

# **Preach the Word**

An Introduction to the Art of Preaching

**A Training Course for Lay-Preachers  
and a Refresher for Clergy**

**St. Andrew's Theological Seminary  
Quezon City, Manila**



## Preface

*Preach the Word* is offered as a training manual in preaching for those wishing to become licensed Lay-Readers in the Episcopal Church of the Philippines, since preaching will form such an important part of their future ministry (ECP Canons: Title III, Canon 2, Section 3(e,f)). It may also be of value to clergy who wish to renew and invigorate their preaching. The material is derived from the Homiletics 1 course I have been privileged to teach at St. Andrew's Seminary for several years. It draws upon many sources, but above all *Preacher, Prepare Yourself!* by Tan Jin Huat, a Chinese Malaysian.

I have not hesitated to draw on my 24 years experience as a parish priest in England and am glad to include here an article by Winifred Lane, one of my Lay-Readers when I was Rector of Thrapston in Northamptonshire (1979-89), and a chapter by Christopher Bartlett, a member of St. Margaret's Barming in Kent, my subsequent parish (1989-2003). I am most grateful too for contributions from Dr. Patrick Tanhuanco, Dean and President of St. Andrew's Seminary, the Rev. Fr. Rex Reyes, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, and Tim Lee, my CMS fellow mission partner in Manila for six years. I have also included material from two outstanding preachers of the past: the English Baptist Charles Haddon Spurgeon and the American Methodist Clovis G. Chappell.

I would like to thank Fr. Tomas Maddela, himself a fine preacher, for inviting me, when he was Dean of S.A.T.S., to begin teaching Homiletics I. He took quite a risk as, when training for ordination, I had read just one book on the subject - James S. Stewart's *Preaching in the Teach Yourself* series! But I also had the advantage of a father, the Ven. Richard Daunton-Fear, with a passion for preaching, whose carefully constructed sermons and 'contact with the pew' influenced me from early days. Thanks too to Fr. Carlos Mendez who, when Chaplain of Trinity University of Asia, read the first draft of this manual and made helpful suggestions which I have adopted. He likened it to a Sari-Sari store containing a wide variety of products drawn from sources old and new! Thanks also to Mrs. Charitas Cho for patiently helping me solve some technical problems encountered in putting this book together.

How should this manual be used? Individuals will just read it, but if it is used for a course on preaching in a diocese or deanery, I suggest the course tutor should ask his/her students to read a chapter in advance for discussion in class. After completing the first five chapters, which are basic to the rest, each student should then be asked to prepare a sermon outline, semi-script or full script for one of the most important types of sermon to preach to the class or perhaps to a small congregation. S/he should then hand in the script to the tutor for assessment.

My prayer is that this book may stimulate renewed interest in preaching and, by God's grace, give rise to not a few carefully prepared and well delivered sermons. It lays no claim to be the last word on preaching. New books are being published on this subject all the time!

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## What is Preaching?

### Terminology

Two words are in general use for the preacher's talk, 'sermon' and 'homily':

- 'sermon' is from the Latin *sermo* meaning 'speech', 'discourse' or 'word',
- 'homily' is from the Greek *homilia* meaning 'converse', 'dealing with others', and later 'a conversational exposition of a passage of Scripture'.

Clearly, originally a sermon was thought of as a carefully prepared speech, whilst a homily was a more informal, participative affair, but today the two words are used interchangeably. Another word sometimes used is 'address', again suggesting a formal speech. In the Philippines a sermon is commonly referred to as a 'sharing'. Whilst this is a pleasant term designed to stop preachers showing arrogance, the danger is that it may suggest the sermon is merely the preacher's own few ideas on the passage or topic concerned, whereas s/he is intended to be a channel of *God's* words – 'Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God' (1 Pet.4:11).

### Some Interesting Definitions of Preaching

1. Preaching is '**the bringing of truth through personality**' (Phillips Brooks)

Phillips Brooks was a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Episcopal priest in Boston and then Bishop of Massachusetts (1891-3), one of the foremost preachers of his generation.<sup>1</sup> His definition focuses on the preacher. Each one of us has a unique personality and, when we preach, God uses it as a channel to convey his truth. And so there is a sense in which we should relax when preaching, 'be ourselves' and let our personality engage with those listening as a means of communicating God's message. But preaching is a *two*-way process. The listeners also interact with the preacher. When they nod or smile s/he is encouraged; confronted with frowns, glares or people walking out, preachers can falter! There is a temptation then to try not to offend, but to give in to this is to violate our commission. We must preach the word whether people like it or not.<sup>2</sup> We are called to comfort, instruct and, when necessary, rebuke.<sup>3</sup> Yet we pray that God will enable us to do it with grace, not like 'a bull in a china shop'! We must 'speak the truth in love'.<sup>4</sup>

2. Preaching is '**a manifestation of the Incarnate Word, from the Written Word, by the spoken word**'. (B.L. Manning)

This is a neat statement indeed, a play on three different types of word: Jesus Christ, the Bible and the word of the preacher.

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<sup>1</sup> He composed the Christmas carol 'O little town of Bethlehem'.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jer.1:4-10, Ezek.2:1-8.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim.4:2.

<sup>4</sup> Eph.4:15.

- The ‘Incarnate Word’: Luther speaks of the Bible as the ‘cradle’ of the Christ; the Old Testament looks forward to him, the New Testament tells of him.
- The ‘Written Word’: the sermon is placed after the Bible readings in most of our liturgies since it is intended to expound them. Article 19 names preaching the pure Word of God as one of the two essential marks of the Church. At their ordination service deacons and priests are handed a copy of the Bible as a sign of the authority given them to preach the Word of God. The same point is made again at an induction service in a parish.
- James S. Stewart, once a foremost Scottish preacher, pleads with preachers to let the wonder and excitement of the Christian message they are proclaiming capture them.<sup>5</sup> Others speak of the need to be *real* in preaching and not to give a lecture on academic theology or sociology.

3. Preaching is expounding the Word of God ‘**to meet the *spiritual needs of men by creating for them an encounter with God moving them to better fulfill their God-given vocation***’.  
(J.H. Tan – my italics)

Everyone has deep spiritual needs which can only be satisfied by an encounter with God. That our homily should set up such an encounter is an awesome thought. All power in preaching comes ultimately from the Holy Spirit (Ac.1:8). The quest for it will involve praying to be a channel of the Holy Spirit. Regular prayer, worship and Bible reading are all elements in this. W.E. Sangster cautions:

Nothing can excuse the preacher from the toil of secret thought and prayer. Regret it as he may, his people live in part upon *his* faith. Struggling for the bread of this life, they have so little time to find the bread of any other.<sup>6</sup>

But we can be confident that the Holy Spirit is already at work also in the listeners.<sup>7</sup> There is spiritual hunger in the human heart. ‘No man’s soul,’ declares Stewart, ‘can be satisfied indefinitely with the wretched husks of a materialistic philosophy.’<sup>8</sup> St Augustine cried out to God in his *Confessions*, ‘You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.’ Julian Huxley made the same point when he spoke of there being a ‘God-shaped blank’ inside everyone.

4. Preaching is the exposition of the Word of God contained in Scripture ‘**to bring home its *liberating truth to the hearers, enabling them to understand that truth in relation to the situation of their daily lives in the world...***’ (Alan Richardson – my italics)

This definition from a former Dean of York speaks of the liberation people find when biblical truth is expounded in a way that engages with their daily lives. To achieve this preaching must bridge the gap between the time when the ancient documents of the Bible were written and the mind of people today. I.T. Jones calls it a specialized form of pastoral counseling and declares that, from the preacher’s contact with people’s lives through the week, ‘Ideas for sermons come

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<sup>5</sup> *Preaching* (London: English Universities Press, 1955), pp.37-42.

<sup>6</sup> *Power in Preaching* (London: Epworth, 1958).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Jn.16:8-10.

<sup>8</sup> *Preaching*, p.48.

trooping into his mind like a small army.’<sup>9</sup> Would that it were always that easy! But contact with one’s people certainly teaches us a lot about what is relevant to them. And one needs to be aware of current news in the media. Billy Graham instructed would-be evangelists to prepare their sermons with the Bible in their right hand and the daily newspaper in their left.

5. Preaching is ‘**God actively *probing me, challenging my will, calling on me for decision, offering me succour...***’ (H.H. Farmer – my italics)

Besides encouragement and information a sermon should contain an element of challenge. Some would say action or change is to be expected from the listeners as a result of any effective sermon. But of course sometimes the change is in a person’s understanding which later leads to action. It is often good for a sermon to end on a note of challenge.

### **Is Preaching Outmoded Today?**

In our modern, electronic age is there not a better ‘high-tech’ way of preaching the Word than just having a ‘talking head’ in the pulpit or on the chancel step Sunday by Sunday? In my former parish of Barming in SE England power-point or partially power-point presentations are now used once a month in the sermon slot at the Sunday Family Service.<sup>10</sup> Drama or dance can also sometimes be used to intersperse a sermon. In the 1970s and 1980s David Watson frequently used drama this way in his evangelistic addresses. A more ‘low-tech’ approach would be the use of a classroom blackboard or whiteboard, brought into church for sermon headings, drawings or puzzles; visual aids (objects, pictures etc) are essential for effective children’s talks.

But there is no lasting substitute for the personal rapport of a preacher with his or her listeners. If the complaint is that this allows no questions or discussion of what has been said, John Stott said he sometimes found it good to allow a talk-back or a discussion over a meal following the service.<sup>11</sup>

### **Martin Luther’s Nine Points in a Good Preacher**

Systematic teaching  
a ready wit<sup>12</sup>  
eloquence  
a good voice  
a good memory  
knowing when to make an end  
being sure of his doctrine  
being immersed in the Word  
expecting to be mocked and jeered (*Table Talk*)

*Is anyone prepared to continue?!*

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<sup>9</sup> *Principles and Practice of Preaching* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p.25.

<sup>10</sup> Explained in chapter 16 below.

<sup>11</sup> *I Believe in Preaching*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1982), p.77.

<sup>12</sup> Humor, quick response.

## Sermon Style and Structure

### Preliminary Points

Preaching is a huge privilege and a huge responsibility. Preachers, like the prophets of old, are the ‘mouthpiece’ of God. The people are in church to hear through them the word of God addressed to their situation.

How long should a sermon be? The sermon should not be too long or the listeners get bored and hope and pray for it to end! But five to ten minutes is too short to feed people spiritually in a main Sunday service. ‘Sermonettes breed Christianettes,’ declares Stott! They make them permanent spiritual infants. Fifteen to twenty minutes may be the right length for most preachers. Particularly good preachers can hold a congregation for thirty minutes or more.

Humor is certainly allowable in a sermon at the appropriate time. It removes tension; it breaks down barriers. One can often use it to ease in less popular material. Martin Luther and Bishop Hugh Latimer were renowned for their word cartoons. Many today use humor to good effect. But jokes must always be *relevant* to your subject matter (except as an occasional ‘ice-breaker’ at the beginning of a sermon) or they will detract from the message.

### Style

John Broadus declared a good preaching style has three elements, ‘clarity, energy and elegance’.<sup>13</sup> We shall follow here the fine exposition of these by Tan Jin Huat,<sup>14</sup> which I have somewhat augmented.

#### Clarity

Use *short, familiar words and sentences with the minimum of technical jargon* (and any unfamiliar words explained). John Wesley, an Oxford academic, preached his sermons to his maid before delivering them in the open air to thousands of uneducated coal miners and others. Julius Caesar provides a masterful, if somewhat arrogant, example of clarity in his summary of his visit to Britain: “I came, I saw, I conquered.” In the Latin original it is just three words: *veni, vidi, vici*. Tan urges us to use the language of everyday in preference to academic (or literary) language: ‘begin’ or ‘start’ rather than ‘commence’, ‘get’ rather than ‘acquire’, ‘hope’ rather than ‘aspiration’ and so on.

Shorter sentences too are generally more telling:

In place of ‘He was not sure what he was going to do in the future’

Tan suggests, ‘His future plans were uncertain’.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn, rev. by Vernon Stanfield (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), p.209.

<sup>14</sup> *Preacher, Prepare Yourself!* (Kuala Lumpur: Good News Resources, 2000), pp.264-74.

And in place of, ‘It was not long before he was very sorry that he had said what he had said,’ say, ‘He soon regretted his words’.

### Energy

This means *enthusiasm* or *passion*. It includes *sincerity* (we mean what we say), and *earnestness* (we feel what we mean).

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, a noted Welsh preacher whom many came to hear at Westminster Chapel, London, declared preaching to be ‘Logic on fire...theology coming through a man who is on fire.’

Stott, referring to Lk.24:32 (“Did not our hearts burn within us while [the risen Christ] talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”), commented, ‘It is still truth – Christ-centred, biblical truth – which sets the heart on fire.’ He spoke from experience even though his own presentation of sermons was far from emotional.

### Elegance

We think perhaps of a person’s ‘elegant’ choice of clothing. What then is elegance in speech? According to the Pocket Oxford Dictionary ‘elegant’ means ‘tasteful’ or ‘ingeniously simple’.

- It is the *right choice of a word* or a *memorable phrase*. There is, for instance, an elegance or neatness in B.L. Manning’s definition of preaching as, ‘a manifestation of the Incarnate Word, from the Written Word, by the spoken word.’
- It may be shown by *rhythm* or *rhyme*. A fine example of this is Jesus’ instruction, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Mk.12:17).
- It can be shown by a *brief pithy quotation*, for example Winston Churchill’s wartime response to Hitler, “He has sown a wind; he will reap a whirlwind!”
- Or we might use a *metaphor*. Instead of the bland, ‘The siren went off’, Tan suggests, ‘The siren wailed.’

## **The Structure of a Sermon**

The basic structure of a sermon is very simple; it consists of three parts:

### **Introduction – Body – Conclusion**

#### Introduction

The purposes of the introduction are (a) to arrest the attention of the congregation and (b) to introduce the subject. A poor introduction is like a ‘sleeping pill’ to the congregation (Tan).<sup>16</sup>

For many years it was traditional to start a sermon by announcing a *text* (just one or occasionally two verses) from Scripture, and then give its context and historical background.

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<sup>15</sup> I have taken the liberty of correcting his ‘are’ to ‘were’.

<sup>16</sup> *Preacher*, p.215.

This can still sometimes be very good if the text is powerful and grasps attention, but there are other more imaginative ways which may be used instead:

- Ask a *question*. A fourth year St. Andrew's seminarian (who actually topped her Homiletics I class) began a sermon on discipleship by looking her fellow students, faculty and others present in the eye and asking, "Are you a follower of Christ or only an admirer?" In the same venue, in a sermon based on Lk.2:21-39, I once looked at my mainly young audience and asked, "Are you looking forward to old age?" – which was greeted understandably with bemused cries of "No!"
- Make a *statement* relating to *daily life* or something of *current interest*. For instance, Tan suggests introducing a sermon based on 2 Cor.12:7-10 (St. Paul's 'thorn in the flesh') with the statement, "Almost everyone is conscious of a handicap." Few families are without someone with a handicap so most people present would realize its relevance to them.
- Tell a *story* from life or fiction. Prime Bishop Edward Malecchan introduced a sermon on prayer by describing a current television advertisement for a fast food meal which started with a little girl saying grace while the family waited impatiently. Our attention was riveted.
- Describe vividly in your own words a *Bible scene*. For example, if the Old Testament lesson for the day is the story of Moses and the burning bush (Ex.3), one might begin by saying: 'He had seen many strange sights in his life – but this was something different!...' Some of Jesus' parables cry out for retelling, or indeed reclothing in contemporary dress. A summary of Clovis G. Chapel's imaginative retelling of the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard (Mt.20:1-16) is to be found in Appendix 4. Riding Lights, a Christian drama group based in York in England, wrote for street theater a modern version of the Good Samaritan which they called 'The Good Punk Rocker'. It has been performed many times over, provoking much amusement but also driving home the point of the parable to young and old.
- Take a scene from *literature*. To introduce a sermon on the subject 'Does God Care?' Stewart suggests the vivid picture Carlyle gives near the beginning of *Sartor*. The philosopher is gazing out across the city at midnight from his lofty attic musing on the mingled joys and sorrows, hopes and fears of half-a-million human beings huddled around him. "But I," he exclaims at last, "I sit above it all; I am alone with the stars." Is God like that - an aloof spectator God?<sup>17</sup> Surely Philippine literature can provide many poignant scenes which could be used in this way.

There are lots of other possibilities no doubt. But, whatever your introduction, do not stay in it *too long* or it becomes the main focus of the sermon rather than leading to it. It is best to go quickly in and quickly out, making a smooth transition to the body of the sermon.

Note well: a preacher's opening prayer and greeting are *not* the sermon introduction, merely its preliminaries. The sermon introduction we have talked about here is part of the sermon itself and must be carefully crafted to interest people to listen to the body of the sermon.

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<sup>17</sup> *Preaching*, p.111.

## Body

Its purpose is to unfold the main *substance* of the message. It needs *structure* or it will be a ramble that goes on and on and no-one will remember. What sort of structure? This varies with the type of sermon and what feels right. Look for the *natural divisions* in a text or passage. Consider the following:

- Mt.6:1-18 has, after a brief introduction (v.1), *three* sections: vv. 2-4 on almsgiving, vv.5-15 on prayer (several subsections), and vv.16-18 on fasting. These should form the three sections of the body of your expository sermon.
- Lk.18:9-14, the parable of the Pharisee and the tax-collector has just *two* focuses and therefore the body of your sermon can likewise have just two explaining in turn about Pharisees and Jewish tax-collectors in Jesus' time. The modern counterparts of these can be saved for the conclusion.
- Acts 2:42 is ideally suited for the text of a sermon on the nurture of Christians. It provides four essentials new (indeed all) Christians need:
  - to study the Bible (which contains the apostles' teaching)
  - to have fellowship (belong to a study group perhaps within the local church and join in social activities too),
  - the eucharist (regular worship)
  - regular times of prayer (a daily 'quiet time' with God).And so the body of your sermon would have *four* sections based on these points.
- 1 Cor.1:22-3 again provides a text upon which to base a sermon, this time with *three* points for the body: those who demand visual proof before they believe, those who insist on intellectual argument, and the central message of the Church: Christ crucified as the way to eternal life.

***Generally the best plan is to aim for a three-point structure in the body of your sermon***, but this must not be taken as an invariable rule.

It is best not to announce your points before you come to them ('dangle your skeleton', to use Charles Spurgeon's memorable phrase) or you lose the suspense factor, but the structure of the body should be evident from words such as: "Next let us consider..." or "First... secondly...thirdly...", or simply by an obvious change of topic.

## Conclusion

The purpose is to bring the sermon to a *memorable conclusion* leading to *inspiration, learning and action*. What form should it take?

- perhaps a brief *summary* possibly using alliteration,<sup>18</sup> e.g. the life of Simon Peter might be remembered by three 'Fs' – fisherman, foolish, fearless.

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<sup>18</sup> Several words beginning with the same letter.

- a *poem* or verse of a *hymn*, e.g. to conclude a sermon on ‘love’ one might say, ‘If we open our lives to God’s love it cannot but make an impact upon on us. In the words of Charles Wesley’s famous hymn:

Changed from glory into glory,  
Till in heaven we take our place;  
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,  
Lost in wonder, love and praise.”

- a *challenge*, e.g. “And what is your response?”  
“Now let us put this into practice!”  
“Let us learn from the life of Peter the importance of relying on God rather than our own impulsive desires.”

## Illustrations

By illustrations we mean here not drawings but word pictures, stories from life or fiction. Our sermon may be very Scriptural and propound many sensible points but fail because we have lost our listeners’ attention. They can only concentrate on serious matters for a relatively short period and need some light relief. Stories provide this. They are like windows in an otherwise unbroken wall.

- They hold people’s attention
- They can recapture the attention of some whose minds have wandered
- They are important means of driving home points the preacher has made.

Regarding the last point, the preacher might state Christ’s noble exhortation to ‘love our enemies’ but to the listeners it might seem totally unrealistic until a true story is told of someone who actually followed it. Take the case, for instance, of Corrie ten Boom whose family in Holland during World War 2 sheltered Jews fleeing from the Nazis. After a while they were detected and thrown into prison camp where her father and elder sister died. It was a horrible ordeal, but amazingly one in which many prisoners including Corrie came to deeper faith. After the war she addressed a rally on ‘loving one’s enemies’, but when afterwards the very camp guard who had deeply humiliated her sister came up to her and held out his hand, she was appalled. Only with prayer and huge effort did she force her hand to take his – and found a wonderful spiritual release and joy.<sup>19</sup>

The **sources** of illustrations are as wide as life: nature, family life, personal reminiscences, books, the media, the internet (including Facebook of course!), advertisements and so on. Any particularly good stories that might be helpful in future sermons should be recorded and stored by the preacher. One can use a notebook, a card catalogue, or an electronic storage system (flash disk or whatever). To save endlessly looking through your whole collection of illustrations for the one you want, it is important to make an index using key words such as ‘faith’, ‘love’, ‘war’,

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<sup>19</sup> The story is told towards the end of her best-selling book *The Hiding Place* (1975).

‘stewardship’ etc. Certain books of sermon illustrations have in fact been published which some preachers find helpful. But one’s own collection of illustrations is likely to be more personal, and there’s not the risk that someone listening will smile and say, “Heard that one before!” Besides actual illustrations it is valuable also to record striking quotations, who uttered them and when. These too may come in useful sometime.

How many illustrations should one use in a sermon? It is impossible to generalize. Some would say, aim to have an illustration for each major point of a sermon. Clovis G. Chappell scattered them liberally around using as many as three or four to drive home points he was making. But some of us may feel that is wasteful of our precious stock of material! If one is preaching on a Bible story, its own drama may provide enough interest without any modern illustrations. But, in general, a sermon that does not contain at least *one or two* added illustrations, risks being rather boring.

Make sure they are *relevant*, though, or they will detract from your message - people will remember the story but not the point you were making! For the same reason do not spend *too long* telling them. Quickly in, quickly out is best. And please, please try to *look your congregation in the eye* and *tell* the story, rather than reading it out of your notes or from a book, or much of its impact will be lost. This is especially true with stories from your *own life* – *never* read those from your script!

## The Preparation of Sermons

### Preliminary Points

The preacher should always be a student or else, faced with preparing sermons weekly, s/he may well run dry. S/he should always, if possible, have a book 'on the go' – bed-time reading? Biographies and autobiographies of Christians are especially instructive about living the Christian life. Valuable also are the writings of C.S. Lewis, not just his children's 'Narnia Stories' but his more serious books such as *Mere Christianity*, *The Four Loves*, *The Problem of Pain* and, in a lighter vein, his science fiction trilogy and 'tongue in cheek' *Screwtape Letters*. One should be abreast too of novels in the public eye, such as Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Philippine classics will of course also be valuable for making telling points in sermons. It would be good if every deanery built up a stock of such books which could be lent to its preachers.

It is even more important for a preacher to be immersed in the Scriptures. As committed Christians we need to have a daily *Quiet Time* with God for Bible reading, reflection and prayer. The ECP Ordo-Calendar provides Old and New Testament lessons and a psalm under Morning (and Evening) Prayer for every day in the year, which we can use if we have no other daily Bible reading system.

We need to put our very best into our sermon preparation. It demands hard work. Our preparation should not be at the mercy of our moods. We must not wait to feel inspired before we start!

People will generally listen and find value in a sermon:

- a) If it contains a *divine* element (Scriptural teaching etc) and not just human opinions, stories and jokes. If this is lacking the sermon will appear shallow, lightweight.
- b) When they perceive something in it is *relevant* to their lives. So the preacher needs to mix what is immediately relevant and interesting with what is of 'ultimate' relevance and will deepen their faith. (Tan)
- c) When it is '*people-centered*'. (Contains stories)
- d) When it is *clearly presented* and *structured* and not just rambling.
- e) When it evidently *matters to the preacher*.
- f) If there are elements of *suspense* and *surprise*. (These tricks are learnt gradually and must stop short of leaving people in a state of shock, unable to listen to what follows!)

### The Actual Preparation of the Sermon

1. Give yourself enough *time*. Start thinking and praying about the sermon at least *one week* before, if possible. If you have to prepare *two* sermons a Sunday, try to complete one by the previous Wednesday, the other by Friday. (Stewart)

2. The key thing is to find an *idea* – a seed-thought which gradually develops into a fully-fledged sermon. This may arise out of:
  - A pressing matter from daily life, e.g. after a typhoon, ‘Why does God allow natural disasters?’ Or, with a general election approaching, one might preach on a Christian’s responsibilities under democracy.
  - More often you will need to pray and then carefully read the set lessons for the Sunday concerned; then *summarize* them, noting any *unifying theme* (Stott advises ‘isolate the dominant thought’ of a passage), any particularly *striking verses*. You do not have to use all three Bible readings in your sermon. It is certainly permissible to focus on just one or two, or even occasionally the psalm.
3. One does not have to settle the whole sermon right away. I.T. Jones<sup>20</sup> advises that next one should go away and do other work or, better still, some leisure activity to allow the *subconscious mind* to get to work.
4. Return the same day or later in the week and reread the set lessons and your notes. Then read a *Bible commentary* on at least your main passage to get a better understanding of it, and perhaps consult a *Bible handbook* or *dictionary* on key words, making notes. These give essential information about the meaning and historical setting of your Bible passage. If you do not have these Bible aids, see if you can borrow them from your parish priest or the Diocesan Center. If they lack them, begin saving up - or find a kind sponsor to provide them!
5. After prayer add to your notes, in any order, any other thoughts, illustrations, quotations, jokes etc that may be relevant. (You may not use them all.)
6. Ask God to bring to your mind a clear *structure* for the sermon then, perhaps moving from your desk to a comfy chair or even lying on the floor (!) *reflect on* all your material, trying to work out the *main points* and their *subsections* for the body of the sermon. Only then work out and add the introduction and conclusion.
7. Write out your *skeleton* (outline) – the main points and sub-points with illustrations and quotations (if you have them) of the whole sermon.
8. Then write out the sermon in *full* using headings for its sections and with illustrations clearly marked. (Rewrite if necessary.)
9. Read it through *several times* until you thoroughly know your script<sup>21</sup> and will not just read it out in church. In time it should be more like an actor’s prompt.
10. Perhaps then ask someone to listen as you deliver a *trial run* of the sermon and to make constructive comments.

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<sup>20</sup> *Principles*, pp.125-8.

<sup>21</sup> I confess my final read through is normally while the Old Testament lesson and Epistle are being read in church!

## The Delivery of Sermons

### Some Introductory Matters

What is it you most fear about preaching sermons? For many it is simply the thought of standing up in public and speaking to a crowd of people. Will I have something worthwhile to say? What if they get bored? What if I dry up? Will I be heard? What will my friends and family think of me putting myself above them, or being so ‘religious’? I simply can’t do it! Feeling like this, a person needs to take hold of some of the great assurances of Scripture such as St. Paul’s statement, ‘I can do all things in him who strengthens me’ (Phil.4:13), realizing that, though we are inadequate, God can enable us to do this task - and then we must take the plunge. Thomas Carlyle said, “Every noble work is at first impossible.” So it is with effective preaching, but with prayer, commitment and perseverance it becomes possible for many people, likely and unlikely, shy as well as confident.<sup>22</sup>

An important point to observe is that one should adapt one’s sermon to the *number* and *nature* of the people present. Fr. Lino Nicasio gives an amusing anecdote:

A city preacher went to a barrio chapel. He found only one farmer as audience. The preacher asked the farmer if it was alright for him to preach to him only. The farmer replied, “Well, if I were going to feed the cows and only one showed up, I’d feed her.” Encouraged, the preacher proceeded with an hour-long homily. Afterwards the preacher asked the patient farmer what he thought of his homily. The farmer said, “Well, if I was going to feed the cows, and only one showed up, I’d feed her, but not with a whole truckload of hay!”<sup>23</sup>

So one’s sermons must be of a style suited to the audience. If many are present a longer, more formal, sermon will be needed, whilst if there are few, a more informal, perhaps interactive style will be more appropriate. A more educated, city congregation will generally need a carefully reasoned out message, a less educated, rural audience will require something less intense which includes stories that relate to their situation.

Many a good sermon is spoilt by poor delivery. So let us consider now what makes for a good delivery style.

### To Read or Not to Read

Perhaps the two greatest perils for a preacher to avoid are *rambling* and *reading*. In chapters 2 and 3 we have considered how best to avoid rambling - by careful preparation and structuring what you have to say. What of reading? It seems that many people assume that the *only* way to

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<sup>22</sup> In Appendix 1 Winifred Lane shares many other verses of Scripture that encouraged her, as a very shy person, faced with preaching for the first time.

<sup>23</sup> L.E. Nicasio, *How to Preach So People Will Listen* (Manila: Logos Publications, 1993), p.28.

preach is by reading aloud a sermon script from start to finish. No wonder many think sermons boring and to be avoided if at all possible! Reading the whole sermon certainly enables delivery of all the preacher intended to say; it allows a complete treatment of the subject and hopefully avoids repetition. It may also reduce the preacher's nervousness. But at what a cost! It means loss of eye-contact with the people; it mutes any passion the preacher might feel for his or her subject and scarcely engenders excitement in the hearers. Reading should be a last resort. So what are the alternatives?

a) Preaching from a Full Script or Semi-Script

The alternative to reading is preaching, and you can preach from notes and even from the full manuscript, if you have taken the trouble...to absorb it, and if your mind is dominated by the sense of [the] central I-thou relationship. (H.H. Farmer)

Farmer's last phrase seems to be referring to the preacher's awareness that s/he is in God's hands. To preach in this way requires the preacher to have read and reread the sermon script until s/he is thoroughly familiar with its contents and need not read it when the moment for delivering it comes but just refer to it from time to time for telling phrases, quotations, dates and statistics. Bible quotations can best be read straight from a Bible or, as with other quotations, be distinctively marked in the script. Illustrations should also be clearly marked in the script but are best *told*, looking at the people, especially if they are stories from one's own life! For most stories I simply put a heading in my script, marking it with a red cross, then I *have* to tell it! In case it may help anyone I have reproduced in Appendix 2 a hand-written semi-script which I actually preached from, and a full script typed later. A semi-script prevents simply reading the text and enables sustained eye-contact with the congregation. If such scripts are set out clearly showing the main and sub points, and with parallel statements placed one beneath the other etc, this facilitates, I believe, the powerful delivery of the sermon.

b) Free Preaching after Careful Preparation

This is a real exercise of faith, but it is the method that has been used by many of the great preachers.

The best method is, in my judgement, that in which the man does not extemporise the matter, but extemporises the words; the language comes to him at the moment, but the theme has been well thought out. (C.H. Spurgeon)

Spurgeon clearly chose his subject and explored it fully, but then left it to God to direct his actual words. Clovis G. Chappell also followed this method. Clarence E. Macartney made an outline which he absorbed then left at home. F.W. Robertson took his sermon outline with him into the pulpit.

c) Impromptu

The preacher has no notes and has made no preparation, preaching spontaneously. He may believe he is relying on the direct leading of the Holy Spirit (perhaps claiming for support

Mk.13:11 which, in fact, refers to a totally different situation). Too often the product is a repetitious and shallow ramble! Stott relates an amusing anecdote (fable?):

Once upon a time there was an Anglican clergyman who was lazy. He had long ago given up the bother of preparing his sermons. He had considerable native intelligence and fluency of speech, and his congregation were simple people. So he got by pretty well with his unprepared sermons. Yet in order to live with his conscience, he took a vow that he would always preach extempore and put his trust in the Holy Spirit. Everything was fine until one day, a few minutes before the morning service began, who should walk into church and find a place in one of the pews but the bishop, enjoying a Sunday off. The parson was embarrassed. He had managed to bluff his uneducated congregation, but he was much less sure of his ability to hoodwink the bishop. So he went over to welcome his unexpected visitor and, in an endeavour to forestall his criticism, told him of the solemn vow he had taken always to preach extemporaneous sermons. The bishop seemed to understand, and the service began. Half-way through the sermon, however, to the preacher's great consternation, the bishop got up and walked out. And after the service a scribbled note from the bishop lay on the vestry table: 'I absolve you from your vow'!<sup>24</sup>

Impromptu sermons are strictly for emergencies only!

## **Breath**

This should be from the *diaphragm*, the muscles at the top of the stomach, with the voice aimed at the *back row* of the room you are in. Arsenia B. Tan suggests as a useful exercises:

For diaphragmatic breathing exercise, stand erect. Place your hands over your waist at your sides, above your hip bones and below your ribs, fingers toward the front and thumb to the back. Now inhale deeply but easily. See if you can detect an expansion along your waistline. You should feel a distinct pressure when you inhale and a noticeable recession when you exhale.

Stand erect and breathe with your diaphragm. Remember your shoulders should not be permitted to rise when you are standing. Putting your hands over your stomach and panting vigorously through your mouth also will help you develop the habit of breathing from the top of your diaphragm. While you are doing this, it is also advisable to practice making guttural sounds. An excellent drill is to say yuh-yuh-yuh-yuh-yuh-yuh.<sup>25</sup>

Whilst this exercise tends to reduce a class to hysterics it is nonetheless useful to emphasize that public speakers must learn to breathe from their diaphragm not take a shallow breath and speak from the back of their throat which yields only a small, tinny, forced sound.

## **Voice**

J.H. Tan points out that the preacher's voice is his most important asset.<sup>26</sup>  
We all have an 'optimum pitch' in the middle of our range.

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<sup>24</sup> *I Believe in Preaching*, p.211.

<sup>25</sup> *Public Speaking and Speech Improvement for Filipino Students*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Manila: National Book Store, 1991), p.27.

<sup>26</sup> This statement and those that follow are taken from *Preacher, Prepare Yourself!* pp.274-76, but I have added my own examples

Rising inflection implies question, doubt, uncertainty, incompleteness, e.g. “Can I believe that?”  
“Is he really coming to dinner?”

Downward inflection implies thought completed, certainty, e.g. “I am sure that that is so.”  
“Eating too much ‘fast food’ is bad for you.”

The important thing is to *vary* one’s pitch. One’s voice should in fact reflect the motion of one’s words – fast, slow, up, down. This is true also for the reading of Scripture.

- In the famous contest between David and Goliath recorded in 1 Samuel 17 we read, ‘When the Philistine drew nearer to meet David, David ran quickly towards the battle line to meet the Philistine’ (v.48). The first clause should be said with slow deliberation, picturing the giant lumbering forward clad in heavy armor; the second should be read at speed (without sacrificing clarity) to reflect the swift movement of the young David.
- Ecclesiastes 3 provides a wonderful set of contrasts:  
A time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
a time to kill, and a time to heal;  
a time to break down, and a time to build up;  
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn, and a time to dance. (vv.2-4)

In general the positive actions: be born, heal, build up, laugh, dance should be said with rising inflection; the negative ones: die, kill, break down, weep, mourn should be said with downward inflection. The exception is ‘a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted’ since a person stoops down to plant a seed/seedling but pulls up an expended plant which is no longer of use, the planting should be said with downward inflection, the plucking up with the voice rising, reflecting the actions.

*Please practice reading these two passages putting in the rising and falling inflections.*

The same approach can be applied to our preaching. It would be good to read through a sermon script looking for such contrasts and practice saying them aloud with these differing inflections. Varied pitch is much more interesting to listen to than a monotone.

The general pace of a preacher’s voice should be neither too fast - or the words will be gabbled and the people unable grasp what is being said, nor too slow - or people become bored and may play a game guessing what will be said next! Stewart declares, ‘Preaching ought to resemble a purposeful, rhythmic march rather than a slow paced saunter’.<sup>27</sup>

Enunciation and pronunciation are of great importance. *Enunciation* is the art of sounding individual letters, syllables and words distinctly. This enables people to hear and understand what the preacher is saying. Spurgeon roundly condemned those who produced ‘a thick, inarticulate utterance in which no word is complete, but nouns, adjectives, and verbs are made

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<sup>27</sup> *Preaching*, pp.159-60.

into a kind of hash.’<sup>28</sup> Right *pronunciation* is of course important too if one is not to incur the irritation of some of the congregation. If in doubt ask advice, particularly when it comes to the names of people and places in the Bible. Spurgeon urged preachers not to speak with their mouths half closed. ‘Open wide the doors from which such goodly truth is to march forth,’ he declared, and he cautioned against the annoying habit of repeatedly clearing one’s throat.<sup>29</sup> Today, to avoid the latter menthol candies are an excellent remedy!

## Pauses

‘Meaningful silence is a very useful tool in the hands of the preacher,’ says Tan.<sup>30</sup> E.g. after the rhetorical question, “And what do you think of that?” a preacher must pause for effect.

- A pause creates *suspense* and therefore interest.
- It is also useful to allow time for *reflection*.
- It is clearly appropriate too before or after a closing *prayer*.

Spurgeon appreciated the value of pauses. ‘Pull up short every now and then,’ he advised, ‘and the passengers on your coach will wake up.’ And he related that once, ‘A minister who saw that the people would sleep, sat down and observed, “I saw you were all resting, and I thought I would rest too.”’<sup>31</sup>

## Dress and Posture

The preacher should be clean and neatly dressed. The posture should be upright not slouched. Occasionally one may lean over the pulpit or lectern to make a point but the whole sermon should not be delivered in this way. Tan points out it is inappropriate to stand with arms folded, hands on hips or in one’s pocket, or cracking knuckles, while speaking.<sup>32</sup>

We need to show the dignity that befits our role as bearers of messages from God, though of course this does not rule out the use of humor from time to time, and our posture will then be more relaxed. In the old days it was thought laughter was inappropriate in church, but those days have fortunately long gone.

It is recommended by some that at the start of a sermon a preacher should look at the congregation and smile before beginning to speak. This may help a nervous preacher gain confidence and bring rapport with the listeners.

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<sup>28</sup> C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, new edn (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1954), p.114. Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-92) was a renowned Baptist preacher who drew thousands to listen to his sermons at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in Southwark, south London. Many of his sermons are still in print.

<sup>29</sup> *Lectures*, pp.114, 124.

<sup>30</sup> *Preacher*, p.279.

<sup>31</sup> *Lectures*, p.138.

<sup>32</sup> *Preacher*, p.286.

## Expression and Eye-Contact

The preacher's expression should be *appropriate* to the occasion. At a wedding s/he should smile and share in the general happiness; at a funeral s/he should appear serious rather than sad, as s/he is looked to for encouragement and strength by the bereaved.

Eye-contact with the listeners is *vital*. Without it the preacher does not engage with them and they quickly lose interest. But it should be eye-contact right around the room, not staying with any one face too long, even though the expression of some interested people may seem to draw the preacher's attention with magnetic power! On the other hand one's gaze should not flit about too quickly. Tan recommends speaking a complete sentence to one person before moving away.<sup>33</sup>

With eye-contact you can see the expressions on people's faces – whether they are interested or bored – and can adjust your presentation accordingly and, in due time, know when to make an end.

## Gestures

Gestures can be a useful means of emphasizing a point. They also attract the attention of those whose attention is wandering. I was once in St. Stephen's Church, Manila, listening to Dr. Edilberto Banzuelo preaching about the four factions in the Corinthian church (1 Cor.1). He neatly summed up the situation with these words:

Some said, "I follow Apollos because he's eloquent."

Others said, "I follow Peter because he's zealous."

Others, "I follow Paul because he's a thinker."

And yet others, "Unless Christ comes down from heaven, we worship no-one."

As he made the last statement he raised his right hand and brought it suddenly down indicating Christ's descent. The action perfectly matched the words.

It is possible, however, to overdo gestures so that they lose their effect and tire the congregation. More extrovert people find gestures come naturally; those more introverted struggle to use them at all. Perhaps the best advice is to *be yourself*.

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<sup>33</sup> *Preacher*, p.283.

## Different Types of Sermon

People are quite surprised to learn there are a number of different types of sermon. We shall look at the most common types and then some that are less common.

### 1. Based on a Text

While I was growing up the standard Sunday sermon was based on a verse (or occasionally two verses) of Scripture chosen by the preacher often from a lesson set for the day, but sometimes from elsewhere. He would begin his sermon with the words: “My text this morning comes from the ..... verse of the ..... chapter of the book .....” He might then give the background and context of the verse in his introduction before dividing the text into sections and drawing points from each. At the end he might issue a challenge or, by way of a summary, recite the verse once more.

One has to find a verse with enough ‘meat’ in it for this to be a profitable approach, but there certainly are many verses which can be handled in this way, amongst them Micah 6:8, Acts 1:8 and John 14:6, each of which divides easily into three parts.

### 2. Expository Sermons

The expository sermon would appear to be the most favored form of preaching today. Its method is to take a passage of Scripture, such as the Gospel for the day, and expound (explain) its meaning verse by verse, section by section, or simply take points out of it. Quite often a preacher will see it his or her responsibility to take one or more points from *each* of the set readings for the day. Such an approach risks collecting an amorphous bag of unrelated points which leave no lasting impression on the mind of the hearers! Unless there is a common theme, or a link can be found between the readings, it is better to stick to just one Scripture passage.

In this manual separate chapters have been given to preaching on the psalms and Jesus’ parables. They are indeed two attractive fields for expository preaching, but of course the rest of the Bible provides many more.

### 3. Preaching on a Bible Character

Focusing on a Bible character can be a most pleasant task as it is entirely ‘person centered’. At a fiesta service it is natural to focus on the life of the church’s patron saint. Again, if a particular person features in one of the set Bible readings for a Sunday it provides an opportunity to study his or her life. The method involves accumulating information on the particular character to get as full a picture of the person’s life as possible and then selecting perhaps three main incidents. These may well provide good examples to follow, failures to avoid, commands to obey, or promises of God to claim for ourselves, such as God’s promise to Joshua in Josh. 1:9.

#### 4. Using a Topic or Theme

There are times when it is important to focus on a topic that is of relevance to people's lives and give it a well-rounded treatment in a sermon. It might be, as an election approaches, 'Our Responsibilities within Democracy'; it might be, after conflict breaks out, 'The Christian Attitude to War'; or, faced with the death and destruction caused by a flood or an earthquake, 'Natural Disasters and the God of Love'. One could also preach on some aspect of the Christian life such as love, wisdom, faith, stewardship, and many other topics. Such a sermon needs careful research in the Bible, preferably with the aid of a concordance or Bible dictionary, and perhaps consulting the internet and other secular sources of information.

Preaching on political and social issues as a form of protest is a particular form of topical preaching.

#### 5. Evangelistic Preaching

Preaching the Gospel and calling people to commit or recommit their lives to Christ is something we tend to leave to the high profile evangelists such as Billy Graham (last century) and his son Franklin (today). This is particularly the case if we have not ourselves had a conversion experience we can date but rather have gradually grown in faith and commitment (as indeed is my case). But there are not enough such evangelists to do the job. In nominally Christian countries like the Philippines and Britain people need to be regularly challenged in local churches to fully commit their lives to Christ. Without such commitment, sin in its many forms reigns both within the Church and in society. To preach evangelistically first we need to have a clear understanding of the Gospel and then to learn how to communicate it attractively.

#### 6. Preaching on Some Part of the Liturgy

If a new liturgy is introduced it is vitally important to devote a sermon to explaining its principles. On the other hand if the liturgy a church is using is so familiar that it is no longer holds interest for the worshippers – they look around the church, talk and do not properly join in its united parts - an occasional sermon on some part of it can help to re-stimulate their interest. In a eucharist one could preach on the initial 'Collect for Purity' to focus on *why* we worship God, on the Creed to explain the scope of our faith, and so on. At an early morning service the sermon can sometimes focus on the collect for the day, taking it section by section, explaining it and applying it to the congregation to strengthen their faith and deepen their understanding. In a sermon on the liturgy it is important to get everyone to turn to the part being studied and follow it through.

#### 7. Children's Talks

If there is no Sunday School the main sermon on a Sunday can focus chiefly on the children, perhaps even as often as once a month. As children's concentration span is short, successful Bible talks for them must inevitably use pictures or objects to keep their attention, or involve them in action in some way. The talk may be followed by a quiz, a memory verse and action choruses. Today audio-visual electronic aids can be most valuable.

*Just occasionally other types of sermons or sermon substitutes are valuable, such as:*

#### 8. A Sermon on a Hymn

At a Carol Service or on some other occasion where singing is prominent, it might sometimes be appropriate to select a popular hymn, telling the life story of the composer if you can discover it, and then looking at each verse of the hymn in turn explaining its meaning. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* can be helpful in giving information about the author if s/he is famous. There are also some books such as *Hymns that Live* by Frank Colquhoun<sup>34</sup> which give a lot of information about certain hymns. But today probably the best avenue to explore is the internet via 'Wikipedia' etc. A talk such as this could also be given at the meeting of an organization such as the ECW or BSA if hymns are being sung there.

#### 9. The Use of an Interview

In England there is a popular television program called 'Songs of Praise' broadcast on Sunday evenings in which a town is visited, and key people from the community are interviewed about their life story, and invited to select a favorite hymn or worship song to be sung at an ecumenical church service in the locality (shown on TV immediately after the interview). Often very interesting stories are told and testimonies given. Many parish churches in England now put on their own local 'Songs of Praise' every few years, sometimes introduced by the theme tune of the television program. At this event perhaps seven or eight leading members of the community and church are interviewed by the priest and one or two assistants, and after each interview the person's favorite hymn/worship song is sung. It is interesting to learn more about these peoples' lives and it can be particularly moving when some share about the importance of God to them.

An interview with a person of strong faith and admirable character can also occasionally replace the sermon in a normal Sunday service, for instance on Mothers' or Fathers' Day. It can be very helpful to ask a father or mother who has successfully raised children the secret of their success and how far their faith in God has helped them. The interview should be rehearsed beforehand so that the 'interviewee' is not 'thrown' by unexpected questions!

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<sup>34</sup> London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1980.

## Expository Preaching

An 'expository' sermon is one that **expounds** (explains) in some detail the meaning of a passage of Scripture and relates it to life today.

### *Which Passage?*

Normally it is one of the set (lectionary) lessons for the day:

- often the Gospel
- sometimes the other New Testament or the Old Testament reading, or even the psalm.

One can expound *all three* lessons but, if so, it is probably best to select just *one* or *two* striking points from each of them, as one feels led. In preparing the sermon, prayer is essential at all stages. At first one may feel no inspiration at all, but that usually changes as preparation continues.

### Procedure

1. Read the passage through slowly asking God to disclose its message to you.

Look for:

- the *overall theme* (Stott prefers to speak of the 'dominant thought') and the
- the *natural divisions* of the passage (the sections devoted to different subjects)

2. Look at the *context* – the passages immediately before and after yours. If your passage comes from a small book of the Bible (e.g. 1 John) briefly consider the whole book – why and when it was written.

3. Go through the passage again *verse by verse*, preferably with a *commentary*. Keep asking:  
a) what did this mean *for the author*?  
b) what does it say *for today's situation*?

Write down notes as you go along.

Perhaps *three main points* emerge; or possibly there will be a '*feast of good things*' (many small points).

4. Add any relevant illustrations.

5. Add an introduction (perhaps why you chose this passage) and conclusion (perhaps a brief summary and a challenge).

6. Prepare outline of the sermon.

7. Take this or a semi-script<sup>35</sup> or a full script into the pulpit?

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<sup>35</sup> An example of a hand-written semi-script is reproduced in Appendix 2.

Note: A sermon based on a **text** is a special form of expository preaching. Here a very detailed study of the one or at most two verses will provide the main points for the sermon (e.g. four in Ac.2:42). These have to be filled out with information from other passages, using a *concordance* or *Bible dictionary* for key names and terms, and a *commentary* for the actual text and its context. Relate each section of the text to life today.

## Sermons on the Psalms

The psalms can prove a rewarding field for expository preaching. Written by human beings some 3,000 years ago in very different situations from our own, they can yet bridge the gulf of time and space and speak us today. Why? Because they contain intensely personal prayers and statements expressing joys, hopes and fears which find an echo in our own hearts. When C.S. Lewis once fell ill he spent time meditating on the psalms, drawing from them great comfort. Subsequently he published his *Reflections on the Psalms*, which would be an asset to any preacher. I once read a recommendation that, if you are faced with preaching and feel spiritually dry, expound a psalm and the inspiration in it will make up for your own lack of inspiration! I have tried it and proved it true. One can preach a single sermon on a psalm or a short series of sermons on different psalms, each with a different appeal, for there are many that inspire besides Psalm 23.

### Some Background Information

The book of Psalms is the longest book in the Bible and the hymnbook of ancient Israel. The word ‘psalm’ comes from the Greek *psalmos* meaning originally the touch or striking of the strings of a musical instrument. Later it came to mean the songs which the instrument accompanied.

The book of Psalms is in fact five books put together: Pss.1-41, 42-72, 73-89, 90-106, 107-150, each ending with a doxology.<sup>36</sup> Some scholars have suggested there were originally three collections from which these have been drawn:

1. 3-41, an early ‘Yahwistic’ psalter, in which God is almost invariably referred to as ‘Yahweh’ (‘the Lord’ in most English versions). This, consisting entirely of ‘Psalms of David’, was probably completed before the exile in 586 BC, and perhaps originated from the southern kingdom of Judah.
2. 42-89, an ‘Elohistic’ psalter, in which God is referred to more often than not by the Hebrew word for God, ‘Elohim’.<sup>37</sup> This contains some ‘psalms of David’ but also others ‘of the sons of Core’, ‘of Asaph’ etc. Perhaps some of it was originally the collection of the northern kingdom of Israel. But while this might apply to 68, 80, and possibly to the royal psalms 45, 61 and 72, it can scarcely be true of those extolling Zion (Jerusalem - 48, 65, 76, 84) or those obviously from the time of the exile (44, 60, 74, 79, 89). Indeed it is a very diverse collection. Ps.68 is thought by many to have come from the time of the Judges, well before David.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> A short statement of praise to God. Please check for yourself.

<sup>37</sup> Actually this is a plural in the Hebrew and could be translated ‘gods’ but the translation ‘God’ is generally required in the light of the 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment, ‘You must have no other gods beside me’. The plural form may be a hangover from earlier polytheistic days – or is it a hint of the three Persons in one God of Christianity? It could be both.

<sup>38</sup> But if so, v.29 with its reference to Jerusalem must be a later addition. The psalm itself is ascribed ‘to David’.

3. 90-145, a later ‘Yahwistic’ psalter – post-exilic, i.e. after 536 BC (though clearly 137 is from the time of the exile itself). This collection again contains some ‘psalms of David’ though most of its psalms are untitled. It includes various new groups of psalms: several declaring that, even though the Judean monarchy may have ceased, ‘Yahweh is king’ (93, 95, 97, 99); fifteen entitled ‘A song of ascent’ (120-134) were probably used on pilgrimages to Jerusalem; five ‘Hallelujah’ psalms (146-150) bring the psalter to a resounding close. Here also is the longest psalm of all (119) repeatedly affirming the centrality of God’s commandments to life.

The ascriptions or titles of the psalms ‘of David’ etc are quite ancient,<sup>39</sup> but not original. ‘Of David’ can mean either *by* David (like Ps.18, as it is also found in a slightly different form in 2 Sam.22) or ‘*belonging to the Davidic collection of psalms*’. Perhaps a considerable number of psalms in the first Yahwistic psalter were composed by David himself (including Ps.23). It is thought that the ascriptions were written by professional musicians for they often contain musical terms. Their attempts to allocate certain psalms to different incidents in David’s life are sometimes artificial, e.g. in the case of Ps.34.

The psalms are Hebrew poetry, but this does not rely on rhythm and rhyme as we know them. Their *rhythm* depends on the number of ‘tonic accents’ (stressed syllables – as in heavy type in the Gelinau musical setting used in St. Andrew’s Seminary chapel), not on the number of syllables. There is also *parallelism* in the psalms, the second half of the verse largely repeating the meaning of the first (e.g. in 114:1), or developing its meaning (e.g. 1:3), or providing a contrast (e.g. in 1:6). Some psalms are *acrostics*, each verse starting with a new letter of the 22-letter Hebrew alphabet (e.g. Ps.34). Ps.119 is a remarkable feat of Hebrew acrostic poetry glorifying the Law (Torah); it has twenty-two blocks of eight verses, the verses of each block starting with the same letter, working through the Hebrew alphabet, making a total of 176 verses.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the German scholar Hermann Gunkel classified psalms by *type*:

1. Hymns, e.g. 8, 19, 96, 98
2. Communal laments, e.g. 44, 74
3. Royal psalms, e.g. 2, 20, 45
4. Individual laments, e.g. 22, 51
5. Individual songs of thanksgiving, e.g. 18, 30, 32

To which Sabourin added:

6. Wisdom psalms, e.g. 1, 119

### **Preparing Your Sermon**

1. Choose a reasonably short psalm (not more than 16 verses) or part of a longer one.
2. Read right through the psalm to find out:
  - the type of psalm

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<sup>39</sup> They are in the Septuagint, the famous Greek translation of the Old Testament started in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

- its general theme
- its natural divisions (sections) if these are clear<sup>40</sup>

Write all this information down.

3. If possible read a commentary on it, making notes.
4. Go back through the psalm
  - working out the meaning of each verse
  - relating it, if possible, to yourself and other people's lives

### **Delivering Your Sermon**

1. Make sure all your congregation have a copy of the psalm before them - print it on the service sheet if there are Bibles available.
2. In your introduction say *why* you have chosen this particular psalm, and perhaps give a few general points about the book of Psalms (as above). Give any information you have from a commentary on the *origin* of the psalm, pointing out its main theme and structure (if easily seen) and concluding, "Let's now look at each section (or verse) in turn".
3. Then go through each section (or verse) briefly and clearly showing its *meaning* and its *relevance* to our lives. You can amplify the points with illustrations if you think appropriate, but it's not always necessary.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> A Japanese preacher presenting Ps.86 could find no clear structure so chose instead to expound the psalm looking at the topics: 'Who am 'I'?', 'Who is the Lord?', 'What I want', and 'What is my decision to do'. It was effective.

<sup>41</sup> Please turn to Appendix 3 for a summary of a sermon on Psalm 1 by the renowned 20<sup>th</sup>-century American Methodist preacher Clovis G. Chappell.

## Sermons on Parables

The parables of Jesus are a delightful field for expository preaching. The characters are vividly portrayed and the scenes are so real. But what does the word ‘parable’ actually mean? It comes from the Greek *parabole* meaning literally ‘something thrown down beside’. It is a story or metaphor from life containing a moral or spiritual lesson; hence the Sunday School definition, ‘an earthly story with a heavenly meaning’.

There are a few parables in the Old Testament, for instance in 2 Sam.12:1-6 and Is.5:1-7. Both make their point forcefully. Jewish rabbis also used parables as a way of teaching, for example they likened the Torah (Law) to a plaster put on a wound to cure an injured man. But parables are particularly characteristic of the teaching of Jesus. In all about sixty are recorded, making up about one third of his teaching in the gospels. They range from pithy sayings, such as ‘the blind leading the blind’ (Lk.6:39), to complete stories, such as the Good Samaritan (Lk.10:30-37) and the Prodigal Son (Lk.15:11-32). *How many others can you remember?* There are no parables in the Fourth Gospel, but some moving allegories – the Good Shepherd (Jn.10:1-16) and the Vine (Jn.15:1-11), where every detail is packed with meaning.

### Why did Jesus use Parables?

Jesus’ explanation to his disciples seems very strange:

To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; in order that ‘they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.’ (Mk.4:11-12)

The quotation is from Is.6:9-10. But was Jesus’ intention to *hide* his message and prevent people from being saved? We instinctively recoil from such an idea, aware that he came to earth on purpose to save people. Luke abbreviates the passage in Mark, omitting some of the quotation (Lk.8:9-10), but Matthew adds a statement of Jesus found elsewhere<sup>42</sup>, ‘to him who has, more will be given; to him who has not even what he has will be taken away’ (Mt.13:12). Perhaps we can conclude from this that for the *sympathetic* they are an appeal to the intellect through the imagination, but for the *hostile* they simply appear obscure and make no sense. In Mark 4:11-12 Jesus surely just has his critics in mind and he will not ‘cast his pearls before swine’. The fact is also that he could say things in parables which, had he said them in direct speech, would probably have led to the premature end of his ministry. This is true of the parables of the Good Samaritan (Lk.10:29-37), the Prodigal Son (Lk.15:11-32), and the Wicked Tenants (Mk.12:1-12) – see a commentary if necessary.

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<sup>42</sup> Mt.25:29.

## Interpreting the Parables

From the Early Church to the end of the Middle Ages the predominant approach was allegorical interpretation, where every detail was seen to have a particular significance, a hidden meaning. Take for example Origen's interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan:

The man who fell among thieves is Adam. As Jerusalem represents heaven, so Jericho, to which the traveler journeyed, is the world. The robbers are man's enemies, the devil and his demons. The priest stands for the Law, the Levite for the prophets. The Good Samaritan is Christ himself. The animal on which the wounded man was set, is Christ's body which bears the fallen Adam. The inn is the Church; the two coins, the Father and the Son; and the Samaritan's promise to come again, Christ's Second Advent.<sup>43</sup>

The chief exception was the late 4<sup>th</sup>-century school of theologians associated with Antioch in Syria, who emphasized the literal meaning of Scripture. The renowned preacher trained there, John Chrysostom (meaning 'golden mouth'), counseled:

Interpret the elements in the parables that are urgent and essential...do not waste time on all the details...seek out the scope for which the parable was designed...and be not overbusy with the rest.<sup>44</sup>

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Luther was capable of a form of allegorization of his own based on his reformed teaching,<sup>45</sup> but Calvin was much more straightforward, calling the allegorization of the Fathers 'idle fooleries' and declaring, 'We ought to have a deeper reverence for Scripture than to reckon ourselves at liberty to disguise its natural meaning'.<sup>46</sup> Of the parable of the Unjust Steward he said,

How stupid it is to want to interpret it in every detail! Christ simply meant that the children of this world are more diligent in their concern for their own fleeting interests than the sons of light for their eternal well-being.<sup>47</sup>

When we come to the modern period (the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on) we find this approach cast into a law. Adolf Jülicher in *The Parables of Jesus*, 2 vol.(1888, 1899) declared that each parable is making *just one* point, for example the parable of the Talents (M.25:14-30) is intended to teach, 'A reward is only earned by performance'. He went so far as to declare that all allegorical interpretations within the gospels (e.g. Mk.4:14-20 of the parable of the Sower) are not from Jesus at all but are the work of the Early Church. Hunter points out, however, that as some of the rabbis gave an interpretation of their parables, why should not Jesus have done so too? His interpretations feel natural, not forced like the interpretations of the Fathers.

C.H. Dodd's main contribution in *The Parables of the Kingdom* (1935) is to say that, while most parables originally reflected the central message of Jesus, the arrival of the kingdom of

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<sup>43</sup> Quoted from A.M. Hunter, *Interpreting the Parables* (London: SCM, 1960), pp.25-6 slightly amended.

<sup>44</sup> Homily on Matthew 64.3, qu. Hunter, *Parables*, p.27.

<sup>45</sup> An interesting example is given by Hunter, *Parables*, p.32.

<sup>46</sup> *Harmony on Matthew, Mark and Luke*, III, p.677, qu. Hunter, *Parables*, p.33.

<sup>47</sup> *Harmony*, II, p.177, qu. Hunter, *Parables*, p.33.

God, some were later reinterpreted by the Early Church to refer to the Second Coming of Christ, e.g. Ten Virgins (Mt.25:1-13). But clearly this is not necessarily correct. The Sheep and the Goats (Mt.25:31-46) must *always* have referred to the final judgment.

**Preaching the Parables: A Basic Approach:**

1. *Retell* the story as vividly as you can in your own words (without dragging it out).
2. Who are the main *characters* in the parable (as in the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son) and what do they do? Or what are the main *sections* and what happens (as in the Laborers in the Vineyard or the Sower)?
3. Who or what did they represent *in Jesus' time?* (consult a commentary)
4. What does the parable say *to us today?*

For a fine example, look at Clovis G. Chappell's imaginative interpretation of the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard (Mt.20:1-16) in Appendix 4.

*You are of course quite free to devise a different approach of your own.*

## Using a Bible Character

### When might this be appropriate?

- At a Fiesta if your church is dedicated to a Bible saint
- On or near a saint's day
- If the person's name appears in one of the set Bible readings for the Sunday

### Objective

To honor the person perhaps and to see what can be learnt from the person's life for our own lives:

- Is there a good example to follow?
- Is there a warning about behavior to avoid?
- Is there a command or promise of God to the individual we might apply to ourselves?

### How to Proceed

1. After prayer, jot down what you already know about the character.
2. Look up relevant Bible passages, if you can think of any, and make more notes.
3. Consult a Bible handbook, dictionary or concordance and make notes of any new information, and the relevant Bible passages from which it is found.
4. Try to build up a life-story of the person: approximate date, place of birth, family, occupation, main known events of life, and circumstances of death if known.
5. From all this select no more than *three* or *four* incidents from the person's life from which there are worthwhile lessons to be learnt. Check a commentary on them if you can. (It is generally best to keep the incidents in chronological order if you can or it may annoy listeners.)
6. Write the stories out, telling them in your *own* words as vividly as you can, followed in each case by the application to today. There is much less need in this type of sermon to add other illustrations as the stories of the Bible character are already illustrations from life, though you may sometimes like to draw modern-day parallels.

### How are you going to introduce the character?

- With a key verse from the person's life? E.g. 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory' for sermon on Isaiah.

- Perhaps try the ‘flashback’ technique as in some films: start with something later in the person’s life, then fill in the earlier period.  
E.g. ‘He was a big man, but a broken man. [pause] It all started three years before when he was in charge of a fishing business on the lake of Galilee. One day, when he was mending his nets, his younger brother Andrew came up to him in a state of great excitement. ‘I’ve found the Messiah!’ he blurted out...’ (sermon on Peter).
- Is there a poem, song or saying that might lead in to the story of the Bible character?  
E.g. the Beatles’ ‘He’s a real nowhere man’ to introduce Moses stranded in the wilderness looking after a small flock of scraggy sheep.

Note: It’s generally good to *withhold the name* of the Bible character at the start and to keep the listeners guessing for a while who you are talking about! (suspense)

- To start, “Good morning! Today I’m going to share with you three events from the life of the Virgin Mary” would waste an opportunity to intrigue the audience.
- Far better: “Good morning! Today I’m going to look with you at some important events in the life of someone you know so well. She was only a teenager when she was committed to marriage to a much older man...”

### **What sort of conclusion would be most effective?**

- A summary of the main points you have made? – especially if you’ve used alliteration,<sup>48</sup> e.g. for Peter: Fisherman, Forthright, Frightened, Fearless.
- A challenge to copy the (good) example of the character.
- The text you used at the beginning?

\* \* \* \*

Note: The same technique as the above can be used with any **figure of Church history**, though it is valuable to link the person, if you can, with suitable biblical material or your sermon will just become a history lesson!

- St. Augustine of Hippo could be linked with St. Paul, whose teachings he reaffirmed.
- St. Antony or St. Francis can be linked with Jesus’ story of the rich young ruler (Lk.18:18-25) which influenced them to give away their wealth.

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<sup>48</sup> A series of words starting with the same letter.

## Sermons on a Topic (Theme)

In the course of life a preacher sometimes becomes aware of the need to focus on a **specific topic** or **theme** which is on his people's minds. It could be:

- A matter of national or international concern  
e.g. the damage caused by a typhoon which poses the question: 'How can we believe in a God of love who allows this?'  
Or, before a forthcoming political election, 'Points to bear in mind when casting our vote'.  
Or perhaps, arising out of TV reports, 'A Christian Attitude to Warfare', AIDS etc.
- A matter of local importance  
e.g. child abuse, alcohol or drugs, our response to poverty, unemployment or tribal warfare.
- A personal issue  
e.g. fear, loving our enemies, loyalty, time management, debt, facing old age and death.
- A theological issue  
e.g. infant versus believer's baptism, difficulties for the faith, the 'fruit of the Spirit' (Gal.5:22-23), the Ten Commandments, our attitude to other religions (including native religions).

Note: the last four suggestions may best be dealt with in a *course* of sermons.

### The Objective of Such a Sermon

To help your people think through the 'life issue' and relate it to their faith.  
Preaching on a topic allows a *well-rounded* (thorough) treatment of the subject concerned.

### How to Proceed

1. After prayer, jot down any *initial thoughts* you have about the topic.
2. Look up any *Bible passages* you think may be relevant (e.g. on love, 1 Cor.13) and make notes.
3. Consult a *Bible dictionary* or *concordance*, if you can, to give you other relevant Bible passages and more information. Note these down. They will probably reveal a variety of aspects of the subject which can provide the main points of your sermon. Consult a *Bible commentary* on key passages or verses if you can.
4. Can you locate a *book* or *chapter of a book* that is relevant, e.g. C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* or *Mere Christianity* on love or faith, or get useful information from the *internet*?

Make more notes. But be realistic, you are only preaching one sermon 15-20 minutes long not writing a thesis!

5. Pray and *read through* all the notes you have made and then *reflect*, trying to work out the *best structure* for dealing with the topic – three or four main points are generally best. J.H. Tan suggests various examples:
  - On love: kinds of love, the need for love, ways to love, the joy of love, the cost of love – or you may prefer to deal with just types of love: parental love, love between friends, love between lovers, specifically Christian love (Gk. *agape* – 1 Cor.13).
  - On spiritual growth: the importance of growth, hindrances to growth, steps to growth, motives for growth.
  - On prayer: using the acronym ACTS for adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication or the Lord’s Prayer.
6. What *illustrations* will you put in?
7. Your *introduction* will need to say why you have chosen the topic, why it is relevant to your congregation just now. Don’t keep them in suspense in this type of sermon!
8. Your *conclusion* should repeat and drive home what you think are the most important points on the topic.
  - Is there a *key text*?  
E.g. for a sermon on ‘fear’ you might end with Josh.1:9.
  - or a *verse of a poem or hymn*?  
On p.7 above a verse from Charles Wesley’s ‘Love divine all loves excelling’ was suggested to complete a sermon on love.
  - or a *pithy saying* you could use?  
One might end a sermon on ‘time management’ with, ‘The pathway to hell is paved with good intentions!’
9. Produce an *outline* of the sermon, a semi-script or a *full script*. Which will you take to the pulpit or reading desk – or none at all?!

## Preaching, Politics and Social Concern

Not long after first arriving in the Philippines in 2003 I encountered what was to me a new type of sermon. After a preliminary look at the Bible readings for the day, it took the form of denouncing government corruption, some particular government policy, or certain sectors of society (landowners or industrialists) which were seen to be making the lot of the poor, and perhaps also the environment, worse. There is no doubt that there *is* corruption in every society which needs challenging. In the Philippines there are many in the churches who make this their cause. The National Council of Churches of the Philippines has strongly taken up advocacy for the poor. After hearing him preach such a sermon at one of our Seminary graduation services, I invited Fr. Rex Reyes, now General Secretary of the NCCP, to come and speak to my Homiletics class on the principles behind preaching on a social or political issue. He came and gave us many valuable points which I have incorporated together with some of my own in what follows. This is a special type of topical sermon.

### Biblical Basis

*Justice* and *peace* are central issues in the Old Testament. God's care about the plight of the poor is very evident. Repeatedly the Law<sup>49</sup> seeks to protect them:

- Money lent to them must be interest-free (Ex.22:25).
- Fields, vineyards and olive orchards are to be left fallow in the seventh year for the land to rest and to provide food for the poor and even the wild animals (Ex.23:11).
- Fields must not be harvested to the very edge nor vineyards stripped bare; what is left is for the poor and the resident foreigners who had few rights (Lev.19:9-10, 23:22).
- Payment of the wages of the poor must not be delayed beyond sunset because their livelihood depends on them (Deut.24:14-15).

And so on. When they were enslaved in Egypt God heard the cry of his people and sent Moses to deliver them (Ex.3). The prophets, in delivering God's word, fiercely denounced injustice (e.g. 1 Ki.21, Is.5:8-10, Am.8:4-6). The Messiah they prophesied would rule justly and bring in an era of peace and wellbeing for all (e.g. Is.9:6-7, cf. Ps.72:1-4).

In the New Testament John the Baptist was beheaded for speaking out on a moral issue (Mk.6:17-21). Jesus, in what amounts to the manifesto of his ministry (Lk.4:16-21), quoted Isaiah 61:1 saying God's Spirit was upon him to preach good news to the poor and free them from their maladies. Much of his ministry was devoted to poor people. But he did not advocate military revolution, on the contrary he declared 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God' (Mt.5:9). To Pilate he said, 'My kingdom is not of this world' (Jn.19:36).

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<sup>49</sup> Genesis to Deuteronomy.

## **In the Early Church**

The earliest Church's answer to poverty within its membership was for all to hold their property in common (Ac.2:44-5, 4:32), but this does not seem to have worked in the long-term, for some cheated the system (5:1-11) and perhaps the property of the wealthier members was not, in the end, sufficient to support the entire membership. At any rate the Gentile churches were soon sending help to the Jerusalem church (Gal.2:10, Rom.15:25-8). St. Paul insisted too that all Christians should work and earn a living (2 Thess.3:6-12); older widows, however, who lacked family support, were supported from church resources (1 Tim.5:3-16), and this long remained a principle of the post-New Testament Church. Concern for the poor generally was of great importance. For instance Tertullian tells us that in the North African Church at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century there was a common chest into which members placed monthly donations to feed the poor and bury them, care for orphans, old slaves, shipwrecked mariners and support Christians forced to work in mines or, it seems, exiled or imprisoned for their faith.<sup>50</sup>

## **Some General Points**

Fr. Reyes made the following pertinent points:

- Promoting justice, peace-making and reconciliation are central to the Church's role. We preach because God is the Lord of history, and Jesus came down to be one of us.
- We cannot leave such issues to the politicians. The IFI has been involved in addressing them from the start, the ECP since the 1970s.
- Preaching is proclaiming God's word so that evil is disclosed. It is casting light into darkness by telling the truth. It hurts.
- Preachers need to know the history of this country well.
- They need to know what is happening in their community and why.
- Preachers need to understand social issues before preaching on them. Then they must analyze them and interpret them theologically.
- We need to educate people about their rights.
- Archbishop William Temple said that the Church must tell politicians what ends to promote but leave it to the politicians as to how to reach them.

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<sup>50</sup> Tertullian *Apology* 39.5-7. He goes on to say, perhaps tongue in cheek, that Christians have everything in common except their wives! (39.11)

### **Some Further Important Biblical Teachings**

- Humans are made in the image of God (Gen.1:26-7) - all therefore have a unique value which must be respected.
- Governments/political leaders are God's agents to promote order and justice (Rom.13:1-7, 1 Pet.2:13-17) - their office must therefore be respected.
- We are instructed to love our enemies not just our friends and neighbors (Mt.5:43-6).

### **For a Sermon**

1. Select a pressing justice issue and research it carefully.
2. Find a parallel situation in the Bible or at least principles relevant to it.
3. Use the biblical principles as a springboard for statements and action you recommend.

## Evangelistic Preaching

This is a type of sermon little practiced in many churches at present, but without it the Church would not exist! At some time there *had* to be evangelistic preaching in every country to establish the Church there, winning people from paganism. So what does evangelistic preaching consist of?

The word ‘evangelistic’ is from the Greek word *euangelion* meaning ‘good news’. The Christian good news centers on Jesus Christ. The Report of the Committee of Enquiry on the Evangelistic Work of the Church set up by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York published in 1918 put forward a memorable definition:

To evangelize is so to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God through him, to accept him as their Saviour, and serve him as their King in the fellowship of his Church.

Jesus must be presented as good news relevant to the listeners. When Prior Augustine was sent by Pope Gregory I to evangelize England in 597 he landed on the Isle of Thanet off the coast of Kent in SE England and sent messengers to the pagan king Ethelbert saying, in the words of Bede, ‘they came from Rome bearing very glad news, which infallibly assured all who would receive it of eternal joy in heaven, and an everlasting kingdom with the living and true God’.<sup>51</sup> Bede does not give us further details, but certainly this aroused interest for soon believers were baptized and the Church took root there. King Ethelbert was unwilling at first to respond to the missionaries’ message as he did not wish to give up his ancestral religion, but when he witnessed the miracles performed by the Christians and saw that the lives of those converted changed for the better, he softened and within a few months was baptized himself and then promoted the new faith.

For specific details of the contents of the Good News about Jesus we must turn to the New Testament, where it is revealed in certain missionary sermons and pithy statements, most notably:

- John 3:16: ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.’
- 1 Corinthians 15:3-4: ‘For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.’

What do we deduce about the Good News from this and related Scriptural teaching?

- (1) That God loves all human beings.
- (2) But because of sin they cannot experience his love and blessings.

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<sup>51</sup>Bede, *History of the English Church and People* 1.25. There is an edition of this important book published by Penguin Classics.

- (3) His solution was to send his Son Jesus Christ to save us by dying on the cross, paying the penalty for our sins.
- (4) Jesus rose from the dead on the third day and is alive today.
- (5) If we repent of our sins, put our trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and submit to him as Lord we shall find forgiveness and eternal life.

If we submit to Jesus as Lord he fills our lives with his Spirit, but then we must cooperate and try to live a life pleasing to God. An evangelistic sermon then will usually bring in some or all of these elements, and end with a challenge/invitation to the hearers to commit their lives to Christ as Savior and Lord.

At the beginning of the sermon, after relaxing the listeners by telling a story or joke, the preacher could point to human failures, fears and needs today. This was Billy Graham's usual approach at his great rallies. He quoted incidents and statistics from the media about the unhappy state of the world today. Notice how Dean Tanhuanco focuses on people's uncertainty as they face the New Year in his sermon 'Mega Joy' in Appendix 5 of this manual. That's the *bad* news. The sermon then goes on to show how God's love in sending Jesus to earth is the *good* news.

An alternative approach is direct from a Bible lesson. Some Sunday Bible readings – the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk.15:11-32) and the stories of Zacchaeus (Lk.19:1-10), Nicodemus (Jn.3:1-21) and the woman at the well (Jn.4) etc – lend themselves to evangelistic sermons. They tell of someone whose life was on the wrong track being given the chance to change. Are we somewhat like that person? If so, God is also offering *us* a chance to change through sincerely turning to Jesus Christ...<sup>52</sup> Rev.3:20 has often been used to bring home the point that Jesus is patiently knocking on the door of our lives, waiting to be invited in.

From time to time one might design a special non-liturgical evangelistic service (perhaps advertised as a 'Guest Service'). It could be an ecumenical venture. In a paper outlining the five points of the Gospel given above Dr. Patrick Tanhuanco stresses that, before such a service, the people of the church should engage in prayer for some weeks, asking God's blessing. The service itself should be more informal than usual and could consist of:

- an initial period of singing
- a Bible reading which is short and related to the sermon
- preaching for 20 to 30 minutes
- an opportunity for people to make a decision to submit to Christ as Lord and Savior
- singing and then a closing prayer or blessing

Another important element that might be included is a brief and moving **testimony**, if the right person can be found.<sup>53</sup> The **decision to receive Christ** could take the form of silently repeating after the preacher a prayer of commitment which s/he reads out slowly. Or it could involve

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<sup>52</sup> Dcn. Joan Beleo used the story of Zacchaeus like that in a sermon in SATS chapel when she was a seminarian. You can find it in our SATS training manual on Evangelism and Church Planting in the chapter on 'Evangelistic Preaching'.

<sup>53</sup> Telling how that person came to faith and what benefits this has brought to his/her life.

signing a decision card left in the pews which (as at St. Stephen's church, Manila) might provide space for the person's name and contact details and allow the person to tick one of three statements:

I received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior today.

I have already received Christ. I decide to live a life pleasing to him.

I am interested to know more about Christ. Please contact me.

The local church's follow-up should consist of inviting those who have made decisions to join a study group to learn more about the Christian life, as well as encouraging them to start a daily 'quiet time' of prayer and Bible reading (perhaps with a more experienced church member), to come to worship every Sunday, and to join in other church activities.

### Recap on the Structure of an Evangelistic Sermon

Introduction: Establish rapport with a joke, story or comment about something you have observed locally.

Body: *Either* point out the problems confronting us today through people's needs or sins (perhaps draw on media), and explain how Jesus is the answer to these problems.

*Or* take a Bible story and draw a parallel today.

Conclusion: Invite people to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior

*Needless to say we are all learners! But there is no greater delight than seeing people make a commitment of their lives to Christ.*

## Festivals and Other Special Occasions

Let me share with you in this chapter a few ideas I have accumulated through many years of parish ministry. You may have other ideas which are more original or appropriate, but perhaps I can stimulate you to try a few new approaches.

### Major Festivals

First, some rather obvious points:

- Keep your sermon notes; you may be able to use information from them again.
- Try to find a slightly different angle each year – preach about a different episode of the story or present something in a different way.
- Sources of Christmas illustrations include television and billboard advertisements and the internet including Facebook! A London priest once began his Christmas sermon with an advertisement plastered across a big London store: “Christmas begins at Selfridges”. He went on to show where it *should* begin.

Children love **Christmas**; why not make them the focus of a Christmas service? If your main Christmas service is on Christmas Eve, consider a ‘Family Service’ on Christmas Day which could include:

- Children’s Christmas carols, e.g. Little Donkey (accompanied by musical instruments).
- A child/children reading the Christmas story from an-easy-to-read version of the Bible, or make it a play-reading shared by several people. (*The Dramatised Bible*<sup>54</sup> would be very valuable here; each diocese ought to have one – but better still to use a Bible version in your local language.)
- Children or a family reading Christmas prayers they have written or simple prayers from a book.
- Children might be asked to bring up to the front a present each had received – for thanksgiving or blessing.
- A **children’s talk**<sup>55</sup> - using visual aids, e.g. Christmas cards or sketchboard with simple outlines or a series of boxes to be filled in... I.e. get children to *tell you* the Christmas story. *Don’t simply tell them yet again the story they already know so well!*  
Or perhaps read out an account of part of the Christmas story with *mistakes!* - *Children must shout out when they spot one!* You might say for instance:

There were some shepherds in that part of the country spending the night in the fields watching over their pigs. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, God’s glory shone around, and they

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<sup>54</sup> Ed. Michael Perry (London: Marshall Pickering, 1989). This is now out of print but in print is a new edition *The Comprehensive Dramatised Bible* (Harper Collins, 2004), alas very expensive!

<sup>55</sup> See also chapter 15 of this course-book.

were terribly excited. “Don’t be excited,” said the angel, “for I have bad news for you. This very night, if you go to Jerusalem, you will not find a baby lying in a manger.....”

This last idea may sound ridiculous, but it adds a touch of fun and involves participation – and I am sure you yourself can write a far better parody than this!

At **Easter** what about an Easter Garden in a corner of the church, on a table prepared for/by the children? It can include the three crosses with soldiers etc and a tomb front with the stone rolled aside, and figures of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and perhaps others around. You can use it as a visual aid in your Easter sermons.

### **Other Annual Events**

**New Year** - Talk about the right attitude to the New Year or New Year resolutions (if you don’t already do this).

### **Mothers’/Fathers’ Day**

- Small gifts to mothers/fathers... (Again, many do this already).
- Special hymns and a special Bible reading appropriate to the occasion (perhaps the maker of our Ordo Calendar could provide the latter).
- A talk about Christian motherhood/fatherhood and/or an *interview* in the service with an admired member of the church who has clearly been a successful mother or father. Ask about the joys and woes of parenthood and how the person’s faith in God has helped him/her in this role.

### **Fiesta**

- Preach on the patron saint sometimes.
- Perhaps write down the saint’s life-story and get it (or some incidents) acted out.
- Perhaps interview a leading member of the church/community about his life story, special interests *and faith!* (Chose that person carefully!)
- Procession or pageant (a common approach already).

### **Good Friday**

This suggestion might be especially appropriate for quite small congregations on Good Friday:

Consider a *One-Hour Service* (‘An Hour at the Cross’) taking the passion story from just *one* of the gospels, episode by episode from the Last Supper or Gethsemane to Christ’s burial. Each reading should be followed by a silence, a meditation, a prayer and passion hymn or choir or solo item. It should end on a note of praise and triumph – for instance by reading Phil.2:5-11 or Rev. 5:11-14. The short meditations take the place of a set-piece sermon.

## Preaching on the Liturgy

When might one preach on the liturgy?

- When a new liturgy has been introduced. If the ECP BCP Eucharist or other services should be revised they would need explaining to the congregation. Occasionally a new service may be introduced into your parish, e.g. a healing service. Then it needs explaining section by section to enable worshippers to understand and value it.
- When one feels instruction on some part of the well-known liturgy would be valuable, perhaps because, repeated Sunday by Sunday, it is no longer valued by the congregation. A preacher could focus, for instance, on the 'Collect for Purity' near the beginning of the Eucharist, the Gloria in Excelsis or even the Nicene Creed.

### Preparation

1. Try to find information on the origin of the liturgy/piece – Who composed it? For what purpose? Consult:
  - SATS liturgy course notes,
  - perhaps (senior) clergy,
  - a key reference book, e.g. *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* ed. F.L. Cross & E.A. Livingstone (3<sup>rd</sup> edn, 1997)
  - the internetThis will give you information for your sermon introduction
2. Read the liturgy/piece right through, dividing it into its constituent parts. These parts will give the sections for the body of your sermon
3. Go through each part to understand its meaning; look up any technical terms you are not sure of. Your sermon will need to explain:
  - (a) the *meaning* of each part and
  - (b) its *value* to us as worshippers/people.
4. For conclusion you may give a summary of what you have said and, if you are dealing with a short piece such as a collect, get everyone to read it through thoughtfully with you.

### At the time of Delivery

Explain first *why* you have chosen to preach on the liturgy/a piece and then ask everyone to *turn* to it and *follow it through* as you preach.

Now let us look at some particular parts of the liturgy that might be treated in this way.

## **Collects**

These short prayers are one of the most characteristic features of Western liturgy. They were:

- designed to *collect together* the main thoughts of the appointed Bible readings of the day (e.g. the collect for Advent Sunday) or
- to reflect a particular stage in the liturgy (e.g. the Collect for Purity at the beginning of the Eucharist, or the collects after the collect for the day in Morning and Evening Prayer).

They are all composed according to a basic pattern:

- Invocation ('O God' etc)
- Supporting statement (e.g. 'whose almighty power is...')
- Petition (e.g. 'grant us your servants...')
- Hoped for result (e.g. 'that we may attain...')
- Ending (often 'through Jesus Christ, our Lord')

Though the second and fourth of these are not always present, and sometimes the collect may begin with the petition into which is tucked the invocation (e.g. 'Grant us, O Lord, the spirit to think and do always what is right...'), the structure is recognizable.

If a preacher has decided that the collect has a powerful message that s/he would like to share with the congregation at a smallish service on a particular Sunday, first s/he should split it into these constituent parts, then explain and amplify each in turn. A former Bishop of Peterborough used to expound a collect at the beginning of each meeting of Diocesan Synod. I have, from time to time, expounded the collect of the day at the early morning said Eucharist ('Low Mass') to good effect. Such an address is generally a 'sermonette' and therefore not really suitable for the main Sunday service.

## **Gloria in Excelsis Deo**

The title is the Latin for 'Glory to God in the highest (heavens)'. It appears to have originated in Greek as a Greek Christian's private prayer; by the 4<sup>th</sup> century it was one of the morning prayers of Orthodox churches. There are two main parts to this canticle, the first addressed to God the Father, the second to Jesus Christ. These can be further subdivided. The first sentence of the Gloria recalls the message of the angels to the shepherds on the first Christmas night (Lk.2:14).

## **Te Deum Laudamus**

The title is Latin for 'We praise you, O God'. This canticle was composed in Latin in the Western Church before AD 500. The Church of England BCP prescribed its daily use at Morning Prayer after the Old Testament lesson. In the ECP Eucharist it is set as an alternative to the Gloria in Excelsis and sung at 'High Mass' on major saints' days and at other times. Again there are two main parts, the first addressed to God the Father, the second to Christ (later

expanded). The preacher will need to explain the meaning of ‘cherubim’, ‘seraphim’ and perhaps even ‘holy’ with the aid of a Bible Dictionary.

### **The Lord’s Prayer**

Where is it found in the gospels?<sup>56</sup> Divide it into its broad sections, then subdivide these into their constituent individual clauses. Explaining these could produce an inspiring sermon on prayer, or a series of sermons.

A **Creed** or **Eucharistic Prayer** would require summary treatment because of their length, but could be beneficially analyzed into parts and briefly explained with profit. A creed could form the basis of a whole course of sermons on the Christian doctrines it embodies.

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<sup>56</sup> We are all well aware of the Mt.6:9-13 in the Sermon on the Mount, but how aware are we of the shorter version in Lk.11:2-4?

## Talks to Children

No course on preaching would be complete without a brief look at talks to children. For several years my Homiletics class was most fortunate to have a visit from Tim Lee, my fellow CMS mission partner in Manila, who with his wife started and ran with a team of Filipino assistants, Jigsaw Kids Ministries, reaching weekly nearly 1,000 children from poor homes and the street.<sup>57</sup> What follows is based on a talk Tim gave us in 2008, supplemented by material he used on other occasions and from my own experience.



Children are important. They are not a race apart from adults. We were all children once. Play is very important with children. We should use it in our work with them. Children have small concentration times depending on their age:  
0-2, 3-6 (4 mins?), 7-9, 10-12 (8 mins), 13-15 (10 mins).

If you haven't prepared properly or prayed, children will know. It is good to use a planning sheet – it stops one from being lazy.

What do you want children to learn?

You can start with a **learning objective** (e.g. how to pray) and look for Bible passages relevant to it, or you can start with **Bible passages** and draw out truths, e.g. the story of Joseph in Gen.37:1-11 can lead to talking about *favoritism* – it only causes pain - or a talk on *child-trafficking* and say, from the story, nevertheless God has a plan for everyone.

You need a quick-moving program – interactive – exciting!

Always use **visual aids** for kids.

Always ask **questions** after telling the story – (perhaps a quiz) to help the stories remain in their brains.

There are many ways of **presenting a Bible story** (never just *read* one):

- Tell it with props (objects relevant to the story).
- Tell it from the point of view of one of the characters in the story, e.g. perhaps tell the Easter story from the perspective of Judas.
- Translate the story into a present-day setting, e.g. a modern form of the Parable of the Good Samaritan can be great fun and make a powerful impact.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> They were in Manila 2003-2009 and have since left the running of the work entirely to Filipinos, including a graduate of St. Andrew's Seminary, whilst remaining in close touch from England.

<sup>58</sup> In the seminary refectory in 2010 a version was acted out where the Samaritan was a *basura* (garbage) collector, and he put the man who had been mugged in his trolley!!

- You can start by asking, ‘Do you know that...?’ then tell a Bible story and conclude with: ‘Jesus told this story.’
- You can produce an object and lead into a Bible story, e.g. from keys you can talk about Paul in prison; from a broom and coin on the floor you can talk about the lost coin.
- You can hold up a picture of a Bible story and ask questions on it.
- You can use a felt-board and pictures that stick to it.
- Leaders and children can together act out a story, e.g. the Parable of the Sower.
- For older children one might use a crossword.

Children need to feel they are part of the story.

When showing them the Bible, talk of ‘big’ numbers to explain the chapters, and ‘small’ numbers to explain the verses.

If you teach children standards and principles it will affect their adult life.

Around the Bible Story there must be a program of *other activities*:

A Bible **memory verse** from the story or linked with it. For example, if you have been focusing on the parable of the Lost Sheep (Lk.15:3-7), Jesus’ teaching about the Shepherd and the sheep (Jn.10:1-16), or Psalm 23, you could have, ‘Jesus said, I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.’ (John 10 v.11) This could be taught in one of a number of ways:

- The simplest would be writing it on the board with all reciting it (with the reference) two or three times, then rubbing out a few words at a time whilst continuing to recite the whole verse until nothing is left on the board.
- One could write its words on separate cards and give these out to children to hold up, getting them to stand in a line or a circle and recite as before, gradually removing the cards until all are gone. For additional fun the cards could be handed to the children in *random order* so that they have to keep changing places until they are in the right order and the verse appears.
- One might write the words on balloons and gradually pop the balloons! (And there are many other possibilities.)

At your next children’s meeting/service small prizes or bonus points could be given to those who remember the memory verse; or this could be made into a game with, say, a ball being thrown to a child who then has to recite the verse for a point for his/her team.

There should also be songs, simple hymns, or best of all, **action choruses** which, particularly younger children, love to join in.

There needs also to be some **prayer** by leaders and/or children, and of course the Lord’s Prayer in the local language and sometimes in English.

When you teach children, Jesus is there.

## The Use of Audio Visual Aids in Preaching

by Christopher T. Bartlett

Many churches nowadays use Audio Visual aids in their services but we must never forget that the purpose is to better enable the Word of God to be presented. Such aids can enhance both modern and traditional forms of worship and can allow the introduction of completely new worship ideas. We have to recognize that for many, particularly young people, a liturgy based format is strange and uncomfortable whereas a more pictorial format encompassing visual presentation and music in the rhythms of their life can be helpful to overcome the unfamiliarity. The installation of such equipment is a measure of the character of the parish priest, ministry team and congregation rather than a function of the age or type of building. Naturally older churches and cathedrals will require a more sensitive approach than a modern structure. The Audio Visual equipment can include some or all of the following:-

1. Audio system with fixed and radio microphones an amplifier and loudspeakers. Other audio equipment may be included such as CD players, iPod or audio tracks from DVD players. In this case an audio mixer panel will allow switching and fading of individual channels. (A Loop system for use with hearing aids is vital.)
2. Video system with a projector and screen. It may be useful to have a portable camera input to be able to project onto the large screen.

Audio systems are the least controversial and the simplest and most necessary application - to allow the speaker to be heard. The pulpit was there for more than permitting the preacher to be '*six foot above contradiction*'; it allowed his voice to project to the congregation. I say *his* deliberately as acoustically men's voices seem to travel better in church because of their volume and pitch. However with the common practice of preaching from the chancel steps, and with an increasing number of women ordained, a microphone system is necessary. Dealing with the acoustics of a large cathedral for example is a severe technical problem. Many who read the Lesson will say that they have no need of amplification but a congregation swallows up sound to a huge extent and all speakers wherever they speak should realize that without a microphone (and Loop system) the hard of hearing may not acquire any of their words at all.

A video system can be used in many ways to project the words of the songs, to show congregational prayers and for video clips<sup>1</sup>. It is quite possible to go on-line to a website during the service and use the vast amount of material on the Internet to reinforce a message. A camera can be used to put the proceedings up on the screen when the preacher works with the children or to project the speaker as in a conference.

Using A/V, the service must be prepared as a complete package where the music, prayers and talk are all linked in the use of a more pictorial approach. Secular film clips from such as 'Lord

of the Rings' or 'Bruce Almighty' <sup>2</sup> can help the congregation to understand the message and of course readings from a wider range of sources such as The Message and books like The Shack all have a place. Sometimes a short drama can be helpful.

A conference speaker will make use of tools such as Microsoft® PowerPoint and it is usual to use the slides as an integral part of the talk. A slide may be an illustration or a text or indeed a mixture of both. In this approach the speaker is said to 'talk to the slides'. The congregation will be concentrating on the screen. This is a totally new approach for clergy trained in the traditional church but will be familiar to those entering the ministry from commerce or industry and of course many of their congregation will also have a similar background, It is a good method for putting across facts but somehow the enthusiasm, the intensity of the spoken word and the directness of the speaker with their own facial and body additions is perhaps lost. Just because people are used to a pictorial presentation does not always mean that this is the best approach and indeed they may well react to the unusual and different presentation of a talk! Party political speakers tend to use very few visual aids and prefer to have their image up on a large screen behind them so that their personality and conviction can be seen.

The style of preaching is similar in many ways whether A/V is used or not. A good speaker can use a story from his/her own life experience to start and then expand this to open up a Bible text or a theme. It is equally sensible to do this with a video clip or indeed the words of some modern songs may be appropriate. On other occasions a short story or a drama may be better. Why should God not speak as well to people through everyday words and scenarios? It is always a good idea to keep the talks short; it is sadly a fact that in general people's attention span is shorter nowadays. Two short talks either side of a song for example can be a more effective way of getting through to people; different voices too will break the monotony. So, there is still a place for a talk albeit with illustrations during it; maybe a text of special importance or a close up projection of the speaker but in this approach the congregation is still concentrating on the speaker.

One variant of the traditional approach that can be very effective is to use lay people in the Ministry Team. These people can give 'talks' rather than preach although the boundaries are often quite grey. They will use their own stories and experience of their faith to give a different approach. One thing they can do is to comment on their doubts and struggles which may be just as prevalent in ordained ministry but the congregation would not expect to hear such from their priest. Sometimes using these latent skills within a congregation fits well with a service built around A/V technology.

The use of A/V does require a supporting team both competent and sympathetic to the Ministry Leader. It is very easy for the technology to take over and of course any mistakes can be disastrous. It is worth mentioning that the A/V operators may well feel that they are concentrating on the technology to the extent that the worship is lost to them so the priest should be aware that having a team is helpful to allow the technician to take part in a service. It is always a good to include a prayer for the technology before the service starts! Equally it is important that the Ministry Team is comfortable with the technology. Not only ordinary services but baptisms, weddings and funerals are increasingly turning to A/V. To many in the

congregation this is a unique experience to meet God and the use of A/V must be totally transparent to that.

### Notes

1. A good A/V system in a church can open up new functions for the building in the community such as showing films or linking it to a TV to show major events such as the Olympics. This will get people into the building and can be seen as part of a larger ministry.
2. <http://www.wingclips.com/> This is a typical site hosting film clips from well known films.

*Chris Bartlett was a leading member of St. Margaret's, Barming in Kent (SE England), where I was Rector 1989-2003. He was an avionics engineer and worked for many years at British Aerospace Systems designing aircraft systems. The Rector who followed me, with his bishop's permission, introduced what he called 'A New Way' one Sunday a month. These non-eucharistic services were planned by a ministry team which he led ( though he let the others do much of the planning; they freely used new audio-visual aids. Chris was a member of this team and they produced some very imaginative services. The congregation included many young families who had not been attending church.*

## Appendix 1

### **From Shy Parishioner to Experienced Lay-Reader**

by Winifred Lane

In 1985 I was an average parishioner – a regular attender at Sunday worship, house group and Bible Study group. My career and involvement with the Girl Guide Association gave me sufficient experience to be comfortable leading small groups (i.e. house and Bible Study groups) during the Rector's absence, but a request to walk to the front of the church in order to read the Scriptures or lead intercessions found me with knees knocking. So imagine how I felt when the Rector handed me a leaflet about Reader Ministry and a note attached suggesting I should pray about it before speaking to him.

Over the next x number of days I dutifully prayed – indeed I thought of little else. I felt as though my insides were tied in knots, yet deep down I knew that it was God calling me to this ministry. Gripped by fear, like many biblical characters before me, I was far from eager to take such a step, but who among us can say 'no' to God and, after all, I already knew from experience that when God calls us to a task for him he also enables us to carry out the same. Having said 'yes', the interviews that followed were nightmarish to me. I prayed fervently for calmness and clarity of mind. I knew that no matter how dreadful my performance I would get through if it really was God's will. I claimed his promise that the Holy Spirit would go before me.

After acceptance came three years of intensive (part-time) training – reading, essays, tutorials and the like. In the second year I was expected to write and preach a sermon occasionally and more frequently in the third year. I soon learned that, contrary to popular belief, there is no special life-line or dictating angel assigned to each preacher! Nothing replaces hard work, of which prayer is a major part. However I believed then, as I do now, that the Holy Spirit leads and directs our thoughts and will lead us into all truth at our invitation.

More than 15 years ago I was licensed to Reader Ministry. Shyness and an inferiority complex are still part of my character but I have come to realize that shyness can be a form of selfishness – a concern for self over and above one's concern for others. If we look to Jesus and seek to share the Good News then we shall receive all the enabling we need.

Before my first sermon I spent many hours seeking God's peace by sitting quietly in his presence and claiming his promises for myself, e.g. 'Be still and know that I am God' (Ps.46:10), 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you' (Heb.13:5), 'Peace I leave you; my peace I give you' (Jn.14:27), 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine' (Is.43:1), 'You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last' (Jn.15:16), 'O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise' (Ps.51:15), 'Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness' (Lam.3:22-3). Since then I have continued to claim these promises, praising God and thanking him for loving me – asking his forgiveness for my selfishness, weak faith and lack of trust – offering him all that I am and all that I have. Calling

on the Holy Spirit to fill me, teach me, lead me and guide me. Then and then only have I started work:

- 1) Reading the Scriptures set for the Sunday – sitting, quietly absorbing them and asking for guidance as to which text/theme etc to take hold of; picturing the people to whom I was expected to speak, and seeking to know God’s message for his people.
- 2) Reading relevant commentaries and words of insight written by scholars and well-known preachers; plus making copious notes.
- 3) Deciding on a format – e.g. introduction, three points, summary.
- 4) Writing a draft copy and including relevant illustrations/examples from day to day life.
- 5) Editing, ensuring terminology was that for the ‘spoken word’ so as not to sound like a chapter from a book. Also using my own words and phrases as opposed to those of other authors.
- 6) Whilst in training only: writing a second draft copy for the Rector to approve/disapprove and make suggested improvements.
- 7) Absorbing as much of the text as possible in order to be able to look at and speak to the congregation rather than, head down, to read.
- 8) Continuing to pray – giving thanks for guidance, asking the Lord to take and use my efforts.

I have never felt as small and insignificant as I did when I stepped into the pulpit for the first time. Wearing a somewhat aged choir robe did little to boost my ego or self image! A quick prayer for the Holy Spirit to take over – a deep breath – and off we go.....  
Thank you, Lord, please take my wobbly legs back down the (pulpit) steps – now I can relax and enjoy what remains of the service.

A number of times I have been asked how long it takes to prepare a sermon – my answer is, “How long is a piece of string?” It is luxury to know the dates and Bible readings well in advance. When that is the case I usually start to prepare about three weeks ahead: a week to pray and read; a week to pray and put pen to paper; a week to pray, absorb and edit, if necessary, having regard to the latest world and local events. If it is one’s lot to preach every week the above process gets condensed into days rather than weeks. Sometimes Readers get called upon at very short notice to go to other parishes. Preparation then gets limited to as little as 24 hours, or even less.

However much or little time I have I continue to follow the order of preparation described above. Sometimes prayer and listening to God brings a flood of ideas and words, but at other times I struggle to make the words of scholars my own. Over the years I have built up a library of commentaries on each book of the Bible, William Barclay being one of the most helpful

scholars (though sometimes his illustrations are dated so one has to be careful). Readers and NSMs<sup>59</sup> have the advantage of secular employment and life-style which provides numerous relevant illustrations and examples. Sometimes a newspaper article will be helpful. In my opinion the introduction needs to meet people where they are and capture their attention. I vary the main content of a sermon so far as the number of points to be covered is concerned, and as to whether it is thematic or verse by verse teaching of a passage. I mostly sum up my points at the end, and frequently offer a challenge to commitment.

I have tried various ways of using material when delivering a sermon: e.g. using a full script, abbreviated notes, numbered notes, no notes. Each individual has different needs and therefore will have to decide on their chosen method. My fear of forgetting what I want to say has led me to take a full script into the pulpit but I rarely refer to it, apart from the occasional glance.

After preaching I don't find the phrase 'nice sermon' much help. It is good to have one or two friends who will be able to offer constructive criticism. In the early days those who would tell me how well I could be heard were very helpful. On the other hand it is most rewarding when someone says, "That sermon spoke to me personally" – a sign that the Holy Spirit is at work – even the worst and weakest efforts are sometimes used to help a certain person in the congregation.

For me the key to mastering shyness is to invite the Holy Spirit to take control. A quiet reflection claiming and resting in the promises of God and Jesus, 'My peace I leave with you.'

God loves each of us and never sets us up to fail. 'In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your path.' To God be the glory great things he has done.

*Winifred Lane served for many years as a Reader in the Diocese of Peterborough in the Church of England. In October 2004, she wrote this very personal account of her own experience (at my request) for the sake of shy seminarians facing the daunting prospect of preaching. Her experience will surely encourage many beyond the walls of the seminary contemplating that same challenge.*

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<sup>59</sup> Non-Stipendiary Ministers – people who are ordained but work in secular jobs and serve the church part-time without any charge.

## Breaking the Habit of Reading the Sermon Script

### ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS

- × Angels & fairies - young AD-F confused!
  - both invisible - wings - wonderful deeds
  - Later: fairies make believe → angels too?
  - difference: fairies → magical joy; angels → fear

NCBD | 'ANGEL. A messenger of God; an order of being different from mankind, of undoubted integrity & obedience to God, but also endowed with free will so not immune to temptation and even sin...'

#### (1) Messengers of God

Hebr. malak & Grk. aggelos to 'angel'.... mean 'messenger'

- 1st purpose is to take messages for God to ..., humans
  - × Gideon vs Midianites (Jud. 6)
  - × Gabriel's announcements to Zechariah... & Mary (Lk. 1)

#### (2) Bring Protection & Help to God's Servants

(a) Protection { 'The angel of the Lord...' (P) Ps. 34: 7  
Jesus: each child has a guardian angel with direct access to God (Mt 18: 10)

(b) Help: Elijah (1 Ki. 19: 5-7), Jesus (Mt 4: 11), Peter (Ac. 12)

Today: quite a few accounts of angelic protection/deliverance

- × Missionary in Borneo? (Prayer without Retard - Ann Townsend)
- × Rhodesia & civil war (Rain & a Dry Land - Roger Knight)
- × Hope Hope's book - it says angels & ordinary clutter!

(3) In God's Service in the Next World

- Rev.: angelic choir singing praise of God & Lamb (R) 5:11f
- \* Sunder Singh - angels receive souls of death . . . . \*
  - \* Dorothy Kemm - deathbed experience, 1912 . . . .

I expect there are similar stories in Philippines . . . .

(4) Archangels

= Angel leaders - \* Michael

- Meet him 1<sup>st</sup> in book of Daniel where he is the 'prince' who protects the Jews from world powers: Persians then Greeks (10:13, 21, 12:1)
- Then in Revelation: <sup>commander of armies</sup> leader of the good angels - fight dragon/devil . . . . (R) 12:7-9
- Depicted in Art
  - Outside new Coventry cathedral \* sheet & photo
  - Barnby church choir stall \* photo
  - Su Miguel gin bottle?! . . . .

(R) ASB Collect for St. Michael & All Angels.

## St. Michael and All Angels

When I was a child I confused angels and fairies:

- both were invisible most of the time,
- both depicted with wings,
- and both did wonderful things!

Later I learnt that fairies are make-believe – was that true of angels too?

A difference that became clear was that fairies, waving their wands, are said to bring joy, while angels are said to arouse fear.

The *New Concise Bible Dictionary* says:

ANGEL. A messenger of God; an order of being different from mankind, of undoubted integrity and obedience to God, but also endowed with free will so not immune to temptation and even sin...

### (1) Messengers of God

‘Angel’ in the Bible is the English translation of the Hebrew *malak* in the Old Testament and the Greek *angelos* in the New, both words meaning ‘messenger’. So the *first purpose* of angels is to take messages from God to humans.

- In the OT this was so with Gideon (Judges 6) to whom an angel appeared saying, “The Lord is with you, you mighty warrior” and he told him he was to deliver Israel from the invading Midianites. At first Gideon could not believe this at all.
- From Luke 1 we are familiar with the angel Gabriel appearing first to Zechariah to announce the birth of his son John the Baptist, secondly to the virgin Mary saying she would be mother of the ‘Son of the Most High’.

### (2) They Protect and Help God’s Servants

‘The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.’ (Ps.34:7)  
Jesus said each child has a guardian angel with direct access to God (Mt.18:10).

In the Bible: An angel appears to **Elijah** fleeing south away from Jezebel, who had issued a death threat concerning him, to Mount Sinai (Horeb). He drops asleep with exhaustion on the journey and an angel awakens him pointing to food and drink to sustain him (1 Ki.19:5-7).

Angels ministered to **Jesus** after the ordeal of his temptations in the wilderness (Mt.4:11).

And **Peter** is delivered from prison by an angel. His chains fall off and he escapes (Ac.12).

Today there are quite a few accounts of angelic protection and deliverance to:

- I read of a female missionary in, I think, Borneo who had worked successfully with the women of a barrio; but this upset their husbands and they determined to kill her. One night when she was alone in her hut she heard them approaching, uttering drunken threats to kill her. She prayed and waited; then she was aware only of their distant voices in the center of

the barrio. Next day she enquired of the women what had happened and was told that the previous night men had approached her hut intent on killing her but had been confronted by men in white barring their way and they had retreated. Interestingly there is more to this story. The book that records it is called *Prayer without Pretending*. It goes on to say that one night the missionary's prayer partner back in England had woken up and felt an urgent need to pray for her friend. She did so. Later she discovered that was the very night her friend was threatened with death. It suggests God sometimes needs our prayers to make a difference to people.

- Similar stories are told in the paperback *Rain in a Dry Land* by Roger Knight. He described the situation in Rhodesia when there was civil war and white missionaries in the east of the country were in the direct path of 'freedom fighters' coming in from Mozambique. He devotes an entire chapter to stories of angelic protection.
- A priest's wife with, I think, the name Hope Hope compiled a complete book of stories of angels delivering people, though many of those angels were dressed in ordinary human clothes – after helping people they just disappeared!

### (3) In God's Service in the Next World

Often the book of Revelation speaks of angelic choirs around the throne of God, e.g. Rev.5:11-12.

In his little book *Visions of the Spiritual World* Sadhu Sundar Singh, a hero of mine, who lived in North India early last century and was converted from a Hindu/Sikh background by a vision of Christ, claims to have seen what happened to the souls of people as they passed at death into the next world. He says most were met by angels and taken to their appropriate place in an intermediate state for further instruction about Christ. He also speaks of heaven and hell. Bad souls who died and tried to cause trouble in the next world were forcibly restrained by angels. We do not know how true this is but one day we shall find out!

Many people have spoken of seeing angels on their deathbed, including the young woman Dorothy Kerrin who, after encountering angels in an out of the body experience in 1912, was miraculously healed, and went on to found Burrswood Healing Center in SE England which has a chaplain and a chapel where healing services are held twice a week and a medical director who is a qualified doctor. Many people have found healing there.

I expect there are stories of angels appearing in the Philippines too but no one has yet told me!

### (4) Archangels

There are leaders among the angels (archangels) including **Michael**.

- We meet him first in the book of Daniel, where he is a 'prince' who protects the Jews from world powers – the Persians and then the Greeks (Dan.10:13, 21, 12:1).
- Then, in the book Revelation he is commander of the army of good angels who fight against the dragon, the devil (Rev.12:7-9). This has often been depicted in art:
  - On an outer wall of the new Coventry cathedral in England where, in bronze, he stands with a spear in one hand and a foot on the head of the bound devil.

- In a medieval carving on the choirstalls of the little church of Barming in SE England where I was Rector before coming to the Philippines in 2003. There he stands with his spear down the throat of a dragon.
- I am reliably told he is also similarly depicted on bottles of San Miguel gin!! The message is clear: while someone is engaged in controlled drinking, knowing when to stop, St. Michael is on top of the devil, but when someone's drinking is thoroughly out of control and he gets drunk, the devil reasserts his power and gets on top of Michael!!

*Read the collect for St. Michael and All Angels day.*

Andrew Daunton-Fear,  
SATS chapel, September 30, 2013

***How can one break the habit of simply reading a sermon script?*** *One way is to preach from a 'semi-script', a fuller form of an outline. It clearly shows the structure of the sermon – the points and subpoints, filling in some of the actual wording but not all. Illustrations including Bible stories alluded to are shown only by headings. Bible references are given but not the text (which is read out from a Bible). I share with you above one of my recent sermon scripts, followed by a full script typed in response to a request for a copy of the sermon. Of course such a full script will not be entirely accurate for some of the spontaneous comments in the sermon itself are easily forgotten!*

*Now why not try to preach **your** next sermon from such a semi-script?! If you can preach it from just an outline that's even better – congratulations!*

## Appendix 3

# He Shall Prosper

*Outline of a Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Clovis G. Chappell on Psalm 1*

### I

The psalmist points us to the path of prosperity.

Everybody desires success...The good news this poet has for us is:

**Everyone may prosper!**

### II

Under what conditions?

1. Certain things he avoids: (a) guidance from the ungodly  
(b) standing with sinners  
(c) sitting in the seat of the scornful (the cynic)
2. Positive activities: (a) he reads his Bible  
(b) he delights in it  
(c) he reads it more and more

### III

The nature of his prosperity:

1. His life is 'planted' – purposeful
2. His life is 'planted' – steadfast
3. He is rich in usefulness – he bears fruit
4. He continues – 'his leaf shall not wither'

[Closing words]

“To make God our choice is to lay hold on abiding springtime, and that is success now and evermore.”

\* \* \* \*

*This is my summary of an admirable sermon by Dr. Chappell taking Psalm 1:3 as his text. In fact he expounds vv.1-3. It is a shame though that he ignores vv.4-6. Is he wishing to avoid the jarring note of God's judgment on the wicked? But this is an important part of the psalm. The complete sermon is in his Sermons on the Psalms (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1931).*

## Appendix 4

# So Much for So Little

*Outline of a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Clovis G. Chappell on the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard*

‘The last shall be first, and the first last’ (Mt.20:16)

### I

1. Look at the laborers. There are three groups:

- a) The first group had the good fortune of making contact with the employer in the early morning. They had bargaining power: “What will you pay for a day’s work?”... “\$1” “OK, that’s fair.”
- b) The second group, those employed at 9am, 12 noon and 3pm, had not the same bargaining power. Their employer offered no fixed wages, only a square deal.
- c) The third group, those employed near the end of the day, hold center stage. They were depressed and discouraged. In answer to the employer’s question as to why they were still there, they said, “We are workless because no-one has hired us.” They were simply told to go also and work in the vineyard, and they hurried in to earn even the pitiful penance they were sure to be paid.

2. One hour later came the pay-off.

Those that came last into the vineyard were paid first. That’s what got the owner into trouble. They were paid a full day’s wage in the sight of all. It encouraged the others to expect more! And when they didn’t get it, they were indignant...

### II

Jesus is not, in this story, wanting to teach us a lesson in economics.

While we tend to measure people’s worth by what they have achieved [3 illustrations], God measures it by what people *would* have achieved *if they had had the chance*.

4 examples: (1) David, who wanted to build a temple for the Lord. He was not allowed to but told, “As it was in your heart to do it, you did well.”

- (2) The widow who put two tiny coins in the temple treasury
- (3, 4) Contemporary examples

### III

The test of what is in our hearts is *what we do with what is actually in our hands*:

- The last laborers in the vineyard
- David got together materials for building the temple
- The widow gave all she had

This test puts us all on an even footing.

“So the first shall be last, and the last first.”

*This fresh interpretation of the familiar Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard (Mt.20:1-16) has a powerful message for us all. The summary is mine but the full sermon is to be found in Dr. Chappell's book In Parables (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953).*

## Appendix 5

# Mega Joy: Good News

*Outline of sermon by the Very Rev. Dr. Patrick Tanhuanco on the text Luke 2:10-12*

### [Introduction]

As we face the New Year 2008 many people are uncertain what this year may bring. They are afraid of:

- a) the outbreak of deadly diseases – SARS, bird virus, others
- b) economic uncertainty, money losing value
- c) political instability, changes; among others

The shepherds during the Roman Empire were treated as one of the lowest class of people of their society, and they have a lot to be afraid of, even the diseases, economic and political situations that they faced. Then on the night when Jesus was born, they heard the message of the angel which started with, “Do not be afraid!” (Lk.2:10a)

### I Do Not be Afraid! (v.10)

In the context of Luke 2, ‘Do not be afraid!’ is addressing the immediate situation of seeing the angel, yet as we see the rest of the message, ‘Do not be afraid’ goes further to situations the shepherds were facing, and so applies to us today.

Reasons not to be afraid:

- 1) ‘For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind.’ (2 Tim.1:7)
- 2) The Lord is with us! – Joshua 1:5b, 9  
*Illustration:* A father got God’s wisdom to help his flower girl daughter not to be afraid by promising his presence!
- 3) The Lord has commanded us not to be afraid (Josh.1:9). What he commands, he enables.

### II Mega Joy: Good News!

- 1) a) What joy is – Proverbs 17:22, 12:25, 15:13. The word ‘merry’ means ‘joyful’.  
b) What *mega* joy is – In Luke 2:10 the Greek word for ‘great’ is a familiar word which we know in Mega Mall. It is MEGA!  
*Illustration:* Carrying the St. Stephen’s Parish Pro-Cathedral’s pocket calendar from one end of SM Mega Mall to the other.
- 2) A Savior (Lk.2:11)
  - a) We have MEGA JOY for we have a Savior who is born for us. By dying on the cross for all our sins, he saved us from the penalty, condemnation and judgment for all our sins at present, and at the judgment day – Rev.20:10-15, Jn.5:24, Rom.8:1.

*Illustration:* A person who saw the fearfulness of hell. Christ has saved us from hell. In this we have Mega Joy!

- b) We have MEGA JOY as we are delivered from our enemies, and from the power of sin; we are free to serve God without fear! – Lk.1:74-5, Rom.6:1-14.

### III To All People! (vv.10-11)

- 1) I am included! That *is* good news! *You* are included! Do you have the gift of God which is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord? (Rom.6:23b)

*Illustration:* If my best friend gives me a gold Parker pen, what do I do?... So *you have to accept God's gift – his only begotten Son Jesus Christ!*

Pray: Lord Jesus, I am a sinner and I want to turn from my sins. Thank you for forgiving my sins. I open the door of my life and invite you to take charge of my life as my Lord and Savior. In your name I pray. Amen

- 2) Everyone is included. That is why we proclaim the Mega Joy: Good News to everyone else!

### [Conclusion]

When you received Jesus Christ into your life as Lord and Savior he promised you everlasting life! John 3:16 – ‘...have everlasting life.’ The word ‘have’, what tense is it – past, present or future? Yes, it is the present tense; that means the Lord Jesus Christ has given us everlasting life now. Therefore we have to live for him and enjoy this quality of life in him!

*I was so grateful to Dr. Patrick Tanhuanco for coming from St. Stephen's church several years running to address my Homiletics class on 'Evangelistic Preaching'. In this sermon he demonstrates how one can turn a Christmas or New Year Service into an evangelistic occasion, drawing people to commitment to Christ our Savior. We need to think carefully how to use other passages and occasions for this same purpose.*

## Being Aware of Your Congregation

### People and Text

Visualize your congregation while preparing your sermon. Go to the text of Scripture *with them!*

Ask:

- What do my people need to know or be reminded of from this text?
- What would they doubt to be true in the text?
- With what inner feelings, longings, thoughts and desires of my people does this text connect?

(Elizabeth Achtemeier)

### Satisfying Personality Types

The psychologist C.G. Jung believed there are four types of perspective among people: sensing, intuition, thinking and feeling. If so, a congregation will contain a mixture of these who will therefore be attracted by different parts of a preacher's message.

#### Sensing

These are practical people who use their five senses. They start from the literal meaning of what is said and want to see and hear what's going on. They are fascinated by the facts.

#### Intuition

These are imaginative people. They like to 'read between the lines' and develop a 'big picture'. They are not so interested in all the details of a Bible passage or its literal meaning.

#### Feeling

These will always focus on the people, their feelings and reactions, and their relationships with others, in what you say.

#### Thinking

These prize logical reasoning, cause and effect, what can be proved. They focus on theological issues and truth claims. They sometimes appear skeptical.

The preacher must try to provide something of interest to them all. (Leslie J. Francis)

*Notes from the Reader Training Course of the Diocese of Rochester in the Church of England.*

## Appendix 7

# Open-Air Preaching

*Some Guidance from a Master: C.H. Spurgeon*

### Advantage

One reaches a far wider audience than by waiting for people to come into your church building.

### Style

- Avoid verbosity: use short sentences, short paragraphs, condensed and concentrated.

It would never do to begin by saying, “My text, dear friends, is a passage from the inspired word containing doctrines of the utmost importance, and bringing before us in the clearest manner the most valuable practical instruction. I invite your careful attention and the exercise of your most candid judgment while we consider it under various aspects and place it in different lights, in order that we may be able to perceive its position in the analogy of the faith. In its exegesis we shall find an arena for the cultured intellect, and the refined sensibilities. As the purling brook meanders among the meads and fertilizes the pastures, so a stream of sacred truth flows through the remarkable words which now lie before us. It will be well for us to divert the crystal current to the reservoir of our meditation, that we may quaff the cup of wisdom with the lips of satisfaction.”<sup>60</sup>

- Each point must be complete in itself for the audience is constantly changing. ‘The chain of thought must be taken to pieces, and each link melted down and turned into bullets...Come to the point at once, and come there with all your might.’<sup>61</sup>
- Be intense. Look at the people.
- Use many illustrations and every now and then a quaint remark.
- Be prepared to take your share of street wit and return it if need be.<sup>62</sup>
- In the face of hostility keep cool and be courteous. Don’t be drawn into a debate. Honest questions can be dealt with the individual concerned afterwards. Do not try to reason with a drunk, he needs to be excluded.
- Be careful where you stand:

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<sup>60</sup> *Lectures*, new edn 1954, p.266.

<sup>61</sup> *Lectures*, p.266.

<sup>62</sup> I am reminded of the repartee of the Methodist preacher Lord Soper with a dirty tramp at Hyde Park Corner in London. *Tramp*: “Christianity’s been around a long time, and look what a mess we’re in!” *Soper*: “Soap and water have been around even longer, and look what a mess you’re in!”

- do not have the sun directly in your face
- do not try to preach against the wind
- if you stand with your back to a wall, have care what's on the other side!

One evangelist received a can of scalding water from over a wall with the kindly remark, "There's soup for Protestants!"... Gideon Ouseley began to preach in Roscommon with his back against the gable of a tobacco factory in which there was a window with a wooden door, through which goods were hoisted into the loft. Would you be surprised to learn that the window suddenly opened, and that from it descended a pailful of tobacco water, an acrid fluid most painful to the eyes? The preacher in after years knew better than to put himself in such a tempting position. Let his experience instruct you.<sup>63</sup>

\* \* \* \*

*Today we have many advantages over Spurgeon's time (1834-92), most particularly the use of amplification. Spurgeon relied on the spoken word and was an excellent and entertaining preacher, but some today supplement this with street drama which can make a powerful impact. Some of us too have had the benefit of learning from the Open-Air Campaigners the value of sketchboards with their pictures, puzzles and ladder-lettering, as well as rope tricks and other means of intriguing people and helping to make them receptive to a Gospel message or indeed Bible stories generally.*

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<sup>63</sup> Lectures, p.260.

## Some Key Words

**APOCRYPHA** – those books found in the Septuagint and Vulgate but not in the Hebrew Old Testament which appear today in Catholic editions of the Bible.

**BIBLE COMMENTARY** – a book explaining the background and meaning of books of the Bible verse by verse or passage by passage.

**BIBLE DICTIONARY / HANDBOOK** – a book of information (usually illustrated) about the names of people, places, and other important words found in the Bible. These key words are listed in alphabetical order.

**CONCORDANCE** – an alphabetical list of all significant words in the Bible showing, for each, the Bible verses in which they occur.

**DOXOLOGY** – ‘Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever’, or equivalent statement.

**EXPOUND** – to explain a text in detail. Expository sermons explain and apply passages of Scripture.

**EXTEMPORE** – spontaneous, from the heart; to ‘extemporise’ is to speak spontaneously, without a script.

**HOMILETICS** – the study of preaching.

**ILLUSTRATIONS** – stories from life or fiction.

**INCARNATE** – clothed in flesh, human

**LITURGY** – from Gk. *leitourgia* meaning ‘work of people’; in the Septuagint it was applied to the services of the temple in Jerusalem. Today it refers to the written order of prayers, canticles etc followed in church services.

**MANUSCRIPT** – hand-written document.

**PSALTER** – the book of Psalms of the Old Testament, sometimes supplied with musical settings.

**POLYTHEISM** – belief in many gods.

**RHETORICAL QUESTION** – a question used by a public speaker for dramatic effect; it is not intended to be answered verbally.

RITE – a religious or solemn observance; it involves words and actions.

SEMI-SCRIPT – something more than the outline but less than the full script of a sermon or talk.

SEPTUAGINT – the official Greek translation of the Old Testament and much of the Apocrypha begun in Alexandria in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC purportedly by 72 translators.

SKELETON SERMON – outline of the sermon.

VULGATE – the official Latin translation of the Bible from Hebrew and Greek made by St. Jerome, AD 382-405. The standard translation of the Bible for Roman Catholics until the Second Vatican Council (1962-65).

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*There are of course many more books on preaching – they are being published all the time – many may be consulted with profit, but no-one can hope to read them all!*