.C. Dargan published a massive two-volume history of preaching. In the first volume he gave a surprising amount of attention to preaching during the English Reformation and even devoted a paragraph to Edwin Sandys. While Dargan noted that Sandys was an important churchman and preacher during Elizabeth's reign he concluded that, "his sermons were printed in 1585 and reprinted in several later editions. They are not held to be of very great value."[47] Hopefully, this paper has respectfully but clearly demonstrated just the opposite to be true.

NOTES

1. Hugh Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church, vol. 4, The Age of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 144.
2. Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, 144.
3. For an interesting take on late Elizabethan and Jacobean preaching see Horton Davies, *Like Angels from a Cloud: The English Metaphysical Preachers: 1588-1645* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1986).
4. Another prominent Elizabethan bishop known for his preaching was John Jewel. See Michael Pasquarello, "John Jewel: Preaching Prelate," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 69:3 (2000): 276-94.
5. Patrick Collinson, "Edwin Sandys" *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-2009); http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/24649.
6. Collinson, "Edwin Sandys."
7. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, ed. John Ayre (Parker Society: Cambridge University Press, 1846) nos. 15 and 16, 293-330.
8. Collinson, "Edwin Sandys."
9. Edwin Sandys to Peter Martyr, April 1, 1560, *Zurich Letters*, ed. Hastings Robinson (Parker Society: Cambridge University Press, 1846) I, no. 31, 74.
10. Scott A. Wenig, *Straightening the Altars: The Ecclesiastical Vision and Pastoral Achievements of the Progressive Bishops Under Elizabeth I, 1559-1579* (New

York: Peter Lang, 2000), 153-166.
11. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 1, 9.
12. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 1, 24.
13. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 1, 21.
14. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 1, 33.
15. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 2, 36.
16. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 2, 45.
17. While a bit dated, the best treatment of this subject is Millar Maclure, *The Paul's Cross Sermons 1534-1642*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1958).
18. Maclure records that Sandys preached at Paul's Cross in both 1559 and 1560. My suspicion is that no. 18 was one of those two.
19. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 18, 350.
20. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 18, 368.
21. Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 29. This is still the classic work on the topic.
22. Printed in *Puritan Manifestoes: A Study of the Origin of the Puritan Revolt* eds., W. H. Frere and C. E. Douglas (London: S.P.C.K., 1954), 5-55.
23. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 19, 371.
24. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 19, 374-381.
25. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 21, 414-415.
26. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 21, 415-416.
27. Perhaps the most notable episode along these lines involved Alexander Nowell, Dean of St. Paul's, who spoke too boldly about the idolatrous nature of images and saints in a court sermon in 1565. After receiving a verbal warning from Elizabeth, Nowell continued on apparently not hearing her majesty's rebuke. A few moments later she raised her voice and from 10 feet away injected "Leave that, it has nothing to do with your subject and the matter is now threadbare." Nowell was so disturbed he could hardly retain enough composure to end his sermon. *CSPS 1558-1567*, 405 quoted in Peter E. McCullough, *Sermons at Court: Politics and religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean preaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 47.
28. In a sermon at court in 1570 a prominent Puritan, Edward Dering, challenged what he perceived to be the queen's laxity in ecclesiastical matters. While his message enjoyed a wider circulation than any other sermon given during the queen's reign, she revoked his preaching license and church credentials within a year. For more on this see Margaret Christian, "Elizabeth's Preachers and the Government of Women: Defining and Correcting a Queen," in *Sixteenth Century Journal* 24:3 (1993), 561-576.
29. Alan Herr, *The Elizabethan Sermon: A Survey and Bibliography* (Philadelphia, 1940), 38.
30. For the full story on Edmund Grindal's challenge to the queen over the "prophesyings" see Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal, 1519-1583: The*

Struggle for a Reformed Church (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

31. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys,* no. 6, 124.
32. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 7, 126-127.
33. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 7, 142-143.
34. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 8, 144.
35. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys,* no. 8, 146.
36. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 8, 151. In February 1570 Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth in the bull *Regnans in excelsis*.
37. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 8, 153.
38. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 8, 154.
39. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 8, 155.
40. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys,* no. 8, 158.
41. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 4, 81.
42. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 3, 57.
43. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 3, 60.
44. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 3, 72.
45. *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys*, no. 3, 74.
46. Collinson, "Edwin Sandys."
47. Edwin Charles Dargan, *A History of Preaching, vol. 1, From the Apostolic Fathers to the Great Reformers A.D. 70-1572* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1905), 506.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE PAST: HAS PREACHING CONTRIBUTED TO INDIVIDUALISM IN THE CHURCH?

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ABSTRACT: Although the Christian church is communal by nature, Christians today are becoming more individualistic, and less community-oriented. Many attribute this to the rise of individualism in modern thinking and life and the changes of lifestyle in the modern society. Without denying the significance of social change and cultural influence on the ecclesial community, this paper examines the recent history of preaching and considers how preaching may have potentially contributed to this drift. Two practical suggestions are also offered as to how preachers can mobilize their congregations to move beyond their individual mindset.

INTRODUCTION

Several months ago, I preached on Acts 2:42-47 and expounded on the importance of the communal dimension of the church's life. After the worship service, a woman approached me and asked gently, "Pastor, why do you think Christians today find it difficult to think and live in terms of community?" You could tell by the look on her face she really wanted to know. Some pastors might be tempted to say, "Well, our culture and lifestyles are changing and influencing people to be more individualistic." While that response is true and valid, instead I said to her, "I am not sure. I think Christians today have forgotten to think and live in terms of community."

After I returned home that evening, her question reverberated in my mind, and I realized I was uneasy about how I had responded. I simply blamed Christians and their pursuit of individualistic lifestyles. Upon further reflection, I soon realized that this response was inadequate. It dawned on me that perhaps it is not simply that lay Christians have forgotten to think and live in terms of community. Perhaps we as preachers have in some ways neglected to communicate and nurture the communal dimension of the Christian faith.

In this paper, I seek to argue that the theory and practice of homiletics over the last half-century have contributed to the growing individualistic orientation of many Christians. The goal is not to cast blame, but to examine

carefully the recent history of homiletics to see what we can learn from the past. Hence, the approach taken in this paper is two fold. First, I will offer a brief historical overview of the broader movements within homiletics since the 1960s, especially recognizing the influence of neo-orthodoxy, the new homiletic, and evangelicals on the ecclesial community. Second, I will offer two practical suggestions for homiletical practice that I believe would be constructive for intentionally moving Christians toward a stronger community orientation.

A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In the 1960s, the influence of preaching on culture waned as morals declined due to instability in the political, social and religious realms.[1] The escalating tensions of the Cold War coupled with increasing racial tension and the cultural stress on individualism exerted a great influence on the perception of religion to the extent that Christian exclusivity was no longer a socially acceptable and tenable position.[2] The '60s was clearly, as Richard Lints describes, "a time of cultural upheaval and generational conflict. It was the decade marked by a clear 'before' and 'after.'"[3] While the '60's was a major turning point in American history, interestingly, the field of homiletics was also transitioning slowly into a new direction during this period. Some of the most significant shifts in the theory and practice of homiletics began to emerge. Notably, cultural upheaval in the '60s led to the widespread rejection of authority. The preacher's authority that was presumed in the past was no longer the case. As Haddon Robinson reflects, in the sixties, "authority—all authority—became suspect….Pastors were no longer trusted as the authorities they had been. This anti-authority mood created suspicion of churches and their values including the authority of Scripture."[4]

NEO-ORTHODOXY

During this period when many seemed to reject Christian tradition, and seek experiential encounters with God, a theological movement arose that made its appeal to the historic origin of the Christian faith: neo-orthodoxy. It is hard to discuss the homiletical landscape in this era without factoring in the theological impact of the neo-orthodoxy. A prominent figure in neo-orthodoxy was the theologian Karl Barth, who attempted to rediscover "the classical Protestant doctrine"[5] in an effort to reclaim orthodoxy over against liberal theology. Although much can be said about his theological legacy and his masterwork, *Church Dogmatics*,[6] we will confine the scope of our discussion to Barth's understanding of the doctrine of Scripture and inspiration which is crucial for understanding the impact of neo-orthodoxy on the theory and practice of homiletics.

Barth held a strong commitment to Scripture and preaching. He asserted that preaching is exposition of Scripture.[7] However, the Bible

became a source, not a text. He insisted that "preachers are forbidden to interfere with any science of art of their own,"[8] but must strictly regard the Scripture as the sole authority of divine revelation. Preachers, Barth noted, must have "absolute confidence in holy scripture."[9] Barth's goal of preaching was ultimately God's glory. He expressed this in his famous statement, "As ministers we ought to speak of God. We are human, however, and so we cannot speak of God. We ought therefore to recognize both our obligation and our inability and by that very recognition give God the glory."[10] It is clear that Barth considered the Scripture as the only authoritative source of preaching. Barth affirmed, "Preachers must accept the necessity of expounding the Book and nothing else."[11]

Despite Barth's strong emphasis on Scripture and preaching, his doctrine of Scripture and inspiration differed fundamentally from the historic Reformed and evangelical view which holds that the Bible itself is the Word of God. On one occasion "when someone questioned the unorthodox way in which he was commenting on Calvin, Barth retorted, 'Calvin is in heaven and has had time to ponder where he went wrong in his teachings. Doubtless he is pleased that I am setting him right.'"[12] Barth maintained that "the Bible is not God's Word in the sense of a state code that tells us precisely what the view of the state is. In reality we ought to say that the Bible *becomes* God's Word. Whenever it becomes God's Word, it *is* God's Word. What we have here is an event."[13] We can already see a correlation between neo-orthodoxy and the new homiletic regarding their emphasis on what the text *does* rather than what it *says*, and their view of preaching as an event. According to Barth, Bowman notes, "The Word is not per se Scripture, but rather what Scripture has to communicate to man from God."[14] The Scripture testifies to God's Word through human speech. Such a view seems to deny the confessions of the church such as the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Heidelberg Confession, which viewed "the Scripture as written as the Word of God and complete and final revelation."[15]

Despite his high view of preaching, Barth's perspective on the inspiration of Scripture undermines not only scriptural authority, but also the divine involvement of the Holy Spirit through which the biblical writers recorded and communicated God's message. On the one hand, Barth asserted that the illumination of the text is solely dependent on the revelation of the Holy Spirit: "This revelation inspired by the Holy Spirit can become luminous for us only through the same Spirit."[16] On the other hand, however, Barth seemed to deny the inner witness of the Holy Spirit within the biblical text. In defense of Barth, Donald Dayton expresses his sympathy that perhaps evangelicals may have put too much stress on the doctrine of inspiration held by B.B. Warfield which draws a sharp distinction between "the 'inspiration' that produced the text and the 'illumination' that occurs as the Holy Spirit speaks through the text to us today."[17] However, both inspiration and illumination are essential not just to the theory and practice of homiletics but to the Christian faith as a whole. The witness of

the Holy Spirit is involved in both the inspiration and the illumination of the text. Believing in one but not the other seems contradictory, and it leads to a diminished and inaccurate view on biblical inspiration.

Regrettably, Barth's doctrine of Scripture and inspiration raises several concerns in homiletics. First, an inadequate view of Scripture will lead to an inadequate pulpit. As Stott asserts, "we cannot handle Scripture adequately in the pulpit if our doctrine of Scripture is inadequate."[18] There appears to be a false dichotomy between what the Bible is as the written Word, and what the Bible is as the proclaimed Word. Barth wrote that Scripture remains the word of man—fallible—unless God uses it by His action.[19] When proclaimed, the Word of God is always viewed as an event.[20] For this reason, Bowman rightly argues that Barth's definition of the Word of God causes confusion since it neither endorses the Reformer's teaching on the Word of God nor appears orthodox in the biblical sense.[21] Barth's view on the doctrine of Scripture created further distance from the evangelicals but as Turnbull notes, it brought "many liberals back to the Bible for the basis of their preaching."[22]

The second concern is that Barth may have erred by over-stressing preaching itself as the chief end of God's Word.[23] It is certainly true that the act of preaching proclaims God's Word, but the authority of preaching does not precede scriptural authority. In other words, if one views the act of preaching—not the text—as God's own Word,[24] this tends to elevate the very act of preaching above scriptural authority.

A closely related third concern is that Barth's framework may cause preachers to have less confidence, or even lose faith in the Scripture itself. Barth's point of view inclines preachers to rely on their ability and their individualistic interpretation of the message. Perhaps that is why Barth suggested that to avoid such peril, a preacher should be utterly subservient to the Word and "engag[e] in real scriptural exposition."[25] However, he undercut that statement wit other comments such as this one: "The proper attitude of preachers does not depend on whether they hold on to the doctrine of inspiration but on whether or not they expect God to speak to them here."[26]

This leads to our final concern: As Barth lays things out that there is no way to examine or verify the preached words. That is, one cannot go back to the written Word to verify or examine on what was proclaimed because according to Barth, the text itself is not inspired. This opens the door to a preacher's presumptuous claims and assumptions, and may even lead to arrogance in the pulpit.

There is no doubt that Barth had a great passion for theology—theology in the service of the church—which is to be greatly admired and respected.[27] Clifford Green presents a positive perspective on Barth's theology:

> It is common to read Barth as the theologian who re-asserted

> the transcendence and primacy of God over against liberal, anthropocentric theology….Barth's protest was not only against anthropocentric theology, it was *equally* against its *subjectivism* and *individualism*….Barth was as much concerned to develop a *social* and *public* theology as a *theocentric* (christocentric and trinitarian!) theology.[28]

Nevertheless, it seems paradoxical that someone with such a conservative leaning toward God, Christ, the church, and Scripture would yet hesitate to acknowledge the inspiration of the Scripture itself. Larsen put it well, "Barth's neo-orthodoxy hoped to blend enough orthodoxy with Enlightenment thinking on the Bible as to make effective appeal to contemporary culture, but it is Barth's faulty and deficient view of scriptural authority that aborts his overall objective."[29] Larsen is not alone in his critique.[30] Buttrick, who stands in a different place on the theological spectrum from Larsen, seems equally critical, "So the irony is that Barth, who wrote more on the subject of preaching than any other modern theologian, has contributed much to the demise of preaching and, at the same time, to the rise of a peculiar crypto-fundamentalism in the land."[31] While these criticisms may deserve further reflection and examination, the overall influence of the neo-orthodoxy movement on preaching can be seen in the way that many of its teachings and presuppositions were adopted by some advocates of the new homiletic.

As liberal influence intensified, the emphasis shifted in the fields of biblical studies and hermeneutics. This crested in the establishment of the new hermeneutic, which brought a distinct homiletical shift as well. The style of preaching that was widespread since Broadus' 1870 publication of *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* fell out of favor.[32] The search for new homiletical methods was underway. What then followed was a series of efforts to discover new homiletical methods which are commonly referred to as "the new homiletic," to which we now turn.

THE NEW HOMILETIC: NURTURING THE "WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME" GENERATION?

Since its conception in the late 1960's, the new homiletic had dramatically changed how preaching is viewed and practiced. Progressively, the emphasis of homiletical theory and practice shifted from content and communication to experience and event.[33] For centuries, the sermonic process emphasized the presentation of an idea; in the second half of the twentieth century the emphasis shifted to listener and experiencing the dynamic of the text. This divergence from the traditional view of preaching had the potential to become a catalyst for an individualistic mindset in the ecclesial community. To understand this shift, it will be helpful to examine briefly Fred Craddock's seminal work on inductive preaching and its emphasis on

listeners and personal experience.

The new homiletic was pioneered by David Randolph and further developed by Fred Craddock, Eugene Lowry, David Buttrick, Edmund Steimle, Charles Rice, and Henry Mitchell. Craddock became prominent when his book *As One Without Authority* was published in 1971. As David Allen notes, the title made it clear that Craddock "meant to signal a shift, a shift in authority from preacher to congregation."[34] Such a shift is understandable when one considers Alexander Campbell's influence on Craddock, as Hughes Old indicates, "The tradition of Campbell comes through in Craddock's doctrine of the ministry. The role of the minister was primarily pragmatic on the frontier. The big question was, can the preacher preach effectively?"[35] Craddock straightforwardly made this shift clear, writing, "No longer can the preacher presuppose the general recognition of his authority as clergyman, or the authority of his institution, or the authority of Scripture."[36] Craddock contended that such assumptions often impede the presentation of the gospel on its own terms.[37] While some may argue with his basic premise, it is undeniably the case that *authority* has become an unpopular word in our culture. In most settings, to call a preacher authoritative is hardly a compliment.

Craddock put forth the inductive method of homiletics.[38] Elements of this method—dialogue, movement, and cultivating a deeper sense of experience through preaching—had a significant impact on the progress and expansion of the new homiletic. Without downplaying Craddock's contribution to homiletics, however, now that we can examine his work in hindsight, it appears that those contributions may very well have played a significant role in the rise of an individualistic mindset in the Christian community, especially with respect to the role of the listeners and their experiences.

A positive contribution of the new homiletic has been the increased awareness of the importance of listeners, and of allowing the preacher and listener to move together through the sermon. Gibson points out, "The new homiletic has made preachers aware of the importance of connecting with one's listeners."[39] At the same time, an overemphasis on the role of the listeners poses a risk. There seems to be a tendency for the situation of the listeners and the "eventfulness" of preaching to compromise the biblical text, so that the listeners may take it to be saying something quite different from what it appears to be saying because the original meaning seems elusive without any point of reference. Craddock who was influenced by Bultmann's existentialist interpretation of the Scripture, envisioned inductive preaching as an amiable form of communication that would allow listeners to arrive at their own conclusion to the sermon.[40] The premise of the new homiletic embraces the hermeneutics of suspicion, in that greater consideration is given to how the text might affect the listener, which can implicitly convey that the meaning of the text is uncertain and unfixed. As Gibson puts it, "The new hermeneutic in the new homiletic has essentially lost biblical meaning

because of the overemphasis on the role of the hearer."[41] For this reason, the approach of the new homiletic may be potentially dangerous because it may lead individuals to conclusions that may be socially and culturally acceptable but not be biblically compatible.

The listener-centered methodologies of the new homiletic can bring much refinement to preaching. If such refinement is left unexamined, however, without much theological consideration, the method may become the message. This, in turn, could potentially result in leaving listeners to choose their own individualistic understanding of the text, and encouraging a "what's in it for me?" attitude towards the biblical text. The danger here is that individualistic understanding of the text tends to take precedence over, or even exclude, the communal dimension of the Christian faith.

Another feature of the new homiletic is the emphasis on individual experience. There is certainly an experiential aspect to preaching as listeners interact and engage with the sermon. The new homiletic, however, tends to rely heavily on the experiential aspect of the hearers - more emphasis is given to what the text *does* rather than what it *says*. A higher priority can be given to elicit a certain emotional response/reaction from listeners. Since the new homiletic considers preaching to be an evocation of event, this raises concerns not only about the legitimacy of the experience of the individual listener but also about the conclusions at which the listeners arrive. Craddock's homiletical thought, as Nicholas Gatzke points out, "leaves only the option for the message to be grounded in the human experience of the listeners."[42]

Craddock made a significant impact, which in retrospect had both positive and negative aspects. Positively, it heightened the preachers' awareness of and sensitivity to their congregations and listeners. Negatively, however, the emphasis on individual listeners' and experience of preaching had an obvious down side: less consideration of communal identity. The new homiletic suggests an individualistic orientation rather than a communal orientation. Campbell affirms that the overemphasis on the individual, experiential event has demoted the perceived importance of building communal identity.[43] Further, he writes concerning narrative homiletics developed by Craddock and his proponents:

> The problem is that up until now narrative homiletics has provided no resources for thinking carefully about the ways preaching contributes to the upbuilding of the church—the formation of the people of God—beyond the individual hearer….The privatistic, individualistic, experiential approach of narrative homiletics simply cannot address adequately the communal dimensions of preaching.[44]

Perhaps it is time to reemphasize the communal dimension of preaching. If Campbell's observation still holds true for preachers today, then it would be difficult to deny that such homiletics may have contributed to the embrace of an individualistic and experiential mindset in the ecclesial

community. The homiletical trend of the last half-century can be characterized as the turn to the listener. While consideration of the audience and its varied ways of hearing a message is of great concern to homiletics, perhaps the new homiletic has taken it too far, and led some Christians to view their Christian faith as if it was all about them in fulfilling their personal needs.

EVANGELICALS AND AUTHORITY

In recent years, the ongoing debate among the evangelicals over the scriptural authority and its inspiration has raised great concerns that a lesser commitment to the authority and inspiration of Scripture will only lead to a decline in biblical authority, theology and preaching.[45] In view of the influence of neo-orthodoxy and the new homiletic on shaping an individual's mindset in the ecclesial community, it is also fair to say that evangelicals have not been immune from moving towards such proclivities.

In times of increasing individualism within the church, the Scripture is often interpreted and understood by individuals rather than by the church as a community. It seems sufficient for Christians to read the Scripture *individualistically* with little or no awareness of Christian community. Padilla underscores this:

> Throughout the entire New Testament the oneness of the people of God as a oneness that transcends all outward distinctions is taken for granted….The Bible knows nothing of the human being as an individual in isolation; it knows only of a person as a *related* being, a person in relation to other people.[46]

As Padilla contends, humans are created not as solitary individuals but as communal beings. The problem of individualism to the exclusion of community is noted also by church historian, Mark Noll, who observes that American Protestants have often been portrayed "as too individualistic, too much driven by personal concerns, too little concerned about communities of faith."[47] While numerous factors may have led to Noll's observation, a homiletical factor that may have contributed to such a notion may have been inadequate attention to the communal aspect of preaching in the past due to placing higher priority on the conversion, growth and subjective experience of individuals rather than promoting the importance of communal dimension of the Christian faith. At least, Jay Adams seems to agree that "there is much less emphasis on the corporate aspects of edification (the building of the entire body, as body) than there ought to be."[48]

SUMMARY

This section has presented a brief (but not comprehensive) historical overview of homiletics in the last half-century in the United States, to provide

a context within which to examine the nature of individualism in the ecclesial community today. Yet, we do not want to blame the church and its preachers to gain a perspective as to how they have arrived where they are. Ironically, although the neo-orthodox movement was a reaction against the increasing influence of the theological liberalism, it led, ultimately, to an inadequate view of Scripture and biblical inspiration, prompting both preachers and listeners to lose faith in the Scripture. This theological climate eventually enhanced the crystallization of the new homiletic. The shift in authority from the text to the listener may have gone too far, resulting in elevating the individual's autonomous interpretation and understanding of Scripture above the important role of community formation in the church. And we have discussed that even among evangelicals the matter of authority has also revealed itself in an individualistic church.

BREAKING THE CARAPACES OF INDIVIDUALISM

Given the recent history of preaching and an increasingly pluralistic culture, an important homiletical consideration might be, "How can preachers help the ecclesial community overcome the carapaces of individualism?" As challenging and complicated as the task might sound, a good starting point would be preaching itself. If preaching has influenced and shaped the way Christians are today, it only makes sense that one appropriate remedy would be to modify or improve the way in which the task of preaching is undertaken. By no means is this meant to suggest that the preaching methods of the past were completely futile. However, it is valuable to consider what homiletical strategies preachers could use going forward, to help "the pews" to overcome their individualistic mindset. I would like to offer two practical suggestions—promoting communal identity and communal application.

FROM "I" TO "WE"

Earlier, we noted the critique of the new homiletics' lack of consideration of communal identity due to its overemphasis of the role of individual and experience. The problem of individualism to the exclusion of community is noted also by contemporary homiletician, Richard Lischer, who writes, "The formation of a people has been replaced by the *persuasion* of individuals."[49] Similarly, Campbell also recognizes this lack of communal emphasis in preaching. He points out:

> Preaching focused on individual experiential events, in which the primary function is the eventful transformation of individuals, still operates with a basically modern, not to mention liberal, American framework….and the individual exists only within the context of relationships and roles played in a particular community. This understanding of preaching does not ignore the individual,

> but rather views the individual within the context of a faithful community.[50]

Campbell contends that an individualistic, experiential approach and overemphasis on the individual hearer and individual experience have, unfortunately, led homiletics to be focused on individualism. While some may consider his critique of narrative homiletics biased, it does suggest a need for renewed emphasis on community in preaching. This visible community of faith is what distinguishes God's people from any other human communities.

Homiletically, the preacher can emphasize this communal identity by appealing to Christians' oneness in the gospel. Through this communal identity a spiritual bond emerges as people worship together in communion. The apostle Paul communicated the concept of communal identity most eloquently: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). Paul referred to the church as one entity in Christ and uses intimate and relational terms such as "the body of Christ" and "the household of God" (1Cor 12:12f, Gal 6:10, Eph 2:19f, 1Tim 3:15, 1Pet 4:17).[51] Paul understood the communal identity of oneness in Christ as an essential component of the gospel. He understood that the life-changing power of the gospel not only saved individuals but also enables people of all nations to identify themselves as heirs of Christ through their unifying faith in Christ (Eph 3:6). This communal identity unifies believers by pointing to who Christ is and what He has done and as a result underscores the oneness of God's people.

Promoting this communal identity, therefore, involves asking how the text might be related to the gospel, that is, how the particular text fits into the larger context of redemptive-history. The preacher discerns whether there is any theme, image or word in the text that might be related to the gospel. Some passages will be more transparent than the others. The preacher can approach the gospel from various biblical themes such as God's sovereignty, God's love and grace, adoption into God's family, the redemptive work of Christ, God's covenant, the law, and Christ as king, priest, and prophet, to name a few. Rather than saying *everything* about the gospel, the preacher captures a certain theme, image or word in the text from which the preacher draws out this communal identity. The aim is to help the congregation see their unifying identity in Christ.

Here is an example of how this is applied to the Old Testament passage, 2 Samuel 11. This passage is used widely to depict David's sin with Bathsheba. When I preached on the life of Uriah, I stressed his extraordinary and undivided loyalty to his king David. I asked how this text might be related to the gospel. The image of a king is important throughout the text. David's kingship, which in the previous chapters was portrayed as invincible is now tarnished. Yet here is a servant with an unrelenting devotion. Toward the end of my sermon, I turned to the congregation and said:

> Uriah served the imperfect king, but we serve the perfect king.
> Uriah served the selfish king but we serve the selfless king.
> Uriah served the sinful king but we serve the sinless king.
> Uriah served the king who would remain behind the battlefield.
> But we serve the king who goes before us and fights the battle for us.
> Uriah served the king who leaves his men behind.
> But we serve the king who promises his presence until the end of age.
> Uriah served the king who tried to cover up his mistake.
> We serve the king who died to cover our mistake.
> Uriah served the king who took away his bride.
> But we serve the king who calls us his bride.
> Uriah served the king who died.
> But we serve the king who is raised from the dead[52]

Emphasizing communal identity is a necessary component of preaching that helps preachers to embrace the concept of "we" than "me." It empowers people to connect and transcend their individual identities that normally define them. The focus becomes helping the congregation to view themselves not as separated by social, cultural, and economical barriers but as one entity in Christ — to undo the mindset of "them" verses "us" or "majority" verses "minority." Bonhoeffer contended, "The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes the more will everything between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus and His work become the one and only thing that is vital between us."[53] And the realization of this divine and spiritual reality begins at the consciousness of the communal identity through preaching.

FROM "WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?" TO "WHAT CAN WE BECOME?"

When Chrysostom preached people were mesmerized by his eloquence and passionate exhortation. Applause often interrupted his sermons. While many preachers would not mind sharing a piece of Chrysostom's acclaim, such a response from the crowd did not please him. On one occasion, he preached to the crowd:

> What is the good of these applauses [sic] and clamors? I demand one thing only of you, and that is the display of them in real action, the obedience of deeds. This is my praise, this your gain, this gives me more luster than a diadem. When you have left the Church then, this is the crown that you should make for me and for you, through the hand of the poor.[54]

Chrysostom struggled to move people to application, and preachers

today face the same challenge. While application can be a challenging task to preachers in general, communal application can be used to bring people under one purpose and vision, and help them to see the potential they have as a believing community. A communal application points beyond the individual need and calls for a corporate witness and response to the gospel, inside and outside the church. This approach does not undermine the needs of individuals but rather expresses that "the fundamental need of persons is to be faithful disciples in a truthful community."[55] Hence, such a sermon focuses not simply on what the text means to each listener as an individual, but also on how the text can influence and be applied to build up the community and beyond it, the world.

Exercising a communal application, therefore, involves three steps. First, pose a question. Next, suggest a possible action plan that people can do as a community. Finally, present a hoped-for outcome—that is, tell how the communal application might transform the community and beyond. Before going through the stages, it might be helpful to mention that communal application can be found in the Scripture. The Scripture was recorded in the context of community. This is not to say that Scripture has little regard for individuals; individual salvation is an important aspect of the meta-narrative of the Scripture. However, the emphasis on the importance of community in the Old and the New Testaments is equally if not more, prevalent. For example, the Ten Commandments were given to a community of God's people. But the Ten Commandments are often preached to emphasize individual morality or "do's and don'ts," which neglects the significance of the commandments being given in the context of community. The commandments also imply that the sin of one individual (or a few) could compromise the corporate responsibility and place the community in jeopardy. The entire community can be guilty of the sin of the one. Achan's sin in Joshua 7 illustrates this point. The unfaithfulness of the ten spies who returned from the exploration of Canaan caused the entire community to wander for forty years in the wilderness (Num. 13:32). The concept of community is not minimized in the New Testament either. Rather it is brought into a greater light through the establishment of the early church. The church described in Acts 2:42-47 reveals a strong emphasis on communal application - people were devoted to one another, met the needs of those outside church walls, and expected God to work through the power of the Holy Spirit. The early church was an authentic life-transforming, multiethnic community (Acts 11:20, 17:4-17, 19:17). Hence, communal application appears to be a biblically viable approach to mobilize the believing community.

The first task of communal application begins with posing a question. A question might begin with a phrase such as, "What can we do as a community to…," "How can we carry out this truth together to …," or "How can we apply this truth as a community?" Posing such a question carries four implications. First, it reinforces communal identity by addressing the question directly to the congregation, as one entity. Second, it reaffirms

that the Scripture is applicable across cultures. The question underscores and recognizes the authority of Scripture as the common bond that distinguishes the congregation as a believing community. Third, posing a question has rhetorical value because an initial question often helps people focus as the sermon progresses, and helps them recognize an important agenda towards the end of the speech.[56] The aim is to create anticipation and bring people to reflect consciously together upon the question, and to recognize that there are common concerns that we share despite our many differences. The fourth implication of posing a question is that it increases the congregation's sense of corporate accountability and responsibility, by placing an emphasis on "we" and "together." In this way both the preacher and community are held accountable.

The second task of communal application is to suggest an application that people can practice together as a community. The preacher motivates the listeners to cross their cultural barriers and work together for a common purpose. Although these examples can be proposed by the preacher alone, it is constructive to follow up with feedforward so people can communally generate, share, and collect ideas.

Exploring a hoped-for outcome gives the congregation a sense of what they could potentially become as a result of applying the message corporately. God's Word is transformative. As Bryan Wilkerson suggests, preachers can help the people to "visualize and embrace better futures for themselves and their churches."[57] Hence, the tone is inspirational. The preacher sketches out how the community might be transformed as a result of their obedience to the communal application. The aim is to stir the congregation to act by helping them visualize the community of faith they could become, and the potential positive outcomes.

What might this look like in a sermon? Suppose the sermon is on the parable of the Good Samaritan. Toward the end of the sermon, the preacher might ask, "What can we do as a community to be a neighbor to others?" Then the preacher would suggest the action plan, "Wouldn't it be great if we could bring down our walls and embrace people in our community with genuine care and love? Perhaps there are people who may be struggling at this time for whatever reason. This week, let's have a meal with someone or family who may be in need of your encouragement. Invite them to your homes or take them out and encourage them and pray with them together as a community. Let's do it this week and see how God changes our hearts and minds as we embrace others unconditionally." Then comes the hoped-for outcome, "Imagine how this application could change our community in the way we treat and see each other. Can you imagine if everybody decided to put this into practice this week, the kind of change it would bring into our community? I don't know about you but I know it will deepen my relationship with God and with others around me. So, as Jesus says at the end of the parable, 'Go and do likewise.'"

Communal application aims to exhibit faith on a corporate level.

It expands the sphere of application from individual to community by motivating the congregation to transform invisible faith into a visible lifestyle as a community. It challenges individuals to look beyond their personal need, and to reach out to the community with a common purpose and vision. It is this vision for which makes preaching great and rewarding.

CONCLUSION

I recently met a pastor from London at a seminar, who expressed that the main impediment to the church's evangelism ministry today in Britain is not a lack of enthusiasm, nor a lack of resources on evangelism. The main impediment, he said, is a strong consensus among Christians in the UK that "faith is a personal and private thing." I am certain that churches in the UK are not the only ones facing this challenge. In this paper, I have argued that the lack of homiletical emphasis on the communal dimension of the Christian faith in the past resulted in the nurturing of excessive individualism in the Christian church. As the contours of individualism become more pronounced in our society, the homiletical challenge remains. As the influence of postmodernism and pluralism continues to grow, the preacher's task is to remind constantly the communal identity of the congregation centered on the gospel, and to motivate the people to apply the truth corporately through communal application. What is needed, therefore, to recover this communal dimension in preaching is a return to a strong sense of identity rooted in the gospel and a compelling vision that will empower people to cooperate and see themselves within the context of Christian community.

NOTES

1. Joseph M. Webb, *Preaching and the Challenge of Pluralism* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1998), 55.
2. David L. Larsen, *The Company of the Preachers: A History of Biblical Preaching from the Old Testament to the Modern Era* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1998), 714.
3. Lints views the '60's as the turning point from modernity to postmodernity. He examines this complex and yet critical era to understand the complexity of religious conviction in the '60's through the lens of modernity and postmodernity. Richard Lints, *Progressive and Conservative Religious Ideologies: The Tumultuous Decade of the 1960s* (Burlington: Ashgate Pub., 2010), 5.
4. Haddon Robinson, "Preaching Trends: A Review," *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 6, no. 2 (2006): 25.
5. Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Modern Age*, vol. 6, The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 570.
6. Its initial title was *Christian Dogmatics*. However, Barth changed this to

Church Dogmatics to avoid Kierkegaardian individualism, or, as he put it, "to fight against the facile use of the word 'Christian,' but above all…. to make it clear that dogmatics cannot be some sort of absolutely 'free discipline,' but 'one that is bound to the realm of the Church, where – and where alone – it is possible and meaningful." See Hans Kung, "Karl Barth and the Postmodern Paradigm," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 9, no. 1 (1988): 16.

7. Barth insisted that preaching is, "exposition not exegesis. It follows the text but moves on from it to the preacher's own heart and to the congregation." Karl Barth, *Homiletics*, trans. G.W. Bromiley and D.E.Daniels (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 81.
8. Barth, *Homiletics*, 48
9. Barth, *Homiletics*, 76.
10. Karl Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, trans. Douglas Horton ([Boston, Chicago]: The Pilgrim Press, 1928), 186.
11. Karl Barth, *The Preaching of the Gospel*, trans. B.E. Hooke (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 43. Also see David Buttrick, *A Captive Voice: The Liberation of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 104.
12. John T Elson, "Witness to an Ancient Truth," *Time*, Apr 20 1962, 63.
13. Barth, *Homiletics*, 78.
14. John Wick Bowman, "The Barthian Theology and the Word of God," *The Presbyterian*, 3 September 1936, 6.
15. Edwin C. Dargan and Ralph G. Turnbull, *A History of Preaching 3, from the Close of the 19. Century to the Middle of the 20. Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), 184.
16. Karl Barth, Harold Knight, and G. T. Thomson, *Prolegomena to Church Dogmatics* vol. 1, The Doctrine of the Word of God (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), 469.
17. Donald Dayton, forward to *Karl Barth & the Pietists*, by Eberhard Busch, trans. Daniel Bloesch (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), xii. Dayton goes on to argue that the Pietists saw "muddy" distinction between the "inspiration" and "illumination" of the biblical text. However, what Dayton seems to overlook is that the reason for this "muddy" distinction is the Pietists' overemphasis of individual piety, meditation and direct approach to the spiritual reality of God.
18. John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century*, 1st American ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1982), 99.
19. Herbert Hartwell, *The Theology of Karl Barth: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 33.
20. Karl Barth and G. T. Thomson, *Prolegomena to Church Dogmatics*, vol. 1, The Doctrine of the Word of God (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1969), 127.
21. Bowman, "The Barthian Theology and the Word of God," 6.
22. Dargan and Turnbull, *A History of Preaching 3, from the Close of the 19.*

Century to the Middle of the 20. Century, 183.

23. Overly stressing the act of preaching itself could overlook the person and character of the preacher. William H. Willimon, *Conversations with Barth on Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 263.
24. Barth, *Homiletics*, 86.
25. Ibid., 79.
26. Ibid.
27. Unlike earlier liberal "fathers," Georg Pfleiderer points out that "Barth's solution to the question of the individual's stability and religion in the context of a dangerous modernity is the church, a theologically reflective church: a church that basically is a preaching and theologizing church." Georg Pfleiderer, "The Development of Karl Barth's Theology," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 23, no. 3 (2002): 344.
28. Clifford J. Green, *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom*, The Making of Modern Theology 5 (San Francisco: Collins, 1989), 18.
29. Larsen, *The Company of the Preachers: A History of Biblical Preaching from the Old Testament to the Modern Era*, 798.
30. In 1962, *Time* magazine reported, "Princeton's best-known systematic theologian, Presbyterian George Stuart Hendry, says Barth's Christocentric approach forces many church doctrines into an artificial mold. Wilhelm Pauck of Union Theological Seminary thinks Barth pays insufficient attention to the history of how Christian dogma developed." Elson, "Witness to an Ancient Truth." In addition, Poythress criticizes, "the problem with Barth's whole theology, from the standpoint of language, consists in the pervasive ambiguity in the meaning of nearly every fundamental term." (Vern S. Poythress, *Symphonic Theology: The Validity of Multiple Perspectives in Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 72-74).
31. David Buttrick, "Preaching Today: The Loss of a Public Voice," in *The Folly of Preaching: Models and Methods*, ed. Michael Knowles (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2007), 9.
32. O. C. Edwards, *A History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 799.
33. Richard L. Eslinger, *The Web of Preaching: New Options in Homiletical Method* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 11.
34. David Allen, "Preaching and Postmodernism: An Evangelical Comes to the Dance," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 5, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 74.
35. Hughes Oliphant Old, *Our Own Time, vol. 7, The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 18.
36. Fred B. Craddock, *As One without Authority* (St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 2001), 14.
37. Ibid.
38. In *Overhearing the Gospel*, Craddock takes an in-depth look at Kierkegaard's

philosophy of communication and carefully examines the underlying principles of Kierkegaard's indirect communication method and shows the efficacy of inductive preaching. Deductive preaching is discouraged because of the supposed lack of interest among the listeners. Instead, the inductive method is preferred to accommodate the changing culture of the people. Hence, he encourages the sermon to begin with the particulars of human experience instead of scripture. Fred B. Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel*, [Lyman Beecher Lectures, 1978] (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), 101-40.

39. Scott M. Gibson, "Critique of the New Homiletic," in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today's Communicators*, ed. Haddon W. Robinson and Craig B. Larson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 480.
40. Craddock, *As One without Authority*, 55.
41. Gibson, "Critique of the New Homiletic," 481.
42. Nicholas G. Gatzke, "Preaching in the Emerging Church and Its Relationship to the New Homiletic" (Ph.D. diss., Brunel University, 2008), 65.
43. Charles L. Campbell, *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1997), 143.
44. Ibid., 144.
45. Some of these debates have been rather acrimonious and divisive than constructive. Mark A. Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 144. Also see Alister E. McGrath, *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995).
46. Rene Padilla, "The Unity of the Church and the Homogeneous Unit Principle," in *Exploring Church Growth*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1983), 285.
47. Mark A. Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2009), 164.
48. Jay Edward Adams, *Preaching with Purpose: The Urgent Task of Homiletics* (Michigan Ministry Resources Library, 1982), 13.
49. Richard Lischer, "Preaching as the Church's Language," in *Listening to the Word : Studies in Honor of Fred B. Craddock*, ed. Fred B. Craddock, Gail R. O'Day, and Thomas G. Long (Nashville: Abingdon Press, c1993), 119.
50. Campbell, *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology*, 222.
51. It would also be informative to read Tucker's work on the relationship between social/civic identity and "in Christ" spiritual identity in the Corinthian church. Based on 1Cor. 1-4, Tucker argues that Christian identity does not erode the social/civic identity, but instead one's new identity "in Christ" should influence and renew the various aspects of the existing social identity in order to attain a healthier "in Christ" social identity. J. Brian Tucker, *You Belong to Christ: Paul and the Formation of*

Social Identity in 1 Corinthians 1-4 (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010).

52. From the sermon titled "An ordinary man with extraordinary faith" at Watertown Evangelical Church, Watertown, MA, preached on September 5, 2010.
53. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John Doberstein (New York: Harper, 1954), 26.
54. John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom, on the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Romans Translated, with Notes and Indices* (Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1841), 276-77.
55. Campbell, *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology*, 222.
56. Alfred Tack, *How to Speak Well in Public* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), 159. For more on how questions can be used effectively as a catalyst for change in a corporate environment, see also Dorothy Leeds, *The 7 Powers of Questions: Secrets to Successful Communication in Life and at Work* (New York: Berkley Pub. Group, 2000), 169-215.
57. Bryan Wilkerson, "Visionary Preaching: Empowering People and Congregations to Pursue God's Better Future" (D.Min. diss., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2008), 3.

LESSONS FROM HEINRICH BULLINGER: HOW CONVICTIONS ABOUT PREACHING CAN SHAPE THE WORK OF EQUIPPING PASTORS

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ABSTRACT: Heinrich Bullinger, the sixteenth-century Zurich reformer wrote fifty sermons to equip pastors to be better preachers. This essay explores how the high view of Scripture and preaching chronicled there works itself out in the example and counsel he sets before fellow pastors. Although half a millennium has elapsed since Bullinger's birth, and the challenges of his era are not identical to ours, his counsel is still worth heeding and his example worth following.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this essay is to explore the following question: How, according to his *Decades*, did Heinrich Bullinger's understanding of preaching shape the way he sought to equip fellow pastors? The word "pastors" as opposed to "preachers" is intentional since, as we will discover, Bullinger saw preaching as the primary and defining task of the pastor, but did not counsel that preaching be undertaken in isolation from other pastoral duties. Edward Dowey describes the *Decades* as Bullinger's "most full-bodied and comprehensive theological work, containing the richness of his scholarship, gathering together themes of all his major writings up to that time, and exhibiting the churchly purpose of being a theological source book for pastors to aid them in the preparation of sermons. This material is presented in the form of fifty Latin 'sermons to the clergy' or lecture sermons in a style quite different from Bullinger's regular vernacular preaching, and was most probably delivered at the Zurich *Prophezei* to the teachers and pastors of the city." It was also widely disseminated in Dutch and English translations and was used by lay people at home and—against Bullinger's wishes—read in worship services or in contexts where no preacher was present.[1] The *Decades* were written to equip his fellow preachers but also to teach systematic theology to the laity and to "resolve intramural debates among Protestants".[2] In honor of the five hundredth anniversary of Bullinger's birth, Reformed Heritage Books reprinted by photolithograph in two volumes the four-volume Parker Society (English) edition (1849-52) edited by Thomas Harding and published by Cambridge University Press.[3] This edition runs to 1801 pages plus 122 pages of introduction and appendixes. One indication of

the impact of the *Decades* in English translation is that archbishop Whitgift's Register dated December 2, 1586 and found at Lambeth Palace—and therefore not lost with records destroyed by the great fire of 1666—includes orders that those ministers "having cure" i.e., having shepherding responsibilities, but not having a master of arts or bachelor of law degree and not licensed to be a public preacher were by February 2, 1587 to be supplied with a Bible, Bullinger's *Decades* and "a paper book." These "inferior minsters" were to read a chapter from the Bible daily, a sermon from the *Decades* weekly and to take notes in the paper book and discuss them each quarter with the preacher assigned to them for that purpose. Sanctions were enforced upon those who did not comply and Whitgift's order specified that no other materials were to be used in any part of the province.[4]

Bullinger maintained voluminous correspondence—12,000 letters have survived from the Zurich archives alone with at least 3,000 elsewhere.[5] He wrote a *Reformation History* and many commentaries—eventually on every book of the New Testament as well as several on Old Testament books. These commentaries often appeared after he preached through that biblical book. Six hundred sermons of his were printed. Many of these writings had a significant impact on the English Reformation. Nevertheless, for this study, the *Decades* will be our only primary source.[6]

Church historians continue to explore and document Bullinger's work including the Prophezei, a Zurich community that met every morning for the forming of pastors.[7] The contribution of this essay is to document how the *Decades* reveal convictions about preaching that shaped Bullinger's approach to the task of equipping pastors.[8] A brief review of Bullinger's life and times will help us see how his experiences influenced both his convictions and his practices. We will then document convictions expressed in the *Decades* and show how they correspond to what he models and urges upon fellow preachers in its pages.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HEINRICH BULLINGER[9]

When the influential reformer Huldrych Zwingli died on October 11, 1531 the post of principal preacher of the Grossmünster in Zurich needed just the right successor if the work of reformation were not to stall. Heinrich Bullinger, well-schooled from age five, was sent to Latin school at twelve in Emmerich on the Rhine. There, to support his education, he begged from door to door by singing, a discipline devised by his priest father to inculcate moderation in the boy and sympathy for the poor. Heinrich matriculated at the University of Cologne in July 1519 at age fourteen. Steeped in the Latin and Greek Church fathers (especially Chrysostom, Ambrose, Origen and Augustine), the Dominicans, the humanists, Luther, and Melanchthon, he also "procured for himself also a copy of the New Testament, and devoted days and nights to the perusal of it, with the aid of the Commentaries of Jerome" (4: viii). Having received bachelor's (1520) and master's (1522) degrees he

returned home to Bremgarten. He broke with the Roman church and by 1522 at age 18 ceased to receive the sacrament of Eucharist. On January 17, 1523 he accepted a position as a lecturer and teacher at a new Cistercian monastery at Kappel south of Zurich. The invitation from its abbot released him from any vows, professions or observances that would conflict with his "enlightened conscience" (4: ix). Bullinger read widely, discoursed, and wrote more than fifty treatises that proved to be the spade work for later publications. From his mid-twenties he wrote stage plays to preach the gospel "outside the temple" (1: li). During this time Zwingli became his mentor and friend and Bullinger took a five-month leave of absence in Zurich where he heard Zwingli's lectures and perfected his Greek and Hebrew. In June, 1528, nearly 24 years old, he was ordained as a parish minister in the reformed church in Zurich but assigned to serve in the rural churches at Kappel and Hausen. On May 16, 1529 he preached at his home church in Bremgarten. Just a few months earlier his father, the priest there, had publicly confessed that heretofore he had misled his parishioners and would now "endeavor to guide them in the right way of life, out of Holy Scripture alone, and through Jesus Christ, our only Savior" (4: x. n. 5). For this confession he was deposed and had fled to Zurich, but now, by mid-May, reformers in the church had regained sufficient influence to invite his son to preach. Heinrich's message on worshipping God in spirit and truth hit its mark and the congregation immediately tore down the images in the church and the next day burned them and demolished the altars. Having *en masse* dedicated themselves to God and the true faith, the following day their church council asked Heinrich to bring the reformation to Bremgarten. The church pled with the Zurich council to release Bullinger for this purpose and they agreed to do so with the younger Bullinger beginning his ministry in his hometown on June 1, 1529. He not only preached four days a week, he also led a daily Bible study, organized a ministry of feeding and clothing the poor, and began an itinerant ministry to the surrounding area (1: lxxiv—lxxv). Bullinger had seen the power of the preached gospel first hand. On August 17, 1529 he was married to Anne Adlischweiler who ultimately bore him eleven children.

After a crushing military defeat of the canton of Zurich by Catholic forces at Kappel on October 11, 1531, and Zwingli's death that day, Bullinger moved his family to Zurich for their safety. On December 9 he was appointed to succeed Zwingli, a post he held for the remainder of his life, nearly forty-four years. Bullinger stepped into a chaotic scene where, understandably, the magistrates of Zurich did not now want their preachers to interfere in political matters. For his first years in this position, much of his energies and writing focused on efforts to defend the legacy and theology of Zwingli. He wrote and counseled to foster unity among the reformed, to respond to attacks of Luther while simultaneously opposing Anabaptists, all of whom he considered radicals. While navigating a stormy relationship with the local magistrates and leading the synod, Bullinger not only ran the Latin school in Zurich but was also responsible for theological education of young men

called to pastoral ministry and for assessing their fitness for ordination. In addition to all these duties, Bullinger preached six or seven times a week in his early years at Zurich, later at least three times a week, customarily employing *lectio continua*, consecutive exposition of books.[10] As Gordon notes, "Through his preaching and writing, Bullinger sought to convey the message of the Bible. The whole enterprise of the Zurich reformation was based around the interpretation of scripture….The role of ministers was to interpret scripture through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and there was a striking confidence in the clarity of God's Word."[11] From 1548 to 1551 fifty sermons (five groups of ten, hence *Decades*) appeared and readily began to have an impact locally as well as further afield. Bullinger's stature as a leader grew apace. Nevertheless, times were tough in Zurich with bad weather, poor harvests and plague, a scourge that claimed his aged mother, his beloved wife, a son, and three daughters as well as many friends, coworkers and parishioners. All this took place against the backdrop of persecution for the gospel. In 1550 various papal decrees condemned Bullinger and all his writings (4: xiii). Persecution was not restricted to the continent; it was also virulent in England, a fact that spurred Bullinger to host spiritual exiles from there for extended periods of time. The *Second Helvetic Confession* of 1566 was his final major theological achievement, though he continued to preach and write until his last illness which finally took his life on September 17, 1575.

Bullinger's ministry was hammered out on the anvil of tumultuous times where the defense of the gospel was paramount. In the days before reformation, priests were often both ignorant and morally lax. Bullinger was convinced that for the sake of the gospel that blight on the church had to change. He, by contrast, was intellectually eager, personally disciplined, and tireless in his sacrificial efforts. A critical learner and discerning teacher, a prolific writer and an internationally respected leader, his views on preaching were deeply rooted theologically in the gospel, a gospel he labored to defend from all detractors. The sovereign God used these times and the spiritual gifts and qualities he had built into Heinrich Bullinger to produce this extraordinarily influential collection of sermons.

THE *DECADES*

Before plunging into the sermons to discern the author's convictions about preaching and how these shaped his approaches to equipping pastors, it will help to note the format and features of the whole work. As Peter Opitz notes, the fifty topical sermons that cover traditional Christian catechetical subjects (the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments) "provide the framework for the depiction of the Christian life in all its dimensions and aspects."[12] To put it otherwise, this work is above all *pastoral* theology. Bullinger typically begins each sermon with a humble prayer for the help of God's Spirit, announces the topic in relation to what has gone before, carefully defines the main terms, and begins to make

his case. The arguments he employs invariably begin with scriptural "testimonies"—both propositional affirmations and examples—and proceed to confirmation from the church fathers. Corporate and personal implications are interwoven throughout. Individual sermons occasionally refer to what was said the day before or apologize for speaking longer than the hour allotted and in these and other ways give a strong impression of oral delivery before an audience. Whether, as Opitz postulates, this is a legal fiction, or, alternatively, what began as actual sermons morphed into written form as the *Decades* emerged, or were always spoken first and then written is difficult to say.[13] That Bullinger intended them to be read and used by fellow ministers is clear from Appendix II that is a sort of cover letter addressed to certain individual deans and archpresbyters, "all the ministers of Christ and of the churches . . . fellow-ministers and brethren".[14] Bullinger repeatedly affirms—and uses the sermons to show by biblical citations, copious reference to creeds, councils, orthodox fathers and bishops—that what he preaches and commends to them is "agreeable with the doctrine of the apostles and of the primitive church which from the beginning delivered nothing to be believed and taught but what we believe and teach in our churches at this day" (4: 557). That his aim was to equip fellow ministers is equally clear:

> These sermons truly I have written, that I might bestow my labors on you, assist your own studies, or even stimulate each one of you to think and find out more; but not that every one of you should use them word for word in the church confided to his care. For selection and judgment is needed, that we may not speak to our own church what is foreign to it, or little profitable and necessary for it. Let the wise pastor consider well of what kind are the morals of the people of his charge, and what things are most requisite for them, and so set them before them, having regard always to edification, true faith, piety, charity and innocence. For we must both teach and admonish, that the church over which it has pleased the Lord to set us may be godly and holy (4: 556-557).

Bullinger's aspiration bore fruit. "[F]rom the second half of the sixteenth century until well into the seventeenth century the *Decades* were on of best-known theological works, performing a crucial role in the spread of the Reformed faith throughout Europe and beyond."[15]

WHAT BULLINGER BELIEVED ABOUT PREACHING

Bullinger's high view of preaching is often expressed in the words of a heading to one section of the Second Helvetic Confession which he wrote: "The Preaching of the word of God is the word of God." This assertion, though an accurate expression of Bullinger's thought, must be nuanced.[16] The *Decades* affirm the theology that surrounds that conviction and gives rise

to it. The summary statements that follow will be illustrated by representative quotes from the *Decades* that could readily be multiplied.

The flow of Bullinger's thought is from God and his character through the means of his word, the gospel, sound doctrine, and preachers to the church that he loves for her good. Though primary, Bullinger did not view preaching as something to be undertaken in isolation from other aids to godliness. For him, preaching was absolutely essential but so were a few other things. He noted:

> Let us stick to this, that the Lord our God has instituted in his church but very few things and such as are necessary; and therefore we ought all to endeavor, that the church be not over-burdened with traditions and institutions which proceeded not from God himself. The church of God is gorgeously enough decked and furnished, if she retain and keep the institutions of her God and Lord.
>
> The chief and principal points of the godliness of the church of God are, the sincere teaching of the law and the prophets, of Christ and the apostles; faithful prayer offered unto her only God through Christ alone; a religious and lawful administration and receiving of Christ's sacraments; . . . (4: 478).

God's loving desire for the church's wellbeing is profoundly incarnational. In the context of the ministry of the word, Bullinger distinguishes what men do from what God does. Of God he says:

> He verily, for his exceeding goodness and mercy toward us, covets to pour himself wholly into us, (which I think good to repeat often, that it may be the deeper rooted in our hearts, and that we also may consider what we owe unto God,) that we may both be strengthened and blessed in him; and may perfectly understand his will toward us, and finally our duty whereby we be bound unto him. . . he himself comes forth to instruct men (4: 93-94).

Indeed, Bullinger could say that "God confirmed the preaching of Paul, because it proceeded from God himself" (4:148). He writes:

> The first preacher in paradise was God himself, yes, the Son of God himself: who by the ministry of the Holy Ghost always spoke to the fathers; even as afterwards, being incarnate, he was given of the Father to be a master and teacher to the whole world. . . He in likewise sent into the world his disciples, that is to say, the apostles who ordained for their successors bishops and doctors . . . God himself therefore is heard in the voice or doctrine of his ministers;

> so that we are commanded to give ear to the minsters preaching the gospel, as to the very angels of God, yes, as to the Lord himself (4: 102).

> Therefore the preaching of the gospel is a divine speech, unreprovable, and brought down from heaven: which whosoever believe, they do believe the word of the eternal God; and they that believe it not, do despise and reject the word of God. For it ceases not to be the word of God because it is preached by the ministry of men (3: 5).

The word of God is the means by which God makes himself and his gospel known, by which he himself preaches the gospel. He writes, "Therefore let this stand as it were for a continual rule, that God cannot be rightly known but by his word; and that God is to be received and believed to be such an one as he reveals himself unto us in his holy word" (3: 125). Nor is this speaking restricted to the Father. Indeed "Christ himself as yet speaks unto us, and will speak even unto the end of the world, by the mouth or writings of the holy apostles and all teachers preaching the doctrine of the apostles. And this doctrine is sufficient for the catholic church; for it comprehends all those things fully which pertain to the holy and happy life" (3: 283-284). Significantly, Bullinger affirms that this word was *oral* before it was written: "Although therefore that the apostles were men, yet their doctrine, first of all taught by a lively expressed voice, and after that set down in writing with pen and ink, is the doctrine of God, and the very true word of God" (1: 54). God does not despise the use of means of all sorts including human voices. He states, "Therefore means do belong to the providence of God, by which he works; and therefore are they not to be neglected." (3: 183). Bullinger continues:

> God indeed might by the secret illumination of his Spirit, without man's ministry (as his power is tied to no creature) regenerate the whole world, and govern the church itself: but as he despises not his creatures, nor destroys the work of his own hand, and does all things in order; even so from the first beginning he forthwith spoke to the world by the patriarchs, then by prophets, afterward by apostles; neither at this day ceases he to give unto the world doctors [teachers] and pastors: so that it becomes us not to tempt God, that is, not to look for a secret inspiration with the heretic Enthusiasts; but to acknowledge a just order and that God himself speaks unto us by men, of whom he would have us to learn religion (4: 94).

In this learning, *words* are essential. "Again, there are testimonies [concerning the person of Christ revealed in Hebrews 9] which cannot aptly be declared but by communicating of words" (3: 271). The prophets themselves were expositors, preachers of the written word as it spoke to their

respective audiences. As such they, by example, teach the way to preach. He states:

> Neither did they teach any other thing than that which the fathers had received of God, and which Moses had received of God and the fathers; and straightways after committing it to writing, did set it out to all of us which follow, even unto the end of the world: so that now in the prophets we have the doctrine of Moses and tradition of the fathers, and them in all and every point more fully and plainly expounded and polished, being moreover to the places, times and persons very fitly applied (1: 50).

Authority in preaching comes not merely from biblical faithfulness—as essential as that is—but from the fact that God himself not only speaks through that word but also acts to accomplish the purposes for which it was given—first in the minister and then through them in their hearers. Speaking of the necessity of authority for pastors in a context where dissolute clergy had been the norm, Bullinger writes:

> But authority is not gotten with such light and vain things [titles and ceremonies]. It is rather obtained by the grace of God, through the love of truth and uprightness of life; if happily God touch men's hearts, so that they understand, that God works his work in the church by his ministers as by his instruments; if they perceive that ministers do the work of the Lord with ferventness of spirit, and not coldly; not fearing anything in a good cause, no, not the wicked and mighty men of this world, but do resist them; and yet that they do nothing of hatred or malice, but do all things of a fatherly affection, with a good courage, constancy and wisdom. Whereunto if there be joined, not an hypocritical, but a holy and upright life indeed, together with honest, modest and comely behavior, all wise men shall perceive, that there is sufficient authority thereby proved to a godly minister (4: 160-161).

Bullinger acknowledges that this principle can be over applied and quotes Nazianzen to remind his hearers that the gospel remains good whether the messenger is good or bad (4: 161). The reformer's high view of Scripture as the very word of God yields a robust confidence that faith can safely rest in it but also underscores the necessity that teachers and preachers add nothing to its doctrines. Bullinger states:

> We have moreover showed in our sermons of faith and of the church, that faith depends upon the only word of God; and that it wholly stays upon the only word of God; and also that the churches of God are built and preserved by the word of God, and not by man's

> doctrine: all which seem to appertain to this matter. . . .Now . . . it is manifest from whence the pastor or doctor must fetch his doctrine, to wit, from no other place than out of the scripture of the old and new Testament, which is the infallible and undoubted word of God; and that therefore this doctrine is certain and immutable . . . (4: 151-152).

It follows that the word of God is not merely *necessary* for generating and sustaining faith; it is also *sufficient* for the task. Bullinger argues:

> Not without good cause, therefore, do we refuse the traditions of men, and turn only to the doctrine of the word of the Lord, without which it is assuredly certain that there is no doctrine nor any foundation of true faith. Neither are they worthy to be heard, who think that the canonical scriptures are not plain enough, full enough, or sufficient enough, to minister a perfect platform of reformation (3: 122).

God rules and guides his church through his word. "It shall be sufficient in this place to defend, that our Lord God, having given doctors unto the church, does found, build, maintain and enlarge the church by his word, yes, by his word alone" (4:24).

Bullinger was not naïve. He understood that both preachers and their hearers have limits and shortcomings. He realistically faces these but drawing on his own robust faith that God's ways and means do not ultimately thwart but rather convey his will, he threads his way confidently through these potentially disturbing limitations. The fixed point by which he navigates is God's loving intention for his church. God has built in safeguards for the church. These include restricting the office of pastor to those he has gifted and called, enabling some to equip them, and keeping to himself and his Spirit those undertakings of which he alone is capable.

God has given "doctors" to the church, teachers whose role is not only to teach the church directly (4:49) but also to teach and equip those who preach. Though Bullinger himself was both a pastor and doctor, he distinguishes the two roles as follows: "Pastors watch over the Lord's flock, having care of the Lord's people, feeding the church with the word of truth, and keeping the wolves from the sheepfolds….Doctors or teachers have their names of teaching. Neither do I see what they differ from shepherds, but that they did only teach, and in the meanwhile were not burdened with the care that belongs to the pastor: of which sort in a manner are the interpreters of scriptures, and governors of Christian schools" (4: 106). Another office, that of "clerks" bears mentioning here. He notes, "Clerks (who are the Lord's inheritance, or whose lot the Lord is) in times past such were called as students, or professors of divinity; that is to say, the very seed of pastors of the church, and such as were even as it were consecrated to succeed in the

ministry of the church: that is, such as lived under government, and were trained up by the doctors and elders in the study of the liberal sciences and holy scriptures" (4: 113).

Bullinger was convinced that when God sets apart people to pastor churches he also calls and equips people to equip them, and that tutelage includes what we would call liberal arts and the study of Scripture. This equipping, though demanding, is not overly burdensome, because God himself has designed the pastor's duties to be within the reach of those he regenerates, calls and gifts for that role. Having in another context recited the basics of the gospel, Bullinger says, "But it suffices if these and other like grounds be uniformly, purely and simply taught in the church according to the scriptures, though there be added no rhetorical figures, nor no painted eloquence be heard….Was not the doctrine of the apostles and prophets most simple and most free from all subtlety, that rightly it might be said, how much more simple it seemed to be, so much the safer it was" (4: 54)? Bullinger is no fan of flowery embellishments or rhetorical polish. Not all preachers will be equally able to preach even in this unadorned fashion, but this diversity of giftedness is not to be the reason a parishioner leaves one church for another. He urges:

> And partly doctrine consists in the daily expounding of the scriptures, and in applying of them to our time, place and affairs. In that kind was ever great variety and diversity for which notwithstanding no wise man ever yet separated himself from the fellowship of the church. For it comes to pass very often, that two or three or else more may expound one place not after one manner, but after most diverse sorts. There may be one that expounds very darkly, and another expounds more plainly: this man hits the mark, he comes not near it: and this man applies the place which he handles very fitly, some other uses not like simplicity of application: in the mean season, notwithstanding, he says nothing contrary to the soundness of faith and the love of God and our neighbor, and uses all things to edification. I say, that of this diversity no man takes just occasion to depart from the church (4: 54).

Moreover, this diversity of gifting and skill among those who share the preaching in one location, when wisely and humbly embraced, is for the good of all the ministers of the word. It teaches and challenges them so that all the pastors of the flock become better preachers and God is glorified. Bullinger states:

> And the best learned [preachers] loathe not their sermons which are not so learned: for albeit they may seem not altogether to have hit the mark, yet forasmuch as they have taught wholesome things, they are praised and not condemned; albeit in fit time and place they

> be somewhiles admonished. Again, they that are unskillful do not envy the gifts of the learned, nor refuse to labor for more perfection, neither loathe they or condemn the learned sermons of those that be better learned; but they praise God, and being warned strive to more perfection (4:55).

Differences such as these notwithstanding, only the lawfully ordained are to *publicly* minister the word. The wave of anticlericalism that was natural among some reformers could be taken too far. Bullinger warns:

> For all of us can and ought privately to teach and admonish our children and our neighbors; but therefore the public ministry of the word of God is not superfluous. For the same God, which commanded parents and us all that they should instruct their children in godliness, and that every one of us also should teach and admonish our neighbors, has given public ministers unto the church. It is their office to teach openly or publicly in the church; neither is this permitted to whomsoever will, but only to them that be lawfully ordained… (4:104).

For Bullinger, this provided some quality control against Enthusiasts, self-appointed teachers of the church. Not that he was against church members having some say in who the church should ordain. Papal abuses pushed him toward a flexible approach in putting candidates forward (4: 134). But there was no compromise concerning who should be lawfully ordained. He states:

> Now we all declare, what manner of men it behooves to ordain: truly not those who lust, but the most choice men of sound religion, furnished with all kinds of sciences, exercised in the scriptures, cunning in the mystery of faith and religion, strong and constant, earnest, painful, diligent, faithful, watchful, modest, of a holy and approved conversation, lest through their corruption of life and scant good name and fame the whole ministry become vile, and that which with wholesome doctrine they build up their wicked life do pull down again (4: 134-135).

But not only did *life* need to be examined; so also did *doctrine*. Bullinger continues:

> I say there shall be needful of a strait trial of life and perfect examination of learning: for this is not a matter of small weight; the whole safety of the church hangs on it. If any unworthy and unlearned [person] be ordained, the whole church for the most part is neglected, led astray, and overthrown. But we do not mean a

> childlike and scholarlike [i.e. a grammar school like] examination; but a grave and strait examination of knowledge in the scripture and the true interpretation thereof, of the charge of a pastor, of the mysteries of sound faith, and of other such like points (4: 135).

Bullinger expects a great deal of the pastor, but not more than God himself asks of him in the context of what he himself wills to do through him. God reserves to himself those works that are properly his own. This is a safeguard for the church and a stimulus to faith. He notes:

> But some, wresting these places of the holy scripture against the natural sense, do give the ministers an equal power in a manner with Christ; and that which only pertains unto him, they communicate also unto them. . . . Let the ministry indeed be beautified and kept in authority, but let it be done without the dishonoring of God. Neither indeed becomes it us, under the pretense of the ministry, to attribute that to man's labor which is only God's office, on whom all men depend, and unto whom, as the only well-spring and giver of all godliness, they ought to have respect (4: 96).

Bullinger goes on to argue that not even the apostles gave the Holy Spirit, drew men's hearts to the Lord, inwardly anointed their minds, regenerated their souls, delivered from sin, death the devil and hell. He writes, "All these things are the works of God, which he has not communicated to any" (4: 97). How much less can we claim authority to do these things? Nevertheless, what God retains to himself he often does through his agents. Bullinger states, "The Lord our high priest speaks unto us even at this day by the minsters preaching his word" (4: 103).

Bullinger was convinced of not only the necessity and sufficiency of Scripture but also of its clarity, its plainness (3: 252, 261; 3: 288). As indirect confirmation of this conviction, when citing scriptural testimonies to support a statement he often foregoes further exposition as unnecessary in the face of such straightforward, repeated claims from the Bible (e.g., 2: 356). Equally often, he corrects errorists for faulty interpretations and sets forward an alternative, almost self-evident hermeneutic. In his sermon on the church in the fifth decade, Bullinger argues, "But to the perfect understanding of the marks of the church this belongs also, and that most principally; that it is not enough to brag of the word of God, or of the scripture, unless also we embrace, retain, and determine the true sense and that which is agreeing with the articles of faith. For if we corrupt the sense of the scripture, and urge the same in the church, then [we] do not bring forth the sincere scripture itself, but our own opinion and our fancies which we have devised of our own mind." (4: 20) Clearly, the analogy of faith plays an important role, but appeal to the Fathers is not uncritical. Bullinger cites Augustine often, but is willing to part company with him when Scripture dictates that he do so (3:

395). Lessons can be learned from others, but Scripture is always given the final say, and pastoral concern that the church knows and lives the truth is paramount. He observes:

> Truly, it never went well with the church, when learned and studious men, forsaking the plainness and pureness of the word of God, turned their eyes another way, and aimed not at the word of God alone. They in ancient time did not condemn the word of God: but in the meanwhile they attributed more to traditions than was convenient. But by that means they both gave occasion unto errors, and confirmed such abuses as were already brought in (4: 484).

Bullinger's hermeneutic relies heavily on what he takes to be the obvious meaning of biblical texts when diligently compared with others, an approach undergirded by a deep conviction of the unity of Scripture. Twenty-first century readers with the benefit of more recent discoveries and insights would from time to time question his confident deductions from Scripture, but it is striking how often his operating principles seem timeless. For instance, he commends the "natural sense" (4:67). He favors preaching the whole canon letting one part interpret another:

> It was the custom in that happy and most holy primitive church, to expound unto the churches, not certain parcels of the canonical books, neither some chosen places out of them, but the whole books as well of the new Testament as of the old; and in so doing there came no small fruit unto the churches. As at this day also we see by experience, that churches cannot be better instructed, nor more vehemently stirred up, than with the words of God himself, and with the faithful interpretation of the books of the gospel, the law, the prophets, and apostles. Where, by the way, we give warning, that the interpretation of the scriptures is not a liberty to feign what one lust, and to wrest the scriptures which way one will; but a careful comparing of the scripture, and a special gift of the Holy Ghost; (4: 154-155; cf., 4: 543).

He warns against over generalizing from singular texts, not unlike what Ramesh Richard calls "principalizing".[17] "For there are many peculiar things done in the scripture, out of which if any man shall go about to draw general things and common laws, he shall bring in absurdities innumerable" (4: 372). It is also perilous to interpret over literally. Having warned against corrupting, adding to or subtracting from Scripture, Bullinger admits "that there be infinite sentences in the holy scriptures, which if we will proceed to expound simply according to the letter, we shall overthrow the whole scripture and the true faith, or we shall seem to charge the scriptures with lies and contradictions" (4: 436). Biblical interpretation then involves the sanctified

use of reason; it is a skill that can and must be learned (c.f., 4: 544). Nor is genuine understanding possible without the illumination of the Holy Spirit who also empowers obedience. Bullinger observes:

> Whom he means to bestow knowledge and faith on, to them he sends teachers, by the word of God to preach true faith unto them not because it lies in man's power, will, or ministry, to give faith; nor because the outward word spoken by man's mouth is able of itself to bring faith: but the voice of man, and the preaching of God's word, do teach us what true faith is, or what God wills and commands us to believe. For God himself alone, by sending his Holy Spirit into the hearts and minds of men, does open our hearts, persuade our minds, and cause us with all our heart to believe that which we by his word and teaching have learned to believe" (1: 84-85, c.f., 2: 404).

Alongside the plainness of Scripture is the fact that much of its content is "hard and doubtful exactly to define by reason" (3: 349) which, to use Bullinger's expression must be "shadowed out", i.e., made visible, by some other sort of description, just as Scripture itself does (3: 388). Furthermore, signs, of which the sacraments are a sub-category, are given by God to teach and admonish us. The miracles of Jesus "declare unto men that that was the true and undoubted preaching of the gospel, whereby Christ is declared to be Lord of all, Lord of life and death, of Satan, and of hell also itself" (4:230-232). Sacraments arise from God's goodness and man's weakness because "we hardly reach unto the knowledge of heavenly things, if without visible form, as they be in their own nature pure and excellent, they be laid before our eyes: but they are better and more easily understood, if they be represented unto us under the figure of earthly things, that is to say, under signs familiarly known to us" (4: 242). To understand heavenly things, we need both hear and see them (4: 244). The sacraments then are to be received just as the word is to be received, as from God (4: 240). But simple people don't need more distracting ceremonies (4: 524-5). Bullinger notes that Christ first preached and then celebrated the Lord's Supper, an example we should follow (4: 406).

Not content merely to trust Scripture and to interpret it accurately with the help of the Holy Spirit, Bullinger believed it must be applied carefully with due attention paid to the contemporary situation and the limitations of the audience. That Bullinger was aware that not all his listeners—or the listeners to the preachers he was teaching—were equally capable is attested by the following politically incorrect admonition. "Furthermore, I do diligently admonish the simpler sort, that they suffer not themselves to be deceived" (3: 235). Bullinger wisely distinguishes between "weak brothers and stubborn persons" (3: 317) and knows that Scripture addresses them differently. As always, the good of the church, not the reputation of the preacher is Bullinger's concern. "But unless the scripture be aptly applied, respect be-

ing had of place, time, matter, and persons of every church; and to this end . . . that the church may be edified, not that the teacher in the church may seem better learned or more eloquent; his exposition of the canonical books of the scripture shall be fruitless to the people." Then, after citing Luke 12: 42, Bullinger says, "Meat is unprofitable unless it be divided and cut into parts. But here the householder knows what portions he should give to every one in his family, not having regard to what delights every one, but what is most profitable for every one." (4: 155) In this way, Bullinger practices what he preaches, using the word directly to equip his listeners with bite-sized morsels. For Bullinger, Scripture is given to move listeners to obedience and that will not be achieved without understanding. "And reason itself teaches us, that the mind of man is little or nothing moved, if the things themselves be not understood. What fruit therefore shall the simple sort receive by the sacraments, unto whom the meaning of the sacraments has not been opened?" They must, he goes on to argue, be expounded (4:291). Bullinger is aware that people can only listen for so long and sometimes cuts short his argument to avoid what is "tedious" or "loathsome" (4: 416; 2: 342). Nor is Bullinger willing to assume that all churches are guilty of the sin a text of Scripture exposes. In his handling of texts from Ezekiel in Appendix II where he explains how to use the *Decades,* he writes:

> Wherefore this passage of Ezekiel shows, and other places of holy scripture declare also, what crimes are most of all to be abhorred; namely, those which directly tend to subvert the glory of God, to oppress justice and holiness, and to cast aside charity. I am aware that these awful crimes do not reign, God be thanked! Nor are they found in every several church. Different churches have different disorders. Nor is it beneficial to set before a people these horrible crimes, if they be not found among them. But the part of a wise pastor is, to consider diligently what is adapted for each church, what is proper for it, useful, and necessary and to insist upon that. But things that are not condemned by the judgment of God in the scriptures, and that do not militate against the points above mentioned, those we ought not to attack; for they sin grievously who condemn as sins what God has not condemned" (4: 547-548). "Let the wise pastor consider well what kind are the morals of the people in his charge what things are most requisite for them, and so set them before them, having regard always to edification, true faith, piety, charity, and innocence" (4: 556).

It should be clear from these citations that Bullinger was not reluctant to confront sin. Sometimes he does this directly and firmly; sometimes quite tenderly. This, like all else, seems to reflect the primacy of love in his theology and his understanding of the word of God. He likens that word in one passage to a candle that searches all the corners of our hearts that we may

confess to God all our offenses (3: 110). Preaching engenders repentance and for preachers to "terrify" the "most unhappy" impenitent (3: 112) is justified since gospel obedience leads to happiness (3: 99). After all, out of love and concern for our neighbor's spiritual health, every Christian is to admonition his or her endangered brother (3: 294). Bullinger urged fellow preachers to be specific:

> Let us urge the people committed to our charge therefore, while they pray earnestly and without ceasing, to amend their evil manner also; that is, to lay aside covetousness, usury, pride, incest, adulteries, fornication, luxury, drunkenness, surfeiting, blasphemies, slandering, idolatry, superstition, ungodliness, anger, envy, wrong and venal judgment, blood-shedding, unjust and mercenary warfare, and oppression and contempt of the poor; and to serve God in Christ with doing good . . ." [after which follows a lengthy list of equally specific *virtues*] (4: 552).

All of this urging and calling for repentance, though motivated by love is also undertaken with an awareness of impending judgment (4: 554-555). Bullinger's theology is not without eschatology. Of course preaching the gospel is not just announcing "bad news." He notes:

> The minister by preaching and consolation of the gospel, does pronounce and testify to the faithful their sins are forgiven. Therefore this preaching of forgiveness, being fetched from out of the mouth or word of God, is the absolution wherewith the minister absolves. . . . The public preaching of the gospel, as it is instituted by Christ our Lord, satisfies a faithful mind, which does not so much respect the demeanor of the minister, as he regards the truth of him in whose name the minister does it (3: 88).

Because Bullinger values the gospel so highly he is equally eager not merely to confront sin but also to rebuke false teaching and replace it with sound doctrine. "Neither is it enough simply to teach true religion, unless the teacher in the church, by often teaching, constantly urge, defend, and maintain the same" (4: 156).

Bullinger was convinced that the church is God's most excellent work (4:3). It is built and preserved by word of Christ. "Therefore we affirm, that only the word of God is apt for the building up of the church of God. Men's doctrines set up men's churches, but Christ's word builds the christian church" (4: 26; c.f. 4: 93). Preaching the only and pure word of God is the chief office of the pastor. He states:

> We have learned, not out of the words or opinions of men, but out of the manifest word of God, that the keys are the ministry of the

> preaching of the word of God; and that the keys are given to the apostles, and to their successors; that is to say, the office of preaching remission of sins, repentance, and life everlasting is committed to them. Whereupon we now conclude this, that the chief office of the pastor of the church is, to use those very keys which the Lord has delivered to his apostles, and no other; that is to preach the only and pure word of God, and not to fetch any doctrine from any other place than out of the very word of God (4: 149).

This ministry of the word produces gospel unity in the church (4:100-101). It engenders worship and which is "inseparably linked" to serving God (3:204). Almost as if to remind twenty-first century readers that so-called "worship wars" are not new, Bullinger chronicles many dangers that arise when singing takes center stage in the church (4: 195-197). For him, the indispensible elements of true worship are "the sincere teaching of the law and the prophets, of Christ and the apostles; faithful prayer offered unto her only God through Christ alone; a religious and lawful administration and receiving of Christ's sacraments;" (4: 479). In prayer, we ask God for many things including "the happy course of the word of God" (4: 21).

In the very last sermon of the fifth decade, Bullinger addresses the institutions of the church. Of the many convictions that he affirms, one stands out: schools are crucially important. "Christian schools have the first place, which bring forth a plentiful increase of prophets or ministers of the church. All nations, unless they were altogether barbarous, have understood, that without schools no kingdoms or commonweals can happily be maintained" (4: 479; c.f., 4: 494). In his commendation of the *Decades* to the Marquis of Dorset (Appendix I),[18] Bullinger urges him to support for the reformation convinced that the safety of the church and kingdom are linked. "And certainly there exists no more deadly plague to kingdoms than that which the corruption of true religion engenders; for nowhere do empires find a more splendid good than in pure religion, or in religion reformed after it has been corrupted" (4: 528).

So, to summarize, time and again Heinrich Bullinger affirms both explicitly and implicitly that the living God himself speaks the gospel of Christ through his word and through those duly entrusted to faithfully expound it. When that word is sincerely and accurately preached and heard, then sin is repented of, faith is granted, holiness is fostered, the church is united, and the wider world is blessed. How then, did these convictions shape the ways he sought to equip fellow pastors?

WHAT BULLINGER DID

We should notice immediately that Bullinger spent more time on "matter" than "manner" or as we might put it, more time on theology than on praxis or methodology. This was not accidental but intentional.

His ministry was driven theologically, not pragmatically. He was neither an ivory tower, academic theologian nor a utilitarian church consultant; he was a pastoral theologian, a working pastor and preacher who believed and lived the rich theology that shaped his practice. Although a detailed study of his correspondence might reveal a more self-conscious espousal of methods, this seems to me unlikely. Instead, Bullinger's approach seems much more like his Master's. He was fundamentally a model. What then did Bullinger model? The passages already cited point to four specifics.

First, Bullinger modeled humility. This is seen in his prayers that prefaced the sermons and in the benedictions and directions at their ends. There he invited his listeners to test all things and hold fast to what is good (1 Thess. 5: 21) and fully expected his students to go beyond him in their understanding (4: 556). He was utterly reliant upon God to work in and through him. "Prayer is commended for faith and godliness of mind, and not for any outward show. Those outward things are rather used, as means to stir us up; albeit even they also take little effect, unless the Spirit of God do inflame our hearts" (4: 191).

Second, Bullinger modeled clarity. This is perhaps the defining feature of the *Decades* and likely the reason that these sermons served pastors and lay people alike. He achieved this in many ways, including consistently defining his terms, writing out multiple biblical texts and then carefully reasoning from them. He used examples as well as concepts to prove his points (4: 170). He employed judicious repetition often speaking of beating the truth into people's minds (2: 334; 3: 39). His transitions make his thought easy to follow despite the thoroughness with which dealt with many possible objections. His dialogical style keeps listeners engaged (4:161; 261). Positive and negative examples simultaneously make his points and drive them home (4: 484; 2: 428). Questions deftly bring listeners along (4: 170 ff.). Convinced that God speaks his word through preachers, Bullinger' clarity is directly traceable to God's own character. Clarity in preaching reflects God's love in the incarnation and his sovereign rule over all he has made. He does not mumble or stutter.

Third, Bullinger modeled intellectual rigor in submission to the gospel for the sake of the church. He knew the Bible, the Fathers, the creeds and church history (cf. 3: 78-79). He thought and wrote analytically and synthetically with a thoroughness that is refreshing. He valued and used logic and reason. All of this is for the defense of "true religion" which is for the sake of the flock of God. Bullinger declares:

I have advanced nothing without the authority of scripture and contrary to true piety, but everything from the scriptures of God and in defense of the true religion. For I desire that not the smallest weight should be granted to myself and my writings, unless I justify all my statement with express scriptures and solid reasons fetched out of scripture (4: 544).

This is why Bullinger was such a proponent of schools and why he was alert to the dangers of carelessness and negligence in their oversight (4:

486). He wanted preachers to have the tools to interpret Scripture rightly, and these tools must be learned. This quality in Bullinger, like the others, is rooted in the Bible. He was convinced that God does not despise his creatures. He uses those he has created for his purposes and that agency entails equipping and equipping includes learning. None of this learning is to advance the reputation of the preacher; it is all to edify the church for the glory of God.

Fourth, Bullinger modeled realistic, persistent, balanced engagement. Though one could argue that this was thrust upon him by the challenges of his day, it is striking that Bullinger did not shrink back from wider leadership. He engaged with the local magistrates, with fellow reformers, and with exiles from other countries. Indeed the *Decades* themselves were an effort to express the underlying truths of the gospel in language that could benefit the church, primarily through her pastors. It might have been tempting to become parochial or even to withdraw in the face of all the challenges from Rome, from fellow reformers, from the pressures of living through the plague. Instead, Bullinger persevered and committed his wisdom for pastors to writing without neglecting either his parish responsibilities or those pastors sitting at his feet on a regular basis.

LESSONS FOR TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY PREACHERS AND THOSE CALLED TO EQUIP THEM

- In the spirit of the *Decades*, allow me to word these as exhortations.
- Don't be afraid to use logic, to reason from Scripture.
- Keep your grasp of theology current and let it dictate both your life and doctrine. Believe that God himself speaks and acts when duly called and equipped servants preach and act accordingly.
- Know and repeatedly articulate a valid biblical hermeneutic. Your students need this and we can't assume they will get it anywhere else.
- Resist the pressure to minimize educational qualifications for pastoral ministry.
- Remember that what we model complements the material we teach.
- Encourage local pastors to take neophyte preachers under their wing as Zwingli mentored Bullinger and Bullinger mentored others.
- Don't despise the place of cultural engagement and weigh speaking and writing opportunities accordingly. Keep your eyes open for students who have the capacity to do this well and urge them to make sure their preaching complements their cultural engagement and vice versa.
- Keep studying church history to discern lessons from the past and to glean inspiration for the present. Consider a detailed study of Reformation-era institutions such as the Prophezei that are in some ways analogous to our seminaries. Be encouraged that since the challenges facing the church are perennial, in many cases good solu-

tions have already been found and simply await rediscovery.
- Promote and support preachers' clubs where seasoned, theologically-driven preachers can rub shoulders with younger pastors instructing them and modeling compelling ministry of the word.
- Finally, as Bullinger said to his readers, "Test everything; hold fast to what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).

NOTES

1. Edward Dowey, "Heinrich Bullinger as Theologian: Thematic, Comprehensive, and Schematic" in Bruce Gordon and Emidio Campi, eds., *Architect of Reformation: an introduction to Heinrich Bullinger, 1504-1575* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 49-50.
2. Joel R. Beeke with George Ella, "Henry Bullinger's *Decades*", the introduction to *The Decades of Henry Bullinger,* ed. Thomas Harding, (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2004), 1: lxxx, lxxxi.
3. Heinrich Bullinger, *The decades of Henry Bullinger* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2004). The *Decades* appeared in three English translations in 1577, 1584, and 1587—the translation on which the Parker Society edition is based. Quotations have been modernized and will be cited in parentheses by volume and page.
4. Bullinger, *Decades*, 4: xxviii-xxix.
5. George Ella, "Shepherd of the Churches" the introduction to *The Decades of Henry Bullinger,* ed. Thomas Harding, (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2004), 1: xlix.
6. Ella, "Shepherds of the Churches", 1: lviii "Bullinger's importance to the English Reformation can scarcely be exaggerated . . ." 1: lxv ". . . no single work affected the English as much as Bullinger's *Decades*."
7. Bruce Gordon and Emidio Campi, eds., *Architect of Reformation: an introduction to Heinrich Bullinger, 1504-1575* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 124-125, 137-138. See also Larissa Taylor, *Preachers and people in the reformations and early modern period* (Brill, 2001).
8. Peter Opitz, "Bullinger's Decades: Instruction in Faith and Conduct" in Bruce Gordon, *Architect of Reformation: an introduction to Heinrich Bullinger, 1504-1575* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 116. "There is still much work to be done: the various theological aspects of the *Decades*, the contribution of the *Decades* to the history of theology and piety, and the influence of the *Decades* on posterity all await further research."
9. Gordon and Emidio Campi, eds., *Architect of Reformation*, 17-19. I am indebted to all the authors of this volume for framing the issues of Bullinger's day and for much of the background information in this section. Additional facts were gleaned from the "Biographical Notice" placed before volume 4 of the *Decades* (4: vii—xxxi).
10. Edward Dowey, "Heinrich Bullinger as Theologian: Thematic, Comprehensive, and Schematic" in Bruce Gordon and Emidio Campi, eds., *Archi-*

tect of Reformation: an introduction to Heinrich Bullinger, 1504-1575 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 43.

11. Gordon and Emidio Campi, eds., *Architect of Reformation*, 26-27.
12. Peter Opitz, "Bullinger's Decades: Instruction in Faith and Conduct" in Bruce Gordon, *Architect of Reformation: an introduction to Heinrich Bullinger, 1504-1575* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 105.
13. Opitz, "Bullinger's Decades: Instruction in Faith and Order," 105.
14. The dedication, omitted in the English translation, was prefixed to the original edition of the *Decades* I. and II. (4: 546, n. 1)
15. Peter Opitz, "Bullinger's Decades", 101 citing Walter Hollweg.
16. See Greg Scharf, "Was Bullinger Right about the Preached Word?" *Trinity Journal* 26 (2005): 3–10.
17. Ramesh Richard, *Scripture Sculpture: a do-it-yourself manual for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 163-167.
18. As in the case of Appendix I, Appendix II, was not part of the original English translation. It was the preface to the fifth and last Decade. (4: 528, n. 1).

"GO FORWARD"—A RALLY DAY SERMON

RUSSELL H. CONWELL

Exodus 14:15

"And the Lord said unto Moses, wherefore cryest thou unto me. Speak unto the children of Israel and tell them to go forward."

We put our hands into the hands of the Lord this morning and say: "Lord, lead on, we are ready." As a church, we cease from our Summer wanderings. We turn our attention to the great duties that confront us and we say, "Lord, here we are! Send us!" And the Lord sayeth unto us as He said unto the children of Israel, "Go Forward." He will never say to us, "Sit down by the shore and wait." He will never say to us so long as sin is in the world, "Rest here in peace." But with each recurring year, with the beginning of each undertaking, He sayeth unto us, "Go forward!" He did not say to the children of Israel that they were to cease offering up their supplications, but He said, "Why do you ask my advice and then refuse to take it. It is time you went forward." Moses said, "Here is the sea with its wild billows raging, beating on the shore. We cannot go forward." But again the voice comes down from the highest dome of heaven's temple, saying, "Go forward!" But Moses sayeth, "Here is the sea; there are the mountains; behind us the enemy. We are surrounded on every side with a wall of difficulties. Lord what are we to do!" Again comes the voice, "Go forward."

THE VOICE

So today the voice comes to you and to me, "Go Forward!" We sometimes long to be in a land of rest, and we say, "There is a rest for the people of God," but it is over on the other side of the river. We sometimes declare, "Oh, when we have finished this thing, we will sit down and rest." But as soon as that thing is done, God says, "No, not now! Do something else." So He says to you the same thing.

"You have been looking forward to the time when we would get the debt on the Church paid and have thought, "Then we will rest in quietness and peace under our own vine and fig tree." But the Lord says, "No, if you sit down, the Egyptians are behind you, the immovable waves are before you, the only thing to do is to put your feet into the water," as He afterward commanded them in the River Jordan.

I visited the seashore, and finding the life-saving station closed, I

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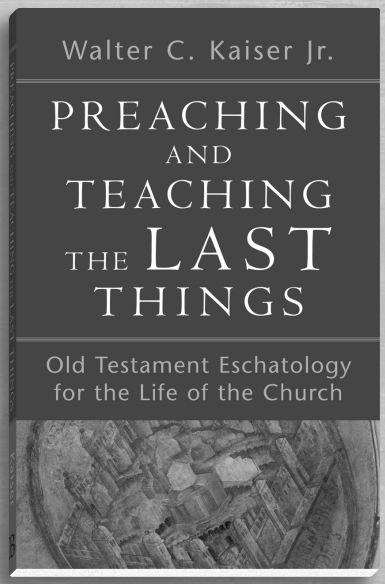

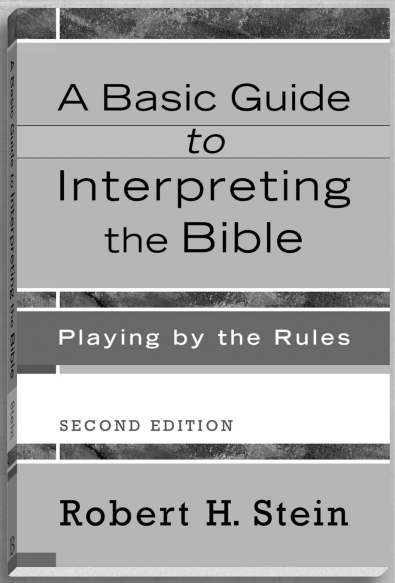

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inquired for some person who could show me the apparatus. They told me a farmer back on the farm had the key. The farmer said that some months ago a yacht had put out from the harbor with a company of people on it, among them his brother. After they had been out a while, there came a severe squall which overturned the yacht and threw the people into the water. But all managed to cling to the riggings, sails or spars. In that terrible gale the sea beat over them and buried them for a moment with the coming tidal wave. The farmer was at his house watching the boat, and he ran down to the shore to see what could be done to help them. As the boat overturned, its long mast stuck in the sand and anchored the boat, so that every wave drove the mast deeper into the sand. The farmer went down and tried to get into the life-saving station. He had no key but at last he broke into the window and opened the door. He found there a great mortar, or a kind of a gun, into which they put a bomb or shot which they fire into the sky that it may fall beyond the vessel, and the line attached to it come within reach of those who are perishing. But he was a farmer. What did he know about artillery? What did he know about a life-saving station? A little farther in, he found an immense apparatus upon wheels that could be turned easily. It had a great many ropes, some anchors and many pulleys, and he anxiously ran around that and wished to know what that was for. But there was no person to tell him. He pulled at the ropes and cogs and tried to separate the ropes. Then he found a number of life preservers, one of them on wheels. He examined them, but here they were, far back from the shore and his friends were out in the ocean, perhaps drowning even then. Here was all the apparatus to save them. The Government had expended many thousands of dollars for that purpose. But he did not know how to use it or what to do with it. He did not dare put any powder into that mortar or fire it. He did not dare run the wheels of that machine into the sea. He simply stood and trembled, and cried on the shore, and his brother went down into the sea, and his body was washed up when the storm was gone. This helpless man stood crying, surrounded by everything that was needed to save every person on that boat. We are in that same position ourselves. All around us as a Church, men are going down; all about us are the sick and suffering; all around us the ignorant; on every side the need of sympathy, of kindness, of Christian love; and we, with a mighty life-saving station, with all the rope and cogs, with all the bombs and shells, stand and tremble, and cry, and do nothing. Yet we are life-savers. Your Church is composed of three-fourths young people, in their strength and prime, with all the ambitions and hopes. It is a great life-saving station. Your Church has in it the energy of active business men. It is composed of the middle class of the community; not the absolute poor, or the greatly wealthy. It is a great life-saving station. You have the public favor of the city. Never did a church receive such great kindness, such voluntary support, such help from public opinion, from the public press and from society as seem to gather around you. A great life-saving station is here with everything ready to work, with all the men and women to use

it. But men are dying still. People are in awful pain and suffering because no hand reaches them. Thousands are going into sin and crime because no Christian sympathizes with them. If this were the only church in the city, our responsibility would not be any greater than now.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If each member of the Church were to give ten cents a week toward foreign missions,—what a power for good that would be! If each member of the Chorus were to sing one soul into the Kingdom, that would be 3,000 people converted by them every year, if they only converted one a month. Suppose each usher were to make a friend of one stranger each Sunday, that one would multiply to 1,560 strangers made friends of the Church in a year. If the attendants of the Societies of the Church were to convert one soul a month, they would convert 60,000 people in one year in this Church. Well may we talk of the responsibility upon individual Christians. Suppose each one of us should visit a sick person, as Jesus went around visiting the sick. If each person in this Church visited only one a week, this Church alone would reach 130,000 suffering people in a year. I feel small when I think of the power of God that has dwelt in your midst. God says, "Go Forward," and we are going. No place in this Church for lazy people any more. No place in this community for those who will not do their duty. We are for God. We are for humanity. We are for the sick, for the sinful; we are for the whole city. We are to save them all.

Did you ever think of your power with God in prayer? It is a dangerous thing to have such power with God. It makes you fearfully responsible for the manner in which you use it, for the petitions you make and for the things you pray for. You have great business force. I do not believe a member of the Church should lend money to another member of the Church and regard it as a kindness. It is no kindness to go around lending money. There is nothing on earth that makes a man hate you so much as to know he owes you money. The obligation of the Church is on a wider, higher plan. Its obligation is that every member of the Church has something to do, and it is our duty to see that no member of the Church is ever out of work, and if you know of a position at a good salary and you know of a member occupying a place at a smaller salary, it is your privilege and duty to try and help that member. You have wonderful business power in the city, reaching out into 32 professions and into 82 kinds of business, many of you connected with the most important enterprises of the city. Throughout the whole city you have this effective social force. How are we going to use these forces? What are we doing to do this coming Fall and Winter with these social and spiritual machines?

During the Civil War, down below Chatanooga, the General came to one of the Massachusetts regiments and said, "I want to see if there are men in this regiment who can fix up this railroad so we can run a freight train

over it by next Thursday. I have orders from General Sherman, and he wants it by next Thursday?" We were all called out, and the General came down the line and said, "What can YOU do?" One man said, "I never worked on a railroad, but I can drive spikes." The General said, "Step out; you can drive spikes!" Each of them knew something, and between them they know about the whole railroad business. The General divided them up and said, "This man can take charge of this, and you of that. You go to work on the rails, and you on this engine, and you on that, " and every man said, "I will do my part!" The next Thursday afternoon the great freight train went toward Dallas, Georgia, and when the troops came in, so hungry, oh, what a delight it was to see them rolling out the biscuits and the pickles! Although no man knew the whole business, each man in his own place did his duty right there. We as a Church, have this great machine. We have this life-saving station. We have these people to save. God has given us apparatus of all kinds and forms. No one knows how to control the whole machine, but each of us knows how to do something, and there are enough of us here, so that with us all, we know all about it. God says, "Go Forward," and if we are to go forward from this Rally Day on, each member of the Church must do his own individual duty in his own place, drive the spikes or repair the engine. God calls to you from the sky and says, "Why cryest thou unto me? Say unto Israel, Go Forward." You cannot escape the awful responsibility God has placed upon you in this Church.

CONCLUSION

I could pray God sincerely that I had a small church; that I was back in the country town in a small church. I could pray God sincerely at this hour that God would let me retire to some place where there were few people and where the great interests of the community were not so tied to the on-going machine of a great church. I could ask Him to shift this responsibility to some better hands and stronger minds. But we cannot escape. Our shoulders are under the building; it will fall unless you and I lift it, and if you lift, and I lift, it will not be a difficult undertaking. We may not be able to rest this side of glory, but we will feel that we have not been cowards or deserters. Lord, we put our hands again in Thine. Go ON! We are ready to follow. We will do what we can.

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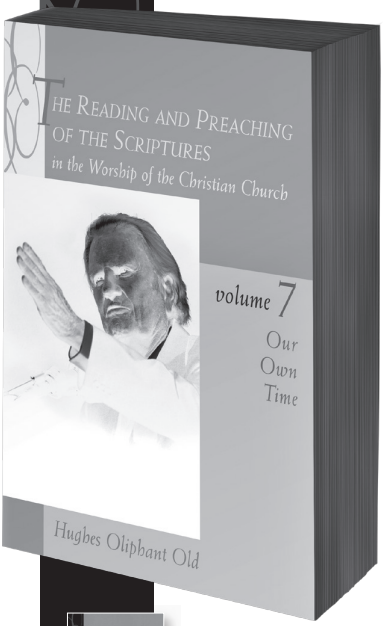

Volume 7: *Our Own Time*

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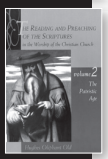

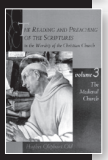

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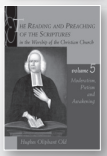

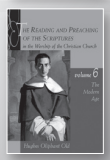

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BOOK REVIEWS

Worship and the Reality of God: An Evangelical Theology of Real Presence. By John Jefferson Davis. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 978-0-83083-884-4, 231 pp., $22.00.

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

Professor Jack Davis has taken the theology of worship back to its roots by grounding it in ontology. Countering the ontologies of modernism and post-modernism, which "tend to wash out our Christian beliefs even before we enter the church" (33), Davis describes God as joyful, beautiful, relational, and available; the church as sui generis a "communion of communities" (33), which should be "deep, thick, and different" (32); and worship as a *real* encounter with the *real*, personal (although unseen) presence of the risen Christ. With particular emphasis on recovering a sense of the real presence at the Eucharistic table (accounting for almost a third of the book), the author argues vigorously, contra Zwingli, for the spiritual presence of our resurrected Lord.

This book is a tour de force of scholarship, immersed in the waters of philosophy, church history, biblical studies, and of course, theology. Davis is also well-read in science and cyber-reality. The academic tone of the book, with vocabulary like "theanthropic," and "aseity," will stretch but not overwhelm readers because of three factors: scores of analogies that describe the unknown in light of the known; a final chapter ("From Ontology to Doxology") that makes concrete suggestions on how to implement this theology of worship into a church; and the author's passion. He believes what he is saying, and he is driven by love of God, the most beautiful and "most real" being in the universe. In fact, I would have enjoyed reading even more of the author's own experience as his vision and practice of worship has been revived.

Readers of this *Journal* will probably wish for more discussion of the ontology of preaching—experiencing the real presence of God through the spoken work—but you should know that the author does believe in that and is passionate about it.

If more people would read *Worship and the Reality of God*, we might get beyond worship wars to adopt practices grounded in an ontology of real presence, balanced in methodology between the ancient and modern, and warm hearted in spirit, seeing that our "'God' is too 'light'; [our] vision of

the church is too low; [our] view of self is too high, and consequently, [our] worship is too shallow" (38).

Pro-Life Pulpit: Preaching and the Challenge of Abortion. By Stephen Tu. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011, 978-1-61097-357-1, 154 pp., $20.00.

Reviewer: *John Jefferson Davis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA*

Stephen Tu's book, *Pro-Life Pulpit*, grew out of a Doctor of Ministry thesis project at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Tu had noted that an increasing number of books in homiletics were engaging social issues, but that none—until the appearance of his book—appeared to be exclusively focused on the issue of abortion, arguably one of the most pressing ethical issues of our age. His book addresses that need with passion, excellent research and reasoned argument, and clarity of thought and expression.

The book is divided into three sections: "Why Preach Against Abortion"; "Who's Preaching, Who's Listening"; and "How to Preach Against Abortion." The first argues the case for the urgent need to address the issue from the pulpit, and expounds the biblical basis for a sanctity of life ethic and the historic Christian views on the subject. The second provides helpful information on the preacher's personal preparation, the demographics of congregational life, and the pervasive influences of popular culture. The third section gives very practical advice on how to preach prophetically, yet pastorally, on abortion.

Chapters 7 and 8 address very specific issues in sermon preparation and delivery when preaching on abortion, and they ably synthesize the exegetical and theological analyses of the material with pastoral sensitivity and homiletical skill. Tu is careful to avoid a simply moralistic approach to abortion, urging the reader to place the issue within the larger framework of Christ, the gospel, and a Christian perspective on the meaning and purpose of human life. Very specific and practical suggestions are made regarding possible sermon texts, biblical themes, and appropriate times during the church year for pro-life preaching.

To illustrate his principles, Tu provides two model sermons that he himself has preached. The first, based on Prov 24:10–12, "The Day of Adversity," is a courageous, forthright, yet sensitive appeal to the listener's mind and conscience. The second, "The Incarnation," based on annunciation narrative in Luke 1:26–45, is a theologically robust and evocative message on the pro-life meaning of the Incarnation and the reality of "God in the womb": "Jesus in the womb. See him in his weakness and vulnerability.

Only Christianity offers you a God who became abortable" (128).

In Appendix B, Tu provides a bibliographic essay that is one of the best resources on pro-life concerns that I have seen in my many years of teaching on this and other ethical issues. All in all, Tu has provided an invaluable resource to pastors and preachers, and I would recommend *Pro-Life Pulpit* with confidence and enthusiasm to every reader of this *Journal.*

BibleWorks 9: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research. Norfolk, VA: BibleWorks, 2011, $359.00 (upgrade from version 8, $159.00; upgrade from version 7, $199.00).

Reviewer: *Joseph D. Fantin, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX*

Since 1992, BibleWorks has been a significant tool for Bible study. Version 9 continues this tradition, providing PC users with a cutting-edge exegetical tool. It contains the essential Greek and Hebrew Bible texts, over 30 English Bibles, numerous other Bible translations, lexical and grammatical tools, and many other references including scans of some important manuscripts, maps, grammars, and Josephus and Philo in Greek and English. Much of the original language material includes easily accessible parsing information, and many of these resources can be linked to employ multiple tools in unison. The program itself, among other features, includes the ability to do word searches, run complex grammatical searches, construct diagrams, and produce various graphs and charts based on those searches. Also, the program includes a number of introductory videos that will have even a novice using this software effectively within an hour of installation. A full list of contents and a description of all the features can be accessed from the BibleWorks web site (www.bibleworks.com).

The basic desktop includes three windows. The center window is the "browse" window. Here one can display a passage in one or more verses. The left window is the "search" window in which results of searches are displayed. The right window (which can be divided into two) is the "analysis" window and includes multiple tabs that, among other things, allow the user to see information from lexicons and grammars, other search results options, and write one's own notes about a passage. One very helpful feature of this program is the ability to place the cursor over a Greek or Hebrew word and have immediate access to parsing and lexicon information in the analysis window. The pastor who has learned, or is learning, the biblical languages should not feel this is a crutch. Parsing information does not change with time, nor does it need any special skill: with Bibleworks, one simply employs the software, rather than tax one's memory. The skilled exegete is one who

uses this information effectively.

There are many components to the exegetical process including textual criticism, word studies, grammatical analysis, background studies, etc. BibleWorks provides an excellent means for doing some of the more difficult and time consuming aspects of this process. First, for word studies, within minutes of loading the program I was able to do word searches in both the original languages and English with a simple double click on the text in the center window: immediately, I had access to all the occurrences of words searched for. Second, with a bit more work (and the aid of the tutorial video and help feature) I was able to do grammatical searches (e.g., looking for a verb followed by a noun in a certain case, etc.). In fact, of all the excellent exegetical uses for Bible software, this function utilizes the benefits of the software and computer abilities most productively. However, I must say that this BibleWorks feature is more difficult to use than the older Gramcord search engine for Windows.

BibleWorks does not include any significant commentaries and only a few general books that would be of interest to many (e.g., Early Church Fathers). Additionally, few add-ons can be purchased. However, for exegesis, it may be the most focused exegetical tool available for the PC. With the additional purchase of BDAG and HALOT (together for $212), BibleWorks will provide all the basic exegetical tools for lexical and grammatical analysis. Unfortunately, the textual apparatuses for the BHS, UBS4, and NA27 are lacking. Those who desire to do serious textual criticism will need to look elsewhere.

In conclusion, BibleWorks does not do exegesis. It gives one access to vital data very quickly. The exegete must then apply his or her skills and utilize this information to come to a conclusion about the meaning of the text. The focus of BibleWorks is narrow. It is primarily for aiding original language exegesis (although the many included modern language translations allow it to be used effectively for Bible study in English). While one can employ the program fruitfully within minutes of installation, it will, however, take time to master many of its more advanced features.

Galatians, Ephesians. By Gerald L. Bray (ed.). Reformation Commentary on Scripture. New Testament, 10. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011, 978-0-8308-2973-6, lvii + 446 pp., $50.00.

Reviewer: *Joseph D. Fantin, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX*

Like the earlier InterVarsity series—Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture—this one, Reformation Commentary on Scripture, provides

a collection of comments by historical figures from a particular era. The purpose of the series is to introduce the contemporary reader to "the depth and richness of exegetical ferment that defined the Reformation era" (xiii). It seeks to enhance contemporary biblical interpretation and preaching through the contribution of the Reformers' own exegesis and insights; it intends to enhance the reader's understanding of the Reformation itself (including its diversity); and it reintroduces the church to the Reformers' spiritual and devotional approaches to scripture which were not separate from their academic approach to the Bible. For the most part these goals have been met.

The volume includes a helpful prelude to the series which introduces the reader to the history and personalities of the Reformation (xiii-xxxviii). Also in the front matter is an introduction to Galatians and Ephesians which describes the Reformers' use of these books (xli-lvii). The format of the commentary is easy to follow. Most of the book focuses on a verse-by-verse collection of comments. Each literary unit begins with an English Standard Version translation and is followed by a brief overview of the passage. Then the section proceeds in a verse-by-verse manner providing quotations from various Reformers. Each verse and quotation is given a descriptive title in bold (e.g., among the passages cited for Gal 1:16 is "The True Meaning of Grace" by Olevianus). This structure allows the busy reader to land on the quotations most relevant to his or her needs. If an acceptable English translation does not exist, a new translation of these citations is included.

Following the commentary is a brief appendix on the Anabaptist use of Galatians and Ephesians (411) and three features most likely common to all volumes in this series: a map, a timeline, and brief historical sketches of important people (413–32). The book concludes with a bibliography and three indexes (author, subject, and Scripture).

This volume provides minimal help for exegesis. First, it is a collection of quotations with no real connection to each other; one cannot follow an author's thought. Second, the quotations are not set in their own context making it difficult to be certain how a specific point fits into a larger argument. Third, although great insights were made during this period, the authors were primarily concerned with their own circumstances and theological issues. Fourth, the nature of the volume demands that the quotations be very selective. This does not mean these comments are not valuable for exegesis. Reading many of these writers will enhance one's understanding of Galatians and Ephesians. This volume can be a valuable first step into discovering this material in a fresh way.

The creation of a significant exegetical tool was beyond the scope of this project. Nevertheless, this volume is quite helpful for teaching and preaching. It provides insightful comments on many passages (e.g., Musculus on Gal 2:19 [78–79] and Dickson on Eph 1:7 [249]). It will also serve as a gold mine for sermon quotations/illustrations. Some citations such as those of

Luther, Calvin, and others on justification in Gal 2:16–17 are theologically significant (71–76). Others are just fun. For example, one of the potential damaging results of drunkenness (Eph 5:18) noted by Johannes Bugenhagen is "out-of-tune singing" (377)!

This volume (and series) provides pastors and teachers with a valuable reference tool to quickly access important comments from Reformers who have contributed greatly to modern Christianity. In additions to helpful insights and excellent illustrations, this book also exposes the modern reader to these important figures and their thought.

Corporal Punishment in the Bible: A Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic for Troubling Texts. By William J. Webb. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011, 978-0-83082-761-9, 187 pp., $20.00.

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

William Webb broke new ground with the "redemptive-movement" hermeneutic first propounded in his widely-debated book, *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals* (InterVarsity, 2001). This work is an application of that hermeneutic to a different issue: corporal punishment. While the book does not directly deal with preaching, its hermeneutic calls for thoughtful analysis and engagement by every preacher. If we are in the business of applying an ancient text to modern life, it behooves us to examine every application hermeneutic.

A brief explanation of the hermeneutic (57–73) is in order. Webb's interpretive "movement" looks like this: X (original culture) → Y (Scripture) → Z ("ultimate ethic") (59). For example, considering, say, Deut 21:10–14 that talks about capturing women in war for wives, Webb would compare that particular command, Y (in Scripture), with what was going on in the original culture with women POWs, X. Noticing that Y depicted a moral and ethical improvement over X, Webb would have readers imagine a trajectory that could be extrapolated from X to Y to a postulated "ultimate ethic," Z, which is not explicit in Scripture. Current readers, chronologically and ethically located between Y and Z, are then supposed to do all they can to get to Z (60–62). That scheme seems to be fraught with problems, but the critical issue is how one can arrive at this extra-scriptural "ultimate ethic" (Z). Is it simply the subjective opinion of the observer? And, by seeking an "ultimate ethic" outside the Scriptural text, does that mean that no text of the Bible ever articulates a terminus, an ultimate state of affairs? There is always a danger in looking at the Bible with our seemingly sophisticated eyes and declaring scriptural injunctions as less than ethically ultimate: a Pandora's

box is thereby opened that permits a great deal of subjectivity.

Webb points to the inconsistencies in the principles of the "pro-spanking" camp when compared to biblical descriptions of corporal punishment: there is no upper age limit for corporal punishment in the Bible; there is no biblical basis for the "two smacks max" limit (forty strokes/lashes are advocated in Deut 25:3); there is no limitation of the location of biblical punishment to the buttocks or hand, no restriction upon causing bruises, welts, or wounds in the Bible, and no restriction of the instrument of discipline to a paddle or a hand (28–52). Webb thus turns the tables on the "pro-spanking" camp: as they alter the guidelines of the Bible for corporal punishment (Webb's point of view), this camp is actually doing what Webb advocates in his hermeneutic: "They [the "pro-spanking" camp] have taken the redemptive spirit, which resides within the corporal punishment texts themselves, and gone beyond the concrete, frozen-in-time particulars of the text to a fuller realization of the biblical ethic" (37). He admits: "We should not assume that the social ethic found in the Bible always portrays an ultimate ethical fulfillment of its redemptive spirit" (51). Apparently, God did not see fit to demand an ultimate ethic of his people in those ancient days, but decided only to nudge them towards that general direction—"a *kinder and gentler* administration of justice and toward a *greater dignity* for the human being who is punished" (84; emphases original).

I am not convinced that the pictures painted by Webb are real. Not only was the ancient near eastern cultural ethic (X) never monolithic, some might argue that in some cases—for e.g., the freedom of women to serve as leaders in pagan worship—it was even "better" than the more restrictive biblical stipulations. So in which direction (Z) are we to proceed? One could consider the development of human governance in the Bible: a one-man show in Moses' time, to amphictyony in Judges, to monarchy later. From our vantage point today, we see the ideal as democracy. But the ultimate ethic is clearly stated in the Bible—it is a monarchy, with Jesus Christ ruling with a rod of iron. This again makes the trajectory towards a fancied extrabiblical "ultimate ethic" (Z) a matter of conjecture.

All in all, I recommend Webb's latest offering. Even though one might carp about his argumentation, there is much there that needs to be grappled with. For all those with any interest in the hermeneutics of application (and that includes the majority of the readers of this *Journal*) this book is a must-read. Well written, in an easy conversational style, it promises, unlike other works on hermeneutics, not to put anyone off with abstruse terminology and inaccessible references. This book has certainly made me think!

How to Read the Bible in Changing Times: Understanding and Applying God's Word Today. By Mark L. Strauss. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011, 978-0-80107-283-3, 272 pp., $14.99.

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

This is another work in the "genre" of application studies: "The question [is] not *whether* a passage of Scripture applies to us, but *how*" (11). For Strauss, the "central message" of the Bible is "the story of redemption," and "living biblically" means "recognizing our place in God's story and living in such a way that we reflect his nature and purpose in the world"—the living out of a Christian worldview (58, 65). This is also to imitate Christ (*imitatio* Christi) as the New Testament amply demonstrates (72–74).

How exactly do we find out in any given passage what we must do to be more Christlike? Strauss suggests that the interpreter focus on the purpose of the passage—"who we ought to be (attitudes and character) and what we ought to do (goals and actions) as those seeking to reflect the nature and purpose of God" (78–79). He goes on to assert the importance of placing the passage in the larger story of Scripture, discerning the author's purpose in light of the passage's genre and historical and literary context, understanding how the passage informs us of the nature and ways of God in the world, to finally land on what the passage teaches us about our attitudes, character, goals, and actions (81–91).

The bulk of the book (107–205) is distributed between two chapters that address the interpretation of diverse genres of the Old and New Testament, respectively. These contain helpful guidelines that readers of this *Journal* will, no doubt, have already encountered elsewhere.

For the Gospels, Strauss notes that while "their goal [i.e., goal of the authors of the Gospels] is to produce a trustworthy account [a single account?] of Jesus' words and actions," they are also theological, written for a purpose: "to proclaim the message of the salvation accomplished through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah" (162). I wish the theological purpose would have been more consistent with what Strauss claimed was the goal of Scripture—redemptive in the broader sense of creating a people who "reflect his nature and purpose in the world" (58). While the Christocentric thrust is a part of this broad purpose, it seems less than hermeneutically sound to restrict the Gospels to "the message of salvation." Mark, for instance, deals almost exclusively with discipleship, rather than with salvation (justification).

The last chapter concludes with three theoretical models of how one could conceivably move from text to application (210–221). The first is the hermeneutical bridge, which is essentially to make a principle out of any passage of Scripture and apply that principle to the current situation.

Strauss's second model is the pyramid/ladder of abstraction, which does not look very different from the bridge model, for this one also draws upon principles. While these principlizing methods might work for the genre of law (after all laws are principles themselves), "it is not so clear how it functions with a variety of other literary forms" (215). The third model is Webb's "redemptive-movement" hermeneutic. He critiques this approach for its seeing an "ultimate ethic" outside of Scripture (see accompanying review in this issue of Webb's latest work, *Corporal Punishment in the Bible*).

Strauss sums up by listing eight criteria that ought to govern any move from text to application: purpose of the writing, cultural correspondence (a lack thereof between "then" and "now" should caution us), canonical consistency (imperatives unchanged through the canon may be easily applied), countercultural witness (if the teaching goes against the grain of contemporary ancient near eastern culture, it is likely to be normative), creation principle (teachings are transcultural if rooted in creation), and redemptive priority (fit everything within God's restoring and redeeming acts).

One problem preachers will find in such works on hermeneutics is a lack of empathy for those of us who deal with the canonical text of Scripture pericope by pericope from the pulpit. Theologians and scholars do a remarkable job when it comes to canonical and testamental and biblical theology, but they pay scant attention to what is the hermeneutically life-changing slice of Scripture God's people come into contact with week by week—the pericope, the preaching unit. And so, in Strauss' work as well, I wish there had been more of a focus upon how one could attend to application pericope by pericope, which, after all, is what preachers do, and which, after all, is how the body of Christ primarily engages the biblical text.

The Beauty of the Word: The Challenge and Wonder of Preaching. James C. Howell. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011, 978-0-664-23695-3, 178 pp., $20.00.

Reviewer: *Bill McAlpine, Ambrose University College, Calgary, Alberta.*

The Preacher of Ecclesiastes admonishes his son with these words as he concludes his reflections on life: "Of making many books there is no end, and much study is weariness of the flesh." One could easily be tempted at times to add two words to this poignant statement, making it read: "Of making many books *on preaching* there is no end ...." How much more can be written even on such a crucial topic without the torpor of terminal redundancy setting in? Fortunately for the academy and the church, for the

homiletics professor and frontline practitioner, James C. Howell has written yet another book on the subject of preaching and, in so doing, has made an excellent contribution to the vast array of homiletical literature already available.

The content of the book is insightfully divided into four subsections that flow seamlessly into each other; *The Subject Matters* (chapters 2 through 4), *Where Sermons Happen* (chapters 5 through 7), *When Sermons Happen* (chapters 8 through 10), and *The Life of the Body* (chapters 11 through 14). His first section addresses the fundamental, yet all too often problematic issue of topic selection. He underscores the immensity of this challenge for the preacher by reminding us that "We get to talk about what is way too massive, or too microscopic, for mere words. We speak of God" (14). In many ways this section serves as an ancient cornerstone, setting the direction for the entire building. Repeatedly throughout this section, Howell reminds his readers the every sermon "must be essentially about God, focused on the wonder and glory of God" (41). He underscores the fact that texts from which our sermons today are built were sermons before they were texts, "and they work because they point us toward God." It is the centrality and beauty of the Word alone that assures the effectiveness of any sermon. "But if we mimic the best thoughts of the world, we do not point to Christ crucified" (26).

The second section (*Where Sermons Happen*) demonstrates how essential it is for the preacher not only to be well immersed in the world, but to carve out time for reflection on the world and on what God is doing in the world (73). Howell points out that it is in our given context that we will often find the most powerful illustrative material, what Karl Barth referred to as "parables in the secular order" (80). Preachers are admonished to study the lives of saints of old, but also the saints to whom we preach and notice ways in which "they naively, flawlessly, and stunningly embody texts, and name their faithfulness as the literal enactment of a text" (87).

Howell consistently and successfully resists pat answers and a simplistic, formulaic approach to preaching. One will not find detailed litanies of technique. Yet he challenges and encourages his readers with some of the most practical insights not only on the preparation and delivery of sermons, also on handling the responses of people to one's preaching. An example of this kind of wisdom is found in the third section and specifically the chapter entitled "Aftermath," in which he wisely advises on how to receive and respond to people's expressions of appreciation following a sermon. "Take the praise for what it is; a garbled locution of belief sustained, of faith stirred, God made real in your talking; and they cannot think of anything else to say except 'I enjoyed your sermon.' Thanks be to God" (109).

In his fourth and final main section (*The Life of the Body*), Howell does a masterful job of positioning the pulpit ministry within the broader landscape of local church life, demonstrating how preaching cannot be

isolated from other ministries such as administration and the educational endeavor of the local congregation. He challenges preachers to "preach sermons that are intentionally instructional and profoundly wedded to what is going on in the rest of the Church program" (136).

In his consideration of two disparate yet equally challenging sermons that any preacher may be called upon to deliver, the prophetic sermon and the funeral sermon, Howell reminds his readers that regardless of the circumstance or context, the goal of any sermon is none other than "to glorify God and to see the Body in action, not changing minds so much as moving the Body together to think, reflect, and embody the ministry of reconciliation" (147).

Howell has skillfully produced and assembled material germane to the experience of the beginner freshly launched from seminary as well as the seasoned preacher with decades of pulpit experience. This has been accomplished largely by his effective mixing of theory and praxis. The breadth of Howell's reading is manifest through the number and variety of sources he referenced from the fields of literature, philosophy, history and theology that are intricately woven into his book. But he does not leave the reader dangling in the ethereal space of the theoretical. Rather, his integration of anecdotal material born out of his own pastoral experience and that of others lands his argumentation convincingly on the *terra firma* of the preacher's world. *The Beauty of the Word*, therefore, has earned the position of required reading in future homiletics classes I am privileged to teach.

Preaching As Worship: An Integrative Approach to Formation in Your Church. By Michael J. Quicke. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011, 978-0-80109-226-8, 279 pp., $17.99.

Reviewer: *Randal Pelton, Calvary Bible Church, Mount Joy, PA*

One of the highlights of being a part of the Evangelical Homiletics Society is meeting people like Michael Quicke. He is someone who is happy in God and God's work. That, plus the fact that he is a veteran pastor and the C. W. Koller Professor of Preaching and Communication at Northern Seminary, makes him a qualified guide for the subject of preaching as worship. Quicke states his purpose for writing: "This book tells of my journey from small-picture to big-picture worship and of some surprising people and events that challenged me to pick up binoculars and look through them the right way" (13).

Like all good sermons, the book is divided into three parts: Part 1, "From a Small Picture of Worship," presents eight symptoms of a preacher's

lack of interest in worship. Quicke offers ten characteristics of myopic preaching. Part 2, "Toward a Bigger Picture of Worship," contains a detailed discussion of the concept of worship. Six key questions provide structure for the rest of the book, and six ways to magnify worship are presented. Part 3 is a detailed discussion of how to implement these stages. Also included is a helpful look at how pastors and lead-worshipers collaborate to create big-picture worship services.

A helpful element of the book is reading Quicke's own frustrations during his personal journey. I found myself resonating with his frustrations and was instructed by them. The book is peppered with personal stories that illustrate problems and solutions. I was convicted by a presentation of "nonworship services" that mirrored what I, myself, have helped create for the better part of twenty years (109). Readers in non-liturgical settings will profit from Quicke's discussion of the seven ways that using the lectionary aids big-picture worship (129–130).

This well-researched book will help preachers reevaluate their goals for creating and conducting worship services. The following sentence is an example of the shift Quicke is encouraging: "Moving preachers from small-picture to big-picture worship means a major change from seeing worship as an activity alongside preaching and pastoring to viewing it as *the* integrative activity that holds everything else together" (21). I was especially spurred on by Quicke's idea that "preachers come to see themselves as worshipers first and foremost—their highest calling is to worship. They are worshipers before they are preachers" (97).

If the book has a weakness, it stems from the relatively small amount of material devoted to *preaching* as worship. The scales tip heavily on the subject of facilitating worship in worship services. An indication of this is the fact that only one chapter was directed at preaching (chapter 5, "Preaching in 360-Degree Worship"). Quicke laments, "Worshipless sermons are the sad and inevitable outcome of myopic preaching. Theologically thin, spiritually disconnected, empty of God, silent about his grace, self-satisfied, and self-oriented, such sermons are devoid of worship" (58). It would have helped to hear Quicke's remedy for this malady. Another minor issue is that the major diagram in the book, Quicke's 360-degree model, is extremely complicated.

As Quicke says: "Worship is in trouble in many places for many reasons" (17). Preachers, after reading this book, will be less likely to contribute to the problem. The work makes a significant contribution to the field of homiletics and pastoral ministry in general by introducing readers to the vital connection between preaching and worship. I highly recommend this book to readers of this *Journal*. If the opportunity to meet the author arises, take it and then enjoy the fringe benefit of imagining his delightful British accent as you read.

The Season of Creation: A Preaching Commentary. Edited by Norman C. Habel, David Rhoads and H. Paul Santmire. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011, 978-0-80069-657-3, 234 pp. $29.00.

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

This work proposes a new, four-week season be added within the church's annual cycle of worship (the church year), namely the "Season of Creation." Following the normal triennial lectionary cycle common to many churches, the Sundays in each of the three years would cover a range of emphases: Year 1 of the lectionary (following the Gospel of Matthew) emphasizes "the Spirit" on Forest Sunday, Land Sunday, Outback/Wilderness Sunday and River Sunday; Year 2 (following the Gospel of Mark) emphasizes "the Word" on Earth Sunday, Humanity Sunday, Sky Sunday and Mountain Sunday; Year 3 (following the Gospel of Luke) emphasizes "Wisdom" on Ocean Sunday, Fauna Sunday, Storm Sunday and Cosmos Sunday. To this end, the editors provide specific biblical passages to serve for each Sunday that appear to make mention of the created order. Suggestions for a "corrected" reading of these texts on the appropriate Sundays are included along with a bibliography of supportive literature.

The proposal emerges from a new hermeneutic for the interpretation of biblical texts that assumes that prior expositions of biblical texts within the seasons of the Christian year have been biased by the alienation of humans from the created order, reflecting an exploitive bias of the creation. The modern environmental concern provides an appropriate context for the remedying of this "defective" approach; now the text can be interpreted and applied from the viewpoint of the created order itself (11). Contributors offer interpretive notes for each lection with helpful summaries of the context and message of each passage. The suggestions for preaching, however, fail to provide a satisfactory bridge for preaching these texts that preserves the original textual intention; instead, the intrinsic authority present in *lectio continua* is abandoned for the less justifiable products of *lectio sacra*.

On a deeper level, this approach violates the traditional perspective on the Christian celebration of time. The evolution of the annual church year was driven by a desire to celebrate (in order of significance) the central elements of salvation history as revealed in Jesus Christ—his death and resurrection (Easter), his Incarnation (Christmas), and his Second Coming (Advent). Around these key events other seasons were arranged to complete the full appreciation of his life and work: Epiphany, Lent, and Pentecost. While the editors of this work offer a general orientation to the Christian Year and

acknowledge its Christocentric focus, they fail to justify how this approach can consistently fulfill the mandate to focus the worshipper's attention on the redemptive work of Christ. By suggesting that this season fits within any season of the Christian year (4), the proposal fails to offer a clear rationale for its presence within the celebration of Christ's life. Ultimately, one cannot adopt this season without risking a shift in focus away from Christ himself.

Sustaining Preachers and Preaching: A Practical Guide. By George Lovell and Neil G. Richardson. New York: T. & T. Clark, 2011, 978-0-56750-785-3, 264 pp., $34.95.

Reviewer: *Greg R. Scharf, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL*

Lovell, a Methodist minister and ministry consultant, and Richardson, formerly a tutor in New Testament studies and then Principal of Wesley College in Bristol, U.K., write because they believe Christian preaching matters to the health of the church and that preaching is at a "critical juncture of challenge and opportunity" (ix). While they affirm preaching that is "grounded in the scriptures and prayer and inspired by the Holy Spirit," Lovell and Richardson lean heavily on methods and processes from the behavioral sciences (x). The book refers to biblical texts on 142 pages, though what the authors understand by its words cannot be assumed *necessarily* to be equivalent to what evangelical readers think of when they read them. For instance, in counseling how to preach the resurrection, the authors write: "To insist that they must believe in the *physical* resurrection is a step too far. Some Christians endorse this view, but it is only one interpretation of the mysterious, sometimes conflicting testimonies of the New Testament" (206).

The book itself has five parts and two appendices (a sermon, each, by the authors). "Part One: Preachers and Preaching" repeatedly highlights weaknesses of preaching, No actual sermons are quoted but the sort of preaching the authors do not like often functions as a foil to project their preferred alternative: dialogical, non-directive, collaborative, even therapeutic peaching. The authors discern two sources of authority for the preacher, namely, his or her call, on the one hand, and the church on the other. They conclude that preaching is a unique form of communication. As we learn later, since readers make their own contributions to the meaning of what they read in the biblical text (112), an exhortation to "let the Bible have its say" (107, 111) rings a bit hollow. The authors argue that "a sermon does not necessarily have its origin in Scripture, but they assume that studying the Bible—by oneself and with others—is a normative and early stage in the preparation to preach" (120). One wants to ask in what sense it is normative.

For Lovell and Richardson, the criterion for success in preaching is pragmatic: the "truest test of [a sermon's] authenticity is whether it enables growth in faith, freedom and love" (20). Chapter 2 offers some welcome remedies for oft-mentioned maladies, remedies including solitude, prayer, listening to God and other salutary practices.

The balance of the book, parts two through five, however, reverts to the horizontal plane. Indeed "Part Three: Making a Sermon," is deliberately sandwiched between "Working Relationships" (Part Two) and "Part Four: Sustaining Developmental Support Cultures, Services and Networks." "Part Five: Sustaining Preachers in a Fast Changing World," rehearses once again the challenges preachers face and clearly reveals the epistemological foundation of the authors: for them, the meaning of the Bible "shifts and changes, depending on who is reading it, and in what circumstances" (203).

Given the authors' context, experience, convictions, and the avowed influence of Schleiermacher and Barth, this book makes a good deal of sense. But a weak doctrine of Scripture plus a thin theology of preaching—we look in vain in the Scripture index for passages that are foundational to such a theology—coupled with a doubtful hermeneutic that elevates the listener above the Author leaves these writers with no sustainable means of sustaining preachers and preaching. When a book leads us to ask as the authors do, "How far *can* Christian preaching change without *ceasing* to be Christian preaching?" (199), we know that it is leading us in the wrong direction. In my judgment, the remedies for the weaknesses of preaching that Lovell and Richardson prescribe do not go nearly deep—or high—enough.

Preaching and Teaching the Last Things: Old Testament Eschatology for the Life of the Church. By Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011, 978-0-80103-927-0, 184 pp., $19.99.

Reviewer: *D. Bruce Seymour, Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, CA*

This is a helpful book, but with a slightly misleading title. It is much more about teaching than preaching. Having acknowledged that, this book has some significant strengths.

After a helpful introduction, which includes an encouragement to teach prophetic passages and basics on how to interpret them, Walter Kaiser organizes this book around fifteen blocks of Scripture to apply his method. For each passage he offers a brief overview, a title, an outline and careful exegesis. He also provides what he calls a "Focal Point," a "Homiletical Keyword," an "Interrogative," and a "Teaching Aim." These were less helpful. They struck me as too general to offer much homiletical assistance. For example, in his

discussion of life and death in the Old Testament, specifically Psalm 49, the Focal Point was verse 15, the Homiletical Keyword was "Answers," the Interrogative was "What," and the Teaching Aim was "to demonstrate that God is sovereign over death and the grave." There are no suggested sermon outlines, no real "big idea," or suggestions for contemporary application.

It might be more helpful to see this book as a specialized commentary on these fifteen difficult eschatological passages. A lesser scholar might have chosen "easier" passages, but Kaiser goes directly to contentious passages, like the seventy weeks in Daniel 9, the Third Temple in Ezekiel 40, and the new heavens and earth in Isaiah 65. In his comments, his conservative approach is obvious, consistent, and respectful.

In each passage the exegesis is closely performed. Kaiser is comfortable working in the Hebrew text and is aware of interpretational issues. For every text, he carefully details the available options, before clearly expressing his choice and explaining why he chose that option. When he is not sure, he admits it: one must admire honest scholarship.

Over and over, Kaiser's scholarly insight into the meaning of the terms used in the text is sharp. Here are several examples: "Death was never treated in the Old Testament as something that was good or even final, for it involved the realm of the unclean" (12). "Molech is probably a deformation of the Hebrew word *melek*, for 'king,' including the vowels from the Hebrew word *boshet*, 'shame' (24). "The term 'Branch' is a most interesting one, for it reveals four different aspects of Messiah in three separate prophetic books of the Old Testament" (59). "The words used in the Hebrew and Greek script for 'new' [heavens and earth] refer not to a total discontinuity between the former universe and the cosmos that is to come. Instead, the word 'new' points to a 'renewal' of the heavens and earth" (155). It was a delight to discover these pearls of wisdom in the field of technical discussion.

Kaiser's language is also enjoyable. In his discussion of Job 19:21–27, he writes: "This passage is among those few texts in the Bible that have stirred up a host of opinions with a plethora of conclusions that run the gamut of views" (14). Nice! And in his discussion of the second coming: "An eschatology without a Christology is like a book without a first and final chapter" (51)!

Structurally, this commentary-like work concludes with three helpful indices: an author index, a subject index, and a Scripture index.

If you are looking for help in preaching the last things, you will probably have to keep looking. But if you want exegetical insight and careful analysis of some of the toughest prophetic passages in the Bible, this book will certainly be useful.

How Effective Sermons Advance. By Ben Awbrey. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011, 978-1-60899-970-5, xvii + 302 pp., $35.00.

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

In *How Effective Sermons Advance*, Ben Awbrey argues for expository preaching that deductively states the sermon proposition in the sermon introduction and structurally unfolds as a list of theological principles no matter the genre of the preaching text(s). The book consists of nine chapters, each ending with a list of 19 to 67 questions to consider. The first five chapters defend Awbrey's approach to sermon structure. The remaining four chapters focus on how to implement his approach.

Despite Awbrey's assertion that sermons need structure, I will touch on three flaws that make the book a poor choice for those looking to improve their preaching with better sermon structure. The first flaw is that the book limits the discussion of sermon structure to the sermon proposition, the main points, and their textually-based subpoints. Sermons, however, can advance through other means including rhetorical questions, objections, applications, and reviews of what has been covered so far in the sermon.

The second flaw is Awbrey's static method of sermon construction which turns preaching portions from any genre into a list of points and subpoints. Such an approach is not only genre *insensitive*, it will lead preachers to produce some sermons that are not expository. He demonstrates this in his treatment of 1 Samuel 1:1–28. Reducing the *pathos* of this Old Testament narrative by structuring the sermon like an epistolary text, Awbrey—drawing from the principlizing approach of Walter Kaiser—turns the narrative into a list of parenting lessons that the text does not teach (114–116). This can be further seen in some of the "model" sermon structures that Awbrey provides from David Jeremiah (292–293).

The third flaw is Awbrey's dogmatic and tedious rhetorical style which exhibits an "us versus them" mentality and is heavy on block quotes and interaction with the Puritans and other preachers long gone. Even those who find comfort in the author's rhetorical style are not likely to find sentences like the following palatable: "Since both components of the essence of the text were sub-principlized and the extent of the text supra-principlized, we can designate the meta-principlized statement above as follows: +Gn: 0s1, s2, 0x, +x = M, < > T" (165). I suspect that a clearer presentation of his ideas would have allowed a greater number of preachers to engage and consider his approach.

The book has its strong points. Awbrey's discussion of what it takes for preachers to carry themselves in a way that shows that they believe they have something worthwhile to preach is insightful (202–206). He is also spot-on when he writes that preachers ought to validate the language of their main points when they explain the text without veering into "information overload" or digressing in thought (265–267).

In sum, *How Effective Sermons Advance* is a call to return to the evangelical homiletical practice of a bygone era, but it seems to ignore the contribution of genre to homiletics, and generally deprecates "lesser" approaches to preaching.

Folly, Grace, And Power. By John Koessler. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011, 978-0-310-32561-1, 150 pp., $16.99.

Reviewer: *Kenneth W. Smith, First Baptist Church, Shelton, CT*

There has long been a need for a book like *Folly, Grace, and Power.* Preaching students, pastors, and homiletics professors will benefit from reflecting upon the insights Koessler sets forth in this brief, but significant "exercise in theological reflection" (18). *Folly, Grace, and Power* is not a manual on *how* to preach, nor is it an exhaustive theological treatment of preaching. However, the work is comprehensive in its scope and deep in its wisdom on much that has gone wrong with contemporary preaching, and on how we may correct it.

Drawing from Eugene Peterson, Koessler asserts that much that is lacking in contemporary preaching "is a matter of deafness rather than blindness. God's Word is opened. The sermon is preached. But somehow the voice of God is not heard" (21). The author points to the pressure that many preachers feel to identify the listener's problems and then solve them. This will often result in "replacing truth with caricature. Instead of preparing God's people to live out their redemption in the real world, they offer a theme-park vision of what it means to follow Jesus" (26).

One of the more intriguing themes in *Folly, Grace, And Power* is the notion of incarnation as an aspect of preaching. Koessler asserts that merely reading the biblical text can never entirely replace the act of preaching. "Preaching is an exercise in communication, but it is also a kind of incarnation. During the act of preaching, the preacher serves as the living voice of the biblical text" (48). While Koessler asserts the importance of inflecting the written text with a living human voice (49), preachers must do a good deal more. Citing Phillips Brooks, Koessler notes that "[r]eal preaching reflects the preacher's character, affections, intellect, and moral being. When the

preacher serves only as a medium for the content of the gospel, 'the man has been but a printing machine or a trumpet. In the other case, he has been a true man and a real messenger of God'" (47–48).

Koessler maintains that if God's voice is to be heard in a sermon, then there must be a cooperative effort on the part of the Spirit and the preacher. "The Spirit who imparts the ability and skill for preaching works in the mind of the preacher to give insight on God's Word" (35). He refers to this as "*illumination*" and asserts that it is "not immediate …. The preacher must do the work of exegesis and interpretation and may use tools" (35–36).

However, the Spirit's illuminating work does not stop at showing the preacher the meaning of the biblical text. The Spirit also sheds light on the connection between the message of the text and the needs of the audience (36). And the Spirit also does a corresponding work "in the minds and hearts of those who hear as the sermon is being delivered. The Spirit does more than give the listener a cognitive grasp of the ideas of the biblical text. His work of illumination includes the God-given conviction of faith" (37).

Later on, Koessler devotes a chapter to the complex relationship between preacher and listeners. He views the preacher in a dual role as prophet and priest. "The prophet does not try to make us feel comfortable…. His chief concern is to arrest our attention and speak the truth" (95). However, preachers also fulfill a priestly function in the sermon. The priestly role is one of identification and advocacy. We stand *with* the listeners in a mediating role and we "ask the questions our listeners would like to ask but dare not…. We give voice to the silent questions that plague our listeners, but we do not necessarily answer them." After all, "God does not always explain himself" (96). Sometimes we must "listen with them to the awkward silence that sometimes ensues once the words have been spoken" (96). While preachers may not be able to answer many questions, Koessler, in his final chapter, points to the hope of Christ's return. "The day is drawing near when the church will no longer need its prophets, pastors, and teachers. When that day comes, all that is imperfect will pass away, and preaching along with it. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (139).

This book promises to be helpful to both beginning homiletics students and experienced preachers. Beginning students could be required to write one or more reflection papers on key concepts in the book. For the experienced preacher, Koessler's book may serve as a worthy reminder of what it is that they are really doing as they stand before the congregation and deliver a message from God's Word.

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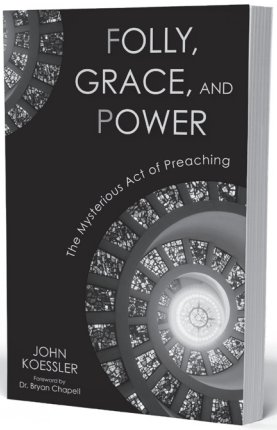

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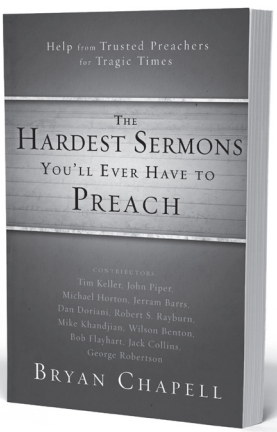

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The Evangelical Homiletics Society (EHS) convened its inaugural meeting in October of 1997, at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, at the initiative of Drs. Scott M. Gibson of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Keith Willhite 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:

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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.

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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.

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