

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL, HISTORICAL, AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS

Introduction

A practice of ministry attempted by the preacher should have a solid biblical, historical, and theological foundation. The use of visual objects in sermons to increase memory retention can find its foundation in examples throughout Scripture. Insights can also be gained through a review of the history of preaching. Finally, a theological framework for this creative preaching style can be constructed through a systematic look at the theology of preaching. The premise of this project is supported biblically, historically, and theologically.

Biblical

From the beginning of time, God has been interested in visual teaching and memory retention. Genesis begins with the account of creation. After several of God's creations, the writer of Genesis records that God "saw that it was good".¹ This anthropomorphism reveals the visual nature of God and His communication with humankind. In fact, the Trinity is very visual. Jesus consistently used visual

¹Gen. 1:4, 1:10, 1:12, 1:18, 1:21, 1:25, 1:32 NIV.

objects in teaching and preaching. The Holy Spirit showed Himself like a dove at Jesus' baptism and displayed what appeared to be tongues of fire at Pentecost.² God constantly uses visual aids in communicating to people and on several occasions He placed visual aids into the hands of the Old Testament prophets.

The Trinity is also very interested in humankind's ability to remember. Jesus promised in John 14:25 that the Holy Spirit will bring His teachings to a person's remembrance. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper as a means of remembering Himself. Numerous times, through Moses and other Old Testament prophets, God reiterated His command for the people to remember Him and not forget His acts of greatness. Visual objects were repeatedly used in the Scriptures to assist in the remembering process. God used visual objects in at least four ways throughout Scripture. First, He used objects to catch people's attention. Second, He used objects to impart truth. Third, He used objects to provide for a need. Finally, He used objects to reveal Himself. Scriptures support the premise that visual aids in preaching are useful for helping the listener understand and remember the subject at hand.

The Old Testament is replete with examples of God using visual objects to teach humankind. Adam and Eve were given a

²Mark 1:10, Acts 2:3 NIV.

visual aid to teach them a lesson. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was placed by God in the center of His paradise. When Eve saw the fruit and the serpent tempted her to eat it, the Bible records that the fruit "was pleasing to the eye".³ God could have offered Adam and Eve the freedom to choose in an isoteric, abstract way. However, He chose a simple, common object to illustrate humankind's spectrum of freedom.

After the Flood, Noah was given the rainbow as a sign from God that a world flood would never again destroy the earth.⁴ Abraham was commanded to use circumcision as a visual sign of God's covenant.⁵ When God tested Abraham with his son Isaac, God provided a ram in the thicket as a visual aid.⁶

No figure in the Old Testament, however, comes close to Moses with regard to the use of visual aids in his mission. Moses was commissioned by God in front of a burning bush.⁷ He performed numerous visible, miraculous signs in front of Pharaoh. He also watched as God brought about the ten plagues on the Egyptians.⁸ The parting of the Red Sea, that

³Gen. 3:6-7 NIV.

⁴Gen. 9:12-17 NIV.

⁵Gen. 17:11 NIV.

⁶Gen. 22:13 NIV.

⁷Exod. 3:1-6 NIV.

⁸Exod. 7:1-11:10 NIV.

led to the Israelites' freedom, was an awesome visual display.⁹ The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire at night were visual reminders of God's presence with Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness.¹⁰ The manna and quail that God provided in the wilderness were visual reminders of His provision.¹¹ God's healing power was displayed by the bronze snake in the wilderness.¹² The ten commandments on tablets provided a visual reminder of God's law.¹³

Additionally, visual aids saturate the Old Testament rites and rituals. The altar sacrifices and all of the materials and objects used in tabernacle worship were given intrinsic spiritual meaning by God.¹⁴ The ark, table, lampstand, altar, oil, priestly garments, ephod, breastpiece, basin, and incense all had symbolic significance and proved to help the people remember what God required of them. The various offerings discussed in Leviticus involve visual objects, as well.

Deut. 4:9 is a key verse for the importance of remembering. It states: "Only be careful, and watch

⁹Exod. 14:13-31 NIV.

¹⁰Exod. 13:20-22 NIV.

¹¹Exod. 16:1-36 NIV.

¹²Num. 21:4-9 NIV.

¹³Deut. 10:1-5 NIV.

¹⁴Exod. 24:1-30:38 NIV.

yourselves closely, so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them." The Hebrew word *zakar* means "to remember, think of, or mention."¹⁵ This word is used throughout Deuteronomy and its repetition shows how much God is concerned with His people remembering. "Remembering means making the past present."¹⁶ The task of each preceding generation is to make the next generation remember God. The Hebrew word *lamad* means "to cause to learn."¹⁷ The English versions translate the word as "to teach." Moses understood that teaching involved more than just stating information in a logical fashion. The burden of the teacher in the Old Testament was to cause the student to learn. Moses instituted phylacteries and mezuzoths as tools in fostering remembrance.¹⁸ The Israelites understood the pedagogical and androgogical value of visual aids.¹⁹

Joshua continued the visual tradition of Moses. The crossing of the Jordan and the placement of the twelve

¹⁵W. E. Vine, Merrill Unger, and William White, *An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984), 324-325.

¹⁶Duane Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, vol. 6A, *Word Biblical Commentary*, ed. David Hubbard and Glenn Barker (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 81.

¹⁷Vine, 419.

¹⁸Deut. 6:4-9 NIV.

¹⁹Christensen, 145.

stones at that site are examples.²⁰ The period of the judges that followed had two good examples. Gideon, with his fleece, and Samson, with his hair, continued the use of visuals in the Bible.²¹

In the time of transition to a monarchy, Israel continued to learn visually. The capturing of the ark, along with the problems that beset the Philistines as a result, taught both the Israelites and the Philistines a great lesson.²² Elijah's miracles with the widow's oil and the fire on Mount Carmel are good examples of visual objects as well.²³ The mantle of Elijah proved to be a useful aid to Elisha.²⁴ The story of the ax head that floated provides an additional example from Elisha's ministry.²⁵

The writings of the Old Testament prophets provide a rich source for visual material. The Hebrew word *nabi*, which is translated as "prophet," means "one who speaks for another."²⁶ The Old Testament prophets were the preachers of their day. They spoke the message of God to the people. Isaiah learned from a burning coal and from the sun

²⁰Josh. 3:1-17, 4:1-9 NIV.

²¹Judg. 6:36-40, 16:17-22 NIV.

²²I Sam. 4:1-10, 5:1-12 NIV.

²³I Kings 17:7-16, 18:38-39 NIV.

²⁴II Kings 2:6-15 NIV.

²⁵II Kings 6:1-7 NIV.

²⁶Vine, 311-312.

reversing its shadow ten steps.²⁷ Jeremiah utilized a linen belt, the potter's house, a yolk, a field, and a scroll to deliver the message of the Lord.²⁸ Ezekiel used a scroll, a clay tablet, wheat, barley, manure, and a razor to visually illustrate his message.²⁹ Daniel experienced the handwriting on the wall.³⁰ Hosea had a wife who was a prostitute and served as a painful reminder of Israel's unfaithfulness.³¹ Amos conveyed a vision of locust, fire, a plumbline, and ripe fruit in his ministry.³²

Jonah was taught a valuable lesson from a worm and a plant.³³ Zechariah had numerous visions and visual experiences.³⁴ Finally, Zechariah used visual examples of four chariots and a crown in his prophecies.³⁵

The New Testament continues the history of visual aids in Scripture. God continued to direct people in a visual manner. Jesus was a key person in the development of a

²⁷Isa. 6:1-7, 38:7-8 NIV.

²⁸Jer. 13:1-11, 18:1-12, 19:1-15, 27:1-28:17, 32:1-15, 36:1-32 NIV.

²⁹Ezek. 3:1-3, 4:1-3, 4:9-17, 5:1-4 NIV.

³⁰Dan. 5:1-31 NIV.

³¹Hos. 1:1-3:5 NIV.

³²Amos 7:1-9, 8:1-3 NIV.

³³Jon. 4:5-11 NIV.

³⁴Zech. 1:7-21, 2:1-13, 3:1-10, 4:1-14, 5:1-14 NIV.

³⁵Zech. 6:1-15 NIV.

visual system for remembrance. The star in the East announced Jesus' birth.³⁶ The temple tax, the fig tree, perfume, and two coins from a widow all provided visual aids for Jesus' preaching.³⁷ Jesus' miracle of turning water into wine, His analogy of water with the Samaritan woman, and His presentation of His wounded side and hands to Thomas are further indications that Jesus involved the visual learner in His teaching.³⁸

The most important visual aid that Jesus used as a memory device was the Last Supper, recorded in Luke 22:17-22 and I Cor. 11:17-34. In the Last Supper, Jesus passed the bread and the wine and requested that His followers continue this sacrament in remembrance of Him. William Barclay rightly notes that Corinthians has an earlier date of authorship than the Gospels. This account by Paul, then, reveals the first recorded words of Jesus.³⁹ The Greek word *anamnesis*, translated as "remembrance," means in this context "an affectionate calling of the Person Himself to mind."⁴⁰ Jesus expected His disciples to remember Him and His

³⁶Matt. 2:1-12 NIV.

³⁷Matt. 17:24-27, 21:18-22, 26:6-13, Mark 12:41-44 NIV.

³⁸John 2:1-11, 4:1-26, 20:26-29 NIV.

³⁹William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, 3d rev. ed., The Daily Study Bible Series (Edinburgh, Scotland: Saint Andrew Press, 1954; reprint, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), 103.

⁴⁰Vine, 946-47.

teaching. Yet, some commentaries doubt that Jesus actually asked the disciples to continue the supper in remembrance of Him.⁴¹ Frank Gaebelin believes that Luke 22:19-20 can be traced to a non-Markan source that Paul and Luke must have quoted.⁴² George Buttrick believes that the remembrance practice was a late addition by copyists to Luke's manuscript.⁴³ These arguments are based on a variety of reasons. First, the parallel accounts of Matthew and Mark make no mention of this being an event to be repeated. Second, Luke's words appear too similar to Paul's account. While noting these textual questions, R. C. H. Lenski still holds to the authentic authorship of Jesus' request that communion be a repeated act in remembrance of Him.⁴⁴ Jesus did institute the supper and His command to continue its practice is recorded in His own words.

Earlier in this chapter, the Old Testament term for 'prophet' was defined from the Hebrew. In the New Testament, the Greek work *prophetes* means

⁴¹John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, vol. 35c, *Word Biblical Commentary*, ed. David Hubbard and Glenn Barker (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 1047.

⁴²Frank Gaebelin, ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 8:1027.

⁴³George Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), 10:137.

⁴⁴R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1946), 1049.

"one who speaks forth or openly."⁴⁵ Vine's expository dictionary adds that the New Testament prophet involved both preaching the Gospel and foretelling of God's future purposes.⁴⁶ The term for 'preacher,' *verux* in the Greek, means "a herald of the Gospel."⁴⁷ In a limited sense then, as one compares the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament preachers, there is a connection in their messages and in their delivery.

Barclay extends the definition of a sacrament to "very ordinary things" in a person's life.⁴⁸ The visual object held as a sacrament carries meaning "far beyond the ordinary," for when one touches or handles one of these "ordinary" objects, "memory is stirred."⁴⁹ God created this visual ability in humankind. Throughout Scripture, He consistently utilized objects to stir memory and cause people to find deeper meaning in the ordinaries of life. Visual objects used by the preacher for memory retention can therefore be based on this solid biblical foundation.

⁴⁵Vine, 894.

⁴⁶Vine, 894.

⁴⁷Vine, 874.

⁴⁸William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*, 3d rev. ed., The Daily Study Bible Series (Edinburgh, Scotland: Saint Andrew Press, 1954; reprint, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), 265.

⁴⁹Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*, 265.

Historical

The Christian sermon has been molded and shaped through the Church's two-thousand year history. The place of the message in Sunday worship, the method of delivery applied by the preacher, the structure of the message, and the effectiveness of the preacher have undergone shifts and changes as the Christian faith has grown and developed. A careful review of the history of Christian preaching reveals two facts that have pertinence to the problem addressed in this project. First, history has shown that inattention of the congregation during the preacher's sermon has continually been a problem for the Church. Second, the use of visual aids in preaching has had a storied history that reveals its effectiveness in keeping the congregation's attention and in fostering memory retention of the sermon content.

Edwin Dargan, a respected preacher and sermon historian who wrote an exhaustive two-volume work on the history of preaching, suggests three streams of history that prepared the Church for Christian preaching. Hebrew prophecy, the Christian Gospel, and ancient oratory contributed to the full development of the Christian sermon.⁵⁰ T. Harwood Pattison, another noted preaching historian, states that

⁵⁰Edwin Dargan, *A History of Preaching*, vol. 1 & 2 combined (New York: Armstrong, 1905; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954), 14.

Christian preaching began with the Hebrew prophets.⁵¹ The biblical discussion recorded earlier sufficiently identifies the point of connection between Hebrew prophecy and Christian preaching. John the Baptist was the connector between the prophets and the Christian preacher.⁵²

The Jewish synagogue also provided some insight into the development of the sermon. Philo attested that the synagogue "consisted chiefly of oral instruction and of free extended speaking."⁵³ The seeds of the Jewish faith were present at the birth of Christianity and led to the flourishing of the Christian homily. The Christian Gospel also lended itself for the formation of the sermon. Much of the Gospel's impact will be discussed in the theological section of this chapter.

Finally, the ancient oratory impacted the history of preaching. Oratory has a lengthy history predating the Greek and Roman Empires. However, the art of oratory was never fully developed before the Greeks and Romans.⁵⁴ Aristotle recognized the importance of verbal and visual communication. He observed that people appreciated a visual representation of a concept because it helped them

⁵¹T. Howard Pattison, *The History of Christian Preaching* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1903), 3.

⁵²Dargan 1, 21.

⁵³Dargan 1, 21.

⁵⁴Dargan 1, 16.

"gather the meaning of things."⁵⁵ He also maintained that after a visual observation "sensings and imaginings continue to exist."⁵⁶ The ancient education of the Greeks and Romans contained oratory instruction as a chief element in the pupil's development.⁵⁷

Dargan divides the history of preaching into six periods. The first period extends from A.D. 70 to A.D. 430 and covers the Patristic Age through the ministry of John Chrysostom and Augustine. The second period includes A.D. 430 to 1095, the year of the First Crusade. John Wycliffe's ministry closes the Scholastic Age, which lasts from 1095 to 1361. The fourth era ranges from 1361 to 1572 and is called the Reformation Age by Dargan. John Wesley and George Whitefield close the fifth epoch spanning from 1572 to 1738. The final period Dargan identifies is from 1738 to 1900, which he entitles the Evangelical Age.⁵⁸ From 1900 to the present, the world has gone through an enormous amount of change and development. As of yet, the divisions of preaching history in the twentieth century have not been clearly identified.

⁵⁵Marilyn McClintock, "The Pictorial Nonverbal Communication System of the Medieval Church: Its Development and Use as a Method of Providing Religious Instruction in the Christian Faith During the Fourth Through the Fifteenth Centuries; with Implications for Visual Literacy" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1980), 51-52.

⁵⁶McClintock, 51-52.

⁵⁷Dargan 1, 16.

⁵⁸Dargan 1, 28.

Yet, the segmenting of the history of preaching will allow the reader to see the issue of inattention and the use of visual aids in sermon delivery as they appear in each era.

Noticeable material exists on the formation of the Christian sermon and the use of visual aids in the Patristic Age. The first-century Church developed early symbols to help believers communicate in a hostile Roman environment. The dove represented the soul. A palm branch represented the martyr's victory over death. Olive branches identified souls that died at peace with God. A drawing of a fish signified Jesus Christ. A circle was used to illustrate God or eternity.⁵⁹ These symbols would later develop into a visual communication system as the Church matured.

In the early Church, preaching was not limited to a special class. Slowly, however, as the Church solidified its form and structure, a special class developed as preachers and preaching were limited to that select group.⁶⁰ Additionally, preachers sat as they delivered their message and for the most part spoke extemporaneously, although some examples of sermon manuscripts do exist.⁶¹ Preaching followed the Scripture reading in services and contained three essential

⁵⁹McClintock, 8-9.

⁶⁰Dargan 1, 36-37.

⁶¹Dargan 1, 37.

elements: apostolic tradition, Scripture, and personal commentary by the preacher.⁶²

By the fourth century, church buildings became more common and their appearance mirrored that of the Roman courtroom. The buildings were constructed as long rectangles with level floors and rows of seats. The presence of a platform, or pulpit, and a reading desk was usually part of the church decorum. Much of the physical structure of the modern church building was developed by this point in the history of the Church.⁶³ Sundays, festival days, and days that honored the saints and martyrs became common times for a sermon delivery.⁶⁴ By the fourth century, the preacher stood during the message.⁶⁵ Additionally, by the close of the fourth century, preaching became restricted to a special class and this became a "fixed and final custom."⁶⁶

The fourth-century congregation was not always attentive to its preachers. Dargan asserts that many in the congregation would move about, others would break into applause, and large numbers would sometimes leave before the end of the service.⁶⁷

⁶²Dargan 1, 39.

⁶³Dargan 1, 68.

⁶⁴Dargan 1, 68.

⁶⁵Dargan 1, 68.

⁶⁶Dargan 1, 69.

⁶⁷Dargan 1, 68-69.

John Chrysostom, known as "golden mouth" because of his eloquent speech, was the greatest of the early Christian preachers.⁶⁸ He was keenly aware of the importance of keeping a congregation's attention. Chrysostom also freely used visual aids in his preaching, to good effect. In a sermon focusing on charity for the poor, he pointed repeatedly to the front row of the church on which the beggars sat.⁶⁹ In the midst of another message, he noticed that the congregation became diverted by the lighting of the lamps in the church while he preached. He used the opportunity as a visual demonstration of how easily the congregation turned away to worldly lamps instead of Christ, the real light.⁷⁰

A third example of Chrysostom's preaching reveals his understanding of the power of the message. Eutropius, a Roman official who angered the Emperor, was found clinging to the altar in Chrysostom's church while surrounded by his enemies. Chrysostom used the opportunity to preach a message as he held back the enemies from Eutropius. He began his message with the theme of vanity and proceeded to use Eutropius as a prime illustration. Eutropius, at this point, appeared to have a mental breakdown and began muttering incoherently to himself. After baiting his hook, Chrysostom

⁶⁸Yngve Brilioth, *A Brief History of Preaching*, trans. Karl Mattson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 31.

⁶⁹Pattison, 67.

⁷⁰Pattison, 67.

turned the message to forgiveness and used Jesus' prayer on the cross as his text. He continued to preach until the enemies of Eutropius pleaded for mercy on his behalf.⁷¹ This example shows the ingenuity of Chrysostom and his understanding of the communication of the message. Even Chrysostom, however, complained of the congregation's inattention and distraction.⁷²

Dargan notices that a sharp decline in the quality and effectiveness of preaching occurred after the passing of Chrysostom.⁷³ He blames the decline on a lack of "spontaneity and freshness."⁷⁴ Imitation replaced creativity in the pulpit.⁷⁵ After the fourth century, the sermon clearly became an expository discourse ranging from the "extended address" to a "brief homily."⁷⁶

During the second era of preaching history, however, an interesting development occurred that had lasting impact to the fifteenth century. The early Christian symbols became the Church's main visual communication system.⁷⁷ Marilyn

⁷¹Pattison, 69.

⁷²Bill Leonard, "Preaching in Historical Perspective," in *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, ed. Michael Duduit (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 25.

⁷³Dargan 1, 110.

⁷⁴Dargan 1, 110.

⁷⁵Dargan 1, 110.

⁷⁶Dargan 1, 113.

⁷⁷McClintock, 28.

McClintock has written a dissertation on the development of this visual system and she concludes that this visual system is the "only known visual system that can be traced from its inception in the fourth century to its culmination in the fifteenth century."⁷⁸

The fourth-century Church understood how visual aids could effectively communicate the Gospel message. The leaders of this time allowed portable icons to be made and "set up in churches or homes, or carried on travels as aids to devotion and safety...."⁷⁹ This practice did not please everyone. The Bishop of Marseilles ordered the destruction of all icons because he found his congregation was showing adoration for the images. Pope Gregory applauded the bishop's concern. He also reprimanded the bishop, though, because the ignorant and illiterate were learning from the pictures even though they were unable to learn from books. He insightfully stated that adoration of images was one thing but learning a story through a picture that illumines what is to be adored should be allowed and continued.⁸⁰

Pope Sixtus, in the middle of the fifth century, ordered for mosaics and pictures to be placed in the Church to help keep the congregation's attention.⁸¹ Similarly,

⁷⁸McClintock, iv.

⁷⁹McClintock, 18.

⁸⁰McClintock, 19.

⁸¹McClintock, 95-96.

Paulinus, the Bishop of Nola in the fifth century, saw the use of visual aids such as pictures and icons as beneficial in keeping the congregation's attention and assisting in their learning.⁸² Although the use of icons and images appeared to be of great benefit to the Church, problems began to develop with their use. People began to show too much respect and adoration for the images. Many would kiss the icons, pray to them, carry them, and even decorate them on festival days.⁸³

The abuse of the icons led Emperor Leo II, in A.D. 726, to prohibit religious symbols in the Church.⁸⁴ The struggle that followed has become known as the "Iconoclastic Controversy."⁸⁵ Those who supported the Emperor were known as 'iconoclasts.' Others who supported the use of icons were called 'iconophiles.' The iconophiles were led by monks and lower clergy.⁸⁶ These officials had first hand experience of how icons had benefited the biblical literacy of the common people.

Anastasius, an important Church leader in the Eastern Church, signed Emperor Leo's edict and thus began a schism of the Eastern and Western Church. Pope Gregory III, in the

⁸²McClintock, 95-96.

⁸³McClintock, 19.

⁸⁴McClintock, 20.

⁸⁵McClintock, 20.

⁸⁶McClintock, 20.

West, excluded the iconoclasts from the Western Church.⁸⁷ Constantine V, Leo's son, heightened the argument when he denounced the icons again under his rule. A bloody saga began as icons were burned and destroyed and iconophiles were beheaded or tortured. Much of the Eastern Church's visual system was destroyed during this time period.⁸⁸

The Council of A.D. 787 was crucial in the conclusion to the controversy. The council "restored veneration" but not "worship of icons."⁸⁹ The issue was not fully satisfied until A.D. 826. In the West, however, the icons and images had become a teaching tool by this time.⁹⁰ As the issue became settled, Charlemagne began to help the history of the sermon immensely. He insisted that sermons should be spoken in the congregation's vernacular and not in Latin.⁹¹ In spite of his insistence, the use of the vernacular did not take hold in the Church until the sixteenth century. However, in the ninth century, leaders finally began to acknowledge the ineffectiveness of a message in a foreign tongue.

The third era in the history of the sermon continued to show the Church's attempt to teach and instruct using visual methods. The eleventh-century *Biblica Picta*, or picture

⁸⁷McClintock, 21.

⁸⁸McClintock, 21.

⁸⁹McClintock, 25.

⁹⁰McClintock, 25.

⁹¹Pattison, 77.

Bible, became a guide for painting images in the Church.⁹² In one copy of the famous book, St. Angar revealed that he "wrote this book for the conversion of the pagans" and noted that "it is entirely composed of signs."⁹³ Medieval Christians, regardless of language, culture, or location were able to understand and interpret the picture system of the Church.⁹⁴

The structuring of the church building was designed to tell the story of the Church through its decoration and architecture.⁹⁵ Easter Eve service in the medieval Church illustrates the visual nature of worship. In the service, all lamps were put out as a symbol of the passing of the old law. New fire was blessed signifying the new law. The fire was struck from flint representing Christ as the cornerstone. The paschal candle had numerous symbolic meanings. When the candle was extinguished, it represented the ancient law, the pillar of cloud from the wilderness experience, and the body of Christ. When it was lighted, it represented the new law, the pillar of fire, and the resurrected Lord. Five grains of incense were driven into the paschal candle in remembrance of the wounds of Christ and the spices women brought for Christ's burial. The

⁹²McClintock, 98.

⁹³McClintock, 99.

⁹⁴McClintock, 21.

⁹⁵McClintock, 59.

paschal candle was lighted and then all lamps in the church were relit to show the coming of the new law.⁹⁶

At the death of Chrysostom in the fifth century, a noticeable decline had occurred in the prowess of Christian preachers. Dargan notices that a revival in preaching finally occurred in the twelfth century. He lists two reasons for this revival. First, preachers took preaching more seriously. Second, the congregation showed more respect for the preacher and greater interest in his message.⁹⁷ In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the vernacular continued to gain more and more use by the common preacher.⁹⁸ Sermons were usually delivered before noon on Sundays and other special days of the year.⁹⁹ Men and women separated for the service, and there has been no consensus on whether the congregation sat or stood for the morning message. Dargan asserts that the context of the service affected this factor.¹⁰⁰

In spite of these improvements, the congregation was not always congenial to the preacher. People being inattentive, people leaving early, and people sleeping were

⁹⁶McClintock, 137-38.

⁹⁷Dargan 1, 181.

⁹⁸Dargan 1, 184.

⁹⁹Dargan 1, 192.

¹⁰⁰Dargan 1, 193.

problems the preacher faced.¹⁰¹ The audience, at times, would even express approval or disapproval by whispering to one another or shaking heads.¹⁰² Bernard, a twelfth-century preacher, is quoted as saying "I see by the way you shake your heads and whisper that what I am saying does not please you; but it is true."¹⁰³

Visual aids continued to be developed in this era. Priests, monks, and friars carried penitential handbooks that contained numerous symbolic pictures.¹⁰⁴ Preachers began to introduce "dialogue, homely illustration, humor, and sometimes even undignified, not to say irreverent drollery."¹⁰⁵

Dargan called this type of preaching "sensational preaching" or "popular preaching."¹⁰⁶ While he identifies the dangers and excessives of this type of preaching, Dargan also identifies its good side as well. Dargan admits that the popular preacher "found the people, held them, [and] helped them."¹⁰⁷ He continues, "Vivid allegory and picturing

¹⁰¹Dargan 1, 192.

¹⁰²Dargan 1, 193.

¹⁰³Dargan 1, 193.

¹⁰⁴McClintock, 151.

¹⁰⁵Dargan 1, 193.

¹⁰⁶Dargan 1, 244.

¹⁰⁷Dargan 1, 244.

appealed to the imagination, lively dialogue and sharp home-thrust kept the attention, and warm and tender appeals to the better feelings of men were not without effect."¹⁰⁸ The popular preacher of the thirteenth century had the "power to attract crowds of hearers" and to communicate to them "with an effectiveness rarely equalled and never surpassed."¹⁰⁹

In the middle ages, sermons remained on Sundays before noon and not much changed from the previous period in regards to the congregation or church decoration.¹¹⁰ Sermons were delivered in one of three ways. They were memorized, extemporized, or preached with notes, much like preaching today.¹¹¹ The reformation era had its share of visual preachers who understood how to hold the congregation's attention. Bernardino, a preacher in the early fifteenth century, was an extremely popular preacher. After a sermon on the dangers of gambling, he had a person in the congregation approach him with a dilemma. The person made a living by painting the dice used for gambling. Bernardino instructed him to paint a disc representing the sun with the name of Jesus in the center. The painter became wealthy from this new business partly, if not entirely, because Bernardino used the discs as an illustration in many of his

¹⁰⁸Dargan 1, 245.

¹⁰⁹Dargan 1, 288.

¹¹⁰Dargan 1, 307.

¹¹¹Dargan 1, 307.

messages. The pope heard of this new enterprise and quickly stopped Bernardino from such activity.¹¹² Bernardino was a gifted preacher, though, whose use of imagination and oratorical talent had a powerful affect on the people who heard him preach.¹¹³

Martin Luther also understood communication theory. He denounced the preacher who "torments his hearers with long sermons."¹¹⁴ He also cursed those who would not simplify the message for the most simple in the congregation.¹¹⁵

Bernard Gilpin, who was a preacher for most of the sixteenth century, used a visual aid in a memorable sermon. Gilpin was a visiting preacher in a church and noticed a glove hanging in the sanctuary. When he inquired about why it was there, he was told that a man hung it there as a challenge. Whoever took the glove down would be agreeing to a fight. Gilpin tried to get people in the church to take the glove down before the service and bring it to him. No one would oblige. Finally, Gilpin took the glove down himself and hid it in his clothing. He preached a message on the un-Christian nature of issuing challenges and at some

¹¹²Dargan 1, 317-18.

¹¹³Dargan 1, 318.

¹¹⁴Pattison, 137.

¹¹⁵Pattison, 137.

point in the message pulled out the glove and used it as a visual illustration of what he was preaching about.¹¹⁶

The fifth era in preaching history showed the continued molding of the sermon. At Westminster Abbey in the 1600s, a preacher had a humiliating experience as he preached a message. He preached too long and people began to leave before he concluded his message. "Vergers" who received money by showing people around the church after the service were concerned about losing business. They convinced the organist to begin playing in the middle of the preaching and the organist did not stop until the preacher gave up and quit preaching.¹¹⁷ The preacher had lost the congregation's attention, yet he continued to preach.

In the seventeenth century, comparisons of everyday objects and events were common in preaching.¹¹⁸ Jacques Bri-daine, an eighteenth-century preacher, had a powerful preaching ministry. In one of his first parish positions at Aiquesmortes, he noticed that people were not gathering for the church service. He grabbed a bell and put on his robe and walked through the streets ringing the bell. His persistence paid off as people began to come out in

¹¹⁶Pattison, 160-61.

¹¹⁷Pattison, 205.

¹¹⁸Dargan 2, 65.

curiosity.¹¹⁹ He knew how to "capture a crowd."¹²⁰ On another occasion, in a sermon about death, he had the congregation follow him to the church graveyard in the middle of preaching. He chanted the *Miserere* on the journey outside and finished his message from a tomb.¹²¹

John Wesley, in a similar story, was not allowed to preach in a certain church pulpit. He went outside of the church and stood on his own father's grave to deliver a message.¹²² Wesley taught other preachers to use "plain, proper, and clear" language when they preached.¹²³ He also urged preachers to preach shorter sermons because he understood that a longer message might lose the congregation's attention.¹²⁴

George Whitefield, in a sermon about hell, wore a black judge's cape used by judges in pronouncing a death sentence on convicted criminals.¹²⁵ He was known to preach from "tombs, roadside signs, and even gibbets."¹²⁶ Peter

¹¹⁹Dargan 2, 254-55.

¹²⁰Dargan 2, 256.

¹²¹Dargan 2, 257.

¹²²Webb Garrison, *The Preacher and His Audience* (Los Angeles: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1964), 245.

¹²³Leonard, 31.

¹²⁴Leonard, 31.

¹²⁵Garrison, 245.

¹²⁶Garrison, 245.

Cartwright, a great American open-air preacher, once preached a sermon near a running spring. He chose to preach on the perils of alcoholism and used a comparison of a dirty, poisonous liquor brewery against the spring of the land. He repeatedly referred to the spring nearby, elaborating on the freshness and cleanliness of God's spring.¹²⁷ The preachers of the post-reformation were not opposed to using visual aids in preaching or using popular methods to insure attention and retention of sermon material.

In the evangelical age of preaching, visual aids continued to be utilized. C. H. Tyndall, pastor of Broome Street Tabernacle in New York City in the early 1900s, wrote a book about the use of visual objects in preaching. He noted that he used visual objects not to merely attract more people but to help with religious instruction and conversion of the lost.¹²⁸ He began using visual objects in children's sermons and noticed how well the sermons were received not only by the children but by the adults as well. Several adults asked him to expand the children's sermon and do away with the adult message. He tried this idea with great success. He preached an object sermon once each month and noticed that comments increased, attendance increased, and

¹²⁷Ralph Turnbull, *A History of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974), 92.

¹²⁸Charles Tyndall, *Object Sermons in Outline* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1891), 22-23.

the services were marked by a "special spiritual power" when the object sermon was utilized.¹²⁹

Kenneth Sollitt, another preacher from the early 1900s who used pictures and visual aids in his preaching to adults, noticed that the visual aids helped in securing and holding attention, insuring retention, and creating mental associations.¹³⁰ Halford Edward Luccock, also a preacher of the early twentieth century, noted that "...the aim of preaching is not the elucidation of a subject but the transformation of a person."¹³¹ He described the sermon as "a wrestling match, or rather two wrestling matches, first with an idea and then with an audience, with the absorbed tenseness of those first moments will determine whether one can get an effective hold on idea or on people."¹³² William Rogers and Paul Vieth, in the 1940s, traced the development of visual aids in the Church from the 1890s to the 1940s. They specifically focused on the use of the motion picture in the sermon.¹³³

¹²⁹Tyndall, 22-23.

¹³⁰Kenneth Sollitt, *Preaching from Pictures* (Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1938), 111-20.

¹³¹Turnbull, 197.

¹³²Turnbull, 197.

¹³³William Rogers and Paul Vieth, *Visual Aids in the Church* (Philadelphia: Christian Education Press, 1946), 1-23.

Dargan marks an insightful observation when he notes that "contemporary taste decides the form of literacy or oral expression."¹³⁴ What works in one century may or may not be successful in a different time or place.¹³⁵

Preachers through the centuries, however, have scoffed at the "sensational preacher" who uses unorthodox methods of communication. Webb Garrison, in the mid-1950s, stated that ten Yale lectures on preaching had warned against "sensational preaching."¹³⁶ Garrison asserted that a preacher's goal is communication and that the preacher should not be afraid to "step outside the boundary of tradition."¹³⁷ The "use of off-trail techniques may actually contribute to both interest-value and persuasive power of preaching."¹³⁸ Eldon Weisheit properly stated, "The purpose of the sermon is to get a message to people."¹³⁹

History has shown that preachers have been aware of communication techniques that assist in grasping a congregation's attention and instilling memory retention. Visual aids have been a part of the preacher's arsenal throughout

¹³⁴Dargan 2, 352.

¹³⁵Dargan 2, 352.

¹³⁶Garrison, 244-45.

¹³⁷Garrison, 250.

¹³⁸Garrison, 250.

¹³⁹Eldon Weisheit, *A Sermon is More than Words*, The Preacher's Workshop Series, book 8 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977), 6.

the history of Christianity. Preachers can find a solid historical basis for utilizing communication theory techniques and more specifically for utilizing visual objects in preaching to adults.

Theological

Preachers seldom consciously reflect on their theology of preaching. However, every preacher has a theology of preaching, whether he or she claims it or not. For years, Christian bookstores have sold books that examine how to be an effective preacher.¹⁴⁰ A theology of preaching must be deeper than this. Defining what preaching is, identifying its purpose, clarifying the subject matter it addresses, and showing the authority of the minister to preach must all be described in a thorough theology of preaching. There is a Pentecostal theology of preaching that permits and even encourages the minister to use creativity in preaching.

Scholars have struggled to define preaching for centuries. Word emphasis and semantics have caused a great diversity in what the Christian community considers preaching. Alan of Lille, in the twelfth century, advocated that "preaching is an open and public instruction in faith and

¹⁴⁰Domenico Grasso, *Proclaiming God's Message: A Study in the Theology of Preaching* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965), xxxi.

behavior whose purpose is the forming of men."¹⁴¹ Phillip Brooks, a noted preacher of this century, proclaimed preaching as "truth through personality."¹⁴² C. H. Dodd observed in the 1930s that much of what is called preaching in the twentieth century would not be recognized by the Apostles as preaching.¹⁴³

The two Greek words *kerusso* and *evangelizo*, that are translated in English as "preach" in most versions, connote "heralding" or "announcing the Gospel."¹⁴⁴ Dodd is correct when he notes the narrower focus of the biblical word in comparison to contemporary usage. However, several theologians have reasoned convincingly that teaching or instruction should also be a part of the sermon. Jay Adams admits that the New Testament Greek word *didasko*, which means "to teach," is more akin to the modern message.¹⁴⁵ Ozora Davis, through reviewing the New Testament, contends that healing, exhorting, admonishing, confirming, and

¹⁴¹Alan of Lille, "The Seventh Rung," in *Theories in Preaching: Selected Readings in the Homiletical Tradition*, ed. Richard Lischer (Durham, NC: Labyrinth Press, 1987), 10.

¹⁴²Phillips Brooks, "The Two Elements in Preaching," in *Theories in Preaching: Selected Readings in the Homiletical Tradition*, ed. Richard Lischer (Durham, NC: Labyrinth Press, 1987), 14-15.

¹⁴³Sweazey, 20.

¹⁴⁴Jay Adams, *Preaching with Purpose: A Comprehensive Textbook on Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1982), 5.

¹⁴⁵Adams, 5.

edifying can all be included in the concept of preaching.¹⁴⁶ Adams identifies two kinds of preaching: evangelistic preaching and instructional preaching.¹⁴⁷ George Sweazey, a noted preaching professor, recognizes three kinds of discourses in the New Testament: evangelistic preaching, instruction on baptism, and teaching given to members of the Church.¹⁴⁸ James Cox suggests four words to help one understand preaching. Proclaiming, witnessing, teaching, and prophesying are all part of the message of the minister.¹⁴⁹ Separating preaching into different categories is not necessary, though. Proclamation of the Gospel message should include the impartation of information. By the same token, an instructional message should include the Gospel message.¹⁵⁰

The distinctions made by these scholars would better be described as aspects of preaching and not as separate concepts unto themselves. For the purposes of this paper, preaching is a message from the Word of God, illuminated, directed, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, communicated through an imperfect minister in natural and spiritual means to a group of people for remembrance of the Gospel message

¹⁴⁶Sweazey, 20.

¹⁴⁷Adams, 6.

¹⁴⁸Sweazey, 20.

¹⁴⁹Cox, 7.

¹⁵⁰Sweazey, 21.

and its transforming effect on the everyday issues of human-kind.

The sermon must be a message from the Word of God. Elizabeth Achtemeier rightly insists that a preacher should use the Bible when preaching or else not preach at all.¹⁵¹ Karl Barth charges that nothing should be added to the Word of God. He chides that the pastor who feels he or she must add personal instruction to Scripture does not trust the Word of God completely.¹⁵² Barth believes that no organization beyond what the Bible expounds should be employed.¹⁵³ He provides an excellent reminder that the sermon must be biblical but his position, when taken to an extreme, is not a balanced approach to communicating a message.¹⁵⁴

The "Word of God" takes on added meaning in light of John 1:1, which refers to Jesus as the "Word of God."¹⁵⁵ Christ should be the focal point as the preacher explores the pages of Scripture.¹⁵⁶ Christ emphasized the "kingdom of God" in His preaching. The object of His preaching was for

¹⁵¹Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Creative Preaching: Finding the Words*, Abingdon Preacher's Library, ed. William Thompson (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 18.

¹⁵²Sweazey, 16-17.

¹⁵³Sweazey, 17.

¹⁵⁴Sweazey, 17.

¹⁵⁵Grasso, 3-6.

¹⁵⁶Grasso, 3-6.

the hearer to surrender his or her life to Him and serve Him faithfully.¹⁵⁷ The Gospel message recorded in the New Testament is a call to accept Christ as Savior.¹⁵⁸ Many scholars and preachers have concluded that all sermons must be evangelistically focused because of the centrality of Christ and His message. However, messages that speak to the issues of the Christian today and instruct and encourage him or her in the faith can still be considered preaching by the Church as well. As long as the impact of Christ and His message are clearly demonstrated in a sermon, any passage or passages of Scripture can be utilized by the minister in preaching. Preaching is the "Word of God." It participates in God's plan, is initiated by Christ, and is guided by the Holy Spirit.¹⁵⁹

A theology of preaching should be Trinitarian.¹⁶⁰ All three persons of the trinity are active in preaching. The Father is the source of the Word; the Son is the spoken, living Word; the Holy Spirit presides over the delivery of the Word.¹⁶¹ The place of the Holy Spirit in preaching is

¹⁵⁷Grasso, 1-3.

¹⁵⁸Grasso, 6-8.

¹⁵⁹David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 456.

¹⁶⁰R. Albert Mohler, "Theology of Preaching," in *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, ed. Michael Dudit (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 14.

¹⁶¹Grasso, 45.

often taken for granted and not fully integrated into the preacher's theology. In a Pentecostal theology of preaching, the Holy Spirit should be given His proper place and should be identified in the preaching event.

Guy Duffield seeks to identify what determines if a minister is a Pentecostal preacher. He acknowledges that many preachers and laity equate Pentecostal preaching to a preacher who speaks with much energy and a loud voice and who uses wide gestures and movement. He continues his stereotype by observing that the Pentecostal preacher may use no notes or manuscript in his or her delivery while claiming no prior preparation as he or she preaches by the Holy Spirit's direction.¹⁶² Duffield concludes that this is not what makes preaching 'Pentecostal.'

Pentecostal preaching begins with a pastor that is a "yielded vessel" to the Holy Spirit.¹⁶³ Fred Craddock views silence as the starting place of preaching.¹⁶⁴ The preacher must acknowledge that he or she has nothing to say unless the Holy Spirit communicates His message to him or her.¹⁶⁵ Listening, therefore, is more important for the minister

¹⁶²Guy Duffield, *Pentecostal Preaching* (New York: Vantage Press, 1957), 24.

¹⁶³James Forbes, *The Holy Spirit and Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 63.

¹⁶⁴Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 52-55.

¹⁶⁵Forbes, 61.

than speaking. He or she must hear clearly from God first, and then secondly from the congregation.¹⁶⁶ Craddock uses Matt. 10:27b as a framework for the preacher's preparation. He indicates that revelation from God is "heard in a whisper" and that from that whisper the preacher "shouts it from the housetop."¹⁶⁷

After Pentecost, preaching by the Apostles was thoroughly "Pentecostal." The Bible repeatedly mentions times in which the Holy Spirit filled, empowered, and inspired the message of the ministers. Acts 4:8, Acts 4:31, Acts 5:32, Acts 6:10, Acts 13:9-10, Rom. 15:19, 1 Thess. 1:5, and 1 Pet. 1:12 all give examples of the Holy Spirit's impact on the preaching of the New Testament Church.¹⁶⁸ Present day preachers should rely on the Holy Spirit just as much as the early preachers. David Lloyd-Jones insists that the preacher must seek Him always. The preacher must go beyond just seeking Him, though; he must "expect Him."¹⁶⁹ Too often pastors preach without giving a thought to the Holy Spirit's activity in the message. James Forbes suggests that

¹⁶⁶Charles Bartow, *The Preaching Moment: A Guide to Sermon Delivery*, Abingdon Preacher's Library, ed. William Thompson (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 13-14.

¹⁶⁷Craddock, 55-65.

¹⁶⁸Duffield, 23.

¹⁶⁹David Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 325.

preachers consciously and subconsciously shy away from fully embracing the Holy Spirit's power and anointing.¹⁷⁰

Forbes believes that the anointing of Jesus serves as a model for today's Pentecostal preacher. He specifically connects Jesus' water baptism, God's supernatural display of favor, and the Holy Spirit's descent in the form of a dove as the starting place of Christ's anointing.¹⁷¹ Preachers should have an expectation of the Holy Spirit's power and anointing in their preaching as well.¹⁷² Jesse Moon, a dean of Southwestern Assemblies of God College, defines the anointing as "the special presence of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of God's servant, which produces an inspiring awareness of the divine presence. His entire faculties are enhanced."¹⁷³ Moon indicates that "heightened illumination, courage, wisdom, discernment, faith, guidance, memory, vocation, emotions, intellect, and physical performance" are all increased by the anointing of the Spirit.¹⁷⁴

This anointing of the Holy Spirit has caused some Pentecostal preachers to claim no need for preparation of sermon material. Although a woefully prepared message may be

¹⁷⁰Forbes, 26.

¹⁷¹Forbes, 39.

¹⁷²Forbes, 50-51.

¹⁷³Forbes, 54.

¹⁷⁴Forbes, 54.

visited by the Holy Spirit, ordinarily this is not the way the Spirit moves.¹⁷⁵ Paul's admonition for Timothy to study to show himself approved and preach rightly is an admonition to the present day Pentecostal minister.¹⁷⁶ Because of the anointing, the minister has an even greater responsibility to be prepared in every way. As the well of the minister deepens, the Spirit can pour out more living water through the minister's sermon.

Duffield connects the passage of John 7:37-39 to the task of the Pentecostal messenger. In this passage, Jesus says if a person thirsts, he or she can drink from His eternal well and rivers of living water will flow. Duffield believes preaching begins with a personal thirst for Christ. As the person drinks, the message begins to multiply within. Finally, the message comes through the minister's personality and comes from the minister's soul to the people.¹⁷⁷ This is a fitting analogy to the spiritual process of preparing and delivering the Pentecostal sermon.

The Holy Spirit is active in all aspects of the sermon experience. He oversaw the writing of the Scriptures and continually oversees the calling of each minister. He guides the selection of Scripture and the topic for a message and is even instrumental in gathering those that God has

¹⁷⁵Adams, 8.

¹⁷⁶2 Tim. 3:15 NIV.

¹⁷⁷Duffield, 28.

appointed to hear the message.¹⁷⁸ The minister's personality, creativity, imagination, and speech delivery are all tools the Holy Spirit can use when a minister yields himself or herself to Him.

A Pentecostal has the responsibility to preach from Scripture. The clearest expression of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit is contained in Scripture. The Spirit illuminates Scripture as a person reads and meditates on the Bible. Preaching from a scriptural passage also serves as a stabilizer in keeping false doctrine and teaching from doing harm to the Church. Because of the experiential nature of Pentecostal preaching, it is imperative that preaching be theologically and biblically defensible.¹⁷⁹ This issue speaks directly to the minister's authority to preach.

Scholars have said that the authority to preach is found in the Bible.¹⁸⁰ Several biblical sources of authority are identified by Sweazey. The authority of commission and special training, and the authority of the Church are cited by him.¹⁸¹ Cox includes a divine call, ordination, education, experience, and character in his list of additional sources of authority.¹⁸² In its simplest form, however, authority is

¹⁷⁸Forbes, 19.

¹⁷⁹Duffield, 40-45.

¹⁸⁰Mohler, 13.

¹⁸¹Sweazey, 25-31.

¹⁸²Cox, 19-23.

found in Christ's commission to make disciples and teach humankind to observe all of His commandments.¹⁸³ The preacher preaches because he or she has been commanded and commissioned by Christ.

With this biblical basis, the theology employed in preaching is more important than methodology.¹⁸⁴ However, communication is crucial in the preaching event. Ilion Jones shares an account of a preacher that illustrates the importance of communication. A woman in the congregation of a church struggled for several minutes to assemble and install her hearing aid. After using the aid for only a brief part of the message, she took out the device and put it away. The preacher may have been preaching correct theology, but he did not communicate it in a way that the woman was willing to hear.¹⁸⁵ The message is not complete until the hearers understand the language.¹⁸⁶

Adams believes there are three crucial points that should be covered in teaching students how to preach. The student should first learn how to clear all obstacles that hinder the preaching of truth. Second, he or she should make the message as clear as possible. Finally, the student

¹⁸³Matt. 28:18-20 NIV; David Buttrick, 449.

¹⁸⁴Stott, 92.

¹⁸⁵Ilion Jones, *Principles and Practice of Preaching*, renewed ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956; reprint, 1992), 37.

¹⁸⁶Jones, 36.

should learn how to point the listener to Christ through the message.¹⁸⁷ Duffield agrees that the preacher should preach simply, in an understandable manner.¹⁸⁸ Achtemeier recognizes that biblical accounts may seem foreign to the modern church attendee. She feels that the preacher has the work of making the message clear to his or her congregation.¹⁸⁹ She contends "the task of the preacher then is to sharpen the hearing of those whose ears have been dulled by the feeling of having heard it all before."¹⁹⁰

The argument could be made that the preacher must simply deliver the message and the Holy Spirit will communicate it to the congregation. It should be acknowledged that ultimately the power of the sermon is not in the preacher's hand, but is rather in God's control.¹⁹¹ However, Jesus, the Pentecostal preacher's example of anointed preaching, utilized communication techniques that enhanced His message. Mark 12:37b indicates that people gladly flocked to hear Him speak. His use of parables, anecdotes, and other communicative devices helped His hearers understand what He was trying to communicate. Jesus

¹⁸⁷Adams, 8.

¹⁸⁸Duffield, 49.

¹⁸⁹Achtemeier, 13.

¹⁹⁰Achtemeier, 13.

¹⁹¹Mohler, 17.

used image-oriented language.¹⁹² He understood that this language gave the common person a grasp on His sermon content.¹⁹³ The use of visual objects in Jesus' preaching was discussed in more detail in the biblical section of this chapter. Several theologians scoff at "sensational methods" of preaching that include non-traditional elements. A comparison of Jesus' teaching and methodology to the religious leaders of His day reveals the same antagonism to the variety that Christ employed.¹⁹⁴ Preaching strives to bridge the gap between biblical revelation and the present situation in the most effective means of communication and the use of visual aids assists in this attempt.¹⁹⁵

The Holy Spirit is active in the communication process of preaching. The guiding presence of the Spirit can develop creativity and fresh approaches to sermon delivery if the minister is willing to wait on the Holy Spirit for insight and be open to new ideas. The use of visual aids and other communication devices to keep the attention of the listeners and help in memory retention has biblical precedence and a

¹⁹²Clyde Fant, *Preaching for Today* (Cambridge: Harper and Row Publishers, 1987), 247.

¹⁹³Fant, 248.

¹⁹⁴Ralph Lewis and Gregg Lewis, *Inductive Preaching: Helping People Listen* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1983), 77.

¹⁹⁵Harold Freeman, *Variety in Biblical Preaching: Innovative Techniques and Fresh Forms* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 28.

strong, theological defense. However, creativity that steps outside of the Holy Spirit's direction and seeks to draw attention to the preacher is wrong and harmful to the Church. Achtemeier warns that "no preacher can show forth simultaneously his or her own cleverness and the lordship of Jesus Christ."¹⁹⁶

Preaching should bring transformation to the listener. It should bring about life-change.¹⁹⁷ True preaching causes the listener to respond.¹⁹⁸ Preaching can not be equated to secular teaching because preaching seeks to have the listener accept the person of Christ and not just an ideology. When the listener accepts the Gospel message, Christ molds the entire life of the person. The world is seen with new vision because the indwelling presence of Christ causes radical transformation.

Preaching is more than a speech that touches on the morality of goodness. Preaching is a theological event. The Word of God, guided by the Holy Spirit, communicated creatively by a minister to a congregation, is a powerful tool commissioned by Christ that is still as relevant today as it was in Christ's day.

¹⁹⁶Achtemeier, 11.

¹⁹⁷Sweazey, 23.

¹⁹⁸David Buttrick, 453.