

INTRODUCTION

It was a Sunday morning like most other Sunday mornings. We had worked our way through the opening prayers and praise songs, the children's sermon, the offering, and the pastoral prayer. Now it was time for the sermon. The preacher began with a story. A phone call late at night. A wife of a pastor in another state, both friends of the preacher for many, many years. Her husband had begun volunteering at a local school. He helped out this one teacher, in particular, who was a divorcée with two small children. One thing led to another and soon her husband was involved in an extramarital affair. Although they were careful at first, eventually the wife found out about her husband's adultery. And, as usually happens, the church found out as well. Now, with her marriage shattered, her husband dismissed from his church and from the ministry, they were moving to a new town in another state, hoping that somehow they might be able to put things back together.

I listened to this story with rapt attention. I looked around and saw that the entire congregation, some 200 or so parishioners, were all riveted on the pulpit. Then, having set the stage, the preacher announced there were three lessons that our sermon text offered to help us avoid such situations. I don't remember exactly when I drifted off, but I do remember becoming aware that I had lost track of time and space. Like the weary road-warrior who suddenly realizes he has no memory of the last twenty miles he has driven, I reacted, hoping that my physical start was imperceptible to those around me. I had been reading the notes in my Reformation Study Bible when I realized I had lost

contact with my surroundings. I glanced at my watch and noted that 7 or 8 minutes had elapsed. I looked around to see if anyone had noticed my inattention. Not only had my “wandering” gone undetected, it was painfully clear that many others in the pews were not paying attention, either. I made an extra effort to pull back in as we plowed through the next two points. We had the usual didactics with the occasional cross-reference.

Then, as the sermon finally approached the landing strip, the preacher launched into a concluding story. I perked up and thought to myself, at least the ending will require less effort to pay attention. As the story unfolded, the preacher worked his way to the end of the sermon, wheels and flaps down, and brought the sermon safely home with the punch line. At that point, the congregation as one burst into laughter. I looked around; it appeared that everyone was awake. They all got it. They had been listening and got the point of the funny story. The congregation that had been wandering in and out of this dimension during the middle of the sermon had found their way back to earth. I walked away from that worship service, shook the pastor’s hand and said “good message,” and realized I had experienced what I have been reading about, studying, and pondering, for the last eight years or so.

THE PROBLEM WITH EXPOSITORY SERMONS

For over four-hundred years, Reformed Christians have attended Sunday morning worship with the expectation that their worship will be “Word-oriented.” That is, the sermon has been, and to a large extent still is, the focus of the worship service. Furthermore, there are expectations about the sermon. It should be based on a text of Scripture, should be explained clearly, proclaimed warmly, and applied fervently. And,

for many Reformed Christians, especially Presbyterians, it should be expository.¹ For those who work in the field of preaching, or homiletics, sermons are classified according to “type.” Among the types of sermons are the following: biographical sermons, catechetical sermons, expository sermons, narrative sermons, and topical sermons.² Historically, the type of sermon preferred by Presbyterians and many other evangelicals is the expository sermon.

There are various definitions of the “expository sermon,” but for the moment, a simple working definition is needed. One of the most widely-used books on preaching, written by a contemporary Presbyterian preacher and professor of preaching, offers this definition: “*The technical definition of an expository sermon requires that it expound Scripture by deriving from a specific text main points and subpoints that disclose the thought of the author, cover the scope of the passage, and are applied to the lives of the listeners.*”³ In his classic work on preaching, Andrew Blackwood notes that an expository sermon is one “whose form is governed by the order of the parts in a passage longer than one or two verses. Usually the passage is a paragraph, such as a parable or a brief psalm.”⁴ These definitions seem to agree in the main with that given by Harry Emerson Fosdick, no friend of the expository sermon. “During a long ministry, I have watched with interest two familiar types of sermon. The first is the expository model— elucidation of a scriptural text, its historic occasion, its logical meaning in the context, its setting in

¹Some Reformed Christians of continental heritage once embraced catechism preaching as an important model. Such preaching is no longer as prevalent today as it was a generation ago.

² Appendix A of this dissertation will have brief definitions of sermon types.

³ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 132. Italics his.

⁴ Andrew Blackwood, *The Fine Art of Preaching* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), 34.

the theology and ethic of the ancient writer; and then, at long last, application to the auditors of the truth involved.⁵ In a similar fashion, Haddon Robinson, in his classic work on preaching, offers this definition: “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.”⁶ An expository sermon, then, “takes its topic, main points, *and* subpoints from a text.”⁷ For the moment, this will suffice as a working definition of the expository sermon.

The modern prominence of the expository sermon goes back to the early days of the Reformation.⁸ Ulrich Zwingli launched his reform efforts in Zurich by preaching through the gospels in a continuous fashion.⁹ Among those who study preaching and worship, this method of determining sermon topics is called *lectio continua*, or, “preaching through the Bible, book by book, text by text.”¹⁰ Those who practice *lectio continua* will preach through a book of the Bible, handling each pericope [literary unit within a chapter] in turn, thus providing a good understanding of the text within its

⁵ Harry Emerson Fosdick, “Preaching as Personal Counseling,” in Richard Lischer, ed., *Theories of Preaching* (Durham: The Labyrinth Press, 1987), 294. He continues, asking, “is there not something the matter with the model?”

⁶ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 21.

⁷ Chapell, 131. Robinson is not as clear on the issue of subpoints, but both of his examples in the section on outlining the sermon have subpoints derived from the preaching text, 133-34.

⁸ Some trace this form of sermon back to the early church, even to the Scripture itself. See Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, Vol. 4, *The Age of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 46, 77.

⁹ Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zurich, 1975), 195ff.

¹⁰ Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2005), 71.

broader context. This method was embraced not only by Zwingli in Zurich, but also by John Calvin in Geneva. Over his many years of ministry, Calvin preached through many books of the Bible. Students of Reformation history are aware that Calvin ministered at Geneva during two separate periods. His first period of ministry, August 1536-April 1538, was ended by a conflict with the Genevan civil authorities over issues surrounding the Lord's Supper.¹¹ Later, when he returned to Geneva at the invitation of the very same magistrates who had banished him, September 13, 1541, Calvin resumed his preaching ministry at *the very point* where he had stopped some three years before.

The *lectio continua* model of sermon selection lends itself to expository preaching. In fact, over the years, the practice of preaching through books of the Bible by means of exposition became identified with Reformed worship and preaching. This emphasis, prominent in Calvin and his heirs, finds its Reformation roots in the worship and preaching of the Strasbourg Reformers.¹² This is explained by Hughes Oliphant Old:

Let us first look at how the Reformers of Strasbourg related preaching to the reading of the Scriptures. Of first importance here is that preaching was to be an exposition of Scripture. In the regular worship of the Church, the Scriptures were to be read and preached. Preaching was worship to the extent that it was God's Word. It was when God's Word was read and preached that God was present in the congregation. The ministers of the Word had authority to the extent that what they preached was the Word of God rather than simply their own word. For this reason the ministers of Strasbourg returned to the ancient Christian form of expository preaching, that is, commenting on the Scripture lesson passage by passage.¹³

¹¹Contrary to the popular notion that Calvin exercised great power in Geneva, much of his tenure involved painful conflict with the civil authorities. When Calvin refused to serve the Lord's Supper to wayward members of his flock, the Genevan authorities made demands that interfered with the prerogatives of the Church. Calvin held his ground and was banished for protecting the church from the authority of the state.

¹² Calvin, of course, was heavily influenced by the Strasbourg Reformer, Martin Bucer, and John Knox, father of Scottish Presbyterianism, was heavily influenced by Calvin in turn.

¹³ Old, *Reading and Preaching*, Vol. 4, *The Age of the Reformation*, 77.

Interestingly enough, the liturgical renewal of the late twentieth-century resulted in a curious juxtaposition of some evangelical Presbyterians,¹⁴ with some of their theologically more liberal counterparts, as they embraced the practice of *lectio selecta*, or lectionary preaching.¹⁵ As a method of selecting texts for preaching, the use of *lectio selecta* does not require a particular sermon type and so will not be a matter for further consideration. *Lectio Continua* does not *require* the preaching of expository sermons, but the two have been ever linked as close companions.

OUR CHANGING CONTEXT

What is the value of the expository sermon? Why did it arise in the Reformed Christian community and why has it found such a warm reception among Presbyterians and other evangelical churches? Perhaps part of the explanation lies in the Presbyterian understanding that the Minister of Word and Sacrament is, according to biblical language, a Teaching Elder.¹⁶ In comparison to other faith traditions which emphasize other matters in worship, such as evangelism, sacrament, spiritual gifts, Presbyterians have emphasized the importance of teaching sound doctrine.¹⁷ And, in the past, this has worked well in Presbyterian congregations as well as in other congregations that have

¹⁴ James B. Jordan, *Liturgical Nestorianism* (Niceville, FL: Transfiguration Press, 1994), 66.

¹⁵These two “groups” do not exist as definable denominational entities. While Presbyterian denominations do have distinct doctrinal cachets, the issue of lectionary preaching is not confined to one particular group, but is practiced here and there in particular congregations.

¹⁶Of course, not all Presbyterian churches refer to the minister officially as Teaching Elder (as does the Presbyterian Church in America, or PCA). However, the “job descriptions” of ministers found in many Presbyterian books of church order or forms of government betray the prominence of teaching elder language. Many “Bible Churches” consider the primary role of their minister to be “pastor/teacher.”

¹⁷The Shorter Catechism, in *The Confession of Faith* (reprint; Inverness: James G. Eccles Printers Ltd., 1981), Q.3: “What do the Scriptures principally teach? A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of him.”

valued such preaching.¹⁸ Perhaps no other sermon type provides a better mechanism for “teaching” than the textually-based, doctrinally-grounded expository sermon.

The Literate Age

The birth of the modern form of expository preaching can be located in the sixteenth century Reformation. Two key innovations nourished the success of the Protestant Reformation. First, the Reformation was a recovery of the act of public preaching. The church of the Middle Ages was a church of sign and symbol. Preaching fell into disfavor as illiteracy among the priests and the people increasingly led to ignorance, superstition, and reliance on an implicit faith.¹⁹ The Reformation was a reawakening of the power of the Word of God as it was read, proclaimed, and exhibited in the sacraments. Most importantly, the public proclamation of the Word resulted in the transformation of churches, cities, and even entire nations.

But along with the preaching of the Word, the Reformation was aided by Gutenberg’s invention of the printing press with moveable type in 1440. The shift from a manuscript culture to a print culture completed the transition from the orality of the ancient world to the linear, typographic world of modernity. H. J. Chaytor says, “we [i.e., “print-age people”] can sit and read at our leisure and turn back to previous pages at our will. In short the history of the progress from script to print is a history of the gradual

¹⁸E.g., in his classic text on preaching, page 20, Robinson, a non-Presbyterian argues that “the type of preaching that best carries the force of divine authority is expository preaching.”

¹⁹ While speaking of medieval preaching in a generally charitable way, Hughes Oliphant Old introduces his volume on medieval preaching by observing that “true expository preaching was almost impossible” due to the loss of language skills and the increasingly complicated, imposing liturgy of the medieval church. Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, Vol. 3, *The Medieval Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), xvi.

substitution of visual for auditory methods of communicating and receiving ideas.”²⁰ In an oral culture, “The highly analytic thought structures we take for granted in certain utterances among literates are quite simply unthinkable.”²¹ In other words, the print age not only revolutionized how we communicate, it changed how we think.²²

Following the Renaissance, which embraced the concept *ad fontes* [to the sources] and the development of literature in the vernacular, the Reformation employed the new technology to spread its message. Reformers and their printers captured the widespread hunger for the printed word and satisfied this hunger by printing sermons, monographs on a host of controversial subjects, and vernacular versions of the Bible. The Greek New Testament and new editions of the church fathers were printed and further facilitated reformation. The printing press both ushered in the age of print and promoted a rise in literacy among the masses. One who could read could access the printed page and the accumulated wisdom of the ages.²³ These two means of communication, public preaching and the printed page, functioned effectively until the onset of the digital age.

Fast forward a few centuries. In 1858, the Lincoln-Douglas debates occurred in the American Midwest. Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas campaigned for election to the Senate. Their debates attracted great throngs of listeners. On August 21, 1858,

²⁰ H. J. Chaytor, *From Script to Print* (Cambridge: Heffer and Sons, 1945), 4. Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962) examines the implications of the shift from eye to ear, from non-literate to literate culture—and beyond (with the dawn of the electronic age).

²¹ Walter J. Ong, *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 290.

²² Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, Critical edition, ed. W. Terrence Gordon (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press, 2003), 123, “even our ideas of cause and effect in the literate West have long been in the form of things in sequence and succession”

²³ See Bard Thompson, *Humanists and Reformers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 39-46 for a detailed excursus on the impact of the printing press on the modern world.

approximately 12,000 people gathered in Ottawa, Illinois to hear the debates. Those who gathered heard Mr. Douglas speak for an hour. Mr. Lincoln then took an hour and a half to respond. Mr. Douglas then responded for an additional half an hour. Following a supper break, a smaller crowd of 1500 gathered to hear another politician speak for an hour and a quarter. Indeed, this was a golden age for public discourse.²⁴

The Digital Age

However, the world has changed markedly since the nineteenth century. And in the last decade of the twentieth-century and the first few years of the twenty-first, cultural change has accelerated at an amazing pace. This rapid change was the result of earlier, more gradual changes. The invention of the radio in 1895 by the Italian inventor, Marconi, resulted in 378 commercial radio stations in the United States by 1922!²⁵ Radio programs contributed to the shrinkage of the American attention-span as listeners became accustomed to short programs or longer, variety programs with many short acts. The onset of commercial television in the late 1940s and its “Golden Age” in the 1950s further confirmed the shrinking attention span of the American audience and gave birth to the image-based culture that now dominates the twenty-first century. As William Dyrness explains, “Things have moved more rapidly than anyone could have predicted in the 1980s, and the triumph of the visual culture is now widely recognized. . . . The

²⁴ William E. Foote, *The Ottawa Debate in the Daily Pantagraph*. Internet. Available at <http://colet.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/getobject ?c.2248:1/projects/artflb/databases/artfl/lincoln/IMAGE/>. Accessed 12 March 2007. This event is described in great detail by Allen C. Guelzo, *Lincoln and Douglas* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008), 113-130.

²⁵ “U.S. Radio Stations as of June 30, 1922.” Internet. Available at <http://members.aol.com/jeff560/1922am.html>. Accessed 12 March 2007.

generation reaching adulthood today represents the second generation of those raised on TV and videos. They have by all accounts a high sense of visual literacy.”²⁶

Walter Ong speaks of the “secondary orality” of the electronic age. “Secondary orality is founded on—though it departs from—the individualized introversion of the age of writing, print, and rationalism which intervened between it and primary orality and which remains a part of us.”²⁷ In other words, the rise of the electronic age marks a significant shift in the way people think and communicate. The full sensorium of the electronic age replaced the linear, rational structure that characterized the typographic culture of modernity. As Ong puts it, “Over and beyond the sound of the voice itself, other related sounds, most notably instrumental music, pulse through the air from millions of radio and television and recording sets to a degree never even remotely approximated in the past.”²⁸ For Marshall McLuhan, television “abolished writing, the specialized acoustic-visual metaphor that established the dynamics of western civilization.”²⁹ For over fifty years, we have experienced the impact of television. But more recent advances in technology have exacerbated the problem even more.

Our image-based culture has accelerated rapidly with the explosion of digital devices, ever more readily available at increasingly discounted prices. From videotapes to DVDs and Blu-Ray discs; from cassette tapes to CDs; from large-screen rear projection televisions to LCD and Plasma High-Definition TVs; from large, clunky portable phones

²⁶ William A. Dyrness, *Visual Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 129.

²⁷ Ong, *Rhetoric*, 285.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 295.

²⁹ Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage* (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko, 2001), 125. For the effects on preaching to the “television culture,” see Timothy A. Turner, *Preaching to Programmed People* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1995).

to palm-sized phones with text-messaging and web-access; from transistor AM radios to satellite radio and MP3 players, our culture has increasingly embraced technological advances that interrupt our ability to focus on and think about complex issues. In a word, “Our cumulative experience with communication technologies has gradually altered behavior and social norms.”³⁰

In addition, we are in the midst of what can only be described as an “epochal transformation”³¹ as the power of the internet and the devices that access its information become ubiquitous. In Nicholas Carr’s work, *The Big Switch*, he tracks the ways in which technology gives birth to social transformation. Concerning the impact of the digital age, he writes:

The medium is not only the message. The medium is the mind. It shapes what we see and how we see it. The printed page, the dominant information medium of the past 500 years, molded our thinking through, to quote Neil Postman, “its emphasis on logic, sequence, history, exposition, objectivity, detachment, and discipline.” The emphasis of the Internet, our new universal medium, is altogether different. It stressed immediacy, simultaneity, contingency, subjectivity, disposability, and above all, speed. The Net provides no incentive to stop and think deeply about anything, to construct in our memory that “dense repository” of knowledge that Foreman cherishes. It’s easier, as Kelly says, “to Google something a second or third time rather than remember it ourselves.” On the Internet, we seem impelled to glide across the slick surface of data as we make our rushed passage from link to link.”³²

And, in some ways, we are not the better for these powerful tools. In a book documenting the intellectual decline of the most-wired generation, Mark Bauerlein laments, “Instead of opening young American minds to the stores of civilization and science and politics, technology has contracted their horizon to themselves, to the social scene around them. . .

³⁰ Naomi S. Baron, *Always On* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.

³¹ Nicholas Carr, *The Big Switch* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2008), 12.

³² *Ibid.*, 228.

The fonts of knowledge are everywhere, but the rising generation is camped in the desert, passing stories, pictures, tunes, and texts back and forth, living off the thrill of peer attention. Meanwhile, their intellects refuse the cultural and civic inheritance that has made us what we are up to now.”³³

Whither?

Thus, the dilemma! How does a preaching style, birthed in the innovations of the Renaissance and Reformation, cultivated and refined in the soil of the Modern World, with its rationalistic, Enlightenment outlook, function in the image-based, sound-bite Postmodern World that is our inheritance? Expository preaching, if nothing else, is complex communication. The listener is expected to follow a discourse that may last thirty minutes or more. Often, expository sermons are filled with much detail about the text. Many expository sermons are organized around multiple sub-points that arrange the data and demonstrate progression in the argument, an argument that is often tied to significant theological concepts. Some expository sermons make use of illustrative material, but not all of them. Whether illustrated or not, the expository sermon is a relatively complicated means of communication. Indeed, one of the few remaining places in public life where speakers produce and listeners follow a sustained argument is the church where expository sermons are the norm.

In the last twenty-five years, there has been a renewed interest in preaching in mainline and evangelical churches. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the “New Homiletic” burst onto the scene in mainline Protestant seminaries. While there were

³³ Mark Bauerlein, *The Dumbest Generation* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2008), 10.

many varieties of preaching³⁴ under this umbrella, the common theme was a rejection of the traditional deductive structure of sermons in which a thesis statement is offered and then supported by a series of subordinate propositions.³⁵ Traditional sermons were viewed as too heavily didactic, reflecting more the traditions of Greek rhetoric than the preaching and teaching of Jesus.³⁶ Even as the New Homiletic reached its zenith among mainline seminaries and pulpits, evangelicals devoted fresh energy to rehabilitating expository preaching, a form of preaching which generally followed the traditional deductive structure. Volumes authored or edited by Haddon Robinson, Bryan Chapell, John MacArthur Jr., and Sam Logan, among others, called Presbyterians and other evangelical and preachers back to their historic, homiletic roots.³⁷

More recently, Calvin Miller of Beeson Divinity School has entered the fray, positioning himself somewhere between the concerns of the New Homiletic school and the old expository school. Miller objects to much of what passes as “expository preaching,” which he describes as “sermons that employed linear reasoning, building arguments with highly propositional styles.”³⁸ Concerning such preaching, he says

³⁴ The many varieties have been variously described by terms such as “narrative preaching,” “inductive preaching,” or “storytelling,” among others.

³⁵ Eugene Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot*, Expanded Edition (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001), 122-3, notes that while there are varieties of the New Homiletic, one of the key, common themes they share is “some kind of procedural plotting as sermon means, generally involving a strategic delay in the arrival of the preacher’s meaning.”

³⁶ For example, see Fred Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, Rev. ed. (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 5.

³⁷ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*; Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*; John MacArthur, Jr., et al, eds., *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word, 1992); Samuel T. Logan, ed., *The Preacher and Preaching: Reviving the Art in the Twentieth Century* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986).

³⁸ Calvin Miller, *Preaching: The Art of Narrative Exposition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 20. Compare this to John MacArthur’s complaint that the “legacy of liberalism” is to blame for the decline of

If preaching did not defy your ability to care about it, it was clearly not the Word of God. To be really good for you, sermons had to be dull. Exciting sermons were generally seen as heretical, or at least non-biblical. Many people secretly felt that this “expository” style of preaching was boring, but nobody would say so out loud for fear of being branded as a liberal. Many felt that liberals were more interesting than conservative expositors, but people generally opted to be bored, rather than heretical.³⁹

It is at this point that Miller appeals to the preaching and teaching of Jesus, noting that our Lord “himself told lots of stories, and his sermons were full of images—image-driven, to be precise.”⁴⁰ Yet he is not willing to abandon expository preaching altogether. Rather, he wants to breathe life into expository preaching by wedding it to a narrative structure. Miller anticipates the question that some readers might have. He explains:

The question you may be asking is, “How does your model differ from preaching an illustrating as if has always been done?” The answer is that it differs not at all from great preaching as it has always been done, with this exception: the emphasis on story is far stronger than that traditionally put on the sermon. Further it recognizes that story is as important as the propositions, both in communicating the truth and in holding people’s attention.

All preachers operate with a set of assumptions about themselves and their listeners. Furthermore, they operate with additional assumptions about the nature of sermons, their construction, delivery, and goal. The question of sermon type/structure⁴¹ is an important one, particularly for those who are invested in traditional, expository preaching. For those who embrace expository preaching, as defined earlier, one of their assumptions is the necessity of “teaching the Word of God” as they preach. For example, R. C. Sproul says, “. . . when I preach, I will often sprinkle some conceptual education

expository preaching. John MacArthur, Jr., “The Mandate of Biblical Inerrancy: Expository Preaching,” in John MacArthur, Jr., et al, eds., *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word, 1992), 23.

³⁹ Miller., 19-20.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 21.

⁴¹ I am using type/structure to pull together a number of related questions about homiletic method (expository/narrative), movement (deductive/inductive), and content (propositions/stories).

into the content of my sermons. So I have a tendency to skate back and forth across the line between preaching and teaching. But I've always thought that the number one thing, as Luther understood, that I'm responsible to do as a minister is to teach the people the things of God."⁴²

Likewise, Hughes Oliphant Old, in the first volume of his series, *The Reading and Preaching of Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, discusses the meanings of *didaskein* and *keryssein*. He notes that "the phrase 'to preach the gospel' meant something done in a special way by Jesus and his disciples, [while] the word 'teach' when used as a synonym for 'preach' tends to designate the ordinary ministry of the Word in its similarity to the ministry of the rabbis."⁴³ Elsewhere, he speaks about the preaching and teaching of Jesus, using these terms almost interchangeably. For example, in his discussion of Mark 4:1-2, Old notes that "the usage of the verb *διδάσκειν* here seems to make it very clear that the preaching ministry of Jesus put an emphasis on teaching and had a strong teaching content."⁴⁴ Here Old represents the classic Reformed tradition which affirms a close connection between preaching and teaching. For example, in some Presbyterian churches, a Minister of the Word and Sacrament is also called a Teaching Elder. These two titles demonstrate the Reformed bias that preaching cannot be separated from teaching.⁴⁵

⁴² R. C. Sproul, "The Teaching Preacher," in *Feed My Sheep*, ed. Don Kistler (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2002), 134.

⁴³ Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of Scriptures in the Worship of the Church*, vol. 1, *The Biblical Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 126. On linkage between preaching and teaching, see also 118, 121-3, 138, 141, 146, 164-5, 197-8, 204, 234-6, 245-7, 250.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁴⁵ Recent pleas for the importance of doctrinal preaching, in addition to the Sproul article in footnote 12, include: Phillip Ryken, "Preaching That Reforms," in *Preach the Word*, ed. Leland Ryken and

However, an assumed bias is not the same thing as a settled point of scholarship. And this points us to a related question that has been the source of conflict for decades. While questions of sermon type/structure are not *directly* related to that of the relationship between preaching and teaching, they are not completely unrelated either. Indeed, the question of whether preaching and teaching are discrete or interrelated activities potentially impacts both sermon type/structure and content. This raises questions about any necessary connection between one's understanding of the relationship between preaching and teaching—and sermon type/structure. Question One: on the one hand, if preaching and teaching are discrete activities, does this undermine the argument for expository preaching? Question Two: on the other hand, if they are in some way identified, does this render invalid the varieties of sermon types/structures offered by the New Homiletic?

BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL NORMS

Complicating the question is an important difference of opinion present in New Testament studies. Some scholars have viewed preaching and teaching as distinct activities. Perhaps the most influential proponent of the distinction has been C. H. Dodd, particularly in his work, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*. Dodd says, “The New Testament writers draw a clear distinction between preaching and teaching.”⁴⁶ His status as one of the 20th century's leading New Testament scholars notwithstanding,

Todd Wilson (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 190ff; John Armstrong, “Preaching to the Mind,” in *Feed My Sheep*, ed. Don Kistler (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2002), 166ff; and Dennis Johnson, *Him We Proclaim* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2007).

⁴⁶ C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1936, reprint; New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 7 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

Dodd's thesis has been challenged by those who believe there is a closer relationship, even an identity of sorts between preaching and teaching. For example, Robert Mounce says of Dodd, "His desire for analytical clarity . . . has resulted in too great a cleavage between the two."⁴⁷ For Mounce, preaching and teaching "are continuous and to some degree overlapping."⁴⁸

With these two champions on opposite sides of the question, the point in contest is clearly worth pursuing. But more is at stake than a question of how to interpret two New Testament words, important as that may be. Reformed and Presbyterian churches, along with many other evangelical churches, constitute a significant portion of Protestant Christianity. Many of these churches gather weekly to participate in worship services which proceed as though C. H. Dodd misread the New Testament data on preaching and teaching. Whether he did misread the data is a matter of no little importance. Therefore, this section will examine three areas of concern before attempting to reach a conclusion with some applications: 1) the meaning and use of *kerygma*, *keryssein* (and cognate forms) in the New Testament, 2) the meaning and uses of *didache*, *didasko* (and cognate forms) in the New Testament, 3) implications of the above for preaching and sermon type/structure in the worship of the Reformed Church today.

The Meaning and Use of κήρυγμα

As noted in the introduction, the thesis that preaching and teaching are distinct activities was championed by C. H. Dodd. For Dodd, "teaching" is largely ethical

⁴⁷ Robert H. Mounce, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, n.d.), 41 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

instruction, sometimes involving apologetic activity.⁴⁹ Preaching, however, “is the public proclamation of Christianity to the non-Christian world . . . [for] it was by *kerygma*, says Paul, not by *Didache*, that it pleased God to save men.”⁵⁰ Indeed, Dodd states that “much of our preaching in Church at the present day would not have been recognized by the early Christians as *kerygma*. It is teaching, or exhortation (*paraklesis*), or it is what they called *homilia*, that is, the more or less informal discussion of various aspects of Christian life and thought, addressed to a congregation already established in the faith.”⁵¹

Robert Worley has summarized the key points in Dodd’s thesis:

The significant features of Dodd’s theory which have been described in their developmental sequence are: 1. In the earliest church a distinct activity called preaching was practiced. 2. Preaching had a particular content, the *kerygma*, which was the earliest missionary message of the church. 3. Fragments of this earliest message are discernible in the written record, Scripture. 4. Teaching is a second distinct activity of the early church. 5. The content of teaching is primarily ethical instruction and exhortation. Its form is derived from Jewish antecedents. 6. The practice and content of teaching are the product of the evolutionary development of the earliest church as it awaited the second coming of Jesus.⁵²

Dodd’s position is reasonable and clear. The question remains, however, whether the New Testament data supports his sharp distinction between *kerygma* and *didache*.

The Greek words κήρυξ, “herald, and κηρύσσειν, “to cry out loud, to announce,” and their cognates go back to the Homeric period and signify both office and function. The herald was one who represented the ruler, who spoke for the ruler as one under his authority. The herald possessed a strong voice and was charged with delivering the

⁴⁹ Dodd, 7.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 7-8.

⁵¹ Ibid., 8.

⁵² Robert C. Worley, *Preaching and Teaching in the Earliest Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967), 22-23.

message he had received, neither trimming nor embellishing it in the least. In the Greek world, the herald made proclamations in the public gatherings of the polis. When representing his ruler before other rulers, the herald was given diplomatic immunity and treated with respect, even by enemies. The role of the herald was both political and religious, with the herald often leading the people in public liturgical worship of the gods. In the New Testament, κήρυξ is rarely used, though the verbal form and other cognates appear with some degree of frequency.⁵³

The word, κήρυγμα, occurs seven times⁵⁴ in the Greek New Testament and is translated as “preaching” (Matt. 12:41; Luke 11:32; 1 Cor. 2:4, 15:14), “proclamation” (Mark 16:8, Rom. 16:25), and “message” (2 Tim. 4:17).⁵⁵ Titus 1:3 has the dative, singular form, κηρύγματι, translated “preaching” and 1 Cor. 1:21 has the genitive, singular form, κηρύγματος, translated as “what was preached.” The related word, κήρυξ (nom., masc., sing.), is twice translated as “herald” (1 Tim. 2:7, 2 Tim. 1:11) and once as “preacher” (2 Peter 2:5, the form here is the acc., masc., sing., κήρυκα).⁵⁶

Interestingly enough, 1 Cor. 2:4 indicates that “kerygma obviously refers to the content” of what is heralded or proclaimed.⁵⁷ Logos is paralleled with kerygma, καὶ ὁ

⁵³ Friedrich, “κήρυξ,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 3:683ff. Also, Colin Brown, “Proclamation, Preach, Kerygma,” *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 3 vols., ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 3:48ff.

⁵⁴ *Bible Works for Windows*, ver. 5.0. (Norfolk: Bible Works LLC, 2001). This is the neuter, singular, nominative or accusative form.

⁵⁵ *The GREEK-ENGLISH CONCORDANCE to the New Testament*, s.v. “kerygma, keryx.” Translations are from the New International Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

⁵⁶ See Mounce, 11-13, for the historic background of “herald” in the ancient world, prior to his discussion of LXX and NT usage of the word.

⁵⁷ Worley, 31; though Friedrich, “κήρυξ,” *TDNT*, 3:716, says in 1 Cor. 2:4 the meaning is “the act of proclaiming.”

λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου, and is translated as “message” (NIV, NASB) or “speech” (KJV, ESV). More to the point, 1 Cor. 15:14 provides additional insight into the meaning of the preaching. In the context, what Paul preached in verse 14 is identical to the “gospel I preached to you” (vs. 1, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν), which gospel had been “received” and “passed on” (vs. 2, παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον).⁵⁸ For Paul, there is an identifiable content to this gospel. Furthermore, what Paul preached is directly related to what he witnessed and to which he “testified” (vs. 15, ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι ἤγειρεν τὸν Χριστόν). Clearly it is the “content” of the gospel, the *kerygma*, that is important.⁵⁹ All of these translations are predictable and demonstrate continuity with the classical understanding of the herald and his message.⁶⁰

The verbal form, κηρύσσειν, occurs 61 times in the New Testament.⁶¹ Nine times it is translated as “proclaim,” “proclaimed,” or “proclaiming” (Matt. 10:27; Mark 1:14; Luke 4:18,19; 12:3; Acts 8:5; Rom. 10:8; Col. 1:23; Rev. 5:2), once as “talk” (Mark 1:45), once as “tell” (Mark 5:20), once as “talking about” (Mark 7:36), once as “told” (Luke 8:39), and once as “message” (Mark 1:7). One particularly instructive occurrence is κηρύσσω καὶ εὐαγγελιζόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ (Luke 8:1) where only one word in English represents two in the underlying Greek text. Here preaching and evangelizing are viewed as overlapping activities—and indeed the focus is on the act of

⁵⁸ Mounce, 90, notes that “the verbs that Paul uses . . . are equivalent to the official Jewish terms for the taking over and passing on of tradition.”

⁵⁹ Mounce, 93, says 1 Cor. 15:3-5 gives a “crystal-clear picture of the historical section of the *kerygma* [but], but it does not tell the complete story.”

⁶⁰ One key difference, however, is that “the NT knows nothing of sacral personages who are inviolable in the world” as in the classical usage. Friedrich, “κήρυξ,” *TDNT*, 3:696.

⁶¹ *The GREEK-ENGLISH CONCORDANCE to the New Testament*, s.v. “*kerysso*.”

proclamation. The rest of the occurrences are translated as “preach,” “preached,” or “preaching.”⁶²

The Meaning and Use of διδασχή

The Greek word, διδάσκειν, “to teach,” “to instruct,” and its cognates (including διδασκή), come from the Homeric era of Greek literature and can be used to describe relationships that involve teacher and pupil. This relationship can be based on the imparting of knowledge or the transference of skills in the arts or technical fields. This word is particularly suited to the imparting of knowledge in any field that involves a developing understanding and increasing mastery of the field.⁶³ In the LXX, διδάσκειν and its cognates take on new meaning, moving away from the mere imparting of knowledge and skill, to the more nuanced teaching of the will of God as the path to life. What is important in the LXX usage is not mastery of knowledge or skills, but “the whole man and his education in the deepest sense.”⁶⁴

With this Old Testament background in mind, we turn now to the New Testament and its usage of διδάσκειν. The verb, διδάσκειν, occurs 91 times in the New Testament and is translated in the NIV (finite verb, infinitive, and participial forms) as “teach” or

⁶² Matt. 3:1; 4:17,23; 9:35; 10:7; 11:1; 24:14; 26:13; Mark 1:4,38,39; 3:14; 6:12; 13:10; 14:9; 16:15,20; Luke 3:3; 4:44; 9:2; 24:47; Acts 9:20; 10:37,42; 15:21; 19:13; 20:25; 28:31; Rom. 2:21; 10:14,15; 1 Cor. 1:23; 9:27; 15:11,12; 2 Cor. 1:19; 4:5; 11:4; Gal. 2:2; 5:11; Php. 1:15; 1 Ths. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Pet. 3:19.

⁶³ Rengstorff, “διδάσκω,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 2:135ff. Also, K. Wegenast, “Teach,” *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 3 vols., ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 3:759ff.

⁶⁴ Rengstorff, “διδάσκω,” *TDNT*, 2:137.

“teaches” 38 times; “teaching” or “teachings” 35 times; “taught” 22 times; with one time each as “began to teach,” “instructed,” “lecture,” and “passed on.”⁶⁵

The related word for “teacher,” διδάσκαλος, in classical usage referred to “not just a teacher in general, but a man who teaches definite skills like reading, fighting, or music, developing the aptitudes already present.”⁶⁶ This word was used only twice in the LXX,⁶⁷ but occurs 59 times in the New Testament, 41 of which refer to Jesus—and 29 of these are vocatives.⁶⁸ Of these 59 occurrences, 58 times the translators use “teacher” or “teachers” and once “master” to translate διδάσκαλος. John 1:38 is a significant passage for understanding the word, for there John says the disciples call Jesus “ράββι”; then he equates this to διδάσκαλε. Leon Morris writes that Rabbi is “the customary form of address for disciples speaking to their teacher. The Evangelist explains the Aramaic word for the benefit of his non-Jewish readers.”⁶⁹

Moreover, Old notes that “at least ten times in the Gospel of Mark Jesus is addressed as Teacher [διδάσκαλε]. This is no doubt simply Mark’s translation of the Hebrew honorific Rabbi.”⁷⁰ Indeed, “the Gospels make it clear point by point that the relation between Jesus and the disciples corresponds to that of Rabbinic pupils to their

⁶⁵ *The GREEK-ENGLISH CONCORDANCE to the New Testament*, s.v. “didasko.”

⁶⁶ Rengstorff, “διδάσκω,” *TDNT*, 2:149.

⁶⁷ Wegenast, “Teach,” *TNIDNTTH*, 3:766 suggests this is because the Old Testament “is more concerned with obedience than with the imparting of information,” while Rengstorff, “διδάσκω,” *TDNT*, 2:151 suggests the professionalization of teaching may have militated against more widespread use in the LXX.

⁶⁸ *The GREEK-ENGLISH CONCORDANCE to the New Testament*, s.v. “didaskolos”; Rengstorff, “διδάσκω,” *TDNT*, 2:152.

⁶⁹ Leon Morris, *New International Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. Gordon Fee, *The Gospel According to John*, revised (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 137.

⁷⁰ Old, *Reading and Preaching*, vol.1, *The Biblical Period*, 127.

masters and that the crowd treated Him with the respect accorded to teachers.”⁷¹ It is interesting to note that six times Matthew places διδάσκαλε on the lips of Jesus’ opponents, but avoids having his own disciples call him that because Jesus was often “in sharp conflict with the rabbis”⁷²

Two related words focus on the “matter” of instruction, διδασκαλία and διδαχή. The first of these, διδασκαλία, occurs 21 times in the New Testament and is translated “teaching” or “teachings” 13 times; “doctrine” five times; “things taught,” (1 Tim. 4:1); and “teach” twice.⁷³ The second, διδαχή, occurs 30 times in the New Testament, being translated “teaching” or “teachings” 24 times; “taught” twice; “word of instruction” (1 Cor. 14:26); “careful instruction” (2 Tim. 4:2); and “instruction” (Heb. 6:2).⁷⁴

In classical Greek, διδασκαλία comes from the noun form διδάσκαλος and “denotes the activity of one who is a teacher in the Gk. sense. . . . [while] διδαχή [is] derived directly from the verbal stem” and focuses on the actual “instruction, or of the doctrine imparted by teaching.”⁷⁵ In the New Testament διδαχή is used more extensively, with διδασκαλία occurring most frequently in the pastoral epistles (15 times).⁷⁶ Although the terms overlap a great deal,⁷⁷ διδαχή is used throughout the New Testament as a sort of

⁷¹ Rengstorff, “διδάσκω,” *TDNT*, 2:153-4

⁷² Wegenast, “Teach,” *TNIDNTTH*, 3:767.

⁷³ Both in Romans 12:7 and 15:4 the NIV has translated the noun as a verbal form.

⁷⁴ Both in Mark 12:38 and Titus 1:9 the NIV has translated the noun as a verbal form.

⁷⁵ Wegenast, “Teach,” *TNIDNTTH*, 3:769.

⁷⁶ Perhaps in order to emphasize the authority of the διδάσκαλος.

⁷⁷ Rengstorff, “διδάσκω,” *TDNT*, 2:161, makes the important observation that it is always the singular “used in the NT when the will of God lies behind διδασκαλία.”

short-hand for the preaching and teaching of Christ, i.e., his teaching on the coming Kingdom of God (e.g., Mark 4:2) as well as his teaching on the law (Matt. 7:28). Indeed, it may very well refer to “His whole διδάσκειν, His proclamation of the will of God as regards both form and content.”⁷⁸ Similarly, διδασχί may be used by the apostles for their teaching, sometimes teaching in general (e.g., Rom 6:17; 16:17) and sometimes teaching as a fixed body of truth (1 Tim 4:2, Tit. 1:9).⁷⁹

Implications

In light of the word studies above, we can now make a few observations about *kerygma* and *didache*. Of the many passages that use these words, several are important to an understanding of the nature and content of *kerygma* and its relationship to *didache*.⁸⁰ For example, there are several statements in Mark 1 about the teaching ministry of Jesus. We read in Mark 1:21 that Jesus “began to teach” in the synagogues and in 1:22 that he “taught” as one who had authority, thus giving a “new teaching—and with authority,” 1:27. These statements on teaching are bracketed by Mark 1:14 on the front end, “Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming (κηρύσσω) the good news of God,” and on the back end by Mark 1:39, “he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching (κηρύσσω) in their synagogues.” Then, in the same context as the closing bracket, we read these words in Mark 1:38: “Jesus replied, ‘Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach (κηρύξω) there also. That is why I have come.’” In this chapter, Mark uses the

⁷⁸ Ibid., 2:164.

⁷⁹ Ibid.; Wegenast, “Teach,” *TNIDNTTH*, 3:769-770.

⁸⁰ Much of the material for this section is suggested by the discussion in Mounce, 41ff.

terms teach and preach interchangeably, employing both to describe Jesus' ministry in the synagogues.

Now, compare Mark 1:38 to the parallel in Luke 4:43 where Jesus says, "I must preach," εὐαγγελίσασθαί με δεῖ. This is closely related to Luke's account of Jesus preaching in the synagogue (Luke 4:16-21). We read in verse 17 (the Old Testament reading is from Isaiah 61:1,2) that Jesus came "to preach good news," εὐαγγελίσασθαι, and to "proclaim (κηρύξαι) freedom for the prisoners." Here we see the words for "preach the gospel" and "herald" used interchangeably.⁸¹

But of much greater import for our concern is the fact that Jesus *taught* in the synagogue. This is presupposed in the fact that "all spoke well of him and were amazed at [his] gracious words."⁸² More telling than this inference is the fact that Luke brackets this event on the front end by the general observation in 4:15 that Jesus "taught in their synagogues."⁸³ He follows the event on the back end with Jesus going to Capernaum where again he enters into the synagogue on the Sabbath "to teach the people" (4:31,32). In this context, his preaching and evangelizing are essentially the same as his teaching.⁸⁴ In Luke 4:44, summing up the scope of his ministry, Luke says "Jesus was preaching (ἤνυ

⁸¹ Robert H. Stein, *The New American Commentary*, ed. David S. Dockery, vol. 24, *Luke* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 156.

⁸² Mounce, 42.

⁸³ Perhaps a customary imperfect to indicate continual or habitual action. See, for example, Joseph Addison Alexander, *The Gospel According to Mark* (reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 19 for a comment on Mark 1:21, a parallel usage of the imperfect which Alexander says "may be understood to signify his general habit."

⁸⁴ Stein, *Luke*, 166, says, "As in 4:18-19 'preaching' is a synonym here for 'preaching the good news' in 4:43 and probably also for 'teaching' in 4:31 (cf. also 13:22). All three terms are used interchangeably in Luke-Acts (cf. 8:1; 9:2,6). In Acts the early church's preaching is often described as 'preaching the good news' and 'teaching' As a result the popular distinction between the early church's *kerygma* (preaching) and *didache* (teaching) made so popular by C. H. Dodd has no basis in Luke-Acts because for Luke they were essentially synonymous."

κηρύσσων) in the synagogues of Judea.” Preaching and teaching are used virtually as synonyms. Mounce explains their overlapping relationship and offers a helpful nuance: “teaching is the expounding in detail of that which is proclaimed.”⁸⁵

In addition to the lexical arguments (and there are more examples than this brief sample indicates) there is another argument that must be made. It is clear that the *kerygma* was not void of theological content, but was an affirmation of the basic truths of the gospel. Among the elements of the *kerygma* that Dodd recognized as Pauline are the following: Christ and him crucified (10),⁸⁶ and risen again (11); Christ dying for our sins (11); the entrance of the “Age to Come” (11); the Lordship of Christ (11-12, 15); the coming judgment (12), and salvation from the coming judgment (12-13). Furthermore, Dodd argues that when Paul gives the elements of the gospel in his letter to the Roman Christians, they “are to be regarded not only as parts of what Paul calls ‘my Gospel,’ but as parts of the common Gospel.”⁸⁷ Of course, Dodd argues that Paul was given to distinguishing between, for example, the “fundamental content of the Gospel and the teaching which he based upon it,” or, to shift the image a bit, the “foundation” and the “superstructure.”⁸⁸

In light of our earlier findings, it is now clear that Dodd’s sharp distinction between *kerygma* and *didache* is overstated. Indeed, a number of New Testament passages identified as “part of the baptismal profession of initiates” appear in contexts

⁸⁵ Mounce, 42.

⁸⁶ Parentheses indicate pages in Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching*, where these statements are found.

⁸⁷ Dodd, 14.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

that “indicate they were also used for teaching.”⁸⁹ Even so Mounce takes issue with Dodd and examines in great detail the New Testament evidence for the preaching of the apostles in order to document the most ancient affirmations of primitive Christianity.⁹⁰ He observes that Dodd has been criticized for leaving the impression that “the *kerygma* is a sort of stereotyped six-headed sermon which the apostles delivered on any and every occasion.”⁹¹ Instead, he argues that the *kerygma* ought to be viewed as a summary “of the theology of the primitive church,” a “survey of primitive Christology” which is used as needed in particular situations.⁹² The result is both more detailed and more fluid than the model offered by Dodd.⁹³

There is, however, one clear point of agreement between our disputants. However basic, however elemental, the primitive *kerygma* contained a number of doctrinal affirmations. In other words, whether you embrace Dodd’s formulaic *kerygma* or the more fluid, contextually-determined model offered by Mounce, the proclamation of the gospel is not without theological content. To say “Jesus is Lord” is not only to proclaim but to teach, albeit at a very simple level. Likewise, the *didache* has an element of

⁸⁹Brown, “Proclamation, Preach, Kerygma,” *TNIDNTTH*, 3:60-61, lists these passages: 1 Cor. 12:3; Rom. 10:9; with Acts 11:17, 20; 16:31; Col. 2:6; and Acts 8:16; 19:5; 1 Cor. 6:11.

⁹⁰Of course, underlying the work of both Dodd and Mounce are issues of form criticism which cannot be considered here. Instead, the text will be regarded in its canonical form.

⁹¹Mounce, 61.

⁹²Ibid., 64.

⁹³For Mounce, there is also something more, an existential dimension to the *kerygma* that must be included, for “true preaching is an event—an event that effectively communicates the power and redemptive activity of God.” Mounce, 64, 155.

proclamation in it for it “denotes Christ’s message (with his call to repentance and faith) and the early Christian preaching in the widest sense.”⁹⁴ As Mounce explains it,

teaching is the expounding in detail of that which is proclaimed. The relation is that of an axiom to its explanation and application. As such, the connection is logical rather than chronological. Or, to change the figure, *kerygma* is foundation and *didache* is superstructure; but no building is complete without both. It is only when they are ideally conceived that teaching and preaching can be taken as entirely distinct. In actual practice they overlap, and may be so intermingled that one can hardly ever say, ‘Now this is preaching,’ or, ‘This, on the other hand, is teaching.’ All *didache* is based on *kerygma*, and it may be seriously doubted whether any *kerygma* ever stands without some measure of explanatory *didache*.⁹⁵

For Dodd, the *kerygma* was identifiable with a small set of fundamental propositions. For Mounce, it was “event”—more dynamic, more fluid, but nonetheless involving a number of propositions—not entirely unlike those offered by Dodd. Whether one embraces Dodd’s understanding of *kerygma*, or Mounce’s, the fact remains that the proclamation of the good news, even in its most primitive form, contained elements of doctrine. Furthermore, the *didache* or teaching of the Church also involved proclamation and evangelizing.

From the standpoint of the history of the early Christian proclamation, therefore, there takes place in the διδάσκειν of the early community the unconscious transmission and sifting of traditional sayings, while in the *kerygma* we have the beginning of a collection of the narrative material, both under the comprehensive challenge which stands at the head of the Christian message generally: μετανοείτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ (Mk. 1:15).⁹⁶

Thus, rather than opposing *kerygma* to *didache*, it is better to think of a spectrum of activities in which proclamation moves from apologetic discourse, to evangelistic urgency, to joyous heralding of good news, to reasoned explanation and application of

⁹⁴ Wegenast, “Teach,” *TNIDNTTH*, 3:770.

⁹⁵ Mounce, 42-43.

⁹⁶ Rengstorff, “διδάσκω,” *TDNT*, 2:145.

truth in some greater or lesser degree of detail. Only this understanding of the terms can account for their fluidity of use. As Francis Handy states it, “The clear cut distinction between ‘preaching’ and ‘teaching’ which is made by some scholars in their eagerness to stress the dogmatic unity of the New Testament finds no support in the Synoptic Gospels.”⁹⁷ Neither can it find support elsewhere in the New Testament.

Two more observations. First, Jesus was both THE Master Teacher and THE Master Preacher. Lois Lebar says, “Christ Jesus was the Master Teacher par excellence because He Himself perfectly embodied the truth, he perfectly understood His pupils, and He used perfect methods in order to change people.”⁹⁸ Calvin Miller says that Jesus was a story-teller and master communicator (21, 53-4, 67, 149, 159, 170, 262), “the preacher’s best role model” (224).⁹⁹ Robert Stein calls Jesus an “outstanding teacher”¹⁰⁰ and Hughes O. Old calls him “the prototype of the minister of the Word” who “set the example of how the preachers of the early Church worked.”¹⁰¹ His mission—proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God—involved preaching, teaching, and evangelizing. That the world’s greatest communicator combined these activities as we have discovered in our earlier discussion provides sufficient warrant for Presbyterian and evangelical churches to view preaching through the teaching lens.¹⁰² Second, the fact that apostolic *kerygma*

⁹⁷ Francis J. Handy, *Jesus the Preacher* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1949), 7.

⁹⁸ Lois E. Lebar, *Education That Is Christian* (Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1995), 65. Lebar does, however, agree with Dodd’s distinction that teaching and preaching are two separate words and therefore two separate ministries, 26.

⁹⁹ Miller, 224. See also 21, 53-4, 67, 149, 159, 170, 262.

¹⁰⁰ Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus’ Teaching*, 7.

¹⁰¹ Old, *Reading and Preaching*, 1:123.

cannot be sharply distinguished from apostolic *didache* likewise gives warrant to linking closely the activities of preaching and teaching. The apostles followed their Lord in doctrine AND in practice. So should we.

Applications to the Research Problem

The final set of questions has to do with the relationship between preaching and teaching and sermon type/structure. Question One has already been answered. Preaching and teaching ARE related; they do overlap, and there is no absolute distinction between them. Proclamation involves teaching, and good teaching ought to involve proclamation. With this answer in hand, no expository preacher needs to worry about his desire to teach the Scriptures while preaching in a service of worship. Further, in light of the New Testament data, the Presbyterian churches may rest comfortably with their designation of the pastor as Teaching Elder.

The second question is more complicated and now will be broken into two questions. Question Two: “Does the connection between preaching and teaching demand expository preaching?” Or, to frame the issue a bit differently, there is Question Three: “If preaching and teaching are in some way identified, does this render invalid the varieties of sermon types/structures offered by the New Homiletic?” The answer to Question Two is “Yes-But” and the answer to Question Three is “No.”

One might look at the answers to Questions Two and Three and conclude that the author is truly dialectical in his thinking. That would be a mistake. To say that preaching involves teaching, Question One, DOES mean that every sermon ought to expound the

¹⁰² Worley, 13, quotes James Smart as saying, “Preaching is preaching and teaching is teaching, and yet good preaching is also teaching and good teaching has in it the note of the preacher’s proclamation.”

meaning of Scripture and that the meaning of Scripture involves application. Application is not something extraneous to meaning; meaning is application.¹⁰³ Thus, every sermon ought to involve an exposition of Scripture. However, the “Yes-But” in Question Two indicates there are a couple of important caveats we must consider. First, we are reminded in the introduction that not everything calling itself an “expository sermon” truly qualifies according to the definitions provided by Miller, Chapell, and Robinson. Calling it so doesn’t make it so.

Second, that every expository sermon requires an explanation of everything in the text, or even a preponderance of the data in the text, is not immediately apparent. Much of Jesus’ teaching (or, preaching!) involved “Big Ideas” or “Big Picture” lessons.¹⁰⁴ In fact, often the details—as in some of the parables—were extraneous.¹⁰⁵ Too many sermons lose their listeners in the morass of details,¹⁰⁶ many of which are neither directly related to the biblical theme nor absolutely necessary for the clarity of the sermon. Preachers must learn to resist the temptation to tell everything they know about a passage in a given sermon.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, A Theology of Lordship* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1987), 82-83.

¹⁰⁴ Think Haddon Robinson!

¹⁰⁵ Robert H. Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus’ Teachings*, rev. ed. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 51, “We should find allegory in the parables of Jesus only when we must, not simply when we can.”

¹⁰⁶ Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 83, writes, “to say one thing each Sunday for fifty weeks is good medicine; to say fifty things each Sunday is to distribute aspirin in the waiting room.”

¹⁰⁷ Derek Thomas, “Expository Preaching,” in *Feed My Sheep*, ed. Don Kistler (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2002), 82-3, warns against the “I have a seminary education and I am determined to let you know that’ sermon.” Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 54, warns that “the subject that can be exhaustively handled in a sermon should never be the subject of a sermon. And yet how many sermons one hears in which the impression is given that the preacher had walked all the way around God and had taken pictures.”

As we move to the explanation of Question Three, we first note that one's desire to "teach" in a sermon does not mean that one is obligated to employ a deductive, propositional style sermon.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, there may be some valuable insights from the proponents of the New Homiletic about sermon structure, plot suspense, and inductive funneling. After warning that the method he proposes is not "*the* method," Craddock has wisely noted that the "forms of preaching should be as varied as the forms of rhetoric in the New Testament, or as the purposes of preaching or as the situations of those who listen."¹⁰⁹ Indeed, even when the same sermon type/structure is used, such as expository preaching, "we shall all do it differently, since, in Phillips Brooke's famous definition, preaching is 'truth through personality.'"¹¹⁰

Second, one who is interested in teaching should not assume that the only way to teach effectively is by outlines with thesis, main points, and sub-points.¹¹¹ Much of what Jesus accomplished as a teacher was directly related to his ability to meet people where they were and initiate conversations on terms they would embrace.¹¹² He was the kind of person who attracted the interest of others. He made frequent and effective use of figures

¹⁰⁸ Indeed, Ralph L. Lewis, with Gregg Lewis, *Learning to Preach Like Jesus* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1989), 12-13, argues against a deductive, propositional structure, saying, ". . . the most significant lesson I've learned about preaching has only come in the last few years. After decades of teaching preaching. After years of studying homiletics. After long hours analyzing great preachers and their sermons for common preaching principles. After preaching hundreds and hundreds of my own sermons. After grading thousands of student sermons. . . . As I began to compare what I had learned over the years with what the Bible showed me about Jesus' preaching, everything seemed so obvious I couldn't believe I hadn't seen it before. . . . Why don't we preach like Jesus?"

¹⁰⁹ Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 45.

¹¹⁰ David Jackman, "The Hermeneutical Distinctives of Expository Preaching," in *Preach the Word*, eds., Leland Ryken and Todd Wilson (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 20.

¹¹¹ Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 26.

¹¹² Lewis, *Learning to Preach Like Jesus*, 20.

of speech and pictorial language.¹¹³ He told stories, often providing the most unusual plot resolutions which left people astounded.¹¹⁴ The most important thing one can say about Jesus as communicator is that he “got through” to his listeners. Perhaps the second most important thing we can say is that he never bored anyone to death.

Third, the evangelical community can rest comfortably that we have ample warrant for preaching AND teaching, for *kerygma* AND *didache* in our service of worship. We can embrace the truths of Scripture and drink deeply from the Living Water. However, we also can learn something from those who have less to say, but have spent more energy and employed more creativity learning how to say it well. There is no virtue in having a high view of Scripture, and therefore more to say in a sermon, if you have not learned to say it well. Those who have never preached an inductive sermon should try one on for size. Others, whose sermons always consist of a thesis and a series of propositions, might experiment with narrative for a change. As some pundit once said, if the only tool you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. Perhaps it is time for evangelical preachers to consider expanding their tool kits even as they reaffirm their commitment to expounding the Word! Humility and a teachable spirit, not triumphalism and sloganeering, will make our ministers better preachers. Better preachers will produce better sermons, and better sermons will bless, feed, and strengthen congregations.

¹¹³ Ibid., 26, 47, 82. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 156; Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 196-202.

¹¹⁴ Think of how Jesus’ original listeners heard the story of the Pharisee and the Publican in which the Publican was justified and not the Pharisee; or the story of the Good Samaritan, in which the religious leaders of the Jews did not act lovingly, while the despised Samaritan did; or the story of the prodigal son which betrays the wicked, unforgiving heart of the “righteous” older son. The question of plot reversal is key to Eugene Lowry’s, *The Homiletical Plot*.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

In light of the changing context of our world and the New Testament teaching on preaching and worship, the **purpose** of this dissertation is to revisit the interplay between preacher and listener. In light of the radical shifts that have taken place as we have moved from print age to digital age, how does the preacher accomplish the preaching task today in a Postmodern, digitally-massaged age?¹¹⁵ The **goal** is to provide guidance for preachers to become better communicators of the gospel by making first steps towards a contemporary theology of Word and World. In order to accomplish this research goal and provide this needed guidance, this Doctor of Ministry dissertation will begin with an introductory discussion of preaching in evangelical churches, looking particularly at preaching and teaching on preaching among confessional Presbyterians.¹¹⁶ What is expository preaching? Why is this method of preaching the preferred (at times, only) form of preaching embraced by many evangelicals? Guiding the discussion is the useful rubric found in Question/Answer 159 of the Larger Catechism.

Question 159: How is the Word of God to be preached by those that are called thereunto? Answer: They that are called to labor in the ministry of the Word, are to preach sound doctrine, diligently, in season and out of season; plainly, not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; faithfully, making known the whole counsel of God; wisely, **applying themselves to the necessities and capacities of the hearers**; zealously, with fervent love to God and

¹¹⁵ Postmodernism will be explained later in more detail. For the moment, Postmodernism may be defined as that world view which replaces the Modernist worldview. Postmodernism rejects the objective, structured, ordered, and purposive world of Modernism and asserts, instead, a world that embraces the subjectivity and relativity of truth.

¹¹⁶ This is a concept-based dissertation, so there is no project associated with a particular act of ministry. Rather the dissertation seeks to resolve an issue that affects ministry in the church-at-large.

the souls of his people; sincerely, aiming at his glory, and their conversion, edification, and salvation.¹¹⁷

Key to this project will be unpacking the phrase in bold, “applying themselves to the necessities and capacities of the hearers.” This dissertation will make use of the multi-perspectival approach pioneered by Reformed theologian, apologist, and ethicist, John Frame. Thus, this dissertation will unfold with chapters on the context of our preaching, the norms of our preaching, and the experience of the listeners. In lieu of a chapter devoted to a review of literature, an extensive annotated bibliography on books on preaching is included as Appendix B.

The introductory chapter will be followed by chapter two which considers the broader context of preaching, namely a world that has been heavily influenced by the ideas and cultural patterns of Postmodernism. This chapter will survey standard works on communication theory to determine the significance of shifting from a print culture to a digital culture and the implications of that shift for preaching. The communications shift is closely related to historical and philosophical trends associated with the movement from modernity to Postmodernity. This chapter will examine this broader context as well. Of particular interest in this chapter is the question, How does an image-based culture affect the way we communicate, especially the way we communicate from the pulpit?

Chapter three will examine relevant biblical and theological norms. First, I will examine the data of the New Testament to determine the nature of the preaching and teaching of Jesus. The purpose of this examination is to answer the question, how did Jesus preach the Good News to a culture characterized by “primary orality” as its dominant means of communication. Second, I will consider the Second Commandment

¹¹⁷ The Larger Catechism, Q. 159. Internet. Available at <http://www.creeds.net/reformed/Westminster/larger2.html> [Accessed 10 September 2008].

and its prohibitions against images. The purpose of this examination is to determine how the Scriptures address issues raised by preaching to those in an image-based, digital culture. This section will interact with the Larger Catechism's teaching on the Second Commandment.

Chapter four will look closely at the "capacities of the hearers." This chapter will survey a number of issues related to the hearing of the Good News, including the use of metaphorical language, story, imagery, images, and imagination. Building upon the work in chapters two and three, this chapter surveys the use of language and explores theories and concepts of communicating to those who are fully immersed in a Postmodern, digital world. A brief survey of homiletical methods employed by preachers outside the evangelical tradition will provide the context needed to understand better this project

Chapter five will consider the focused context of preaching as a part of the service of worship. Specifically, this chapter will look at two worship trends: Emerging Church and Ancient/Future faith, both of which are evidence of a desire for holistic worship. If wholeness (*shalom*) is a biblical desideratum, then preaching and its worship setting should be designed to facilitate wholeness. This demand for wholeness will be considered in light of the traditional Protestant focus on Word—and the pressing need for a better model.

Chapter six will offer a series of practical suggestions for the preacher who is interested in communicating the Good News more effectively. A concluding section will note areas for possible further research.

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The amount of relevant literature for this research project is massive. Therefore, the works discussed here are representative and selective of the much larger body of literature. The first section will consider a few key works on Postmodernism and communication theory. The second section will consider works on preaching and will include two categories¹¹⁸ of books on preaching: 1) works by the broader church community, and 2) works by Presbyterian and Reformed authors.¹¹⁹

Works on Postmodernism

The last two decades have seen an explosion of works on Postmodernism. Among the many volumes available, *Postmodern Pilgrims*, by Leonard Sweet, is one of the best introductions to our strange, new world.¹²⁰ Sweet argues that our Postmodern world can be explained by the acronym, EPIC: E= experiential; P= participatory; I= image-driven; C= connected. For Sweet, the Church must be aware of these primary characteristics of our contemporary, Postmodern world and engage this world, not by insisting on Modern (Enlightenment Project) ways of thinking, but by returning to the biblical patterns of being and knowing. As he puts it, “While a worship methodology that is more

¹¹⁸ The annotated bibliography will have several additional categories.

¹¹⁹ Some volumes have already been referenced earlier in this document. Full citations are given here simply for consistency’s sake.

¹²⁰ Leonard Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000). See also his earlier work, *SoulTsunami* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999) for a more detailed examination of the cultural changes facing the twenty-first century Church.

Experiential, Participative, Image-based, and Corrected [sic] will likely be classified as postmodern, its whole life and being inheres in the biblical tradition.”¹²¹

Another more recent volume also seeks to find points of contact between Postmodern authors and biblical Christianity. James K.A. Smith, *Who’s Afraid of Postmodernism*, is subtitled “Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church.”¹²² In this volume, Smith examines some of the key teachings of these three, foundational Postmodern thinkers and discovers points of contact between their critiques of the Modernist (Cartesian) worldview and orthodox, biblical Christianity. As he puts it, “in order for the church to be postmodern, it should be catholic,” defining catholic not in opposition to Protestantism, per se, but as over against “sectarian, provincial, and polemical” forms of Christianity.¹²³

Three other volumes also share this interest in calling the Church to respond to Postmodernism, not by offering Modernist critiques, but by returning to the historic, orthodox faith of the early Church. These books share a common theme, namely, the Church’s need to respond to Postmodernism not by “rational critique” but by biblical faithfulness- by returning to the patterns of worship and faith captured by the early, undivided Church. Robert Webber, widely recognized as a leading authority on worship, offers two volumes: *Ancient-Future Faith* and *The Younger Evangelicals*.¹²⁴ Similar in

¹²¹ Ibid., 157.

¹²² James K. A. Smith, *Who’s Afraid of Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006).

¹²³ Ibid., 132.

¹²⁴ Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999) and *The Younger Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002). Though more propositional in tone, an earlier work by Diogenes Allen, *Christian Belief in a Postmodern World* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989) also finds room for optimism in spite of the Postmodern shift.

tone and content is the work by Roman Catholic journalist, Colleen Carroll, *The New Faithful*, subtitled, “Why Young Adults Are Embracing Christian Orthodoxy.”¹²⁵

Even as other evangelicals have also found reason for optimism in the face of Postmodern challenges,¹²⁶ still others have found much to criticize. Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *Postmodern Times*; Millard J. Erickson, *The Postmodern World*; and David S. Dockery, *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, all have weighed Postmodernism in the balance and found it wanting.¹²⁷ Erickson, *Postmodernizing the Faith*, provides an introduction to Postmodernism and then surveys the wide range of responses offered by evangelicals, from unfavorable opposition to enthusiastic acceptance.¹²⁸

One final volume deserves mention, for it is a bridge volume that links the preceding category with books on preaching. In 2001, Graham Johnston published his Gordon-Conwell D.Min. dissertation under the title, *Preaching to a Postmodern World*, subtitled “A Guide to Reaching Twenty-First Century Listeners.”¹²⁹ In this volume, Johnston discusses the nature of Postmodernity, the challenges of communicating to

¹²⁵ Colleen Carroll, *The New Faithful* (Chicago: Loyola, 2002). Of course, another set of issues is raised by the emerging church movement which seems headed in yet another direction. For an introduction, see Dan Kimball, *the EMERGING church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003).

¹²⁶ Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

¹²⁷ Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *Postmodern Times* (Wheaton: Crossways, 1994); Millard J. Erickson, *The Postmodern World* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2002); David S. Dockery, *The Challenge of Postmodernism* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001). Another negative work, though focusing more on “post-Christian” issues than Postmodernism (though these categories overlap greatly) is Harry Blamires, *The Post-Christian Mind* (Ann Arbor: Vine Books, 1999). Two other works that deal with Postmodernism (among other issues) in a negative way include D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) and David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

¹²⁸ Millard J. Erickson, *Postmodernizing the Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998).

¹²⁹ Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Postmodern World*, with a foreword by Haddon W. Robinson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).

“Postmoderns,” obstacles to communication, “inroads” to the popular culture, and suggestions that will make for better sermon delivery and more effective communication.

Works on Communication Theory

There are several key volumes that provide the background noise for communication in the digital age. Of course, no discussion of modern communication can occur apart from the works of Marshall McLuhan. In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, McLuhan discussed the revolutionary nature of the alphabet, the printed page, and the electronic global village.¹³⁰ Shortly after this, he published a massive work, *Understanding Media*, which examined how the media transform our culture, analyzing “our proliferating technologies” which “have created a whole new series of environments” that affect the way we relate to the world—as well as our awareness of that relating.¹³¹ A more popular work, *The Medium is the Massage*, is a strangely prescient examination of the modern electronic culture and the impact of the new media on those bearing “the psychological conditioning and sensory responses of the old.”¹³²

One of the most interesting authors is Walter Ong, a Jesuit who held professorships in English and Psychology. His 1971 work, *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology* explores the interaction between culture and changing modes of communication.¹³³ In a later work, *Orality and Literacy*, he focused on what was a small

¹³⁰ Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).

¹³¹ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, Critical edition, ed. W Terrence Gordon (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press, 2003), 14.

¹³² Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage* (1967, reprint; Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press, 2001), 94..

¹³³ Walter J. Ong, *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971).

part of his 1971 work, the way in which the dominant mode of communication impacts and transforms culture.¹³⁴ Among other issues, he examines the “psychodynamics of oral culture” and that way in which a typographic culture “restructures consciousness.”

One final work that will be reviewed here is the classic, earth-shaking work on metaphors by Lakoff and Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By* launched a full frontal assault on both objectivism (objects have meaning in themselves apart from relationship) and subjectivism (which would deny any structured account of reality).¹³⁵ Lakoff and Johnson argued that metaphor is not simply a linguistic phenomenon. Rather, our “conceptual system is largely metaphorical” so that “the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor.”¹³⁶ The importance of this work is its bold, head on challenge to Foundationalist notions of correspondence, coherence views of truth. Lakoff and Johnson deny that there is any “absolute truth” and say we have no access to the “whole truth.”¹³⁷ Metaphor is a way of being in the world and relating to reality. They have inadvertently wandered into the theologian’s playground and provided unintended insights into the nature of Scripture—which is filled with metaphor!

Works on Preaching

Among the volumes on preaching by non-Presbyterian and Reformed authors, perhaps no work has been more widely received and highly revered than John A.

¹³⁴ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London: Routledge, 1982).

¹³⁵ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, w/ new afterword (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 182, 180.

Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*.¹³⁸ Broadus draws from classical sources on rhetoric and contemporary (to him) sources to provide a thorough introduction to matters including the selection of the text, the interpretation of the text, the development of the homiletical outline, the various types of sermons (expository sermon, pp. 141ff), illustrating and applying the sermon, and delivering the sermon. Generations of ministers have learned to preach from Broadus and his comments on both expository sermons and the role of narrative are helpful to this study.

Of more recent vintage are the classic works by Fred Craddock, no great fan of expository preaching. His works: *As One Without Authority*, *Overhearing the Gospel*, and finally, *Preaching*, make a strong case for narrative preaching.¹³⁹ Craddock, writing from outside the Reformed tradition, is not saddled with the a-priori expectation of expository preaching, and so provides useful insights into a method of preaching that is not embraced, generally, by Presbyterian preachers. Nevertheless, his is a voice that needs to be heard. His trenchant criticism of preaching “that buries itself in the text, moves through it phrase by phrase, and never comes up for air” is that it “may prove to be ‘unbiblical’ in the sense that it fails to achieve what the text achieves.”¹⁴⁰

From the Congregationalist Church, John Killinger (a sometime Presbyterian) offers his 1985 work, *Fundamentals of Preaching*.¹⁴¹ Killinger provides some valuable

¹³⁸ John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, new and rev. ed., Jesse Burton Witherspoon, ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944).

¹³⁹ Fred Craddock, *As One Without Authority* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971); *Overhearing the Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978); *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985). For the sake of consistency, all preaching texts in this section will be cited as a first, full reference.

¹⁴⁰ Craddock, *Preaching*, 28.

¹⁴¹ John Killinger, *Fundamentals of Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).

guidance regarding the role of preparation in preaching: “A great lawyer once said that a good legal counselor reveals in the courtroom only 20 percent of the careful study he or she has done in preparation for a trial; any more than that would turn both judge and jury against him. This is perhaps a healthy reminder for the preacher.”¹⁴² Killinger notes that expository preaching is helpful because it teaches the Bible, but it “is also a very difficult method to master.”¹⁴³ Among the many matters he addresses are: constructing the sermon, starting and finishing the sermon, illustrating the sermon, and employing style in the delivery of the sermon.

One of the most widely-referenced texts in the evangelical community is the contemporary classic by Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*.¹⁴⁴ The subtitle of this work is “The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages.” While acknowledging the cultural shifts that undermine the practice of preaching, Robinson makes a case that “those who take the Bible seriously” should see the value of expository preaching, for it is “the type of preaching that best carries the force of divine authority.”¹⁴⁵ Robinson discusses the process of moving from text to sermon, methods of illustrating sermons, techniques for capturing the interest of the listeners, and ways to improve the delivery of sermons.

The most recent, and perhaps the most interesting volume to come from the broader church community, is the offering from evangelical preacher and homiletician,

¹⁴² Ibid., 18.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 36. And so he lists “expository” as one of many types of sermons a preacher might use.

¹⁴⁴ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 19-20.

Calvin Miller, *Preaching*.¹⁴⁶ Miller comes out of a tradition that values expository preaching, but has dared to break new ground. He quotes favorably another preacher who says, “The good news is preaching has become all-important in the plan of God. The bad news is, it’s not 1950 anymore.”¹⁴⁷ This volume is chock-full of humorous anecdotes and one-liners that achieve Miller’s desire for “conversational scholarship.”¹⁴⁸ More importantly than the humor, he makes a strong case for what he calls “narrative exposition,” a form of preaching that weds story with propositional truth.¹⁴⁹ Of fundamental importance to Miller is the idea that preaching is “art” and the way to become an artist is to cultivate creativity.

Among Presbyterian and Reformed authors, one of the classic works on preaching is Andrew Blackwood, *The Fine Art of Preaching*.¹⁵⁰ In this enjoyable little volume, Blackwood describes his authorial stance: “the point of view is that of a conservative in Christian belief, one of many who feel that we have much to learn from some of the liberals concerning how to preach.”¹⁵¹ Blackwood offers informed criticism, noting that while “the expository sermon is sometimes best of all,” “practically, the expository

¹⁴⁶ Calvin Miller, *Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 67. His subtitle reveals his intent: “The Art of Narrative Exposition.”

¹⁵⁰ Andrew Blackwood, *The Fine Art of Preaching* (New York: Macmillan, 1946).

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, viii-ix.

sermon is often the worst”¹⁵² This all-too brief volume is sprinkled with wit and valuable advice that would profit every preacher who seeks to improve his preaching.¹⁵³

From the broader Presbyterian tradition and, at that time, Princeton Theological Seminary, comes Thomas G. Long’s, *The Witness of Preaching*.¹⁵⁴ Long discusses the various images of the preacher: herald, pastor, and story-teller. He discusses the exegesis of the text and the process by which the text gives shape to the sermon. He contends that “the gospel is too rich, complex, and varied to be proclaimed through a single sermon form.”¹⁵⁵ The remainder of the book is occupied with refining the sermon form, the various parts of the sermon, images and experiences that enliven the sermon, and resources that are useful to sermons.

A few years after Long’s work was published, Bryan Chapell, now President of Covenant Theological Seminary, published what was declared by *Preaching* magazine to be their book of the year, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, subtitled, “Redeeming the Expository Sermon.”¹⁵⁶ In this volume, Chapell discusses the nuts and bolts of expository sermons- including outlining and structure, illustrations, application, movement from introduction to conclusion, and the redemptive approach to preaching.¹⁵⁷ He says, “expository preaching does not merely obligate preachers to explain what the Bible says,

¹⁵² Ibid., 28.

¹⁵³ Since the author is a minister in a denomination that ordains only men, the masculine pronoun is used in reference to preachers.

¹⁵⁴ Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: John Knox/ Westminster, 2005).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 131.

¹⁵⁶ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

¹⁵⁷ The redemptive approach asks how the text addresses our FCF and how does it provide God’s redeeming work as the solution.

it obligates them to explain what the Bible means in the lives of people today.”¹⁵⁸ Central to his approach to expository preaching is the “FCF,” or, the Fallen Condition Focus. As Chapell defines it, “*the FCF is the mutual human condition that contemporary believers share with those to or for whom the text was written that requires the graces of the passage for God’s people to glorify and enjoy him* (emphasis his).”¹⁵⁹

One final volume and one final multi-volume work are worth noting at this time. In 1986, Sam Logan edited a work consisting of contributions from many Reformed preachers, including faculty members from Westminster Theological Seminary. This work, titled, *The Preacher and Preaching*, is subtitled “Reviving the Art in the Twentieth Century.”¹⁶⁰ This volume boasts among its contributors J.I. Packer, Joel Netherhood, James Montgomery Boice, R.C. Sproul, Sinclair Ferguson, Ed Clowney, and Jay Adams. The emphasis throughout is on the traditional, expository sermon, with further emphases on doctrinal content and application.

The multi-volume set of books is Hughes Oliphant Old’s magisterial six-volume series, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*.¹⁶¹ With volume six now in print, Old has provided a wealth of information about preaching across twenty centuries of church history. All throughout these volumes he provides insight into how preaching was done in a particular age. One who is interested

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 84.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 50.

¹⁶⁰ Samuel T. Logan, Jr., *The Preacher and Preaching* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986).

¹⁶¹ Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, 6 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998-2007).

in the history of expository preaching can find a host of discussions on this topic sprinkled liberally throughout these volumes.

In addition to the volumes on Postmodernism and preaching, additional resources will be consulted as need. Such resources include standard biblical and theological reference works, language resources, biblical commentaries, and biblical/theological monographs.

CONCLUSION

As this project begins, there are a number of inter-related questions that must be answered—and none of these stands alone. Indeed, the answer to one question provides direction that shapes and informs how the next question will be answered. But that is the nature of preaching, for preaching moves from the text, to the preacher, to the audience. No part of this necessary dialogue can be ignored with impunity. What are the lessons to be learned from the preaching of Jesus? How should his preaching style inform the preaching of the contemporary Church as it faces the cultural dominance of Postmodernism and the impact of our digital culture? What can evangelicals, committed to the exposition of Scripture, learn from a close analysis of both culture and the preaching of Jesus? How do we preach with proper regard for the “necessities and capacities of the hearers”? These are the questions that this dissertation will seek to answer—not definitively, but at least in a preliminary way. And, to the extent that is accomplished, this dissertation will point the way towards a contemporary theology of Word and World for evangelical preachers.

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