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PULPIT SPEECH

By

Jay E. Adams

A Textbook
for use in the classroom or study

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CONTENT AND PURPOSE

When you think about content, you must think about at least three things: first, the subject area or over-all theme; second, the purpose (in preaching this means God's purpose, i.e., the Holy Spirit's purpose in including the passage in the Scriptures); third, other supplemental materials.

While this is not the place to discuss the preacher's purpose (*telos*) in detail, perhaps a word here may be appropriate.³ Each sermon has a general and specific purpose, a telic dimension that involves a *telos* toward which, out of which and around which all of the sermon moves. The word *telos* means, "the goal, purpose, end or aim." The telic note should dominate the message. The *telos* determines the preaching portion. The *telos* of a sermon may be large or small, it may contain sub-*teloi* or may be one of several such sub-*teloi*. It should be the unifying factor in every sermon, without exception.

To discover the Holy Spirit's *telos* is the reason for our exegetical work. Some people seem to think that exegesis exists in a vacuum for itself. But exegesis is incomplete without the telic note. The culmination of exegesis is to discover the Holy Spirit's purpose in including the preaching portion in the canon. We are concerned about discovering the purpose for which the passage was given by the Holy Spirit so that we may use it for the proper purpose for which it was intended to help our listeners. When we discover the Holy Spirit's *telos*, and use the preaching portion for that purpose, we will use that portion of the Scriptures *as God intended it* to be used. Other uses are misuses.

DETERMINING THE MATERIALS TO BE USED

An old Puritan recipe for cooking turkey began, "First catch your turkey." Obviously, research comes first. This is

³Strictly speaking this matter should be reserved for homiletics. It is my plan to discuss this matter fully in a forthcoming book on homiletics.

the only way to get the preaching materials in hand. There are various types of preaching materials which must be distinguished. These are factual, logical, psychological, and illustrative.

The *factual materials* consist fundamentally of two sorts:

1. *Basic materials*: These materials consist of the infalible revelational words of God in the Scriptures. Here there can be no error except in the preacher's interpretation of the basic materials. The materials, themselves, are, in the original languages, perfect and true.

2. *Supplemental materials*: These materials consist of historical, biographical, statistical, archeological, and many other kinds of information that may be brought into a sermon to supplement the basic biblical materials. But their function is clearly supplemental. Basically, a sermon preaches Christ as he is found in the passage of Scripture at hand.⁴ Supplemental materials raise not only the problem of interpretation, but also the problem of error in the materials themselves.

Logical materials consist of those kinds of materials that are used in argumentation that enable one to reason from the biblical facts (as interpreted by the preacher) to conclusions and applications pertaining to the audience. This argumentation may involve argument from analogy, from cause to effect, effect to cause, etc.⁵

Psychological materials consist of those sorts of materials that evoke an affective response from the listener. They are

⁴Christ is the subject of all the Scriptures: cf. Luke 24:27. The Scriptures are "opened" (explained properly—vss. 27, 32) when Christ is seen in "all the Scriptures." It is then that hearts are set on fire (vs. 32). Cf. E. P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961.

⁵A study of the book of Galatians reveals the fact that Paul used a number of different sorts of arguments in contending for justification by faith alone. In chapters 3-5, as many as eight or nine types of argumentation have been distinguished.

motivational materials, and as such consist of emotionally charged words, stories, and phrases.

Illustrative materials comprise such things as examples, instances (shortened examples), figures of speech, and imagery. These serve to clarify, impress, concretize and make the other materials relevant.

PURPOSE AND MATERIALS

The materials and methods that one uses are closely related to and should be determined by the biblical purpose. This is one of the crucial reasons why the preacher's purpose in each sermon must be clear. Without such clarity it is impossible to know the type of materials to use at any given point or throughout a message.

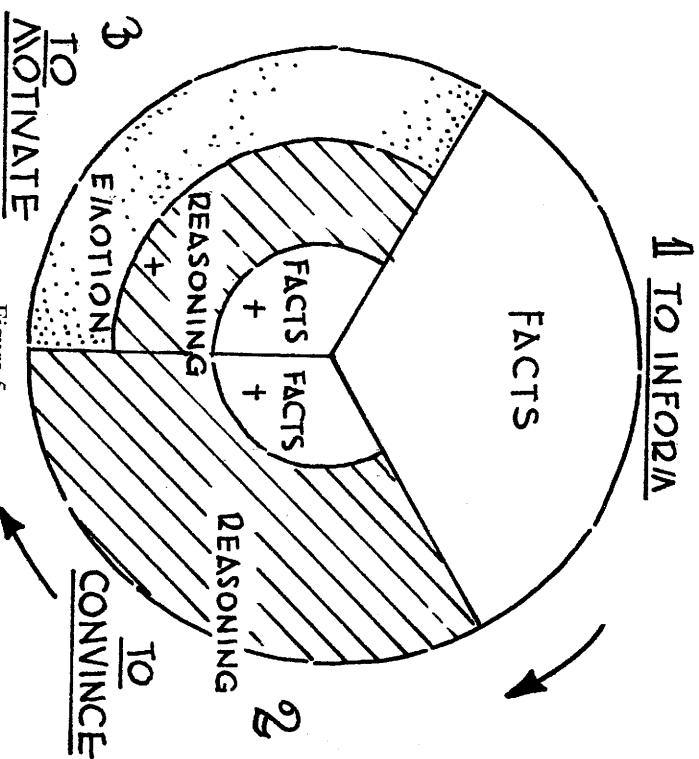


Figure 5
Purpose and Materials

SOURCES OF SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Supplemental materials may be obtained in more ways than can be mentioned here. However, a few suggestions may be useful to the beginning student.

1. *Borrowing.* All of us borrow. A study of the biblical use of the word "imitation" (*mimēō*) and *tupos* (type, pattern, model) shows that God expects each of us to imitate others; that much is assumed, not even questioned.⁶ The only questions are how to imitate, what to imitate, and whom to imitate. The important matter here, however, is the ethics of borrowing. There are fundamentally only two ways to borrow: one may borrow directly or indirectly. Direct borrowing obligates the borrower to credit the source from which the material was obtained. Indirect borrowing, however, is a different matter. A suggestion by Oliver Wendell Holmes at this point pretty well points to the best solution to the problem. Holmes said, "I have milked 300 cows, but I made my own butter."⁷ This direct borrowing from Holmes (in which I credit him) speaks of indirect borrowing. He clearly tells us that there is something that each individual can bring to old material: new organization, new integration with other materials, etc. Someone asked Sir Joshua Reynolds how long it took him to paint a certain picture. His answer was, "All my life." The preacher must learn how to churn materials through his own mind so as to make them truly his own. He must bring the thoughts of others into a new relationship with the Scriptures, into relationship with his own experience, and into relationship with the particular congregation to whom he is speaking. Sermons which are nothing more than one week's study are almost invariably not the preacher's own. There must be a

⁶Cf. Jay Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, pp. 177 ff.

⁷Quoted by A. W. Blackwood, *Pulpit Digest*, XXXIII, January 1953, p. 16.

have chosen these three topics in the light of your resources and the audience analysis.

In the Study

1. Work through the interaction of factors and arts in each grid. Make a list of possible implications. Keep this list handy when preparing sermons.
2. Make an audience analysis of your congregation. Refer to this analysis when preparing future sermons.

Chapter Two

THE USE OF NARRATIVE IN PREACHING

(The Preacher as a Storyteller)

A narrative is a story. Everyone from his first childhood well into his second enjoys a story. Picture an all-too-typical classroom scene: a dry lecture is being delivered by a teacher who has lost his class. Half of the students are nearly asleep, the other half are perfunctorily taking notes. The speaker says, "Let me tell you a personal experience that illustrates this point." Heads pop up and the class magically awakens. Why? Because the teacher is about to tell a story.

Narrative speaking figured largely in Christ's preaching. Again and again the New Testament represents Christ telling stories. Christ knew the values of the narrative method and capitalized on them; every preacher must learn to do the same. The parable, one of Christ's chief teaching forms, is a narrative form. No wonder, then, that the common people heard him gladly.

We shall begin with the narrative for three reasons. First, the narrative is the easiest speech with which to begin. It is easy to tell a story because of its inherent interest value; most people readily respond to narratives. A good narrative is also easier to construct and to tell than other kinds of speeches. Second, narrative speaking logically precedes the other types of pulpit speaking that we must consider. We shall proceed from the simple to the more complex. Each new type of speech will demand new elements *in combination with* (not in place of) the former type of speech. That means, the narrative may be used in conjunction with other forms of speech. Usually when it is so used it is called an illustration or example. Third, the narrative demands the fullest use of delivery from the outset, forcing the student to consider this important aspect of speech immediately. Unless he does so, he may continue or develop poor patterns of delivery during the early

part of the course that will have to be unlearned later on.

CHOICE AND LIMITATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

Fundamentally there are just two kinds of narratives: the real and the fictitious. The real may come either from your own personal experience, or from the experience of someone else. For the beginner it is better to begin with a real narrative of something that actually happened to you. It is usually much easier to remember and describe a real situation in which you were personally involved than it is to invent not only the plot but also the details of a fictitious one.

Initially the beginner is likely to find it difficult to limit his subject. He recognizes that he must fill a certain amount of time with verbalized information and, therefore, frequently chooses a large topic hoping that it will afford him sufficient material to cover the entire five- or ten-minute period assigned to him. However, he soon is likely to become quite frustrated. Something is wrong; the speech seems dull, uninteresting. Although he usually does not recognize it, the reason for this frustration is that his subject is too broad. He has failed to consider that one can say much more in a small period of time, about a narrower subject, than he can about a larger one. Learning from the laser, he must discover the power of a concentrated beam of light. Large subjects, broad abstract topics, and wide ranging themes can only be outlined or sketched in a brief period of time. The kind of colorful detail and specific concrete material that is necessary to make a narrative vital and to make the subject live, is impossible in broad topics. As a result, such speeches tend to become dull and uninteresting. You can't say very much in two or three minutes (or for that matter in twenty or thirty minutes); so in order to say anything well it is essential to *limit*.

The principle to grasp at all costs is that you can say more about less. For example, a sermon on the subject of "Prophecy" is much too large. You might want to narrow that sub-

ject to limit it to one aspect of prophetic study, such as "The Second Coming." And yet, think of the breadth of the second coming as a topic for a sermon. Think about the great controversy there has been over the second coming; think of how many aspects there are to that topic; think about how much information there is in the Scriptures concerning it: someone has said one fourth of the New Testament relates to it. Clearly, then, the subject, "The Second Coming," though an aspect of the broader topic "Prophecy," itself needs to be limited. So let's take one aspect of the topic, "The Second Coming," for example: "Implications of the Second Coming." But even this is much too broad. There are so many implications of the second coming. "All right," you say, "let's limit the implications of the second coming to 'Implications for Believers.'" But still, you know how many implications of the second coming there are for believers. So after all this, you finally decide to narrow your topic to one aspect of the implications of the second coming for believers, namely, one implication: e.g., "Purity" (1 John 3:3), or "Comfort" (1 Thessalonians 4:13 ff.).

What the preacher needs to learn is that a rifle is much more powerful in preaching than a shotgun. Limitation keeps a preacher from scattering his shot. If he carefully limits his sermon he will not run out of sermon topics during his first or second year in the pastorate. His congregation will not go home confused because he has told them too little about too much. They will go home clearly understanding and deeply concerned about one thing in depth. It would be well for a preacher to imagine that someone has offered to give him \$50 for every sermon that he could legitimately preach on an aspect of the subject that he has chosen. Hardly any other problem presents itself more pointedly at the outset than the problem of limitation. That is why the narrative you will give in this course should be limited to one story about one brief event that is complete in itself.

THE BASIC NARRATIVE PLAN

There are, of course, many ways in which narratives can be presented. Some ways are far more sophisticated than others. The flashback method, for example, in which one begins at or near the end of the story and then goes back and unfolds the steps leading toward their ultimate consequences is one variation on the basic theme. But for a beginner, the best way to begin is to let the story unfold as it happened. Instead of jumping into the middle of the action, it is better for a beginner to use the basic narrative plan so that he does not give away the plot or the climax too soon. More sophisticated methods will be possible later when one becomes more adept in the use of the narrative. The following diagram (Figure 6) demonstrates plainly the basic narrative plan with each of the essential elements contained in it.

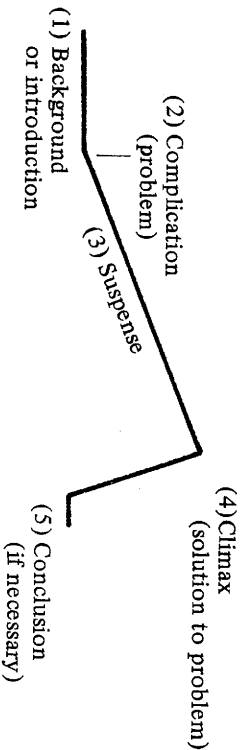


Figure 6
The Basic Narrative Plan

You will note on the diagram above that there are the following elements: (1) background or introductory material; (2) the introduction of a problem or some complication; (3) suspense which builds through new complications, failures to solve the original problem or new insights into the problem; (4) a climax or solution to the problem or problems; and (5) though not absolutely necessary, a very brief conclusion. (Notice how the interest level rises to the climax then drops abruptly.) The climax at times may be identical with the conclusion.

BACKGROUND

Background materials should not always be sketched explicitly; often information may be conveyed incidentally by suggestive hints while saying something else. There is a well known form of Japanese poetry called Haiku, which uses just such a methodology to suggest some season of the year, as well as the point of the poem. Both must be inferred, since neither is stated explicitly. The following sample of Haiku poetry is a wonderful spoof on the stupidity of idolatry. You will doubtless notice also the season which is implied but not stated.

Oh Buddha on the wall
From thy holy nose indeed
There hangs — an icicle.

You will notice, too, the periodic nature of this poetry in which the meaning, purpose and punch are suspended until the very end. Here the climax and meaning of the poem coalesce in the one last word: "icicle."

Background material should consist only of such material as will be of definite value to an understanding of the story. Other interesting but extraneous bits of information only detract and tend to lead the listener down false paths. It is important, then, to sift carefully the background material in a narrative, so that only those elements that are absolutely necessary remain. In telling a story, it is all too easy to get caught up in what a friend has called the "lace curtains." By "lace curtains" she means that when she tells a story she goes into so many extraneous details that it takes forever to get to the point. But it is important to note that some vital details may at first seem extraneous. Such information may be planted in the introductory or background part of the narrative and at that point may seem extraneous, yet it proves to be essential to an understanding of some later point in the narrative. Seeding the introduction with all such information takes care and deliberation. You can see therefore that it is often, if not al-

Preachers also must be careful not to poke fun at people. The simple and naturally humorous aspects of incongruity provide the best humorous material. Telling a joke on oneself at times may be appropriate.

USES OF THE NARRATIVE

There are many uses of the narrative. Narratives may be used to catch attention, to maintain interest, and to provide variety. When the listener has been taxed by sustained tension, a narrative may bring welcome relief by relaxing the tension. But these reasons in themselves are never adequate for introducing a narrative; they are the fringe benefits or by-products of the narrative. The reasons for which narrative is used are largely summed up under these three purposes:

1. To make a point vivid, clear or memorable.
2. To illustrate a principle or abstract truth in concrete, Monday morning terms.
3. To enable one to say through the narrative what a hostile audience might not accept otherwise.

To make the third abstract point clear and memorable we might illustrate by the story Nathan told David (II Samuel 12:1-4). First, Nathan gained David's assent to the principles involved in the story. Verses 5 and 6 indicate that the story had the desired effect. Then, through this story the Holy Spirit trapped David into conviction of his sin in order to bring him to confession. Had Nathan approached David directly about his sin, probably David would not have listened to him. But the story in which the point was made so clearly, and to which David had already implicitly given assent, enabled him to strike home at David's conscience with power: "You are the man!" (vs. 7). Similar use of parables by Christ is frequent in the New Testament (e.g., Matthew 21:33-46; note particularly vss. 40, 41, 45).

Everyone knows that narratives make a point vivid, vital and convincing. They help clarify and aid in retaining thoughts

which, when stated abstractly only in the form of a principle might readily have been forgotten. Narratives may be used as introductions, as conclusions or as sub-points under major heads in sermons. Someone has said (while doing it himself) that in a sermon no major generalization should be made without a story or example by which it is illustrated.²

SOME FUNDAMENTAL INFORMATION ABOUT DELIVERY

At this point it is important to begin to discuss delivery (the use of the voice and body) in a preliminary way, since good delivery is crucial in delivering a narrative speech. More must be said later on.

The basic narrative outline (previously discussed) also becomes the key to proper delivery.

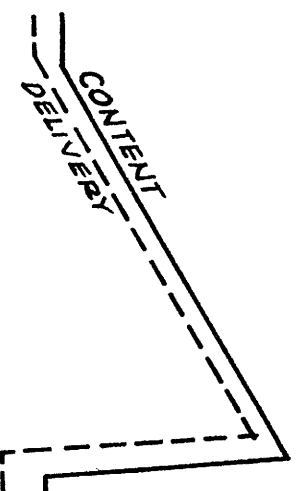


Figure 7
Delivery in Narrative Speaking
Delivery (use of voice and body) must
parallel content at each point.

You will notice in the diagram (Figure 7) that parallel to the particular elements of the basic narrative plan, at each point delivery follows content. This fact may be formulated

²In applying this rule, if you think you are introducing too many narratives into a sermon, you might check on whether you may not instead be introducing too many major generalizations.

as the most important rule about delivery: *content must determine delivery*. This order should never be reversed. Quite frequently, however, preachers do reverse the order with dire results. We have all seen the preacher who early in his career was told (wrongly) that he should smile and look pleasant while preaching. So, regardless of content, this pulpit Liberatee speaks with a broad smile or leering grin (as it may variously be interpreted). Such a preacher will stand up with the broadest smile on his face and say, "Now let me tell you about my grandmother's funeral. . ." We have all also heard the preacher who believes that sermons should be shouted from the first syllable to the last. Such a preacher will arise and declare with a horrible cry, "God loves you!" Usually he will augment this verbal attack by shaking his fist in your face as he screams these words. It is unfortunate that preachers have fallen into such strange practices. In our day-by-day activities, normally we allow content to determine delivery. Who would think of proposing to his fiancée by shaking his fist in her face and saying, "I love you" to the accompaniment of a shout or growl? As a preacher cannot speak effectively about hell while smiling, neither can he speak of the joys of heaven with a drab, dull, lifeless, stoical, unemotional attitude.

At each point, then, both the way that the voice is handled and the way that the body functions, must grow out of and parallel the content so that the delivery assists rather than hinders the transmission of the content. As a demonstration of how much content is conveyed through the use of the body alone (one of the two sides of delivery), simply turn down the sound on your TV set and watch the faces and bodily actions of the speakers.

The importance of delivery and its power to function as a negating factor is well known. By the mere wink of an eye, everything that one says may be reversed. By the unwitting "wink" of the body or voice, preachers frequently do the same. While they are talking about commitment or conviction

or enthusiasm, by their own lackluster delivery they deny the very words that they speak. Such preachers unintentionally distort and deny the truths of the Scriptures as they attempt to preach them; their congregations hear not only what they say, but they also hear the way in which they say it. Often congregations just as unconsciously follow the subtle unintended message delivered by the preacher, that may be quite contrary to the Word of God. Sometimes theological students think that giving attention to pulpit speech is unimportant or "unspiritual." However, the facts about delivery demonstrate the vital importance of this study. Attention must be given to pulpit speech not in order to turn a preacher into a Demosthenes of the pulpit, but rather to keep him from distorting the Word of God. The effort in this book is to help the preacher to preach the Bible truthfully and effectively. Study of the use of speech in the Scriptures shows careful attention to this matter.

How, you may ask, can I learn to parallel content and delivery? In a narrative, for instance, how can I learn to vary delivery according to content by the unemotional presentation of background material, the more emotional introduction of complicating problems, and the emotional building of suspense? Is this done in some mechanical fashion, or is there another way? Can I think about such matters as I am preaching? Should I? These important questions must be answered. Not all of the answers need to be given at this point, but some basic guidelines may be established.

Good delivery arises naturally from one's attitudinal viewpoint. Body and mind function jointly; thought triggers emotion. In telling a story, preachers must learn how to *relive* rather than *report*. If the preacher takes his stand in today and looks back on the story as though it happened yesterday, he *reports*. The reporter, removed in time and space from the experience, tends to relate it dispassionately. However, if he returns in viewpoint to yesterday and brings his audience with him back into the experience as he tells it, both he and they

will *relive* it; that is, the story will come alive for them. The speaker in telling the story should feel the chill or thrill of the experience running down his spine. He may be sure that when he himself can feel something of the fear or the joy or the anxiety or the perplexity of the moment *in his body*, then his congregation also is in a position to live through the experience. In other words, the preacher's delivery will parallel content when he gets his own emotions involved in the narrative content. In telling a narrative, the preacher must re-experience the narrative emotionally (never so fully that he loses control of his emotions, however). Within control, one must let himself go; i.e., let the content control his emotions. He must preach the scriptural content that is before him (some of which contains the most emotionally moving narratives ever penned) with the same emotion that the writer and the people experiencing the events felt as they lived through them. Vitality, animation, and enthusiasm characterize the effective delivery of a narrative, but these principles of delivery extend beyond the presentation of narratives to all pulpit speech. More must be said about delivery later on.

One final observation on delivery seems necessary. Apart from a serious organic problem, there is no excuse for a speaker not to be heard. We have all *learned*, as a habit, to speak at various intensities. Those who have difficulty in being heard have learned not to be heard. When a preacher cannot adequately fill a reasonably sized auditorium with the sound of his voice, it is because he has learned poor habits of speech. Fortunately, what was learned can be unlearned and new habits may be acquired. Every healthy child is born with the basic equipment to be heard. He demonstrates this early in his life when he is able to make himself heard through a brick wall by screaming at the top of his voice so that his mother can hear him when she is outside hanging up clothes. Often strapping men, now many times the size they were when they were born, even though their lungs have greater capacity and their vocal folds have expanded and lengthened,

protest that they cannot speak more loudly than they do; yet they cannot be heard as far as the fifth pew. The protest is unfounded; the claim simply is untrue. Volume is a matter of learned behavior which can be changed.

IMPROVING DELIVERY

The basic question for such preachers to ask is, "How can I improve my delivery?" In answer, several helpful suggestions may be offered. We know a good bit about the process of learning and unlearning behavior. First, breaking old patterns and establishing new ones takes regular, patient practice. Second, practice should not take place during formal speaking situations, but rather in ordinary day-by-day speaking situations. Third, practice should take place in short sessions, five to fifteen minutes in length. Fourth, these short practice sessions must be held daily. Often it is wise to attach the sessions to some particular activity (like after eating a meal) that occurs regularly each day. Last, practice, of course, must involve correct practices. All that practice does is to fix habits, without asking if they are good. So if the practice involves engaging in faulty practices, the practice will be harmful rather than helpful.

Here is a concrete suggestion for profitable practice; promise to tell a story to your children each night. Now, you don't need to tell your wife or your children why you have decided suddenly to engage in this particular activity, but you may be sure that they all will love you for it (your congregation will be happy about the results as well). This scheme virtually assures regularity, since you may be sure that if you make the promise, your children and your wife will hold you to it. The suggestion has an additional advantage: when telling a story to children, you can try out anything, no matter how far out, and get away with it. Not only can you practice style (that is, language usage; you may reach out for new, simple, vivid words that children understand and that ordinarily are not a part of your speaking vocabulary), but your delivery particu-

larly can be stretched. When telling stories to children, you may easily practice using your hands descriptively, emphatically and indicatively. You will be able to exaggerate your gestures and facial expressions to their limit without fear. You can try out all sorts of grunts and growls and groans and shouts, whistles and wheezes, and whatever else you like, all with great abandon and without the least suspicion about your sanity. You may experiment with the whole range of your vocal and physical potential, and the louder and wilder and the more experimental you become, doubtless, the more your children will enjoy it. It is hard to imagine a setting that offers as many built-in advantages for practice. Here is one of your better opportunities. I recommend it heartily.

In all such practice, what you are seeking is not the acquisition of oratorical skills peculiar to preaching and different from those common to ordinary conversation. Nor should you try to incorporate various predetermined gestures appropriate to each emotion into your repertoire as the elocutionists tried and failed to do. Rather, you are concerned about learning to preach with the same bodily actions and with the same use of voice that you naturally use in normal conversation. If you concentrate your efforts in practice upon reliving, you will thereby begin to bring those habits of delivery that are already natural to informal conversation into the more formal speaking situation. Try to become warmly involved in the content; plug in your emotions as well as your mind. As you tell the story, feel what you are saying; learn to experience the very emotions that you and other persons in the situation felt when the events actually took place. You do not have to be concerned then about learning all of the complex information available concerning the quality, the volume, the pitch, or the rate at which your voice operates in order to improve.

The interesting thing about the physiology of the voice is that when you learn to feel the emotions that grow out of content, the voice and the appropriate bodily action will fol-

low along without your giving conscious attention to them. For example, if the introduction of the complication into the narrative immediately creates a very tense situation which then rises quickly to a climax, when you are reliving the story you will begin to feel tension instantly spreading to all of the muscles that control the vocal folds also. That will mean that automatically and without the slightest conscious effort, the vocal folds will stretch. Stretching the folds automatically changes the quality of the voice. Stretched folds are harder than relaxed folds; thus the quality of speech naturally becomes less mellow and more strident. When the folds are stretched by the emotion-controlled muscles they act like the strings of a violin; the tighter the string (or fold) the higher the pitch. Bodily tension, as it mounts, also often tends (in ways not quite so easily explained) to accelerate the rate of speech and raise the volume. In other words, as you concentrate on reliving and feeling the emotions appropriate to content, you will be pleased to discover that all of these physiological aspects of speech naturally take care of themselves. There is no need for you to think consciously, "Now I must raise my pitch level. I must speak more loudly here. I must accelerate my speaking rate. I must change the quality to a more strident sort." None of this even needs to come consciously to mind.

As a matter of fact, such thoughts must not be allowed to come to mind during the delivery of the sermon itself. During the delivery of the sermon the preacher must think only of God, of his congregation, and of the content of the Word from God which he is attempting to bring to them. He cannot think about how he is speaking or about methodology at all. It is self-defeating for a preacher to think about the delivery he is using when preaching, just as it is wrong to think of the consequences of what he is saying at this time. Where proper practice takes place during brief periods regularly observed day by day, you will soon find that the new habits begin to bleed over into one's speech during the rest of the day and

eventually into the formal speaking situation as well. After daily concentrated effort, some marked differences will usually be noticeable after about three weeks. In six weeks, some permanent changes ordinarily may be effected. But continued growth thereafter can be assured only by continued practice, although the practice may be spaced out and less concentrated. Speech improvement (which means practice) of some sort should be the life-long endeavor of every preacher.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

For Classroom or Study

In the Classroom

1. Telling a narrative. Time: 3 minutes.
 - a. Choose a limited topic, one simple incident, describing an event in which you participated.
 - b. Allow the story to unfold as it happened. Use the basic narrative plan (do not use flashback, etc.).
 - c. Be concrete; use necessary detail and dialogue.
 - d. Practice telling the story, particularly working on delivery and the climax.
 - e. Note: No written manuscripts, outlines or notes will be allowed during the delivery of this narrative or any of the other speeches in this course. All speaking will be strictly extemporaneous (though not impromptu).
2. Begin keeping notes on principles of speaking. Lay out a sheet in two columns as follows and fill in the principles you discover while listening to your classmates and others speak.

This speech was effective because . . .	This speech was ineffective because . . .
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
etc.	etc.

In the Study

1. Using the same format that is suggested in No. 2 (above) keep notes on sermons, speeches on television, etc.
2. Plan to use a narrative in each of your next five sermons. Try to observe carefully the principles of good narrative style.

PREACHING TO INFORM
(The Preacher as a Teacher)

Speaking in order to inform is one of the most important types of speaking; and it is basic to all good preaching. In ordinary conversation we all must speak to inform every day. You come home to your family and tell them what took place during the day. Members of the family respond by filling you in on what happened to them. You must give directions, explain your viewpoint on the news, set forth the ways and means of raising gerbils, and on and on. Sometimes life may seem to consist of nothing else but explanations, explanations, explanations and more explanations. Preachers likewise must explain the facts of the Scriptures to their congregations. Persuasion is built upon the foundation of information. The two can be distinguished only in emphasis. Each message will primarily seek to inform or persuade; but while it is possible to inform without persuading directly (all truth implies belief and action, however), it is impossible to persuade properly except on the basis of adequate information. The bread and butter work of speaking is in one sense the task of informative or (as it is sometimes called) expository speaking.

TWO ELEMENTS

Informative preaching requires two things: 1. Information (facts plus the speaker's interpretation of them), and 2. understanding (the interpretation by the listener of the data presented). Of course, the Holy Spirit must be at work in all to make it efficacious.

1. *Information.* Information means content as understood by the preacher. Research skills are required. Part of such research is the ability to judge what information is new or of vital importance to a particular congregation. In other

words, what is informative to one congregation may be old hat to another. Judgment is needed, however, to distinguish between old material that needs to be repeated and old material that is truly old hat. Judgment must be developed to determine how much brand new information a given congregation can assimilate at one time. The speaker who tries to inform an audience about matters already well known to them insults his audience and wastes their time. The preacher who tries to give information that is too advanced for his congregation before giving them adequate background information may snow them, but does not inform.¹ Information, therefore, means something worth learning, that meets needs, and that it is possible for a congregation to learn.

2. *Understanding.* Understanding means the congregation's understanding of the information that the preacher gives them. First, the speaker must understand the information; he must know clearly what he wants his congregation to know. Only then is it possible for the congregation to understand the information clearly, for they will (at best) only understand it as the speaker has understood it. It is very important, then, for him to know before he can show; he must get the goods before he can deliver the goods. On the other hand, there are many preachers who have the goods but cannot deliver it. We have all heard preachers who knew their subject, and we knew they knew it, but they couldn't put it across. Exposition, or informative speaking, then has to do with getting something into your head, then into other heads, with the least possible loss or addition in the transmission process.

THREE AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE

There are three areas of knowledge to which one may turn in order to find information about which to speak. On the

¹ Cf. Hebrews 5:11-14. Note how the writer has analyzed his readers precisely in this manner.

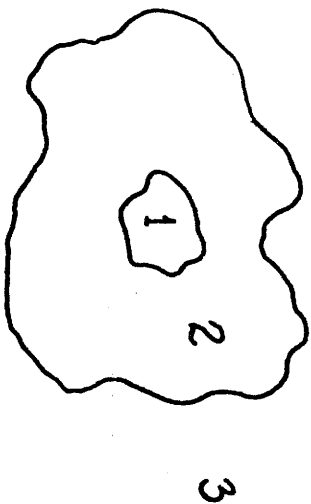


Figure 8: Three Areas of Knowledge: (1) Well-known, (2) Partially known, (3) Unknown.

diagram (Figure 8), area number 1 represents material that is so thoroughly known that one could be said to be virtually an authority on the subject. Area number 2 is very dangerous because we often think it comprises well-known information, whereas in reality this area embraces only partially known material. The preacher's knowledge of class 2 information is only more or less accurate, more or less detailed, more or less thorough; not known well enough to inform others about. So often speakers speak out of class 2 material as though they were speaking from class 1 material. Subtly, the distinction is blurred. And, of course, there is a third and larger area (3) that might be labeled "unknown." This is that vast area of information with which the preacher has only the slightest acquaintance. He has so little understanding of class 3 material that it would be impossible to speak about this information with the slightest semblance of authority or to convey anything meaningful about that material to another. The principle here is that nothing should be preached or taught before it has been brought within the scope, or at least very close to the edge, of area number 1.

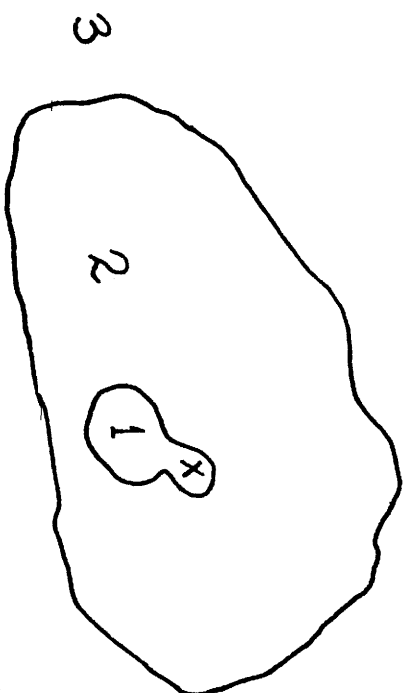


Figure 9
Broadening the Area of Well-known Material

You will notice that in the second information diagram (Figure 9), the border of the class 1 area has been expanded by research, study or whatever work was required, so that the preacher has brought within the pale of material known authoritatively, material (X) that previously belonged to class 2. In other words, to sum up, the preacher should speak only out of adequate preparation, study and research.

RESERVE POWER

The sort of research that brings information within the scope of area 1 also produces authority and power through what has been called "reserve power." Preparation that makes one something of an authority on a subject uncovers more material than can be used in any given sermon, and thus puts a person in possession of a reservoir of unused material. In some not altogether explainable fashion, that reservoir, like a reservoir of water, exerts a pressure that lends power to what he says. Congregations recognize reserve power (usually unconsciously) and, you may be sure, also know when it is lacking! Reserve power may be seen in various ways. A speaker with reserve power is able to answer questions about the details of his message. It is clear that he has not "shot his wad." He is not left with nothing more to say.

Informative speaking might tentatively be defined as speaking that orally transmits accurately understood information from the speaker to the listener in such a way that both understand the same information in the same way.

TRANSMISSION SKILL AND CLARITY

Everyone knows what clarity is, but all too few preachers know how to be clear. The roots of the words "say" and "see" are related. Saying should produce seeing. Our English phrase, "I see," used to acknowledge that one has understood, exactly makes the point. Clarity comes as the result of "informing" and "expounding" in their etymological senses. To inform, etymologically, is to "put something into its proper form." It is to make it take that form for the listener; it is to paint for him a picture of it like it is. Etymologically, to expound is to *set forth* or to *lay out* the facts, so that they can be seen. The picture in the word is similar to the one in our modern expression, "Lay the cards on the table." The image behind the word "expound" is about the same as that behind the words "make plain." To make plain, etymologically, is to *lay out on a flat, plain surface*, i.e., *where all can see plainly*. All of the images behind the words "expound," "make plain," and "inform," have in common the concept of making something clear by exposing it or showing it to be what it actually is.

OBSCURITY AND AMBIGUITY

Negatively speaking, clarity involves the removal of two factors: obscurity and ambiguity. Since it is essential in informative speaking to convey content with clarity, it is important to know how to avoid obscurity and ambiguity.

Obscurity is literally anything that covers up. There are many things which obscure or cover up content. First, *complexity* obscures. The informative speaker, therefore, must learn how to *simplify*. Long ago the cartoonists learned this art. Many of the cartoonists, with Walt Disney, found that if

they omitted one of the four fingers and included only three fingers and a thumb they could get all of the action and expression they wished in the hands of cartoon characters. Drawing four fingers in cartooning at times can become quite complex. So they simply dropped one finger. Though people have read Walt Disney cartoons for years and years, most of them have never noticed this fact. The cartoonists lost nothing by dropping the finger; in fact simplifying, in this instance helped to clarify. In the process they replaced a thin little finger with a fatter, larger index finger that, for instance, can point directions more effectively. Similarly, simplification of concepts and ideas (in which there are resultant gains rather than communicative losses) must take place in preaching. Not *everything* about any subject can be said in every sermon. Therefore, eliminate what obscures. At times simplification allows for the enlargement of a major point that becomes the fat index finger of the sermon.

Secondly, *technical terms* may obscure. Technical terms obscure when they are unexplained or if they come too quickly or in too large a quantity. Doctors are perhaps the most obvious offenders in the use of unexplained technical language. Perhaps physicians can justify their use of Latin and Greek words on the grounds that they need a certain mystique and authority in order to get us to take their foul-tasting medicines and submit to the surgeon's knife. But preachers have no such excuses. You go to the doctor and say, "My head itches." After a few hmmm's he may say, "I'm afraid you have an acute case of pediculosis." Startled, you ask meekly, "Will I live?" He says, "Of course you will. All you'll have to do is get rid of those lice." Why couldn't he have said so in the first place? Why say pediculosis when you can say instead, "You've got lice"? Some preachers seem to think that technical terms, unexplained, will enhance their image. But the image of the preacher is unimportant compared to the clarity of his message. He must remember that his message is not his own; it is the message of God. The enhancing

of a preacher's image at the expense of the Word of God is a capital offense. The Word of God is the simplest, most straightforward message in all the world. There are, of course, some technical terms in the Scriptures. These must be preserved, propagated, and explained. It is important for the members of our congregations to learn the great terms of the Christian faith, not only in order to read the Scriptures, but also to keep them in continuity with the best of Christian literature. Other technical terms ought to be used sparingly; and then never without explanation, and always in such a way that they can be learned and remembered.

Thirdly, *ornateness* obscures when it does not further the thought. Whatever does not further the thought calls attention to itself and thereby actually detracts from the message. Cleverness, the second cousin to ornateness, also obscures for the same reason. Preachers seem to be highly susceptible to the temptation to try to be clever in sermons. For example, many search Roget's *Thesaurus* from cover to cover in order to find a third "r" or a fifth "i" or a fourth "p" simply for the sake of fancy alliteration. Finally, discovering that there is no third or fourth or fifth word that really fits, they settle for something that half fits, and as a result end up saying something different from what they really intended to say. What is more serious is that it is not what God said. So the message is distorted for the sake of cleverness. All such alliteration (most alliteration is boring and useless anyway) must be avoided.

The second factor that inhibits clarity is *ambiguity*. Ambiguity is anything that can be understood in more than one way. To be ambiguous because you said something poorly is bad, but to be ambiguous because you, yourself, are not sure about what you are saying is worse. We shall not speak of the ambiguity that results from the latter cause, since the solution to such ambiguity is repentance. However, ambiguity resulting from poor speech can and needs to be cleared up. The answers to ambiguity are: *precision* (which literally means to

cut off, or to *sharpen*) and *accuracy* (which means to *take care*). Precision comes largely through concreteness, which involves the use of specific details and examples. Precision and accuracy also are aided by careful definition. It is of some importance to know what a definition, itself, is. Functionally speaking, a definition is that phrase or sentence which distinguishes one object or person from all others. Every good definition has four elements: (1) the term, (2) the verb *to be*, (3) a general classification, and (4) a particular classification. Thus, the four parts of a definition look something like this:

term	verb	general classification	particular classification
Delivery	is	those visible and auditory activities	by which the speaker communicates his ideas and feelings.

THE KNOWN AND THE UNKNOWN

Precision and accuracy may be enhanced by explaining the unknown in terms of the known. For instance, statistics are hard to understand unless they are visualized. Merely to state that the diameter of the moon is 2,160 miles really means very little to most people. How much more meaningful then to turn to the *World Book Encyclopedia* and find a drawing of the moon superimposed upon a map of the United States, with lines extended from its outer edges down to San Francisco and to Cleveland. The size of the known (the United States) adds tremendously to the understanding of the relative size of the unknown (the moon). Probably most readers were surprised to discover how small the moon actually is. Mere statistics do not show this, but placing the moon upon the map makes it quite clear. In another similar example, readers are pleased to discover in a book by Chester Warren Quimby entitled, *Paul for Everyone* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), that there is a map of Paul's journeys superimposed upon a

map of the United States. Washington, D. C. becomes Antioch in Syria; Wilmington, North Carolina, becomes Jerusalem. One discovers that by land, Paul traveled as far north as Madison, Wisconsin (Philippi) and as far west as Marion, Iowa (Be-rea). By sea, he traveled west to Pierre, South Dakota (Rome) southwest to Hutchinson, Kansas (Malta), and south centrally to Cairo, Illinois (Fair Havens). I would suspect that anyone who has just read these two descriptions of the moon and of the map of the Mediterranean will never forget them. Even though you have not seen the *World Book* illustration or a copy of Quimby's book, you will remember because of the explanation of the unknown in terms of the known. Often the mere juxtaposition of the known with the unknown makes a powerful impression. Preachers must learn to use this extremely important rule for clarifying new material. Scribes of the Kingdom of Heaven must bring out of their treasures things both old and new, said Jesus, and often they must bring the new truth in terms of the old story about known facts. With Christ learn to say, "The kingdom of heaven is like . . ."

THE ORGANIZATION OF INFORMATIVE SERMONS

Informative speaking must be adapted to the informative purpose, that is, to achieve the understanding and the retention of content through clarity. Persuasive speaking is aimed principally at belief or action; it is not primarily concerned with understanding (although understanding is essential to persuasion). The purpose determines the methodology. The purpose of persuasive speaking will require different methodology from that which is required by informative speaking. The big thing in informative structure is bold, rugged organization. When speaking informatively, let the bones protrude; make every rib show. Informative sermons should have rigid spinal columns. They are vertebrates, not jellyfish. While it is true that no sermon is exclusively informative or exclusively persuasive, we are talking now about its basic emphasis. The writer of the biblical passage upon which the sermon is based

might particularly be concerned with getting information across. The preacher might, for example, be preaching from one of those portions into which Paul leads with the words, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning . . ." In such a passage, the Holy Spirit's purpose is plainly informative.

Some of the elements of bold, rugged organization are:

1. *Enumeration.* The use of numerical divisions like first, second, third (enumeration) especially aids in retention so long as there are not too many major points. Enumeration also clearly divides the various aspects of a subject.

2. *Repetition.* There is an old three-point rule of thumb which says, "Tell 'em what you're gonna' tell 'em; tell 'em; tell 'em what you told 'em." This basic deductive pattern is frequently useful. There are three stages in the development of a sermon using this plan: first you state the thesis (purpose or central idea), next you expand it, discussing it in detail, and then you summarize at the end. The plan is built on the principle of repetition. It is important to remember that a listener cannot reread a sermon as he can reread pages in a book. He must hear what you say the first time, at your speaking rate, according to your explanation. Any material of the sort that might require *rereading* in a book, in a speech must be *retold* by the speaker. In other words, you must help him to "reread" this material by *repeating* the material for him.

Information ought to be repeated in the same words and phrases only if these particular words and phrases are themselves of importance. Otherwise, most repetition is best given in different form. If the exact words are not important, then repetition in a different form allows you to approach the subject from another angle. When information is presented in various forms, a greater number of people with different experiences and backgrounds may more readily grasp it. Saying the same thing twice in different ways helps to clarify what is

meant either the first or the second time. This is one of the values of the form of Hebrew poetry called synonymous parallelism. The second phrase (or term) of the parallel says roughly the same thing as the first but in different words. Frequently you can understand one or the other of the difficult terms in that parallel only by reading the other term.

What plans of organization are possible? There are various possible plans for bold informative speaking. Basically, all plans may be divided into those that classify and those that divide. Classification is the process of moving from diversity to unity, while division is the process of moving from unity to diversity. The sermon may sort out from a larger conglomerate those similar elements that fall into smaller groupings. Thus, the sermon may reveal the divisions (perhaps previously unrecognized by the congregation) of a subject. Or the sermon may group, out of a seemingly disorganized mass, those elements that are common to one another, classifying them under various heads.

One well-known plan for organizing the informative sermon is based upon the principle of comparison or contrast. Comparisons are similarities (classification). Contrasts are differences (division). Much of John's writing lends itself to this sort of organization, because John, himself, was fond of bold comparisons and contrasts.² Another method of organization in informative speaking uses time order: this plan utilizes such divisions as first, second, third, or ancient, medieval, modern. Space order provides a fourth way of organizing informative materials (also by division). For instance, the three accepted speech areas in the United States may be classified as the General American Speech Region, the Eastern American Speech Region, and the Southern American Speech Region. These basic informative plans may be used either alone or in combination. There are many other variations on these

²Cf. John's use of terms like: light/darkness, love/hatred, life/death, etc.

themes, but these should be found helpful in beginning to prepare an informative sermon.

TRANSITIONS IN INFORMATIVE SPEAKING

More will be said at another place about transitions. Transitions are important. Their purpose is to guide the listener smoothly from where he is to where you want him to go. A study of biblical transitions, especially in the epistles, reveals skill in the use of bridging diverse concepts; especially in linking doctrinal instruction to practical living and blending concrete ecclesiastical matters with doxology. A study of transition in the book of Revelation is particularly interesting.³ One method of making transitions in informative speeches is by the use of the three-point transition, which consists of:

1. A summary of the past section
2. A transitional word or phrase
3. A brief introductory statement leading into the next section.

Here is an example of such a three-point transition: (1) Thus it is clear from all of these data that in the Old Testament era the mode of baptism was (without exception) sprinkling or pouring. (2) Now, (3) let's take a look at the New Testament evidence. . .

STYLE OF THE INFORMATIVE SERMON

Whitehead said, "A merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God's earth." All of us know how desperately dull preachers can become at times when they try to teach. But the transmission of information certainly doesn't need to be dull. Rather, it can be exciting and interesting. Preachers must not become Bible butchers, chopping out great chunks of scriptural meat and throwing them raw and bloody to their

³Cf. Jay Adams, *The Time Is At Hand*, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1969, pp. 20, 60, 68, 71, 83, 89.

congregations as if they were feeding tigers. There is nothing wrong with the meat. There is nothing wrong with the butchering process. But preachers must also learn to become cooks as well as butchers. They must learn to serve the meat well cooked, warm, well seasoned, garnished, with an appetizer and dessert, by candlelight. Most congregations choke and gag on a slab of raw doctrine, even if it is a prime cut. The preacher as butcher does research; the preacher as cook and host presents his materials in palatable, digestible, and inviting form.

INTRODUCTIONS

Let's take a look at that appetizer (introduction). Introductions should (as the word means) *lead into* the subject. Introductions should catch attention, arouse interest in and create a desire to learn more about the subject matter. In short, they should aid by evoking:

- A - Attention
- I - Interest
- D - Desire

It is sometimes wise to assume that the audience is bored or is thinking about other matters, and that your first task is to arouse interest. Someone has said, "Light your match on the first strike." Often preachers waste a paragraph or two of words before getting into the subject. The trouble is that not only are words wasted, but members of the congregation are being turned off before they were ever really turned on. The first sentence should usually be gripping, if not striking. My wife has an appetizer that always draws comment. It is tomato juice spiked with ginger ale. Why not spike your introduction with something that has a bite? One man giving a speech on safety used as his first sentence these words: "Four hundred and fifty shiny new coffins were delivered to this city last Thursday." In a class on psychology the professor at the beginning of the period whipped out two pistols, fired

blanks at the audience, and then declared, "Today I shall speak about stimuli and response."

It is possible for the introduction to be too graphic or too striking. If the introduction has so much of a bite that the rest of the sermon cannot measure up to it, then, instead of leading into the subject, it calls attention to itself and draws the listener away from the subject. A good introduction must be followed by a good sermon, or the rest becomes a let-down. But why shouldn't it be followed by a good sermon?

The key to an introduction, remember, is to move the congregation from wherever it is at the moment to where the preacher wants them to be. It is not sufficient, therefore, for the introduction simply to arouse attention or interest. As a good appetizer goes with the rest of the meal, so too an introduction must have a direct bearing upon the message that follows. It is easy to arouse interest. A preacher may appear before his congregation on Sunday morning carrying a strange box. Dramatically, he may open the box and let loose three pigeons. But while the bewildered congregation is watching these birds flap around in the auditorium, he, of course, could not preach. He, himself, would have destroyed any opportunity to speak. It is important, therefore, to prepare introductions carefully, usually after the rest of the sermon is well in hand, so that the direct relevance of the two is assured. In their introductions, preachers who fail to do so have opened boxes and let fly speckled birds of every sort.

A good introduction may, for example, answer the question, "Why bring that up?" After all, the speaker is asking the listener to consider a topic about which he has not been thinking. To change his thoughts is not always easy. Indeed, he may need help to do so. The introduction should provide this kind of help. Showing why it is important for him to turn his attention to this matter may be just what he needs. Few preachers, unfortunately, seem to bother about this problem and assume, often wrongly, that people are automatically interested in what they have to say. Senator Pat McNamara

wisely showed the present importance of his subject when he opened an address with these words: "Of all the persons who have ever reached the age of 65 since the dawn of mankind, twenty-five per cent are alive today." One way to become conscious of the elements of good introductions is to study carefully the opening words in magazine articles.

Here are the introductory sentences to several sermons. What do you think of each?

1. "The first thought which seems to be suggested by these words (the words of his text) is a thought directly contradictory to a very prevalent opinion."
2. "You probably saw the advertisement, too."
3. "The words, 'a still small voice' are even more surprising in the original: 'a sound of thin silence.'"
4. "If you're a Christian, you can't say can't."
5. "James identified one cause of man's trouble, personal and social, when he said, 'Ye have not, because ye ask not.'"
6. "Do I have the money to give?"
7. "There was some danger in attending church when this exhortation (Hebrews 10:25) was penned."

CONCLUSIONS

While it is important to have a good appetizer, it is also essential to have a good dessert (conclusion). In informative speaking, the key to a good conclusion is repetition and summary, i.e., saying it again, "telling 'em what you told 'em." In the summary it is of special importance to repeat key words and phrases that should be remembered. The ending should contain the meat or gist of the message. A summary should tie up any loose ends, integrate thoughts, and focus upon the core of the message. It should be written in conjunction with the introduction and perhaps will wrap up the package in the same terms or imagery as was used in the introduction. End strongly; do not do a fade-out. Do not approach the landing field three or four times, only to soar up into the blue again

at the last second. Instead, when the congregation has been alerted to fasten seat belts (by a "finally" or some similar signal) bring her in for a full flap landing on the first approach.

VISUAL AIDS

There are two kinds of visual aids: three-dimensional and two-dimensional. Many preachers, if they think of visual aids at all, limit their thinking to two-dimensional aids, such as chalkboards, charts, posters, graphs, pictures, slides, maps, overhead projectors, etc. But we should keep in mind the possibility of using three-dimensional aids as well. In fact, most of the visual aids used by biblical preachers were, according to the Scriptures, three-dimensional. Three-dimensional aids include both objects, like Agabus' belt (Acts 21:11), and people (cf. Matthew 18:2, 3). Objects may include either the actual items themselves or models scaled up or down.

There are two basic rules for the use of visual aids. The first is that *they must be visual*. This might seem to be a truism, yet those who have had anything to do with the study of visual aids know that frequently the visual aid is not large enough for everyone to see. Sometimes the visible qualities are obstructed by clutter. Detail tends to run together. The rule is to simplify in every way possible. For instance, it is frequently unnecessary to write out words; instead they may be abbreviated, the first letter of the word may be used, or symbols may be substituted for words. Second, when using a chalkboard, use bold, suggestive strokes. Heavy, confident and quick strokes with chalk or a magic marker are superior to time-consuming, thin, sketchy, carefully worked out lines. Third, you may want to exaggerate the size of some item in the drawing if you want to emphasize it. Of course, this should not be done if the exaggeration causes a distortion that misrepresents. Fourth, when you use colors in charts, on the board, etc., use bold primary colors that contrast, not pastels that tend to fade into one another. That is one reason why

yellow chalk against a green blackboard is so effective. And, finally, when you use the aid, don't get in its way, don't stand in front of it, don't hold it so that it wiggles and shakes, but prop or tack or hang it up carefully so that it can be seen by all. Stand off to the side and point to the aid with your hand or with a pointer.

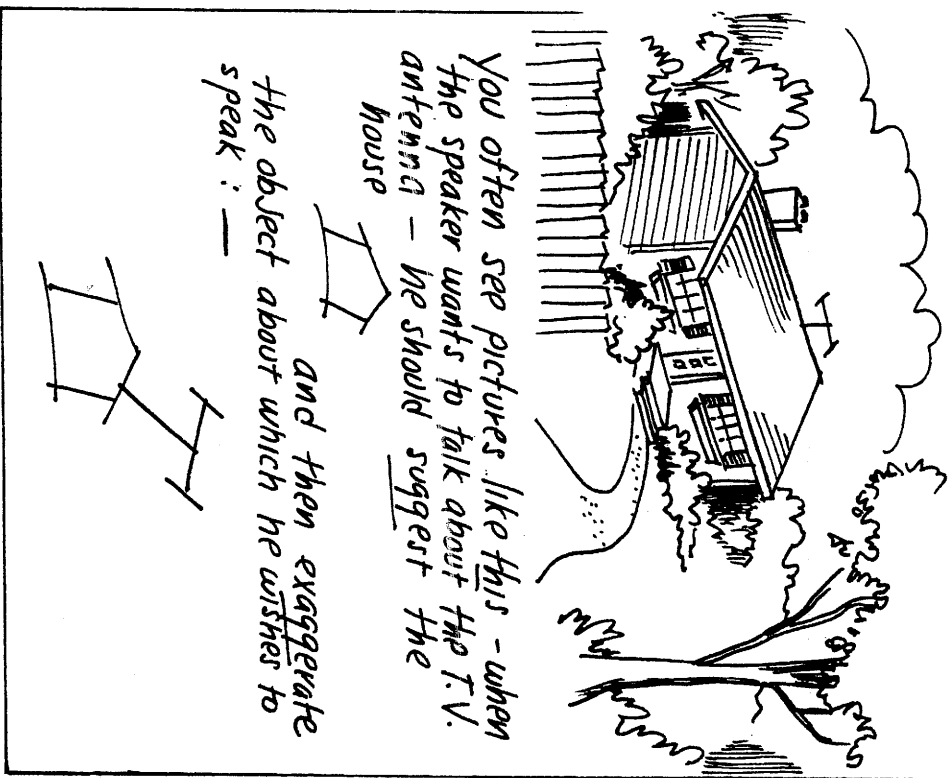


Figure 10
Simplify and Exaggerate

The second rule is that *visual aids must aid*. There is no middle ground here. They either aid or they hinder. They either help or they detract. Use only one aid at a time. Any aid which is not in use but is in view may detract. It is usually wise to cover and hide aids whenever possible, both before and after use. Second, the aid must be mastered. For instance, one must learn how to pull chalk rather than push it, so that it doesn't squeak and send shudders down the listeners' spines. The preacher must know his aid and, if possible should practice using it in the place where he will speak. I once saw a girl captured by a visual aid. Because it was a rainy day she had rolled up her poster and carried it across the campus to Switzer Hall, the oldest building at the University of Missouri. When she got up from her seat she marched confidently to the front of the room, produced two thumb tacks, and unrolled her poster. But as she pushed the first thumbtack into the poster board and attempted to tack the poster into the hardwood molding around the blackboard, she met strong resistance. The wood was so hard that she couldn't make the tack penetrate it. After several unsuccessful attempts, she valiantly put a hand at the top of the poster board in order to hold the aid against the blackboard herself. But the poster was rolled tight, and when she unrolled it, the poster acted exactly like one of those stiff white shirts that is worn with a tuxedo. Every time she tried to smooth it out and unroll the board, it rerolled itself, recoiling up toward her hand at the top of the poster. Finally, when all else failed, in desperation she grasped the bottom of the poster with her free hand, and with that move had been completely captured by her aid. One final word of warning: never talk to the aid—always speak to people.

CONCLUSION

Now, as we said, comes the time for a summary. A good summary contains key words and phrases. The big word in informative preaching is *clarity*. *Information* is the material

with which the preacher works, *understanding* (and *retention*) is the goal that he seeks, and *clarity* is the means by which he attains this goal. Now abideth these three: information, understanding and clarity; but the greatest of these is clarity. As the professor said: "If I can get this one word into your head, you'll have it all in a nut shell."

SUGGESTED PROJECTS
For Classroom or Study

In the Classroom

1. Using one of the topics chosen earlier (or some other), prepare a 5-minute talk on a subject about which you believe your audience needs to be informed and about which you have (or plan to acquire) adequate knowledge.
2. Hand in a one-page full sentence outline at least two days before you must speak (you may continue to revise this until the moment of delivery), containing the following elements and using this form:

TITLE

PURPOSE: (Here follows a one-sentence statement of the specific purpose of this talk: e.g., "I wish to tell my audience how we got the present chapters and versification in our Bibles.")

INTRODUCTION: _____

I. _____

A. _____

1. _____

2. _____

B. _____

etc. _____

II. _____

etc. _____

CONCLUSION: _____

Remember: During this course no notes or outlines may be used while speaking. You may use visual aids during this speech or any that follow, if you elect to do so.

In the Study

Using the outline form suggested in No. 2 (above), prepare an informative talk that could be given to your Sunday school teachers on The Use of Visual Aids.

Chapter Four

PERSUASIVE PREACHING
I—PREACHING TO CONVINCE

Fundamentally, there are two types of persuasive sermons. The first type involves what might be called argumentative preaching, and the second motivational preaching. The goal of argumentative preaching is to convince. This means changing and establishing a belief. Of course, ultimately only the Holy Spirit can convince. Yet the very fact that he has given to his Church the office of pastor and teacher (Eph. 4:11) shows that he plans to use preaching as the agency through which he accomplishes his work.¹ The human means that the Holy Spirit ordinarily uses is the use of logical scriptural proof of the sort employed by Paul and Peter throughout the Book of Acts and in their letters. This means interpreting biblical evidence and reasoning from it to sound, practical conclusions. The goal of motivational preaching, on the other hand, is to move to action. Whereas the preacher primarily aims at the intellect in argumentative persuasion, in motivational persuasion he aims through the intellect at the emotions. The same means are used in both, with the important exception that when he seeks to move to action, the preacher must also employ psychological appeal.

BIBLICAL PERSUASION

Some persons try to be more pious than Paul; but their piety is false. They say that persuasion in preaching is unnecessary and the implication, therefore, is that those who use persuasion ignore the Holy Spirit and depend upon the arm of flesh. "Simply present the facts," they maintain, "and let the Holy Spirit do the rest." However, that viewpoint is de-

¹Cf. Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, Chapter II, pp. 20-25.

cidedly unscriptural. It was Paul's regular custom (*ethos*) to "argue" (*dielexato*) from the Scriptures (Acts 17:2). The word *dielexato* comes from *dialego*, which means to reason, discuss, or dispute. In Acts 17:3, Luke notes two of the elements that are involved in this dialectical method that Paul developed: he "explained" (*dianoigon*, or "fully opened") and "proved" (*parathemenos*, "demonstrate" or "set before"). The effect of these joint activities is also described in verse 4, where Luke observes that some were "persuaded" (*episthesan*). These words plainly describe a process of reasoning through argumentation; Paul is involved in changing people's thinking by this process. Paul set forth the scriptural evidence and argued from it. By this process the preacher endeavors to move someone from doubt to acceptance by means of biblical data presented logically in verbal form. Of course, it is important to recognize that the whole process used in reasoning with facts (evidence) rests upon the bedrock of assumptions or presuppositions that are agreed upon explicitly or implicitly by the speaker and his listeners. It is important also to notice that persuasion was not some extraordinary activity in which Paul infrequently engaged; this method of preaching had become customary (verse 2). Indeed, in Acts 17:17 Luke says that he argued (*dielegeto*) in the synagogues and in the market places every day. In Acts 18:14 he is pictured as arguing in the synagogue each Sabbath. Plainly, then, argumentation was a regular part of Paul's missionary preaching. It was a definite part of the gospel presentation. Throughout the book of Acts, from the second chapter on, wherever gospel preaching by Peter, Stephen, or Paul is recorded (at least as a summary), it is plain that the Scriptures of the Old Testament are used as the basis for such reasoning. New Testament preachers reached their positions concerning Jesus Christ by showing how he had fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies in history. In summarizing his missionary work, Paul put it this way: "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade (*peitho*) men" (II Cor. 5:11).

There is a different word in the New Testament that signifies the wrong sort of persuasion. This word is used in Acts 18:13 and means "persuasion by deceit" or "misleading persuasion" (the word used here is *anapeitho*). In I Corinthians 2 Paul does not argue against reasoning or argumentation in general. He says that he had determined to "know nothing but Christ and him crucified" among the Corinthians. In order to assure this, he made certain that his message and preaching were not in *peithois sophias logos* (vs. 4); that is, he refused to use "persuasive words of wisdom" (here he means the wisdom of men as he has defined this in the previous chapter²). He wanted their faith to depend instead upon the demonstration and power of the Spirit. But from what Luke tells us, we know that this cannot mean that he refused to persuade by arguing from the Scriptures. Notice also Paul's stress upon the wisdom of men in verse 5.

The Spirit has given his Word to men not to be ignored, but to preach and be believed. The Spirit is the One who makes known the truth of God and the Gospel (compare vs. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16); thus it is impossible for one man to convert another simply by means of persuasion. But this does not preclude the fact that the Spirit may work, if and when he wills, through persuasion. Indeed, he ordinarily chooses to demonstrate his truth through the "foolishness" of the kind of persuasive preaching that is based upon reasoning from the Scriptures where the wisdom of God may be found. This is what Luke says Paul did; it is also what Paul did in Corinth. It is not persuasion, then, that Paul opposed (cf. Acts 28:23 and 19:8); his words in I Corinthians 1 are directed against the sophistical methods that many other teachers of his day employed. These methods focused upon eloquence and reasoning itself rather than upon the truth about Christ and his

²Indeed, the Kurt Aland text brackets *logos* and reads simply, *en peithoi sophias* ("with persuasive arguments of wisdom"). The stress is not against persuasion, but rather against persuasion by worldly wisdom.

atoning death. It is all such trickery and specious argumentation as that used by the sophists that Paul rejects. His very concern arises from the fact that in preaching the Gospel he *did* have to argue. He trembled because he was afraid that he might be tempted to argue in such a way that their faith might rest upon human wisdom. The kind of persuasion that Paul believed in and practiced, pointed men to the Christ of the Scriptures. In the rest of this chapter he makes it very plain that even *such* reasoning, apart from the regenerating work of the Spirit in the heart, is hopeless. So that even scriptural reasoning cannot bring about conversion apart from the Holy Spirit. No man can savingly say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). But biblical argumentation is one of the means of grace that the Spirit of God uses in bringing the elect to repentance and faith.

THE PROBLEM IN PERSUASION

The problem in logical persuasion (argumentation) is how to move the listener from doubt to acceptance, or at least how to move him further along the way toward acceptance. Frequently, the beginner harbors the mistaken notion that he ought to be able to convince most of his congregation to see things his way (which hopefully is also God's way) by means of a single sermon. This, of course, may happen, but usually it does not. Ordinarily, Christians move from doubt to acceptance over a period of time. And that is not altogether bad. Believers should "test all things (including sermons) and hold fast to what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).³ When the Scriptures are consistently and clearly presented bit by bit, piece by piece, Christians will grow; they will come to understand and believe more and more, sometimes in spite of themselves. So,

³ Cf. Acts 17:11. The Bereans had already learned this lesson. If a congregation is cautious and checks you out scripturally, with Paul, you should rejoice and praise them for it. Beware of those who too readily accept everything you preach.

a realistic goal ought to be set for each sermon. Set goals in terms of what one particular sermon of a given sort ought reasonably to be expected to accomplish. Then, if the Spirit "does exceedingly abundantly above what you ask or think," rejoice. Then he, and not you, will have the glory for the results.

The words that are used to describe various aspects of logical persuasion are themselves informative. The etymology of the English word *argue* may be found in a root meaning "to make clear." The fact that making something clear is a way of arguing shows the importance of clarity, not only when attempting to inform, but also in the process of argumentation. As a matter of fact, many people accept a statement as true if they understand it. So, clarity is essential in argumentation. Or to put it another way, argumentation must be built upon the foundation of the principles of informative speaking that we have studied already. It is not by departing from the use of facts and evidence in argumentation, but by building on them that you may progress to persuasion. The word *evidence* comes from two terms that mean "to see" and "out." These two words compounded mean that evidence is that which helps one to see out there in front of himself where he can see it plainly or clearly. The word *proof* comes from a root that means "that which can stand the test." And finally, *reason* originally meant "to think" by joining or fitting pieces together. The process of joining is analogically used to describe the thinking process as joining bits of evidence together with the cement of reasons in order to reach conclusions. So the words themselves that are employed in the process of persuasion say a great deal about the process itself.

CHOOSING AN ARGUMENTATIVE SUBJECT

In a preliminary course in pulpit speech you are not yet ready to preach. Probably you will be wondering how to choose a subject for this course. In choosing such a subject the first consideration might be the audience. When Dr. Mar-

tin Lloyd-Jones determined to preach his famous series on the Sermon on the Mount, he did so not because of his own interests ("If I had been left to my own choice I would not have chosen to preach [this] . . . series of sermons"). Rather, the needs of the church demanded it.⁴ It will often be necessary to do an audience analysis to discover needs, problems, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices and errors. The choice of the subject should be made in the light of such information. Choose a topic that puts you in a position to grapple with the beliefs of your audience. Be sure you believe what you are saying to be true, but also be sure that most of your audience does not.

Secondly, the subject must be limited sufficiently to enable you to do a satisfactory job. The topic should be narrow enough (perhaps some mildly controversial *aspect* of a subject about which you all agree) to reasonably expect some noticeable (though possibly small) shift in belief if the speech is successful. Unless the subject is fairly well narrowed, a speech cannot possibly cover the following four factors, all of which are essential to good persuasion:

1. *Explanation of the state of the argument.* You often need to consider most or all of the following items: What is the problem specifically? Why is this problem important? What are the positions that have been taken and now are taken with respect to this question? By whom? What is the history of the argument? What are the definitions of key terms used in this argument?

2. *Evaluation of your own arguments.* Are they sound? Is the evidence factual? Are your sources reliable? Are your interpretations correct? Is your reasoning unassailable? Do you understand your own position clearly? Are there weak points or fuzzy thinking? Are you fully convinced yourself? Questions

⁴D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Studies In the Sermon on the Mount, Vol. I*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1960, p. 9.

tions like these will not only help you to anticipate objections and enable you to shore up your defenses, but, because they demand a reevaluation of your position, sometimes will cause you to refine and modify it, and sometimes to reject it. Many of the results of such an evaluation of your position will become part of the positive presentation and argumentation for it.

3. *Refutation of your opponent's arguments.* Both his constructive arguments and his attacks upon your position must be anticipated. You must know what he will say for his viewpoint and also what he will say against yours. You will thereby provide ammunition to use in anticipation and also much with which to answer his objections at a later point. By anticipating and pre-answering in your initial presentation, you preempt him and remove much of the force of what he might say. A strong argument, then, is not merely an argument for, but must also be an argument against. Note especially how Paul anticipates objections and counter-arguments when he writes, "You will say to me then . . ." (Rom. 9:19; see also 11:19, 1 Cor. 15:35 and James 2:18).

4. *Summary and appeal.* Taking time to summarize so that the impact of the full argument is felt is important. Moreover, it is essential to urge acceptance upon the audience. This point becomes particularly crucial when persuading to move to action, so further discussion of it will be reserved until you reach that point.

When you have a subject that satisfies these criteria and about which you are confident that you can speak effectively because there is time to cover most or all of them, then your subject is properly limited. When a subject is too broad, you will discover that there is not enough time for all of these things within the framework of the talk. Not all speeches will require blanket coverage of all of these items. Some items may be conceded by the opposition since some facts may be mutually accepted by all parties.

FOUR TYPES OF DISPUTABLE QUESTIONS

Thirdly, it may be helpful to recognize that there are four categories of disputable questions from which a topic may be chosen. There are questions of (1) *fact*—does it exist? The woman's question, "Is not this the Christ?" (John 4:29) fits this category; (2) *definition*—what is its nature? Pilate's "What is truth?" (John 18:38) probably belongs to this class; (3) *value*—what is it worth? (cf. I Cor. 15:29a, 32). These three types of questions are all appropriate for the argumentative speech to convince; (4) *policy*—what action should be taken? (cf. Acts 2:37). A persuasive speech of this sort is motivational and is not presently of interest to us. Statements or questions of policy can be recognized by the fact that they usually contain the word "should" or the word "ought."

TYPES OF ARGUMENT

There are two basic kinds of arguments: the *inductive* and the *deductive* argument. When arguing inductively one moves from particulars to generalizations. Inductively organized sermons are like the locusts of Revelation; they have the sting in their tail. For instance, if you wish to preach about limited atonement to an audience that is hostile to the doctrine, you might be wise to argue inductively. You may begin by saying, "Christ is a personal Savior: 'He loved *me* and gave himself for *me*,'" quoting Galatians 2:20b. You may then argue that God's purposes are never frustrated, and quote various passages to support this fact. You may also suggest that it is unthinkable (because unbiblical) that at the very same moment that Christ was dying for their sins multitudes were themselves suffering in hell for the same sins. You may further establish biblically that Christ came to save, not merely to make salvation possible, and that his death indeed does pay the penalty for the sins of those for whom he died. You may wish to explain that his atonement was not merely the storing of potentially redemptive energy that may or may not be tapped, but that it was an actual payment of a debt. You may show

in Isaiah 53 and in the New Testament Christ is said to "die" or "give his life" or "shed his blood" for *many*. At the very end you would draw all of these points together to their inevitable conclusion (generalization) that the atonement must have been limited and not universal.

A deductive argument moves in the opposite direction. It moves from a generalization to particulars. For instance, you may set forth your thesis immediately in the introduction to your sermon: "Today I intend to show that the biblical mode of baptism is by sprinkling and never by immersion. Your first point might be: Baptism in the Old Testament was always by sprinkling. Under that head you might turn to Hebrews 9:10 and compare Numbers 8:7, showing that the "different kinds of *baptismois*" in the Old Testament to which Hebrews 9:10 refers, are identified in the rest of that chapter as "purifications." You would then show that Old Testament purifications, according to Numbers 8:7, were accomplished by the sprinkling of the water of purification. You may also show as your second point under the first main head that John 3:25, 26 identifies baptism with Old Testament purification. This leads again to the conclusion that it is the sprinkling of the water of purification to which the Bible refers whenever it speaks of prechristian baptisms. Thirdly, you may also wish to point out that there is no act even resembling an immersion required by the Old Testament Law, let alone "various types" of immersions; yet Hebrews 9:10 says "different kinds of baptisms" were required. So there could not be various types of immersions. But throughout the ninth chapter of Hebrews, there are clear references to various purifications by sprinkling. There is the sprinkling of water and blood (vs. 19), the sprinkling of blood alone (vs. 21) and the sprinkling of blood and ashes (vs. 13).

As your second main head you could maintain: "Baptism in the New Testament was always by sprinkling." You might show that John the Baptist sprinkled, observing that the John 3 passage, where his activity is denominated as "purification,"

makes this clear. You might show that the passage also does not teach that there was "much water" in Aenon (as the King James Version wrongly translates verse 23) but literally "many waters" (*hudata polla*). These "waters" can be identified more specifically: the passage says that John was baptizing "in Aenon because there were many waters there." The word Aenon means "springs." All you need to do then is to put two and two together, and so on and on. The whole argument may continue throughout a number of the other key New Testament passages in which you may show that there is never a single allusion to baptism by immersion, but always baptism by sprinkling. You move successively through Acts 2, 10, Romans 6, Colossians 2, etc., showing that the biblical mode is described as "sprinkling, coming down upon, resting upon, shedding forth, pouring out and anointing." Finally you conclude: "As I said when I began, the testimony of the whole Bible is clear: baptism was always by sprinkling."

Now, if you were going to deliver this message before the Orthodox Presbyterian General Assembly, a deductive method of this sort would be highly advisable. It would give you the advantage of repeating the thesis again and again throughout the whole message, reinforcing what the members of the Assembly already believe. It might possibly add new arrows to their quiver. There would be no opposition to overcome.

But suppose you were invited to speak before the Southern Baptist Convention and had elected to preach on the same subject! Here you would be wise to approach the question inductively, or probably you would not get beyond the introduction. Turn this outline on the mode of baptism inside out, and you have an inductive presentation. Instead of beginning with the thesis that baptism was by sprinkling both in the Old Testament and in the New, using the same approach as in the outline of the sermon on Limited Atonement (note also the inductive title: Christ, Our Personal Savior), you might begin by saying, "Let's look at some passages on baptism." You take a look at Hebrews 9 and ask some questions; you look at

John 3 and come up with some puzzling information. Then you look at baptism in the New Testament and you discover more interesting facts. All along you have been drawing some minor conclusions; now you must finally conclude that "as amazing as it may seem, the biblical evidence indicates that in both the Old and New Testaments baptism was by sprinkling alone."

The advantage of the inductive method is that you will get a hearing. Stephen was stoned, but not before he got his message across. Paul, likewise, got a hearing in Athens. In both cases an inductive approach assured this.⁵ In general, then, audience analysis is all important in determining the type of argumentative approach to use. Ask yourself, "What kind of attitude does the audience have toward me and my proposition?" when you can answer that, you will know whether your approach ought to be inductive or deductive. Must you approach them as Nathan confronted David, or can you move directly to your thesis? Hostility indicates induction, friendliness indicates deduction.

TYPES AND TESTS OF EVIDENCE

The basic information used in preaching comes from the biblical revelation. Since the Bible is an inspired and inerrant document in the original, the only test that may be applied to this information is the test of the preacher's interpretation and use of it. There are two problems that arise in handling scriptural data: first, the preacher must determine what the Scriptures teach. While the Bible does not err, the preacher's interpretation may. Secondly, the preacher must determine the Holy Spirit's purpose in revealing the particular data under consideration and determine what legitimate use he may make of these facts today. There is also non-revealed factual

⁵Cf. Christ's use of this method in Matthew 21:28-32. Like Nathan, through the use of a parable, he gains consent for the principle that he is about to apply to his audience.

material of several sorts. Such material may not only be misinterpreted and misused, it may also be false. More needs to be said about using and testing the several sorts of non-revealed material. First consider the problems connected with one highly specialized kind of material:

Statistics. Statistical materials can be quite tricky. First, it is essential to be precise in the use of statistical material. It is usually not adequate to say a "few" or "many" or "some." It is far better to say five, eighty-four or three-fourths. Listeners understand statistical materials most easily, we have seen, when they are translated into concrete terms. It is often wise to use comparisons: "as large (small) as . . ." or direct translations: "If all of these were placed side by side, they would stretch from New York to . . ." Statistical materials need to be tested. This may be done in a variety of ways. For example, since it is wise for a listener to evaluate the sources of statistics, preachers need to learn to cite sources. In source evaluation one should want to know such facts as whether the sources are expert or lay, biased or disinterested, and if they were in a position to know. He will also question the quantity and quality of the information behind the statistics. Was there a broad enough sampling? Did it really cut across all of the classes or areas involved? So statistics themselves are very slippery and, unless quite simply presented together with some evaluation about quality, source, and meaning, often the listener is unable to judge their actual value.

Example. Examples are used in argumentation as supporting pieces of evidence for the general proposition that is drawn from them. It is especially important for preachers to learn to use examples because while they support, at the same time they clarify, illustrate and frequently by their concreteness apply. The effective use of example by Christ as his most pointed means of argumentation should encourage every minister to seek to excel in their use. In effect, the Gallup Polls use numerous examples in arriving at statistics. Examples be-

come support when they are clearly typical of numerous occurrences and truly illustrate and support the thesis.

One question to ask might be, "Is the example full?" That is, is the example a narrative or merely the reference to a narrative? The latter is called an "instance." Sometimes it is more effective to pile up instances than to present one or two full examples (cf. Paul in II Cor. 6:4-10). Another essential question is, "Is the example real or is it hypothetical?" Hypothetical examples may not be used for support in the way real examples may. Therefore, we want to ask, "For what purpose is it used? To support a thesis? To clarify the point? To help listeners retain information? To catch and hold attention?"

We should test the use of examples by questions like these: Are there enough cases cited? Are these cases typical? Is there a fair cross section? Are exceptions noted? Can predictions be made for the next specific case? And, the crucial rule of all, do the examples relate to the point at issue?

Analogy. Analogy proceeds on the assumption that since two things are alike in some *essential* respects, they will be alike in *other* respects. The issue here is, are they really alike in the essential respects? You have a comparison between cases. If a particular church extension program worked well for the Conservative Baptists, can it be argued that it would also work for the Orthodox Presbyterians? Analogies may be literal or figurative, and may be used respectively as proofs or illustrations. Voting a church officer out of office may be used as a literal analogy, but changing horses in mid-stream is a figurative analogy. Can you, for example, parallel something that takes place in education with something that takes place in medicare or in a church Sunday school? If so, you would be using a literal analogy. Can you argue that because of moral decay America is on the verge of collapse as a world power because imperial Rome fell due to inner corruption?

Cause. Then there is the argument from cause. The argument from cause expresses a reason for the being of a fact. It moves from cause to effect in predicting the future or from

effect to cause in discussing the why of the past. Cause to effect runs this way: if we do *this*, then *that* will follow. Effect to cause says: Rome fell *because* so and so took place. Here the argument may be tested by asking questions like these: Is the cause-effect connection broken or incomplete? Will another cause change the predicted event? Are there additional causes contributing to the effect? What other effects might be produced by the cause? A speech teacher shatters a piece of chalk against the chalkboard and asks, "What is the cause of the resultant spot on the chalkboard?" From one viewpoint the chalk may be said to be the cause; but also the physical nature of the board is the cause; the course in speech is the cause, the class is the cause, and the instructor is the cause. Each is a cause at a different level. When discussing cause and effect, you must understand what you mean by the words.

Sign. Relations and associations that cannot be stated causally nevertheless are used as the reason for believing in the being of a fact. For example, when you see robins you say that spring has arrived. The Scriptures speak of the budding of the fig tree as a sign (Matt. 24:32-34). Where there is smoke there is fire; where there are pickets, there is a strike, are other examples of sign. The miracles of Jesus Christ are literally called "signs."⁶ They were performed to attest to his Messiahship (Acts 2:22). Christ argued from sign to reassure John the Baptist when he doubted in prison. Compare Matthew 11:2-6.

The tests of a sign are: Are qualifiers used, such as "some, few, many, most"? Qualifiers may indicate only exceptions rather than rules. Do the signs show probability or only accidental association? For instance, a red nose may be the sign of drinking, sunburn, a cold, a punch in the nose, etc. There

⁶Cf. John 20:30-31 and throughout the book. In Mark 2:10 the miracle which involved the "power of the Lord" (*duamnis*; cf. Luke 5:17b) was a sign of his "authority" (*exousia*). Christ argues that the miracle is a visible, tangible sign of his invisible, intangible authority to forgive sins.

may be multiple causes for a particular sign. Are signs mistaken for causes? A sign is a sign of the existence of a problem, but not necessarily a sign of the specific item that is the cause of the problem. Depression may be the sign of guilt, but it does not indicate the specific nature of the guilt. To put these various types of argument together in one sequence, you may proceed to argue in this order: *signs* indicate that a proposition is true; the *causal arguments* indicate why it is true; and the *examples* support and convince, while the *analogy* helps us to understand in terms of what is already known by the listener.

THE STOCK ISSUES, A STRUCTURAL TEST

Stock issues, as they have been called by debaters, are helpful not only for constructing an argument, but they also provide an excellent test of the cogency of someone else's argument. Any sound argument should satisfactorily answer each of the following four questions (unless one or more of these is granted, assumed, conceded or admitted by all parties):

- First, is there a *need* for the proposed change?
- Second, will the proposal *meet the need*?
- Third, is the proposal *feasible*?
- Fourth, will the proposal bring about *new and worse evils*?

Let's run through a particular example. Someone argues that the church needs a new Sunday school building with fifteen to twenty rooms at the cost of \$200,000. Everyone agrees that there is a need for the change. Second, everyone concedes that this particular proposal will meet the need. But the debate gets hung up on the next issue: is such a proposal feasible? The discussion finally reaches the point where both sides are agreed that the proposal is feasible only if they could get all of the members of the congregation to tithe, but "if," in this instance, is a very large word. Since it does not seem possible to get all of the members of the congregation to tithe, the proposal must be abandoned or modified. And so

the argument for the new building flounders upon the test of feasibility. Another problem may be run all the way down to the fourth issue. A particular disease may be cured by a proposal to take certain steps that would cure the patient, but the result may be to cure him of that disease while crippling him for life. To adopt the proposal would be to bring about new or worse evils. The proposal tested in terms of its side effects must be abandoned. Frequently arguments that seem attractive otherwise will be scuttled by tests three or four.

HOW TO ARGUE

Remember, you are concerned not only to win the argument, but also to win the listener. So, attitude in argumentation is crucial. Later, more must be said about the importance of the *ethos* or image of the speaker in persuasion. But for now, let us consider some principles of sound argumentation. Never use weak arguments. It is better to have one strong argument than five arguments, four of which are weak. Jesus Christ never used a weak argument; and we should not do so in his name. Weak arguments give a handle to the opposition. You may be sure that the opposition will focus upon the weak arguments only and avoid entirely a strong argument, even though it may be totally convincing. There are no weak arguments in the Scriptures. Preaching, therefore, does not admit of weak arguments.

However, some arguments may seem more impressive or more evidently convincing than others. This raises the old primacy-recency question: should the strongest argument be introduced first or last? Apart from matters where the attitude of a hostile audience settles this question, which is more effective? Experimental studies have not yet shown that one order is superior to the other. It would seem that often the best order would be: strongest, strong, stronger. If the strongest argument is presented first to a friendly audience, then it may be repeated continually throughout the message. This will enable the preacher to relate other arguments to the

strongest one which may become the argumentative theme. By constant reference to it, the strongest argument can be indelibly impressed on the mind of the hearer.⁷ Whenever there is one leading argument in a sermon, this argument may be put into one short graphic unforgettable sentence like, "Don't sell the day to buy the hour," or "Bow now in faith or later by force." This kind of sentence put in concrete form becomes the rock in the snowball that gets the job done.

Clarity in argument is crucial. This has been mentioned earlier. Not only is clarity crucial for informative speeches, but also for persuasive speaking as well. Here is a list of words that each speaker should carefully distinguish. It would be well for him to look up the etymology and current usages of each. These words should be known and distinguished to lend clarity to one's thinking and speaking: fact, opinion, theory, hypothesis, presupposition, belief, evidence and proof.

⁷God continually used the principle of repetition in the Scriptures: cf. the repetitive use of the phrase, "They shall know that I am the Lord," throughout the prophecy of Ezekiel, and also the covenantal slogan that in its several variations always contains the words "your God, my people." This slogan occurs from Genesis to Revelation.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS
For Classroom or Study

In the Classroom

1. Using one of the topics chosen earlier (or some other), prepare a speech to establish or change a belief. Be able to justify the choice of this topic by your knowledge of the beliefs of your audience. Be sure that at least one-half of the group disagrees with your viewpoint.
2. Hand in a one-page outline exactly as you did before, at least two days before you will speak.

In the Study

In the spaces below, list scriptural references to biblical usage of each type of argument.

Analogy	Cause	Example	Sign	Other Notations

Chapter Five

PERSUASIVE PREACHING
II—PREACHING TO MOTIVATE

DEFINITION

Speaking to motivate reaches the culmination or peak of public speaking. All of the arts learned for the previous two types of speeches must be employed, plus a third element. Speaking to inform largely focuses upon factual content; the intent is to communicate new information to the mind. Speaking to convince presents evidence and reasoning that leads to conclusions and should influence belief. Speaking to motivate adds a psychological or emotional element in order to get listeners to act upon the information and the conclusions. It is important to understand that in motivational speaking nothing previously learned is left behind. Note the stress upon *addition*. Poor motivational speaking bypasses facts and reasoning and appeals directly to the emotions. But proper motivation operates *through* these two former channels and is based upon them.

First of all, good exposition is essential because lasting motivation always must be founded upon solid information. Problems and their solutions need to be stated clearly. A clear explanation of *what* action to take must be given first. Only then can motivation be meaningful. Secondly, good argumentation stresses the reasons *why* such action should be taken. Thus argumentation is essential to convince the listener that what you are asking him to do should be done because there is a need and this course of action provides God's answer to the need, or that it is the best feasible and logical solution deduced by solid reasoning based upon evidence from the Word of God. Exposition then reveals what to do while argumentation says why it must be done.

THE NEW ELEMENT

The third and new element that is peculiar to but not used exclusively in motivational speaking (all of these elements must be understood only as emphases within each of these types of speaking), is the emotional or pathetic (from the Greek word *pathos*) element. The speaker seeks to activate his audience to accomplish certain ends through arousing an emotional desire by psychological means. In informative speaking the stress is upon the *what*, in argumentation the stress falls on the *why*, but in motivational speaking the stress is upon the *want*.

The etymology of the word emotion is helpful. The word comes from the Latin *emovere*, which means to stir or to upset. Physically speaking, an emotion is the upsetting of the normal sympathetic bodily action causing the parasympathetic to take over. It is a keying up of the body for action. It is important, however, to distinguish between emotion in a broad and in a narrow sense. Emotion in the broadest sense includes what might be called *impulse* (or persuasion by the use of emotion alone). By impulse we mean the unreasoned acquiescence in an emotional drive. In contrast, emotional appeal in the narrower sense means acquiescence in emotion growing out of conclusions reached by solid reasoning from factual evidence. Thus the emotional element recommended here is the acceptance of an emotional drive only after reasoned judgment.

THE USE OF THE NARRATIVE

Narratives often may be used very effectively in conjunction with all three types of preaching. They may be used in exposition and argument to clarify and illustrate, or as examples. But the narrative is particularly useful as an agent for conveying emotion. A good narrative by definition carries a great deal of emotion with it, as we have seen in the discussion of the delivery of narratives. The introduction of complication, growing suspense and climax is in itself the introduc-

tion of emotional factors. Thus one good way of introducing emotional appeal as the new element in motivational speaking is through the use of narratives.

EFFECTIVE USE OF EMOTIONAL APPEAL

There are several factors involved in the effective use of psychological or emotional appeal. First, audience analysis is essential. Speakers must know what motivates audiences in general and each audience in particular. Paul was able to toss the golden apple between the Pharisees and the Sadducees by raising the issue of the resurrection, because he knew his audience. As Luke says:

“But perceiving that one party were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, Paul began crying out in the Council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead!”¹

What motivates one audience may not motivate another. Hopefully that which motivates a conservative congregation will be different from that which motivates the Mafia. What this means is that the speaker must be clear about the motive or motives to which he appeals. He must be able to state these motives exactly. In other words, he must be able to give a reasoned, ethical, biblical case for arousing these particular emotions.

MOTIVATION RESEARCH

Secondly, the discussion of audience analysis leads to the question of motivation research, which has been a large factor in modern advertising. Motivation research is the study of the psychology of human motivation. The beating that once was given to Wall Street now is received by Madison Avenue, or as it more affectionately has been called, Mad Avenue. Motiva-

¹ Acts 23:6. Note the word “perceive.” By underscoring this fact, Luke points out Paul’s conscious use of audience analysis.

tion researchers have discovered that sinful man operates on an emotional basis far more than he recognizes. (The Bible has been saying this for centuries.) This, they say, is partly true because of basic irrational desires and needs like status, sex and security. Hence, the policy of motivational researchers is to sell more than the product and service. They want to appeal directly to these irrational desires. The motivational researcher, therefore, will insist that his client sell, in addition to the product and service, the promise of the fulfillment of a basic desire (or, better still, desires). It is in order to fulfill these desires, they say, that man acts. Motivational researchers have illustrated by interesting data the old biblical facts about sinful human beings.² For example, the eye rate blink of women in grocery stores has been shown to be the same as that of persons who are hypnotized.³ Hence, they buy under suggestion. Homes are no longer thought of as houses. The home is used to appeal to a woman as an expression of herself, an extension of her personality. To men, the home is said to symbolize mother; a place of calm refuge.⁴ Stores must no longer sell shoes; instead, they must sell lovely feet. For a long while, of course, people had been saying, you don't sell the steak, you sell the sizzle. Take the soft drink industry, for example. Pepsi Cola launched an advertising campaign several years ago that clearly illustrates the motivational approach. Pepsi's advertising on television and radio was quite blatant. Such commercials as the following were drummed into our ears day after day: "Do you know you can buy sociability in a bottle?" Then followed the sound of a sweet young voice singing, "Be young and fair and debonaire, be sociable—buy Pepsi." Pepsi sales soared so high and cut so deeply into

²Cf. especially, II Peter 2:10-14; Titus 1:10-12, and many other parallel passages.

³Vance Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders*, Pocket Books, Inc., N. Y.: 1958, p. 91, 92.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 79.

Coke that Coke had to respond with a similar appeal. Their reply was, "Things go better with Coke." Coke will help you to solve all of life's problems. Packard, in his book *Hidden Persuaders*, tells the interesting story of a manufacturer who packaged the same soap in yellow boxes and in blue boxes. When the soap was tested, women said that the soap in the yellow boxes was too strong. They said that the soap in the blue boxes left the clothes dirty looking. The manufacturer finally settled on a third box colored blue with splashes of yellow,⁵ because after testing it the women declared that the soap in it was magnificent. This was, of course, exactly the same product that previously had been declared too strong or too weak.

ETHICAL QUESTIONS

It is impossible to avoid the use of emotional appeal, as George Campbell recognized in 1719:

"To say that it is possible to persuade without speaking to the passions is but at best a kind of specious nonsense. . . . This he cannot avoid doing if he speak to the purpose."⁶

Long before the motivational research fad, Campbell knew what every good Christian speaker recognizes, that the problem is really not whether we will use emotional appeal, but whether we will use it well and ethically (that is, in accordance with the biblical ethic). Preachers are whole persons speaking to whole persons. Broadus says, "The ignorant use emotional appeal too much, while the cultured use it too little."⁷ Perhaps the real problem is that the ignorant and unscrupulous cultivate psychological or emotional appeal to

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁶George Campbell, *A Philosophy of Oratory*, Bk. I, ch. 7, par. 4.

⁷John Broadus, *The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, Smith, English and Company, Philadelphia: 1875, p. 235.

the neglect of logical appeal, while the cultured⁸ and ethical tend to cultivate logical appeal to the neglect of the psychological. The real point here is that Christian speakers ought to cultivate both. Preachers must keep both in proper balance and in proper relationship to the particular purpose of the sermon.

Vance Packard and Ernest Dichter perhaps have best set forth the two extremes with respect to the use of emotional appeal. Their exchange raised many of the pertinent ethical issues involved so that a critique of these positions is helpful to the Christian who wants to use emotion properly in speaking. The thesis of Vance Packard's *Hidden Persuaders* might be summarized by his negative answer to the question: "Have we any right to manipulate people into buying or doing what we want when they have no idea what is going on?" Dichter set forth three major propositions in his book, *The Strategy of Desire* (Dichter's answer to Packard's book): First, ethics is changeable, relative and fluid. The new understanding of motivation that we have today requires a brand new ethics based upon it. We now know man's basic needs for security, sex, status, etc., and recognize that these needs must be satisfied for him to enjoy a full and integrated life. Secondly, Dichter claims that rationality is the fetish of the 20th Century mind. Our society, he says, will not allow us to admit man's true irrationality. The motivational research approach, therefore, simply covers up (sugar-coats) this irrational base for action with rationalization. Thirdly, Dichter strongly advocates a new hedonism. He says that hedonism must be made respectable in order that men may live the full life. Strictly speaking, he claims, products and services are incidental; it is the fulfillment of life's basic desires that counts. As a matter of fact, that is not even strictly true, for it is not their actual fulfillment that matters, but rather the fact that we *think* they

⁸Here I use Broadus' term merely by accommodation, not because I accept it.

have been fulfilled. Therefore, if Pepsi does not really deliver on its claim for sociability, that is fine if you *think* you are more sociable and thereby become a better adjusted person with a fuller life. The crux of all this is that the end justifies the means. So on the one hand Packard's view is that every use of emotional appeal should be made known to the listener to avoid manipulating him unfairly and unjustly. Dichter, on the other hand, maintains that the end justifies the means.

The Christian must avoid both of these extremes. Packard's approach goes too far in the one direction. Every use of emotional appeal simply cannot be tagged and labeled as such in a speech. Every word uttered carries some emotion. Even those passages of a sermon that seemingly are not very heavily charged emotionally, *may* be for *some*. Some persons may consider terms, phrases, references or statements highly emotional because of their personal understanding of them or because of special problems that they associate with these comments. Thus Packard's solution vitiates the personality of man as God has made him and must be rejected out of hand. Packard's plea rightly alarms us and makes us take account of the gross amount of manipulation that is taking place. Nevertheless he goes too far in his proposed solution to the problem. Dichter's dictum that the end justifies the means boils down to this: that ethics applies to goals and not to means. Therefore, the only really debatable factor is the goal. This proposition totally ignores the command, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." Moreover, his goal of a full hedonistic life runs directly contrary to the biblical admonition, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and . . . all these things will be added unto you." Dichter is also wrong in over-stressing the irrationality of man. Though in a world of sin, men do act irrationally, and though Dichter has contributed to our understanding of this aspect of man, his solution, it must be observed, is sinfully irrational, as it appeals not to the objective revelation of God, but to the warped nature of sinful man.

A biblical approach, of course, begins with the Scriptures,

the Word of God, as the standard of faith and practice. According to the Bible, God made man with reason *and* with emotion. The whole man must act, and thus the whole man must be reached. Reason should not be bypassed in reaching emotions; the logical dimension must not be *replaced* by the psychological. The solution, therefore, will not come in an either/or form. It is wrong to *substitute* emotion for facts, evidence and argumentation, but it is equally wrong to *substitute* logical for psychological methods. A preacher must not write in the margin of the sermon, "Yell loudly here, argument weak." Nor may he speak about heaven or hell disparsonately. He must not misrepresent the cross by preaching it only didactically and not also doxologically. Sermons must have exclamation points! The Christian preacher, therefore, must present a biblically defensible case for all action, *together with* the use of appropriate emotional appeal. The Christian preaches the sizzle *and* the steak, not the sizzle *instead* of the steak, or the steak *without* the sizzle. The Christian in preaching (or when engaging in any other form of speaking) makes promises or raises hopes only when he knows (because God has said so) that these will materialize. As a matter of fact, the Christian message alone lives up to its claim; the Christian message alone can deliver on the promises that are made. Christians may, therefore, rightly appeal to all of the God-given desires of man, for Christianity can be demonstrated scripturally to meet every psychological need. However, the appeal must not be to any abuse of a psychological drive, but always must be made in terms of the scripturally revealed commandment for the proper use or fulfillment of that drive. Christians, therefore, ought to be using emotional appeal with more confidence and more fully than anyone. As Campbell put it, "So far from being an unfair mode of persuasion to move the passions . . . there is no persuasion without moving them."⁹

⁹ *Op. cit.*, Bk. I, Ch. 7, par. 4. Note such passages as II Peter 1:13, 3:1

THE LANGUAGE OF EMOTIONAL APPEAL

Emotional language is more highly colored, emotionally charged, and strongly connotative than didactic language. The use of words must be governed by the biblical ethic of truth. Probably nowhere else can one go wrong as easily as in the choice of language. Words can be subtly *skanted*. Unfair connotations may be added or important connotations may be subtracted. For instance, euphemisms often have been substituted for what some have considered difficult doctrines of the Scriptures. Sin has frequently been called error or failure when the context called for nothing less than the strongest words available to designate or describe a violation of the law of a holy God. Here are some examples of the differences that can be made by substituting emotionally charged words for other words. For instance, the same woman might be called either a mother (think of the warm connotations surrounding that word) or mother-in-law! The very same slice of meat may be labeled either "filet mignon" or called "a first-rate piece of dead cow." The airlines long ago learned the importance of euphemism. This is seen clearly in the evolution of the language used on what somewhat euphemistically might be called the chuckbag. Years ago, the words printed on this small but essential item found in the pocket in front of each seat used to read "for vomiting." Probably more people vomited as a result of this highly suggestive language than because of nausea due to air movement. Then this phraseology was euphemised to "for air sickness." Later on it became, more euphemistically, "for motion discomfort." And in more recent times the bag has either been left completely blank, or ticktacktoe and other games have been printed on the side. So where *diegeiro*, "to stir up" or "excite the emotions," is used. Here Peter plainly reveals his purpose. He wants to arouse emotional responses to the intellectual facts learned previously. Cf. also Hebrews 10:24 where the writer speaks of "stimulating" one another to good works. The word used here (*parozuno*) is a term associated with strong emotional excitement.

the importance of the careful and accurate use of language and of thinking through the exact connotations of emotionally charged terms is essential to good ethical motivational preaching.

THE SALESMEN'S CLOSE

The salesmen for years have been known to be experts in motivation. Their livelihood depends upon it. Many practices that are used to motivate customers (such as dropping the pencil on the floor so that the customer picks it up and, therefore, has it in his hand ready to sign the contract) of course cannot be recommended for motivational speaking. However, there is much to learn from the salesman. Perhaps as crucial a matter as any is learning how to close. The *close* is the conclusion to the salesman's pitch. The question is studied carefully by every good salesman because everything depends upon whether at that point he is able to get the customer to buy. No matter how well he has done in presenting information conclusively and convincingly throughout the salestalk, if in the conclusion he fails to motivate the customer, he fails. If a congregation is convinced but fails to take action, the preacher also has *failed*. The problem in conservative (and particularly in Reformed churches) is that while preachers do instruct and do convince people, they do not know how to move them to action. Often this is the result of improper closing. Congregations may become concerned, even anxious to do something about a problem, yet they do not know *what* to do or *how* to go about doing it. Sermons often are not specific enough. Instead of urging believers to pray, why not urge them to come to prayer meeting Wednesday night and pray for . . . (then spell out several specific needs)? Instead of merely saying, "Study your Bible," why not also make Bible study guides available in the vestibule?

Remember, too, that it is easy for people to forget. Other interests intervene when they leave the church service, and if they have nothing to carry with them, they may easily forget

even their best Sunday resolutions before Tuesday. Moreover, they don't know what to do, or how to do it, because we seldom tell them what to do or how to do it. The genius of a good close consists in presenting concrete action that can be taken *now*; it consists in striking while the iron is hot. There should be in the conclusion of a speech to move to action a direct appeal to do something that the listener can reasonably be expected to do. This involves usually: providing or pointing out certain ways and means that make it feasible for the believer to follow now. Gasoline companies encourage driving by distributing maps. Preachers need to learn how to give directions as well as to urge people to take trips. For instance, if the sermon has to do with Bible study and the listener has been encouraged to begin a study in a particular book of the Bible which will be conducted throughout the next six weeks, taking a certain number of chapters or verses at a time, he might go away from church with a pamphlet that the usher handed him at the door as he was leaving which would contain a mimeographed six-week program for such a Bible study. Following the service perhaps a pocket portion of the Bible book also might be distributed. Members often are enabled to begin and to continue new biblical courses of action as a result. Such help conserves good desires and determinations which otherwise might fall on stoney ground. Often simply pointing out the first step, or in other cases laying out a step-by-step process as a possible way of obeying God's Word, will make a tremendous difference.

The end of a motivational speech, like the end of a sharp pencil, should come to a point. It should answer the question, "Where do I go from here?" The speaker should have his specific purpose so well in mind that he can state it in a one-word imperative, and it is often wise to do so in the conclusion. He may say Investigate! Study! Go! Write! Witness! One way to check your conclusion is to read the purpose statement that you placed at the top of the page, then skip over the rest of the outline and look directly at the conclusion. Do they

correspond? Does your conclusion urge the same action that you set out to urge? If it does not, there may be something wrong with the conclusion itself, or there may be something wrong in the body of the speech. It may be that at some point in the body, the speech takes a turn so that your conclusion ends at a different goal than the one toward which you started out. Thus the comparison of the initial purpose statement with the conclusion provides a very important check on the whole speech.

THE SPEAKER'S PSYCHOLOGICAL IMAGE

So far, we have discussed *evidence* and its use in persuasion. Such logical considerations largely have to do with *content*. We have also discussed emotion, which primarily has to do with the *audience*. But we have said nothing about the ethical side of preaching.¹⁰ *Ethos* has to do with the *speaker*. The psychology of motivation not only has implications about outlining and style, but where the P and A (preacher and audience) lines in the homogeneous grid meet there is significant interaction. The personality of the speaker, therefore, is essential to consider in motivational preaching.

In the Goldwater campaign, for example, the press built an extremely unfavorable image for Goldwater which doubtless had much to do with his landslide defeat. In accordance with the philosophy of motivation based upon a biblical ethic derived from the Ten Commandments, the preacher should be concerned to build a favorable image that honestly fits his own personality. In other words, he must not build up a false image. Such an image is an image only. It is like claiming that sociability can be bought in a bottle. The image must be true to the facts. This was precisely the fault of the Pharisees, whom Christ denounced as "hypocrites" (cf. Matt. 23). The Christian preacher needs to "take heed to himself" as well as

¹⁰Here "ethical" is used in its classical rhetorical sense: *ethos* meaning the personal, psychological image of the speaker.

to his doctrine so that his "progress may be evident to all" (I Tim. 4:15, 16). The preacher's manifest personality (or image) should closely approximate his inner personality. Christians should strive for the image of a reality; and that means that for his image to be effective, it must be the image of a godly and competent man.¹¹

A study cited by Buehler and Linkugel illustrates the importance of reputation and association to a speaker's credibility. At Northwestern University the same taped speech was played for three different audiences. In each case the experimental subjects were told that an entirely different kind of person had delivered the speech. To one audience the speaker was identified as a high government official; another was told that he was the head of the Communist Party in the United States; and the third was led to believe that he was a fellow student. I do not want to comment on the ethics of the experiment, but wish only to note that the study clearly illustrated that what the audience thought of the speaker was of crucial significance. The study showed that the acceptance or non-acceptance of what he had to say was dependent upon his image. The high government official got much wider acceptance than the other two. There was a negative response toward the ideas of the Communist and a who-could-care-less attitude toward the thoughts of a peer. Yet the ideas were actually the same.¹² Preachers, therefore, must recognize that Paul's exhortation to "take heed" to one's self is of great importance, part of which has to do with his ethical appeal.

But what, precisely, is one's image? When we speak of the ethical appeal (image) of the speaker, we are talking about at least two things:

First, *The Preacher's Prospective Image*. The words pro-

¹¹The importance of continued self evaluation before God and others cannot be overstressed.

¹²E. C. Buehler and Wil A. Linkugel, *Speech: A First Course*, Harper and Row, N. Y.: 1962, p. 66.

spective image refer to the preacher's prestige or general reputation. This consists of what position he holds in his field, in his denomination, what his reputation is nationally, and what it is locally. It also consists of his experiences, his knowledge, his degrees, his associations, his titles; in sum, the authority (or lack of it) that goes before him. Remember the taunts of Christ's adversaries who scoffed about him as a mere "carpenter's son" (see also John 6:42; 7:15, 28-29), and even those who were more sympathetic asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46).

In addition, the reputation about the preacher's character plays an important part in what people will think of him. This is one reason why II Corinthians was written. Paul spends a good bit of space in defending himself from attacks against his character, not because he cared about his own reputation in itself, but because the attack against his character was an attack against his message. Anyone who has read II Corinthians carefully cannot fail to see how closely authority, character and message are related. (Incidentally, II Corinthians should be read in a modern translation since the King James translation of this book is extremely poor.) And finally, image rates his knowledge and general ability in the field about which he will speak. Sometimes it is crucial just to say, "I was there" (cf. I Cor. 15:5-8). Many people are tired of slick advertising techniques and have begun to ask: "Is the speaker speaking from within his own element?" They are disgusted with ball players on television who recommend brand X razor blades. They reason, rightly, "Why do ball players know more about blades than I?" Liberal preachers who, while decrying the authority of the Scriptures, have made themselves out to be social, political and economic authorities, have begun to feel the pressure of just such a layman backlash.

Second, *The Preacher's Present Image*. The present image is the image that the audience receives from seeing and hearing the speaker immediately before, during and after the delivery of his sermon. His appearance, consisting largely of his

grooming and confidence (poise), his voice, his body, and his language, his pronunciation and grammar, are external, but important, factors that determine image. Also, image is shaped by the content of the sermon, its organization and the reasoning behind the argument. It consists of the attitudes that the audience thinks (though they may be led astray when the image is false¹³) that he has toward them and toward his subject matter. If he seems to be noncommittal toward his subject or apathetic or enthusiastic, this makes a tremendous difference. If he seems to have the welfare and concern of the audience at heart, he gets a different reception than when he simply seems to be putting in time. His approach (whether it is a hard or soft sell) can be fundamental. His basic personal integrity and sincerity, as well as the persons and causes with which he identifies himself as he speaks, all help build his image.¹⁴ All of these factors have a lot to do with the present image. Yet that image is not static; it often grows and changes during the sermon. It is important for a speaker to think about these matters because they are so vitally related to the audience's receptivity. The message is crucial, not the preacher's reputation; but more often than not listeners too closely associate the two. There are two kinds of image power that speakers possess. Either consciously or unconsciously, audiences recognize these. First, there is what the Scriptures call *dunamis* (the Greek word for that sort of internal power or authority that stems from the man as a personality in his own right). This is the word consistently (though not exclusively) associated with miracles; they are called "powers" (cf. Acts 2:22, 10:38; 1:8). Over against this is *exousia* (externally-conferred power). This authority, Christ also possessed: cf.

¹³The image may be false negatively as well as positively. A preacher may have warm feelings internally that do not constitute part of his image. The audience may misinterpret his stiff, formal image for coldness toward them and their needs.

¹⁴Cf. Acts 4:13

Luke 5:24; Matthew 18:18. It is significant to notice that this authority was recognized (Luke 4:32).

To sum up, emotional persuasion has to do with the audience and the speaker in a more intimate relationship with each other. The Christian minister, therefore, must strive to be a godly and competent man, for the sake of the gospel.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS For Classroom or Study

In the Classroom

1. Prepare a speech designed to motivate your audience to take some action you believe it would be reasonable to expect them to take, assuming your speech will be effective. Strike while the iron is hot. Plan to call upon your group to take some specific action. You may want to pass the hat to collect for a cause, pass around a paper for the signature of those who will give blood, distribute a mimeographed prayer list, etc. But whatever you do, urge the group to take concrete action, and provide the ways and means for them to do so.
2. Be sure to hand in an outline at least two days before, prepared according to previous specifications.
3. In this speech, be very careful about the connotations of the emotionally freighted words that you may use. In most of these speeches you will want to use a narrative and some examples.
4. Imagine several radically different congregations, and in one short paragraph write out the prospective image each would have of you.

In the Study

1. Ask yourself, your wife, your children, your elders and anyone else who may know, what image your congregation has of you.
2. Prepare a motivational sermon and plan to follow through with concrete action that will help your congregation to respond. For instance, if you speak on the importance of Bible study, be prepared also to announce a six week's course on *Basic Principles of Bible Interpretation*, have the ushers hand out a brochure on *Methods of Effective Bible Study* in the narthex, etc.

points. Be sure that they are mutually exclusive. That is, they cannot overlap or cover the same territory. Ordinarily these should be limited to a maximum number of four or five. That is about all that a congregation can remember. When you have more than this, probably a second sermon on the subject is indicated. The divisions of the major points that explain or support them are the minor (subordinate) points. These divisions of the major points must also be coordinate to one another. Since minor points must coordinate too, therefore, they also must be mutually exclusive. Putting each point on a separate card allows you to group them in various ways until you finalize the correct relationships between them.

In much the same way that one fits together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, the points on the cards may be grouped, all the greens, the blues, the reds, etc., to see which ideas fit together. You will find that this method also makes it easy to sift out the extraneous materials. There should be more material than you can use if you have done your work well. These "extra" cards may be filed for future use. You will probably end up with somewhere between two and four major points, plus two to four minor points for each of these. The major points should be stated in parallel form and in terms that directly involve the audience. You are not merely stating a doctrine or reporting a past event; you are preaching God's Word to a living congregation. Thus sentences like: "I. Evangelism is the work of the whole church (Acts 8:4)" or "I. Everyone in the early church evangelized" should read instead: "God calls every one of *you* to evangelize." Then, in the minor points the biblical basis for this contemporary call may be explained: "A. It was not merely the Apostles who evangelized, Acts 8: 1, 4." In this way, the present relevance of the Word of God is clearly set forth. Every sermon should contain a contemporary call growing from a biblical basis.

The sentence structure of every outline ought to be complete with a capital at the beginning and a period at the end. In other words, full sentences should be used for each point.

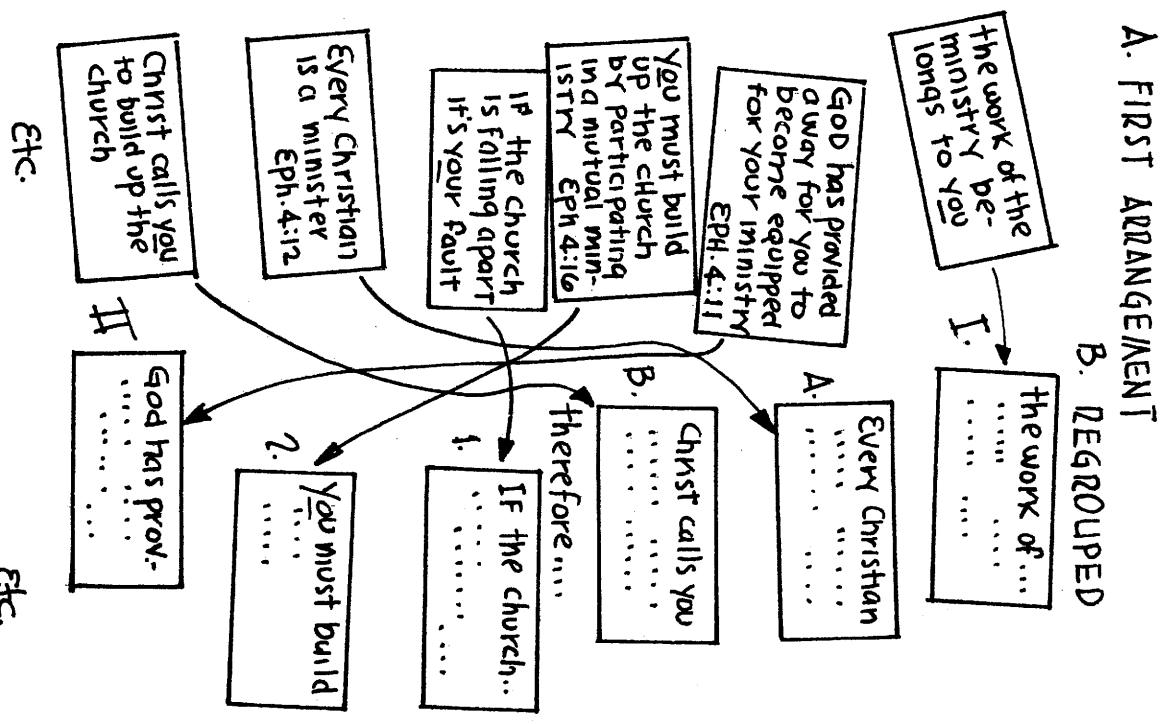


Figure 11
Outlining by Grouping and Regrouping

translation had for the first time brought home the exact import of Paul's words. Unfortunately, she didn't see it that way.

THE FORCE AND POWER OF WORDS

Force and power lie not only in ideas, but also in the words by which they are conveyed. Therefore, it is essential to avoid the use of weak, as well as inaccurate, words. While strictly speaking words may be accurate, at the same time they may be weak. One reason for weakness lies in the overuse of passive constructions. Active verbs are stronger than passive verbs. Active verbs pack a punch. Reread the last sentence in the passive: a punch is packed by active verbs. Take another example or two: "I think" is more forceful than "It is my thought," or "See your dentist" is more potent than "Your dentist is to be consulted." The passive has its place, but frequently preachers overwork it and, thereby, destroy its legitimate use.

FIGURES OF SPEECH

There are many figures of speech, but we will mention only a few.

Simile and Metaphor. A simile is a phrase introduced by the words *like* or *as*: "The kingdom of heaven is like . . ." A parable is in effect an extended simile. A metaphor is the use of a phrase like the one Jesus used when he called Herod "that fox." An allegory is fundamentally an extended metaphor. Avoid mixed metaphors; don't have "someone biting the hand that lays the golden egg." The Bible is full of simile and metaphor; there is no better place to study this figure than in the Scriptures themselves.

Personification and Apostrophe. Death is personified in I Corinthians 15:55-58 (quoting Hosea 13:14) and then addressed in an apostrophe (speaking to the personification): "O death where is thy victory; O death where is thy sting?"

Personification is used boldly in Proverbs 8 where wisdom is personified as a good woman who is going about the street using all the wiles of the harlot to woo the young man to herself rather than to the harlot.

Parallelism. Parallelism is a device used largely in Hebrew poetry where the *repetition* of the main idea is the genius of the poetical form and this repetition usually occurs in parallel lines. The meanings of the first and the second lines are identical in synonymous poetry. In antithetical poetry, the meaning of the second line contrasts with the first. This poetical form is used throughout the Psalms, Book of Proverbs, and elsewhere in the Scriptures. It also gets into the thinking, writing and speaking of the New Testament preachers. There is a different type of parallelism in I Corinthians 13, where phrases are repeated in parallel form. The repetition of the form "Though I . . . and have not charity" (I Cor 13) is typical of this sort of parallelism.

Antithesis. II Corinthians 4:5 provides a good example of antithesis: "What we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord." See also I Corinthians 2:4.

Onomatopoeia. These are sound effect or sound-like-it words. Buzz, bang, boom, slam, meow, moo are all sound-effect words. Preaching in Baltimore, Donald Gray Barnhouse once declared that the view usually denominated as post tribulation premillennialism "is SSSSSatanic!" As he said it, you could hear the serpent hiss. This was a more subtle form of *Onomatopoeia*.

Rhetorical Questions. Expected replies are implied in the question. Job has a chapter full of them (cf. Chapter 38). The rhetorical nature of these questions is typically misunderstood and misapplied by Mormons who take the question, "Where were you when I created . . ." literally as though God were speaking of pre-existence. Job 38 is also a fine example of the question cluster, a rhetorical form used in all great preaching. Question clusters consist of a series of questions, one follow-

foolhardiness. It is wise for a preacher not to preach (and particularly not to yell) when his voice is sore and hoarse. It is better to get rest for the voice and to call in someone else to preach at that time.

Post-Nasal Drip. Unchecked post-nasal drip irritates the throat, and can lead to the previously considered conditions. Here many suggestions can be made, but the problem for the preacher to solve is to find fast-acting medication that has no side effects and that stops the drip for at least two hours during the morning service. The physician can give you helpful pills. You should tell him, however, that you want medicine that will not make you drowsy. You may be able to use certain patent medicine cures available without a prescription to stop the drip, but most of these have unwanted side effects because they contain antihistamines. Such medication is in abundance at the counter of the drugstore. But while antihistamines may arrest the post-nasal drip, they also may tend to dull one's thinking. So avoid any product that warns, "may cause drowsiness" or, "do not drive or use machinery," since those side effects are also detrimental to speaking. What a preacher needs, therefore, is the kind of oral medicines or local application with no side effects that will give him at least an hour or two of relief while he is preaching. Certain nebulizers on the market fit this description. A nebulizer is a plastic tube which can be squeezed as one inhales. Medication squirts from the tip of it directly onto the area that is congested. One must be careful, however, in the use of these, and ought to confer with his doctor about their use.

Nasality, Denasality. Nasality may be defined as that fog-horn quality in which a speaker nasalizes other letters in addition to *m*, *n* or *ng*. In English it is proper to nasalize only those three sounds. Of course to speak French, you must learn to nasalize other sounds as well. Americans have learned to nasalize certain sounds and to denasalize others, just as the French have learned to nasalize and denasalize a different set

of sounds. Therefore, the answer to this problem is learning; it is a matter of drill in proper speech habits.

Denasality occurs when a speaker does not nasalize the *m*, the *n*, or the *ng* sounds. Denasality sometimes is confused by amateurs with nasality. But denasality can easily be identified by pinching your nose and speaking words that contain an *m*, *n*, or *ng* (e.g., "I have something clogging my nose"). It is the sound that you hear when there are obstructions in the nose, due to colds or enlarged adenoids (which may require an operation, if severe). Or denasality may also be a matter of habit. Whenever learned, denasality requires better control of the soft pallet. Drill, again, is the answer to the problem. Nasality and denasality also may stem from psychological causes. Some persons have learned to react to stress by developing nasal systems, for example. Emotional responses to problems of various sorts may affect the way that one's nose operates. Particularly, it may have something to do with giving rise to stuffiness or dryness of the nose or, on the other hand, increased nasal discharge. The answer to this is not medication but change in the patterns of handling life's problems.

Harshness, Stridency, Tinniness. This condition variously described by the three words that head this paragraph (or others) is usually caused by undue tension in the folds. When the folds are brought together too tight, or when they are stretched too tight, harshness, stridency and tinniness is the effect. This is an effect resulting from the texture of the walls of the vocal passages, and particularly from the texture of the vocal folds themselves. If the folds are stretched too tight, they become hard in texture, and as the sound hammers against a hard substance it produces a tinny effect. Usually the pitch is also too high and this is an accompanying sign of the undue tenseness that exists. The answer usually is learning to relax. Relaxing in general will bring relaxation of the vocal musculature. Often it is important to drill on yawning and sighing prior to speaking. When one yawns his muscles natur-

ally relax. Preachers with tinny voices must learn how to yawn so that their audiences won't.

Pitch Problems. Speaking at too high or too low a pitch is usually a matter of habit. When the pitch is too high it is because the folds are overly tense. High pitch also may have a psychological base in anxiety. Or it is possible that the high pitch is a vestige of childhood. When the voice changes took place, the speaker simply continued to speak as if no change had occurred. Even though his folds became longer and thicker than they were before, providing him with the equipment to speak in a deeper, more mature masculine voice, he has never learned how to do it. The solution in such cases of habit is to learn how to speak at optimum pitch. The optimum pitch is the healthiest, easiest, clearest, ringing note for speech. It is the speaker's normal, easiest, most natural speaking pitch. Each individual has his own optimum pitch level. The optimum pitch is the note on the scale that should be the base from which one operates. It is the note from which he moves upward when he is tense and downward when he is more relaxed. Every person has an optimum pitch, but the optimum pitch of one individual may not be the same as that of another. Here are four methods for finding optimum pitch. You may use any or all of them. It is better to use more than one as a check.

First, you may sing up and down the scale and find the upper and lower limit to which you can sing without strain. Next, using a piano, locate the middle note between these two extremes. The tone you are looking for ought then to be located about one-third below this mid-point. That note would be your optimum pitch.

Another way of finding optimum pitch would be to relax in a chair, with your arms hanging down loosely, your legs as loose as possible, your head and neck relaxed and hanging loose. Then, sigh in a vocalized fashion. Do it again and again. Listen for the pitch level. Find that level on the piano, and it should be close to your optimum pitch.

A third means of finding optimum pitch uses reading material. Read as normally as you can. Listen for a central pitch tendency from which you move up and down. Sustain a vowel; note the pitch. Compare it with the vocalized sigh and the tone one-third below the mid-point in singing.

Lastly, you may sing down the scale to the lowest note you can sing comfortably. Then on the piano go up five semitones (that is, five piano keys), and this ought to be on or close to your optimum pitch. The optimum pitch for most men is at about C below middle C.

Articulatory Problems. The largest group of speech problems falls into this category, and fortunately these are the most easily solved. They are all habitual, learned problems. Ear training (learning to hear the error when you speak) followed by retraining through drill, constitute the means by which one may change any articulatory liabilities into articulatory assets. Into this area fall lisping, lip laziness, sloppy articulation and other bad speech habits. Over-articulation, that is articulation which is so precise that it calls attention to itself, is also a serious problem.⁶ All articulatory problems have easy and simple solutions for those who are properly motivated to solve them.

Ministerial Whines, Drones, Tunes. There are habits that some preachers have picked up or developed on their own that have been called by a variety of terms. They usually involve a combination of pitch-rate melody patterns. These are those intolerable sounds made by preachers that seem to be peculiar to the profession. The ministerial whine, tune or drone at some time in church history was developed by certain preachers who doubtless felt that it added a note of sanctity or authority to what they had to say. As a matter of fact,

⁶E.g., some preachers get into the habit of pedantically pronouncing the words *a* and *the*, *eh* and *thee* whenever they occur, rather than using the normal pronunciations *uh* and *thuh* whenever possible.

these whines actually turn people off. Nothing is more detestable and disgusting than to hear preachers whining from the pulpit. The message of God is the virile Gospel of the God who as Father sent his Son to the cross for his people. And the Son had the manly determination to go. Jesus Christ came from a carpenter's shop. He was not a Casper Milquetoast or a sissified pantywaist. He was a man. These tunes emasculate the man of God of all of his manly qualities. Years ago C. E. Jefferson wrote, "If certain creatures could hear their pulpit tones, they would be exceedingly amused." Today, with the widespread use of tape recorders, every preacher can enter into this source of amusement, and if he suspects that this problem is his, I advise him to do so.⁷

Such patterns may be broken up (1) by becoming conscious of them, (2) by understanding how seriously they detract and misrepresent the Christian message by calling attention to themselves, and (3) by learning how to preach in a more natural and manly speaking voice. Tunes and whines lack pitch-rate variety. The same kinds of melody patterns occur again and again. So in order to "bust" the pattern, a preacher must learn how to vary rate and pitch. This may be accomplished most rapidly by daily practice in learning to "relive" stories while speaking. He must learn how to let content influence form rather than to shape content by form.

Monotones. A monotone may involve a hearing loss, so the first step is to have one's hearing tested professionally. Not only may a physician do this, but all university speech departments of any size have testing equipment. A monotone involves pitch and/or rate inflexibility. Monotony is the technique used in hypnosis. Nothing then could be more devastating to preaching. The monotone, if it does not result from a hearing loss, is learned behavior. Usually the habit is connected with personality. When this is true, one must also learn

⁷ Charles E. Jefferson, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

how to become a different person. He must learn how to throw himself, including his emotions, into his speaking. He must learn the proper use of reliving his experience in speaking; he must learn to become more outgoing. In short, he must learn to expose his feelings outwardly to others. Usually the problem with such people is that they will not allow others to know what they are thinking and feeling. A preacher must be willing to allow the Word of God to grasp him inwardly and preach it to others with the same effectiveness and power that it has had upon him.

One's voice tells a lot about a person. Charles Berry, the astronauts' physician, says that he can tell a great deal from just hearing the communications from the astronauts as they are traveling in space. The sound of their voice tells him, for example, whether they are excited or whether they have undue fatigue. The voice is also a clue to one's personality. People with monotones, like those with over-anxiety, sometimes need counseling. The goal for a speaker with a monotone problem is voice variety. He should seek to develop a voice that sparkles with change.

Verbal Pause. A verbal pause is the use of "uh, and uh, er" and other such fillers. There are several theories as to why the verbal pause occurs. One theory is that in modern competitive society if you don't hang on to it, you soon lose the leadership in conversation, and that the use of verbal pauses is one way to hold on. Well, whether this is so or not really matters little. There is a solution to this problem, the same one offered for all other poor speech patterns that involve substituting a new habit for an old one. By conscious practice in normal life circumstances one can soon develop the capacity to eliminate most *uhs* and other verbal pauses. Concurrently, he ought to work on pauses that punctuate. He must become aware of the true purpose of non-verbal pause. He must learn how to use dead air effectively. There is power in pause. Pause enables an audience to allow the previous thought to sink in. It underlines or sets off material and gives time for re-

flection. It allows one to build suspense and anticipation, and "sets up" the audience for a climax.

Speakers also should learn to avoid pauses after prepositions and articles (these are unnatural spots). Perhaps the most important advice of all is to agree to forfeit 50 cents toward a new hat for your wife every time you use a verbal pause *and have her keep score*. You will soon be broke, but cured.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS For Classroom or Study

In the Classroom or Study

1. Whether or not you think you have difficulty with pitch, use one or more of the methods suggested and discover your optimum pitch. Check this against tape recordings of your voice (especially those previously recorded).

My optimum pitch is _____

2. If you discover that the description of any one or more of the dozen voice disorders mentioned fits you, determine what you will do about it. Ask: should I see a physician, should I speak to my speech instructor, or can I work up a personal improvement program for myself? If a problem is apparent, make plans to do something about it *now*. Your voice is too valuable an asset to the Church of Christ for you to neglect it.

3. Whether you have a voice disorder or not, determine 3-5 areas in which you think you need to improve your speaking ability, and in a two-page paper draw up a *personal improvement program* for yourself that can be carried on over the next three years. If you are taking classroom work, hand in the carbon copy (you should retain a copy as a reminder) to your instructor so that he may be able to check you out from time to time. The paper should contain:

1. *My problems* as I now see them. State each clearly and succinctly.
2. *My goals* during the next three years. Goals should include both solutions to problems and anticipated improvements.
3. *The means* I intend to use to reach these goals.

audience, consciously or unconsciously, a great deal about the man and his attitude toward himself and his subject. They are all of importance, therefore, because they communicate, sometimes more than the words he uses and the voice that produces those words. Speakers need an alert, on-the-top-of-it posture which has flexibility and freedom and yet is poised for action. The body should suggest an attitude of humble confidence.

ACTION AND MEANING

When he moves, the speaker's movement should communicate something. All action should have helpful significance. Stepping to either side of the pulpit, for instance, should not be purposeless action, but should help the speaker say something. All action, as a rule, ought to be purposeful action. There ought to be no random movements that have no meaning to them. If one steps to either side of the pulpit, he might do so at a time when he wishes to indicate transition to a new point or change of thought. When he comes forward or leans forward in a more intimate, warmer fashion, a speaker may be indicating informality or concern, or perhaps that he is taking the audience into his confidence. Stepping backward might be used to indicate a certain remoteness to an idea, objectivity, relaxation, or that there is a clear difference of viewpoint between the speaker and his audience. But when a speaker is not aware of the meaning of such motion and never stops to interpret what he is communicating by it, he is likely to say things with his body that he never intended to say. He may actually be contradicting his message by his motions.

FACE, EYES, MOUTH

Facial expressions are quite expressive; in fact, many persons think they are the most important elements in bodily delivery. This holds true especially when speaking over television or where the speaker is in some other way brought very close to the audience. Good delivery growing out of reliving

content will usually help the speaker to make the proper use of his face and mouth. But a word or two must be directed to the problem of maintaining eye contact, since this raises a special problem in bodily delivery.

Eye contact should be maintained and distributed during a speech. The false idea that one should pick out a friendly face and speak to him (or to two or three friendly faces) needs to be contradicted immediately. Do not focus directly on one or even several specified persons, but gradually let your eyes survey all. You do not want those people to feel especially privileged (or warned) and the rest to feel avoided. Everyone should feel as if you were speaking to him a reasonable portion of the time. Eye contact conveys honesty, directness, warmth, good will and interest toward the audience. When you look at people instead of out of the window or at the ceiling or toward the floor or down at notes, you let the audience know that what you are saying is for *them*. You are not speaking for the sake of yourself or the sake of the sermon, or for the sake of the building, but you are speaking to *them*. Learn how to use notes effectively. If notes are a problem because they interfere with eye contact, learn to use less notes or become more familiar with them beforehand. But at all costs avoid the henpecking shenanigans that result from too frequent reference to notes.

GESTURES

As important as facial expressions may be, for the preacher, probably the one most important part of bodily action is the use of gestures. Good preaching demands their use. Gestures may be either overt or covert. In general, extremes should be avoided. Neither the wooden soldier nor the windmill in a tornado is to be emulated. Preachers must use both overt and covert gestures; the use of the two types is not to be thought of as an either/or matter. Such an antithesis is entirely false. The subject, the occasion, the size of the audience, the size of the auditorium, and a host of other factors

must govern whether overt or covert gestures are appropriate. Every man must become expert in the use of both. At a funeral, or young people's scavenger hunt, or speaking to a YMCA board luncheon, or a Sunday morning congregation, one's gestures probably will be and ought to be distinguishable. Preaching from Matthew 23 will require gestures quite different from those used when speaking from John 14.

It might be helpful also to distinguish (as a key) between the *actor's* gestures, which in general are *imitative*, and the *speaker's* gestures, which are normally *suggestive*. When a preacher speaks, for example, of pouring water, he may give a suggestion of the act by a motion of the hand, but ordinarily he will not actually raise one hand as though holding the glass and the other as though pouring out of a pitcher into it.

There are three basic functional types of gestures. First is the *descriptive* gesture, which goes with words like, "It was *this* tall," or "The fish was *this* long." Secondly there are *emphatic* gestures which accompany words like "No!" "Now!" or "Oh yeah?" Then there are *indicative* gestures that assist phrases like, "That one over there," or "He went *that* way."

IMPROVING BODILY ACTION

The speaker's goal is to learn the use of free, natural and appropriate action that will aid oral communication. The word *natural* needs to be understood. It does not mean biologically natural. Naturalness in speaking is not hereditary; "natural" speech is natural because it has become *second* nature. It is actually habitual speech appropriate to content.¹ This speech comes naturally as one learns to drive a car without thinking about each action, or as he buttons his shirt without deciding whether to begin at the bottom or top. Bodily action is learned. It is cultural. The Chinese express sur-

¹ See Jay Adams, *op. cit.*, pp. 164 ff.

prise by sticking out the tongue, disappointment by clapping hands, and happiness by scratching ears.² These bodily actions are not "natural" to us, but are perfectly natural to them because that is the way they learned to express their emotions.

Practice in improving bodily action should take place in normal life situations (don't practice when speaking formally, nor should you learn specific gestures for specific speeches). Build new gestures into your repertoire, not merely into one speech. Secondly, observe natural bodily movements that you already use in animated conversation. That is, become aware of the gestures that are already natural when speaking effectively, and practice using these more often. Thirdly, because gestures should grow from feeling, and should not be planned as such, you must learn to relive the circumstances of the situation you are describing. I have already spoken about this at length in Chapter Two. Fourthly, you should learn to eliminate all bodily actions that have no purpose or meaning and, therefore, that distract. Mannerisms, such as jingling coins or keys in a pocket, buttoning and unbuttoning a coat, must be eliminated. If the habit is continued, it will not be long before the boys in the back row will begin to make book on how many times in a given sermon the mannerisms will occur. Fifthly, effeminate hand gestures and bodily actions must be replaced by masculine ones.

In order to study delivery, go to the artists and don't omit the cartoonist who has learned to exaggerate bodily actions in order to convey meaning. Until recently, there were few ways of studying bodily action in isolation. One could wear ear plugs and go to speeches, of course. (A deaf man, after Henry Clay spoke, once said, "I didn't hear a word he said, but didn't he make the motions?") But now all that you need to do is to turn down the sound on the TV set. You may watch bodily action in this way to your heart's content.

² Clifford T. Morgan, *Introduction to Psychology*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1956: p. 94.

You will probably be surprised at how much content and feeling are conveyed through bodily action itself. I strongly recommend the practice.

TENSION AND FEAR (STAGE FRIGHT)

Tension is often the key problem that a beginning speaker must overcome. Sometimes he speaks of butterflies in the stomach, stage fright or clammy hands. But nervousness, as someone has said, is the penalty that we pay for being race horses rather than cows. Tension is a normal anticipation reaction before a long-awaited trip, a sports event, and a test. Some have called such excitement the original emotion.³ Tension has been noted in a child as early as the second week. It would seem that it cannot be avoided. Four thousand combat airmen in World War II were quizzed about their feelings prior to a flight. The result of that study showed symptoms that are strikingly similar to those commonly reported during stage fright. In the order of their frequency, here are the top six: (1) a pounding heart; (2) muscular tension; (3) easily irritated, angry or sore; (4) dryness of mouth; (5) perspiration; (6) butterflies in stomach.

What actually happens in stage fright? A normal bodily state of anticipation or tension may be all that is necessary to start a vicious circle that will make one incapable of speaking well. The normal bodily state of anticipation arouses feelings in the body that may be misunderstood and thereby cause fear, which, in turn, causes the body to grow more tense, which creates more pronounced feelings, which again may be misinterpreted and bring about more fear, ad infinitum. In tension situations, the body, by psychological impetus, prepares itself for an emergency. Wise speakers know this and they know also that it is good and necessary for the body to be so prepared for speaking. They know that good speak-

³Floyd L. Ruch, *Psychology and Life*, Scott, Foresman and Company, 1948, p. 411.

ing is dependent upon bodily alertness, so they harness the tension for service. Tension often helps ideas to jell during delivery. The best sermons are those in which the jelling factor is prominent. If they jell earlier in the study they may lose some of the fire that they might otherwise have at the moment of delivery.

In an emotionally tense anticipation situation, the mind reflecting on the task ahead telegraphs the various parts of the body to prepare to the fullest, and the body mobilizes its resources. That is what the speaker needs: a body fully prepared. In relaxed situations the sympathetic system operates. Its function is to build up and conserve bodily supplies. But, when the parasympathetic system is called into service, the breathing rate, the heartbeat, circulation and other physiological functions respond appropriately. The adrenal glands (adrenal means on top of the kidneys) secrete adrenalin hormone into the blood. This hormone circulates throughout the body and affects many organs. People in stress have found themselves capable of performing tasks that they are unable to do normally. Adrenalin is a kind of supercharger that soups up the body for action. For example, a man carried a safe across the room and threw it out of the window during a fire. After the fire was over, he was asked how he did this and attempted a repeat performance. He found that in a normal state of tension he could hardly budge the safe.⁴ When adrenalin reaches the liver, it helps release sugar into the blood to make more energy available for the brain and the muscles. It also speeds the heartbeat so that the blood can carry on its functions more rapidly. It converts sugar resources into sugar to be utilized more rapidly by the skeletal muscles. As the body diverts blood from the digestive system to exterior muscles, the peristaltic movements of the stomach and intestines (those warm, comfortable ripples that move our food along during the

⁴Ruch, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

more relaxed state of the body) stop and thereby cause the butterfly feeling. The mouth may dry up, the hair may stand on end, and the hands may feel clammy.

Tension cannot be avoided, need not be feared, but must be understood. Tension is bodily preparation, the way God has made us to enable us to meet emergencies and difficult situations. Tension makes us alert. Speakers should not seek the reduction of tension, but only of the kind of excessive tension that spirals out of control because of fear. Fear can usually be avoided by understanding the beneficial function of tension and thus brought under control of content. This means that tension, to be used properly by a speaker, must be controlled so that it varies with the variety of subject matter. Content controls the amount of tension and makes it appropriate to itself at each point. Tension problems, then, are fundamentally a matter of degree.

TENSION: A MATTER OF DEGREE

So long as tension is the speaker's servant, tension is good. In order to preach well or speak well in any circumstance one must be alert, not overly relaxed, not overly tense. A certain amount of normal tension is necessary for this alertness. Normal keying up is good because it helps, but whatever hinders is abnormal and must be dealt with. Understanding is the first of several factors that may be brought into play. The first step in learning to use tension as a servant is coming to understand its purpose and its function. That's why we have been taking the time to explain the psychosomatic effects of anticipation. When lack of understanding is the source of the problem, the fear of the unknown and the resulting undisciplined tension will disappear. When a speaker feels the butterflies in his stomach, feels his muscles tense, and has a feeling of apprehension, and understands why, he will not fear these normal feelings and thus escalate tension to an abnormal level.

But after a speaker acquires a thorough understanding of

the normal bodily sensations, if stage fright persists, there may be another problem. His difficulty may stem from pride or possibly from cowardice and guilt. Possibly he is afraid of the audience's response. Fear of this sort boils down ultimately to undue personal self concern. Assuming that his preparation is adequate, that he has spoken frequently enough to become acquainted with the speaking situation, and that he understands the dynamics of normal keying up or tension, if stage fright still persists, the speaker must plainly ask himself: "Am I afraid of my audience?" He may be concerned about his appearance. A speaker's appearance becomes an object of scrutiny, and perhaps he is concerned about audience response to it. Or, more likely, he may be concerned about audience response to his performance. Or, he may be concerned about audience response to his ideas, particularly about the response of those who disagree with him. He may fear the subsequent consequences of what he has to say. Or he may feel guilty for having failed to say what he knows God wants him to say. In that case, his anticipation is about committing the sin of cowardice. Each of these possibilities notes that a shift has occurred in the speaker's thinking. Instead of thinking of the welfare of the audience, rather than thinking about being faithful to God, he has started to think about himself. The subject matter that he wishes his audience to believe has become secondary to self concern. When a speaker begins to think, "How do I look? How am I speaking? How am I going across?" he has opened the door to the possibility of a bad case of stage fright. There is only one cure for this malady—straightening out these matters with God before preaching. The speaking situation must be put into the hands of God so that when actually preaching the speaker is lost in his subject and his concern for the audience. If one is rightly concentrating on the subject matter, he has no time to think about himself. Such thought is diversionary, it hinders concentration on the subject matter and it, therefore, hurts good speaking.