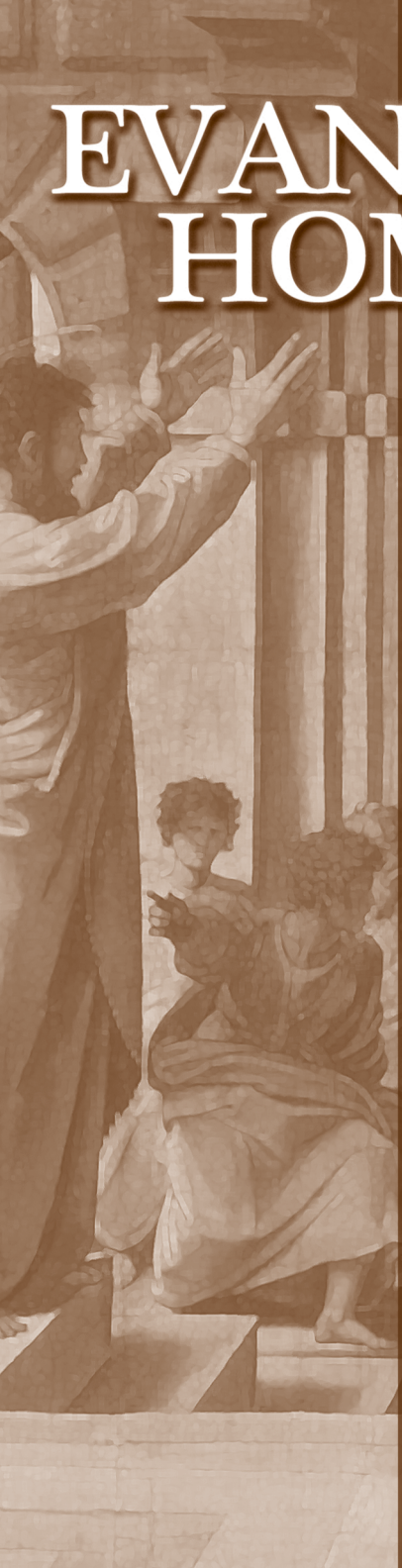

THE JOURNAL OF THE

EVANGELICAL HOMILETICS SOCIETY

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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 *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 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.

REMEMBERING HADDON ROBINSON

SCOTT M. GIBSON
General Editor

Haddon W. Robinson died on July 22, 2017, but his legacy lives on. This edition of the *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* is dedicated to the memory of a faithful preacher, teacher, and servant of Christ. Most of the articles in this edition celebrate the life and ministry of Haddon Robinson, his enduring impact on the field of homiletics. First, Torrey Robinson, Haddon Robinson's son, shares three features of preaching that the elder Robinson taught his son. These three lessons instruct all preachers as they preach.

Next, Chris Rappazini writes about three people who shaped Haddon Robinson's life and his homiletic. Rappazini prompts us to reflect on those who have shaped us as well.

Jeffrey Arthurs joins the tribute to Haddon Robinson as he contemplates the impact of Robinson's homiletic upon himself and all those who preach.

An article outside the general theme of this edition is included. The article is authored by Daniel J. Gregory who suggests an approach to preaching that strengthens the movement from text to sermon. Readers will find his argument interesting and engaging.

Another contribution by Torrey Robinson is included in this tribute to Haddon Robinson. This piece is the memorial service sermon that Torrey Robinson preached. The service was held on Thursday, September 7, 2017 at Kaiser Chapel, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts. Torrey Robinson explores the Big Idea of Haddon Robinson.

"Haddon Robinson's Legacy" is the brief remembrance I delivered at Haddon Robinson's memorial service. When Haddon Robinson retired, he related to me that he was concerned about his legacy. I assured him that he had nothing to worry about, that his legacy would live on. This tribute suggests how that legacy lives on.

The Haddon W. Robinson Preaching Award-winning sermon is included in this edition. The first-place awardee for 2017 is Collin Skipper, a recent graduate of Moody Bible Institute. This is the second year for the Robinson Preaching Award. The awardee's sermon is published in the journal.

The book review section comes next and closes out this edition. Here you will find a variety of current preaching books reviewed by a collection of insightful readers. The reviewers' perceptiveness of the field of homiletics is demonstrated in their comments on each book.

The Evangelical Homiletics Society is grateful to God for the life of Haddon W. Robinson. We celebrate his contribution to the field of homiletics, and ultimately, to the way he spread of the gospel to the glory of God.

THREE THINGS MY DAD TAUGHT ME ABOUT PREACHING

TORREY ROBINSON
Senior Pastor
First Baptist Church
Tarrytown, NY

INTRODUCTION

It is only natural, when you lose a loved one, to find yourself reflecting upon what that person said or did. Since my dad's promotion to heaven a few months ago, I find that I have frequently engaged in such reflection. I treasure the memories of times spent with my dad and of the many things he taught me.

But when it comes to preaching, thinking about my dad is nothing new. In fact, for more than thirty years, it has been a weekly experience for me to think about my father. As a pastor, whenever I sit down to write a sermon, I feel as if my dad is at the computer with me. Throughout the homiletical process, I find myself asking, how would my dad handle this passage?

I wrote an entire book with my dad on preaching, but I'd like to keep these reflections brief. As I prepare a sermon, among the many things my father impressed upon me, the following three are certainly worth highlighting.

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

The most basic and yet perhaps most important homiletical foundation to every sermon involves nailing down your Big Idea. I used to tell people that while dad never gave me credit for it, I was the real source of the Big Idea concept. I remember on several occasions when dad saw me getting into trouble as a kid he'd stop me and say, "What's the Big Idea?"

As obvious as it may seem, clearly stating the Idea of your sermon is often harder to do than you may realize. Until, you've reasoned your way clear to your main idea, you have nothing to say. Just this week, as I was preparing my Sunday sermon, I realized late in the game that I was trying to put my sermon together when I wasn't clear exactly what I was trying to say. Once I stopped to clarify the idea from my preaching passage, I had the key element to begin writing my sermon. Identifying the Big Idea should be the foundation for every sermon.

But thinking myself clear to my idea is only the start. As I write my sermon, I need to be clear that I communicate my idea clearly. That is much easier said than done. A friend of mine, who is a capable preacher studied under my dad. He told the following story on himself. After he preached his first sermon in his doctoral studies class with my dad, this pastor explained that he ended his sermon by dropping in his homiletical idea, "like a pearl" at the end of the sermon. He said

that he sat down feeling that he had just preached an exemplary sermon. Yet when my dad got up to critique his message, the first thing dad said was, "I'll give a quarter to anyone who can tell me the big idea of that sermon." My friend confessed that nobody could do it. He learned, early on, that it is much harder to get your big idea across than he had thought.

What's the Big Idea? That's a foundational question that every preacher must ask. Think your way clear to the idea in the exegetical process. Then organize the sermon so that the idea is apparent to the listener.

IDENTIFYING THE PREACHER'S STANCE

As I preach my sermon, it is important for me to give consideration to my stance as a preacher. That is, do I stand with God's people or do I stand against them? When I started out in ministry, I remember my father pointing this out to me. A pastor who fails to give this thoughtful consideration, can easily take the stance of pronouncing God's judgment against His congregation. To be sure, if you read the Old Testament prophets, God's preachers to the nation of Israel often stood with God in declaring His judgment upon the nation's sin. But as a pastor, my sermons will likely be more honest, and almost certainly better received, if I take the stance of Ezra and Nehemiah who acknowledged their own sinfulness even as they read about the judgments of God against the sins of their forefathers.

My dad put it this way, "Whenever you are talking about people's sin, you have to have a sympathy for sinners, not sin. The sinner needs to know that you have sympathy for sinning so that they can trust what you are saying. It is the mood of the preacher. It is important to start the sermon identifying the needs of the sinner. The priest sacrificed for his own sin before he sacrificed for the sins of others."

Do your listeners think you empathize with their struggles with sin? Giving thought to your stance will go a long way towards gaining a hearing from your listeners. There's another aspect to the preacher's stance. In the book I co-wrote with my dad, we applied the concept of stance to first-person sermons. In first-person sermons, stance means something a little different. Giving thought to the preacher's stance in relation to the audience in a first-person sermon, primarily is about avoiding anachronism. When I preach a first-person sermon, I need to be clear and consistent as I portray the Biblical character to a contemporary audience. In this case, stance has to do with what the character would know about the people to whom he/she is speaking.

In my experience in preaching first-person sermons, inconsistency with the preacher's stance is one of the primary mistakes made by preachers who have little experience with first-person sermons. For example, you may preach the story of David and Goliath as David's armor bearer. To do this with consistency, it is important to think whether you are inviting the audience to travel back in time to observe the confrontation or will the armor bearer step forward in time to speak in this day to the contemporary audience. As you tell the story every detail needs to be consistent with the stance you choose.

An inexperienced preacher may easily ignore his/her stance in relationship to their audience. But a good communicator will take this into consideration. Consistency and integrity are key.

PREACHING TO YOURSELF

To be honest, I can't say that I thought much about this until after my father's death. But my dad's life demonstrated the power of preaching to yourself. The definition of expository preaching in Biblical Preaching underscores preaching to yourself:

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

Dad, the ultimate word-smith, spoke of those who failed to apply the truth they were preaching to their own lives as "trafficking in unlived truth." Over the years, hundreds of people have shared with me the impact of my father's preaching on their lives. It wasn't until after my dad died that I reflected upon the impact of dad's preaching on his own life. He truly practiced what he preached.

Dad's love for and commitment to the scriptures marked his life. As Haddon Robinson's son, I saw the impact of the Word of God upon his life. Let me give you just two examples.

When my dad was in his midlife years, I heard him preach a very powerful sermon covering the entire book of Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes is certainly relevant to our times. But it was clear to me that the message about the futility of life was personally relevant to dad and enabled him to manage the challenges of his own midlife years.

About the time my father became president of Denver Seminary. It seemed that he "discovered" the Sermon on the Mount. Dad came out of a background of old line Dispensationalism taught at Bob Jones and Dallas Seminary back in the '50's. That theology didn't have much interest in Jesus' teaching about the kingdom had an impact on his life. Dad led a Bible Study with dozens of businessmen in the Denver area before work one day each week and he led them through a study of the Sermon on the Mount. This study later became a book that is one of my personal favorites from dad, *What Jesus Said About Successful Living*.

The impact of that study on dad's life was evidenced by his fondness for the Lord's Prayer. From the time of that study on, Jesus model prayer shaped dad's prayers. My father frequently led us in the Lord's Prayer when we prayed as a family and when he prayed with his students in class.

CONCLUSION

In the months following my father's death many have written about the impact dad's preaching had on their lives. But I bear witness to the fact that my dad and our family may have received an equal, if not greater blessing, the impact God's truth has upon a man and his family, when he preaches to himself and when he practices what he preaches.

What's the Big Idea? What's your stance as you preach? Are you preaching to yourself? I can attest from my dad's ministry, answering these three simple questions will have a profound impact on your listeners and on yourself.

The Scott M. Gibson
Emerging Scholars Grant

SPONSORED BY THE EVANGELICAL HOMILETICS SOCIETY

From its founding in 1997, the **Evangelical Homiletics Society** has been committed to cultivating rising scholars in the field of homiletics. This Grant honors Dr. Scott M. Gibson, co-founder and first president of the Society.

The Emerging Scholars Grant is a means for the Society to assist and encourage developing scholars to fund their education. Awardees of this grant represent the best in current graduate educational scholarship in homiletics.

SCHOLARSHIP DETAILS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- This scholarship is open to all Associate Members of the Evangelical Homiletics Society enrolled at the PhD level of graduate study
- The submission must focus on research regarding a relevant issue in homiletics
- The length of the research will be 15,000 – 20,000 words, follow the current JEHS style guide for articles
- The target readers are evangelical professors of homiletics
- The student must submit the research to ResearchScholarship@ehomiletics.com by the stated deadline of APRIL 30, 2017
- A jury of EHS members will evaluate the essay "blindly" based on relevance to the teaching of biblical preaching and the EHS confessional statement, and determine a recipient
- The Board will notify the students of the decisions at least 90 days prior to the EHS annual conference
- The awardee is expected to attend the EHS annual conference
- Recipient will be recognized at the annual Evangelical Homiletics Society conference, may be given an option of presenting the research during the Evangelical Homiletics Society annual conference and possibly published in a future issue of the *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society*

Cash scholarship of first place is $2,000, plus registration fees and meals to attend the EHS conference. Travel assistance to the conference may be available.

The submission deadline is 30 April 2018.

Evangelical Homiletics Society

http://ehomiletics.com/competitions/emerging-scholars/

GREAT PEOPLE BUILD GREAT PREACHERS

CHRIS RAPPAZINI
Program Head and Assistant Professor of Biblical Exposition at Moody Bible Institute-Spokane
Assistant Preaching and Teaching Minister at Southside Christian Church
Spokane, Washington

When Scott M. Gibson, editor of the *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletic Society*, asked me several weeks after Haddon Robinson's passing to write a reflective piece as a way to extend Robinson's legacy, I felt extremely humbled and honored. I went immediately to this journal's September 2011 issue which was dedicated to honoring Robinson upon his 80th birthday. As I read through the twenty-three beautifully written tributes to him by the kings and queens of the evangelical preaching world, I was riveted by their stories, insights, and wisdom on preaching as well as the contributors' relationships with Robinson. Reading their words reminded me of the enormous impact Haddon Robinson made on the field of homiletics as well as on the lives of those who teach preaching.

I then thought to myself, why did Scott M. Gibson ask me, of all people, to write a reflective piece? If I were the editor, I would have asked any one of those experienced homileticians. They have taught for decades, been published widely and most of them knew Haddon Robinson a lot better than I did. While reading their tributes, the words that quickly came to Moses lips before the burning bush rapidly echoed in my mind, "Who am I?" What could a young preacher, who is still trying to find his voice in the homiletical wilderness, possibly offer the readers of this journal regarding Haddon Robinson's legacy?

I considered summarizing all of Robinson's accomplishments and accolades, but I would not be the first to do so and would definitely exceed my word count limitation. I suppose one of the only areas in which I can relate to Haddon Robinson, is knowing what it is like to be a young homileitican. Like many, including myself, he did not set out to be a teacher of preaching, but that is where the Lord ultimately led him. In this paper, I will address the stages of Haddon Robinson's journey while highlighting three pivotal people who were influential to him throughout his life and vocation: a Sunday School teacher, a reverend, and a seminary president.

A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER: MR. JOHN MYGATT

Haddon William Robinson was born on March 21, 1931. At the age of ten, his mother died, and he was raised by his hard-working father in a section of Harlem called Mousetown, which was, at that time, one of the toughest neighborhoods in the United States.[1] Consequentially, as a young boy, he associated with a gang.[2] He was good at getting into mischief but also enjoyed sports like baseball, stickball, and basketball.[3] One day he and his cousin Bob, joined a basketball team at Broadway Presbyterian Church. They, then, discovered that every silver lining has a cloud because in order to play on the team, they had to attend Sunday School at least three Sundays a month.[4] It was at Sunday School class that the young Robinson met someone who would deeply influence his life, his Sunday School teacher, Mr. John Mygatt.

Mr. Mygatt taught the boys in his class about the Bible, but also showed them what grace look liked. The young Robinson was captivated by Mr. Mygatt's fun, game-like Bible lessons and admits, "I learned more facts, just facts in John Mygatt's Sunday School class than I did at Seminary, or at Christian college, because that's what it was, it was a contest of facts."[5]

Along with learning about the Bible, young Robinson was "profoundly impressed" by Mr. Mygatt's willingness to show real interest in the boys of his class. He admits that, as far as he can remember, Mr. Mygatt was the only person in the church that ever came to the Robinson apartment. One particular moment that stood out was when Mr. Mygatt noticed a crack in Robinson's glasses and offered him the money he had been saving for a new suit. "Here's a man [willing] to give up his suit in order to buy me some glasses," Robinson recollects. "John was that kind of person. And so he had a great influence on me."[6]

Sometime in his early teens, Robinson says he, "crossed the line from non-faith to faith."[7] Preaching quickly enamored him and he was fascinated by the guest preachers who came to New York and many others he heard on the radio or saw on television.[8] As a result of John Mygatt, his life had drastically changed from a "latch-key kid" who associated with a gang,[9] to a follower of Jesus with an interest in preaching and evangelism. Robinson graduated high school a year early and, at age sixteen, he joined his cousin, Ernie Campbell, at Bob Jones University.[10]

A PASTOR: REV. JAMES W. NEELY

Robinson studied history and the Bible during his college days at Bob Jones University, but would spend many Friday nights in the library reading articles, sermons, and books on preaching.[11] He delivered his first paid sermon during the summer of 1949 at the Jerry McAuley Rescue Mission in New York City, followed by more similar opportunities.[12]

After completing his degree at Bob Jones University, Robinson

had planned to again follow his cousin, Ernie, to Princeton, where he had a scholarship lined up.[13] However, as he would soon find out, God had different plans for his life. The first interaction he had with Dallas Theological Seminary was with a recent DTS graduate and his wife. He recalls the man's wife saying something similar to, "What a wonderful experience to go to Dallas Seminary." Not long after that, Robinson recalls that:

> One night I was praying, reading the Bible—and I have no idea how this happened—but I said, Lord, if you want me to go to Dallas, I'll go. Why I said that—I mean I wasn't wrestling with Dallas, wasn't wrestling with Princeton. And then there was a peace that came. And I don't have those experiences very much.[14]

Robinson married his college sweetheart, Bonnie Vick, on August 8th, 1951 at the First Baptist Church in Albany, Oregon, where the Vick family attended. The wedding was officiated by the pastor, Reverend James W. Neely.[15] [16] Little did Robinson know, but the Lord would use his relationship with Rev. Neely in the near future.

The newlyweds moved to Dallas after a honeymoon along the coast to attend Dallas Theological Seminary.[17] While at seminary, Robinson's passion for preaching and evangelism grew despite the limited preaching classes available.[18] Nonetheless, he actively led and spoke at youth groups, began teaching informal preaching classes,[19] conducted an outreach radio program[20] and directed the Dallas Youth for Christ organization.[21] "I've always been interested in evangelism and how you reach non-Christians," Robinson recalls. "I enjoy that. I revel in the gospel. Not in its clichés but in it's great truth."[22]

Robinson graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary on May 10, 1955, with a desire to be an evangelist. Ten days after graduation, Bonnie and their 4-month old baby, Vicki Ann, flew to Albany, Oregon, to stay with Bonnie's parents during most of the summer,[23] while Robinson traveled and preached at evangelistic events around the southeast[24] and the southwest.[25] Robinson loved to travel and preach, but like so many graduates, providing for his young family dwelt in Robinson's mind and he realized he needed a more stable income.[26]

When he got home to Oregon, he was a guest preacher at the First Baptist Church in Albany,[27] the same place he and Bonnie married. However, Rev. Neely was no longer the pastor because had taken a pastorate at the First Baptist Church of Medford, earlier that year. [28] Nonetheless, Rev. Neely knew Robinson was looking for a pastorate and invited him to guest preach occasionally when he was out of town.[29]

Eventually, in early 1956, under Rev. Neely's leadership, the First Baptist Church of Medford offered Robinson a job as the assistant pastor overseeing the youth.[30] After his installation service,[31] Robinson quickly gave his attention to reaching the unsaved youth through outreach events

such as formal banquets[32] and youth socials after football games.[33] Robinson recounts:

> We served cokes and did skits and we would pack the church. It was the thing to do after the game. But the people in the church had me stop it because some of the people [youth] would be smoking in the restrooms and didn't know how to behave. That was the first time I realized that if you are serious about reaching non-Christians you can't ask them to behave as Christians.[34]

Robinson would also travel all over North America[35] to do evangelistic campaigns about once a month,[36] which made pastoral duties difficult. Nonetheless, despite his own thoughts on his effectiveness[37] as a youth and community leader, he was a top candidate for the Medford Junior Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Service award in January of 1958.[38]

However, in early 1958, as Robinson recalls, some people at the church, including the chairman of the board of deacons, did not like Rev. Neely.[39] The chairman of the board told Robinson his future at the church may be in jeopardy too and advised him to think about going somewhere else.[40] Robinson heeded the chairman's advice and began seeking other opportunities. Over a couple months, several churches asked him to be their pastor.[41] With uncertainty about his future, Robinson felt the Lord leading him elsewhere and submitted his letter of resignation to the church board in early March 1958.[42]

A SEMINARY PRESIDENT: DR. JOHN F. WALVOORD

While contemplating where the Lord was leading him next, a Baptist church in Fullerton, California, asked him to come down for a week of evangelistic meetings in early March 1958. After preaching on Sunday, the chairman of the pulpit committee approached him and asked him to consider applying to become their next pastor.[43] He felt it was the Lord's calling and went before the board of deacons later that week. After quickly receiving full approval of the pulpit committee and the board of deacons he preached his candidating sermon the following Sunday.[44] A congregational vote was taken on the next Wednesday in which he needed a 95 percent approval. The chairman of the board called on Wednesday night and informed Robinson that he had lost by a single vote. As Robinson recalls:

> He was stunned, I was stunned, the deacons were stunned. It really spun me because I was so sure that this [was] what God wanted us to do. In fact, they called back later in the week and they said, "Look we've been talking to some of the people who voted against you, and they didn't mean to vote against you. [The church] had had another candidate, and that candidate didn't get in. It was kind of a

> protest. But a couple of them said if we knew our vote was going to keep him from coming, we wouldn't have voted against him. Would you come back and do it again?" And I didn't have the heart for it. I was so sure, and I was so wrong, and I wrestled with it.[45]

Torrey Robinson shared the story at his father's memorial service:

> He was so disillusioned by it because he thought that ministry is what the Lord wanted, and certainly what the leaders of the church wanted. Shortly after, he returned to Medford and tried to make sense of it all and still wondered where God wanted him."[46]

Approximately two weeks later, a day or two after Robinson's twenty-seventh birthday, he received a letter from John F. Walvoord, President of Dallas Theological Seminary, asking Robinson to consider coming back to the seminary as a part-time instructor to help with some of the speech and homiletics classes. President Walvoord writes:

> Dear Haddon,
>
> From time to time we get reports of your work and trust that the Lord is continuing to bless you in your ministry both in evangelism and in the church.
>
> At the Seminary we are struggling with our largest enrollment in history and the problems of expanding our work. In this connection, the question has been raised whether you contemplate in the future undertaking the work of a teacher in an educational institution… The fact is, we could probably use one with your gifts full time right now, but I would very much like to see you get at least a master's degree before getting too involved…I have talked to both Professor [Howard] Hendricks and Dr. [J. Ellwood] Evans about this proposition, and they are quite enthusiastic that this approach is a practical one and would help us a great deal with our immediate need as well as holding promise for the future…
>
> Sincerely Yours in Christ,
> John F. Walvoord[47]

This invitation came at just the right time for Robinson and his family. Speaking on behalf of his family and God's sovereignty on their lives he responded a couple days later:

> Dear Dr. Walvoord,
>
> In many ways your recent letter about teaching at Dallas Seminary was a thrilling surprise. In some ways, though, it seemed to be almost a natural thing in the light of the recent leading of the Lord in my life.
>
> During the last few months several churches have written and asked if I would be interested in being their pastor; but in every instance, though the salary was quite high and the opportunity great, I did not feel that this was God's will for my life. As of April, 1, I have resigned as assistant pastor here at First Baptist Church of Medford because of doors that have opened in evangelistic work for full-time service… Strangely enough, though we have been blessed in our evangelistic ministry, there has never been the deep satisfaction that this was God's final purpose for us… All of this is to say that I am very interested in your offer to teach at the Seminary while taking an advanced degree in speech...
>
> Yours Because of Calvary,
> Haddon Robinson[48]

After some planning, Robinson accepted the job and the Robinson family of four moved to Dallas later in the summer of 1958. Robinson began teaching during the 1958 Fall semester as an instructor of Pastoral Theology. Dallas Theological Seminary reached an all-time high of seventeen members that fall with the addition of Robinson and three other instructors.[49] After nineteen years of teaching at Dallas theological Seminary, President Walvoord played a significant part in Robinson becoming the third president of Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, known today as Denver Seminary.[50]

CONCLUSION

It seems that when many people talk about Haddon Robinson they reminisce on an encounter they once had with him as his student, colleague, or friend. Allow me if you will to conclude with mine. When I was studying at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, I remember I was about to pass by Dr. Robinson in an empty hallway. I had been in his class and worked with him at the Center for Preaching, but I doubt he remembered me, especially with all the students stored in his memory bank. Then suddenly, out of nowhere, he grabbed my arm, pulled me in, and shared some advice I will never forget. He said, "Hey kid, great preachers don't build great churches; great churches build great preachers." Then he just kept walking along as if nothing happened, leaving me to ponder that big idea.

I still remember those words today, and I think we can say something similar regarding Dr. Robinson: Great preachers don't build great people; great people build great preachers. Great people like James Mygatt, Rev. James W. Neely, and President John F. Walvoord. Each of these men saw something special in Dr. Robinson, invested into his life, and took a chance on him. It is no surprise, that Dr. Robinson continued their legacy by investing into my life, possibly your life, and the lives of thousands more. Now, we have been given the privilege and honor to continue Dr. Robinson's legacy by pouring into the lives of the next generation of homileticians.

NOTES

1. Scott M. Gibson, "Found: The Keys to Expository Preaching," *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society*, vol. 11, no. 2, Sept. 2011: 5.
2. Ibid., 5.
3. Haddon W. Robinson, Personal interview with Eric Dokken, 4 December, 2006.
4. Haddon W. Robinson, Personal interview with Lolana Thompson, 22 October 2012.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Some of the preachers young Robinson heard as guest preachers in New York or on the radio include but are not limited to: John Hess McComb-Broadway Presbyterian Church in New York, New York; Clarence McCartney-First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Harry Ironside-Moody Church in Chicago, Illinois; Harry Emerson Fosdick-Riverside Church in New York, New York; Jack Wordson; Donald Grey Barnhouse-Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Percy Crawford-Youth Worker of America; Charles Fuller-Old Fashioned Revival Hour; Roman Catholic preacher, Fulton Sheen; as well as many others on National Radio Pulpit. Robinson, Personal interview with Thompson, 22 October 2012.; Robinson, Personal interview with Dokken, 4 December, 2006.
9. Gibson, 5.
10. Robinson, Personal interview with Thompson, 22 October 2012.
11. Some of the people he read where John R. Rice, T. DeWitt Talmage, Billy Sunday, Dwight L. Moody because they were devoted to preaching that gospel. Robinson, Personal interview with Dokken, 4 December, 2006.
12. Ibid.
13. Robinson, Personal interview with Thompson, 22 October 2012.
14. Ibid.
15. "Miss Vick and Mr. Robinson Exchange Vows At Church," *Albany Democrat-Herald* (Albany, OR) 18 August, 1951: 4.
16. Knowing that Robinson was a recent graduate from Bob Jones University and had won the top preaching award, Rev. Neely asked Robinson to preach at the Sunday evening evangelistic service, just days before Robinson's

wedding. The sermon title was, "The Lord's Supper." "News of Services In The Churches," *Albany Democrat-Herald*_(Albany, OR) 3 August 1951: 8. Robinson preached again at the First Baptist Church in Albany per Rev. Neely's request in 1953. "News of Services In The Churches," *Albany Democrat-Herald* (Albany, OR) 28 August 1953: 6.

17. "Exchange Vows," *Albany Democrat-Herald*.
18. When asked if he took preaching classes at DTS, Robinson recalls, "They didn't have them. You preached a couple sermons. But I don't remember any classes in which they taught homiletics. If they did they went past me. What we preached they basically had a professor who was a professor of preaching a man by the name of Elwood Evans. He was devoted to expository preaching and by that he meant verse by verse preaching. I had no idea how to do that except that you take a verse and take off and you take another verse and take off." The only preaching class he remembers taking at Bob Jones University was a class called "Pulpit Speech." Robinson, Personal interview with Dokken, 4 December, 2006.
19. Robinson's informal classes was one of the main reasons the administration asked him to return to Dallas, although there is no mention of this in his correspondence with President Walvoord. Gibson, 5.; Personal interview with Dokken, 4 December, 2006.
20. Robinson conducted a radio program, "Treasure Chest," which was broadcast in the United States, Central America, Europe and received special commendation from the government of Liberia. "Assistant Pastor Assumes Duties," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR) 24 Feb. 1956: 6.
21. Ibid.
22. Robinson, Personal interview with Dokken, 4 December, 2006.
23. "Flying From Texas," *Albany Democrat-Herald* (Albany, OR) 20 May 1955: 2.
24. "N.Y. Pastor Evangelist At Crusade," *The Times* (Shreveport, LA) 26 June 1955: 49.; "Revival Rites Begin Today At Lakeview," *The Times* (Shreveport, LA) 22 May 1955: 51.; Robinson, Personal interview with Thompson, 22 October 2012.
25. "Assistant Pastor Assumes Duties," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR) 24 Feb. 1956: 6.
26. Robinson, Personal interview with Thompson, 22 October 2012.
27. "Church Calendar," *Albany Democrat-Herald* (Albany, OR) 5 August 1955: 6.
28. "New Pastor, Family Here To Serve First Baptists," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR) 4 March 1955: 5.
29. "Guest Minister To Speak Sunday," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR) 28 October 1955: 6.
30. "Assistant Pastor Assumes Duties," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR) 24 Feb. 1956: 6.
31. "First Baptists Set Reception for Robinsons," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR) 9 March 1956: 6.
32. "Formal Banquet," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR) 20 May 1956: 15.
33. Robinson invited teenagers from all over the city included inviting the opposing team's students as well. "Youth Socials To Be Sponsored by

Baptists," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR) 31 August 1956: 6.

34. Robinson, Personal interview with Dokken, 4 December 2006.
35. Including but not limited to: Toronto, Illinois, Ohio, California. "Pastor Returns," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR) 14 December 1956: 6.; "Plan Week of Service at Brown St. Baptist," *Alton Evening Telegraph* (Alton, IL) 7 September 1957: 7.
36. Robinson, Personal interview with Thompson, 22 October 2012.
37. Robinson, Personal interview with Thompson, 22 October 2012.
38. "Two Candidates for Service Award Are Listed by Jaycees," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR) 19 January 1958: 2.
39. Rev. James Neely ended up leaving the First Baptist Church of Medford in April, 1960, five years after he had arrived. "Neelys Honored At Dinner Wednesday," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR) 29 April 1960: 6.
40. Robinson, Personal interview with Thompson, 22 October 2012.
41. Haddon W. Robinson, Letter to President John Walvoord. 24 March 1958. TR. Robinson recalls also having an offer from a friend to be the advertising director of Gilman's Dairy in Medford, Oregon. Robinson, Personal interview with Thompson, 22 October 2012
42. "Haddon Robinson Resigns Position At First Baptist," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR) 14 March 1958: 6.; "Dinner Held, 1st Baptist Tells Plans for Expansion," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR) 28 March 1958: 6.
43. Torrey Robinson, "Haddon Robinson Memorial Service," *YouTube*, uploaded by Gordon-Conwell, 20 September 2017.
44. Robinson, Personal interview with Thompson, 22 October 2012.
45. Ibid.
46. Robinson, "Haddon Robinson Memorial Service."
47. John F. Walvoord, Letter to Haddon Robinson. 20 March, 1958. TR.
48. Robinson continues with more questions and possibilities. The two correspond back and forth regarding continuing education, radio, potential classes taught, and salary. Through a total of at least eight letters from the end of March until the beginning of May an agreement is reached for Haddon Robinson to teach part-time at Dallas Theological Seminary for a salary of $2,400. Haddon W. Robinson, Letter to President John Walvoord. 24 March 1958. TR.
49. Other instructors included: Dr. William A. BeVier, Instructor in Historical Theology; Dr. Fredric R. Howe, Instructor in Systematic Theology; Dr. Bruce K. Waltke, Instructor in Semitics and Old Testament. "Resident Faculty Increases to 17 Members With Addition of Four Instructors This Fall." *Bulletin of Dallas Theological Seminary* 34:4 (1958).
50. Robert C. Frederich, Letter to Dr. John F. Walvoord. 6 April 1979. TR. Robinson was instrumental in changing the name from Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary to Denver Theological Seminary. For many years prior to Dr. Robinson's arrival to Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, the Rev. James W. Neely had served on the Board of Trustees. "Neely Honored At Dinner Wednesday," *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR) 29 April 1960: 6.

The Haddon W. Robinson Preaching Award

SPONSORED BY THE EVANGELICAL HOMILETICS SOCIETY

The Haddon W. Robinson Preaching Award is an annual preaching scholarship established in honor of Dr. Haddon W. Robinson, one of the leading evangelical homiliticians of the later 20th and early 21st centuries. Robinson's teaching career in homiletics spanned decades, instructing students at three different seminaries. Dr. Robinson's classic textbook, *Biblical Preaching*, helped shape the place and force of evangelical homiletics. Robinson's legacy for preaching is captured in this significant award.

Sermons for this year's award are to be based on

OLD TESTAMENT POETRY: THE PSALMS

> *Haddon Robinson wrote: "Poets do not usually tell stories but instead express feelings and reflections about life."*

SCHOLARSHIP DETAILS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- This scholarship is open to all Associate Members of EHS
- Sermons are to be 15-20 minutes in length
- Sermons are to focus on the theme and/or Bible text announced for the Haddon W. Robinson Preaching Award
- The target listeners are members of a local evangelical church
- The sermons are to be videotaped, posted to the student's YouTube channel, and the YouTube link provided to RobinsonSermons@ehomiletics.com by the stated deadline
- A task force of EHS members will view the submission, evaluate it on the basis of adherence to basic principles of biblical preaching (as discussed in Robinson's Biblical Preaching) and the EHS confessional statement, and determine first, second and third prize awardees
- The Board will notify the students of the decisions at least 90 days prior to the EHS annual conference
- Recipients will be recognized at the annual EHS conference; the first place recipient may be an option of presenting the message during the EHS (e.g. one of the periods in which academic papers are presented) and a possible link to the message included on the EHS website

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TRUE PREACHING IS BIBLICAL PREACHING: A TRIBUTE TO HADDON ROBINSON

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This brief tribute will focus on the thing I appreciate most about Haddon's homiletic, but before I divulge that, I'd like to list in rapid succession things I appreciate about Haddon as a mentor and friend. He was the wisest person I have known. With rapier insight and Twain-like humor he was able to summarize a situation in a flash—the *real* situation behind profuse verbiage as in a faculty meeting. He did not criticize people behind their backs. I heard him quote with admiration a statement hung over the fireplace in the home of Robertson McQuilkin, a statement that applied perfectly to himself: "Absent friends are safe here." His love of people, even though he was a loner, was evident in his zeal for evangelism. He never bragged about that, but his conversation and sermons were sprinkled with statements like, "Bonnie and I are praying for our neighbor," and "The Lord used me to lead that young man to faith in Christ." He was known for blunt evaluations of sermons (how many graduates tell stories that start like this: "I remember the first time I preached before Haddon . . ."?), but I must say that I saw his gentle side more often than his blunt side. He was able to speak the truth in love to young preachers, and I've tried to do the same. All in all, he was a very good man, a genuine disciple of the Lord. Always unpretentious, he did not wear his discipleship like a ribbon for display, but it was there—a deep faith that continued to sanctify him to the end of his days.

With a man as gifted as Haddon, with so many accomplishments and such a long tenure of service to God and the Church, it is hard to know what to focus on in paying tribute, but taking to heart Haddon's mantra that "less is more," let me center on just one feature of Haddon's homiletic that has become part of me and many preachers around the world: true preaching is biblical preaching.

The Word of God is a fire that burns away chaff, a hammer that breaks up stony hearts, a mirror that reveals the true self, a lamp that illumines the path, seed that grows and bears fruit, water that washes, bread that feeds, and a sword for battle. Haddon believed this. His allegiance was to the Word and the God of the Word. Of course, such allegiance does not imply sterile and unimaginative preaching. Another of Haddon's mantras was, "It is a sin to bore people with the Bible;" but in Dr. Robinson's homiletical estate,

creativity was a house servant, while accuracy was lord of the manor.

Haddon's homiletic equipped preachers to do exposition. In particular, the simple tool he called the "exegetical idea" has been a godsend to me and my students. In *Biblical Preaching* he stated, "While most preachers tip their hats to expository preaching, their practice gives them away."[1] He was probably referring to the fact that many preachers, even those with a high view of Scripture, make a minor idea in the text the main idea of the sermon. Such a sermon has *some* connection to the Bible, bit it zooms in on the third fencepost from the left and misses the prairie stretching from east to west. Other preachers might fashion a thematic sermon on a key word from the text such as "faith," "foundations," or "frailty." But Haddon taught a generation—no! two or three generations—to ask: What is the author talking about? and What is he saying about what he is talking about? Exegete-preachers are to answer those questions fully and precisely, and in my opinion, those simple questions are the foundation of exposition and enable the preacher to say with confidence, "Thus saith the Lord." Haddon said that "ministers can proclaim anything in a stained-glass voice at 11:30 on Sunday morning. . . . Yet when they fail to preach the Scriptures, they abandon their authority. That is why most modern preaching evokes little more than a wide yawn. God is not in it."[2] Haddon's homiletical method taught aspiring and seasoned preachers to stay close to the text. He gave us a usable but profound, simple but not simplistic method for doing expository preaching, "the type of preaching that best carries the force of divine authority."[3]

NOTES

1. Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 4.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

THE PENTATHLON PREACHING PRINCIPLE: A PROPOSED METHOD FOR BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN TEXT AND SERMON

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ABSTRACT

This article considers the difficulty inherent in sermon preparation as a preacher seeks to create a similar illocution in the oral sermon as is found in the biblical text. This difficulty is identified as illocutionary distance. The problem of illocutionary distance, it is proposed, may be solved by achieving generic equilibrium between the inscripturated literary act and the speech genre adopted for the sermon. The author proposes a conceptual matrix, the pentathlon preaching principle, which suggests steps a preacher might take in order to attain generic equilibrium between text and sermon.

INTRODUCTION

A preacher stands between God and the congregation, in order to bring a message from Scripture to the people. Yet this movement from text to sermon is one of the most difficult maneuvers a preacher executes in sermon preparation. In order to be faithful to the text, one must not only convey the message of Scripture with its significance for the congregation, but must do so in a way that coheres with the text's form and function. The way the text communicates must influence the way the sermon communicates. In short, there must be some similarity between the illocution of the biblical passage and the illocution of the sermon.

In what follows I will describe the problem of illocutionary distance, noting the complex issues it raises for preachers trying to achieve a similar illocutionary force in the sermon as is found in the biblical text. I will then offer a homiletical framework by which one may attain generic equilibrium between the elements in the Scriptural passage and those of the oral sermon

in order to traverse the illocutionary distance separating them.

THE PLAYGROUND OF LANGUAGE

A literary act is a textualized instance of a specific genre.[1] As textually mediated revelation, then, every passage of Scripture may be expected to conform to the rules and conventions of the literary genre to which it belongs. These conventions or language-games create a literary context for both author and reader where meaning is shared, even when both parties may be far removed from each other by time and space.[2] By language-games, I mean the concept of linguistic utility in everyday life set forth by Wittgenstein.[3] For Wittgenstein, language cannot be divorced from the activities in which it is employed since language does not exist in a vacuum. "The word 'language-game' is used...to emphasize the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or a form of life."[4]

INSCRIPTURATED LITERARY ACTS

In interpretation therefore, one must determine what kind of language-game is being facilitated by the generic elements of the text.[5] The adjective 'generic' is not meant to convey the sense of general, but rather "'characteristic of a specific literary type.' The rules that govern a particular literary genre...."[6] This determination is the first step in entering the literary context of the author and deducing his or her intended meaning. However, as Vanhoozer notes, a literary genre does more than simply provide a framework by which interpreters may discern the content or sense of a text. He asserts "that a true description of a literary act must focus on what an author is doing with a genre. That means specifying illocutions..."[7] Drawing on J. L. Austin's tripartite taxonomy of locution, illocution, and perlocution, Vanhoozer suggests that literary acts possess illocutionary force at the level of genre.[8] Building on the work of narrative theorists Mary Louise Pratt and Susan Snaider Lanser, he suggests that stories possess "narrative illocutions" which obtain when authors present and evaluate worlds through literary acts.[9] He asserts illocutionary force is present in every text, including the inscripturated literary acts of the Bible.[10] This application of "performative" language to generic language-games invites new ways of thinking about not only what a text *says*, but also what it *does*.[11] I now turn to an exploration of the illocution of inscripturated literary acts as it relates to sermon design.

HOMILETICAL SPEECH UTTERANCES[12]

While discerning the thrust of a biblical passage is an important first step in sermon preparation, many homiletic works seem to neglect engagement with the Scripture when discussing sermonic structure, style, and development. Indeed, many homiletic textbooks seem content to pro-

vide a ready-made sermon mold into which preachers may pour the content gleaned from their biblical exegesis, with no thought as to whether the content and form of their sermon are complimentary.[13]

This disjunction between sermonic form and content is significant given what we know about generic illocution. In his essay, *The Problem of Speech Genres*, Mikhail Bakhtin identifies three elements integral to communication at the generic level: "thematic content, style, and compositional structure."[14] These communicative components synergistically enable generic illocution such that, if one is excised, what the text *does* is fundamentally changed. It stands to reason therefore, that any preacher who hopes to reproduce in his or her sermon an illocutionary force similar to that of the biblical text, must pay attention to the generic elements of that text when shaping his or her sermonic content, style, and structure.

However, before exploring this concept further something must be said about the generic category to which oral sermons belong. "The oral sermonic form...is itself a genre with accompanying expectations and conventions."[15] It is here that preacher, inscripturated literary act, and congregation experience dynamic and vital interaction.[16] The catalyst for this interaction is God the Holy Spirit, as He brings the word to life in and through the preacher, so that the congregation hears a word from the Lord. Contextualization of the biblical text, with a view to applying its message to the congregation, is the aim of the sermon.[17] The content, style, and structure of the discourse affects the interaction between preacher, text, and congregation. These unique generic features and functions must be taken into account when attempting to craft a homily with a similar illocutionary force as is found in the biblical text on which it is based.

THE PROBLEM OF ILLOCUTIONARY DISTANCE

The difficulty of producing a similar illocution in the homiletical speech utterance as found in the inscripturated literary act should not be ameliorated. I refer to this challenge as *illocutionary distance*. Illocutionary distance calls attention to the complex divide one must navigate when organizing a generic language-game within a sermon so that its illocutionary force resembles that of the biblical text.

This divide consists of several complex issues. First, there is the relationship between orality and textuality. In oral discourse there is an immediate link between a speech event and its derivative meaning, whereas in written discourse a temporal gap exists between inscripturation and meaning, as the latter is apprehended by a reader at a later time.[18] More significant than this however, is the disparity between these two mediums. Texts communicate through a sign-system of visible markings perceived optically.[19] Verbal speech functions by oral-aural interaction as sound vibrations move through the air.[20]

A second issue which complicates this problem is the disparity be-

tween literary and speech genres. "Literary forms or genres are typical patterns of written communication that conform to recognizable conventional patterns."[21] Something similar may be said about verbal speech genres: they are "*relatively stable types* of [speech] utterances" which operate within unique linguistic spheres.[22] While both literary and verbal speech genres possess great diversity (each has innumerable forms to accommodate the broad range of human expression), at times one is hard pressed to find a verbal speech type which shares generic features with a particular literary type.[23]

Illocutionary distance seems greatest when no verbal speech genre is found that resembles the generic form of the inscripturated literary act. This distance may seem exacerbated when the sense of the text is obfuscated by cultural distance and/or ignorance of its *sitz im leben*.

How then, are preachers to cross this illocutionary divide in order to produce a similar illocution in the homiletical speech utterance as is found in the inscripturated literary act? What is needed is a conceptual framework in which the constitutive elements of generic illocution in the literary act, namely, content, style, and structure (among others), may be evaluated with regard to their synergistic force. Following this analysis one will be in a position to consider possible ways to utilize these generic elements in the sermon in an attempt to produce an illocutionary force similar to that of the biblical text.

Before moving on to explore what such a framework might look like or how it would function, it is necessary to first clarify its intended purpose or goal. It is unlikely that a preacher will be able to reproduce the illocutionary force of the biblical text in an oral sermon, nor should this be the goal.[24] Instead, one should aim to produce a *similar* illocutionary force in the homiletical speech utterance to the one found in the biblical passage. A preacher's goal, in traversing the illocutionary distance in sermon preparation, is to achieve homogeneity between the generic illocution of the biblical text and that of the homiletical speech utterance.

COSSING THE ILLOCUTIONARY DIVIDE BETWEEN TEXT AND SERMON: PRELMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

The mechanics of the framework I wish to propose are relatively simple, and are guided by the principles of generic illocution. Broadly speaking, any such framework must take into account the interaction between content and form in the inscripturated literary act.[25] The result of this interaction is the text's function or generic illocution, that is, *what it does*. Thus the framework must provide a coherent way to account for the (generic) variables of content and form, so that the internal dynamics of the text may be analyzed. Once analysis is complete, one may consider how to shape sermonic content and form so that it resembles at certain points (but by no means at every point), those elements in the biblical passage. In order to be effective, the framework will encourage a preacher to observe what is (Scriptural text),

and then imagine what might be (oral sermon). The intended result is that the sermon's illocution will be similar to the illocution of the preaching passage. It is this kind of interaction that any proposed framework must account for in the preacher's journey from text to sermon.

The idea that sermonic content and form should both take their cue from the biblical text is hardly new.[26] While several books on the subject are available, few provide the clarity and insight of Thomas Long's *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*. Long raises five questions designed to aid the preacher think through how he or she might shape his or her sermons to "extend a portion of the *text's impact* into a new communicational situation, that of contemporary listeners…"[27] When moving from text to sermon, Long encourages one to ask:

> What is the genre of the text? (2) What is the rhetorical function of this genre? (3) What literary devices does this genre employ to achieve its rhetorical effect? (4) How in particular does the text under consideration, in its own literary setting, embody the characteristics and dynamics described in the previous questions? (5) How may the sermon, in a new setting, say and do what the text says and does in its setting?[28]

These questions are foundational for anyone who wishes to successfully traverse the illocutionary distance between text and sermon.

In a later work Long discusses the intimate relationship in sermon preparation between focus and function statements.[29] The former determines the sermon's message while the latter describes its intended impact on the congregation.[30] Taken together they suggest possible ways the sermon might be shaped. He notes that sermonic form is vitally important in conveying the focus and function of the sermon.[31]

> Instead of thinking of sermon form and content as separate realities, it is far more accurate to speak of the *form of the content*. A sermon's form, although largely unperceived by the hearers, provides shape and energy to the sermon and thus becomes itself a vital force in how a sermon makes meaning.[32]

These issues are a necessary starting point as we seek to bridge the illocutionary gap between the biblical text and sermon. The value of any framework which proposes to do so may be measured in part by how effectively it helps preachers process through these important issues.

A PROPOSAL: THE PENTATHLON PREACHING PRINCIPLE

One particular framework, from the discipline of translation studies, holds promise for suggesting ways one might traverse the illocutionary

distance between text and sermon. In discussing strategies for effectively translating lyrics from a source text to a target text, Peter Low advocates for a multifaceted and flexible approach.[33] He uses the metaphor of the olympic pentathlon, where athletes must balance their performance in each event in order to achieve a good score over all. He writes:

> My general approach to devising singable translations is what I call the 'pentathlon principle'. Olympic pentathletes must compete in five events, and optimize their scoring overall - they must not omit to train for javelin and discus, and they must hold some energy in reserve for the 1,500 metres. So they sometimes choose to come second or third in one event, keeping their eyes on the whole day's challenge. According to this metaphor, the translator of a song has five events to compete in - five criteria to satisfy - and must aim for the best aggregate. One is (a) Singability; another (b) Sense; a third (c) Naturalness; and others are (d) Rhythm and (e) Rhyme. These criteria are as dissimilar as a shot put and 100-metre sprint![34]

Yet flexibility is key when utilizing this matrix:

> A translator working according to this principle attempts to score highly in the overall effect of the text, without insisting on unbeatable excellence on any single criterion. The more margins of compromise that are available, the greater chance of a successful translation.[35]

Low's approach to lyrical translation may provide insight into how preachers might travel from text to sermon, while preserving part of the text's form and function in the resultant sermon. It could prove useful in determining which generic elements in the biblical passage need to be reproduced in the sermon, and to what degree. The coherence and flexibility of this model make it a good candidate for aiding preachers in moving from the inscripturated literary act to the homiletical speech utterance in order to produce a similar illocution in the latter as found in the former. There are limitations however, to Low's matrix which prohibit its uncritical use in sermon formation. Any promise Low's 'pentathlon principle' holds for homiletical utility will require a significant adaptation of his framework.

While the specifics of Low's principle are not useful for crossing the illocutionary distance between the inscripturated literary act and the homiletical speech utterance, the underlying paradigm or conceptual framework of his idea holds great potential for navigating this divide.[36] Low notes that "A translator working according to this principle attempts to score highly in the *overall effect of the text*, without insisting on unbeatable excellence on any single criterion."[37] Thus the criteria in this model are subservient to, and servants of, the song's effect, which their fusion produces. This idea is very

similar to generic illocution, where features of a text cohere to produce illocutionary force synergistically.

As a result of the pentathlon principle's evaluative capabilities and potential for achieving a kind of balance through the process of translation, it appears uniquely suited to aid preachers in crossing the illocutionary divide. This principle allows one to measure various individual communicative components in a piece of music and ascertain how they work together to produce the desired result of the composer. The evaluation forms the groundwork for translating the text of the musical piece with a view to producing the desired result of the composer by balancing the various elements of the work in a fitting way. This conceptual paradigm holds great promise for use in traversing the illocutionary distance between text and sermon.

As mentioned previously, the discontinuity between the tasks of sermon preparation and lyrical translation render the specifics of Low's matrix inadequate for the preaching enterprise. However, his conceptual model can be adapted to serve the preaching task, provided it is calibrated appropriately. The framework must be customized to measure those elements which constitute generic language-games as they produce illocutionary force, as well as to generate suggestions as to what elements in the sermon on balance, might achieve a similar illocution. Thus this framework would help a preacher achieve *generic equilibrium* with regard to the biblical text and sermon. By generic equilibrium I mean an arrangement of generic elements in the homiletical speech utterance, so that its illocution is similar to the illocution of the inscripturated literary act.

ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED CRITERIA

The generic elements of content, structure, style, and rhetorical devices are ubiquitous in literary and verbal discourse.[38] As common denominators on both sides of the illocutionary divide, these features provide a natural starting place in configuring the pentathlon principle for homiletical use. As the adjective implies, the principle will consist of five criteria; in addition to content, structure, style, and rhetorical devices, it will also take into account orality. I will call this adaptation of Low's matrix the "Pentathlon Preaching Principle" since preachers always appreciate alliteration.

Content

When working through the framework, a preacher must first evaluate the message of the biblical passage as well as the shape it takes. Through this interaction, the horizon of the text collides with that of the preacher, generating understanding and shared meaning.[39] Once this is done, one may begin to devise strategies for shaping sermonic content in a way that will be biblically faithful, relevant to one's hearers, and have the best chance of producing a similar illocution as the one produced by the preaching passage. [40]

Abraham Kuruvilla's work on pericopal theology offers some insight into the mechanics of this first evaluative movement. In his book *Text to Praxis*, Kuruvilla builds on Ricoeur's notion of the "projected world 'in front of' the text."[41] He maintains that since every inscripturated literary act is comprised of specific generic elements, understanding the language-game of the text is the first step in interpretation. Yet, one must not stop interacting with the text at this point; one "must proceed further to the discernment of the projected world 'in front of' the text in order to derive valid application of the text…"[42]

The projected world of the text invites the reader to inhabit that world and discern the transhistorical intention the text contains.[43] Once this intention is discerned, a preacher may begin to trace out ways the transhistorical principle might apply to his or her hearers.

> The task of the theologian-homiletician, therefore, in interpreting a pericope for applicational purposes, is to move from the concrete biblical text via the intermediary (the world in front of the text) to arrive at another concrete element-relevant application in the modern day for specific listeners.[44]

Kuruvilla's theoretical model is easily assimilated into the pentathlon preaching principle, as it aligns with the evaluation process of the first criterion. When processing through the framework one must first evaluate the text's message along with its form. In doing this one discerns the world in front of the text as well as its transhistorical intention. The result of this analysis suggests not only how the message of the text might be applied in a relevant, biblically faithful way to one's hearers, but does so in ways that pay attention to the form of the message. The form of the content in the inscripturated literary act may suggest what type(s) of speech genre(s) will best serve the sermon (fulfilling the generative function of the criterion), as the preacher brings the Scriptural text to bear on the lives of the congregation.

Style

The next element the proposed homiletical framework accounts for is style. Bakhtin defines style in communicative discourse as the "lexical, phraseological, and grammatical" particulars within a given sign-system.[45] Word choice, syntax, emphasis, and grammar are all clues in a biblical passage that point out not only *what* the author meant, but *how* he or she meant it. Careful analysis of these textual features enable one to acquire a sense of the tone or attitude of the passage. Working through this criterion requires the preacher to take a stylistic measurement of the text.

After evaluating the stylistic particulars of the text with a view to discovering how they contribute to its overall illocution, the preacher may now begin thinking through how he or she might employ similar stylistic

features in the sermon. Of course, one is already thinking through the implications of the text for the congregation by virtue of their engagement with the passage. However, the preacher must now discern what stylistic features should attend the oral sermon, so that it matches the tone or attitude of the passage.[46] Practically speaking these decisions will be made as the sermon is written down and/or rehearsed.

Taking into account the purposes of the preacher along with the type of speech genre selected for the sermon, flexibility must be exercised with this criterion. At times, appropriating the text's stylistic features and adapting them into the sermon may prove unhelpful, in which case preachers will have to draw on the stylistic elements available to them within the sermon's chosen speech type. In that case the available elements will have to be creatively utilized, so the sermon's illocution might still be similar to that of the biblical text.

Structure

The third criterion in the sermon matrix is structure, an element whose value cannot be overstated in sermonic formation. Aristotle says much about the importance of plot or structure in his *Poetics*. After noting the six parts which comprise a tragedy (plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, and song) he states "But most important of all is the structure of the incidents...the plot, then, is the first principle, and, as it were, the soul of a tragedy…"[47] Similarly, Bakhtin places a premium on compositional structure in communicative discourse.[48]

As a preacher studies the biblical passage to be preached, he or she needs to pay attention to the way it flows. Each preaching text is uniquely structured to communicate a particular truth in a specific way. Identifying the structure of an inscripturated literary act will enable the preacher to gain a better understanding of not only how the content is ordered, but also of how it is developed, whether inductively or deductively. This investigation may yield clues as to how a preacher might structure his or her sermon in order to apply the text to his or her listeners.[49]

However, it is a significant mistake to assume that the sermon must reproduce the precise structure of the text to be preached. There are instances where this is either impossible or inadvisable for practical reasons.[50] Instead, as the preacher discerns how the text might be applied to the congregation, he or she will choose a structure that best integrates with the other sermonic elements in order to achieve the desired effect. Yet, even when opting for a significantly different structure than is found in the biblical text, a preacher may still include some structural features in the sermon that are reflective of those in the Scriptural passage.

On a related note, to effectively utilize this criterion one must reject any notion of a one-size-fits-all approach to sermon structure or form. The heterogeneous literary forms contained in Scripture militate against such an

approach, as do the diverse speech genres utilized in every area of life.

Rhetorical Devices

The penultimate criterion in the pentathlon preaching principle is rhetorical devices. This element of the framework is related to, but distinct from, the criterion of style. As a preacher investigates the biblical passage, he or she will be on the lookout for rhetorical devices such as chiasmus, inclusio, repetition, metaphor and simile. Understanding the mechanics of these rhetorical devices will help preachers apprehend the meaning and intent of the text. As the preacher interacts with the text, he or she will begin to think of its potential significance for his or her parishioners.[51] As the preacher's horizon melds with the text's, he or she will think of specific rhetorical devices that will aid in producing a similar illocution in the sermon as is found in the inscripturated literary act.

Under the guidance of this criterion, one may discover ways to utilize the same kind of rhetorical devices in the sermon that were discovered in the text. However, given the sermon's purpose, the sermonic structure chosen, or the speech genre selected, using a rhetorical device in the sermon that corresponds to one found in the text is not always possible or expedient. Rather than focusing on replicating a specific rhetorical device, one should focus on the illocutionary force of the sermon.[52] Various devices may be employed in order to help the sermon achieve an illocution similar to that of the text, and one should always be expanding his or her repertoire of these devices through observation and practice.

Orality

The final criterion in the proposed homiletical framework is orality. The mechanics of this criterion are more complex than those previously mentioned because the text is bereft of any oral quality, so its evaluative function must operate more freely and imaginatively than the other criteria in this framework. Despite the significant differences between textual and oral communication, there are ways a preacher can allow the oral quality of his or her sermon to be influenced by the inscripturated literary act. One way to do this is by reading the text aloud in order to try to imagine its tone and mood as it was experienced when originally delivered.

> The task of interpreting a text may very well be enriched by reoralizing a text. This involves employing the resources of the voice and body to explore, then convey, the affective quality of the text through oral communication...Oral interpretations, whether through voicing, dramatizing thoughts and actions suggested in a text, or through preparation of performed interpretations, transform written communication into orality and deepen speakers' and listeners'

understanding of how a text communicates.[53]

Several features ought to be kept in mind when reoralizing a text, such as "voice quality, pitch and inflection, stress and volume, rate and pause," as well as "progression and movement."[54] Once one has a sense of how the text was experienced, he or she may begin to form the sermon so that it produces a similar kind of experience. However, one should remember that the evaluative function of this criterion requires creativity, imagination, and permission as he or she tries to discern the oral quality of the text.

CONCLUSION

The pentathlon preaching principle provides a framework by which preachers may traverse the illocutionary distance between the inscripturated literary act and the homiletical speech utterance. By utilizing the evaluative and generative functions of the proposed framework, one may discern the illocutionary force of the biblical text and seek imaginative ways of crafting a sermon that produces a similar illocution.

The flexibility of this homiletical matrix invites one to shape a particular criterion so that is closely resembles its generic counterpart in the biblical text, while freely adapting another. This elasticity serves to produce generic equilibrium between the Scriptural passage and the sermon. As the sermon is crafted to produce a similar illocution to that of the biblical passage, generic equilibrium is achieved and the illocutionary distance between text and sermon is traversed.

This proposed framework may serve as a guide to help one apprehend the synergistic illocution of the biblical text, determine its meaning for his or her congregation (as his or her horizon collides with the text's), and point the way forward to crafting a sermon that is relevant and biblically faithful, not only in terms of its content, but also with reference to its illocution.

NOTES

1. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There A Meaning in This Text? The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998). Vanhoozer goes on to note that a literary or text act "is communicative action fixed by writing" wherein "communicative 'matter' (propositional content) and 'energy' (illocutionary force) are inscribed" (*Meaning*, 229). In *Text to Praxis: Hermeneutics and Homiletics in Dialogue* (Library of New Testament Studies. London: T&T Clark, 2009) Abraham Kuruvilla observes "A text, then, is an instance of a generic language-game, played in accordance with, and while abiding by, the rules of that game. The corollary to this notion is that interpretation of the text involves the utilization of those rules as well" (*Text*, 35).

2. Vanhoozer traces out what he means by shared meaning: "...Because writing does not assume a shared situational context, genre creates the possibility of a shared literary context...A literary form is not a 'restraint' on what an author can say, but an enabling means of being able to say something about something to someone *at a distance*" (*Meaning*, 339).
3. Manuel Velasquez, *Philosophy: A Text with Readings*, 8th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 2002), 476-478.
4. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 4th rev. ed. eds. P.M.S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte; trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Press, 2009), 23.
5. Vanhoozer, *Meaning*, 338.
6. Ibid., 338.
7. Ibid., 340.
8. Ibid., 340. According to Austin, locutionary statements deal with words and the "sign system(s)" to which they belong (Vanhoozer, *Meaning*, 209). Such statements convey information by saying something about a specific subject. J. L. Austin defines an illocutionary statement as the "performance of an act *in* saying something as opposed to performance of an act *of* saying something" (*How to do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. eds. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975], 99-100). Perlocution is concerned with the effects elicited by locutionary and illocutionary acts (Austin, *Words*, 101).
9. Vanhoozer, 341. He explains: "The literary act of a narrator is indeed 'displaying,' but it is also accompanied by evaluative illocutionary act-praising, snubbing, mocking, questioning, The illocutionary force of narrative includes not only displaying imagined worlds but commending, or condemning, them as well" (Vanhoozer, *Meaning*, 341).
10. I use the term *inscripturated literary acts* to refer to those passages which come to us as literary acts, but belong to the canon of Scripture.
11. Austin's definition of performative language is helpful: "[it] is not to describe my doing of what I should be said in so uttering [a sentence] to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it" (Austin, *Words*, 6).
12. By homiletical speech utterance I mean the specific type of speech genre utilized for homiletical purposes in a liturgical setting.
13. In *The Witness of Preaching* (2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 117, Thomas Long notes that "We tend to think about a sermon's content, on the one hand, and its form, on the other, as if form and content were two distinct realities. The picture we have in our heads is that of a preacher developing the content of a sermon and then hunting around of a suitable form, something like a shipping container, in which to box this content for delivery. In other words, content is the important stuff of the sermon; form is mere packaging, and afterthought."
14. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays.* eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist; trans. Vern W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 61.

15. Thomas Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 33.
16. Gregory Kneidel, "*Homiletics*," in *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*, ed. Thomas Sloane (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 347.
17. Grant Osborne (*The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* [Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006], 410-11), supplies a helpful definition here: "Contextualization is 'that dynamic process which interprets the significance of a religion or cultural norm for a group with a different (or developed) cultural heritage.'"
18. Kuruvilla, *Text to Praxis*, 20.
19. As Kuruvilla observes: "With distanciation and the accompanying alteration in medium comes the rupture between message and speaker, and message and hearer, exploding the dialogical situation and enabling, even in the absence of the author, repeated examination of, and thoughtful reflection upon, the message. From an oral-aural world, it has irrupted into a new sensory world of vision that transforms and indeed restructures consciousness" (*Text*, 21-22).
20. Susan Gingell and Wendy Ross discuss this dynamic process in *Listening Up, Writing Down, and Looking Beyond: Interfaces of the Oral, Written, and Visual* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 8, where they write, "From a physiological perspective, speech is constituted by articulation (the language-specific ways in which sounds are produced), voice (use of the vocal folds, breath, and articulators such as the lips, tongue, teeth, and palate to produce sound), and fluency (including rhythm, with its elements of speed and hesitations). We use the word *speech* with an awareness of these constitutive elements, further meaning it to cover the full range of verbalized vocal dynamics—in other words, the range in delivery of vocalized words from whispered to shouted as they are employed in meaningful stretches of discourse within or across speech communities."
21. John Rottman, "Literary Forms," in *The New Interpreter's Handbook of Preaching*, ed., Paul Scott Wilson (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 65.
22. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 61.
23. Bakhtin maintains that "The extreme heterogeneity of speech genres and the attendant difficulty of determining the general nature of the utterance should in no way be underestimated" (*Speech Genres*, 61). Nevertheless, this caveat seems to weaken the foundation of Bakhtin's theory of speech genres, which asserts that such forms function as "*relatively stable types* of [speech] utterances" (*Speech Genres*, 61). As Roxane Rodrigues-Rojo points out: "…it is the genres' stability and regularity that people often emphasize in this definition, despite its relative nature, ignoring the heterogeneity that is emphatically pointed out through the same part of Bakhtinian text…" ("Bakhtin Circle's Speech Genres Theory: Tools for a Transdisciplinary Analysis of Utterances in Didactic Practices," in *Genre in a Changing World*, eds. Charles Bazerman, Adair Bonini, and

Débora Figueiredo, PWS [Anderson, SC: Parlor Press, 2009], 301-02).

24. Concerning this important distinction Long argues "The preacher's task, though, is not to replicate the text but to regenerate the impact of some portion of that text. He or she must not attempt to say and do everything the text once said and did. Rather the preacher should attempt to say and do what a *portion* of the text now says and does for a new and unique set of people" (*Literary Forms*, 33).
25. Commenting on the reciprocal nature of form and content Leland Ryken ("The Bible as Literature and Expository Preaching," in *Preach the Word: Essays on Expository Preaching: In Honor of R. Kent Hughs,* eds. Leland Ryken and Todd Wilson [Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007], 39), says, "Literary form exists prior to content in the sense that no content exists apart from the form in which it is embodied. As a result, the first responsibility of a reader or interpreter is to assimilate the form of a discourse. Without the literary form, the content does not even exist."
26. Mike Graves, *The Sermon As Symphony* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1997), 18.
27. Long, *Literary Forms*, 33; emphasis added.
28. Long, Ibid., 24-34.
29. Long, *Witness*, 109.
30. Regarding this relationship Long clarifies: "Focus and function statements are merely compass settings for the sermon journey. They guide the preacher in the creation of sermons that possess unity, clarity, and a firm connection to the biblical text...in other words, when we have crafted serviceable focus and function statements, we can anticipate and begin to create the sermon structure that will get us from here to there" (*Witness*, 109, 116).
31. A similarly helpful list of questions designed to aid preachers move from text to sermon is found in Greg Scharf's *Let the Earth Hear His Voice* (Philipsburg: P&R, 2005), 110-112, where he suggests that preachers ask the following questions of the text in sermon preparation: "(1) What is *this text*, functionally? (2) What is the main thing *this text* is speaking about? (3) What is *this text* saying about its subject? (4) What response does *this text* call for? (5) How does *this text* elicit that response? (6) How does *this text* contribute to the larger drama of redemption?"
32. Long, *Witness*, 118. See also Fred B. Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, Revised and With New Sermons (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001), 18.
33. Peter Low, "Singable Translations of Songs," *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 11:2 (2003): 87-103.
34. Low, "Translations," 92.
35. Ibid., 102.
36. Given the similarities between some of the criteria in the pentathlon principle and certain elements of Hebrew poetry, it is possible that Low's matrix might be adapted with greater specificity for use in preaching poetic Scriptural texts.

37. Low, "Translations," 102; emphasis added.
38. Bakhtin notes that "Language is realized in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity. These utterances reflect the specific conditions and goals of each such area not only through their content (thematic) and linguistic style, that is, the selection of the lexical, phraseological, and grammatical resources of the language, but above all through their compositional structure. All three of these aspects- thematic content, style, and compositional structure- are inseparably linked to the *whole* of the utterance and are equally determined by the specific nature of the particular sphere of communication" (*Speech Genres*, 61).
39. Speaking of the utility of literary genres, Vanhoozer explains: "...genre creates the possibility of a shared *literary* context. Alistair Fowler (...)says genre compensates for the lack of a shared situational context in two ways: 'First, it provides a situation of *literary* context; second, it reinforces the signal strength with additional coding rules.' A literary form is not a 'restraint' on what an author can say, but an enabling means of being able to say something about something to someone *at a distance*" (*Meaning*, 339).
40. I noted earlier that the movement from text to sermon is a very complex maneuver. Yet as Osborne clarifies, the steps of interpreting the inscripturated literary act and then allowing its message to inform the homiletical speech utterance are inextricably linked. He states "As we move from the world of the text to its significance, we must wed those two aspects. We cannot finally separate exegesis from application, meaning from significance, because they are two aspects of the same hermeneutical act. To derive the meaning of a text is already to arrive at its significance, because the horizon of your preunderstanding has united with the horizon of the text, and exposition has become the beginning of significance" (Osborne, *Spiral*, 410).
41. Kuruvilla, *Text*, 157.
42. Ibid., 157.
43. Kuruvilla, *Text*, 158.
44. Ibid., *Text*, 159.
45. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 61.
46. Using an analogy from music, Graves describes the sermon as a symphony: "The sermon as symphony, then, consists of an interpretation of a text, searching for its mood and movement, an artistic blending of text and tune…" (*Symphony*, 19).
47. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1450a 9-14.
48. In his analysis of the generic elements of speech genres Bakhtin says "These utterances reflect the specific conditions and goals of each such area and not only through their content (thematic) and linguistic style, that is, the selection of the lexical, phraseological, and grammatical resources of the language, *but above all through their compositional structure*"

(*Speech Genres*, 61; emphasis added).

49. David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 310.
50. Graves provides a helpful caveat at this point: "Occasionally it may be possible to duplicate the movements of the text to some extent within the sermon. But there are some structural forms that simply do not lend themselves to being duplicated. A sermon on prayer does not have to be delivered in the form of a prayer, though the sermon should respect the mood of that prayer" (*Symphony*, 21).
51. Robert S. Reid, "Rhetorical Devices," in *The New Interpreter's Handbook of Preaching*, ed. Paul Scott Wilson (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 363.
52. As Grave observes: "It is more important to discern what the form of a text "achieves" than to copy its form, thereby answering the question, What is the text doing?" (*Symphony*, 21).
53. Richard Ward, "Oral/Aural Communication," in *The New Interpreter's Handbook of Preaching*, ed. Paul Scott Wilson (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 357-358.
54. G. Robert Jacks, *Getting the Word Across: Speech Communication for Pastors and Lay Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 66.

THE BIG IDEA OF HADDON ROBINSON

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I Corinthians 15:9-11

INTRODUCTION

I wanted to point out one picture, in case you missed it in the montage we saw a few moments ago. I was a picture of Duane Litfin, there in the middle, with Joe Stowell on the right and dad on the left. That snap shot is one I found in a photo album that mom put together for dad several years ago. What makes me smile when I thumb through the photo album is the caption under this photo in the album. It reads, a great preacher with his two friends. I just love the ambiguity of that!

I have heard all three of these men and they are all great preachers. So you may wonder why I am here this evening preaching at my dad's memorial service, especially when some of the best preachers in America are sitting out in the audience. As a grieving son, there is a part of me that would have preferred not to be up here this evening, risking an emotional breakdown. But there's another part of me that can honestly say that to speak to you tonight at this memorial service for Haddon Robinson is truly the greatest honor of my life. You see, it was dad's wish, if we were able, that Vicki and I have a part in tonight's service. We settled that with dad at least four of five years ago. I have been both anticipating and dreading this day ever since.

I once heard my dad say that the lives of most great men and women are the embodiment of a great idea. Most of us in this room tonight accept the premise that the Bible was written by authors, both human and the Divine Author, to communicate God's Truth, what my dad called the Big Idea. But human life is often rather haphazard, so the Big Idea we associate with people may well be open for debate. Nevertheless, men and women who live their lives well and who live with a sense of purpose often have a distinct singularity to their lives.

Let me give you one example of such a person, the great reformer,

Martin Luther. His protests against the excesses of the Catholic Church, in his day, sparked the Protestant Reformation, 500 years ago. When demanded to recant of his accusations against the Catholic Church and the pope, Luther stood his ground. "Here I stand," he said. "I can do no other." Roland Bainton, who wrote about Luther nearly 70 years ago, titled his biography, "Here I Stand." Some might argue, that was the Big Idea of Luther's life.

After dad gave me the assignment to preach at this event, I found myself wondering how I might determine the Big Idea of my dad's life. When it comes to finding the Big Idea someone's life, I must admit that I have no special training. But I figure it must be a bit like those connect the dots pictures that we've probably all done at one time or another. You start out with a page full of numbered dots and you connect dot one to dot two and dot two to three, and so on until a picture emerges. But to get the big picture, you have to connect all the dots.

We certainly don't have the time to connect many of the dots in my dad's life, so let me give you a few of the key dots and dates for you to pin on a map in your mind. This evening, I want to connect a few dots from dad's childhood and then look at two key transitions in dad's life and then examine this initial picture from scripture to see if we can identify the Big Idea of Haddon Robinson.

NEW YORK CITY

Dad was born in New York City in 1931, the only child of immigrant parents, William and Anna Robinson. In 1941, at the age of 10 his mom was hospitalized with, what they called back then, "a nervous breakdown." That, now vacant, rather scary looking psychiatric hospital still looms over the East River in New York City today. I'm not sure Anna, my grandmother, ever returned home. She died in 1944. Dad was just 13 years old. And because his Irish father had to scratch out a living during the Great Depression working afternoons and evenings for the Railway Express, essentially, from the age of 10, dad grew up without much parental oversight, in a neighborhood where being held up and beaten up was a regular occurrence.

On rare occasions, as Vicki and I were growing up, we heard dad talk about his neighborhood, and running with a gang. But as fascinated as I was by the subject, dad said relatively little about those years. I never heard him talk about what it was like to see his mother break down or to visit her in the hospital, which he did every Saturday for three years, until she died. He didn't talk much about the fear of life in his neighborhood, but I know those years left their scars. The proof of that was on dad's 80th birthday we took a trip as a family back to Harlem and asked dad to show us around his old neighborhood. His apartment and many of the old buildings are still there, although the neighborhood is much cleaner, much safer and far less scary than it was during the 1930's and 40's. What stuck in my mind from that visit to dad's neighborhood was dad's comment to us as we drove through his old

neighborhood. "At age 80, I still feel the fear that gripped me as a boy."

How did a young man, an only child, a latch key kid, escape the danger, the evil influence and the fear of the ghetto to become a significant Christian leader in our day? I'm not going to answer that question just now, but I will. Instead, let me fast forward.

BOB JONES UNIVERSITY

In 1947 dad left the integrated neighborhoods of New York for the segregated campus of Bob Jones University in Greenville, SC. It was there he met my mom, then Bonita Vick. Mom and dad were married on August 11, 1951. They immediately headed south to attend Dallas Theological Seminary. What you may not know is that dad began ministry as an evangelist. He conducted evangelistic meetings during the summers while he was at Dallas Seminary. My sister was born right before dad graduated from Dallas. From there, mom, dad and Vicki moved to Oregon, where my grandparents lived. Dad began leading evangelistic meetings in Albany, Oregon. A year or two later dad became the Associate Pastor of a Conservative Baptist Church in Medford Oregon. That's where I was born. Dad continued to conduct evangelistic meetings on the side.

How did Haddon, the evangelist, become Dr. Haddon Robinson the professor of preaching at Dallas Seminary? It's an interesting story.

DALLAS SEMINARY

Dad had made a trip to Fullerton California to conduct a week of evangelistic meetings at Temple Baptist Church, which was also looking for a senior pastor. The meetings went well. The search committee was impressed with dad and liked his preaching. They were so impressed that they invited dad to put his name in as a candidate for the senior pastor position. I'm not exactly sure of the timing of the candidating process, but the search committee and the leadership board were unanimously in favor of dad becoming their next pastor. After prayer and serious thought, dad agreed to be their candidate. He preached at the church and then flew back to Oregon to await the outcome of the church vote. When the vote came in, the threshold required to call a pastor was very high, something like 95% of the vote, and dad missed being called as their senior pastor by one vote. When the pulpit committee called him in Oregon to relay the news, they assured him that it was a fluke. There was one man who voted no, who actually liked dad, he had a gripe with the church leaders, so his no vote was a protest vote, not a vote against dad. The committee assured my dad that if they took another vote, the results would be different. But dad was so disillusioned by the process that he turned them down. He had no idea what God was trying to say to him. But about two weeks later, Dr. John Walvoord, President of Dallas Seminary called and asked if dad would consider coming to teach

preaching in Dallas. Dad accepted Dr. Walvoord's invitation and, as a result, dad pursued his doctorate in speech communications to teach preaching for 19 years at Dallas Seminary. It was there he wrote the first edition of his book Biblical Preaching. Who knows what would have happened if that man in Fullerton had not voted against him?

I have explained how dad began his career as a professor of preaching, but let me connect a few more dots concerning another significant transition in dad's life. To do that, we need to fast forward once more.

DENVER SEMINARY, GORDON-CONWELL SEMINARY: CONNECTING THE DOTS

In 1979, dad left Dallas to become the President at Denver Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary. Those early years as president were hard ones. Dad had to learn on the job how to run a school. And when mom and dad moved to Denver, they also discovered that my mom's mother had cancer. So they moved her in with them and for the first few years of their lives in Denver, my grandmother lived and died in their living room.

But it seemed to me that after that, in the middle 1980's dad began to hit his stride as a seminary president. I don't know how long dad would have stayed on as president, nor do I know what he thought he might do next, but I know God had a plan.

It was my observation that what changed the course of dad's life, at that point, were two different lawsuits that the Seminary faced near the end of the 80's. Though dad was not the focus of either suit, he was named in both because the buck stops with the president. My dad described it as the worst experience of his life. Coming from a man who grew up in Harlem in the 1930's & 40's, this was serious stress. I remember my mom telling me that the anxiety and fear of the lawsuits brought back to dad the fear of those years in Harlem. Sue and I lived in Wisconsin back then, so I didn't see my dad often, but when I saw him during the worst part of those lawsuits, dad was so thoroughly whipped, he looked to me like someone who was terminally ill.

Dad never said this to me, so this is admittedly conjecture on my part, but although the seminary and my dad were exonerated at the end of the legal process, I honestly think it was those lawsuits that were the primary factors that made the offer at Gordon-Conwell of the Harold John Okenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching an offer my dad couldn't refuse. Just as persecution scattered the church in the book of Acts, it seems to me that God used those lawsuits to propel dad back into the classroom. And pretty much any of you who studied preaching under my dad at Gordon-Conwell or those who received Doctor of Ministry degrees in programs my dad taught in the last quarter century can give thanks for those lawsuits.

So why am I connecting these particular dots in my dad's life? How did a young man from an immigrant family in the ghetto's of New York end up being the influential leader whose life we celebrate here tonight? How do

I connect the dots to find the big idea of dad's life?

You all know, if dad were here speaking to you tonight, he would certainly point us to God's Word. Dad did not assign me a Biblical text to preach tonight, but I wouldn't be surprised if he would point us to I Corinthians 15. As I told you, my dad began ministry as an evangelist and I remember his teaching the very essence of what the gospel is from verses 1-8. You may remember how the chapter starts, "Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain." (I Cor. 15:1-2)

And dad had a great hope in the Resurrection. This spring I listened to a sermon online from Dr. David Jeremiah in which he told his listeners that it was a message from my dad on the Resurrection at an evangelistic dinner back when David was a student at Dallas Seminary that first underscored to him the tremendous significance of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

Nevertheless, in identifying the big idea of dad's life, I don't think my dad would focus on those resurrection verses in the last part of I Corinthians 15. The words that may well sum up the Big Idea of Haddon Robinson are verses that at least some commentators consider a digression of thought. Paul writes in verses 9 & 10, "For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them – yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."

The Apostle Paul did more to advance the gospel than anyone who ever lived. And yet, as you read Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, the people of this church apparently were not overly impressed with him. I'm not sure that Paul was overly concerned with his own notoriety. I don't believe that Paul was being humble when he called himself the least of the apostles. You see, Paul knew his own heart. And when he examined his own heart he recognized a self-righteous Pharisee who had set out to destroy Christ's Church. It was Jesus who met him on the road to Damascus, on his way to destroy the church and it was Jesus who set him on a totally different journey to establish and build up His Church. That is why Paul says, "but by the grace of God I am what I am." Paul was uniquely gifted for his ministry. Paul was uniquely trained. And Paul was uniquely and powerfully used by God. Nevertheless, Paul knew that when he encountered the risen Christ, he was using all his energy to destroy the Church.

If you sat in my dad's classes or listened to many of my dad's sermons, you probably heard him say, "If I knew you like you know you, I'd be tempted not to talk to you. But if you knew me like I know me, you'd be even more tempted not to listen to me." As children of Haddon Robinson, Vicki and I can attest that my dad was one of the wisest and godliest men either of us has ever known. Nevertheless, dad and God knew my father's

heart, the motives, the sins, the doubts that are all hidden from view. In one of dad's sermons I remember him telling a story that I thought about numerous times in these last years of my dad's life. Dad explained how my grandfather developed dementia and so for a time my dad brought his father to live with us. But his dementia was such that my grandfather would wander. As I remember the story, my dad was alone in our house in Dallas with my grandfather. Grandpa would walk in the room and then walk out of the room, into the room and out of the room. Dad tried to get him to sit still, but it was no use. Finally, in exasperation, dad hauled off and swatted my grandfather. This was not a corrective "spanking," dad swatted him in anger and frustration. In that moment, dad realized that his swats on grandpa's backside were not expressions of love but anger. Dad realized in that moment that he could have knocked my grandpa to the ground. In that moment, he could have killed my grandfather. If you ever heard my dad tell that story, I suspect it made an impact on you. It certainly did on me. Dad was a man who recognized his depravity, but he also knew the grace of God. He believed and he lived the grace of God.

I am grateful for the article that Steve Smith wrote about my dad for Dallas Seminary Magazine back at the start of this year. In that article, Steve told how dad was instrumental in opening the doors for black students at Dallas Seminary. I know that is true, yet as Haddon's son, I never personally heard dad take credit for helping to integrate Dallas Seminary. Instead, I know that when dad was asked by a student if he had any significant regrets in his life, dad responded, that he regretted that he did not go down to Selma Alabama to march for civil rights in 1965. He said that he gave in to pressure and did not go.

At the end of dad's career there were several different occasions in which people sought to honor dad for his accomplishments. There were special dinners. There were services of tribute. Many of you were part of one or more of these occasions. As Haddon's son, I was privileged to be on hand for a number of these events.

But we, in the family, knew that while dad was honored by these tributes, they always made him uncomfortable. Vicki and I would joke with each other that it was too bad that it was dad and not us who got all the accolades because we would have enjoyed them much more than he did.

CONCLUSION: THE BIG IDEA

My friends, as I connect the dots, I think I see the Big Idea of Haddon Robinson. It is the idea that I believe he preached about more than any other, God's grace. It was God who formed him in the womb with a keen intellect. And it was God who lit a fire in him in the ghettos of Harlem. It was God who made him the evangelist, preacher, teacher, administrator, writer, leader, father, and husband whose life we celebrate tonight. At key transitions in dad's life, I believe it was God who saw to it that dad focused so much of his

life on teaching preachers. Like the great Apostle, I believe my dad would declare to all of us, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." And so, this celebration of the life of Haddon Robinson is ultimately a celebration of our God and Savior. We sang it at the outset. To God be the glory great things He has done!

I am preaching this sermon tonight from my dad's Bible. It was the Bible he had with him when he died. After putting this sermon together, using my own Bible, I decided that I should familiarize myself with this passage in my dad's Bible. I found it very instructive, when I opened dad's Bible to this passage I discovered that in verse 10, dad had underlined three words. Let me read this verse to you again and point out the words to you. "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them – yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me." You see, Grace! Grace! Grace! It's all about grace.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said it well, "It is grace at the beginning, and grace at the end. So that when you and I come to lie upon our death beds, the one thing that should comfort and help and strengthen us there is the thing that helped us in the beginning. Not what we have been, not what we have done, but the Grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. The Christian life starts with grace, it must continue with grace, it ends with grace."

HADDON ROBINSON'S LEGACY

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INTRODUCTION

He was sitting in his office strewn with papers, books and boxes. After twenty-one years at the seminary he was packing it up. He was moving out.

I could see him through the window in his office door. The morning sun washed across his desk. He looked bewildered and tired. I knocked on the door. "Come in!" he bellowed.

I wanted to see how he was getting along as he packed boxes and sorted through his books and papers. I asked him how he was doing. And what he said to me was a bit surprising. He said as he sat among the piles of decisions scattered around him, "I'm concerned about my legacy."

What would you have told Haddon in those tender moments? What would you have said? To be sure you could say several things.

HADDON ROBINSON'S LEGACY WILL LAST LONG IN THE LIVES OF HIS FAMILY

Haddon's family is a living legacy of Haddon's life and influence. His wife Bonnie; Torrey his son and Sue, Torrey's wife and children Carey and Carl; and his daughter Vicki, can testify to his impact in their lives

Not only will Haddon Robinson's legacy last long in the lives of his family, but there's another layer to add.

HADDON ROBINSON'S LEGACY WILL LAST LONG IN THE LIVES OF HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Haddon's collection of friends and colleagues can speak to Haddon's lasting legacy on their lives. Gathered at his memorial service were only some of Haddon's friends and colleagues who have felt and will continue to feel the impact of his life on theirs, mine included.

Yes, Haddon Robinson's legacy will last long in the lives of his family and friends, but there's more.

HADDON ROBINSON'S LEGACY WILL LAST
LONG IN THE LIVES OF HIS FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND STUDENTS

Students were his life and love; he poured himself into them—masters and doctor of ministry. Many of his students know this to be the case, because Haddon poured himself into you.

More than the legacy living in family, friends and student, we can add one final layer to this enduring legacy.

HADDON ROBINSON'S LEGACY WILL LAST
LONG IN THE LIVES OF HIS FAMILY, FRIENDS, STUDENTS,
AND THE WIDER FIELD OF PREACHING

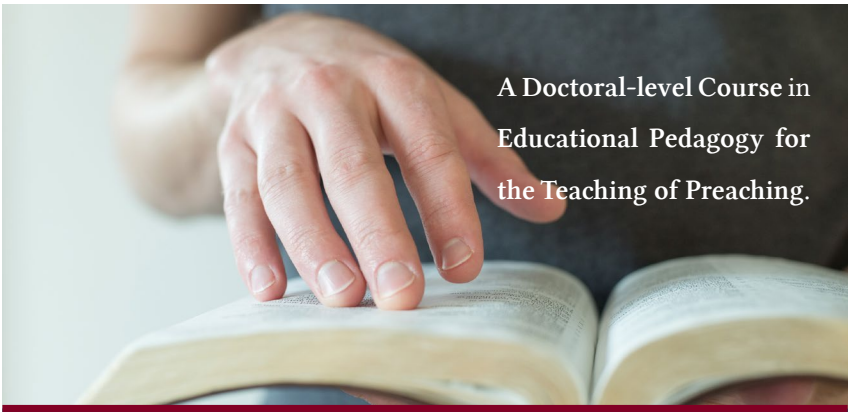
This preaching giant's influence in the pulpit and in his writings, especially, *Biblical Preaching* has had a long-lasting impact on the field of homiletics. Evangelical preachers, teachers of preaching, scholars in the practice of preaching have felt—and will continue to feel—the influence and impact of his emphasis of mining from the text the biblical idea and communicating it to one's listeners clearly.

CONCLUSION

So, there I was, standing in that cluttered office and I heard the words, "I'm concerned about my legacy." I knew that twenty-one years before, at age sixty, my age now, he began yet another chapter of his life, another chapter of his legacy, which changed the way we approach preaching here at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and beyond. Haddon didn't have anything to worry about, did he?

Oh, you might be wondering, "what did you tell him, Scott? What did you say?" I don't remember, exactly. I think I told him that he had no reason for concern. For it is the case, isn't it?

Haddon Robinson's legacy will last long in the lives of his family, friends, students, and the wider field of preaching.



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FIGHT ON! THE SURPRISING WORDS OF JESUS TO HIS SUFFERING PEOPLE

COLLIN SKIPPER
2017 Haddon W. Robinson Biblical Preaching Award Recipient
Pastoral Resident
Southside Christian Church
Spokane, WA

Revelation 2:8-17

The subject of suffering can be hard for us to relate to sometimes in our current 21st Century, American context. We may think of our so-called suffering as things right out of the "first world problems" meme you may have seen going around: things like "my salsa is too spicy" or "I want to change the channel but the remote is on the other side of the room." Too often, that's what we think of when we think of the "suffering" that we may experience in our cushy, 21st Century context.

Sometimes, we may think we're better than we actually are. In fact, recently, I was reminded of my own tendency to think too highly of myself with the aid of an app on my iPhone called Yelp. Yelp is a service that lists out all the restaurants and coffee shops near you and gives them a rating, based on customer reviews, out of 5 stars. You can even post your own reviews and tips for other people like "try the soup" or "steer clear of the oysters."

A couple years ago, I had planned a birthday lunch for my wife with our whole family and some friends of ours at a local restaurant. When we arrived, they told us that the table wasn't ready, but that it would only be a few minutes. Well, we waited for a while but decided to go somewhere else, thanking the staff on the way out and promising to return another time in the future. At least, that's how I had remembered the story, until very recently.

One of the triumphs of the digital age is that we now have a great electronic record of all the times we were whiny little babies. You see, not too long ago, I found the review I posted on Yelp that day. Here it is: 1 out of 5 stars. "Food smells good, but I haven't had any of it yet. Had a reservation at 6 and we've been standing at the door for half an hour." You can just smell the hatred and disgust dripping from those sentences. Notice I didn't even use the definite article "the" in front of the word "food," likely because I wasn't going to let this establishment take any more of my valuable time.

It seems like that is the impression we have of suffering in our world today: First-world problems like your salsa being too spicy, the line at the

grocery store being too long, or, in my case, bad service at a restaurant. We might feel like we have no right to talk about suffering, because in other parts of the world, people are dealing with suffering much worse than waiting thirty minutes for a reservation.

But the reality is, that's just not true. We do suffer. We face A LOT of suffering, even in places where we don't fear for our lives. We suffer both big things and small things. We suffer through financial hardship and even poverty, when we don't know where the money to pay our bills is going to come from. We suffer through illness and old age, when our bodies are slowing down, or our family members need more and more care. We suffer through loneliness, when we can't find a friend and we begin to fear that we really are on our own in this world. We suffer through unemployment, fear of the future, broken relationships, families that feel like they are just barely held together at the seams, violence, and eventually, death.

Truthfully, we know how to suffer and we know suffering when we see it. So, when we look at biblical cities like Smyrna and Pergamum and the serious suffering that they faced, we can realize that the words of encouragement that Jesus spoke to them are just as applicable to us in our suffering as they were to them. The letter to the church in Smyrna begins:

> [8] And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: "The words of the first and the last, who died and came to life. [9] 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. [10] Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. [11] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.'

In order to understand the crux of what Jesus is saying, there are a few things we need to know about Smyrna. The first is that persecution in that city had made the church there very poor. Smyrna was a strategic port city for that part of the world, so most of the wealth that came into that region moved first through its ports. Money was changing hands all the time. It was like the New York Stock Exchange of the ancient world. Living in a city like that, it was fairly easy to get rich quick.

But, unfortunately for the church in Smyrna, this wasn't true for Christians. Christianity was an illegal religion at that time, because Christians by-and-large refused to worship the emperor, which was a law for all citizens. Because of that, Christians weren't afforded the freedom to do business like the Greeks and the Jews. Persecution was rampant in Smyrna, from pagan Greeks as well as devout Jews. They were barred from participating in trade. So, essentially, choosing to be a Christian was choosing to be poor; choosing

to give up financial security and the comforts of life. To follow Jesus was to willingly enter the hard life for those in Smyrna.

The second insight we need into life in Smyrna, in order to understand Jesus' message, is that trouble was on its way. Jesus tells the church that some of them will be thrown into prison for ten days, which probably just means a short time, not necessarily literally ten days. But, notice he doesn't say, "then you'll be set free, so just hang in there in the meantime." Actually, he says, "be faithful unto death." You see, those who were about to be captured and imprisoned, not so that they could have a fair trial, but so that they could be put to death for following Jesus. So, as bad as life was in Smyrna for Christians, it was about to get a whole lot worse.

The third and final thing we need to know about Smyrna is that Jesus didn't give them any correction. The letters in the preamble of Revelation all seem to follow the same format, which includes corrections of the church's practices and behavior. But in this letter, Jesus doesn't offer them any corrections. Instead, he just encourages them. He knows that they are afraid, he warns them that trouble is ahead, he encourages them to be faithful, and then he ends the letter. Basically, his message to Smyrna is "You're doing a good job. Things are going to get worse, but hang in there!"

Isn't it an encouragement that when Jesus looked at this harassed and helpless church, he didn't want to pile on more instructions? Instead, he just wanted them to know that he was with them in their suffering.

That's the letter to Smyrna. Let's look now at the letter to Pergamum:

> [12] "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: 'The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword. [13] 'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. [14] But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. [15] So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. [16] Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. [17] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'

Like the previous letter, it can be easy to get lost here, so we'll focus on the important things we need to know about Pergamum. First, it's important to understand that in Pergamum, someone had been killed for following Jesus. Antipas, who Jesus refers to as his "faithful witness," was a

member of the church in Pergamum who was killed for refusing to worship the emperor. In persecution, there is a definite line between being just pushed out or made second-class citizens and someone actually being killed for their faith. Crossing that line would have changed the tone in Pergamum so that all the Christians there would be looking over their shoulders. It would have changed the way that they interacted with others, and especially the way they may have shared the gospel with people. Now, with the threat of death hanging over their heads, no one could have felt safe. They had already given up their financial stability, now they are giving up their safety, and could even have to surrender their lives for claiming Jesus Christ and staying faithful to him.

The second thing to know about Pergamum is that the church was mixing worship of Jesus with idol worship. In the letter, Jesus references Balaam and Balak, the Nicolaitans, and eating food sacrificed to idols. The basic point he is making is that the church in Pergamum had fallen into compromising their faith in Jesus in order to fit in better with the culture around them. They didn't stop worshipping Jesus, but they started to add in worship of other gods too. But why would they do that? Simply, to fit in. They likely thought that if they remained faithful to worship of Jesus Christ but also sacrificed to idols and worshipped the emperor, they would no longer be targets of the persecution that threatened to take their lives.

Even though the stakes for fitting in were certainly higher in Pergamum than they are for us, it's fair to say that we do the same thing. Granted, most of us probably aren't secretly worshipping idols in our closets. But in our case, maybe we instead begin to let our principles slip. Maybe you say things at work that you wouldn't dare say in front of your family and certainly not at church. The stakes for staying true to our principles are so much lower than they were for those in Pergamum. At worst, you have to awkwardly exit a conversation or feel like everyone else around the table thinks you're a prude or "holier than thou." In Pergamum, their very lives were on the line. So, out of fear, they mixed their worship of Jesus with worship of idols.

The third thing to know about this letter is that Jesus promises the faithful in Pergamum a fantastic reward. Jesus tells the church that he will give those who remain faithful to him a "new name." In the ancient world, names were more than just what people called you, they were a part of your identity and people thought they helped determine the kind of person you were going to be. So, when Jesus says, "I want to give you a new name that nobody knows but you and me," he's saying, "I want to give you a new identity that is so sacred and so intimate between the two of us, that no one and nothing in this world can ever touch it. None of the cares and troubles of this world, no one who wants to tear you down, no problems or pain in life can touch that identity that I've given you. It's between you and me."

Can you imagine what a comfort that would have been for this church? They feared that any day they could lose their lives just for trusting

in Jesus. But they could face the future because they had a new identity that was secure in him.

So those are the churches and what Jesus has to say to them. But let's break all this down a bit. There are three things in these letters that Jesus is saying to people who are facing intense suffering and pain, and they're the same things that he's saying to you today in the midst of the struggles you face, whether they are large or small.

I KNOW

First, Jesus says, "I know." He said to Smyrna, "I know your tribulation and your poverty." And he said to Pergamum, "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is." These churches gave up everything to follow Jesus. Think back to when you first became a Christian. Imagine you make a decision to follow Christ and you're filled with excitement and a desire to share the gospel with everyone you meet. Then, suddenly, a law is passed that Christians can't be involved in commerce. You lose your job and you have to find a way to provide for your family. Then, you find out someone has been killed simply for claiming to follow Jesus. They lost everything. Little by little, more and more was taken away from those who clung to their faith. And every step of the way, they had to be wondering, "Where are you, God? Do you even know what's going on?"

Then, they get a letter addressed to them from Jesus himself. And the first thing written on the page in front of them is "I know." He hadn't forgotten them. He knew exactly what they were going through. And he knows what you're going through too. If you feel like God doesn't know, or he doesn't care, or maybe he isn't listening, or maybe you've done something to get in the way of his care for you, it's not true! He knows what you're going through. In fact, he feels the pain you feel. Jesus didn't only suffer for you on the cross when he hung there for the forgiveness of your sins, he also suffers with you now, because he's in you through the Holy Spirit and he feels your pain. He wants you to feel better, but more than that, he wants you to know he is with you through it all. To the churches back then, and now to you, Jesus says, "I know."

STAY WITH ME

Second, he says, "Stay with me." Remember his warning to the church in Pergamum? He calls them out for worshiping idols in order to fit in with the culture around them and then he says, "…repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against [you] with the sword of my mouth." This seems a little harsh! However, it tells us that it is so important to Jesus that he doesn't have to share his glory or our worship with anyone or anything else that he willing to say, even to a suffering church that he recognizes has otherwise been faithful to him, "stop muddying the waters."

When we face suffering, our first reaction is often to cut and run to whatever sin we know will help us ease the pain. But even though Jesus knows our weakness, sympathizes with our pain, and suffers alongside us, he still doesn't let us use our pain and suffering as an excuse to be unfaithful to him. And it's not because he's mean or unreasonable, it's because he knows we need him, more than anything else, to get through what we are facing.

It seems like the three most common responses to suffering in the Christian life are:

1. Trust God.
2. Ignore God.
3. Get mad at God.

And we tend to think that trusting God is the best, ignoring God is bad (but not that bad), and getting mad at God is absolutely inexcusable. But, in reality, the very worst thing you could do in the midst of pain and suffering is to ignore God, because we need him to get us through what we're going through.

I was recently talking with a friend of mine who was struggling with some deep personal problems. He told me, "I am so mad at God that I don't want to pray because I don't want to come into his presence angry. I'm afraid I'll just yell and scream at him. What should I do?" I told him, "I think you need to pray anyway." The reality is that God can handle your anger! But, you can't handle being apart from him. You can't push him into a corner and promise to come back to him when things are better and you have your life together. You need God to get you through the struggles you face. That's why he says to us, when we suffer, "stay with me."

IT WILL BE WORTH IT IN THE END

Third, Jesus says, "It will be worth it in the end." And this is one of the hardest messages to receive when we are faced with hardships and suffering, because we are often incapable of seeing how God can redeem the worst things that happen to us. It can be extremely painful to hear, even from the mouth of Jesus, "It will be worth it in the end." But this is what he means when he says, "To the one who conquers I will give…a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it." Paul says a similar thing in Romans 8:18, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

And so, the difficult, hard-to-believe message of God to his suffering followers is that there are worse things that could happen to you than death, but there is nothing better than Jesus Christ. If Jesus says to us when we suffer, "I know. Stay with me. It will be worth it in the end," then how should that change the way we face pain and suffering in our lives? I think we can boil it down to one point:

FIGHT ON!

When troubles come, we are faced with the choice to either give up and throw in the towel and succumb to whatever horrible struggles we are facing, OR we can fight on, knowing that Jesus is with us, he knows what we're going through, and he will someday make everything worthwhile.

Now, listen. The point of all this is not that heaven is some great consolation prize that will make all the terrible things we go through in this life seem not so bad. When you meet Jesus face to face at the end of your life, he's not going to be like, "Sorry you lost your job, sorry for that horrible disease, but hey…this place has free ice cream."

No!! The point is that eternal life with Jesus Christ is so good and so powerful that everything in this life that made you want to quit and give in will seem like a bad dream and will only make you appreciate your new reality even more. It will be like losing something precious to you and mourning its loss only to discover it was hiding in your pocket all along, which makes you love and cherish it even more. When we come into Jesus' presence at the end of our lives, everything we thought we lost and all the suffering we faced will only be reasons to love him more and appreciate him more for who he is, as we gaze upon him in awe.

This last summer, I lost my Grandmother. She was so important to me and my family. She was a 5-foot-tall British woman who cooked like Paula Deen and swore like a sailor, and we loved her all the more for it. She was dying of liver failure, and eventually we found ourselves at the end of a long and demoralizing barrage of hospital visits, scary incidents, and bad reports. Before she was released to go into hospice care, she spent a lot of time in the ICU, and while she was in there, the nurses were very strict about only having two people in her room at a time. But at the end of one day, they announced that we could all come in to say goodnight, which signaled to all of us that we might also be saying goodbye.

So, I, and all her other grandchildren, gathered around her bed. One by one, my cousins and brothers went up to see her, and one by one they collapsed on her hospital bed sobbing, while my Nana tried to keep a brave face. All the while, I stood in the corner with a lump growing in my throat, until it was my turn. But when I was the only one left to speak, I couldn't do it. My feet felt like they were nailed to the floor. I think my mom noticed and she ushered everyone else out of the room. I stood there for what felt like hours but what I'm sure was only a few minutes, because I couldn't clear my throat of the sadness and grief to actually make any sound.

Standing there, looking down on her, I could see how afraid she was to die and how badly she wanted more time with all of us. But the thought that finally got me through it was knowing that as soon as she departed from our presence, she would be in the presence of Jesus, and all her fears would vanish like a nightmare in the morning. And she would be finally and irrevocably made whole in the presence of her savior. And then, I thought

about how someday I will stand before Jesus too and everything I was feeling and all that I had gone through and all the struggles I have yet to face will feel like nothing but a bad dream. It was in that moment that I understood for the first time what it means for God to "wipe every tear from [his people's] eyes."

Because we know that everything will be worth it in the end, we can choose now to fight on in the face of whatever suffering lies ahead. What are you facing today? Maybe you're having hard times at work. You could choose to give up and deal with the consequences of a terrible boss or a bad workplace culture and end up feeling dead inside each day as you head off to work. Or you could choose to fight on and allow God to bring his meaning into your life and work. Maybe you feel like your family is falling apart and you are the only thing that is holding it together, and you've been fighting so long and hard that you don't know if you can keep going. You could choose to give up and let it all fall apart. Or you could choose to fight on, knowing that Jesus cares about you, wants your family to succeed, and is here to help. Maybe you're facing illness, or even death, and you have the choice to either consign yourself to this bad hand that life has dealt you, and to be bitter and angry. Or you could choose, in the midst of your body breaking down and falling away, to grow spiritually instead.

Now, I'm not saying that you, by fighting on, can make everything go well in your life. But you don't think that the church needs more than anything else men and women who are willing to stand up and fight for the things that matter, even when we face difficult circumstances? Is it pain, fear, disappointment, poverty, loneliness, depression, illness, death? More than anything else, what will test your moral fiber and commitment to Jesus is being in the furnace, facing difficult times. So, fight! Stand up and fight, knowing that Jesus will make it okay in the end. He's with you. He feels your pain. And he is fighting for you.

So how do we fight? When you feel like you can't stand to be around other people, especially in the congregation of God's people on a Sunday morning, worshipping and hearing some crazy preacher tell you your business, come to church anyway! It can be a fight to be there, but be there anyway. Because that's exactly where you need to go to be with Jesus on a Sunday morning. When you feel like you can't pray because you're inadequate before God, you don't have the right words, or he doesn't really want to hear from you after all these years, or even just because you're mad at him, pray anyway! You can't afford not to. When you feel like you're tapped out, like the world has taken all your reserves, or like you have no energy left to do any good, serve anyway! Jesus will be your strength, and in serving, you will find more meaning than in your struggles. When you feel like you can't read your Bible because you don't understand it or it's boring, pick it up, dust it off, and read it anyway! Because in that book is the Word of God to you in the midst of your struggles. Church, we need him to get through our struggles. So, fight on, because he's fighting for you.

BOOK REVIEWS

Preaching The Luminous Word: Biblical Sermons and Homiletical Essays. By Ellen F. Davis. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 978-0802874238, 332 pp., $33.00.

Reviewer: *Daniel D. Green, Moody Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL.*

Ellen Davis is the Amos Ragan Kearns Distinguished Professor of Bible and Practical Theology at the Duke Divinity School. She earned her Ph.D. in Old Testament from Yale. Davis is both an insightful scholar and an erudite preacher. Her particular interests include promotion of ecumenical unity and ecological management of the earth. She is an advisor to the Anglican church in America and abroad.

The present work consists of numerous sermons as well as lectures in homiletical theory. Both have value to preachers of various persuasions. There is also a forward by Stanley Hauerwas and a summative afterword by Austin McIver Dennis.

The sermons are occasional and are given in very numerous settings such as baptisms, chapels, convocations, earth day services, graduations, ordinations, and weddings. Local churches addressed include those of Anglican, Baptist, Episcopalian, Methodist and Presbyterian affiliation. Her messages are a pleasure to read for their exceptionally precise language. As Dennis writes, "To hear Ellen Davis preach is to be drawn into a meticulously worded Scripture-based world of uncommon eloquence and transformative potency" (317).

The sermons are also often theologically profound. In her exposition of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, she says that there are times in believers' lives "when God seems to take back everything they have ever received from God's hand" (7). Of the Jonah narrative she says, "True security can only come from God's own compassion towards humanity and the compassion of humans toward humans" (240). She also summarizes the first evangelist's work well: "Matthew's Gospel challenges us to live boldly in the hope of the Magi, so that, having rejoiced with them in the first coming of Christ, we may at his second coming know fullness of joy forevermore" (255).

The sermons are relevant to contemporary life. Preaching from Isaiah 6, Davis says to a candidate for ordination, "Keep your vision clear, Tony, so that you can see, and help us to see, God with us in the places where God's holy presence is desperately needed, and far from obvious: in the defeats and losses that come from war, from illness and death, from misplaced hopes, from our repeated failure to trust God more than ourselves" (193). From a sermon on humility from the life of Moses, she surmises, "So you might say

that humility is nothing other than our capacity for remembering God, and, further, your capacity for being transparent to God, so when people look at you what they see is the power and action and compassion of God" (45).

Interspersed with the expositions are lectures on homiletics. In the lecture on holy preaching, Davis defends the exposition of the Scripture versus a thematic approach that, she says, "tends to present and reinforce the established viewpoint." For her, the superiority of exegetical preaching is that it allows the text to function as inspired speech that can move the church community in new directions, and raise new problems (99). In the lesson on preaching in witness to the triune God, the writer implies a Trinitarian center to the word: "Preaching widely across the canon is necessary in order to illumine the canon's unified witness to the Triune God" (246). She also wants her young preachers to address ethical issues. Ethical interpretation leads to a personal willingness to change in response to what we learn, that is, to repent (96).

Davis is not an evangelical. Her references to JEDP (20), third Isaiah (179), and a God who does not control the world (86) are disturbing, as is her statement that "love can cross species" (81), and the reference to the Psalmist as "she" (123).

All told, the volume provides some beneficial reading for experienced expositors and advanced homiletics students willing take a fresh look at the biblical text.

Not with Wisdom of Words: Nonrational Persuasion in the New Testament. By Gary S. Selby. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 978-0802873002, 197 pp., $22.

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

It is not always that one finishes a book in almost-a-single sitting with delight. Especially not one on hermeneutics. Well, I did this one, on a flight across the Atlantic.

Selby, Professor of Ministerial Formation at Emmanuel Christian Seminary, has written this book focusing on how NT authors "use language to bring their audiences into an imaginative, visceral experience of … truth" (viii). This is in opposition to other communication modalities that merely inform and explain, but not inspire: those aim for intellectual conviction than imaginative experience.

Chapter 1 delineates a history of rhetoric relating to the NT, a recent turn after decades of "research that focused on uncovering the layers of form and tradition"—an "'archaeology of discourse'" (or, as I like to call it, a hermeneutic of excavation) (3). "By contrast, rhetorical scholars aimed … at exploring how the texts might have functioned persuasively for the audiences to whom they were directed" (and audiences in the future that were

clearly authorially intended) (3). Such an approach counters the "tendency to reduce a potent, imaginative vision to mere propositional argument in a way that marginalizes or even dismisses the central feature of the discourse, that is, its experiential, visionary character" (5–6). While Selby restricts his proposal to "the poetic texts of the NT," exemplified in chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5, I would argue that every pericope of every genre of every book of Scripture is implicitly "poetic" in this sense, for all texts (or their authors) *do* things with what they say and propound a new worldview, a vision of God's ideal world, a *world in front of the text* that God invites his people to inhabit. Falling in love with that vision, one lives in accordance to it, aligning oneself to its demands. "These texts were not aimed at convincing but, rather, at inducing 'ekstasis,' literally, transport, carrying their listeners into an alternative realm of reality, an experience that would fundamentally change their orientation in the physical and social worlds in which they lived" (16–17). Indeed, "much of the human response to the world … is visceral, a 'gut reaction,' arising not from conscious intellectual processes [alone] but from what the Scripture calls the *kardia*, the heart" (11). This is what the text is *doing*, and for the interests of the readers of this *Journal*, this is the role of the sermon: to depict the world portrayed by the text and to arouse a passion for that world! Such communication, especially that geared towards application as is *all* of Scripture, is always "poetic" in function. And the consequence of such "poetic" communication and engagement of the audience is that it "may be awakened to realities of human existence hitherto unacknowledged, to certain kinds of self-knowledge, and to new ways of seeing the world" (27).

In chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, Selby, in a close analaysis of their language and structure, considers four NT "poetic" texts: 1 Thess 4:13–18; Rom 7:14–25; 1 Cor 13; Eph 1:3–14—instances of "the NT's use of mimesis in its efforts to inculcate a Christian worldview," the world in front of the text (41). With observations carefully made—though a bit more integration into a unified sense of what the author is *doing* with what he is saying would have helped—the author offers a creditable and convincing accounting of these texts.

Chapters 6 and 7 bring the book to a close with a cogent discussion of the implications for such an approach (an annoying misspelling of John Bunyan's name, notwithstanding). Selby discusses how poetic form alters the three fundamental relationships of the rhetorical encounter: the relationship of audience to content (holistic adoption of the vision/content, not just its intellectual apprehension), of rhetor to audience (poetics has the rhetor almost avoiding direct address to the audience and not drawing attention to himself, rather pointing to the vision, and becoming a joint participant with the audience), and of audience members to one another (poetics tends to "create" communities through language that evokes shared emotional states, and that invites listeners to "become" an ideal audience). I found myself extrapolating these notions to the preaching situation: the audience experiencing the *world in front of the text*, the preacher being the curator of the text-picture and not the painter, and the formation of the audience into a

congregational community by the act of preaching in a context of worship. Much grist for the mill here, and worthy of more exploration! In sum: *Not with Wisdom of Words* comes with a "must-read" recommendation for all preachers!

Becoming a Pastor Theologian: New Possibilities for Church Leadership. Edited by Todd Wilson and Gerald Hiestand. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2016. 978-0830851713, 217 pp., $25.00.

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

This work is made up of papers—both plenary addresses and other contributions—from a 2015 conference sponsored by the Center for Pastor Theologians, and edited by its co-founders, Todd Wilson and Gerald Hiestand. For the sake of brevity, I shall deal with the plenary papers.

Peter Leithart ("The Pastor Theologian as Biblical Theologian") caught me off guard with his requirement that "the literal [interpretation of texts] must open into the spiritual senses, into Christological allegory and tropological exhortation" (16). Also, he avers that "the pastor theologian's most important theological publication is the sermon" in a liturgical setting, particularly that of the Eucharist. "If you are preaching without bread and wine, then your first task is to put an end to that anomaly as quickly as possible" (19). None of this is very convincing.

James Smith ("The Pastor Theologian as Political Theologian") continues the theme of his other writings: humans are not just thinkers, but lovers. The role of the pastor, first, is to exegete the love-shaping cultural rites of political institutions, unmasking their idolatry (false worship) and, second, communicates an alternate vision of what the Good is—true worship with baptism and Eucharist at its core (26, 30). As in Smith's monographs, there is no mention here, either, of how Scripture may propound and shape the godly vision of the divine kingdom.

For Kevin Vanhoozer ("The Pastor Theologian as Public Theologian"), the pastor theologian need not be a scholar: "Theology is the project of seeking, speaking and showing understanding of what the triune God is doing in and through Jesus Christ for the sake of the whole world, and this is far too important to be left to academics" (41). Well and good, but "what the triune God is doing in and through Jesus Christ"—consummating all things in Christ, and conforming his people into the image of Christ—needs to be proposed for the flock's consideration in weekly sermons, pericope by pericope. Sadly, Vanhoozer and his co-authors all seem to manifest a certain naïveté to the notion of preaching and application—congregations' consumption of the sacred writ in pericopal chunks.

Gerald Hiestand ("The Pastor Theologian as Ecclesial Theologian"),

sees the pastor as a "local theologian" (working within a local congregation), a "popular theologian" (writing for lay people), and—pertinent to this chapter—an "ecclesial theologian," whose work is directed to other theologians and scholars. One wonders where this hapless pastor is going to find the time to preach and shepherd amidst all the theological burdens he has to bear! But Hiestand recognizes the difference between an academic theologian and an ecclesial theologian. The attention of the former will mostly be on research side of things, and the attention of the latter mostly on the implementation end. I suggest that there may be yet another species of theologian that takes what the researchers produce and provide it in usable form to practitioners: the one mediator between academia and ecclesia.

Todd Wilson ("The Pastor Theologian as Cruciform Theologian") declares that the ecclesial location of the pastor "entails a cruciform vocation" (Gal 2:20) (70). According to Wilson, "cruciformity means real, concrete suffering … self-sacrifice … in Jesus' name for the good of others," and is paradigmatic for pastoral ministry (70). But that is not what Gal 2:20 implies. Perhaps it is Wilson's own sufferings (a major health issue) and those undergone by his church (crises of some serious proportions) that have influenced this trajectory of his thought. Suffering is, of course, a necessary crucible for character development, but to make it a *sine qua non* of the pastor theologian's ministry seems unwarranted. Suffering is the lot of all God's children—"cruciform Christians," i.e., cruciform homemakers, cruciform physicians, cruciform pilots, cruciform construction workers …. I am not sure that making the pastor theologian a cruciform theologian is a quantum epistemic leap.

Many of these plenary addresses/papers focused on the function of the pastor theologian in the pulpit. I would strongly urge the Center and its thinkers refocus their attention to the remaining 167½ hours of pastoral ministry in a week, and expound on how the admittedly crucial tasks of the pastor theologian may be accomplished therein. Please, folks, leave the sermon time in the pulpit for exposition of the biblical text, pericope by pericope, discovering the thrust/theology thereof, and for bringing it home in powerful application that progressively molds believers into the image of Christ. *This is the key task of the pastor-preachers.* If this is not done, nothing else is worth accomplishing. First things first!

Do We Need the New Testament? Letting the Old Testament Speak for Itself. By John Goldingay. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015. 978-0830824694, 183 pages, $22.00.

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

Of course we need the New Testament, as Old Testament scholar John

Goldingay states in the opening line of his book. But his provocative title turns our usual question about the relationship of the two Testaments on its head, setting readers up for the agenda expressed in the subtitle, "Letting the Old Testament Speak for Itself." The author is convinced, and convincing, that "We need the First Testament for an understanding of the story of God's working out his purpose, for its theology, for its spirituality, for its hope, for its understanding of mission, for its understanding of salvation and for its ethics" (32). The nine chapters of the book, most of which were papers delivered at SBL and other venues, unpack that summary claim.

I agree with an endorsement on the back cover says that Goldingay is incapable of being uninteresting. And I agree with the next sentence, which states that some passages in the book evoke smiles, others grimaces. Grimace moments for some readers may include Goldingay's critical conclusions (authorship of Isaiah, for instance), genre labels (is "historical novel" an appropriate description of some Old Testament books?), and interpretations (different readers will balk at different points). Not everyone will agree that Goldingay has struck the right balance between continuity and discontinuity of the Testaments. But none of these points of disagreement compromise the book's sustained defense of the Old Testament against condescending readings.

Though the book has value for anyone who wishes to understand the Old Testament better, this review will concentrate on values for homileticians and preachers.

Preachers do not have to Christianize the Old Testament. It is already Scripture, it is the church's Scripture, and it is the Bible Jesus read. It discloses our God and the possibility of a grace-filled relationship with him. "One's response to the account of a relationship with God that is offered in the Psalms or in the stories of ordinary people like Hannah is not: 'If only they had the real relationship with God that I have after Jesus came,' but 'If only I had the real relationship with God that they had before Jesus came'' (100).

Preachers do not need to be "Christ-centered" in handling Old Testament texts; in fact, "The First Testament restrains christocentric interpretation of either Testament" (162). Christ himself was God-centered, and following his lead will keep God central in interpreting both Testaments. Furthermore, christology is only one of the lenses through which the New Testament looks at the Old. Paul's primary lens is ecclesiology, seeing in the mission to the Gentiles not the negation but the fulfillment of God's word to Israel.

Preachers do not have to be "Trinitarian" in their homiletic. Israel's God has always been Trinity. But to read Trinitarian inferences into the Old Testament is to misread. One example: some advocates of Trinitarian interpretation see significance in the way the Old Testament speaks of the Father; but in the Old Testament he is the Father of Israel, not the first person of the Trinity.

Preachers may find attention to the Bible's "middle narratives" fruitful. Where redemptive-historical preachers keep the metanarrative—creation to consummation—in view, and others handle brief narratives like David and Goliath or Peter walking on the sea, we ought not ignore the potential of exploring mid-length narratives like Genesis to Kings, or Chronicles to Esther, or the Joseph material or Romans.

Preachers who are also worship planners would do well to read chapter 6 thoughtfully ("The Costly Loss of First Testament Spirituality"). The first three quarters of the Bible have much to teach us about intercession, lament, imprecation, ethics, and corporate worship.

Those who like to preach from the Old Testament will resonate with this book. Those who don't need to read it even more.

You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit. By James K. A. Smith. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016. 978-1587433801, 224 pp., $19.99, hardback.

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

James Smith, professor of philosophy at Calvin College, a prolific writer on matters hermeneutical, promised us a trilogy several years ago. Only two have seen the light of print so far. But here is a more popular version of the second volume of the trilogy that itself has been reviewed in these pages.

Smith rightly counters the modern understanding that humans are fundamentally "thinking things," minds that just happen to be enclosed and trucked around in extraneous, temporary bodies. Learning and discipleship then end up being "primarily a matter of depositing ideas and beliefs into mind-containers" (3). But action is not a sort of "withdrawal" from a depository of knowledge; in fact, behavior is not "always the outcome of conscious, deliberate, rational reflection that ends with a choice. … In all of this, we ignore the overwhelming power of habit," that happens under the radar, if you will (3–4). Smith, of course, does not disagree that the role of the mind is biblically affirmed (2 Cor 10:5; Rom 12:2; Ps 1:2). But it is the monopoly of the mind—a widespread racket!—that he tries to dismantle. Paul's prayer in Phil 1:9–11, Smith avers, "hints at a very different conviction: 'You are what you *love*'"; fundamentally, humans are "erotic creatures" (6–7, 9). Therefore, the goal for life transformation is to direct that *eros* towards the appropriate *telos.* Smith articulates his theme cogently: discipleship is "to want what God wants, to desire what God desires, to hunger and thirst after God and crave a world where he is all in all—a vision encapsulated by the shorthand 'the kingdom of God'": the *telos* (2). Unfortunately, we are given no indication where this vision of the kingdom comes from (it is from Scripture, of course, that, pericope by pericope, propounds a *world in front of the text*). In any case, according to Smith, this vision of the divine kingdom ought to captivate our imaginations and motivate our desires, cultivating in us virtues, habits, internal dispositions, and character (16). Initially, such

habits are inculcated by instruction and modeling—"more like practicing scales on the piano than learning music theory." But the ultimate goal is the internalization of the sense of the good, creating "the *kind of people* who do this without the 'stick' of rules compelling them to do so": the development of the Aristotelian "second nature," "like inscribing something into the very fiber of your being" (17, 18).

Smith calls these love-shaping habits "liturgies," convinced that "the practices of Christian worship train our love … habituating us as citizens of the kingdom of God." For Smith, such habituation and development of loves happen subconsciously as "liturgies" are engaged in; so "worship is the heart of discipleship," the means by which loves are molded and shaped (22–23, 25, 32, 65). Now, I will not deny the importance of worship, but without Scripture, this ship is completely adrift. You don't want a "deployment of the language Scriptures" in liturgy and lections and prayers (84), you want an *exposition* of Scripture; you don't want rites and rituals of worship written on your brain, you want the rites and rituals of Scripture application to seize your life. Ironically, Smith speaks often of in*scrib*ing habits into character, into the fiber of one's being, into the unconscious (17, 18, 36, 65), and of practices con*script*ing our bodily habits (65). For all this emphasis on the root of the word "scripture," we are not told of any primary role of Scripture in habit formation, life transformation, or character development.

Smith borrows from the views of psychologists, including works of pop-psychology, the conclusions of which are not universally accepted in academia. That is not to say they have no worth, but one must be careful before consuming these studies whole. He also relies considerably on the work of Yale researcher John Bargh, who, unfortunately, has had some bad press in the scientific literature for the irreproducibility of some of his work. That being said, I do believe in the fundamental postulates of what Smith is propounding.

While this is a refreshing approach to biblical ethics, particularly for us preachers who major in application for our congregations, Smith, sadly, has nothing to say about preaching. It is preaching that fires our desires for the divine kingdom as portrayed in Scripture, pericope by pericope. And application is the means by which habituation is begun, inclining us towards those loves, such that the habits inculcated become life dispositions that, in turn, become Christlike character in us. That is how we become more like the One we love.

A Manifesto for Theological Interpretation. Edited by Craig G. Bartholomew and Heath A. Thomas. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016. 978-0801030871, 304 pp., $30.00.

Reviewer: *S. Jonathan Murphy, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX.*

A Manifesto for Theological Interpretation is a twelve-point vision cast on the recent resurgence in hermeneutics toward that very ancient approach to reading the Scriptures: *theological* hermeneutics. The manifesto defines this theological approach simply as a reading of the Bible *for the church* and proceeds through twelve chapters to identify, explain, clarify, and even propose ways forward on issues revolving around this subject. A summary of these chapters follows to whet the appetite (hopefully!) for further reading:

"The History and Reemergence of Theological Interpretation" (chapter 1) looks at past and present approaches to interpreting the Scriptures, identifying theological interpretation as a return to conversations on the Bible where they belong, that is, within the church.

"Doctrine of Scripture and Theological Interpretation" (chapter 2) emphasizes the importance of reading the Bible as the authoritative, inspired, and infallible witness of the Spirit to Christ and salvation; this is considered a "solid" view of the doctrine of Scripture.

"The Ecclesia as Primary Context for the Reception of the Bible" (chapter 3) contends that the primary context for theological interpretation of the Scriptures is the church gathered for worship; that is, as the Bride listening to her Groom.

"Theological Interpretation and Historical Criticism (chapter 4) argues unapologetically for the inclusion of divine involvement in history for a correct interpretation of Scripture over and against the common tendency of historical-critical approaches to exclude divine agency from methods of inquiry.

"The Role of Hermeneutics and Philosophy in Theological Interpretation" (chapter 5) declares that theological interpretation is an approach operating within an intellectual habitat—a Christian philosophical framework—and as a hermeneutical model that is deeply relational.

"The Canon and Theological Interpretation" (chapter 6) contends that a theological reading is grounded in a God-given canon that focuses attention on Christ and man's conformation to God's desires.

"Biblical Theology and Theological Interpretation" (chapter 7) defends the importance of biblical theology as an ancient task and tool of the church that projects an overall unified narrative of Scripture and history out of the varied details within its pages.

"Mission and Theological Interpretation" (chapter 8) contends that a theological approach adopts a missional hermeneutic because the Bible is a record and product and tool of God's mission to renew his world.

"The Telos (Goal) of Theological Interpretation" (chapter 9) is simply

to hear God's voice in the text so that the person is formed and the church transformed to the image of Christ and for the sake of the world.

"A Framework for Theological Interpretation" (chapter 10) is proposed that emphasizes faith as the context of interpretation; the Bible cannot be validly understood outside this context of faith as it is written by believers and for believers.

"Theological Commentary of the Bible" (chapter 11) is essential to an interpretation that is in keeping with the Scripture's nature, origin, and purpose.

"Theological Interpretation for All of Life" (chapter 12) declares that a theological reading embodies a creation-wide perspective. It is cosmic in its scope as Jesus is the author of—and so speaks into—all life.

Overall, this book is well worth the read; I highly recommend it. Not only does it bring into one volume the expertise of many minds and voices on the subject but each chapter is clear and engaging. The book stimulates thought and provides access to this important conversation. Credit to Bartholomew and Thomas for their skill in making multiple voices read like one. In short, this work is for anyone engaged in the reading of Scripture and so is valuable for those of us engaged in the weekly proclamation of the Bible *for the church*.

Sacramental Preaching: Sermons on the Hidden Presence of Christ. By Hans Boersma. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. 978-0801097454, xxv + 213 pp., $23.99.

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

This is a book of sermons that Hans Boersma preached in his home church, in Langley, British Columbia. Some were preached again in the chapel at Regent College. As he explains in the introduction, the sermons are intended to answer the question, "Can we read the Bible today in the same way the church fathers did?" Specifically, "What do we do today with the patristic modes of exegesis?" (xvii). It soon becomes clear that Boersma has the same metaphysical assumptions as the "premodern" church fathers (xxii). He clearly admits, "These homilies attempt to follow the church fathers in their move from the surface level of the text . . . to the deeper contemplative level" (xxii).

The book then presents fourteen of these sermons, arranged around the theme of happiness (blessedness). After an introductory sermon to demonstrate his method, there are four sermons on Sensed Happiness, three sermons on Pilgrim Happiness, three sermons on Heavenly Happiness, and three sermons on Unveiled Happiness. Each sermon is followed by a section called, "Preacher Notes" in which Boersma explains and defends his method and explains some of his exegetical choices.

As far as the sermons themselves, they are a frustrating blend of good exegesis and annoyingly allegorical application. Boersma is clearly aware of the expository approach to Scripture and purposefully rejects it. In the Preacher Notes section of Sermon 6, for example, he admits: "My preaching is not strictly expository. First, I do not sequentially follow the biblical account the biblical account verse by verse or even word by word. Instead I look for a theologically significant word, theme, or quotation that plays a prominent role in the biblical text . . . [A]voiding a verse-by-verse exposition enables me to bring out the theological theme(s) more directly and emphatically" (78). How he chose the "significant word, theme, or quotation" in any particular text was not clear to me. His decision to separate the sermon from the text itself, seems to fall short of Paul's exhortation to "preach the word" (2 Tim 4:2).

In short, this book is a collection of sermons that most of the readers of this *Journal* would find incomplete. The sermons intentionally de-link what the text meant from what it means, so there is no concrete application or contemporary relevance. His method relies on creative insights that are impossible to validate. I appreciate his desire to find Jesus everywhere, but I do not think the retrieval of free-association allegory is a satisfying way to do that.

The Christ-Centered Expositor: A Field Guide for Word-Driven Disciple Makers. By Tony Merida. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2016. 978-1433685743, 300 pp., $29.99.

Reviewer: *Randal Emery Pelton, Calvary Bible Church of Mount Joy, PA, and Lancaster Bible College/Capital Seminary and Graduate School, Lancaster, PA.*

All *JEHS* readers will receive two broad benefits from reading Tony Merida's *The Christ-Centered Expositor*, a revision of his earlier book, *Faithful Preaching*. First, the author has culled some of the best information from some of the best homiletic minds, both past and present. The numerous quotes and allusions are especially helpful for pastors and students who have not yet read some of the more important works on preaching. Those who teach and practice some form of Christ-centered preaching will appreciate Merida's continuing down the path of the Chapells and Kellers reflected in the new title. Second, sprinkled throughout the book are Merida's own concise, keen insights into preaching for the Church. I found myself nodding often as I read.

For example, when discussing preaching style, Merida writes, "One timeless problem in preaching is verbosity. Preachers have a tendency to waste words and say more than what is necessary" (214). Lord, keep us from being word-wasters! Or, regardless of how much, if any, notes you bring to the pulpit, "The important thing to remember is that you must prepare

thoroughly" (207). I also appreciated hearing Merida's preference for giving application early and throughout the sermon, instead of waiting till the conclusion (he refers to "both *running* and *collected* application" [188]).

The book begins by presenting nine ingredients that go into making an effective expositor of God's word. In that same chapter, Merida presents his definition of faithful preaching: "explaining what God has said in his Word, declaring what God has done in his Son, and applying this message to the hearts of people" (9).

Part 1: The Expositor's Heart, challenged me to make sure I am responding to God's word first in the study, long before asking others to do so during the Sunday service (chapter 2). And what pastor doesn't feel the need to pray more fervently throughout the week as a matter of life and ministry (chapter 6)?

Those who resonate with various forms of christocentric interpretation will value chapters 3 and 4 as Merida makes his case.

Part 2: The Expositor's Message, contains what many readers of this *Journal* expect in a complete homiletics textbook. Merida supplies his own terminology by teaching us to identify the "MPT" (main point of the text) and "MPS" (main point of the sermon). He provides some examples of both (152–57). As is often the case in textbooks, Merida's instruction on showing readers how to identify the "MPT" is too brief and broad to be helpful in anything other than didactic genre. Chapter 10, Step 3: Construct an Outline, was especially helpful in providing a variety of ways to display a sermon's organization and movement.

Finally, appendices cover a brief history of preaching, advice on doing exposition in non-pulpit contexts, and provide sermon outline sheets and a sermon evaluation form.

I often judge the value of a book by the highlighting I do while reading it the first time. In this case, one of the weaknesses of *The Christ-Centered Expositor* is the number of times I highlighted familiar homileticians. As someone said long ago, who else are we going to copy than the Joneses, Robinsons, Chapells, and Kellers of the homiletical world? But there is a sense in which I found myself hearing too much of them and not enough of Merida.

Nonetheless, he has written a well-rounded, comprehensive homiletics textbook that will help those who read and practice it. If you are a veteran preacher or teacher of preachers, let me close with, "It is still a good idea for 'Major League Expositors' to return to the batting tee for review" (134). I am glad I spent some time with this preaching coach.

Preaching as the Word of God: Answering an Old Question with Speech-Act Theory. By Sam Chan. Eugene: Pickwick, 2016, 978-1498220248, 279 pp., $ 35.00.

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

Sam Chan is a national communicator for City Bible Forum in Australia. His Ph.D. dissertation from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School underlies this book.

In a detailed Introduction (chapter 1), Chan affirms his aim "to articulate an adequate theological conceptualization of the preached gospel as the word of God" (1). He clarifies the theological problem raised by the biblical claim and embraced by Protestant Reformers that the preached word is the word of God. He does so in order to discern under what conditions this claim can stand.

In Part A, Chan reviews how the Reformers, especially Martin Luther and John Calvin, addressed this theological problem of when the preached word is the word of God (chapters 2–3).

In Part B, he explores the biblical testimony, making a case that God speaks through his word (chapter 4), addresses the role played by human messengers of God's word (chapter 5), the message itself (chapter 6), and the intention and results of preaching (chapter 7), and he summarizes his case thus far in chapter 8

Part C, chapters 9–11, brings Speech-Act Theory into the conversation. Chapter 9 revisits the problem of how, in the light of false teachers, preaching can be identified with the word of God. Chapter 10 summarizes Speech-Act Theory and reviews how it has been applied to biblical and theological studies and how it might be applied to biblical preaching if, as Chan does, it is taken to be an example of double agency discourse. Chapter 11 is Chan's final synthesis.

Part D offers an additional summarizing conclusion. Back matter includes a thoughtful appendix that explores the relationship between prophecy and preaching, a bibliography, and author, subject and Scripture indexes.

Preaching as the Word of God is tightly reasoned and clearly written. Especially valuable is the fact that it consults biblical, historical and philosophical primary sources in proportions that evangelicals should welcome. The Bible is probed and cited copiously to paint a picture of biblical preaching, the source, content, and purpose of which are all scripturally defensible. The Bible, Chan affirms, is not merely saying things; it is doing things and biblical preaching should reflect that fact. Footnotes make it easy for the reader to check sources or follow secondary but important qualifications and nuances. A wealth of quotes from Luther and Calvin put human faces on crucial affirmations. In each case these quotes are summarized. Indeed, if I were to find stylistic fault with this volume it would be that the summaries and conclusions are too many and too often.

The interaction with Speech-Act Theory helpfully summarizes it and clarifies it—especially the "troubling" distinction between illocutions and perlocutions (201) and how it can help thinkers conceptualize what is

happening in preaching, especially when listeners do not respond in faith, despite the fact that the preached word is God's word. In my judgment this does not take the reader much beyond where Chan's clear scriptural arguments take us. The connections between biblical preaching and Speech-Act Theory supply a level of supportive confirmation that one strand of recent philosophical thought can be squared with what the Bible affirms, but only in rarified circles would these notions be useful in explaining things to God's spokespersons.

The significant value of this text to teachers of homiletics and their students will be that in short compass it offers a clear and compelling theology of preaching than do most introductory homiletics texts. Those who assign a theology of preaching paper in an introductory preaching class will see the quality of the submissions go up among those students who read this text. Those professors who lecture on the theology of preaching will also want to review this work.

Sam Chan has done us a valuable service in making his case for biblical preaching. Happily, he is also a powerful and passionate preacher. It is encouraging to be able to point learners to an exemplary preacher whose craft rests on solid biblical, theological and philosophical foundations *and* who can preach.

Learning from a Legend: What Gardner C. Taylor Can Teach us About Preaching. By Jared E. Alcántara. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2016. 978-1498226097, 140 pp., $20.98.

Reviewer: *Andrew Thompson, The Chapel, Brunswick, GA.*

In this concise book Jared Alcántara invites readers into the life and work of "America's last pulpit prince," the Rev. Gardner C. Taylor, who died in April 2015. Building on his doctoral work on Taylor and an earlier offering on homiletic theory (*Crossover Preaching*, 2015), Alcántara writes with pastors in mind, although the content would equally benefit pastors-in-training.

Neither a biography of Taylor nor a homiletics text, *Learning from a Legend* is a little bit of both. Alcántara uses Taylor's lectures, life experience, sermon excerpts and interviews to offer sound preaching wisdom. But the reverse is also true: he discusses live issues in preaching theory and practice as a way to introduce pastors to a preacher worthy of admiration. The book leaves one hoping to learn more about Taylor and to hear more of his recorded sermons.

Via this work, Taylor's life offers six lessons to preachers on the subjects of pain, redemption, eloquence, apprenticeship, context, and holiness. Each chapter features quotations and events from Gardner C. Taylor's life and ministry relating to that subject. Also included are historical sketches

and general discussion on the topic, practical suggestions, and questions for reflection and application. Ralph Douglas West offers a foreword in praise of Taylor, and Alcántara provides a helpful introduction and summary conclusion. While on select topics (e.g., Christ-centered preaching) the author is mildly critical of Taylor, the latter is generally held up as a model for respect and emulation.

Although the book's blended biographical/homiletical format enables a fresh and compelling approach to pulpit ministry, it also introduces complications, because presenting a complete discussion of each issue requires drawing from homiletical sources beyond Gardner C. Taylor. The most helpful of such digressions explore the African-American preaching context, in which Taylor played a central role. At other times, however, we are taken much further back in church history to define and discuss preaching issues. In fact, some chapter sections devote more space to general homiletical advice than to Taylor's wisdom on that topic. In a few sections, such as the discussion of eloquence in preaching, Taylor's voice has given way to Alcántara's.

In spite of these tensions this book will serve as both a valuable homiletical resource for students and pastors, as well as an invitation to explore the life of a truly great preacher. Instead of a theoretical homiletic, this text offers accessible wisdom that spans the personal and professional aspects of the pastorate. In addition, it does so based on a fruitful life and ministry: Alcántara harnesses Taylor's preached and written words, as well as his personal and painful experiences, all of which give added weight to the wisdom within. Furthermore, it offers practical insights and exercises, and the reflection questions at each chapter's end provide ample opportunity for discussion and implementation.

Finally, Alcántara offers readers a model of the kind of crossover work that Taylor commends to preachers. He shows on nearly every page his familiarity with the African-American homiletical world, but is equally adept at drawing from broader scholarship. He is as comfortable citing evangelical authorities as mainline scholars. And throughout, his deep respect for Taylor evokes a similar attitude in the reader.

As a pastor in pulpit ministry, I could use more books like *Learning from a Legend* in my personal library. And I could use more role models like Gardner C. Taylor.

Questions Preachers Ask: Essays in Honor of Thomas G. Long. Edited by Scott Black Johnston, Ted A. Smith, and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2016. 978-0664261719, 159 pp., $20.00.

Reviewer: *Russell St. John, Twin Oaks Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, MO.*

Collected as a *Festschrift* for Thomas Long, the essays in *Questions Preachers Ask* unfold under five divisions: Part I: Bible, in which contributors explore how the Scripture should inform preaching; Part II: Theology, in which queries about interfaith insights and the proper posture of authority in the preacher emerge; Part III: Changing Congregational Contexts, in which the authors engage respectively in ideas for preaching to diverse gatherings, distracted millennials, and dying congregations in turn; Part IV: Church and Culture, in which contributors explore profitable use of social media networks and prophetic preaching in a politically divided nation; Part V: Hopeful Signs, in which the lone essay offers three reasons to hope in the future of preaching in North America.

The essays assembled in this *Festschrift* offer little of substance to readers of this *Journal*. The non-evangelical contributors proceed from different—and incompatible—hermeneutical and theological assumptions, and thus their concerns are different than those of a Bible-believing evangelical preacher; their conclusions, too, run far afield from those that an evangelical might reach. In "Shaped By Hearing: Living Our Stories Together," Gail O'Day interprets Jesus' announcement of his ministry in Luke 4, in which he quotes Isaiah 61, as an example of the type of eventful preaching that the New Homiletic propounds, thereby reading her own theological commitments into Luke's narrative, while at the same time ignoring the plain meaning of the text. Alyce McKenzie beats the "sermon form is important" drum, while Scott Johnston reviews various ways in which the preacher might plan a sermon series. In "Discerning Authorities," Ted Smith argues that "[w]e stand in particular need of a concept of authority that can help us frame moral questions without determining answers to them in advance" (58), but he rejects the authority of a legitimate office conveyed by Christ through his Church in favor of an authority of authenticity. Anna Carter Florence offers insightful and helpful context to Paul's Areopagus sermon from Acts 17, but proceeds from the assumption that Paul was "furious" with the Athenians because of their idolatry, psychoanalyzing Paul in a way that the text does not (93). Richard Lischer recounts the stunning and ongoing collapse of mainline Protestantism, and suggests that preachers should engage in the language of exile, diminishment, and death and resurrection in order to offer future hope to congregations that are in their death throes. While he acknowledges that Bible-believing congregations have continued to grow, he implies that this has happened in spite of the "idolatry of power, subservience to the state, its support of war, and its easy accommodation to secular culture" that pervade the evangelical Church (106). Lischer expects a coming reversal of fortune, while continuing to deny the authority of the word of God. Referring to evangelical convictions as offering "an exclusionary and hate-filled hermeneutic," Teresa Fry Brown defines prophetic preaching in a way that bears little resemblance to the work of the prophets, offering a way forward through "a womanist homiletic" (136). Sally Brown rounds out the collection by denying that the efficacy of preaching resides in the power

of the Holy Spirit (143), and then offers other avenues, which she identifies as trends that signify a hopeful future for North American preaching: the use of the internet, the appropriation of the African-American preaching tradition—particularly its resilience amidst suffering—and the imitation of what can only be described as a hipster ethos, in order to "proclaim divinely inaugurated hope to a generation that distrusts hope itself" (155).

In *Questions Preachers Ask*, a collection of intelligent, highly educated people grope about in darkness, sifting through cultural trends, demographic data, communication theories, generational dynamics, and sociological studies, all in an attempt to find something that works. The answer that each avoids is the simplest: Preach the Bible as the authoritative word of God, prayerfully trusting in the Holy Spirit to give the increase, and the rest will take care of itself.

Preaching in the Era of Trump. By O. Wesley Allen, Jr. St. Louis: Chalice, 2017. 978-0827231481, 117 pp., $12.97.

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

This reviewer was ready to decline when asked to assess Allen's text, given that author's theological stance and likely wholesale dismissal of President Trump. After some reflection, however, it seemed prudent for one purpose: to recall the motivation for the founding of the Evangelical Homiletics Society, the parent body of this *Journal,* twenty years ago, in 1997. The message heard from the Academy of Homiletics back in those days echoes throughout Allen's assertion in this work that science, reason, experience, and culture must often replace the Scriptures as the ultimate authority for ethical living. Allen, as 2017 president of the Academy of Homiletics, serves as a representative voice for that organization.

Allen's urgent call to preach his version of the gospel was provoked by his surprise and disappointment over Donald Trump's election win in November 2016. Gracious *JEHS* readers will understand the haste of his first and emotional response to what he deems a political, social, and spiritual catastrophe. Furthermore, readers will affirm Allen's call to preach faithfully (50–51) against hatred and bigotry, and will heartily agree that Trump has shamed himself on many occasions with unacceptable behaviors and reckless statements regarding sensitive and complex issues.

That said, the core issue lies deeper than Donald Trump. Allen is a professed political, social, and theological "progressive." By placing "progressive" in opposition to "conservative" (17), Allen identifies as a liberal in worldview and practice. Being progressive is not the problem. There are many opportunities for Christians to take the progressive path. For example, Allen's call for racial equality and respect reflects the biblical

perspective on race. His call for gender equality and respect also reflects biblical principles, that is, until he chooses to dismiss the Scriptures that teach familial and ecclesiastical hierarchies. "One can love scripture and still be honest about problems in it …. By naming patriarchal elements of a text in a sermon, preachers teach a congregation skills in identifying sexism in other forms of discourse as well, and preachers liberate congregations from the patriarchy we have inherited from scripture" (83). Granted, powerful men have abused women (and other men) by employing aberrant interpretations and applications of the Bible, and success in reversing such abuse is not easily achieved. But when he dismisses the biblical teaching regarding gender roles in home and church, Allen parts company with historic and orthodox interpretations of Scripture.

Allen's appeal for LGBT membership, ordination, and marriage rests on evolving medical and cultural views regarding sexual behavior and gender identity. According to Allen, the Bible got its condemnation of homosexual relations wrong because of "ancient gender bias," and "any place in scripture in which an author honors or celebrates love between humans can be used to lift up healthy, empowering love between different people today, *including* same sex relationships" (93). While the author is correct in affirming respect for all human beings, his commitment to determining what is true and meaningful by constructing realities grounded upon shifting cultural opinion once again abandons biblical principles (13).

Readers will agree with Allen that Muslims should be treated with respect and granted freedom to believe and worship according to their consciences. However, his implication that Muslims who hold fast to their Muslim faith may possibly be among Jesus' sheep (101) flies in the face of Christian doctrine. Christianity has always taught that Jesus Christ is true God and true man and that faith in Him alone is the basis of eternal salvation.

To sum up: Allen's appeal to science, reason, experience, and culture over Scripture demonstrates why the Evangelical Homiletics Society was founded and why it continues as an alternative voice to the Academy of Homiletics.

Preaching Old Testament Narratives. By Benjamin H. Walton. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016. 978-0825442582, 254 pp., $18.99.

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

Any volume that encourages the expository preaching of the OT deserves hearty commendation. In addition, any volume that identifies the essential elements of excellent preaching as textual "accuracy," real life "relevance," oral "clarity," and "inspiring" (91–96) promises to be a trustworthy read for *JEHS* subscribers. Walton's text furnishes both. Looking further, the questions

readers might ask are, "What's new?" and "Are the prescriptions helpful?" and "What's missing?"

In answer to the first question, "What's new?" this reviewer concludes, not much. To be sure, Walton introduces his readers to a new vocabulary. His "CUT" (complete unit of thought), "EI" (exegetical idea), "OTM" (original theological message), "PPA" (picture painting application), and "THT" (take-home truth) represent concepts that a host of other authors have previously expounded. The sections on biblical authority, genre, mistakes in application, narratology, sermon introductions, developing vivid applications, moving to Christ, sermon conclusions, and suggestions for improving one's preaching, etc., replicate the content of many texts on preaching. There is little here that advances our current understanding of how to preach OT narratives.

In answer to the second question, "Are the prescriptions helpful?" this reviewer concludes, not really. This reviewer found Walton's method daunting. Although the five steps presented propose a reasonable paradigm for the exposition of any sermon based on an OT narrative (46), the overwhelming amount of detail prescribed by Walton, especially in the "Study the Plot" and "Determine the Original-Theological Message" steps, does not reflect the reality of preaching weekly. The charts provided (60–70) require massive amounts of exegetical and theological excavation, more than any pastor can reasonably hope to accomplish on a weekly basis. If the preacher need not employ all the means of extracting every detail of every text, but rather should understand how to identify and grasp those textual clues and constraints that efficiently and accurately lead to a sound understanding of the text, then these strategies are welcome. However, a preacher could easily sense that if all the details were not fully mined as suggested, he is falling short of faithful exposition.

Then, many of Walton's prescriptions seem arbitrary: e.g., using five commentaries to supplement one's own work (65), making "God" or "the Lord" the subject of the original theological message, limiting each movement through the narrative to no more than five verses (130), and dedicating fifteen hours to sermon preparation (200).

Walton's "Move to Christ" chapter comes across as uncommitted. Several well recognized arguments for preaching Christ from the OT are presented. But Walton also appears to be warning readers that, "If we move to Christ, but fail to communicate the message of the text, listeners may never get another opportunity to hear that "CUT's" Spirit-inspired message," (178) and, in this connection, warns that "[w]e must not misinterpret the text," (186). In a final word on preaching Christ from the OT, the author suggests that Abraham Kuruvilla's christiconic approach is, "another potentially excellent option," while Sidney Greidanus's seven "ways that we can move to Christ legitimately in sermons from the OT" (189–190) is yet another viable approach. Walton apparently has not made up his mind on which of these disparate approaches to take.

In answer to the third question, "What's missing?" this reviewer concludes that the most essential link in preaching OT narratives with accuracy is essentially missing. That critical move—and that which keeps Walton's text from advancing our knowledge and skill in preaching OT narratives—is any reliable method/process for discovering, from the story in the text, the theological message expressed by the text. Although he values the "Original Theological Message," the author fails to demonstrate how an analysis of plot, characters, theme(s), questions, the narrator, commentaries, etc., enable the preacher to identify the "OTM."

This text may prove helpful for beginning students as long as they do not become discouraged by the amount of detail demanded by Walton's exegetical analysis of the biblical narrative and as long as they can make his approach to discovering the text's theological message work. Although his observations and suggestions on preaching in general are well documented by others, they would likely prove helpful for the novice.

Igniting the Heart: Preaching and Imagination. By Kate Bruce. Norwich, UK: SCM, 2015. 978-0334053194, 224 pp., $27.00.

Reviewer: *Keith Essex, The Master's Seminary, Sun Valley, CA.*

Kate Bruce, an ordained Church of England priest, is a prominent voice in discussions on preaching in Anglicanism and this book is based on her Ph.D. dissertation from Durham. She defines preaching as "the design, delivery and reception of an oral event, which is based, in some form, on Scripture and earthed in a particular cultural context" (xiv). Bruce is passionate that the sermon must engage both the preacher and the hearer; the key to this engagement is that "in all the stages of the sermon process the human imagination, filled with the revelatory power of God, is at work" (xiii). Thus, "the purpose of this book is to inspire and equip preachers and homiletics teachers to be imaginative in the way they think about, prepare and deliver sermons" (xiv).

The argument for the vital importance of imagination in preaching is advanced in six chapters. Chapter One ("Imagination—What it is and Why it Matters") offers a framework for understanding what imagination is. There are four areas of imaginative function: the sensory, the way we see things in everyday perception; the intuitive, how we make connections and present the "seeing" to others; the affective, our emotional experience (particularly empathy with others); and the intellectual, a resource that reason can employ. Each of these imaginative functions are applied to preaching through sermon examples and key questions to establish in sermon construction.

Chapter Two ("A Theology of Imagination") seeks to establish theological foundations for the assertion of the importance of imagination.

Biblical words (especially for "heart") demonstrate a call to internal thinking, to imagine and to reimagine our apprehension of God, while biblical forms, especially the parable, employ imagination. The theological themes of revelation, incarnation, divine character and the image of God all utilize imagination. The author asserts that imagination is a vital tool of theology and of preaching.

Chapter Three ("Preaching in the Lyrical Voice") argues that sermons, while not poems, employ poetic insight and learn from the craft of poetic expression, a highly imaginative endeavor. The preacher should make use of analogy, simile and metaphor in the sermon. Bruce is emphatic that the preacher needs to learn "to write for the ear."

Chapter Four ("The Sacramental Potential of Preaching") argues that preaching has sacramental potential, a fresh disclosure of God through the divinely graced imaginative words of the preacher heard by the divinely graced hearing of the hearer.

Chapter Five ("Imagining the Preaching Task") interacts with six metaphors for the preacher. Bruce describes the preacher as teacher, spiritual director (or coach), herald, artist, jazz musician, and jester. Though the first three have a rich pedigree in Christian tradition and still have currency, Bruce is concerned that they elevate the preacher above the hearer in knowledge and authority. On the other hand, she sees great value in the last three metaphors for the preacher if they are not pressed too far.

Chapter Six ("Lighting the Blue Touch-Paper—Implications for the Practice and Teaching of Preaching") answers the "and so what?" question: the preacher must develop the gift of imagination. She also calls on teachers of preaching to allow their students to try new approaches to the content and form of their sermons as they grow in their use of imagination. In addition, an appendix includes five sermons by the author.

Igniting the Heart is a well-written, well-argued volume. Bruce's contention is that in the preaching event, there is a lively, present, local revelation of God that ignites the heart. However, approaching the biblical text with an imaginative perspective that incorporates different points of view is not an option for evangelical preachers. A text cannot mean today what it never meant previously even if we could imagine another meaning! Once the original meaning and first application of the text are determined, then preachers will seek how to best convey the truth with its application to contemporary audiences. Bruce sees this approach as "arid bibliolatry" (38) that "leads to an account of preaching that is overly rational, takes no account of genre, nor the context of the preacher's life, nor the situation of the hearers" (38–39). But a quick perusal of standard evangelical preaching textbooks by Stott, Chapell, Robinson, and Sunukjian dispels such objections. Nonetheless, this volume gives evangelical preachers a better understanding of the non-evangelical approach to contemporary preaching, and challenges every preacher to better prepare to be heard.

The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society

History:

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

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

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

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

Purpose:

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

Vision:

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

General Editor:

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

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

Frequency of Publication:

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

Jury Policy:

Articles submitted to the Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society are blind juried by members of the Editorial Board. In addition, the General Editor may ask a scholar who is a specialist to jury particular articles.

The General Editor may seek articles for publication from qualified scholars. The General Editor makes the final publication decisions. It is always the General Editor's prerogative to edit and shorten said material, if necessary.

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2. Manuscripts should be double-spaced. This includes the text, indented (block) quotations, notes, and bibliography. This form makes for easier editing.

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

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   a. From a book:

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

   b. From a periodical:

   note: 5. Frederick Barthelme, "Architecture," *Kansas Quarterly* 13:3 (September 1981): 77-78.

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   Dewey 111.

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Please do not use abbreviations in the text. Only use them for parenthetical references. This includes the names of books of the Bible and common abbreviations such as "e.g." (the full reference, "for example" is preferred in the text). Citations of books, articles, websites are expected. Please do not use "p./pp." for "page(s)," or "f./ff." for "following." Precise page numbers or verse numbers are expected, not "f./ff."

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Submission and Correspondence

Manuscripts should be sent to the attention of the General Editor. Send as an email attachment to the General. Send to: sgibson@gcts.edu

Address correspondence to Scott M. Gibson, General Editor, Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society, 130 Essex Street, South Hamilton, MA 01982.

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