

**THE FORM OF THE SERMON
AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**
- A HOMILETICAL STUDY -

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AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
- A HOMILETICAL STUDY -**

by

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TO MY PARENTS

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CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

With the advent of the 21st century, we discover that some churches have become polluted by contemporary lifestyles. Such pollution includes immorality, and specifically adultery (Armstrong, 1996:1), as well as religious pluralism, including syncretism and mysticism. Pluralistic societies especially tend to de-emphasize moral positions (Loscalzo, 1992:90). The church is also faced with new challenges, such as the postmodernist deconstruction of worldviews to the effect that no one particular belief can be taken as more true or believable than any other (Butler, 1998:51).

As a result, in various churches in many parts of the world the power of God's word increasingly becomes lost (Jost, 1996:5). Although some churches do still continue to grow in their specific areas, nowadays there is a loss of spiritual power with many churches in various parts of the world in decline (Green, 1996:9; Harrop, 1996:278).

This decline cannot be seen as independent from the preaching in the church. It appears that preaching, too, experiences problems.

There are many obstacles, both outside and inside the church, which can obstruct preaching. Among those that lie outside of the church, Stott (1982a:89) has identified the following three main points that serve as obstacles to preaching: (1) the prevailing anti-authority mood makes people unwilling to listen; (2) addiction to television (the cybernetics revolution)

makes them unable to listen; and (3) the contemporary atmosphere of doubt (the loss of confidence in the gospel) makes many preachers both unwilling and unable to speak.

There are also obstacles inside the church. Packer (1986:3-6) mentions six factors: (1) there has been much nonpreaching in our pulpits; (2) topical preaching has become the general rule; (3) low expectations are self-fulfilling; (4) the current cult of spontaneity militates against preaching; (5) the current focus on liturgy militates against preaching; and (6) the power of speech to communicate significance has become suspect.

Due to these obstacles today encountered by the church, preaching has fallen on hard times (Vorster, 1996:71-72; Domokos, 2000:1).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.2.1 The form of the sermon

The sermons of the church today are faced with countless problems. One of these problems is that preachers do not always spend enough time on the form of their sermons (Lowry, 1997:16-18). Though the pastoral schedules in the church are tight and time consuming, there is nevertheless a need for well-prepared and well-structured sermons. Preaching is both a science and an art (Hamilton, 1992:19).

Research over the last several decades has revealed that content, though essential, is only one element in communicating a message. The medium by which a message is communicated also contributes to the message itself (McLuhan, 1964:23). In fact, how a message is communicated may be as important to its meaning as what is communicated.

Such research has led homiletics to lively discussions concerning the form of the sermon. If content is the "what" of the sermon, then form is the chief part of its "how," its medium. Beginning in the late 1950s with the work of H. Grady Davis, homiletics have progressively considered how options in sermon form might enhance the communication of the preacher's message. Sermon form seems to have attracted the lion's share of attention in recent homiletical writings (Eslinger, 1987:13).

Homiletics have begun to question the validity of the dominance of the traditional approach to preaching. First, the tendency of the outline approach to preaching to find in Scripture large concepts or ideas and then dividing these into categorical points, leaves the listener with the impression that the gospel itself is simply composed of major concepts with rationally divisible parts. Also, outline-style sermons are static and lack movement because they are artificially constructed with weak transitions that barely join together the various categories of the main idea. Moreover, it obscures the real issue of preaching, which is not shaping ideas but forming communication to allow what is preached to be heard by the congregation. As Long (1989b:96) states "A sermon form is a plan for the experience of listening, not just an arrangement of data, and it is the listeners who are missing from the typical process of outlining." Thus, in the last several decades the quest for new sermon shapes has been stimulated in part by the disenchantment with discursive rhetoric and communication.

A preacher needs to prepare the form of the sermon very carefully, as this contributes to effective preaching. Many preachers however remain under the impression that the content is the only important aspect of the sermon, leaving form as a mere packaging, an afterthought. If a preacher doesn't prepare his sermon well, the congregation is likely to find it not only utterly boring but also tiresome, thus discouraging them to listen properly. As Logan (1986:277) points out, using good form is an important part of preaching, and preachers should think through the forms of the sermon.

1.2.2 Biblical forms of the sermon

The traditional method tended to view the form of the text only as a vehicle for its content. Thus, once the message or major idea of the text was discerned, the form of the text was disregarded. Today, however, the revival of interest in sermon form is in part an attempt to ensure that preaching is biblical both in form and in content. The Bible provides a rich repertoire of biblical forms. These might, and should, lead the preacher to communicative preaching (Long, 1989b:132). There should therefore never be a separation between the content of a biblical text and its literary form and dynamics. Long (1989a:12) says: "Texts are not packages containing ideas; they are means of communication."

Because of the predictable similarity of all traditional sermon forms, the sermon has often been defined pejoratively as "three points and a poem." But today preachers are moving away from predictability of form by taking their cue from the great variety of forms in the Bible. Elizabeth Achtemeier for example, writes: "Because the story of God's salvation of humankind is presented to us through the heart-stirring genres of the Bible, it therefore follows that if we are to proclaim that story, we should do so in words and forms that will produce the same telling effects. Why turn God's love into a proposition?" (1980:46).

The Bible does not have only one form, but a wide variety of forms. The Bible presents many strategies and oral genres – story, logical presentation, historical account, rhetorical questioning, poetry (Greidanus, 1988:106). Utilizing these, preachers must make an effort to strive to obtain the attention of the people. The Gospel comes to us in a wide variety of forms, and the preacher who faithfully bears witness to the Gospel will allow the fullness of the Gospel to summon forth a rich diversity of sermon forms as well.

1.2.3 The communication of the sermon

It is a fact that the congregation's life situation is changing increasingly rapidly. Preachers need to become listeners to the stories of the congregation. The process of preparing a sermon is never divorced from the listeners who are in the world (Kellerman, 1997:25). Preaching is "standing between two worlds," an articulation between the ancient text and the modern listeners (Arthurs, 2000:1). Therefore, the preacher can proclaim the gospel more appropriately and relevantly when he understands the world.

Unfortunately, in the church a paralysis occurs at both ends, in both the speaker and the listener (Long, 1989b:134; Craddock, 1985:89; Stott, 1982a:89). The congregation no longer hears and understands what the preacher is saying in what appears to be his one-way monologue. The sermon should not be an impersonal lecture about God but a relevant encounter with God (Loscalzo 1992:15). Hobbie (1982:17) articulates the problem as such: "Our challenge is how to get the truth, the gospel, heard among the varieties of listeners before us."

Concerning the state of communication theory in general, Schramm (1988:170) makes the following observation: "The most dramatic change in general communication theory during the past forty years has been the gradual abandonment of the idea of a passive audience, and its replacement by the concept of a highly active, highly selective audience, manipulating rather than being manipulated by a message."

To ensure effective communication, preachers can no longer simply assume that people either want to listen to sermons, or indeed are able to listen. Contemporary preachers must construct sermons that reflect an awareness of the need for effective communication in the preaching event. Indeed, the preacher must invite the hearers to share the responsibility for completing the sermon. Such sermons should be explicitly aimed at involving the listeners.

The central problem, therefore, is: "To what extent does form contribute to effective communication in a sermon?"

From this, the following questions arise:

- What are the Scriptural perspectives on the form of a sermon?
- What historical perspectives exist on the form of a sermon?
- What effective forms for communication of a sermon can be identified?
- What guidelines might be set for utilizing different forms of preaching to communicate effectively for contemporary Christians?

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Aim

The main aims of the suggested research are to investigate the form of the sermon and effective communication on basis-theoretical and meta-theoretical levels; and to suggest some guidelines for the praxis of the form of sermons to communicate effectively for the contemporary congregation.

1.3.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To investigate Scriptural perspectives on the form of preaching;
- To study historical perspectives on the form of preaching;
- To identify forms of effective communication for preaching;
- To suggest some guidelines for the form of preaching to communicate effectively.

1.4 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument of this study is that the form of a sermon is an important means to effective communication for which guidelines need to be formulated.

1.5 METHOD OF RESEARCH

This is a study in Practical Theology, utilizing practical theological research methods. In answering the different research questions, the following methods will be used:

The method of basis-theory, meta-theory and practice theory (Zerfass, 1974:166 ff.) will be utilized. Basis-theoretical research will be done primarily from Scripture according to the grammatical-historical method (Coetzee, 1997:1-14). Relating to analysis of preaching in the Bible, a connection will be made with an analysis of the rhetorical criticism method (Watson & Hauser, 1994; Kennedy, 1984), because this method is indispensable for understanding forms, structural patterns and devices of communication in the Bible.

In the meta-theoretical area, the method will mainly be eclectic as proposed by Stoker (1961:56 ff.).

As for the practice-theoretical level, a hermeneutical interaction between basis-theory and meta-theory will be undertaken in order to form new guidelines for theories that might be applied in practice.

1.6 DELIMITATION OF THIS STUDY

This thesis is limited to the understanding of the form, and the function of the form of preaching, without getting caught up in unnecessary theoretical details. Our purpose is therefore to discover the most effective forms of preaching in the contemporary era. In order to achieve a satisfying result in this study, some delimitation is necessary.

- This is not a general study of all the preaching in the Bible. This is a study of the preacher in relation to his preaching ministry, specifically with regard to the form he utilizes.
- This is not a general study of all forms of preaching from a historical perspective. Rather, the study focuses on communicative / effective and valid forms of preaching.
- This study does not investigate all the methods of effective communication but focuses on effective forms of preaching.

1.7 CHAPTER DIVISION

The following outline of the contents shows the scope of the study.

Chapter 1 covers the background and problem statement, aims and objectives, central theoretical argument, and research method of this study.

Chapter 2 extracts basis-theoretical perspectives on literary forms in Scripture for the form of preaching.

Chapter 3 investigates basis-theoretical perspectives on forms of sermon from recent history.

Chapter 4 studies meta-theoretical data on form and effective communication.

Chapter 5 analyses a selection of written sermons on form and effective communication.

Chapter 6 provides practice-theoretical perspectives on the form of the sermon and effective communication.

Chapter 7 will contain the final results of this study and offer the consequences in a final conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 2

BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON LITERARY FORMS IN SCRIPTURE FOR THE FORM OF PREACHING

The purpose with this chapter is to investigate a selection of literary forms in Scripture. A selection of literary forms in Scripture will be analysed and explained, and certain deductions will be made on form and effective communication. In this way certain fundamental forms of preaching may be exploited. In this chapter the following issues will be dealt with:

- perspectives on literary forms of the Old Testament and the form of preaching
- perspectives on literary forms of the New Testament and the form of preaching

2.1 HEBREW NARRATIVES

Behind every human being there is a story. This story embraces the whole of his/her life. It starts at his/her birth, covers the whole of his life and ultimately ends with his death. And the author of this story is the person him(her)self. "In addition to stories heard, human beings seem to construct their own life-story lines" (Buttrick 1987:10).

Likewise the Bible is the book of God's story and the narrative form is one of the most common genres in the Bible (Larsen, 1989:148; Long, 1989a:66; Hamilton, 1992:128). In fact, salvation history as disclosed in the Bible is in

the form of a story. Narrative is the main literary type found in Scripture. Indeed, some recent writers have even suggested that it is the only literary form in Scripture—an obvious, though perhaps understandable, exaggeration (McGrath; 1991.23).

The distinction of the narrative in the Bible is related to the Bible's central message that God acts in history. Bloede (1980:8) states that "the Bible is really a storybook – the story of God's involvement in the universe, in human history, in interpersonal relations, and in the inner life of individuals. Individual stories unfold in the Bible to reveal such themes of the story as creation, estrangement, grace, reconciliation, a new creation, a new community, a vision of a new world".

Kaiser and Silva (1994:69) mentions that "the narrative framework spans the history of God's dealings with humanity from creation to the exile of Judah in the books of Genesis to 2 Kings. In terms of the divisions of the Hebrew canon, narrative is the predominant genre in the Torah (esp. Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers,), in all the books of the Earlier Prophets, in some of the Latter Prophets (esp. major sections in Isaiah and Jeremiah, plus parts of Jonah and other books), and also in several books of the Writings (esp. Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Ruth, Esther, and Daniel). Narrative is clearly the main supporting framework for the Bible".

We accordingly need to learn to hear and tell our own stories as much as we need to enter in and follow the Bible's unfolding story of God's ways with us (Rice, 1979:22).

2.1.1 Literary elements of Hebrew narratives

The following is not an exhaustive description of Hebrew narrative but of particular literary forms. We shall take a closer look at the following

elements of Hebrew narratives: scene, dialogue, plot, and rhetorical devices.

2.1.1.1 The scene

The most important feature of the narrative is the scene. Fokkelman (1975:9) points out: "In Old Testament prose, the scene is about the most important unit in the architecture of the narrative." In the scene, the action of the story is broken up into separate sequences, each scene representing something that took place at a particular time and place. Within the scenes, the emphasis is put on the deeds done and the words spoken (Licht, 1978:31).

Narrative form is constructed of scenes or episodes that are interconnected. Cinematography provides a closer analogy to Hebrew narrative than modern literature (Berlin, 1983:44). Klein (1992:32) says: "As in modern cinemas, selective scenes dominate the plot, being prolonged by dialogue. Gaps occur between the scenes but the cohesiveness of plot structure implies intervening events, which the viewer supplies through imagination. Supportive scenes are usually shorter but still integral to the continuity of the film. The narrative makes use of the same techniques by giving scenes with picturesque qualities, enabling the reader mentally to view the event. Detailed description, however, is limited only to where necessary for understanding the plot. Therefore, where elaborate description of settings occur, the expositor must be aware of its special emphasis. Most likely, these details will come into play in the outcome of the plot."

The scenes function much like the frames in a movie that make up the total film. Each one contributes to the whole, but each may be analyzed in and of itself in order to discover how the parts contribute to the whole. Each scene is usually made up of two or more characters.

For biblical narrative, one of the most distinguishing features is the pervasive

presence of God (Kaiser & Silva, 1994:71). Often God is one of the two “characters” in the scene. In the early chapters of Genesis, it was God and Adam (Gen. 3), God and Cain (Gen. 4), God and Noah (Gen. 6), God and Abraham (Gen. 12), (Greidanus, 1988:199) and God and one of the three patriarchs in the rest of the book of Genesis. Even when God was not directly mentioned as being one of the participants in the scene, his presence often was implied from the point of view taken by the narrator, writer, or the prophet who spoke on his behalf.

Many narrative texts tell the stories of certain events. Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah, Gen. 22 is well known. Klein (1992:32) offers guidance for Gen. 22: “The scenes of Genesis 22 are indicated by change in participants and dialogue. Abraham appears in every scene as the main referent, giving coherence to the whole

- Scene one: God’s command to Abraham (1-2)
- Scene two: Abraham’s journey and instructions to his servants (3-5)
- Scene three: Abraham and Isaac’s dialogue (6-8)
- Scene four: Abraham’s offering of Isaac and the voice from heaven (9-12)
- Scene five: Abraham’s offering of the ram and the voice from heaven a second time (13-19).”

Thus, the scene mode of Hebrew narrative underscores the importance of understanding the theme of the scene in the context of the whole narrative.

● Deduction

The scene is the most important element of the narrative. Within the scene, the emphasis is put on the deeds done and the words spoken. Each scene contributes to the whole, though each may be analyzed in and of itself in order to discover how the parts contribute to the whole.

2.1.1.2 Dialogue

The primary place to look for meaning in the story is in the statements of the characters. In biblical narratives there is no idle chatter. The speech is highly concentrated and shaped to convey meaning. Dialogue plays a major part in the narrative of the Bible.

As Alter (1981:182) has noted, "everything in the world of biblical narrative ultimately gravitates toward dialogue. Quantitatively, a remarkably large part of the narrative burden is carried by dialogue, the transactions between characters typically unfolding through the words they exchange, with only the most minimal intervention of the narrator".

In reading stories in the Bible, one quickly recognizes the high proportion of dialogue in narratives. In 1 Samuel 20, for instance, dialogue between David and Jonathan begins and ends the chapter, while a dialogue between Jonathan and Saul is found in the center. The narrative in this chapter functions to change the setting (e.g., vv. 24-25) or to provide "a bridge between much larger units of direct speech." (Alter, 1981:65)

Dialogue almost invariably occurs between two characters, rarely three or more. One or both of the characters may be a group speaking as one person or actually speaking through a spokesman (1 Kings 12). The two characters engaged in dialogue are often contrasted with one another (Greidanus, 1988:202). Their styles of speech differ and serve to characterize a biblical personality. In Alter's analysis of Genesis 25, Alter contrasts "Esau's inarticulate outbursts over against Jacob's calculated legalisms." (Alter, 1981:72).

Greidanus (1988:202) states that "another feature of dialogue is stylized speech, which is especially noticeable when one character repeats in whole or in part the speech of another character". In his explanation of Genesis 2:16-

17, God had said, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat." The serpent, however, asked the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden'?" the woman's subsequent alteration of God's speech makes God's demand appear quite unreasonable: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, *neither shall you touch it...*'" (Gen. 3:1-3).

Sometimes, the narrator summarizes the dialogue. The narrator gives a summarizing speech at a particularly critical juncture in the narrative in order to (1) speed up the flow of the narrative, (2) avoid excessive repetition, or (3) give some perspective to what has been said (Kaiser & Silva, 1994:73).

Indeed, the frequent use of dialogue in biblical narrative effects a strong measure of vividness. It is one of the ways in which the narrator can present characterization.

● Deduction

Dialogue plays a major part in the narrative of the Bible. Dialogue almost invariably occurs between two characters, rarely between three or more. One or both of the characters may be a group speaking as one person or actually speaking through a spokesperson.

2.1.1.3 Plot

Narrative discourse has a plot made up of a sequence of events that moves toward a closure. Narrative consists of an organized and orderly system of events, arranged in temporal sequence. Brooks (1984:5) defines plot in the following helpful way: "Plot is the principle of interconnectedness and

intention which we cannot do without moving through the discrete elements – incidents, episodes, actions – of a narrative.”

The plot must have a lucid beginning, middle and end (cf. Wilcoxon, 1974:93; Ryken, 2001:62; Kaiser, 2003:66). Long (1989:80) suggests that “narrative texts be analyzed according to the concept of plot. Narrative plots are intricate and complex, but the preacher can expose something of the plot dynamic by exploring the three basic components - the beginning, the middle, and the end”.

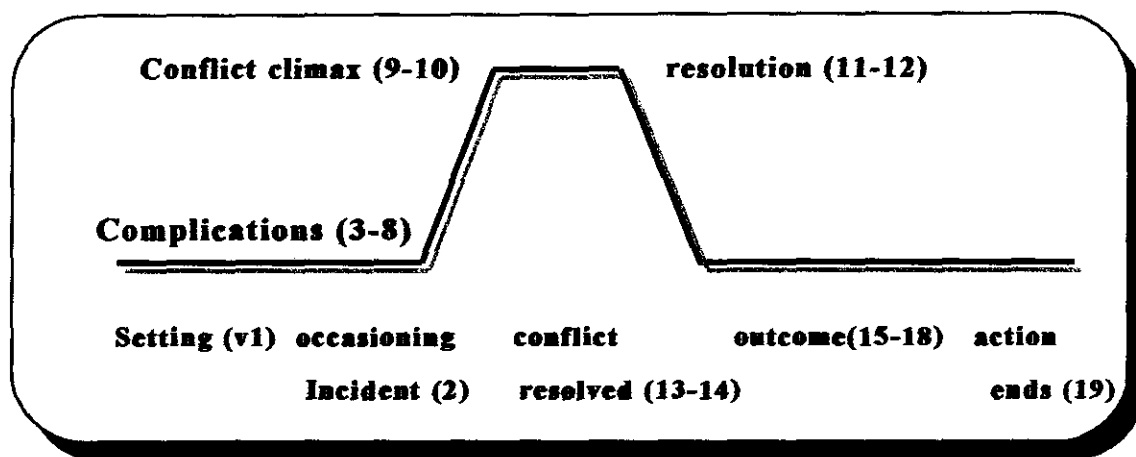
This sequencing is generally called the plot, for it traces the movement of the incidents and episodes as they revolve around some type of conflict. As the plot thickens, the narrative moves toward a resolution or a climax.

As a general rule, plot is thrust forward by conflict. The conflict generates interest in its resolution. The beginning of a story, with its introduction of conflict, thus pushes us through the middle toward the end, when conflict is resolved (cf. Mathewson, 1997:52)

Thus, a narrative has time orientation. It consists of a time-line or event-line which provides the backbone of movement in the plot’s advancement. The beginning and end of the narrative are sometimes denoted by explicit introductions and conclusions.

Plots can be either single or complex (Greidanus, 1988:203). *A single plot* builds up to a high point of tension until it is released at the climax of the account where the story turns toward resolution or outcome. Bar-Efrat (1980:165) says “single plots exhibit the classical pyramid pattern. From a peaceful initial situation the action rises towards the climax where the decisive step determining the outcome of the conflict is taken, and from there it drops again to a more or less tranquil situation at the end”.

This type of pyramid pattern is evident in Genesis 22 where God's quiet request to sacrifice Isaac rose to the climax of the sudden halt to what was almost the sacrifice of Isaac, and then settled down again to Abraham and his son returning back down the hill to the servants who were awaiting their arrival before they set off again for Beersheba. The diagram would look like this (Greidanus, 1999:297).



The climax of a complex plot will be retarded by complicating tensions that prolong the story's events-line. The climax or peak is signaled by sudden changes in the surface structure of the text where the common discourse features of the narrative shift to another set of features. The story of Isaac's blessing in Genesis 27 is an illustration of a complex plot. Bar-Efrat (1980:166-167) mentions more concretely: "The narrative....reaches its climax when Jacob comes very close to the suspicious Isaac and is subjected to bodily examination. A resting point is reached when Isaac, apparently satisfied, gives Jacob his blessing. But when immediately after Jacob's departure Esau enters his father's tent the story flares up again. A new resting point is reached only after Jacob departs from his home and a physical distance is created between the hostile brothers."

The plot serves to organize events in such a way as to arouse the reader's interest and emotional involvement, while at the same time imbuing the events with meaning.

- **Deduction**

The plot is the indisposable unit of interconnectedness and intention which brings together the discrete elements – incidents, episodes, actions – of a narrative. The plot serves to organize events in such a way as to arouse the reader's interest and emotional involvement, while at the same time imbuing the events with meaning.

2.1.2 Rhetorical devices

We can find some of the rhetorical devices in Hebrew narrative that appear also in others kinds of prose and in poetry. Three important ones are chiasmus, inclusion, and repetition.

2.1.2.1 Chiasmus

Chiasmus is a general feature of ancient writing, experienced in the ancient Near East and the Greco-Roman world (Welch, 1981:84). It is utilized for structuring narrative episodes, whole books, and even collections of books. Chiasmus is named after the Greek letter chi (χ). It is named for the crossing, or inversion, of related elements within parallel constructions (Kaiser & Silva, 1994:75).

Chiasmus is an arrangement of multiple inclusions. Chiastic arrangements also occur in a concentric pattern when episodes parallel around a significant episode (cf. Longman III, 1987:95). The first episode parallels the last, the second parallels the next to last, and so on. These patterns appear on both small and large scales. Whatever the case, chiastic structures often limit the boundaries of a section and help us understand the writer's interest.

Wenham (1987:235) states that Genesis 11:1-9 shows how chiasmus both shapes the account and indicates the prominent idea:

Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9)

- A the whole earth had one language (v. 1)
- B there (v. 2)
- C each other (v. 3)
- D come let us make bricks (v. 3)
- E let us build for us (v. 4)
- F a city and a tower (v. 4)
- G *the Lord came down* (v. 5)
- F' the city and the tower (v. 5)
- E' which mankind had built (v. 5)
- D' come... let us mix up (v. 7)
- C' each other's language (v. 7)
- B' from there (v. 8)
- A' the language of the whole earth (v. 9)

The center is the focal point of the arrangement, emphasizing God's judgment on the nations and the irony that God comes down to witness their feeble efforts to reach up to heaven. The message is clear: what the nations are building up will be torn down by God.

Old Testament narrators often used a literary device called chiasmus. It is named for the inversion or crossing of related elements in parallel constructions. So a Hebrew narrative arouses our emotions, appeals to our will, and stimulates our imagination in a way that a modern systematic theology cannot (cf. Culpepper, 1987:34).

● Deduction

Chiasmus is named for the inversion or crossing of related elements in parallel constructions. It provides for effective communication by raising the emotions, appealing to our will, and by stimulating the imagination of the reader in ways that modern systematic theology cannot.

2.1.2.2 Inclusion

Inclusion is a special form of repetition found in Hebrew narrative. Inclusions appear frequently in Old Testament narratives, and the ability to identify them is crucial for interpretation. Inclusion relates to a repetition that marks the beginning and the end of a section, thus effectively bracketing or enveloping the marked-off material (Kaiser & Silva, 1994:75).

Pratt (1993:218) provides a good example of inclusion in his analysis of 1 Kings 3:1-10:29.

National Glory (3:1-9:25)

Pharaoh's daughter and sacrifices (3:1-3)

Solomon's wisdom (3:4-9:23)

Pharaoh's daughter and sacrifices (9:24-25)

International Glory (9:26-10:29)

International trade (9:26-28)

Queen of sheba (10:1-13)

International trade (10:14-29)

In the book of Kings, two inclusions help organize the account of Solomon's reign. After reading about Solomon's rise to power, we come upon a long section focusing on Solomon's glorious kingdom (1 Kings 3:1—10:29).

Inclusions divide this material into two major parts. As the outline suggests, this portion of Solomon's reign breaks into two sections: his national and his international glory. Both of these sections are marked by inclusions. The inclusion reveals the purpose of this section: to concentrate on the effects of Solomon's wisdom in the national and international realm. Once again, by means of inclusion, the writer marked boundaries and characterized a section of his book.

As above, inclusions help us find sections within these materials and understand their focus and inclusion signaled the end of the narration. It may have reiterated the message by reminding the audience of the opening statement.

- **Deduction**

Inclusion is a special form of repetition found in the Hebrew narrative. It aids in effective communication by revealing the overall purpose of the narrative as well as to assist in finding sections, locating those with a more specific focus.

2.1.2.3 Repetition

Repetition is particularly noticeable in Old Testament narrative. Repetition is one of the favorite rhetorical devices in Hebrew narrative (Alter, 1981:88-113; Longman III, 1987:95). One type of repetition uses the recurrence of words or short phrases; another links together actions, images, motifs, themes, and ideas. The repetition of words is especially significant. In many cases the author used repeated words or even sentences to express a certain emphasis, meaning, or development of the text (Kaiser & Silva, 1994:74).

According to Klein (1992:38), the most common use of repetition is emphasis.

Therefore, it is able to decode or grasp a meaning of the text, or at any rate, the meaning will be revealed more strikingly (Alter, 1981:93).

In the Abraham-Isaac story (Gen. 22) “father-son motif” is highlighted by repetition. Also, parallel lines as a use of repetition mark out the beginnings or closings of different units. The parallel expressions of ‘and the two of them went on together’ (vv. 6,8) and ‘and they went on together’ (v. 19) establish the closing boundary for their respective section.

The type of repetition in Hebrew narrative is resumptive repetition. This serves to return the audience to the original point of the story after it has followed a branch for a while. According to 1 Samuel 19:12, “Michal lowered David from the window and he fled and escaped....” The reader remains with Michal and the encounter between her and Saul’s men. But meanwhile David has been making his escape, as we are told in 19:18...’And... David fled and escaped.’” (Greidanus, 1988:209; Kaiser & Silva, 1994:74-75).

Repetition is an effective tool for characterization (Klein, 1992:39). Subtle alterations of a quotation by a participant may be indicative of a change in perspective on the part of a character. God’s instructions to Adam concerning the trees of the garden (Gen. 2:15-17) are repeated with slight differences by the serpent and the woman so as to give the command of God their own interpretation (Gen. 3). In the sacrifice of Isaac, the angel of the Lord commends Abraham in two speeches, repeating “you have not withheld from me, your son, your only son” (22:12,16,NIV), but the second is prefaced with the oath “I swear by myself” (22:16,NIV). This formal oath confirms the covenant promises to Abraham and sets Abraham’s response of faith in the broader context of Genesis’ theme of blessing (22:16-18).

● Deduction

A narrative in Old Testament uses repetition of words or sentences to

emphasize meaning, or for the development of the text.

Narrative form does not represent a new creation for communicating God's Word. The Bible contains the narration of God's ways with humankind. Narrative form is important for effective communication. Using narrative content in Old Testament creates enormous possibilities. Narration creates interest. A narrative almost inevitably catches the hearers' attention, involving them in the sermon.

2.2 PROPHETIC LITERATURE

Other books of the Old Testament come under a category of literature known as the prophets. When we think of prophetic literature, we usually think of the collection of books designated in the Hebrew Bible as "the Latter Prophets" (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the twelve minor prophets). Sixteen books were written between 760 B.C. and 460 B.C., and they contain a vast array of messages from God.

Payne (1973:631) says that "there are 8,352 verses with predictive material in them out of 31,124 verses in the whole Bible – a staggering 27 percent of the Bible that deals with predictions about the future. The Old Testament contained 6,641 verses on the future (out of 23,210 total, or 28.6 percent)". The form of these prophetic books will be the main concern in this chapter.

To say that the writings of the prophets contain a rich variety of literary material is a vast understatement. Greidanus (1988:228) explained that "the latter prophets contain genres—genres such as narrative (e.g., Is. 36-39 taken from 2 Kgs. 18-20; Jer. 26-29; 32-45), song (e.g., Is. 5:1-7; 42:10-13; 44:23; 49:13), wisdom (e.g., Amos 3:3-6; Is. 28:23-29; Ezek. 18:2), and apocalyptic literature (e.g., Is. 24-27; Joel; Zech. 12-14)".

The prophetic books are tremendously rich, and this makes possible a great variety of sermon types. Effective preaching on the prophetic literature needs to take seriously this wealth of literary variety. We shall first examine the literary characteristics of prophetic literature and then look at some rhetorical devices used in prophetic literature.

2.2.1 Literary characteristics of prophetic literature

The following is not an exhaustive description of prophetic literature but particular literary forms. We shall take a closer look at the following aspects of prophetic literature: poetry, speeches, symbolic actions and rhetorical devices.

2.2.1.1 Poetry

A considerable percentage of the material in the writings of the prophets is in the form of poetry (Greidanus, 1988:240; Hamilton, 1992:136). Books in which the large majority of the contents are written as poetry include: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos. West and Donald (1971:234) observes that “only five of these books (Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah) are cast entirely in the poetic form”. Poetry is also scattered throughout other parts of the Latter Prophets.

The preaching of the prophets was poetry. Ramm (1970:249) points out that the prophets were preachers and visionaries and not academic lecturers. They were poets (Fee & Stuart, 1982:161). They preached poetically as any modern translation indicates.

The mixture of prose and poetry in the Latter Prophets is obviously related to the mixture of narrative and speech (Greidanus, 1988:240). While narrative is

written in prose, the prophetic speeches account for the poetry. This is not to say that all prophetic speeches are poetry (for prose speeches see, e.g., Jer. 7:1-8:3; 17:19-27; 18:1-12), nor that the distinction between prose and poetry is always apparent (compare the RSV and the NIV on Jer. 11:15-16; 23:5-6; 31:31-34). The parts of the Bible that are written in prose use the resources of poetic language.

The most important thing to know about poetry is that it is a distinctive type of language. Poetry differs from ordinary prose by its reliance on images and figures of speech, and by its verse form. Poetry is heightened speech, far more compressed than prose (cf. Hos. 2:4-14; Jonah, 2:2-9; Obad.). The preacher needs to handle this genre carefully, understanding the various forms of Hebrew poetry.

For example, Nahum 3:1-3 shows that there could be no more graphic picture of the progress of a battle than that in Nahum 3, and notice it is conciseness itself, only three verses long:

Woe to the city of blood,
full of lies, full of plunder,
never without victims!
The crack of whips,
the clatter of wheels,
galloping horses and jolting chariots!
Charging cavalry,
flashing swords
and glittering spears!
Many casualties,
piles of dead,
bodies without number,
people stumbling over the corpses
[NIV]

Another brief but most vivid description of the defeat of an army is drawn in the wonderful little poem at the close of the seventeenth chapter of Isaiah, where the noisy terror of the approaching army is likened to the booming of the waves on the harborless coast, and their swift flight to the blowing of the chaff from an out-of-doors threshing-floor when a whirlwind strikes it.

Alas, the uproar of many peoples
Who roar like the roaring of the seas,
And the rumbling of nations
Who rush on like the rumbling of mighty waters!
The nations rumble on like the rumbling of many waters,
But He will rebuke them and they will flee far away,
And be chased like chaff in the mountains before the wind,
Or like whirling dust before a gale.
[NASB] 17:12-13

● Deduction

There is a mixture of the form of prose and poetry in the latter prophets. While the narrative is written in prose, the prophetic speeches are written in poetic form.

2.2.1.2 Speeches

Westermann (1967:90-92) notes that “most form critics distinguish among three major forms in the Latter Prophets: (1) accounts or report, usually in the form of narratives about the prophets; (2) prophetic speeches, “the words of God delivered by a messenger of God”; and (3) prayers, “utterances directed from man to God”. He notes that “these three major forms are confirmed as the basic elements of the tradition in the prophetic books in that they represent at the same time – and this is certainly no accident – the basic

forms of the three parts of the canon: the account is the basic form of the historical books, and speech to God in the form of lament and praise is the basic form of the Psalter.”

There is one form of speech which is especially important for our understanding of who the canonical prophets were and what they were up to, since it is a form which is typically prophetic. They did not borrow it from any other area of life, and so it seems to tell us most directly what they wanted to say to their people. It is a two- part speech, an announcement accompanied by a reason, and it occurs hundreds of times in the prophetic books (Westermann, 1967:129-188). For example, Amos 5:11 shows it:

Therefore because you trample upon the poor (REASON)
and take from him exactions of wheat,
you have built houses of hewn stone, (ANNOUNCEMENT)
but you shall not dwell in them;
you have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you shall not drink their wine.

• Deduction

There are three major forms of speeches by latter prophets, namely: (1) accounts or reports, usually in narrative form about the prophets; (2) prophetic speeches: “the words of God delivered by a messenger of God”; and (3) prayers: “utterances directed from man to God”.

2.2.1.3 Symbolic actions

These are sometimes quite drastic, as in the cases of Isaiah and Hosea (Is. 20:1-5; Hos. 1-3). The example from Jeremiah, on the other hand, is rather ordinary, though still effective. Prophecy often uses a great deal of symbolic

imagery, especially in the sections called apocalyptic literature. Apocalyptic literature appears in Daniel 7-12 and in the entire book of Zechariah.

In addition, there is figurative language in the Prophets. The Book of Hosea has a great many similes and metaphors. Isaiah 5:1-7 is one of the few parables found in the Old Testament. Allegory is found in Ezekiel 17:3-10. A metaphor has the power to make us see reality in new ways, from different and surprising angles. For example, Wolff (1973:72) states that "Hosea alone, in various passages, calls Yahweh Israel's husband, lover, fiance, father, physician, shepherd, fowler, and even lion, leopard, bear, dew, fruit tree, moth, and dry rot."

Isaiah speaks of a road in the wilderness, of lion and lamb nodding in agreement, of military weapons hammered into farm implements, and so forth. Listen to Isaiah singing a song of God's future:

- 1 The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus,
- 2 it will burst into bloom;
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.
- 5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
- 6 Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.
- 7 The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

-
- 8 And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness.
The unclean will not journey on it;
it will be for those who walk in that Way;
wicked fools will not go about on it.
- 9 No lion will be there, nor will any ferocious beast get up on it;
they will not be found there.
But only the redeemed will walk there,
- 10 and the ransomed of the LORD will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away. (NIV. Is. 35)

The poem contains not only images of joy, such as blossoming and song, but mention of earthly constraints as well – terms such as dry land, desert, blind, deaf, lame, speechless, burning sand, unclean, fools, sorrow, sighing. Metaphors are made out of vivid, graphic images.

● Deduction

Here we can deduce that prophecy often uses a great deal of symbolic imagery, especially in the sections called *apocalyptic* as in Daniel 7-12 and in the entire book of Zechariah. In these prophets, is found figurative language including similes and metaphors.

2.2.2 Rhetorical devices

The prophets use various forms and forms within forms, so they can use rhetorical structures and rhetorical structures within structures. Sometimes rhetorical structures such as inclusion and chiasm encompass the forms, and

sometimes these structures, especially repetition and parallelism, function within forms. These may be looked briefly at each in turn.

2.2.2.1 Chiasm

Chiasms may involve the inversion of anything from words or clauses in two parallel lines of poetry to a series of dialogues or even of a series of chapters of narration. It is easiest to identify chiasms where the same words clauses, or phrases are reversed (Kaiser & Silva, 1994:75). A clear example is the following, from Isaiah 6 (Dorsey, 1999:219).

A Yahweh's heavenly splendor and glory (6:1-4)

- begins : the image of Yahweh sits enthroned in his heavenly bode
- theme : fullness – yahweh's heavenly abode is filled;
the earth is full of his glory

B Isaiah's distressed reaction (6:5a)

- begins : and I said

C Isaiah's lips are unclean ; but they are purified

- his sins are forgiven
- his eyes have seen
- he lives among a sinful people

D CLIMAX : Isaiah's call and acceptance (6:8)

C The people's eyes, hearts, ears are sinful (6:9-10)

- they will not be forgiven
- their eyes will not see
- the people are sinful

B Isaiah's distressed reaction (6:11a)

- begins: and I said

A Judah's future devastation and humiliation (6:11b-13)

- begins : the image of no one sitting/dwelling in the land
- theme : emptiness – the land/earth will be empty and desolate

It is arranged in a symmetric configuration that features the actual call at the highlighted center. The matching draws attention to the contrast between Isaiah's purged lips and the people's sinful hearts, eyes, and ears and to the contrast between Yahweh's heavenly majesty and Judah's future humiliation and devastation.

- **Deduction**

A Chiasm is arranged in a symmetric configuration that features the actual call. It is easiest to identify chiasms where the same words, clauses, or phrases are reversed.

2.2.2.2 Inclusion

Inclusion marks primarily the limits of a literary unit by repeating at the end words and phrases from the beginning. For an audience which received this narration aurally, inclusion signaled the end of the narration and may have reiterated the message by reminding the audience of the opening statement.

Lundbom (1975:16) sees inclusion functioning at three levels: that of the book as a whole ("The words of Jeremiah"[1] and "Thus for the words of Jeremiah" [51:64], that of speeches as a whole (poems), and that of units (stanzas) within speeches. Unfortunately, many of the inclusions are lost in the standard English translations.

Isaiah 3:1-15 contained within the inclusio *the Lord, the Lord Almighty* (1,15), forms a unified composition (Motyer, 1993:59).

-
- A the act of the Lord, the Lord Almighty (1a)
 - B the collapse of leadership and social disorder (1b-5)
 - C Vignette: leadership debased (6-7)
 - D Jerusalem's collapse explained (8)
 - D' Jerusalem's judgment pronounced (9-11)
 - C' Vignette: leadership brought to trial (13-15a)
 - B' Social oppression and misleading leaders(12)
 - C' Vignette: leadership brought to trial (13-15a)
 - A' The word of the Lord, the Lord Almighty (15b)

In the way this material swings vigorously from one topic to another, in its telling use of illustration and in its sense of divine authority, we surely hear the authentic voice of Isaiah the preacher.

● Deduction

Inclusion aids in effective communication by signaling the end of the narration and possibly reiterating the message by reminding the audience of the opening statement.

2.2.2.3 Parallelism

There are three principal kinds of parallelism: synonymous, antithetic and synthetic.

- The Synonymous: In this the same thing is repeated in different words, such as Isaiah 6:4; 13:7. Parallelism, if synonymous, is a form of repetition: AB BA. For example, Is. 1:2a

Hear,	O heavens,	A B
And give ear,	O earth	A' B'

-
- **Antithetic Parallelism:** In which the second member of a line (or verse) gives the obverse side of the same thought, such as Isaiah 1:3.

The ox knows its owner,
And the ass its master's crib;
But Israel does not know,
My people does not understand.

The first two half lines as well as the last two exhibit synonymous parallelism. The relationship between the first two half lines and the last two shows antithetic parallelism.

- **Synthetic Parallelism:** Called also constructive and epithetic. In this the second member adds something fresh to the first, or else explains it. According to the IDB (1962:832) parallelism is *balances strichs* [half lines] in which the second element advances the thought of the first. Hos 5:14 manages to exhibit as many as three kinds of parallelism in four half lines:

For I will be like a lion to Ephraim,
and like a young lion to the house of Judah.
I, even, I, will rend and go away,
I will carry off, and none shall rescue.

The parallel line does not simply repeat what has been said, but enriches it, deepens it, transforms it by adding fresh nuances and bringing in new elements, renders it more concrete and vivid and telling.

- **Deduction**

There are three principal types of parallelism namely synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic. Parallel lines enrich, deepen and transform what has been said

by adding fresh nuances and bringing in new elements.

2.2.2.4 Repetition

Repetition is apparently the basic building block of most ancient structural patterns. Significant repetitive devices distinguish among three levels: (1) themes and topics are expressed by repeated incidents and descriptive passages, a grouping of ideas stylistically constructed. (2) the repetition of key-words is one of the most common devices. It is related to motifs, themes, and also sequence of action (Combrink 1982:8), and (3) refrain is a repetitive device at the end of successive pericopes for the elaboration of unifying themes. Lohr (1961:410) maintains that "it is useful to mark thought-groups and that it can easily be adapted by the oral poet to tie together larger units within the traditional material, and so in some way to compensate for its inherent parataxis".

Simple repetition of words, phrases, and clauses is frequently found in prophetic literature. The same sentence is repeated twice using different words. Sometimes, however, the subject is not repeated in the second half of the sentence, but it is omitted in an ellipsis and implied because of the proximity. For example, Isaiah (1:18; 53:5) shows repetition:

Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow
Though — — they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. (Isa. 1:18)

But he was wounded for our transgressions,
— was bruised for our iniquities. (Isa. 53:5)

Repetition can function at various levels, such as key words, motifs, themes, and a sequence of actions.

Repetition, inclusion, and chiasm serve various functions in prophetic speeches. In the case of chiasmus, variation is sometimes necessary when the speech builds heavily upon repetition. And for the listeners, the inclusion and chiasmus are mnemonic devices aiding them in retention.

• **Deduction**

In repetition, the same sentence is repeated twice using different words. Repetition can function at various levels such as key words, motifs, themes, and a sequence of actions.

A preacher must study the prophetic books as literature. Most literary material in the prophetic books appears not as prose but as Hebrew poetry. The prophets used chiasm, inclusion, parallelism and repetition. They generally took great pains to arrange their compositions in ways that would help convey their messages. Thus, a preacher needs to consider the prophet in light of how the message was delivered.

2.3 LITERARY FORM OF THE FOUR GOSPELS

The Gospels are a unique form. The Gospels are encyclopedic forms, and it is the precise combination of literary elements that converge in them that is without precise parallel outside of the Bible. The combination of individual forms that make up the Gospels is truly striking. The list of literary form represented in the Gospels keeps expanding. Historical narrative, parable, dialogue, sermon, and proverb are especially prominent.

Ryken (1987:24-25) gave some distinctive literary features of New Testament books. The first feature of the New Testament is that it is *religious literature*. The literature has a strong, persuasive, theological purpose. The Gospels concentrate on the purpose and work of Christ (Efird, 1984:90-91). The

second feature of the Gospel is that it is *simple and realistic literature*. New Testament writers included everyday details. Their readers lived in an ordinary world of farming and nature, buying, selling and journeying. A natural symbolism was at work; sowing seed and baking bread and putting on armor became more than normal activities. A third feature of the Gospel is that it is *oral literature*. Addresses, sayings, and dialogues dominate the narrative parts of the New Testament (the Gospels and Acts). The fourth feature of the Gospel is that it is *popular literature*. The New Testament is a book of the people. Its language is for the most part the language of everyday speech.

The New Testament books fall into general genres and possess a high degree of artistry, special resources of language, and master images. Preachers need to know the story about which the New Testament books report; preachers also need to know the style of writing which the authors used.

2.3.1 The structure of the gospel

The gospel was a unique literary creation of early Christianity (Combrink, 1983:17). Each gospel has its own identity, making it a unique literary creation, and this individuality and uniqueness must be given its full due. But this does not mean that each gospel belongs to a separate literary genre. The classification into literary genres is determined by certain main characteristics, which group together certain writings and broadly distinguish them from other types, without thereby repudiating the differences among writings belonging to the same genre. As far as the four gospels are concerned, we have to recognize what will become clearer later: with regard to their main characteristics and intention, their basic motivation and structure, they share enough common features to be regarded as belonging to the same literary genre (Combrink, 1983:5-6).

The following is not an exhaustive structure of the gospel but of particular gospels. We shall take a closer look at the following structure of the gospel: Mathew and Mark.

2.3.1.1 Matthew

An interesting approach is offered by those who find a chiastic or symmetrical structure in Matthew (Lohr, 1961:427; Ellis, 1974:12; Combrink, 1983:61-90). Their classifications are not exactly identical, but the basic insight they share is that the gospel has been constructed symmetrically around a particular correlation between chapters. Combrink takes as his starting-point the assumption that the 'five discourses' are our clue to a symmetrical structure in the gospel, with the parable discourse of chapter 13 as the focal point. It is set out as follows:

- A Narrative 1:1-4:17**
- B Discourse 4:18-7:29**
- C Narrative 8:1-9:35**
- D Discourse 9:36-11:1**
- E Narrative 11:2-12:50**
- F Discourse 13:1-53**
- E' Narrative 13:54-16:20**
- D' Discourse 16:21-20:34**
- C' Narrative 21:1-22:46**
- B' Discourse 23:1-25:46**
- A' Narrative 26:1-28:20**

The chiastic approach can appeal to similar motifs in the content of the infancy and passion narratives and to the similar lengths of B and B' as well as D and D'. While similarity occasionally exists between other corresponding elements, this usually seems arbitrary and unconvincing.

● Deduction

The Gospel of Matthew is constructed symmetrically around a particular correlation between chapters.

2.3.1.2 Mark

Mark's gospel belongs to narrative literature. The style is lively and realistic, a phenomenon that may be accounted for by the narrative character of the gospel (Gundry, 1993:1049). Mark is a dramatic narrative. Mark is a skilled story-teller, and the potency of his tale ultimately leaves the listener in the grip of subtle but engrossing literary forces (Jerry, 1992:56). This story is told by an unnamed, intrusive narrator who has an omniscient point of view. The narrator not only knows all the events of the story but also the thoughts, feelings, emotions, and intentions of the various characters. This knowledge allows him as an intrusive narrator to intrude into the world of the characters or into any scene to give additional comments and explanations to the reader (Guelich, 1989:xxiii).

Scott (1985:20) states an overall chiasmic structure in Mark:

A (1:2) An angel witnesses to his coming

B (1:11) You are my Son

C (2:7) Who can forgive sins *ei me heis ho theos*

D (3:29) The guilt of the scribes

E (3:33) Who is my mother...?

F (3:35) The primacy of doing God's will

G (4:40) Who is this that the winds...obey him?

H (6:3) Jesus is called the son of Mary

I (8:27) Who do you say that I am?

J (8:31) Prophecy of betrayal, passion, resurrection

K (9:7) This is my Son: listen to him
J' (9:30) Prophecy of betrayal, passion, resurrection
I' (10:18) Why call me good?...*ei me heis ho theos*
H' (10:47) Jesus is called Son of David
G' (11:28) By what authority do you do these things?
F' (12:30) The primacy of God's commandment of love
E' (12:37) How is Christ David's Son?
D' (12:40) A judgment on the scribes
C' (14:61) Are you the Christ the Son of the Blessed God?
B' (15:39) Truly, this man was the Son of God
A' (16:6) An angel witnesses to his going

● **Deduction**

Mark is a skilled story teller, and the potency to his tale ultimately leaves the listener in the grip of subtle but engrossing literary forces.

2.3.2 Stories

The gospel writers told the story of Jesus in writing, but they did not narrate strictly according to chronology. Instead, they related the story of Jesus from his birth to his resurrection by a certain collection of materials. Pastors need to observe and understand some of the obvious units of collection and writing.

2.3.2.1 Miracle story

Gospel writers included miracle stories in their collections about Jesus (Welch, 1978:152-153). The typical structure of a miracle story is this: (1) Notation of a need, (2) Seeking Jesus' help, (3) An expression of faith from the person in need or from acquaintances of the person in need, (4) The

miracle performed by Jesus, and (5) People's response to the miracle (Ramsey, 1981:23). A given miracle story might omit one or more of these elements.

Miracle stories have narrative elements (Praeder, 1986:43-54) with reference to:

- **Characters**

They can be portrayed in the role of responsibility, the role of reception and the role of participation.

- **Events**

(a) The causes of miraculous events include performance, prayer, pronouncement and provision.

(b) The most common classes of miraculous events include exorcism, healing, punishment and raising.

- **Person**

Miracle stories in the gospels are told in third person narration. This means that the narrators are never characters in the miracle story. Some miracle stories outside the gospels are told in first person.

- **Voice**

In the gospel miracle stories, the explanation or interpretation is made by the voice of one of the characters rather than by the narrator. The editorial contribution of the evangelists may be seen in the introduction and the conclusion of the miracle story, but the heart of the story is explained with the voice of one of the characters. This section many times also contains the heaviest concentration of traditional material.

- **Perspective**

In the gospel miracle stories, the perspective is usually external, that is, the focus is on actions, occurrences and statements. There are some indications of an internal perspective or focus on thoughts and emotions when the reaction of the audience is presented in the conclusion.

Wire (1978:83-113) identifies four kinds of miracle stories that show how divine action breaks open closed, oppressive life systems:

- (1) Provision miracles portray divine provision in the midst of want.
- (2) Exorcisms represent God's displacement of arbitrary, restrictive, even violent powers with freedom for the possessed.
- (3) Controversy miracles picture God's intent to release the community from a variety of social and moral restrictions.
- (4) Request miracles are initiated at the request of the person or group who feels physically or psychologically impotent but who responds to the presence of divine power by requesting a miracle.

The Gospel writers included a wide range of the kinds of miracles Jesus performed. They depicted Jesus' power over the natural world, disease and handicap, the unseen world, and death. The writer of the Fourth Gospel selected seven signs or miracles to present the life and ministry of Jesus.

• Deduction

Miracle stories have narrative elements with reference to characters, events, people, voices, and perspectives. Wire, on the other hand, identifies four kinds of miracle stories that show how divine action breaks open an oppressive life system.

2.3.2.2 Pronouncement story

The stories should be classified according to the relationship between the stimulating occasion (the narrative) and the response (the pronouncement). According to the Pronouncement Story Work Group of the Society of Biblical Literature there are seven basic types of pronouncement stories: correction, commendation, objection, quest, inquiry, description, and hybrids (i.e., more

than one class exists). It is best to categorize the story according to its function and impact within the passage rather than imposing a sometimes foreign classification label (Cranfordville, 2002).

One of the distinctive subtypes in the Gospels is the pronouncement story. This is a brief story in which an event in Jesus' life is linked with a memorable saying or proverb by Jesus. Usually the event leads up to and culminates in the saying. The saying is embedded in the narrative in such a way that the two are remembered together (Ryken, 1987:381).

The pronouncement no doubt represents either the literary or the theological climax of the passage and many times, both. It should not be ignored when drawing final conclusions. For example, in the first pronouncement story in Luke (2:41-52), Jesus' pronouncement in verse forty nine contains the revelation of who Jesus is and how he is related to his heavenly father. This should be viewed as the basic teaching of the passage as opposed to any type of model parent-child relationship.

- **Deduction**

Stories should be classified according to the relationship between the narrative and the pronouncement. The pronouncement represents the literary and the theological climax of the passage.

2.3.2.3 Conflict or controversy stories

Conflict stories are the prototypical Gospel story—most like ordinary stories, they put Jesus against an opposing person or group. They give the Gospels much of their color and excitement, and they move the overall action inexorably toward the eventual trial and death of Jesus.

Jesus is always the protagonist in a conflict story, regardless of whether he or his opponents originate the conflict. We need to identify the antagonists or villains in such a story, as well as the reason for their antagonism against Jesus and the exact means by which they try to trap or defeat Jesus.

As for the progress of the action, we can usually plot the steps by which the conflict between Jesus and his opponents proceeds. In particular, we can note Jesus' strategies of defence and offence or counterattack. These stories are built on a back-and-forth rhythm in which Jesus always gets the advantage. We also need to interpret how the conflict is finally resolved, and determine the lesson we are intended to learn from this resolution (Ryken, 1987:380-381).

● Deduction

Conflict stories are the prototypical Gospel story, most like ordinary stories putting Jesus against an opposing person or group. In these stories, Jesus is always the protagonist regardless of whether he or his opponents originate the conflict.

2.3.3 The forms of Jesus' teachings

Jesus was an outstanding teacher. Without the use of modern-day audiovisual materials he captured the attention of his audience. Why was Jesus such a fascinating teacher? The *what* of his message and the *who*, i.e., the personality and authority, of the messenger all played a part in making Jesus an exciting teacher. But, another factor that made Jesus a great teacher is the exciting manner in which Jesus taught on the forms of his teachings (Stein, 1978:8).

The purpose of this part is to investigate some of the forms and techniques that Jesus used as the medium for his message.

2.3.3.1 Argumentation

Formal reasoning is seen in Matthew 6:28-30 in the passage about worry. Jesus used a form of reasoning called a *fortiori* argumentation. An *fortiori* argumentation is not so much a figure of speech as a type of argument in which the conclusion follows with even greater logical necessity than the already accepted fact or conclusion previously given. In other words, granted the first fact or conclusion, the subsequent conclusion is more certain and inescapable still (Stein, 1978:8).

And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is [alive] today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, [will He] not much more [do so for] you, O men of little faith?

[NASB Mt. 6:28-30]

Here the argument is clear. The contrast between the lowly flower and the pinnacle of God's creation clearly indicates that the God who so carefully adorns and cares for these lowly flowers will of course adorn and care for his children!

● Deduction

Argumentation used by Jesus in Matthew 6:28-30 indicates that the God who so carefully adorns and cares for the lowly flowers will also adorn and care for his children.

2.3.3.2 Metaphor

A metaphor is a comparison between two essentially unlike things. In contrast to a simile, however, where an explicit comparison is made ("The eye is like a lamp for the body'), the metaphor makes an implicit comparison ("The eye is the lamp of the body'). The Gospels contain numerous examples of such figures of speech, for Jesus was fond of using analogies. The following are some example of metaphors in the Gospels:

- I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. [NIV Mt. 10:16]
 - Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. " [NIV Mk. 8:34]
 - Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." [NIV Lk. 9:62]
 - "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. " [NIV Jn. 15:5]
-
- **Deduction**

A metaphor is a comparison between two essentially unlike things. Jesus used metaphors in his analogies throughout many of his sermons.

2.3.3.3 Irony

Both irony and metaphor are figures of speech in that they cannot be understood without rejecting what they seem to say (Booth, 1974:1). Also, many exaggerated claims have been made about both of these figures, including the premises that all good literature is ironic or metaphorical. Irony

is frequently encountered in literature, including biblical literature.

Muecke (1969:19) explained an accounting of irony's three constitutive elements:

- (1) First. Irony requires that there be two or more levels of discourse, one available to the victim of the irony, the other to the observer.
- (2) Irony requires that there be dissonance or tension between the two levels.
- (3) Finally, irony requires that someone – either the victim or the ironist himself – be innocent of the tension. In this way, the observer is invited to respond on more than a rational basis. The work of irony is ultimately a work of subtlety and shock.

Irony is the subtle use of contrast between what is actually stated and what is more or less wryly suggested. Frequently there is present a feigned sense of ignorance. When such a contrast becomes crude or heavy-handed and as a result loses much of its cleverness it becomes sarcasm (Stein, 1978:22). Some examples of irony in the Gospels are:

And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' "Then he said, 'this is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."' "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich towards God."

[NIV Lk. 12:16-20]

In this passage there is an unexpected and surprising conclusion to the elaborately made plans of the rich man. He never reckoned that he might not live as long as his plans demanded!

- **Deduction**

Irony is the technique implying exactly the opposite of what is actually stated.

2.3.3.4 Parables

The word παραβολή appears seventeen times in Matthew, thirteen times in Mark, and eighteen times in Luke. In the rest of the New Testament it appears only in Hebrews 9:9 and 11:19 (Young & Boardt, 1989:5). The number of parables is not as easily identified as the simple counting of the use of the word παραβολή might indicate (Jones, 1995:56).

Dodd's (1935:16) definition of a parable is one commonly found in books on the parables:

At its simplest the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.

Dodd is aware that a blending of classes takes place in comparing parabolic forms. The total impact of the parable does not wait upon its classification but is designed to "catch the imagination" of the listener and to lead him or her to the "one single point of comparison" (1935:8).

The classification of the parables of Jesus is not a matter of exact agreement among scholars. Jones (1982:32-33) describes the parables of the gospels as

"parabolic sayings," "simple parables," and "narrative parables." While somewhat simplistic, covering over a multitude of questions of a literary nature, the classification does enable marshal of similar kind to be joined together for comparison and discussion.

- **Parabolic Sayings**

Parabolic sayings, such as Matthew 5:13-"You are the salt of the earth," are simple metaphors which touch everyday life and are easily applied by the listener. The Sermon on the Mount contains a number of these "still picture" sayings (5:13; 6:24; 7:6). These parabolic sayings, Matthew indicated (Mt. 7:29), carried authority with the crowds who heard Jesus speak.

- **Simple Parables**

Simple parables, sometimes referred to as "similitudes," are a step beyond a "still picture" saying. The picture adds frames and becomes a simple story. The situations simple parables evoke may still be typical of daily life, but a formula of comparison may now introduce the saying. Jones (1982:94) gives "the paired parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost coin (Lk. 15:3-10), the Tower Builder and the Warring King (Lk. 14:28-32), and the Treasure and the Pearl (Mt. 13:44-45)" as examples.

- **Narrative Parables**

Narrative parables move beyond the simple story by adding details and progression. Jones (1982:94) identifies the "parables of the Rich Fool (Lk. 12:16-21), the Unjust Steward (Lk. 16:1-8), the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:30-37), and the Wicked Tenants (Mk. 12:1-9)" as narrative parables. The parable of the Prodigal Son also fits this classification.

- **Deduction**

A parable uses a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or daily life to capture the attention of the listener with its vividness or strangeness. It leaves in the mind sufficient doubt about its precise application in an effort to tease it into active thought.

2.3.4 Rhetorical devices

We can find some of the rhetorical devices in the Hebrew narrative that appear also in others kinds of prose and in poetry. Two important ones are chiasm and Parallelism.

2.3.4.1 Chiasm

Chiasm is a figure of speech, when two pairs (AB and CD) of words or propositions are disposed in such a way that a relation is obtained between one or the other word or proposition of the first pair and one or the other word or proposition of the second pair.

Chiasm is either direct if the relation is found between A and C and between B and D:

A love
B the enemies of you
----- and -----
C pray for
D those who persecute you

Mt. 5:44 (cf Lk. 6:27)

Or inverted when the relation is between A and D and B and C (Bauer, 1989:18):

Then was brought to him a demoniac

A blind

B and dumb;

And he healed him, so that the dumb man

C spoke

D and saw

Mt. 12:22.

(also) Jn. 5:21-25; 8:25-28.

2.3.4.2 Parallelism

When the order of the two terms of the second member is the same as the first member (ab/a'b'), one can speak of parallelism.

My soul praises the Lord

my spirit exults in God, my Savior.

Lk. 1:46-47

Here both syntax and semantics are parallel. In terms of grammar, both lines begin with a verb, continue with the subject (both followed by the first-person possessive), and then conclude with a direct object (colon A) or a prepositional phrase (colon B). Furthermore, the second line affirms and progresses beyond the thought of the first. It frequently has been noted that it is out of keeping with the conventions of parallelism to contrast "soul" and "spirit" as two separate entities within a person. On the other hand, B does not just repeat A. Morris (1976:76) has indicated that "exult" in the second colon is a much more intense word than "praise"; in the Greek, the verbs also differ in tense. Furthermore, Mary's expansion of "Lord" into "God, my savior" both identifies one specific function of the Lord and also personalizes the reference.

In this example it is evident that the following line essentially repeats the meaning of the first line. This is a twofold parallelism. Other examples of this kind of parallelism are found in:

Mark 2:21-22; 3:4, 28; 4:20, 30; 8:17, 18; 9:43-47; 10:38, 43-44; 13:24-25

Matt 5:39-40, 46-47; 6:25; 7:6; 10:24-25, 41; 12:30, 41-42; 12:30; 13:16;
23:29

Luke 6:37, 38; 12:48b; 13:2-5; 15:32; 17:26-29; 19:43-44; 23:29

John 3:11; 6:35, 55; 12:31; 13:16

Another form is chiasmic parallelism. A chiasmus is an inversion of parallel statements that result in a pattern ab//BA.

a Do not give dogs what is holy;

b And do not throw your pearls before swine,

B Lest they trample them under foot

A And turn to attack you.

Mt. 7:6

This example is chiasmic parallelism, for the “dogs” of (a) corresponds with “turn to attack you” of (A) whereas the “swine” of (b) corresponds to “trample them under foot” of (B).

Conclusion that can be drawn from Jesus’ use of parallelism is that Jesus must have spent time in organizing his teaching and preparing its form. Jesus carefully prepared “for his classes.” Some of the time that he sought to be alone was not only for the purpose of prayer (cf. Mark 1:35; 6:46; Lk. 5:16; 6:12; 9:28) but also to prepare *what* and *how* he would teach (Stein, 1978:32).

● Deduction

Chiasm and parallelism are rhetorical devices found in Hebrew narratives.

A advantage of literary form from the four gospels is that it provides the sermon almost automatically with forward movement and thus creates interest. Therefore, a preacher must wrestle with a passage creating tension and dialogue like Jesus' teaching.

2.4 LITERARY FORM OF THE EPISTLES

Twenty-one of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament are not in narrative form, but are epistles that are addressed to Christian communities in a pagan culture. Because Paul's letters played a dominant role in Christian communication, Bartlett (1993: 160) correctly argues, " In the legitimate enthusiasm for narrative preaching, we sometimes undervalue Paul. In some ways his letters are more immediate than even the liveliest biblical narratives." The genre of epistle was well-known in the Greek world. Paul was the first to adapt this genre for communicating with Christian churches.

Twenty-one New Testament books come under the literary category of epistle or letter. Deissmann (quoted by Fee & Stuart, 1982:44) divided this literary genre into two categories: letters and epistles. Other scholars do not make such a sharp distinction between letters and epistles. He believed that letters were nonliterary, that is, they were not intended for the public but for the person or persons to whom they were addressed. In contrast to the letter, Deissmann thought the epistle consisted of an artistic literary form intended for general public reading.

2.4.1 The form of epistles

The form of the Greek letter which, minor variations apart, was in general use for many centuries before and after Christ, and which was prescribed by the literary tutors, was as follows:

-
1. Preamble (sender, Recipient, Greeting)
 2. Formula valetudinis (wisher for good health, thanksgiving, etc.)
 3. Introduction to the main argument. (Body-opening)
 4. Main argument or body (Latin: corpus)
 5. Conclusion of main argument (Body-closing)
 6. Closing (Greetings, Random remarks ((sometimes)), Closing greeting)

Not all these categories appear, of course, in every letter. In the short ones in particular, written on a single papyrus sheet, certain elements are missing. But numbers 1,2, and 6, with their stereotyped formulas, appeared regularly, while a shorter or longer corpus was implicit (Botha *et al.*, 1985:6).

Ryken (2001:434) explained that the basic form of the New Testament epistles consists of a five-part structure. Opening (sender, addressee, greeting), Thanksgiving (prayer for spiritual welfare and remembrance or commendation of the spiritual riches of the addressee), Body, Paraenesis (exhortations) and Closing (final greetings and benediction).

According to this classification, Paul wrote epistles. His writings resemble the customary form of first-century Greco-Roman letters. Though he used a first-century letter form, Paul's content was theological. His typical greetings included theological terms such as grace and peace. The body of Paul's letters consisted of theological discussions and instructions. Even Paul's final greeting and farewell included theological content. We shall look more closely at some of these alterations in the various parts of the epistles.

2.4.1.1 Opening

In the sender-section he generally mentions his official status as servant and/or apostle of Christ. He lays especial stress on his apostleship when he is

not well known to his readers (Rom. 1:1-6) or when his apostolic authority is being questioned (Gal. 1:1).

His elaboration of the recipient-section serves particularly to remind the believers of the glory and the responsibility of their calling.

In the greeting-section Paul changes the opening greeting from the Greek *chairein* (greeting) to *charis* (grace) and adds the word "peace" (probably in imitation of the *shalom* of Jewish letters). Thus the neutral Greek "Greeting!" becomes the profound "Grace to you and peace." The Jewish liturgical greeting was taken over by the Christians in their worship, and this in all probability has influenced the greeting in Paul's letters. With Paul, then, the greeting of the Greek letter changes into the pronouncing of a blessing-greeting at the commencement of contemporary Christian worship (Botha *et al.*, 1985:9).

● Deduction

The opening is one of the literary forms of the epistles where mention is made of the official status as servant and/or apostle of Christ. Paulines's opening has a Jewish liturgical greeting.

2.4.1.2 Thanksgiving

If the opening may contain clues to the intent of the letter, such clues may be anticipated even more in the thanksgiving section. It is generally acknowledged that the thanksgiving period introduces the vital theme of the letter or the epistolary situation. For example, in 1 Cor. 1:7 Paul mentions the spiritual gifts which play such a large role in this letter, and in v.8 he touches on the subsequent theme of conduct by speaking of being guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. By contrast, the thanksgiving in Rom. 1:16-17

speaks of the power of the gospel and the righteousness of God, thus highlighting the theme of Romans (Greidanus, 1999:317).

Where in the Greek letter the thanksgiving mostly concerns the recipient's physical welfare, Paul thanks God for his readers' spiritual well-being (Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4; etc.), or else he voices a doxology (2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 1:2ff). Sometimes the thanksgiving section builds up to an 'eschatological climax', as in 1 Cor. 1:8f; Phil. 1:10f; 2 Thes. 1:10 (Botha *et al.*, 1985:10).

• Deduction

It is generally acknowledged that the thanksgiving element introduces the vital theme of the letter or the epistolary situation. In the Greek letter the thanksgiving concerns the recipient's physical welfare, Paul's thanks to God for his readers' spiritual well-being, or a doxology.

2.4.1.3 Body

In the beginning of the body Paul uses the disclosure formula: I want you to know, brethren (Rom. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:8; Phlm. 1:12). Once we find an expression of amazement (Gal. 1:6). Frequently the introduction or body-opening also indicates the theme of the main argument or that of the first main section of the letter (e.g., Rom. 1:16f; 1 Cor. 1:10; Gal. 1:6ff).

Roetzel (1975:34-35) observes that "a request or disclosure formula ('I beseech you...', or 'I would not have you ignorant...') serves as the threshold of the body, while the end is marked by an announcement of Paul's travel plans." Further, Paul usually relates something about himself near the beginning of the body. "In each case this autobiographical note is fully integrated into his theological argument. The report on his situation is made to impinge directly on the situation of his readers. By reciting the demands

made on him as an apostle of Christ, Paul is apprising his hearers that like demands may be made of them.

● Deduction

Here we can observe that the body of the Pauline letter is marked by an opening that indicates the theme of the main argument. The end is marked by an announcement of Paul's travel plans.

2.4.1.4 Closing

In line with the usage in the normal Greek letter Paul often closes his congregation by sending greetings. In Romans and to some extent in Colossians as well the list of those to whom he sends greetings is fairly lengthy (Rom. 16:3ff; Col. 4:10ff). Remarkably enough, there are three instances where he begins his personal greetings by saying that he pens them with his own hand (1 Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18; 2 Thes. 3:17). This section sometimes also includes instructions for the handling of the letter in question (Col. 4:16; 1 Thes. 5:27). In four of his letters Paul tells the believers to greet one another 'with a holy kiss' (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thes. 5:26). Instead of the stereotyped Greek farewell in the Pauline letters we have a blessing in which the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ has prime place (Rom. 16:20b; 1 Cor. 16:24; 2 Cor. 13:13) (Botha *et al.*, 1985:12).

● Deduction

The closing in the Pauline letters is characterized by a blessing instead of the stereotyped Greek farewell and sometimes includes instructions for the handling of the letter in question.

2.4.2 Rhetorical devices

If the Epistles are more religiously oriented than most other ancient letters were. They are also more literary. The writers were following an established genre of letter writing.

The Epistles appeal continually to our imagination. We cannot get their meaning without analyzing metaphors and similes. According to Sands (1932:153) Paul's diction is continually enlivened by metaphor, '*glueing* yourselves to the good', '*boiling* with the spirit', '*buying up* the opportunity', 'let the love of Christ *make its home* in you', let the peace of Christ be *umpire* in your hearts'. Other figures of speech also make the style of the Epistles continuously poetic and literary.

The Epistles are consistently literary, not only in their figurative language and proverbial style, but also in their highly patterned rhetoric. This artistry consists of antithesis, chiasm, climax, metaphors and parallelism. Almost any page from the Epistles will illustrate this conscious design. To get the full effect, we need print the phrases and clauses like poetry.

2.4.2.1 Antithesis

Antithesis is a marked characteristic of Paul's mindset and world view. He perceives the world as a battleground between good and evil, God and Satan. There is, moreover, the tension between this world and the spiritual world. Paul's rhetoric is the natural vehicle for his outlook:

What is sown is perishable,
What is raised is imperishable.
It is sown in dishonor,
it is raised in glory.

It is sown in weakness,
it is raised in power.
It is sown a physical body,
it is raised a spiritual body. (1 Cor. 15:42-44)

2.4.2.2 Chiasm

Chiasm may consist of a simple a-b-b-a pattern, or it may be further expanded. An example of a simple chiasm is found in Romans 11:22, which reads:

A Not then the kindness
B and the severity of God:
B' severity towards those who have fallen,
A' but God's kindness to you.

Welch (1981:214) provides a good example of a chiastic structure in a single paragraph of Galatians 4:1-7.

A The *heir* remains a *child* and *servant* (4:1)
B Until the time appointed of the *father* (4:2)
C When that time came, *God* sent forth his *Son* (4:4)
D Made under the *law* (4:4)
D' To redeem those under the *law* (4:5)
C' Because ye are sons, *God* sent forth the Spirit of his *Son* (4:6)
B' That ye cry Abba, *Father* (4:6)
A' That ye are no more a *servant* but a son and *heir* (4:7)

2.4.2.3 Climax

Climax is the arrangement of linguistic units in order of increasing

importance, so that the final element forms a particular peak. Botha *et al.* (1985:15) provides a good example of climax in his analysis of Romans 8:29f.

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined
to be conformed to the image of his Son ...
And those whom he predestined he also called;
and those whom he called he also justified;
and those whom he justified *he also glorified*.

2.4.2.4 Metaphors and allegories

Metaphors are a most important aspect of style. In Paul's case we find comparatively few original metaphors. Mostly he uses conventional metaphors from the Old Testament and Late Judaism as well as from other sources (Botha *et al.*, 1985:15). One of his favourites is that of spiritual warfare (Rom. 6:13; 13:12; 2 Cor. 10:4; 1 Thes. 5:8; 1 Tim. 2:3f; Eph. 6:11ff – in the last pericope he expands it into a full allegory).

Though Paul does not often go in for allegorizing, in Gal. 4:22ff we have one clear instance, where a deeper spiritual significance is given to various elements in the story of Abraham (see also 1 Cor. 10:1ff).

2.4.2.5 Parallelism

We find lyric poems or hymns incorporated into the Epistles, and they, too, advertise themselves by their poetic parallelism. A famous example is 1 Timothy 3:16

And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness:
He who was revealed in the flesh,

Was vindicated in the Spirit,
Beheld by angels,
Proclaimed among the nations,
Believed on in the world,
Taken up in glory. [NIV]

2.5 FINAL CONCLUSION ON BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON LITERARY FORMS IN SCRIPTURE

Literary forms in scripture covers a wide spectrum with the aim of effective communication. We have examined the Hebrew narrative, prophetic literature and literary for four gospels and the epistles relationship between form and literary. The conclusions can be drawn from perspectives on the on the literary forms in scripture:

1. Narrative is one of the most common genres and main literary type found in Scripture. The feature of the narrative is the scene, dialogue, and plot. This consists of three specifically organized important rhetorical devices (chiasmus, inclusion, and repetition).
2. Prophetic literature has a wealth of literary variety such as narrative, song, wisdom, and apocalyptic literature. They have value such as the arousing and fulfillment of figures of communication, style and arrangement.
3. Literary form of the four gospels contains the prominent elements (historical narrative, parable, dialogue, sermon, and proverb). Especially, metaphor, irony and parables can be characterized by the forms of Jesus' teaching.
4. The epistles employ rhetorical devices such as antithesis, chiasm, climax, metaphors and allegories as well as parallelism. This device focuses mainly a dominant role in the effective communication.

The writers of Scripture faced a communication problem similar to the one encountered by the contemporary preacher—finding the most effective rhetorical shape for their message (Long, 1989:12). Literary forms and rhetorical approaches in Scripture help for effective communication. Therefore, a preacher should pay attention to biblical literary form and dynamic communication.

The next chapter will review forms of sermon from recent history in order to attain effective communication in a sermon.

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER 3

BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES FROM RECENT HISTORY ON FORMS OF A SERMON

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate certain selections of form from three preachers. Some applicable forms of preaching will be analysed and explained. In this way certain fundamental forms of preaching may be explored. In this chapter the following issues will be dealt with:

- THE INDUCTIVE FORM : Fred Craddock
- NARRATIVE AND THE SERMONIC PLOT : Eugene Lowry
- A PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD : David Buttrick

3.1 THE INDUCTIVE FORM : FRED CRADDOCK

Davis published his *Design for preaching* in 1958, the main argument of which was that a sermon's "germinal thought" or "generative idea" has an energy, a vitality, inherent in itself (Davis, 1958:21). Davis's thoughts proved to be germinal indeed thirteen years later when Fred Craddock's work on inductive preaching was published. *As One Without Authority*, first published in 1971, is widely recognized as a watershed work in contemporary homiletics. Inductive preaching has come to be commonly associated with Fred B. Craddock in contemporary homiletical literature (Hamilton, 1992:98). Craddock makes a strong case for the inductive method of preaching. He is convinced that the inductive method is a form of preaching that incarnates the message of Christianity, being a homiletic form well suited to the content of

the Gospel and the nature of the Christian faith (Craddock, 1981:3-4).

This chapter will organize the discussion of Craddock's form of preaching, the inductive form, around the categories of structure, movement, unity, and imagination of the sermon.

3.1.1 Structure of the sermon

Assuming that the preacher has heard the Word of God and that conversation between text and congregation has occurred, how is the message to be shared? What is to be the form of the sermon? Craddock notes that there is no form in the Bible that can be designated "the form of a sermon". If anything, the presence of a great variety of literary forms in the Bible calls for a commensurate diversity in sermonic forms (Craddock, 1985:171-172).

The preacher has the alternatives of either selecting a form or of creating a form. Many preachers turn to the biblical text itself for their sermon form and Craddock encourages this congruence of biblical form and message. Indeed, Craddock believes that there are several advantages to shaping a sermon in the light of the biblical text. First, it ensures variety in form; second, it enhances the integrity of the sermon if both its form and content come from the same source; third, it encourages the preacher to discover the purpose of the biblical form (praise, correction, encouragement, judgement) and to replicate that purpose in his preaching. Finally, by inviting the question, "Will a change of form from the text to sermon alter the meaning of the text for the listeners?" (Craddock, 1985:179), it strengthens awareness of the sermon's reception. For these reasons, then, there is great value in sermon forms that are rooted in the biblical text itself.

The preacher may choose to create a form in accord with the inductive method which demands two things of a sermon outline. First, in inductive

preaching, structure is subordinate to movement. The preacher's primary concern is making the flow of ideas coherent while concerns about structure are secondary. Indeed, with inductive preaching, structure, which is often not noticeable to the congregation, exists to facilitate sermonic movement. Craddock (1981:140) suggests "Usually, for the skeleton to be showing, with a sermon as with a person, is a sign of malformation or malnutrition".. Second, in inductive preaching, the outline starts with the present experience of the hearers and moves to the point at which the sermon leaves the hearers to make their own decisions and conclusion. "It bears repeating that a preaching event is a sharing in the Word, a trip not just a destination and not handing over of a conclusion." (Craddock, 1981:146).

The preacher needs to consider several dimensions of the movement of the sermon in relation to its structure. Craddock makes several practical suggestions. First, one begins the preparation of the sermon with the conclusion, not the introduction, for the beginning point of the actual preparation process is knowing where the preacher and the congregation are going. It may even be helpful to write one's conclusion at the bottom of a piece of paper. Second, on a sheet of paper, plan the trip to the conclusion in outline form, remembering that it is important to sustain anticipation if all persons and all the faculties of each person are to make the complete journey. Playing on Mark 2:27, Craddock (1981:148) says "The outline is made for man, not man for the outline". Third, in the interests of creating an outline that sustains anticipation and hence movement, he notes that the preacher can learn much about how to gain the involvement and participation of his hearers by reflecting on poems, essays and parables that proved effective in his own experience (Craddock, 1981:148-149). Thus, Craddock (1985:166) states that effecting the quality of anticipation is a primary burden of movement in a sermon.

Therefore, where does one get an actual outline or structure for an inductive sermon? Craddock concedes that there is no single model or source. One

strategy might be to simply invert a deductive sermon, moving from 1, 2 to A, and then 1,2, to B. However, he warns that all the old problems of point sermons may simply re-appear in this way. Another strategy for the preacher struggling to find a form for a cluster of ideas is to adopt the form of the biblical text being preached. Indeed, Craddock (1981:153) says "If the speech-forms of the Bible were adopted, sermons would be strengthened by the fact that the text would not be forced to fit a new frame" .

Although the very nature of the inductive sermon means there is no single inductive outline or pattern, Craddock offers several suggestions for those who wish to use inductive movement in preaching. First, since preaching is oral communication, the preacher is advised to prepare his sermon with a view to how it will be preached. Craddock (1981:154-155) says "It is reasonable that one operates as much as possible in preparation as one will operate in delivery". Second, it may be helpful to list ideas down the page in brief phrases or sentences in order of occurrence, asking if the material moves and sustains interest to the end. Third, maintain the image of a trip by identifying the transition points in the story and marking them with appropriate phrases (Craddock, 1981:155). Fourth, underline the transitional phrases, using them as pegs upon which to hang a series of ideas. By noting these transitional expressions, the preacher can readily see the movement of his thought and the shape of his emerging sermon. The sole purpose is to engage the hearer in the pursuit of an issue or an idea so that he will think his own thoughts and experience his own feelings in the presence of Christ and in the light of the Gospel (Craddock, 1981:157).

What then does an inductive sermon look like in actual practice? Essentially it consists of a series of movements of ideas and thoughts that build toward a climax. The smaller units of the sermon are linked together by transitional phrases that enable the listener to put the pieces together. Altogether the inductive sermon form focuses on making the flow of ideas coherent so that it corresponds to the way people ordinarily experience reality and to the way

life's problem-solving activity goes on naturally and casually (Craddock, 1981:66).

Craddock concludes his discussion of sermonic structure and movement by noting that members of the congregation may experience inductive sermons as one long introduction with an implied point at the end. Although the minister may interpret such remarks in a variety of ways, it may indicate, says Craddock, that the people cannot shake off the finished sermon as easily as they shake the minister's hand. The sermon, not finished yet, lingers beyond the benediction, with conclusions to be reached, decisions made, actions taken, and brothers sought while gifts lie waiting at the altar (Craddock, 1981:158).

3.1.2 Movement in preaching

Craddock is convinced that movement is an important methodological consideration for effective preaching. Basically, notes Craddock, there are two directions in which thought moves: deductive and inductive.

Craddock argues that the inductive approach to preaching is a commendable contemporary communication strategy. Craddock (1981:55) notes that, using this approach, thought moves from the particulars of experience that have a familiar ring in the listener's ear to a general truth or conclusion. An inductive approach to preaching has at least two advantages. First, it is an approach to preaching in which the method of proclamation and the method of preparation coincide. In the pulpit on a Sunday morning the preacher simply replicates the inductive movement of thought experienced in his/her study during the week (Craddock, 1981:162). Second, it is a method of preaching that empowers the hearers to apply the conclusion to their own lives. Craddock (1981:57) argues "If they have made the trip, then it is their conclusion, and the implication for their own situation is not only clear but

personally inescapable”.

Craddock would reply that two matters are theologically basic to the inductive method. First, when preaching to the church, the preacher recognizes that he addresses the people of God and hence, the preacher's message is the people's message. Craddock (1981:60) argues “He speaks not only to them but for them and seeks to activate their meanings in relation to what he is saying”. Second, even when preaching to the unchurched, the preacher recognizes that a point of contact, rooted in the *imago dei*, exists between the listener and God. Thus, in inductive preaching, Craddock (1981:61) says “the congregation is more than just the destination of the sermon”.

Craddock stresses three aspects of the relationship between inductive movement and the listener. First, concrete experiences common to both the preacher and the listeners are integral to the inductive sermon. Craddock (1981:59) says “Fundamental to the inductive movement, therefore, are identification with the listener and the creative use of analogy”. The preacher and listener are inextricably linked by virtue of their shared experiences communicated in the preaching moment by means of analogies drawn from daily life. Craddock (1981:59) says “It cannot be overemphasized that the immediate and concrete experiences of the people are significant ingredients in the formation and movement of the sermon and not simply the point at which final applications and exhortations are joined”.

Second, respect for the capability and the right of the hearers to participate in the movement of the sermon and to arrive at their own conclusion is fundamental to the inductive approach (Craddock, 1981:62). Craddock (1981:62-63) notes “The advantage of this type of movement is that it creates and sustains interest, and it does so by incorporating anticipation”. The inductive sermon capitalizes on life's healthy and interesting moves from expectation to fulfillment.

The third aspect of the relationship between inductive movement and the listener pertains to the listeners' responsibility to complete the sermon. This invitation for the hearer to complete the sermon is characteristic of God's way of relating to humans. Craddock (1981:65) says "One could characterize God as reticent to be obvious, to be direct and hence to overwhelm, even when men called for some clear and indisputable evidence from heaven". Thus, the inductive approach to preaching calls for incompleteness and a lack of exhaustiveness in the sermon itself, a difficult assignment for preachers who want to guarantee that their message is heard.

Craddock (1981:123) notes that recent attempts to travel the distance from text to sermon reveal that, while exegesis and preaching are not identical, they are, nonetheless, inseparable (Craddock, 1981:110). They are distinct, yet interrelated activities. The problem at this point for Craddock is that sermons that unhook exegesis and preaching lack unity and movement whereas sermons that exhibit these qualities tend to dispense with either the biblical text or the contemporary situation. In response to the question, Is there another alternative?, Craddock makes two suggestions.

First, Craddock invites the preacher to use the same inductive process in delivery as he used in the preparation of his sermon. In traditional preaching, laments Craddock, the route from studying the text to structuring the sermon is like ascending a hill (inductive exegesis in the study) and then descending a hill (deductive sermonizing in the pulpit) with the congregation experiencing only the deductive side of the shift from inductive to deductive movement of thought.

Thus, while the preacher experiences the thrill of discovery as he ascends the hill by means of his inductive study of the text, the people experience no such joy for they must descend, starting with the preacher's conclusion, the summit of his work, and then moving down deductively to a consideration of the various life-related applications of his thesis. Craddock (1981:123-125)

says "What's wrong is the movement. Why not make the method of proclamation the same as the method of preparation?"

Second, if movement and unity en route from exegesis to sermon is to be achieved, says Craddock, then the preacher must give greater attention to the place of the congregation. He (1985:98) argues "Giving disciplined time and attention to the interpretation of one's listeners is critical for preaching". Indeed, in reality, the preacher does not study the text alone, or without his people, but rather, he studies the text from the perspective of the congregation's situation, bringing the congregation's circumstances to bear upon his understanding of the text and its message for them (Craddock, 1981:126). He (1981:132) recommends that the movement be dialogical: "the experience is not of a trip from text to people or from people to text but... both are actively involved".

● Deduction

The inductive approach to preaching helps to link the preacher and listener by virtue of their shared experiences communicated in the sermon moment, by means of analogies drawn from daily life.

3.1.3 Unity of the sermon

If movement is a primary characteristic of effective and persuasive preaching, then unity is essential to that movement (Craddock, 1981:100). Indeed, Craddock (1981:100) insists: "There can be no movement without unity, without singleness of theme". While the inductive sermon does not have "points," it does have a point, a single theme that governs the preacher's selection and rejection of material for the sermon. Craddock (1981:100) says "The contribution to the movement and power of a sermon made by the restraint of a single idea can hardly be overstated". In fact, the discipline of

this one idea contributes to the preparation, delivery, and reception of a sermon.

While preparing the sermon, the restraint of one governing idea releases the imagination. For Craddock, it is crucial for the topic to be firmly fixed in the preacher's mind as s/he prepares the sermon. "A broad topic or theme has no center of gravity, it draws nothing to itself.... But not so the precise and clear thesis. Like a magnet it draws potentially helpful material from current and remembered exposures to people and books" (Craddock, 1981:100). With a single idea in mind, the preacher is free to assemble a sermon, excluding what is irrelevant and including that which is pertinent to the single germinal idea that is the destination of his/her sermon. Also, during the delivery of the sermon, the presence of a single theme contributes to the forcefulness with which the sermon is communicated. For Craddock (1981:101), "The difference between sermons with the constraint of a single idea and those without such a constraint is like time difference between a moving stream and a stagnant marsh". The presence of a governing theme focuses the energy of the preacher on the unfolding of the single germinal idea that is the point of the sermon. Moreover, while listening to a sermon, the presence of a single focus contributes interest and meaning. Craddock (1981:102) says "Unity does for the sermon what a frame does for a picture".

How can the preacher say one thing and say it well? First, a thorough exegetical analysis of the text is really the only way to discover the governing theme for the sermon. Exegesis will indicate that, although the text may contain a cluster of ideas, all those ideas are really subordinate to a larger umbrella theme which may be treated in a single sermon or by means of several. Second, the desire to be thorough in one's treatment of a text may lead the preacher to sacrifice unity of theme. Thus, the preacher must take the time to discover the point of the story and allow that point to govern all other considerations. Third, the preacher should guard against the seduction of using the concordance to create a sermon. The preacher should resist any

temptation that short-circuits struggling, studying, and wrestling with the biblical text in search of a governing idea that is the key to a forceful sermon. Although unity may be difficult to achieve, Craddock (1981:105) says "the desired unity has been gained when the preacher can state his central germinal idea in one simple affirmative sentence".

Craddock observes that most sermons today exhibit a broken unity with part of the sermon oriented toward the past and the other part oriented toward the present. The primary reason for this lack of unity is the bi-polar nature of the task of preaching, or at least, of preaching that seriously struggles with what the biblical text said and what the text says. For Craddock, unity is essential to movement in preaching, but this unity requires an interpretive approach that bridges the distance between the past and the present with substantial continuity. As Craddock (1981:117) says, "the absence of serious interpretation of the biblical text endangers the Christian character of the sermon while the presence of such biblical interpretation endangers the movement of the sermon and the unity essential to that movement".

● Deduction

The topic of the sermon should be firmly fixed in the preacher's mind. During the delivery of the sermon, the presence of a single theme contributes to the forcefulness with which the sermon is communicated.

3.1.4 Imagination in preaching

Craddock concedes that the inductive form of preaching makes a heavy demand upon the preacher's imagination. For if the people are to hear the text as the preacher heard it in his study, then the preacher will not be satisfied to reduce his/her experience to conceptual structures like points, logical sequences, and moral applications. The preacher who desires to reflect what

s/he has experienced will do so, Craddock (1981:77) argues in paraphrase of Martin Heidegger, by means of "evocative images rather than conceptual structures".

Although imagination is crucial to all types of thinking and problem solving, Craddock believes its significance in our day has been reduced by those who associate imagination with fantasy alone. Yet, in Craddock's (1981:79) view, imagination, like hope, is essential to life "because imagination is ingredient to hope". For example, no thinking person would reduce hope's image of the lion and the lamb lying together to fantasy. Images are critical to the preaching event. Craddock (1981:80) argues "By means of images the preaching occasion will be a re-creation of the way life is experienced now under the Gospel".

The preacher's imagination is best nurtured, maintains Craddock, not by focusing on the use of imaginative words but by cultivating the preacher's ability to receive images. The preacher must remain alive to the ordinary sights and sounds of life. Craddock (1981:81) says "If the imagery of his sermons are to be real he must see life as life, not as an illustration under point two". Reading quality literature helps to keep the preacher sensitive toward life, especially reading in the absence of the pressure of preparing for the next sermon. The preacher's involvement in the life of the congregation is also an important factor in nurturing his/her capacity for empathetic imagination. Craddock (1981:92) argues "The preacher's task is to use evocative imagery that will allow his congregation to see and hear what he (she) has seen and heard". Of course, what the preacher has seen and heard is not information about God but "our existence as it is in the liberating light of God's graciousness toward us (Craddock, 1981:92).

But how does one preach "so that the images he has received are formed in the imagination of his hearers with clarity and force sufficient to effect changes in attitudes, values, and life directions?" (Craddock, 1981:92). Five

principles are critical to the function of imagination in preaching. First, the images should be drawn from ordinary life and cast in forms recognizable as real and possible (Craddock, 1981:92). Next, since the force of the sermon depends upon communicating that will be recognized by the hearers, the preacher's words need to be concrete so that they convey what can be heard, seen, smelled, touched, or tasted. For example, Craddock (1981:93) says "if the sermon revives the memory of the odor of burped milk on a mother's blouse it evokes more meaning than the most thorough analysis of 'motherhood.' ". An economic use of words is a further principle which the preacher should respect since communication, like revelation, must leave room for discovery (Craddock, 1981:94). Craddock also encourages the preacher to avoid all self-conscious interruptions in narration and description (Craddock, 1981:95). For example, interrupting the sermon with phrases like "We find in this story" or "We see out this window" only serve to draw attention away from the sermon to the preacher. Finally, Craddock calls for the preacher to use the vernacular in the pulpit if he wishes to communicate with images that awaken his hearer's imagination. Craddock (1981:95) says "The language used is to be one's own". These five principles, then, guide the preacher in his capacity to express what has been impressed upon him by life.

Of course, there are objections to the use of the aesthetic in homiletics, notes Craddock. Some may argue that it fails to contribute to human transformation and others that it does not appeal to everyone. But Craddock (1981:86-90) replies that "preaching's burden is to share the whole Gospel with the whole man".

● Deduction

Imagination is crucial to all types of thinking and problem solving as well as being an ingredient to hope. The preacher's task is to use evocative imagery that will allow his congregation to see and hear what he has seen and heard.

3.1.5 An evaluation of Craddock's sermon form

3.1.5.1 Strengths of Craddock's sermon form

A first strength of Craddock's strategy for effective communication in preaching is his emphasis on the value of movement within the sermon. As Eslinger (1987:123) states "for him as well as Lowry, preaching without movement is a homiletical mortal sin". For Craddock, sermonic movement is what sustains congregational interest in the preached Word. In my estimation, Craddock is also accurate in his assessment that the deductive method fails to enhance movement within the sermon.

A second strength of Craddock's strategy for effective communication in preaching has to do with what it posits about the goal of the preaching event. In his earliest work, Craddock (1981:63) argues that "fundamental to induction is movement of material that respects the hearers as...deserving the right to participate" in the anticipation that "moves from expectation to fulfillment". Although many contemporary preachers have learned to express themselves almost entirely in writing, Craddock rightly insists that preaching is orality not textuality.

A final strength of Craddock's strategy for effective communication in preaching is the central place it gives to the congregation. Craddock's homiletic strategy has been influenced by his ecclesiology. For example, he claims that the preacher does not study the text alone, or without the people, but rather, s/he studies the biblical text from the perspective of the congregation's respective situations (Craddock, 1981:123-125). Thus, Craddock's strategy is clearly listener-oriented preaching.

3.1.5.2 Weaknesses of Craddock's s sermon form

One weakness of the inductive strategy proposed by Craddock relates to the insistence that there can be no movement without singleness of theme. Craddock emphasizes the importance of reducing the message of the text to a single affirmative idea that contributes, he argues, to the preparation, delivery, and reception of a sermon. However, I agree with Eslinger (1987:125) who says, "the weak link in his approach is the assumption that the interpretive payoff of every text is a proposition which then becomes the homiletic payoff of every sermon form". What happens, asks Eslinger, when the preacher is working with one of Jesus' parables or one of the Johannine signs whose messages simply refuse to be reduced to a single simple affirmative sentence? In such circumstances the preacher's options are limited: either impose a theme upon the text from the outside or sacrifice sermon unity. For hermeneutical and homiletical reasons, neither option is attractive.

The other weakness of Craddock's strategy relates to its reduced teaching value. At least one of preaching's purposes in the church is teaching. Perhaps James W. Cox is right when he (1990:162) says, "I believe that it would be impossible to do a thorough job of consecutive Bible exposition or give a good account of the Bible's teaching without going at our task much of the time deductively".

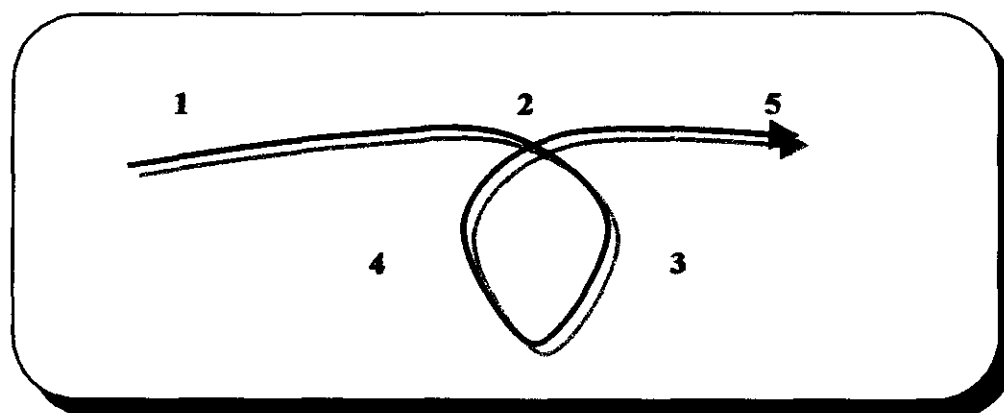
3.2 NARRATIVE FORM AND THE SERMONIC PLOT : EUGENE LOWRY

With regard to Lowry's form of preaching, in this chapter will first be considered his narrative approach. Then this chapter will describe Lowry's "suspense-driven" approach to sermons, attending to the five sequential stages of upsetting the equilibrium, analyzing the discrepancy, disclosing the

clue to resolution, experiencing the gospel, and anticipating the consequences. Finally, this chapter will provide an evaluation of Lowry's narrative approach.

3.2.1 Lowry's Narrative approach

Lowry sets forth a profile of a sermonic plot, noting that it comprises five basic movements or "stages" which function almost like an outline for a sermon. Lowry (1980:25) says "Because a sermon is an event-in-time, a process and not a collection of parts, it is helpful to think of sequence rather than structure". The five basic sequential stages to a typical sermonic process constitute a plot which may be visualized in the following way:



The stages are: (1) upsetting the equilibrium; (2) analyzing the discrepancy; (3) disclosing the clue to resolution; (4) experiencing the gospel; and (5) anticipating the consequences.

3.2.1.1 Upsetting the equilibrium

In the opening stage, the preacher poses the problem of the sermon in a manner that engages the listeners. Within the first two or three minutes, interest must be stimulated, and it is best achieved by upsetting the equilibrium of the listeners. Ambiguity arouses interest because as human

beings we have a commonly felt need to resolve it. Indeed, Lowry (1980:30) believes that "The primary purpose of sermon introductions is to produce imbalance for the sake of engagement". For Lowry ambiguity and its resolution is a basic form-ingredient of a sermon. There is always one major discrepancy, bind, or problem which is the issue. The central task of any sermon, therefore, is the resolution of that particular central ambiguity (Lowry, 1980:31). The strategy of upsetting the equilibrium of the listeners is comparable in function to the opening scene of a movie or play in which tension or conflict is introduced. Lowry (1980:25) says "A sermon introduction may upset the equilibrium of members of a congregation by means of an inconsequential ambiguity which serves simply to stimulate interest in the sermonic process".

Lowry offers several suggestions to the preacher intent on triggering ambiguity in the listeners' minds and hearts. First, if the introduction involves an ambiguity that is not actually related to the central plot, the preacher must be careful that it does not occupy the listener's attention at the expense of their focus on the central plot of the sermon. Second, it is often the case that the opening ambiguity will be the central discrepancy, especially in sermons addressing the contemporary situation and in sermons that are expositional or doctrinal. For Lowry, the objective is to trigger not simply intellectual ambiguity, but also an existentially felt ambiguity. Third, while establishing disequilibrium is the key to beginning the sermon, the next step is to keep it and not let it slip away in the next few moments of the sermon. Fourth, although the resolution of the plot is left hanging and incomplete in the first stage of the sermon, direction to the ambiguity must be given. Without disclosing the clue to its resolution, the listeners need to know the plot's direction. While the specific problem and its difficulty is clear, what generates interest at this stage of the sermon is the lack of resolution (Lowry, 1980:32-35). In other words, the underlying factor is the suspense created in the listeners because they do not know how the issue will be resolved. Thus, Lowry (1980:35) says "The first step in a preached sermon is to upset the equilibrium".

- **Deduction**

The preacher must pose a problem in the introduction of sermon by upsetting the equilibrium of the listeners. One way this can be done is by means of posing ambiguous statements to arouse the listeners. Because, as human beings, we have a commonly felt need to resolve them.

3.2.1.2 Analyzing the discrepancy

Once the opening bind of the sermon has been disclosed and the listeners have been thrown into disequilibrium, the preacher begins the second stage of the sermonic process which involves the task of probing the problem. At this stage the preacher diagnoses the discrepancy or problem, and asks, Why? For Lowry this diagnostic stage is not only the most lengthy of the five, often an amount of time equivalent to the other stages combined, but also, for two reasons it is the most critical stage. First, since the sermon seeks to resolve a problem, discrepancy, or bind, the analysis of the discrepancy determines the shape of the sermon as well as the good news proclaimed. Lowry's strategy assumes a correlation between the human problem and the gospel's response. The effectiveness of the cure prescribed to resolve the human dilemma or bind depends on the accuracy of the diagnosis (Lowry, 1980:36-37). Second, this stage is for Lowry (1980:37) "the chief vehicle for the maintenance of the sermonic plot". At this stage the preacher seeks to create the kind of suspense experienced while reading a good detective story that leaves you wondering who did it. The desire to learn the villain's identity propels the reader forward. "Likewise the suspense of not yet knowing why things are as they are... provides the homilist the opportunity of diagnostic wrestling – of theologizing" (Lowry, 1980:38).

Regrettably, laments Lowry, preachers often opt for description or illustration instead of diagnosis. "What is missing is depth – a probing into the causative

ingredients responsible for the situation" (Lowry, 1980:39). Diagnosis or analysis is what is needed – not description or illustration. Lowry uses the example of a sermon on apathy that calls for a diagnosis of apathy's causes. If a hearer discovers while listening to a sermon on apathy that fear of rejection may be a cause of his or her apathy, then the gospel will speak to the hearer because the good news of God's acceptance reduces his or her fear of rejection by others. In this way, Lowry (1980:40) argues, "the purpose of the sermonic process of analysis is to uncover the areas of interior motivation where the problem is generated, and hence expose the motivational setting toward which any cure will need to be directed". Lowry insists that the sermon must treat not only the behavioral level but also the more complicated motivational level. To illustrate his point Lowry notes that in the story of the prodigal son, the text does not raise the issue of why he left home so the preacher is free to imagine the motives for his departure. Perhaps a negative experience with his older brother coupled with a desire to see the world prompted his leaving? The point is that the preacher cannot rest content with mere analysis of human behavior, he or she must go behind the simplicity of behavior to the complexity of causality (Lowry, 1980:40-41).

During the preparatory stage prior to the sermon, the actual process of diagnosis/analysis is easier to state than effect. Ultimately, the preacher must repeatedly ask why the discrepancy/bind/problem exists until he or she reaches the revelatory "Aha" stage (Lowry, 1980:41-42). Since Lowry's approach assumes a correlation between the human condition and the gospel's response, the need for in-depth analysis is critical. "When this analysis is superficial, the gospel as proclaimed must of necessity feel like a 'pat answer'; it will lack credibility" (Lowry, 1980:43).

Also, concerning the actual sermon stage, it is important for the preacher to go through the process of analysis inductively with the congregation in a fairly complete, though modified fashion. The same principle is operative in such a sermon as in the detective story where, although the author already

knows who did it, the reader experiences the drama of discovery by repeatedly asking, "Who did it?" In the sermon itself the process of analysis moves the listeners through numerous dead-end routes until the decisive clue is disclosed. If the clue to resolution (stage three) is to be existentially real, and if the gospel is to be heard (stage four), the stage must be prepared by the ambiguity explicit in the analysis of the discrepancy. The purpose, then, for stage two is not simply for a resolution to be reached but also for a readiness for resolution to be developed (Lowry, 1980:45).

- **Deduction**

The second stage of the sermonic process involves the task of probing the problem. At this stage the preacher diagnoses the discrepancy or problem, and asks, "Why?" S/he must then remember to answer this question when concluding.

3.2.1.3 Disclosing the clue to resolution

Working with the assumption that we live in a cause - effect world, the ultimate goal of the problem-solving process is to provide the so-called "missing link" or an explanation that accounts for the problem. For Lowry, when the explanation is found and disclosed, it functions as the bridge from problem to solution, from itch to scratch, and enables the listeners to view the problem from a fresh perspective (Lowry, 1980:47).

Also, characteristic of the problem-solving process is the encounter with numerous "dead-end" solutions that must be discarded so that one can press on toward the real solution which, once discovered, is, in gestalt terms, the "aha," the missing piece that puts the puzzle into proper focus. Lowry (1980:48) says "Such a revelatory clue is experienced by the congregation rather than simply known".

Peculiar to the homiletical revelatory clue is the fact that it comes as a surprise; it's not exactly what one anticipated; it turns things upside down; it's what Lowry (1980:48) calls "the principle of reversal". Lowry (1980:56) says "The process of reversal as presented in a sermon can be likened to the action of pulling the rug out from under someone". Of course, the preacher must first lay the rug before he pulls it. Then, with the rug well laid, it is reversal time. While the principle of reversal seems to characterize Jesus' parables, it is found elsewhere in Scripture as well, for example in the story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. God's command to sacrifice Isaac was really a seemingly nonsensical command for Abraham to destroy the only logical means God had for fulfilling his promise to Abraham. However, Lowry believes that the principle of reversal is more than a literary device. It is rooted in the gospel for there is something about the gospel which is a reversal of the world's way of viewing truth. Lowry (1980:60) says "The fundamental mistake of the liberal Protestant pulpit of the last forty years is that it presumes that the gospel is continuous with human experience". However, such a continuity is only the case after the gospel has reversed human experience by turning it upside down.

So far Lowry envisions a sermon that starts by making contact with the members of a congregation at the point of their human predicament (stage one). It then moves through an inductive analysis of the predicament (stage two) to disclosing the clue to the resolution of the issue (stage three) by means of some kind of reversal thereby setting the stage for the proclamation of the Gospel.

● Deduction

The ultimate goal of the problem-solving process is to explain the problem. When the explanation is found and disclosed, it functions as the bridge from problem to solution, enabling the listeners to view the problem from a fresh perspective.

3.2.1.4 Experiencing the Gospel

The listener's readiness to experience the gospel is dependent upon the depth of analysis achieved in the two previous stages. Regrettably, an attitude of impatience may lead to an improper diagnosis and cause what Lowry (1980:62-63) calls a "homiletical short circuit" which is "a giant and ill-fated leap from the beginning of stage two (analysis) to stage five – which is the stage of anticipating what can or ought to be done in light of the intersection of problem and proclamation of the gospel". For example, the issue of one's identity, an illustration Lowry uses, can be short-circuited if the preacher assumes that it is incumbent upon us to search for self and proceeds to offer suggestions in the sermon on how people might find their identity. However, it is a false assumption for it seeks to find what can only be given, Lowry (1980:63) argues: "Instead, the gospel declares that we have been found – that identity is a gift one can never obtain or reach on the basis of human effort".

Another critical factor is the matter of sermonic timing. With respect to the above illustration for example, "it would be fatal homiletically to announce this good news at the beginning of the sermon" (Lowry, 1980:64). On the other hand, when the context has been properly set in stages one, two and three, when the congregation experiences the utter futility of the search for identity, then the gospel will be proclaimed effectively and credibly, i.e., the gospel does what it says. Of course, Lowry reminds us that the content of the gospel proclaimed in stage four must fit the diagnosis of stage three. Lowry (1980:64) says "The cure must match the disease". It is not difficult to determine what the gospel has to say to a clearly and deeply diagnosed issue. Indeed, Lowry (1980:65) says "When I have done my diagnostic homework and the decisive clue has emerged, the good news has fallen into place sermonically as though pulled by a magnet".

Again, with Lowry's strategy the sermon begins inductively, moves toward

the clue to resolution, revealing the dead-ends along the way and turning things upside down, and then it proclaims the gospel deductively. Once the gospel has been proclaimed, the homilist is ready to ask about the matter of consequences.

● Deduction

A preacher begins a sermon inductively. It moves toward the resolution, revealing dead-ends along the way and turning things upside down before proclaiming the gospel deductively. When the context has been properly set in stages one, two, and three, and when the congregation experiences the utter futility of the search for identity, the gospel can be proclaimed effective and credible.

3.2.1.5 Anticipating the consequences

Stage five explicates the future in light of the good news experienced in stage four. "Plot-wise," Lowry (1980:67) says, "it is the stage of effecting closure". Essentially the preacher asks what can be anticipated in light of the gospel's intersection with the human condition. The sermon as homiletical plot is different in two important respects when compared with the more traditional sermon construction. First, the traditional sermon reaches its climax in the conclusion's invitation or call to commitment, whereas the sermon as homiletic plot reaches its climax in the resolution stage where everything is turned upside down and viewed in a fresh light (Lowry, 1980:68). The perception of apparent similarity between the two types of sermons is related to the fact that the final stage of the homiletical plot sermon, anticipating the consequences, is in the same position time-wise as the call to commitment of the traditional sermon. The second difference is manifestly theological. When traditional preaching makes the invitation for a human response the climax of the sermon, it is guilty of works righteousness for it puts the focus on us

rather than on God's activity. Lowry (1980:69) says "To make the call to commitment the central focus of a sermon is to place ourselves in the limelight, where we have no business being". Instead, Lowry (1980:69) says "The focus of our preaching is upon the decisive activity of God, not upon us, and hence the climax of any sermon must be stage four—the experiencing of the gospel". While human response is critical, it is not the center of gravity for the sermon. What is the center is the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The preacher is able to call for a response at stage five only because the gospel has effected a new freedom to choose. Lowry (1980:70) writes "Freedom is a consequence of the grace of God". This is a truth illustrated so very well in the story of the woman of Mark 14:1-10. The gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed generates the ability to respond.

In summary, Lowry's "suspense-driven" strategy consists of five sequential stages of upsetting the equilibrium, analyzing the discrepancy, disclosing the clue to resolution, experiencing the gospel, and anticipating the consequences.

While some modification in the five stages of the sermon process may be needed on occasion, Lowry (1980:76) says "there is one essential form which I believe indispensable to the sermon event, and that one essential is ambiguity". For Lowry variations on the above five step process may be made as long as the glue of ambiguity is preserved. The major exception occurs when preaching a biblical narrative sermon for the biblical narrative has its own plot and its own ambiguity needing resolution. It does not need another plot line superimposed on top of it (Lowry, 1980:76). Other variations are also possible. Sometimes the anticipated consequences to the narrative plot may be unstated or only hinted. At other times, for example a funeral sermon, the opening stage of the sermon may be omitted. On still other occasions long drawn out diagnostic analyses may be inappropriate. Yet the most suitable way of achieving variety according to Lowry is by altering the form of the discrepancy from "why" to "how" or "when" or "where". However, for Lowry (1980:80) "whatever kinds of variation are utilized in the plot formation of a sermon, the glue of appropriate, ambiguity is necessary".

● Deduction

To communicate effectively a preacher has to understand his or her audience and adjust the message accordingly. The preacher should ask what can be anticipated in light of the gospel's intersection with the human condition.

3.2.2 Preparing Narrative sermons

Lowry devotes considerable space to the subject of preparing a narrative sermon. Indeed, his book, *How To Preach A Parable*, is a "how-to" volume designed to help preachers prepare narrative sermons. What motivates Lowry's significant attention to the matter of preparing narrative sermons is the mistaken general notion that only the rare and gifted preacher can preach narrative sermons (Lowry, 1989:13). Of course, Lowry (1989:15) rejects the idea and boldly asserts that "narrative preaching is not an esoteric art form reserved for the few. All of us can utilize the method—indeed, I believe, ought to".

Here several aspects will be considered of Lowry's treatment of the task of preparing a narrative sermon including suggestions for the preliminary stage of sermon preparation, pointers in telling a story, implications of viewing the sermon as an event-in-time, understanding the properties of a story, and creativity and sermon preparation.

3.2.2.1 Ordering experience

If the sermon is to become an event-in-time, Lowry believes it will require a paradigmatic shift in thinking about sermon preparation: it will demand a radical shift in thinking that moves from ordering ideas to ordering experience. Most preachers, observes Lowry, tend to think space rather than

time when it comes to sermon preparation. As a result they set about ordering ideas when preparing a sermon. Instead, Lowry invites us to imagine a sermon as an ordering experience. The change in perspective will focus our attention on the congregation rather than on a piece of paper in front of us. Knowing their existence in time (actually several times), we now perceive our work as doing something with their twenty minutes of listening time (Lowry, 1985:13). What will arrest their "times", says Lowry, is not ideational content but a story. Such an approach involves action, movement, duration—elements of time. Lowry (1985:13) argues "A moving sermon is more like a trip that takes us from here to there through the medium of time—from then to now". For Lowry the compass readings for this trip are taken from biblical narratives, in particular Jesus' teaching strategy which seems to order experience in time rather than ideas in space. However, as persons preparing sermons, preachers need to be aware of the full implications of this shift in focus from ordering of ideas to ordering experiences. Indeed, the paradigm shift encompasses several major considerations which Lowry presents as a series of contrasts between the ordering ideas and the ordering of experience (Lowry, 1985:14-28).

The first is the difference between the task of organizing and that of shaping. In traditional preaching the preacher is advised to identify a main thesis and then organize subsidiary points under the main point with a view to achieving unity of thought and focus. However, this approach suffers in several respects. One problem is that disunity characterizes most traditionally prepared sermons. Lowry (1985:14-15) says "One speaks of attaining unity only when one assumes it is not already there". Indeed, often a typical traditional sermon is several complete ideas barely glued together. Another problem is a lack of sermonic movement. The disparate parts of the traditional sermon are complete thoughts. Lowry (1985:15) notes "There is nothing that can close down attention more easily than a complete thought". An ever larger problem with the image of ordering ideas is that it assumes the preacher has mastered the biblical material rather than being called into question and challenged by

it. Lowry (1985:15) says: "One gets the truth in place, declares it, puts it into a proposition. Putty in one's hands". But Scripture confronts us, Lowry (1985:15) argues "It is we who need figuring out, not the Bible". Instead of controlling and organizing, Lowry invites the preacher to listen and to shape experience by attending to movement rather than thought. Thus, the preacher's task is to shape experience, not organize ideas.

A second difference between ordering ideas and ordering experience while preparing a sermon, relates to the form of the sermon. If one's task is to organize ideas, the result will be a sermon form that is a structure. But if one's task is to shape experience then the sermonic form will be a process. One way to note the difference is by comparing the sermon notes for organizing ideas with those for shaping experience. The former move vertically, resettling a building blueprint, while the latter move horizontally and look more like a road map. A process sermon moves in a more linear fashion because life is experienced in time (Lowry, 1985:17). Another way to state the difference is by considering the grammar of the central points. With a sermonic structure the key points are declarative propositions that convey finality, whereas with a sermonic process the central points are questions and transition markers that function like road signs guiding one to the destination. Finally, in a sermonic structure the points are often interchangeable whereas in a sermon imagined as process the markers are like road signs that cannot be changed without altering meaning. Lowry (1985:18) says "process road markers are in series".

A third difference between ordering ideas and ordering experience in the preparation stage relates to sermonic focus. The preacher organizing ideas into a structured form will invariably focus on a theme and seek to discover a unifying ideational thread (Lowry, 1985:19), whereas a preacher shaping experience into a process form will focus on events and, as Buechner testifies, if there is a theme it emerges through the events that take place and the interaction of the characters (Lowry, 1985:19).

A fourth difference between ordering ideas and ordering experience in the preparation of a sermon relates to an important preparation principle. Lowry (1985:20) notes while doing the work of preparing a sermon, the preacher unconsciously evaluates his or her progress. If the preacher has learned to imagine the sermon as the ordering of ideas, then the yardstick for assessing progress will be substance: Are you getting it said? Substance as the underlying principle of sermonic evaluation, notes Lowry, assumes that God's revelation in Scripture is essentially propositional in form. Yet even those who subscribe to a non-propositional view of revelation seem to utilize the principle of substance. Lowry (1985:21) says "It means that homiletical theory has drawn heavily upon the principles of rhetoric and unwittingly borrowed a principle that is not altogether suitable for our task". By contrast, if a preacher imagines the sermon as ordering experience, the measuring stick will be resolution: Are you getting there? However, Lowry (1985:20) cautions that "narrative trips are different from car trips in that often resolution increasingly becomes more remote and difficult, apparently, until by some strange shift or move the resolution happens with utter surprise".

A fifth contrast between ordering ideas and ordering experience has to do with the final product of the preparation stage. Lowry (1985:22) writes "If the preacher is ordering ideas, the resultant structural form likely will be an outline and if the preacher is ordering experience the resultant process form is plot". The outline fits the informational image of preaching it represents, observes Lowry, whereas there is some kind of sequential ordering in a plot including an opening conflict, escalation or complication, a watershed experience (generally involving a reversal) and a denouement (that is, the working out of the resolution) (Lowry, 1985:23).

A sixth difference between ordering ideas and ordering experience in preparation relates to the means by which the preacher produces an outline or a plot. An outline is generally acceptable to those who seek to order ideas if it makes sense and communicates the central theme with clarity. Lowry

(1985:24) notes, "What's critical is 'cognitive coherence'". By contrast, an effective plot-like sermonic product exploits ambiguity and suspense. The critical question, Lowry (1985:24) argues, will be "whether ambiguity based on discrepancy is maintained successfully until the preacher is ready to resolve matters with the gospel". With plot the focus is not on the test of coherence but on the test of correspondence. As Lowry (1985:24) puts it, "does the ambiguity and/or suspense maintained by the preacher resonate as real as the listeners experience life?"

A final contrast between ordering ideas and ordering experience in preparation relates to the goal of the sermon. Understanding is the bottom line for those who imagine the sermon as ordering ideas, whereas some kind of happening is the critical issue for those who imagine the sermon as ordering experience. For Lowry a sermon is an event-in-time, and hence, he opts for happening.

Recognizing that a radical shift in sermon preparation from ordering ideas to ordering experience will not occur without a "push," Lowry believes that an appropriation of the power of story provides it.

- **Deduction**

The form of the sermon should demand a radical shift in thinking that moves from ordering the ideas to ordering the experience, recognizing that a radical shift in sermon preparation will not occur without a push. An appropriation of the power of story provides such evidence.

3.2.2.2 Preliminary steps

Lowry identifies two preliminary and difficult stages of sermon preparation.

First, there is the stage of “wandering thoughtfulness”. As the preacher contemplates Sunday’s sermon he or she notes potential ideas, reads the lectionary texts, pulls out previously prepared long-range sermon planning notes, and checks the denominational calendar. Lowry (1980:17) says “At best this stage is one of imagination; at worst it is the stage of anxiety”. Second, there is the preliminary matter of settling on a sermonic idea. When completed, Lowry (1980:17) says, “This stage represents a transition to a very peculiar state of knowing implicitly that a sermon can happen”. Since Lowry believes the sermon is a narrative plot, the sermonic idea emerges at the intersection point between problem (itch) and solution (scratch). Thus, he suggests that we begin this preliminary preparation stage by choosing one of these two poles as a starting point and then moving thoughtfully in the opposite direction until the discrepancy or bind is known and felt (Lowry, 1980:81).

According to Lowry, the following steps are instrumental in giving birth to a sermonic idea. (1) Select a source like a biblical text, congregational need, ethical issue. (2) Identify the material as either problematic, solutional, or resolutional. (3) Press the problem or solution into more specificity by considering its opposite. (4) Experience the bind or discrepancy at the intersection point between problem and solution or when a “problematic itch” intersects with a “solutional scratch” the sermonic idea is born. (5) Set the material within the five stage sermonic plot pattern explicated above (Lowry, 1980:83).

● Deduction

For narrative sermons, there are two preliminary and difficult stages of preparation namely, wandering thoughtfulness and the matter of settling on a sermonic topic.

3.2.2.3 Sermon creativity

Recognizing that a narrative sermon requires some creativity on the part of the preacher, Lowry addresses the question of how preachers can be more creative in their sermon preparation. Three convictions govern Lowry's (1985:98) suggestions on creativity in sermon preparation: first, creativity is not something a few people possess but rather a potential result we all possess to some degree; second, although one cannot choose to be creative, one can choose the behavioral patterns that stimulate creativity; third, the key to creativity lies in releasing the creative preconscious mind from the controls of routine consciousness.

Lowry encourages preachers to behave in a certain way in order to be more creative during their sermon preparation time. First, he advises alternating work with other activities. Creativity is most likely to be released, says Lowry, after one has experienced the hard work of focused, intensive, and conscious deliberation of the problem and/or issue of the text quite apart from any consultation of the exegetical experts and without reaching any conclusions about its resolution.

Second, Lowry urges preachers to prepare sermons by talking to oneself, with another person, by role playing, and by using free association. During the early stage of the gestation period of sermonic preparation, creativity often receives assistance by talking the sermonic ideas out loud either with or without another person present. Lowry (1985:101) even suggests having a kind of role playing dialogue with the characters in the text. Third, the most important factor, according to Lowry, is to begin writing a sermon before you think you are ready. Here Lowry is following the lead of narrative artists who speak of allowing the story to lead them toward the plot (Lowry, 1985:103-104).

● Deduction

The preacher should be creative during sermon preparation time. Such creativity may involve talking to oneself, discussion with another person, role playing, and using free association.

3.2.3 An evaluation of Lowry's sermon form

3.2.3.1 Strengths of Lowry's sermon form

The first strength of Lowry's narrative form of effective communication in preaching is its power to capture the attention of the people in today's pew. If, as Craddock suggests, the first goal of a sermon is to get heard, then Lowry's narrative plot sermonic form will be heard. Lowry defines plot as "the moving suspense of a story from disequilibrium to resolution". For Lowry plot is the journey from "problematic itch" to "resolutional scratch". Thus, a commendable feature of Lowry's sermonic strategy is that the unresolved tension in his homiletical plot has the power to pull the listener along until the discrepancy is resolved. It is a listener-oriented style of preaching.

A second strength of Lowry's strategy of sermon form for effective communication in preaching is its listener-oriented nature. Since Lowry encourages preachers to design sermons around an investigative search for a resolution to the text's problem or trouble, it overcomes many of the problems of the static outline and provides a way for the listeners to become active participants in the preaching moment (Long, 1989:100).

A third strength of Lowry's narrative approach relates to his attention to sermon preparation. Lowry has provided preachers with a veritable road map to sermon preparation and communication. His three major works, *The Homiletical Plot*, *Doing Time in The Pulpit*, and *How To Preach A Parable*,

are essentially handbooks on how to preach a narrative sermon.

A final strength of Lowry's narrative approach relates to his careful explanation of the paradigm shift required of those who wish to order experience rather than order ideas. Anyone reading Lowry's discussion of the seven antitheses between ordering ideas and ordering experience cannot fail to grasp the difference between space-oriented discursive preaching and time-oriented narrative preaching.

3.2.3.2 Weaknesses of Lowry's sermon form

The first weakness of Lowry's narrative approach is that it may be a method that requires more creativity than the average preacher possesses. To be sure, Lowry recognizes that creativity is a factor in preparing narrative sermons and hence he anticipates this criticism by suggesting that creativity is not a gift possessed by the few but rather a potential result stimulated by choosing the right behavioral patterns. Lowry's method is not easy to master. Indeed, it is a method that requires reading and re-reading his suggested stages, making a point of knowing what each stage requires the preacher to do, and how each step fits into the whole movement of the sermon (Blair, 1982:23-25).

A second weakness in Lowry's narrative form concerns its purported ability to lead the listener to the same new insights the preacher experienced while preparing the sermon. Lowry's homiletical plot strategy with its sudden reversal or loop attempts to lead the listeners to the place where they suddenly say, "Aha! I have discovered a new truth!" However, while the preacher may indeed gain new insights during the process of preparing to preach, Thomas Long (1989:100) says "it is not at all clear that marching someone else through those steps will generate the same 'Eureka!'".

A final weakness of Lowry's narrative plot is related to its strength, namely,

its problem-solving normative pattern. Lowry's homiletical plot remains a problem solving sermonic form although he labels it "narrative" (Long, 1989:100). While the problem solving form works to create listener interest as noted above, the concern here is, as Thomas Long (1989:101) states that "the preacher will be tempted to form every sermon to a pattern so well received". Moreover, if the problem solving strategy is repeatedly employed in the pulpit Sunday after Sunday, it may lead the people to incorrectly conclude that the gospel's goal is solving problems (Long, 1989:101). Furthermore, how can one form be normative? As Long (1989:101) rightly argues: "The gospel is too rich, complex, and varied to be proclaimed through a single sermon form".

3.3 PREACHING FORM IN A PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD : DAVID BUTTRICK

Buttrick's phenomenological approach to preaching is best described by discussing his understanding of the various components (preaching in moves, preaching and framework, preaching as imaging, language and preaching). Finally, this chapter will provide an evaluation of Buttrick's homiletical approach.

3.3.1 Preaching in moves

Buttrick invites preachers to think of biblical passages as 'film-clips from motion pictures' (Buttrick, 1994:83). Biblical texts have movement and meaning occurs in movement as it travels from one understanding to another. Accordingly, he urges the contemporary preacher to favor "mobile systems of sermon construction" as opposed to fixed categorical development. For Buttrick, sermon construction ought to travel through congregational consciousness as a series of immediate thoughts, sequentially designed and

imaged with technical skill so as to assemble in forming faith (Buttrick, 1981:55-56). At the outset then, it may be appropriate to describe Buttrick's homiletic as a "motion-picture strategy" (Long, 1989:101-102).

When Buttrick speaks of sermons as bundles of words or talks ordered in sequences called "moves," he is intentionally avoiding the older terminology of "points". "The word 'point' is peculiar; it implies a rational, at-a-distance pointing at things, some kind of objectification" (Buttrick, 1987:23). Instead of points, Buttrick prefers to speak of sermons in terms of developing scenarios, or movements of thought tied together from beginning to end by some sort of logic (Buttrick, 1987:23-24).

Buttrick speaks of these moves from a background informed by rhetoric, the study of words in motion. Instead of disparaging rhetoric, he demonstrates the necessity of an understanding of rhetoric for preaching. He observes, for example, that while the movement of ideas in preaching is slower than everyday conversation and the attention span of today's congregation is short, with about four minutes for each conceptual idea and twenty minutes for a sermon with five or six sequenced subjects, the pulpit's power to form faith consciousness is simply awesome. However, for Buttrick, good preaching, which imitates the way consciousness grasps and understands, involves the imaging of ideas and the structuring of concepts. In short, a preacher strives to form conceptual understanding in communal consciousness by preaching a sermon that involves a sequence of subject matters arranged in some sort of structural design with each simple meaning developed into a move or language module that is between three and four minutes in length (Buttrick, 1987:28).

Every move is built according to a specific blueprint, insists Buttrick. All moves have three parts: an opening statement, a closing statement and development in between. The opening statement of a move is usually preceded by a pause in speaking. Studies indicate, says Buttrick, that

audiences are most alert after a brief pause in a sermon. The beginning of the move is critical for the preacher must capture the listeners' attention in a few short sentences. While oblique starters may create suspense, the preacher should avoid the delayed start for they fail to focus consciousness and often irritate an audience. The all-important goal of the opening statement is to fix the congregation's focus on the subject at hand like a camera lens zooming in on its target. Buttrick concedes that the opening statement is difficult to prepare because of its multiple functions. In addition to fixing focus, the opening statement of a move must establish connective logic with the preceding move, the perspective of the move, and the mood of the move. So Buttrick (1987:40) writes: "Unless each move, at the outset, structures in consciousness, a sermon will not mean!".

The second important part of an individual move is developing the focus idea. For Buttrick, since congregations consist of people who are "being-saved" in the world, they have a peculiar double consciousness. Hence, drawing on rhetorical wisdom, he suggests that each move will develop from three basic rhetorical postures: first, preaching will involve bringing out various understandings of the Christian faith by means of explanation, metaphor, analysis, exploration, and analogy; second, preaching will include associating Christian convictions with lived experience by means of testimony, example, illustration, and imagery; and third, Christian preaching will disassociate or distinguish Christian understandings from other social attitudes and ideas. Of course, within each of the these three rhetorical strategies there may be different orientations labeled temporal, spatial, social, and personal (Buttrick, 1987:40-43).

The third critical part of a move is closure. If a single subject matter is to form in group consciousness, the preacher must return to the initial idea of the move and reiterate its focus at the conclusion of the move. Indeed, to the extent that the preacher may even elect to use the exact sentence with which the sermon began, the closing statement must always return to the starting

idea of the move. Thus, what is required is not compound sentences, or questions, or quotations, but rather a simple, terse, final statement with a strong definite noun. "With closure," says Buttrick of preachers, they frame a field of meaning in consciousness so as to be able to shift focus in a different direction (Buttrick, 1987:52). In Buttrick's view, each move is developed differently and with care so that it will begin and end with sufficient strength to form faith in communal consciousness. Every move then will have an opening statement, development, and then closure.

But if a sermon is to reshape the faith consciousness of the people of God, every move, insists Buttrick, will also exhibit varied points of view. Buttrick reminds the preacher that consciousness for modern men and women is perspectival. Hence, if preaching is to fit into the consciousness of twentieth-century people in a natural way, it too must be perspectival. Since point of view governs the style of preaching, one must be aware of differences in point of view and know how to employ different perspectives or stances in preaching. So Buttrick carefully defines the several categories of point-of-view.

Stance is the spatial (speaking while lying on your back beneath a pine tree) or temporal (speaking in present time) position from which one speaks. Orientation is the direction of your intending (turning in your speech toward some place or time in the past) or aimed consciousness. Distance which is measured in consciousness is spatial (speaking of a starving African child seen on a TV screen across the room) or temporal (speaking of a past event as if immediate), emotional or attitudinal. Focal field which is spatial or temporal is like a camera lens that can be widened (looking at our world) or narrowed (looking at American policy in Nicaragua). Lens depth is the level of self-involvement expressed in the point-of-view. Focal depth refers to how far we see into who or what we are observing. It may be simply a surface impression, or may penetrate into the feelings and thoughts of a person (Buttrick, 1987:58-61).

Having rehearsed the categories of point-of-view, Buttrick underscores the attitudinal nature of point-of-view in preaching, insisting that the language of preaching is not the neutral language of detached scientific objectivity which fails to grip congregational consciousness. Hence, Buttrick promotes preaching that is radically perspectival and thus capable of forming and, perhaps, transforming congregational consciousness (Buttrick, 1987:62).

At this point Buttrick provides some general rules governing moves. He argues that preachers must learn to control point-of-view within a move, if they wish the congregation to truly bear the sermon. Since contemporary congregations are highly impressionable, a point-of-view must be established early in the move, indeed, within the first three sentences, and then maintained for the duration of the move. While changes in point-of-view will occur between moves, "within a move we will wish to be disciplined" (Buttrick, 1987:62). Also, within a move, the preacher must maintain one particular stance and orientation lest the move splits and fails to form in consciousness. Sudden shifts in stance, orientation, or distance will so effect language in consciousness as to fragment moves or bewilder congregations (Buttrick, 1987:63).

Of course, there are some exceptions to these general rules, notes Buttrick. It is possible to establish a moving stance or orientation at the start of a move by alerting the congregation with a cue sentence. But one cannot begin a move with a fixed stance and then attempt to establish movement. Also, minor shifts in focal field, lens depth, and focal depth are manageable within a move if the congregation is provided with appropriate cues. Further, while we can speak about different attitudes, as a general rule the preacher's attitudinal point-of-view, if expressed, must not shift during a move unless the congregation is notified and the shift is simply a moderation in one's attitude. Of course, the preacher should not voice an attitude that is not truly his or hers for preachers are not actors on a stage but persons who share a common humanity with the congregation (Buttrick, 1987:83).

Buttrick concludes his discussion on point-of-view by acknowledging its complexity yet insisting that it is a gift that we can learn to use. Variable points-of-view must characterize our sermons, even as it does everyday speaking. However, generally speaking, the preacher establishes perspective early in the move and shifts. Indeed, each move expresses a single controlled perspective. Buttrick (1987:65) gives substantive attention to the matter of point-of-view because "point-of-view in language can serve the cause of human transformation".

Since Buttrick regards sermons as sequenced scenarios, he rejects the approach of the "older homiletic" that preached categorical "points" joined by transitional paragraphs. "Though categorical sermons are intrinsically easy for preachers to jot down," says Buttrick, "they are intrinsically tedious for congregations". For Buttrick, transitional sections are unnecessary when sermons are regarded as sequences of ideas or "moves". Thus, when putting moves together, what's needed is a way to keep the moves distinct so that there is structural toughness yet connected so that there is logical coherence. Buttrick (1987:71) asserts "Congregations are remarkably logical... Therefore, as preachers, we must pay attention to connective logic and be sure that such logic forms in congregational consciousness".

To connect moves, explains Buttrick, we can either rephrase the moves into the logic of conversation or the logic of consciousness. Indeed, Buttrick (1987:71) writes: "The first step in getting at the consecutive logic is to rephrase the moves in a colloquial language." However, if the logic of connection is formed by point-of-view (the logic of consciousness), connections are almost effortless. In conversational logic "and" and "but" are two words that cause the preacher a good deal of connective trouble for they tend to keep moves connected yet not separate. To keep moves apart, ideas must not "spill over" from one move to the next. Thus, anticipatory or reiterative phrases must be avoided so that the language of the start of the move does not echo the previous move. Ultimately the best way to ensure that

moves connect yet remain separate, Buttrick (1987:74-75) says, "is to be sure the move sentences, read in order, make sense".

As noted earlier, the reason the start of a move is so difficult to design is that it carries so much freight. It must focus consciousness, display connective logic, indicate point-of-view, and establish mood. By "mood" Buttrick means an emotional tone. Although emotion has been sadly neglected by many contemporary preachers wishing to avoid the errors of emotionalism, a lack of emotion is unnatural and unrelated to the urgency of the gospel of liberation through Jesus Christ. Buttrick (1987:78) says "we must reject all false, put-on emotion but we must not turn from emotion *per se*". The preacher must not forget the intimate connection between emotional tone and point-of-view. In sum, the first three sentences of a move will carry the freight of content, connective logic, perspective and mood.

● Deduction

A preacher should make mobile systems of sermon construction as opposed to fixed categorical development. Sermon construction ought to travel through congregational consciousness in a series of immediate thoughts, sequentially designed and imaged with technical skill so as to assemble in forming faith. This moves from a background informed by rhetoric, the study of words in motion. Additionally, the preacher must not forget the intimate connection between emotional tone and point-of-view.

3.3.2 Preaching and form

In writing about the form of a sermon, Buttrick has two essential homiletical moves in mind: introductions and conclusions. Introductions, which are designed only after a series of moves has been developed, serve two primary functions: "They give focus to consciousness and provide some sort of hermeneutical orientation" (Buttrick, 1987:83).

Introductions provide focus like a camera lens, says Buttrick, by bringing a particular subject into vision against a backdrop of a larger field of meaning. Like a camera lens, focus serves a twofold purpose: "Locating a whole field of meaning, and isolating some particular feature within the field of meaning (usually connected with a first move) (Buttrick, 1987:84).

Practically speaking, the introduction sets up the sermon so that the first move may begin. The critical factor is avoiding introductions that are too general and hence unrelated to the first move or too particular and thus irrelevant to the sermon as a whole. That is, "An introduction must evoke a general 'field of meaning,' and, at the same time, ready us for a first move" (Buttrick, 1987:85). Indeed, the main test of an introduction is its ability to facilitate a smooth, natural move into the body of the sermon. They should be designed with care and discipline, says Buttrick. For example, Buttrick (1987:86) maintains they should not give away the goods of the sermon before it begins. "Never tip your hand!". Also, they should not be too long since they merely function to focus. Indeed, as a general rule, "introductions may run between seven and twelve sentences in length" (Buttrick, 1987:86). Further, introductions should not be too short since it takes a congregation at least two or three sentences to adjust to our speech patterns, four to six sentences to establish focus, and a single sentence to make a firm closure to the introduction (Buttrick, 1987:86). Moreover, the last words of an introduction should come to a crisp, clear, conclusion. In fact, Buttrick says (1987:87) "the longest pause in the delivery of the sermon will usually occur immediately following an introduction and before the body of a sermon begins". Next, the middle six or eight sentences do the work of focusing on a single issue, theme, mood, or field of meaning. As a final note, if the sermon speaks of Scripture, the introduction should include a reference to Scripture yet it should not be a labored documentation (Buttrick, 1987:90).

In addition to focusing consciousness, introductions provide a hermeneutical orientation that indicates to the congregation what is being discussed and how

to listen. The old dictum that sermons need to begin close to home, is not entirely trustworthy. Yet, "an introduction ought to establish shared consciousness between a preacher and congregation in which some image or idea may become focal"(Buttrick, 1987:92). Thus, "I and you" language is to be avoided because it does not draw preacher and people together into a shared consciousness.

After outlining a general approach to introductions, Buttrick notes some pulpit conventions to avoid. For example, step-down introductions (first talking about Paul, then talking about Corinth, and finally talking about the Eucharist in the Corinthian Church) require too many shifts in point-of-view to focus congregational consciousness and irritate the hearers. Also, tangential remarks and intrusions cannot be tolerated in introductions for they disrupt focus and leave the congregation struggling for focus. Another convention calls for oblique remarks that are attempts to create suspense. These should be avoided for they too fail to focus consciousness. Yet another strategy is personal illustrations. However, personal experiences in the introduction split the focus. "As a preacher," writes Buttrick, "you are attempting at the outset of a sermon to focus congregational consciousness on an image, or an idea.... But, by speaking of yourself, inevitably the congregation will focus on you (Buttrick, 1987:94). Finally, humor is another common feature of sermon introductions. But there are two difficulties with humor in introductions: first, the humor is usually totally unrelated to the sermon's focus, which the introduction seeks to introduce; and second, since the gospel speaks of Christ's being crucified for us, humor at the start of a sermon tends to trivialize the seriousness of the Christian faith (Buttrick, 1987:95).

In short, introductions give focus to consciousness and provide hermeneutical orientation. They demand disciplined language that is terse, visual, and focal. Buttrick encourages preachers to write them out and to learn them well. "The trick in preparing an introduction may be to put yourself in the place of your people" (Buttrick, 1987:96).

Conclusions, on the other hand, serve to bring the sermon to the point of intention and then stop. For Buttrick conclusions do not introduce new ideas and they should not be long, five to eight sentences at most. What's critical for a conclusion is that it fix intention. Since sermons intend to do something, the preacher must determine what a particular sermon is trying to do before he or she can prepare a conclusion. Sometimes the intention of the biblical text is discerned and then incorporated into the conclusion of the sermon. Buttrick (1987:100) writes, "Each conclusion will fulfill some different intention, [...] and each, therefore, may be different in shape, and mood and language".

Perhaps the critical question for Buttrick is how to bring a sermon to a conclusion and yet ensure a lasting impact from the sermon? He suggests that the first two or three sentences of a conclusion must establish a reflective consciousness "without tipping off a congregation to the fact that a conclusion is taking place"(Buttrick, 1987:101). One strategy is to create a conclusion that draws together parts of the sermon and thus echoes images and phrases of the sermon's moves. Another strategy is to create a conclusion that fulfills the aim of the sermon by functioning as a natural outcome of the sermonic material. In the last three sentences of a conclusion a sense of ending is expressed by some form of repetition or by a terse last sentence. Indeed, the last sentence of the conclusion, which is short, and unencumbered with adjectival or clausal modifiers, simply stops (Buttrick, 1987:101-102).

There are several conventional conclusions that are problematic. For example, ending a sermon with a question is problematic because evidence suggests that congregations delete such questions from consciousness the moment they are asked. A better strategy is create a picture in consciousness of someone doing what the sermon wants God's people to do. Another popular strategy that should be avoided is ending a sermon with a quotation. However, Buttrick argues that the conclusion is a direct speaking situation that demands a high level of eye contact and high degree of intimacy. A further convention

to avoid involves returning to the introduction. It may provide satisfaction but it stifles response to the sermon by creating a closed circle in consciousness in which nothing more needs to be said or done. Indeed, Buttrick (1987:105) says, "if we wish sermons to move and motivate, to transform lives, we will avoid conclusions that turn back and reprise introductory material". Yet another convention to avoid is rhythmic intensifications that strive for emotional impact. Unfortunately, says Buttrick, more than one repetition in a conclusion may enable the preacher to feel something, but the congregation will not feel in the same way. A final strategy often employed by preachers is personal testimony. While personal testimony may be appropriate at earlier points of the sermon, it is most inappropriate in a conclusion because it leaves the congregation with a consciousness of the preacher rather than of the gospel (Buttrick, 1987:106).

As a general rule, when creating a conclusion, preachers must shun vague categorical labels and instead use direct, simple, concrete images. Buttrick (1987:109) writes: "conclusions are acts of obedience; we are doing what is intended. They are practical matters; we stop".

● Deduction

Introductions bring a particular subject into focus against a backdrop of a larger field of meaning. An introduction should not give away the point of the sermon before it begins. Also, it should not be too long since its main function is focus. Humor is a common feature of sermon introductions. In conclusion, preachers must shun vague categorical labels and instead use direct, simple, and concrete images.

3.3.3 Preaching as imaging

Buttrick is convinced of the centrality of images and metaphors to

understanding the function and operation of illustrations and examples in preaching. Since analogy is the language of faith, argues Buttrick, analogical language is critical to preaching. By means of metaphor, simile and image we speak about God's likeness to us. Of course, we qualify our analogies with the language of amplification and denial in order to say that God is much more than our likeness and to signal that God's ways are not our ways. Buttrick (1987:125) writes "Faith is formed in a nexus of image, symbol, metaphor, and ritual, therefore, the language of preaching is essentially metaphorical".

Like metaphors, illustrations and examples are also native to the language of faith and hence preaching. Examples are essentially drawn by the preacher from the shared experiences of the congregation whereas illustrations are imported from outside of the common consciousness of the congregation. Both examples and illustrations are useful to preaching because they can bridge time, build models in consciousness, and compress blocks of meaning into a coherent system. Examples and illustrations "are crucial to preaching" (Buttrick, 1987:128).

Examples serve many functions in preaching, claims Buttrick. They establish the truth of statements by showing that they correspond to lived life. Also, we use examples to shape analogies as when we liken God's forgiveness to parental forgiveness. Further, examples in preaching portray a slice of life for study. Of course, examples in preaching must be used in a disciplined manner. First, in sermons examples may be brief or enlarged but they must be controlled and not overdeveloped lest they fail to express the shared experience of the congregation. Second, examples will convey how things affect us or how we act in our daily lives. Third, when using an example in preaching, it is best to carefully design it, including actual concrete descriptions so that the example will be true to life. Fourth, within a single move only one example should be used unless one is trying to establish that some statement is true to life in which case a chain of no more than three

examples may be used. Fifth, the preacher will locate examples within his or her own memory bank. One simply turns toward memory and recalls experiences of what actually happens in life. However, those recollections should be assessed to ensure that they are true to life (Buttrick, 1987:128-133).

Unlike examples, illustrations are imported, states Buttrick. They include short quotes, briefly described scenes, action episodes, pictures, stories, and bits of dialogue. But again, illustrations must be used with care. Buttrick mentions three criteria for evaluating illustrations. First, there must be a clear similarity between the illustration and the sermon content. Second, there should be a parallel between the shape of the illustration and the structure of the content. Third, the illustration must be appropriate; it must fit the content. Buttrick (1987:135) writes "If illustrations function within moves they will be governed by the content, shape, and intention of a move, and must fit into the move's point-of-view". With regard to their function in moves, Buttrick mentions several ground rules for the use of illustrations. (1) Unlike examples, illustrations may not be multiplied within a move. Indeed, only one illustration may be used in a single move for multiple illustrations weaken analogy and make understanding difficult. (Buttrick, 1987:135). (2) Illustrations must fit the content of the move. This will be the case if they exhibit a clear analogy with the content of the move, if they parallel the structure of the content, and if they are appropriate to the content (Buttrick, 1987:136-137). (3) Illustrations must not overpower the strength of the move and throw the sermon out of balance. Instead, they should relate to the move so as to support its content rather than detract from the content of a move (Buttrick, 1987:137-138). (4) Illustrations must also coincide with the positive or negative character of the move. Thus, an illustration of lovelessness will not match a move that is urging love for one another (Buttrick, 1987:138). (5) Illustrations must relate to the basic model of the text. Thus, a sermon on the parable of the sower should relate to its fields of imagery, such as agriculture, house plants, growth in general, and may

contain few to many multiplications (Buttrick, 1987:139). (6) Illustrations of some length should be avoided for they will probably detract from the meaning of the move instead of functioning to illustrate it (Buttrick, 1987:140-141).

There are several conventions associated with illustrations that Buttrick calls into question. First, regarding the habit of using personal illustrations in a sermon, Buttrick (1987:142) says: "To be blunt, there are virtually no good reasons to talk about ourselves from the pulpit". Usually personal illustrations throw more light on the preacher's personality than on the sermon's content. Also, beyond colloquial one-liners, Buttrick discourages peppering the sermon with quotes that require the congregation to adjust from the preacher's oral pattern of speech to the prose material's syntax. Further, concerning Scriptural illustrations, we can only draw on a limited repertoire of biblical illustrations because today's congregation is not well acquainted with scripture. Finally, regarding humor, Buttrick suggests two rules: first, congregations should laugh only when the preacher has good reasons for wanting them to laugh; and second, "if you are naturally funny, your problem is control; if you are not naturally funny, do not try it!" (Buttrick, 1987:147).

Since illustrations are intended to illustrate, Buttrick encourages preachers to delete extra material. Buttrick (1987:147) says "Illustrations must be pared down, the 'point' of analogy heightened, and, as much as possible, the shape of an illustration made to match the structure of thought in a move". To strip away extraneous fat, preachers should write out illustrations in advance, limiting them to about a dozen sentences at most since compressed images are more powerful. Also, it should be recognized at the outset that not every move will have an illustration, yet when used they must be shaped into the move, "knitting them into content with care, yet, at the same time, protecting the strong starts and finishes of moves" (Buttrick, 1987:148). As a general rule, illustrations and ideas are joined together by weaving illustration and content together, avoiding obtrusive introductions to illustrations and

dangling conclusions at the end of the illustration. Finally, the preacher "gives credit" for an imported illustration not by endless name-dropping but by unobtrusively indicating to the congregation that it is not his or her material (Buttrick, 1987:149-150).

Convinced that sermons are for the forming of faith in consciousness, Buttrick proposes the idea of an image grid. Whereas older homiletics employed illustrations and examples to support points, Buttrick suggests that sermons build a faith world in consciousness by means of images, metaphors, illustrations, and examples. Therefore, the appropriateness of an illustration must be tested by how it relates to a particular move and how it interrelates with the whole sermon. For Buttrick (1987:153), "what makes a good sermon is not one single illustration, but a gridwork of interacting images, examples, and illustrations". Thus, in the initial stage of sermon preparation, one simply lists a series of sentences on a page to form an outline. At this point, it would be premature to gather images, examples, and illustrations for they may dominate the thought structure of a sermon. "As a rule, then," Buttrick (1987:154) cautions, "it will always be better to develop each of the move sentences in a sermon". Later, and only after each of the move sentences has been elaborated so that one has some sense of how ideas will form, one can begin to gather material. Buttrick (1987:155) writes "Initially, the process does involve a kind of brainstorming free associating that involves dredging up out of memory half-recalled material, stuff we have seen or read or heard". Next, after brainstorming each move of the sermon and after listing possible images, examples, and illustrations for each move of the whole sermon, one can begin choosing and selecting illustrations for a single move but always with the whole sermon in view. Buttrick (1987:156) says "In effect, we will gather stuff for a whole sermon and then with an eye to structural design, select with care".

Thus, Buttrick proposes designing an interacting image grid by means of reprise, refrain, and interrelating illustrations. Ultimately, the image grid

reflects the fact that sermons are intended to form faith consciousness. Buttrick (1987:170) says "preachers are not poets but they should have a poet's eye. More, preachers should take delight in putting words and images together as they build a world for faith".

- **Deduction**

Metaphor, illustrations, and examples are native to the language of faith and preaching. They are found in short quotes, briefly described scenes, action episodes, pictures, stories, and bits of dialogue. They are useful to preaching because they can bridge time, build models in consciousness, and compress blocks of meaning into a coherent system. Preachers are not poets, but they should have a poet's eye. Moreover, preachers should take delight in putting words and images together as they build a world for faith.

3.3.4 Language and preaching

Buttrick is critical of both the communication and expressive models of language theory as they are uncongenial to a theology of word. He prefers to define the language of preaching as "a connotative language used with theological precision" (Buttrick, 1987:184). The language of preaching is simple. It must be ordinary language, the common shared vocabulary of the congregation. He estimates that the typical seminary graduate has a vocabulary of around 12,000 words while the average member of a church has one of about 7,500 words. But since everyone has a collection of around 2,500 technical words and local expressions, "the common shared vocabulary of a congregation will consist of about 5,000 words" (Buttrick, 1987:188). Also, the language of preaching is highly connotative. While denotative language is fine for business, it is inadequate for preaching because it spends its time talking about things; it is observational, objective and lacks personal involvement. What preaching requires is connotative language for sermons

are intended to form faith powerfully in congregational consciousness "by combining phenomenal imagery with imaginative syntax and metaphorical language" (Buttrick, 1987:192). Moreover, the connotative language of preaching must be theologically appropriate. Buttrick (1987:194) is not urging the use of in-house religious terms like redemption, salvation, and sanctification for they simply "drape discourse in an aura of old-time religious respectability". What he means by theologically apt is that it is not appropriate to speak about the "kingdom of God" in individualistic terms as a personal possession when, biblically speaking, the kingdom of God is a social reality. According to Buttrick (1987:194), "we must speak the language of common image and metaphor, but do so with theological wisdom".

Two additional criteria are to be used to assess the language of preaching. First, the language of preaching is intended to form in congregational consciousness. Hence, preachers will need to check their private and personal expressions of the faith in their lives against the measure of their social and public usefulness. While preachers seek a freshness of expression, "the images we choose and use must work in congregational consciousness" (Buttrick, 1987:195). Second, the language of preaching must serve the moves in a sequence of sermon scenarios. For Buttrick (1987:195) "the language of preaching is not a language per se, but is always a language doing a particular move". The above five yardsticks, then, are the norms Buttrick offers for assessing the language of preaching. No wonder he (1987:193) describes preaching as "a considered craft".

Buttrick rejects the notion that preachers should develop their own style. Instead, he argues that as unique individuals preachers already have a unique way of speaking. The real issue, says Buttrick, is to bend our style so that it may serve the twin purposes of representing the gospel and serving congregational consciousness (Buttrick, 1987:204). To that end, Buttrick believes it is helpful to be aware of three components of style. First, preachers should not fear the sounds of words. For example, when speaking of

cruelty, preachers should not hesitate to employ words with harsh guttural sounds. However, the sounds of words are governed by rules, says Buttrick. If the sounds used do not fall within the range of the speaker's ordinary speech pattern, they will draw attention to themselves rather than serving the speaker's purpose. Thus, when using the sounds of words, speakers should not alter their own syntax. Also, the sounds of the words should function "to serve the meaning we are attempting to shape"(Buttrick, 1987:207).

He also mentions a few things to point the preacher in the direction of a good sermon style. First, preaching language is concrete; it avoids conceptual terms like "goals" "relationships," "situations," or "desires". Second, sermons use verbs that give color or visual character and verbs that give precision or distinctive meaning. Thus, expressions like "we peer," "we peek," and "we stare" are preferred to "we look". Third, the weakest word in preaching is the adjective, says Buttrick. He notes that we rarely use adjectives in everyday conversation, So he suggests that we should never use adjectives for effect and use them only when necessary. Fourth, pronouns are fine to use, especially "we" and "our" and "us" . However, since we should use language that connects the preacher with the congregation, preaching should avoid "you and I," "you and me". Also, "I" is always dangerous when used alone, the word "you" is most suitable if used in this way: "What were you going to do?" Fifth, in general preaching employ the present tense, active voice, and simple short sentences (Buttrick, 1987:217-220).

Buttrick insists that preachers can learn to work with words for speaking is a craft that must be learned not an art. Preachers can learn much about using words effectively from books, poets, novelists, and dramatists. Indeed, Buttrick (1987:221) insists that we will learn more about language from poets, novelists, and dramatists than from reading chapters on sermon style penned by some professor of homiletics.

● Deduction

The language of preaching must be ordinary language, the common shared vocabulary of the congregation. Two additional criteria are to be used to assess the language of preaching. First, the language of preaching is intended to form in congregational consciousness and Secondly, the language of preaching must serve the moves in a sequence of sermon scenarios. Preacher must speak the language of common image and metaphor, but do so with theological wisdom.

3.3.5 An evaluation of Buttrick's sermon form

3.3.5.1 Strengths of Buttrick's sermon form

One of Buttrick's form strategies for effective communication in preaching is its use of rhetoric. Indeed, Thomas G. Long (1987:4.) writes that "the most exciting aspect of Buttrick's book is its return to Christian rhetoric". According to Buttrick (1994:112), "rhetoric is a speaker's wisdom that is based on how the language works and, more urgently, how human beings understand". By definition, then, rhetoric is concerned with how human beings actually hear and grasp meaning. Hence, Buttrick notes things like the short attention span of today's congregation and as a consequence suggests that a sermon will be twenty minutes long with four minutes for each move and a maximum of five or six sequenced subjects in each sermon.

Another aspect of Buttrick's strategy for effective communication in preaching is its attention to the movement of language and the logic of movement in both biblical texts and sermon forms. He insists that biblical passages are more like film-clips from motion pictures than static, still-life snapshots. Biblical passages "travel along with the give and take of lively conversation, moving from one idea to another"(Buttrick, 1994:83). For

example, Hebrews 12:1-3 travels by visual logic, featuring the metaphor of a marathon and moving from a crowd of past champions to runners getting ready to race, to a pace-setting victorious Christ. So sermons, argues Buttrick, will be movements of thought from beginning to end; they will be developed like sequenced scenarios because meaning is structural and structure is shaped by movement of thought or image or event as we journey into truth. Buttrick's approach is convincing at this point. Indeed, preachers should favor mobile structures as opposed to categorical point-making sermons based on propositional truths distilled from allegedly static, still-life biblical text.

3.3.5.2 Weaknesses of Buttrick's sermon form

One weakness in Buttrick's strategy relates to the question of a preacher's ability to master and use it in weekly sermon preparation. As Richard Eslinger (1987:162) aptly states, "the success of this distinctive approach to preaching largely depends on the degree to which it is comprehensible and adaptable for the preacher who is a novice to the system". Even if one concurs with Buttrick's critique of the older homiletic, is it possible to implement his approach after a careful reading of his strategy? Thomas G. Long is not optimistic about the prospects of its use by students and pastors.

The other weakness of Buttrick's approach relates to the form of the sermon. As noted, sermons shaped according to Buttrick's (1981:56) strategy, are conceived as "mobile structures". That is, the sermon is a "series of immediate thoughts, sequentially designed and imaged with technical skill so as to assemble in forming faith". But is a sermon simply a series of sequenced thoughts? No wonder, Thomas G. Long (1989:104) questions, and rightly, such an assumption, stating: "But surely sermons are more than a series of idea-laden boxcars moving down the track".

3.4 FINAL BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES FROM RECENT HISTORY ON FORMS OF A SERMON

Forms of sermons today appear as theory and as method in the inductive form, narrative and a phenomenological form, and then we investigated that there are several elements to be examined: movement, imagination, narrative and unity in form of sermon. From our examination of forms of the sermon from recent history we arrive at the following conclusions:

1. Three forms of sermons have a communication skill. They help to link the preacher and listener by virtue of their shared experiences communicated in the preaching moment by means of analogies drawn from daily life. This means that three forms arouse the interest of the listeners because as human beings we have a commonly felt need to resolve it. To make an effective communicative sermon a preacher has to decide on the movement, unity, imaging and narrative for a good sermon form by analyzing contemporary audience.
2. The language of preaching serves the moves in a sequence of sermon scenarios. This means that it must be ordinary language, the common shared vocabulary of the congregation. Accordingly, the use of a specific rhetorical approach such as metaphor, illustrations and examples are useful to preaching because they can bridge time, build models in consciousness, and compress blocks of meaning into a coherent system.

The next chapter will summarise effective communication in order not only to understand the process and form, but also to discern the function of communication.

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 4

META-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON FORM AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The purpose with this chapter is to investigate meta-theoretical perspectives on the form of preaching and effective communication. Some communication forms will be analysed and explained. In this way certain aspects of effective communication may be exploited. In this chapter the following issues will be dealt with:

- A definition of communication – a selection
- Basic elements of the communication process
- The form of communication– a selection of approaches
- The function of communication
- Preaching and effective communication

4.1 A DEFINITION OF COMMUNICATION – A SELECTION

We would probably all agree that we know what communication is and that we can recognize it when we see it. However, few words are used in as many different ways by as many different people. Some people immediately think about a conversation between friends, a politician making a persuasive speech, a minister delivering a sermon. Others immediately associate communication with mass media such as newspapers, radio and television

It is equally difficult to describe why we use communication. People communicate to establish relationships with others to express feelings and

opinions, to share experiences, to persuade others to think as they do. What is very clear is that communication is used to describe many things.

Communication is defined in communication science, among others as the process of sharing with another person one's message in a two-way transmission of ideas (Rogers, 1992:112).

Communication is also defined as a transactional process of exchanging messages and negotiating meaning to establish and maintain relationships (Verderber, 1990:9).

According to Gibson *et al.* (1994:17) information integrates the activities within the organization. Information flows to and from the organization and within the organization. They define communication as the transmission of information and understanding through the use of common symbols. The common symbols may be verbal or non-verbal.

Baron and Greenberg (1997:334) support Gibson *et al.* by defining communication as the process by which a person, group or organization (the sender) transmits some type of information (the message) to another person, group or organization (the receiver). Robbins (1998:327) states that communication must include both the transference and the understanding of meaning. In general communication is the exchange of ideas through a common system of symbols.

Fielding (1997:4) defines communication as a transaction whereby participants together create meaning through the exchange of symbols. A transaction may involve two or more people who construct meaning together. The definition emphasizes the fact that these participants take one another into account, and have to work together according to a set of rules. This definition stresses the point that the people have to pay attention to each other at the same time. They have to learn to develop mutual expectations. If

mutual awareness exists then mutual influence becomes possible. Furthermore these people need to ensure that others understand what they are saying. Effective communication therefore demands that people work together to ensure that the meaning created is the same for all. There must be a sharing of meaning.

Cronje, Hugo, Neuland and Reenen (1992:368), and Du Toit, Du Plessis and Nortje (1990:83) agree that communication is a process by which one person, (the transmitter) conveys a particular message to another, (the receiver). The transmitter has to formulate his message in such a way that the receiver clearly understands its content and purpose. All communication is intended to produce a response in the receiver. It is not enough for him to grasp the content correctly; he must also perform the appropriate action. Communication also involves a reciprocal action or feedback. The receiver must always respond to the message sent.

We must be careful not to oversimplify the complexities of the communication process. Long (1988:59) says that "As we listen to a person speaking to us, we are not pieces of electronic equipment receiving and holding the data. We are human beings interacting with what the speaker is saying, sifting it, debating it, adding to it. We are thinking what we will have for lunch, wondering how things are going at home.... If anyone wants to assess what is happening in the communication, let that person not try to measure how much of the speaker's manuscript is arriving intact in the hearer's brain. Rather, let that person feel the texture of the tapestry speaker and hearer weave together".

If a message that gets no response is not communication, how much preaching could actually be classified as no communication? Probably most of it. The preacher must remember that he or she is not automatically communicating just because they are verbalizing; it is only when the congregation responds positively that preaching can be classified as good communication.

Therefore, it is evident that communication is a process whereby an individual has an idea to share with another person. The sender needs firstly to decide exactly how he wants to say it. To ensure understanding he needs to empathize with the receiver. The message will then be sent to the receiver, however he also still has to interpret the message to have meaning for him. In the response the receiver gives feedback to the sender. If the receiver reacts according to the sender's expectations, the message was clearly and correctly received.

4.2 BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

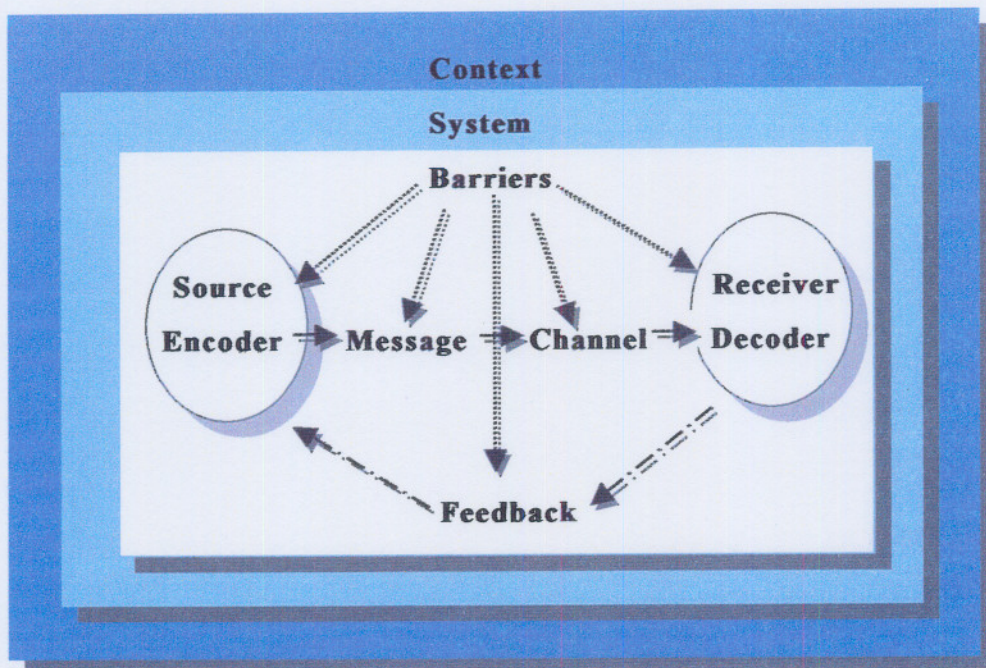
Communication does not happen in a vacuum or apart from interrelated events or history. Speech communication is a process by which meanings are exchanged by information sent and received.

As human beings we try to organize our data and give the data meaning, that is, we have a need to interpret. There are a number of factors that cause us to interpret things in one way or another, including past experience, assumptions about human behavior, expectations, knowledge, and personal moods (Adler & Rodman, 1991:35).

Because communication involves a transaction between sender and receiver it cannot be static or understood in terms of individual, isolated acts. Variables such as interpersonal history, culture, and audience all contribute to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the communication process between sender and receiver. Essentially, good communication must be seen as dialogical in nature.

The next model of the communication process is adopted from Stanley (1982:138), McQuail and Windahl (1983:10), Aaker and Myers (1987:294), and Barker and Gaut (1996:13). The communication process model is outlined

as follows:



4.2.1 Source/encoder

The source (sometimes called the sender, communicator, or encoder) is the person who shares information, ideas, or attitudes with another person. The source also determines what the purpose of the message will be: to inform, persuade, or entertain. The source generates a message through his or her past experiences, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings (Barker & Gaut, 1996:13; Wilson & Wilson, 1998:7). Communicator form purposeful messages and attempt to express them to others through verbal and nonverbal signs.

The preacher as communicator has to equip himself with certain requirements as a source of communication. Bauman (1992:22) said that "the source of communication is the preacher, who is equipped with communication skills, attitudes, a bank of knowledge, a social system in which he lives, and a culture in which he operates. As the sender of the message he is one who must encode his own thoughts, ideas and cognitions into verbal, vocal and physical

message". Venter (1993:254) stated that on the metatheoretical level special attention is paid to the communication requirements for the sender. The requirement that the preacher as communicator must have, the ability to teach or to proclaim the sound message, is a primary requirement for communication. The ability to teach and to proclaim depends on the communicator's knowledge, character and particularly his credibility.

The preacher as source must have the sense of talking to the congregation who is with him as he prepares his sermon. Sweazey (1976:51) stated that the preacher as communicator, as source, must be able to feel what the congregation is feeling, to look at life from their eyes. The preacher as source must have the sense of talking to the congregation who is with him as he prepares his sermon.

To facilitate the effectiveness of the communicated message the sender must empathize with his receiver. In the next paragraph the discussion will be on empathy and effective timing. They are most important for the sender, if he wants his communication to be effective.

4.2.1.1 Empathy

According to Reece and Brandt (1994:40) and Robbins (1998:341) empathy is crucial for effective communication. It is the ability to put one in the other person's role and to assume that individual's viewpoints and emotions. This involves being receiver oriented rather than communicator oriented. The way the communicator communicates should depend largely on what is known about the receiver.

Thus Gibson *et al.* (1994:595) state that empathy requires communicators to place themselves in the shoes of the receiver to anticipate how the message is likely to be decoded.

A communicator must understand and appreciate the process of decoding. The message is filtered through the receiver's perceptions. The sender must also have proper timing for sending his message.

4.2.1.2 Effective timing

Reece and Brandt (1994:38) said effective timing is crucial for effective communication, as individuals are exposed to thousands of messages daily. Because of the impossibility of taking in all the messages, many are never decoded and received.

An encoder must realize that while they are attempting to communicate with a receiver, other messages are being received simultaneously. Thus, the message that encoders send may not be heard. Messages that do not compete with other messages are more likely to be understood.

On an everyday basis, effective communication can be facilitated by properly timing major announcements. This will improve understanding. Before sending the message the sender need to first decide how he wants to send his message.

4.2.2 Message

The second element of the communication process is the message, or that information which is being communicated. The source encodes an idea and then determines whether or not to inform, persuade, or entertain. After deciding what message to send, the source uses symbols to get the message across to others (Barker & Gaut, 1996:13).

Symbols are words, pictures, or objects that the source uses to elicit meaning

in the mind of the receiver of the message. Words are the most common symbols used in communication. Words can represent objects, ideas, and feelings. These words permit us to share our thoughts with other members of our species (Wilson & Wilson, 1998:8).

We will limit our study to human communication with its attendant symbols, especially word symbols. Word symbols control our world as they serve to label, categorize, and identify ideas and objects. Words are very powerful symbols and our proper or improper use of them can make us or break us (Sleeth, 1986:32). Certain words become the badge of membership in our group.

The Gospel is of the most common symbols used in a church service. Streng (quoted by Sleeth, 1986:32) reminds "the Gospel is the Sacred Word". In preaching, the Gospel is the link that binds preacher and hearer together. The preacher uses the Sacred Word to feel what the congregation is feeling, to look at life from their eyes.

Both Kreitner and Kinicki (1998:430) and Robbins (1998:329) define the message as what is communicated. They state it is the actual physical product from the source encoding. "When we speak, the speech is the message. When people write, the writing is the message. When people gesture, the movements of their arms, the expressions on their faces are messages".

In general the message can be defined as the result of what the communicator wants to say, as well as how he wants to say it. The message then is what the individual hopes to communicate to the intended receiver, to ensure effectiveness the sender must create his message carefully.

4.2.2.1 Creating the message

Bovée and Thill (1992:46) stated that it is true that if one wants the receiver to understand and accept his message the sender has to help. He cannot depend on others to carry the communication ball. The sender must think about the purpose and define the goal of communicating. In general terms, the major purpose is to bring the receiver closer to the sender's views. The sender must create a bridge of words that leads the receiver from their current position to his point. For this to be successful, the sender needs to know what his receiver now know and what is needed to be known. The sender should tell the receiver what to expect. Once the sender has defined his readers or listener's information needs, he can launch them on their journey towards the intended destination.

Fielding (1997:379) said the best way is to make the sender's message memorable. A communicator must use words that evoke a physical and sensory impression. It is also crucial to stick to the point. The key to brevity is to limit the number of ideas, not to short-change their development. By keeping the sender messages as lean as possible, one helps people absorb them more easily.

The sender should connect new information to the existing ideas. If the sender wants the receiver to understand and remember new ideas, he has to indicate how those ideas are related to the files that already exist in his mind. The sender should tie the message to the receiver's frame of reference. This also helps to make the new concepts acceptable.

According to Bovée and Thill (1992:47) one needs to emphasize and review key points. If one is delivering the message orally, he must use body and voice to highlight important concepts. By highlighting and summarizing key points, one helps the receiver to understand and remember the message. It refreshes people's memories and also simplifies the overall meaning of

complete material. The sender will only think of creating the message carefully if he knows which medium he is going to utilize.

4.2.3 Channel

The channel links the communicator and the recipient. Kotler and Armstrong (1993:85) and Stoner and Freeman (1992:534) agreed that the channel is the carrier of the message, the means by which the message is sent. The communicator or sender must determine which channel is formal and which informal. These channels or mediums are established mainly by the organization with the aim of ensuring effective communication.

In general, the medium can be understood as pathways along which encoded information is transmitted. A communicator uses the senses of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch to communicate messages (Barker & Gaut, 1996:13; Tubbs & Moss, 1991:11).

To do that the preacher as communicator must organize ideas with insight, use vivid language, and reinforce concepts with gestures. Speech training is essential for all vocal communicators. The preacher as communicator needs training for speech, gesture, voice, etc. for effective transmission.

4.2.4 Receiver/decoder

The receiver in the communication process is the target audience. The receiver is, in other words, the person or group of persons for whom the communicator's message is intended (Wilson & Wilson, 1998:9).

Stoner and Freeman (1992:534) further said that the receiver is an individual whose senses perceive the sender's message. Thus the receiver is a necessary

component for communication to meet the requirement of shared meaning, and serves as the object towards which the communicator's intentionality is directed.

The receiver must also have the intention to be part of the process of communication to occur. The closer the decoded message comes to the intent desired by the communicator, the more effective is the communication. This underscores the importance of the communicator being receiver-oriented.

The receiver does not merely receive the message. The receiver is an active participant in the communication process in that a recipient intentionally and consciously pays attention to the message in order to understand and interpret it (Steinberg, 1999:24). When a receiver responds to the message, the receiver becomes the communicator. In fact, communicator- receiver is receiving and sending a message at the same time.

Preaching without a receiver is empty (Pieterse, 1987:80; Black, 1990:17). A congregation is an indispensable part of communication. The congregation accepts or rejects what the preacher as communicator says. The preacher must listen to the congregation while the congregation basically has the task of listening during the sermon.

4.2.5 Feedback

Feedback can be direct, indirect, verbal or non-verbal. Feedback informs the communicator that a message has been received. It also enables the communicator to gauge whether the message has been interpreted correctly or not. The quality or quantity of feedback yields valuable clues as to whether a message is appropriate for its audience. The communicator will also be able to establish whether the right media format and communication channels have been used.

Feedback can take many forms. It can consist of words, gestures, facial expressions, or any other observable element (Wilson & Wilson, 1998:9). The effective communicator is always sensitive to feedback and constantly modifies his or her messages as a result of the feedback received (Barker & Gaut, 1996:13).

From the feedback the sender gets an idea of how accurately their message is understood. It also enhances the communication process, because it stimulates active participation. The communicator is stimulated to enlarge on the contents of his message if he receives positive feedback, which in its turn leads to greater understanding.

Feedback reinforces some behaviors and extinguishes others. Thus feedback is important to the source in adapting transmission to the receivers needs. It enhances the effectiveness of the source, and it is important to the receiver as a means of eliciting from the source a more useful and better understood message.

Thus feedback can be made by the preacher as communicator enquiring, and listening to the congregation. Feedback is necessary for good communication to succeed in that it concerns the goal of communication.

4.2.6 Communication barriers

There are many potential barriers to effective communication. To improve the effectiveness of communication the communicator needs to understand the communication process and the sources of error. A communicator needs to be aware of attempts to block a channel of communication or to distort a message. The best motto is never to assume that effective communication will automatically result; always anticipate likely barriers and try to work to overcome them in good time.

4.2.6.1 Language

Both Fox *et al.* (1991:159) and Robbins (1998:339) stated that words mean different things to different people. The meanings of words people speak are not in the words, but they are dependent on people age, education and cultural background. These are three of the more obvious variables that influence the language a person uses and definitions given to words.

Preacher and congregation usually do not know how others with whom they interact have modified their language. Senders also tend to assume that the terms and words they use have the same meaning to the receiver as they have to them. Often this is incorrect, thereby creating communication difficulties.

4.2.6.2 Noise

Noise can be defined as any influence or disturbance that changes the message or causes the message to be misunderstood. Noise can be literal, for instance the drilling noise of a machine, or background sounds. Adey and Andrews (1990:26) defined noise as any interference or disturbance that confuses the message or competes against communication. Kotler and Armstrong (1993:385) defined noise as the unplanned static or distortion during the communication process, which results in the receiver getting a different message to that sent.

Though effective communication is very important in the church it is still faced by some distortions. To ensure that people succeed in the development of effective communication pastors need to know the noises that affect communication negatively.

To summarise, the basic elements of communication are source, message, channel, receiver, and feedback. It is possible to say that communication is

not an act. But, there are some potential barriers to effective communication. For good communication, the preacher must delete barriers and try to work to overcome them.

4.3 THE FORM OF COMMUNICATION – A SELECTION OF APPROACHES

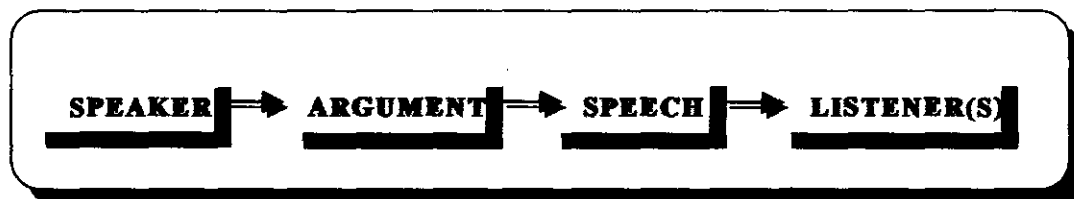
There are many communication forms. Communicologists have classified the aspects of communication in a variety of different ways. Beginning with Aristotle's early form and proceeding to four currently influential forms, communication as a process will be considered more closely.

4.3.1 Aristotle's form of communication

Aristotle regarded rhetoric as an art that could be taught and as a field of academic study. Of the writings that survive from classical Greece, the most important is Aristotle's *Rhetoric* which is still used as a reference work in departments of communication today.

Aristotle maintained that people could be taught the skilful construction of an argument and effective delivery of a speech.

Aristotle's form can be outlined as follows:



Aristotle (Steinberg, 1999:24) described communication in terms of an orator or speaker constructing an argument to be presented in a speech to listeners –

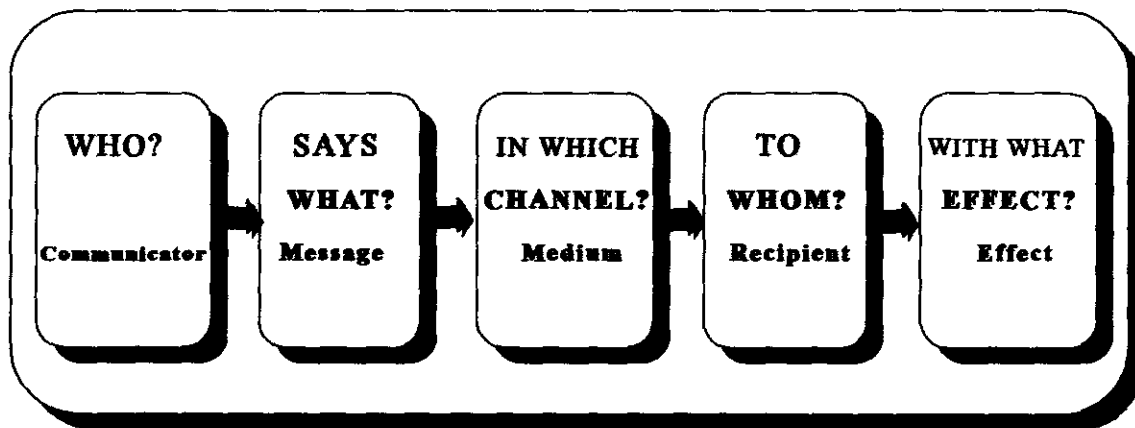
an audience. The speaker's goal is to present a positive image of himself and to make sure that members of the audience are receptive to the message.

Study of Aristotele's form in respect of speaker, speech, and audience may be profitable, but this form omits elements to which others direct attention (Abbey, 1976:40).

4.3.2 Lasswell's form of communication

Lasswell was an American political scientist whose main interest was in the area of propaganda. In 1948, he described a view of communication that emphasises the effect of a message on the recipients.

Lasswell's form can be outlined as follows:



In the model: "communicator" refers to the person who formulates the message, "content" refers to the message, "channel" indicates the medium of transmission and "whom" describes either an individual recipient or an audience of mass communication. "Effect" is the outcome of the message which, for Lasswell, should be that the recipient will be persuaded to adopt a particular point of view. The model focuses our attention on the individual components of the communication process and emphasises that the

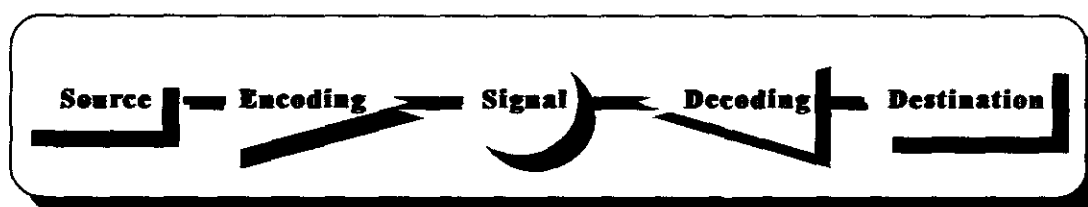
components occur in a sequence that begins with the communicator and ends with the recipient (Steinberg, 1999:29).

Lasswell was able to broaden the medium to include the mass media as well as face-to-face communication. He suggests that there could be a variety of outcomes or effects of communication, some of which may be unintentional.

4.3.3 Shannon-Weaver's form of communication

The Shannon-Weaver form (Abbey, 1976:28) deals with five elements of the communication process: a source from which a message emanates, a transmitter that encodes the message, a signal that carries it, a receiver that decodes the message, and a destination to which the message is directed. The encoding transmitter, the signal, and the decoding receiver together constitute the medium – telephone, radio, newspaper, the spoken word, or one of the many other possible media.

The Shannon-Weaver form can be outlined as follows:

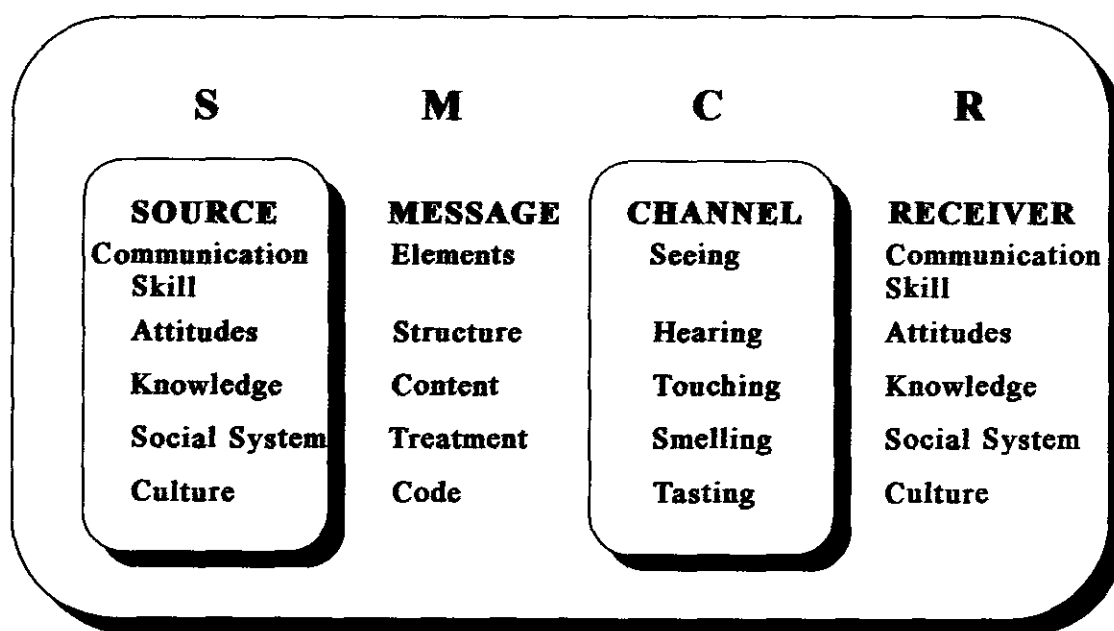


This form depicts a sequential process in which each component of the communication process is clearly defined. Although not indicated by means of a label, Shannon and Weaver's form also draws our attention to the effects of the message – the effects of noise on the reception and understanding of the message by the recipient. They do not consider the content of the message or the meaning that is conveyed and interpreted by the participants (Steinberg, 1999:29).

According to this form “developed”, the basic elements of all communication involve a sender, a signal (message), a channel, and a receiver (one who responds).

4.3.4 Berlo’s form of communication

Some differences from the Shannon-Weaver form become evident at a glance. Berlo’s form is designed for the study of human communication, as distinguished from technological communication. The Shannon-Weaver source and transmitter are elided into Berlo’s source, who encodes. Similarly the Shannon-Weaver receiver and destination become Berlo’s receiver, who decodes. The Shannon-Weaver signal becomes the Berlo channel, which must make contact with one or more of the senses. Berlo’s form can be outlined as follows:

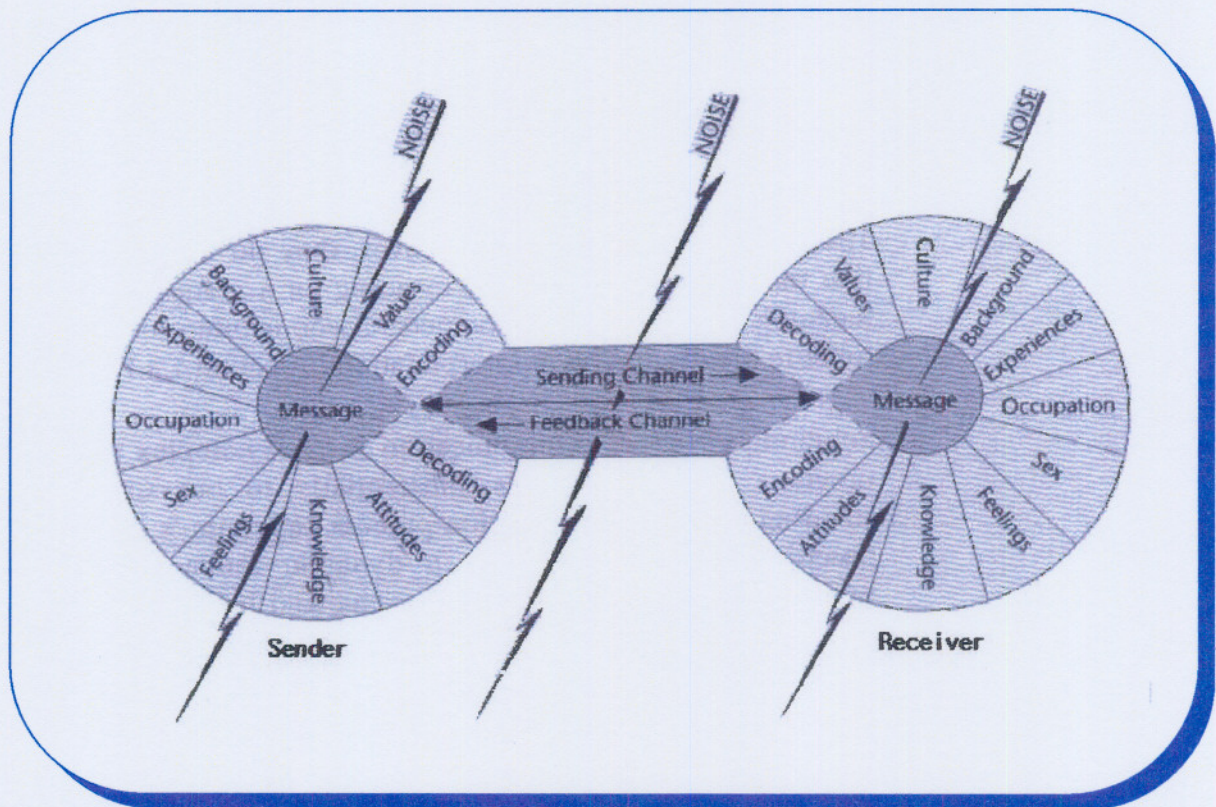


Berlo accentuates that the source must know the kind of social system within which he operates (Kellerman, 1978:73-74). This form was developed from the Shannon-Weaver’s form. It accepts that a sender must know the social system and culture of the receiver.

4.3.5 Verderber's form of communication

This model is not substantially different from the above model – it also depicts communication as a dynamic process in which both participants are actively engaged in encoding, transmitting, receiving and decoding messages.

Verderber's (1990:10) form can be outlined as follows:



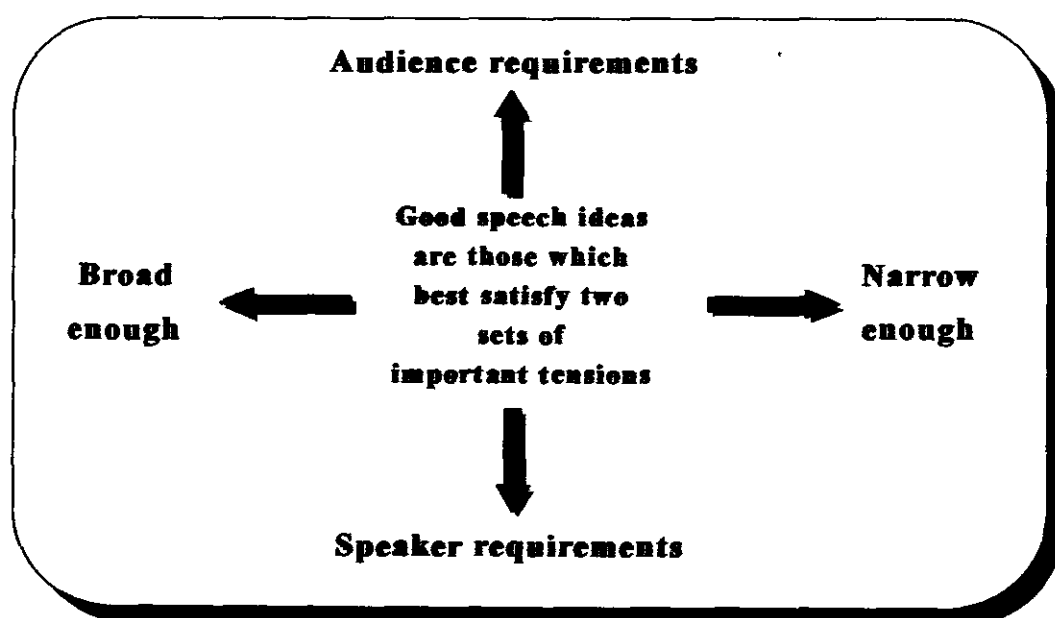
The main difference is that communication is seen within the context of a relationship between two participants who are simultaneously involved in the negotiation of meaning. Simultaneous implies that, instead of a two-way flow, both people are constantly encoding and decoding messages. Therefore, there is no longer a separation between the two communicators (Tubbs & Moss, 1991:99).

The transactional model also highlights that the creation of meaning is negotiated between the participants. The two circles represent the communicator and the recipient. In the center of each circle is the message:

the thought, idea or feeling that is communicated using verbal and nonverbal signs. The bar between the circles represents the medium of communication. Rather than depicting transmission and feedback as two separate processes, the transactional model indicates that messages are continually passing between the participants. The area around the communicator and the recipient represents the context or circumstance in which the process takes place. While it is taking place, external, internal and semantic noise may be occurring at various places in the model. These noises may affect the ability of communicator and recipient to share meanings.

4.3.6 Litfin's form of communication

Litfin (2001:89) suggests qualities for the form of a communicative speech. He explains that a good idea for a speech is one which successfully balances two sets of sometimes opposing requirements. First, the idea must meet the needs of both the speaker and the audience. Second, the idea must be broad enough to be significant, but also narrow enough to be handled in a relevant way. Litfin's form can be outlined as follows:



According to this form, a speaker should adjust to his audience in every way possible in audience-speaker tension. Therefore, the choice of subject matter should be made in the light of the interests, attitudes, needs, and expectations of your audience, thus the audience exerts a very strong tension upon a speaker's choice of his topic. The broad-narrow tension an idea must satisfy to be considered a good one is that which exists between significance and relevance, or what we will call the broad and the narrow. Thus this form accepts that a sender must think of a hypothetical ladder of ideas, with the inconsequential and trivial at the bottom giving way to the increasingly inclusive and therefore significant as we move to the top.

In short, the development of communication models has continued until the present time. Communication as a process is always complexly developing. It is never still or motionless. Actually, human communication is a much more complicated process than it might seem on the surface.

4.3.7 Steinberg's focus on the context of communication

A communication situation occurs with particular people, in particular physical and social circumstances, and during a particular period of time. Then communication is contextual. Contexts are different types of communication situations or settings classified according to the number of people involved in them and the degree to which they are able to interact. Steinberg (1999:36) specifies the different types of context. (1) The intrapersonal communication context. It occurs when an individual sends and receives messages internally. (2) The interpersonal communication context. It occurs between people in a face-to-face situation. They are able to see each other and observe facial expressions and other nonverbal behaviour while they are exchanging verbal messages. (3) The small-group communication context. It refers to communication within a group of between three and twelve people. (4) The organizational communication context. It refers to

communication within and between organizations. (5) The public speaking context. In public speaking one person addresses an audience in a public setting such as a lecture hall or auditorium. The speaker is introduced, and delivers a speech that has been prepared to meet the goals of the particular situation. (6) The mass communication context. It is communication to large masses of people who do not know each other and who are usually not in the same place.

According to the above settings, it is very clear that people are trying to get one or more of several possible outcomes: understanding, pleasure, attitude influence, improved relationships, and action.

4.4 THE FUNCTION OF COMMUNICATION

Kotler and Armstrong (1993:388), Rensburg (1996:409) and Steinberg (1995:26) agree that communication provides a release for the emotional expression of feelings and for fulfillment of social needs. Communication enables people to do certain important things. It enables people to grow, to learn, to become aware of themselves, and to adjust to their environment. When people can do these things, they are on the road to good mental health. People develop and grow by communicating with others in their environment. People occasionally change their environment using communication to help them grow in new surroundings. People gain this information about things, places and other people through communication. As people internalize more ideas, they grow as people. Closely related to individual growth is the process of learning.

Rensburg (1996:109) and Steinberg (1995:26) state that learning means the accumulation of information. Growth, on the other hand, involves the total personality of the individual. Almost all-instructional strategies utilize some form of communication. As one listens to experts, attends classes, reads

books, views television, and perceives his or her environment, he is learning. People become aware of who they are, primarily through communication. People tell others things about themselves that they use to monitor their development as people. People gain input that tells others if they are successful in their behaviour exchange with others. They also develop a sense of their heritage and of their potential through communication. Who they are today is the product of thousands of communication exchanges that they have experienced throughout their life. All people exist within a world of people, ideas, places and things. They learn what change they need to make through communication.

According to Steinberg (1995:26) communication helps people to persuade others. In many situations people communicate to persuade others to think the way they think or change an attitude or behaviour, as well as to have them understand what they are saying. In today's world of technology, the mass media are used extensively for persuasive purposes.

Both Fielding (1997:7) and Katz (1997:48) state that the other function that communication performs relates to its role in facilitating decision making. It provides the information that individuals and groups need to make decisions by transmitting the data to identify and evaluate alternative choices. None of these functions should be seen as being more important than the others. For groups to perform effectively they need to maintain some form of control over members. They must stimulate members to perform, provide a means for emotional expression and decision making. People communicate to obtain and share information for a number of purposes. Communication also helps people in decision-making. Some decisions are made in cooperation with others, whatever the context, people communicate to obtain and share information that enables them to make informed decisions.

We can by analogy aver that analogizing the functions of the communication in Christianity is our common worship of God and preaching of his Word and the maintaining of his truth.

4.5 PREACHING AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

4.5.1 Preaching as a communication aimed at effect

The effects of communication should be classified as those desired by the source, those desired by the receiver, and those actually obtained (Miller, 1994:32). It is necessary to analyse the relationship between audience analysis and overall effect.

The effectiveness of the preacher as communicator depends on his ability to analyse his audience. Craddock (1985:25) states "to say that listeners are participants is to make at least three statements about the nature of preaching. First, the message is appropriate to the listeners. The second statement which listener participation makes about preaching is that sermons should proceed or move in such a way as to give the listener something to think, feel, decide, and do during the preaching. The third and final statement about preaching, generated by the conviction that listeners are vital contributors, is that a sermon should speak for, as well as to the congregation." The listeners are active participants in preaching. After finding out these facts, the preacher as communicator has to prepare a sermon which is suitable to the audience.

If communication is to be successful, it must have at its foundation the notion of knowing the audience. Making the listener want to hear you is primary. Schramm (1988:13) lists four conditions that must be fulfilled if the message is to have its intended effect: (1) The message must be so designed and delivered as to gain the attention of the intended destination. (2) The message must employ signs which refer to experience common to the source and destination, so as to get the meaning across. (3) The message must arouse personality needs in the destination and suggest some ways to meet those needs. (4) The message must suggest a way to meet those needs which is appropriate to the group situation in which the destination finds himself at the time when he is moved to make the desired response.

Preaching ordinarily is not done merely to inform, although informing may be a significant part of the preacher's goal. Persuading, urging, challenging, convicting, converting: these are words which belong to any standard definition of preaching. It is assumed that preaching produces change. Change will occur when the gospel is preached with the effective communication.

Davis (1958:23) points out that preaching is a unique kind of speaking, a special language, a dialogical interaction between God and hearers. Preaching is a form of human communication. But on theological grounds most would also say that preaching is a divine event the essence of which cannot be explained by or reduced to communication (Willimon & Lischer, 1995:82). The Holy Spirit knows best what exactly He wanted to communicate to the first readers through the writer (Bugg, 1993:16). No man, without the Holy Spirit, accepts the things that come from the Spirit of God, because he cannot understand it.

Communication happens largely unconsciously. We don't even notice such vital systems until they break down. Communication is always going on whenever and wherever there are people. When we attempt to communicate, we reach out to other people across whatever gap separates us from them. This may be a comparatively small gap, as between members of the same family, or a very large gap, as between members of widely different societies.

Every communicational interaction involves a gap and a bridge. A communicational gap always exists between human beings and those who seek to interact with them, whether they be other humans or heavenly beings. To cross such a gap, the bridge of effective communication is needed. Preaching as effective communication will be more closely studied.

4.5.2 Preaching as dialogical communication

In communication that involves a sender, a message, a channel, and a receiver, dialogue is involved whether or not the dialogue is verbally articulated. When preaching ceases to be dialogical in nature, it ceases to be communication.

Preachers must remember that at the other end of every message are people who must receive the message and apply meaning to the message in order for communication to have taken place. If the audience is not drawn into the communication process through dialoguing with the preacher, the inevitable result is that the audience will begin to dialogue at a different level (Vines, 1986:127). They might start whispered conversations with their neighbors or, they might begin a dialogue at an inn-personal level within their own imaginative minds. When talking to ourselves we often assume dual verbal roles, and actually dialogue with ourselves.

Dialogue between the preacher and the audience must not cease, for if it does, preaching is reduced to a monologue, and communication ceases even though the preacher has not ceased verbalizing. Stott (1982b:61-62) refers to this as silent dialogue: "Dialogical preaching... refers to the silent dialogue which should be developing between the preacher and the hearers. We want to provoke people to think, to answer us and to argue with us in their minds, and we should maintain such a lively (though silent) dialogue with them that they find it impossible to fall asleep".

Eisenson (as quoted by Richardson, 1969:63-64) recognizes three specific elements of effective communication important to the speaker-listener relationship of which preachers involved in silent dialogue should be aware: (1) Individuals may play either specialized or alternating roles in the communicative process...sometimes acting as communicator, sometimes as listener. (2) Response from the listener is the ultimate goal of all communication. (3) Individuals respond most readily when they are highly involved in the purpose of the communication.

Many a preacher has a tendency to devote all of their energies toward the exegesis of the biblical text with its corresponding hermeneutic, and, in the process, forget about the audience. If a preacher is remiss about the audience s/he will inevitably forget about dialoguing with the audience and thereby condemn the sermon to the drudgery of the aforementioned monologue.

Craddock (1985:93-95) offers us three ways by which a minister comes to know the audience:

- (1) *Formal*. A preacher does not move into a ministry and expect to be consistently effective in the pulpit when he or she knows the parishioners solely by a process of gradual absorption. Initiative and intentionality are essential, if for no other reason than to break the stereotypes we bring with us...A few key interviews quite soon after one's arrival in the community can hasten the beginnings of pastoral as well as pulpit effectiveness.
- (2) *Informal*. Hardly a day passes that does not provide many and varied human contacts and occasions to observe the activities and interactions of those to whom and among whom one ministers...Having an understanding of the currents of a community's life...enables the minister to interpret the listeners to themselves.
- (3) *Empathetic imagination*. Empathetic imagination is the capacity to achieve a large measure of understanding of another person without having had that person's experiences.

A crisis in preaching exists because of a general use of the monological style. Lack of intercommunication between pulpit and pew means that neither can accurately understand the other so that the Word of preaching fails to touch the hearers at the point of their need.

Preaching is not something that one person does, it is something that the community of faith does in concert, with each one having a role in this communication between man and God (Duduit, 1996:11). Dialogical communication, because it assumes the necessity of participation, has, through various means, set out to accomplish this dynamic interaction between persons. Dialogical style is a most appropriate response to concerns about pulpit authority and expectations of change, for it removes barriers which hinder effective proclamation of the gospel through preaching (Swank, 1981:22; Johnston, 2001:150). The preacher should do his or her best to avoid any type of interference in the verbal or silent dialogue process since interference tends to block both message and meaning.

4.5.3 Preaching as feedback communication

Preaching which is sensitive to and responds on feedback will be in a position to make necessary adjustments in the communication process. The preacher must be aware of the effects of his or her communication in terms of behavioral relationship. Clevenger and Matthews (1973:154) mention that "it should be clear that the term feedback refers not to any catalogue of listener behaviour, but to a relationship between the behaviour of the speaker, the response of the listener, and the effect of that response on the further behavior of the speaker".

Feedback works in much the same way as communication; it demands a response. To avoid the monologue, preaching must never become a zero-feedback situation. Robinson (1983:69) says: "the most astute preachers allow their eyes and ears to program their mouths. As they stand in the pulpit, they respond to cues from the audience telling them how they are doing. As they prepare, they study not only content but also people, hearing the spoken and unspoken questions. After speaking, they listen intently to find out how they have done."

Since feedback demands a response in order to be classified as feedback, the preacher will need to retain some flexibility in his own behavior (Clevenger & Matthews, 1973:155). One of the most serious complaints of preaching is that it is delivered like a lecture without any sense of flexibility, this, of course, quenches any form of dialogue be it verbal or silent. The preacher needs feedback.

In short, communication skills complement the preaching of God's truth, not undermine it. Such a lively relationship should maintain between the preacher and the audience.

4.6 FINAL CONCLUSIONS ON META-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON FORM AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The basic elements of communication are source, message, channel, receiver, and feedback. In this way certain aspect of effective communication may be exploited. The following conclusions can be drawn from the meta-theoretical perspectives on form and effective communication:

1. Communication is process of sharing with another person one's message in a two-way transmission of ideas, and is intended to produce a response in the receiver. It also involves a reciprocal action or feedback. Essentially, good communication must be seen as dialogical in nature.
2. Communication involves source, message, channel, receiver, feedback and dialogue is involved whether or not the dialogue is verbally articulated. For good communication, it must delete barriers and try to work to overcome them. The preacher as communicator needs to understand the communication process and the sources of error, and also needs training for effective transmission.

-
3. To communicate effectively a sender (preacher) must understand his audience and adjust the message to the audience. In this regard a sender (preacher) has to consider the audience as listeners who want to listen differently for different purposes, or who may intend not to listen.
 4. Preachers must remember that at the other end of every message are people who must receive the message and apply meaning to the message in order for communication to have taken place.

This next chapter will analysis a selections of written sermons on form and effective communication from three preachers.

CHAPTER 5

CHAPTER 5

THE FORM OF THE SERMON AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION - ANALYSING A SELECTION OF WRITTEN SERMONS ON FORM AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the form and effective communication of three written sermons from three preachers:

- Eugene Lowry's sermon
- David Buttrick's sermon
- Susan Bond's sermon

5.1 Eugene Lowry's sermon

"A Knowing Glimpse"

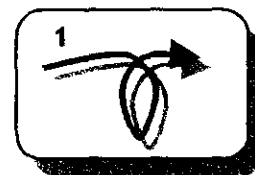
Lk. 24:13-35

Sometimes, the most fascinating parts of a story may be the parts not said or key moments not shared. With this text, it may be a moment not given.

What I want to know is: What are these two friends of Jesus' doing on the road on the Easter Sunday afternoon anyway? Why are they heading away from the city? Are they going home to Emmaus? Certainly they landed in a familiar dwelling for the evening meal that night. But, all the action was happening in Jerusalem. The women had said the stone was rolled away, and the body was missing. They even claimed to have been confronted with two men in dazzling clothes alleging Jesus to be alive. "An idle tale," concluded the disciples when told the story. Impulsive Simon Peter ran to the tomb—of course—to see for himself. But these two Friends seem, instead, to be running away—away from the action.

1. UPSETTING THE ÉQUILIBRIUM (Oops!)

Lowry introduces conflict. He names the problem that is the focus of the sermon. It could be a question or difficulty that arises in connection with the Bible.



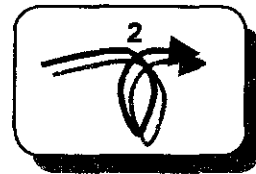
Could they be afraid that there might be new victims in this story? Or in confusion did they want to take a long walk? We don't know. I can't help wonder if *they* knew. For whatever reason, they are walking to Emmaus—Cleopas and another never named.

They are joined by this stranger. It is Jesus, but they don't know it. They do not recognize him at all. "What are you talking about?" he asks in feigned innocence—and they cannot believe this stranger to town hasn't heard the news of their slain friend, who they hoped might be the promised one. When I first read or heard this story, I found it inconceivable that they would not recognize Jesus. How could they not know it was he?

But, I don't wonder anymore, primarily because of an experience I had twenty—five years ago. I was attending a birthday party in my honor at the home of some friends, the Samples. Peggy is a fine canvas artist. Unbeknown to me, she had painted my likeness as a clown and placed the painting above the mantle. They found

2. ANALYZING THE DISCREPANCY (Ugh!)

Lowry explores the complication. He helps the congregation think critically about the manifestations and causes of the situation that upset the equilibrium of the congregation. What is wrong? Why is it wrong? The community goes "Ugh" as the reasons for the problem come into focus.



3. DISCLOSING THE CLUE TO RESOLUTION (Aha!)

A sudden shift appears. The sermon now reveals insights from the gospel.

Illustration

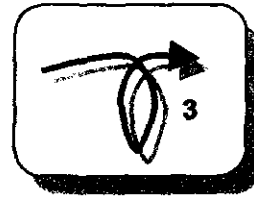
several excuses for me to have to walk past that mantle during the course of the evening. I never did see the painting.

Eventually, her husband, Tex, asked me how I liked the new painting. I looked, and granted that I thought it a really nice painting—but had no clue whatsoever it was I in the painting. Now I might have recognized the sadness in the face, for I was walking through quite a valley in those days. Or just looked at the face. To this day, twenty- five years later, people always recognize the face. But I didn't. Somehow, I couldn't. Somehow it was beyond my capacity to believe that Peggy would have painted my likeness—so I didn't. I remember the face looking familiar. But it was just too much to perceive—to recognize.

Well, so it was for them. Too incredible, no matter what the women had reported earlier in the day. Way too much to imagine. And so they didn't, and, instead, proceeded to “instruct him” about the events of the last few days.

Finally, he took over the instructing role and filled them in on the significance

DISCLOSING THE CLUE TO RÉSOLUTION (Aha!)



of the week's events. Once they arrived in Emmaus and as an act of hospitality, they invited him to stay for supper and a night's rest. He moved ahead, as though he was going yet further, but they insisted he stay with them—even invited him to serve as host for the meal.

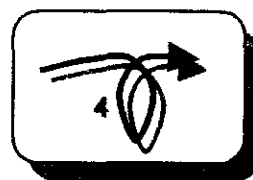
So, he took the bread, blessed the bread, and shared the bread—clearly a sacramental meal, explains Fred Craddock. And as the bread was broken so was the veil of their ignorance. They recognized it was Jesus. It was Jesus who had been walking with them, explaining the scriptures to them all along the road. And the moment they recognized who he was, he disappeared, vanished from their sight. Poof. Just like that.

Seems like divine humor to me. Just when we think we can get our hands on the holy—poof, it is gone, beyond our grasp. We should never imagine any capacity ever to survive more than a glimpse. Not here. Don't press it. Don't try to bottle it. Don't try to preserve it as a possession. That's the way it is, in what Rudolf Otto called the *mysterium tremendum*—that

DISCLOSING THE CLUE TO RÉSOLUTION (Aha!)

4. EXPERIENCING THE GÖSPĒL (Wheel)

Lowry expands on the clue to the resolution and applies it to the situation of the congregation. At its best, this part of the sermon contains an imaginative experience of the resolution to the tension through the gospel.



experience of the wholly other. Those folks who speak so glibly of their ongoing relationship with the divine—well, I just don't trust it. If Moses was allowed to glimpse only the back side of Yahweh, why should we think greater capacity for ourselves? I know there are those who claim a nice little conversation with Jesus about a parking place at the mall. But I have my doubts.

Isn't it more a matter of a *knowing glimpse*—the kind of glimpse that takes the breath away? "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us?" they asked. Now, that's more like it — that momentary glimpse that grips the soul.

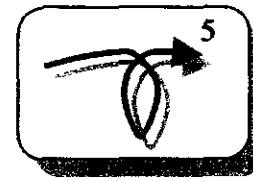
Well, I'll tell you, it gripped their bodies, too, and literally turned them around—one hundred eighty degrees. The text says that within the hour, "they got up and returned to Jerusalem." By this time, it must have been dark. They had to walk back to Jerusalem in the dark. Oh, no they didn't. Don't think it for a moment. It was during the day—as they walked toward Emmaus—that they walked in the dark. And now, at night, they started walking in the light.

EXPERIENCING THE GOSPEL (Wheel!)

5. ANTICIPATING THE CONSEQUENCES (Yeah!)

This phase of the sermon is an unfolding. Lowry anticipates how the discovery of the sermon will affect the future. The congregation wants to know how the resolution of the tension will affect the future of the congregational life and their life in the wider world.

That's the way it can be for us all. If any of us ever get a glimpse—you know, even just a fleeting, momentary, fragmentary glimpse—well, it'll turn you around! Yes, it will.



5.1.1 Evaluation of Eugene Lowry's sermon

Lowry sees tension as the chief element of the homiletical plot (Allen 1998:93). The sermon begins with a question, an ambiguity, or an unsettled point that arrests the congregation's interest. His sermon helps the congregation move toward an adequate response to the question, a clarification of the ambiguity, or a settlement of the issue. Lowry's sermon begins with an itch. The sermon seeks to scratch the itch.

5.2 David Buttrick's sermon

Gen. 22:1-19

Introduction: An old German woodcut pictures the sacrifice of Isaac. There is Isaac, all trussed up, lying on a pile of brush; huge empty-circle eyes, staring. Above him stands Abraham, both hands held high, about to plunge the knife. Over to one side, in a bush, stands a white lamb, waiting. What a strange story!

INTRODUCTION

The introduction sets the scene and identifies characters so that an unfolding of the story line may take place. The device of a picture immediately establishes the story as a symbol to be considered rather than as historical narration.

The story has troubled religious people for centuries, everyone from Augustine to Kafka, from Kierkegaard to Karl Barth. What can we make of the sacrifice of Isaac? Terror and grace. What can we make of the story?

Buttrick begins an imaginative detail.

I

FIRST MOVE

At the outset, notice: Isaac is much more than an only child. *Isaac is hope*, hope wrapped up in human flesh. All the promises of God were riding on Isaac. Remember the story? Remember how God dropped in to tell Sarah and Abraham that their offspring would be as many as the sands of the sea, that they would give birth to nations. Well, the old folks giggled, for, according to reliable medical advice, it's mighty tough to conceive when you're pushing ninety! Then, suddenly, Isaac was born, a miracle child: God did provide! Through Isaac, there *would* be many descendants, a multitude of nations. An American playwright tells of how his Jewish parents scrimped and saved to give him everything. They bought him new clothes three times a year, bundled him off to private schools, paid for his college

The background information is given in highly contemporary language and is followed by contemporary illustration.

Statement

Development

Image

education. "Everything we got's wrapped up in you, boy!" his mother used to say. "Everything we got's wrapped up in you." How easy it is to focus our hopes. God gives us a land to live in and, before you know it, we're chanting, "Everything we've got is wrapped up in you, America!" Or a church to belong to: "Everything we've got is wrapped up in you, Presbyterian Church!" Listen, Isaac was more than an only child. Isaac embodied the promises of God. "Everything we got's wrapped up in you, boy." Isaac was hope, all the hope in the world.

Image

Closure

II

SECOND MOVE

So what happened? *God spoke.* "Kill him off," said God, "Take your only child and kill him!" We hear the words and we're appalled. We've always talked of God as Love, spelled L-O-O-O-V-E, so the hard words shake us. "Kill him off," said God. Suddenly life is not what we thought it was —a comfortable therapist's office where on a couch called "prayer" we can spill out our souls to some caring Deity. No, instead, we're stuck with a stony place, a funeral pyre, and a knife blade flashing.

Suddenly, the narrative action takes over the sermon. But, notice, there is little description of the story. Immediately, we enter into a contemporary consciousness hearing and reacting to the story.

Statement

Development

Yes, God gives good gifts, but God takes away! "All our loves," cries the heroine of a British novel, "All our loves, you take away!" For every brimming child, there does seem to be a knife blade. So maybe, as the theologians say, we're going to have to "reconstruct our God-concept" to include a few of the darker shades. God may well be terribly good, but notice the adverb "terribly"! God spoke a terrible word to Abraham. As Abraham stood staring at his child Isaac, God said "Kill him, Kill him off." God spoke.

III

Then, of all things, *Abraham obeyed*. Abraham did as he was told. He obeyed. Flat-eyed, grim, Abraham led his son up the hill, muttering "God will provide," "God will provide," with biting irony. Fanatic Abraham obeyed. To most of us, religion's rather easygoing, a "liberal persuasion," something that's even passable on campus—you can talk religion down at The University Club, Then, we flip a page in our Bibles and stumble on wild-eyed Abraham passing out the poisoned Kool-Aid in some stony Jonestown,

Development (Image)

Images from the story occur at the start of the move, and then in the sixth, eighth, and eleventh sentences before the move ends again with the story line.

Closure

THIRD MOVE

Now, the sermon is being moved along by the story-line episodes.

Statement

Development

and we're embarrassed. Down in the Southwest there's a tribe, the Penitentes. Some say they were practicing human sacrifice into the 1950s. Finally, they were investigated. "What kind of people are you to practice human sacrifice?" a prosecutor demanded. To which a tribal leader replied, "You do not take God seriously." Well, maybe we don't. We are moderate people: We calculate our charities, confess our minimal sins, schedule a "Minute for Mission" on a weekly basis, and run for dear life from anything in excess. But, see, in Abraham, radical, blind obedience. God commanded, and Abraham was bent on doing God's will even if it meant slaughtering his only hope. So, Abraham went up the hill to kill Isaac. God spoke and Abraham obeyed.

IV

Now, hear the clatter of the knife on stone. See Abraham's arms fold down to his side. For, *suddenly, Abraham caught sight of the trapped lamb*: "God will provide," he cried triumphantly. "God will provide!"

Development (illustration)

The illustration used works off what may be a revulsion toward the whole notion of human sacrifice, but seeks to retain the sense of serious self-sacrifice demanded of us by God.

Closure

FOURTH MOVE

Here, Buttrick begins with a slightly delayed start in order to imitate the dramatic suspense of the original story.

Statement

Well, if you're Christian, you can't help thinking of Calvary, can you? Of another stone hill, and a high cross. One of the earliest pictures of the crucifixion is a Byzantine wall painting. The picture shows the stone hill and the wood-stick cross, but, instead of hung Jesus, there's a huge nailed lamb on the crossbar: Lamb of God! Look, if God will hand over an only Child as sacrifice to our rigid sins, then see, behind the hard hurt surface of life, there's not a Holy Terror, but Love: Love so amazing, so Divine, so unutterably intense it will sacrifice itself for us. Lamb on the cross, then Lamb on the Throne! So, Abraham caught sight of the trapped lamb and shouted for joy. Clatter of the knife on stone. Fold of the arm. "God will provide," cried Abraham.

V

Now, do you see what the sacrifice of Abraham is all about? *God set Abraham free for faith.* The Bible calls the story a "test" but the word is too tame. On a high stone hill, God set Abraham free, free for faith. Blind obedience was transformed into faith. Oh, how easy it is to pin all our hopes on a means of grace, amid forget God, the giver. Subtly we turn God's gifts

Development (Image)

Byzantine mosaic recalls the woodcut from the introduction.

Closure

FIFTH MOVE

The move begins with a radical shift in point-of-view.

Statement

Development

into idols. God has given us the scriptures, but see how we flank the open page with candles and frame dogma to guarantee infallibility: "Everything we've got is wrapped up in you, Bible!" Or perhaps, God draws us into faith through a masculine church; before you know it we're protecting the pronouns and two-legged tailored vestments: "Everything we got's wrapped up in you," sung by a bass-voiced choir. Back in the sixties, a liberal Catholic journal announced gleefully, "God can get along without the Latin Mass." To which a reader replied: "Maybe God can, but we can't." Is there any idolatry like religious idolatry? No wonder God speaks and shatters our souls: "Kill it off!" God who takes away all our false loves. So, on a high hill, God called up Abraham and Isaac, and there—Amazing, Ruthless Grace—God set Abraham free, free for faith.

Development

Image

Closure

VI

SIXTH MOVE

Well, *here we are stumbling down a stone-bill Calvary into the twentieth century.* We are free to trust God, for God will provide. Oh, we still have our Bible, our church,

A type is drawn between Abraham's high place of sacrifice and Calvary.

Statement

our liturgies, but, somehow, they are different now: the gilded sheen has rubbed off. We can love our churches, without having to hold on for dear life, particularly in an age when God may be sweeping away our denominations. And, yes, we can love the scriptures, without having to defend each sacred page, especially now when authority fights are building. We can trust the self-giving God to give us all we'll ever need: "God will provide!" There's a minister in a northern state who has papered a wall of her office: Custom-made wallpaper repeating words line after line, all over the space. Now she can sit at her desk and read: "Trust God, Let go. Trust God, Let go." Because we trust God—Lamb on the throne—we *can* let go of all our loves: Bible, church, nation, even sexuality. We can stumble down from Calvary into a human world, sure of the grace of God.

Conclusion: Now then, here are pictures to put up in your mind. A stone hill, a pile of brush, empty-circle eyes, and a knife blade high. "Kill him off," cracks the voice of God. But, here's another picture:

Development

Image

The image which features a woman will interact with remarks about a masculine church in the previous move.

Closure

CONCLUSION

After recalling the woodcut and the Byzantine mosaic, He urges the congregation to keep both pictures.

A wood cross on a rock hill, and a lamb **CONCLUSION**
nailed to the crossbar, “ God will
provide.” Keep *both* pictures in your mind.
“ You God, you take away all our loves,
but you give yourself !” Trust God, let go.
Let go, trust God.

5.2.1 Evaluation of David Buttrick’s sermon

Buttrick takes a Hebrew narrative. He refers to the selection and sequencing of the various parts of the sermons so that they can work together to help the sermon achieve a particular intention (Allen, 1998:87).

The plot is made up of moves—small segments of the sermon. A move lasts from three to four minutes. Consequently, a twenty-minute sermon would consist of a beginning, four to six moves, and an ending. Each move consists of the following parts: He begins with a statement, that is, a clear indication of the content of the sermon. He then develops the statement by explaining it, usually in clear, analytical language. After the development, he offers an image that pictures the point made in the move. The move ends with closure. Closure summarizes the point of the move.

Thus, Buttrick’s approach can help the preacher and the congregation to interact with biblical texts as well as situations.

5.3 Susan Bond's sermon •

"Coming Home"

Is. 60:1-6

Well, here we are, just cleaning up the mess from Christmas, and ready to get on with life at a more normal pace, and we get this call to rise and shine. Rise and shine. The phrase reminds me of a story about a girl whose father, a regular early-riser, would peek his head in her bedroom door and call out, "Rise and shine." The girl would pull the covers even closer around her ears and mutter, "I will rise, but I sure ain't gonna shine!" The call of the prophet to rise and shine doesn't immediately inspire us. We may rise up for the day, but we're not sure we want to put on a shiny face to do it. We don't want to be summoned for another job.

Here's the first problem. We're busy now. There's just too much work to do already. Like a kid who's been waiting for the weekend stretched out ahead, we don't want to fill our hours with work. Hey, Isaiah! Can't we just relax and take it easy? God, we're only human.

The form of Prophetic

literature—poetry (Graphic picture), prophetic speeches and metaphors (Isaiah calls Yahweh Israel's light. A metaphor has the power to make us see reality in new ways, from different and surprising angles).

Imagination

Vivid description

Problem Form Tension

Contemporary situation

Maybe that's the whole idea. We're only human. We resist this constant urge to work and get busy. We're already worn out and fragmented by our daily lives. Pastoral counselors use the phrase "emotional homelessness" to describe our feelings of being alienated or cut off from things. We are psychologically disenfranchised and without a sense of belonging. We are in exile. Part of the reality that we call "postmodern" includes suffering from a sense of discontinuity and rootlessness. We are a nation that tries to escape more demands. We drink more alcohol than we should. We pop more pills and stick more needles in our arms than almost anybody else. Booze and drugs, symptoms of our alienation, are faulty attempts to fill the emptiness or to at least numb it. Children want a safe haven. Parents want someone else to fix things. We are only human, and we feel stretched beyond our limits. We don't want to take on one more mandate.

Repetition

Vivid description

Repetition

We come to church to escape the problems of the world. We've had enough of trouble. Every day we see news reports of disaster. Television is full of reports that scare us to death. The TV tells us that our houses are full of toxic synthetics, and our food is pumped full of pesticides. On the evening news we hear stories of children gunned down in the hallways of public schools. We're already convinced that the world is in trouble, but we feel helpless to change things. We want church to be a safe place, a sanctuary in a falling—apart world.

Problem Form, Tension

Contemporary situation

Tension

Isaiah's people can identify with us. They are grabbed up and taken into exile in another land. They've been kidnapped by a foreign nation and taken to prison camps hundreds of miles away. They are far from home, and they can't get back. If you've ever traveled to another country or just to another part of this country, you know how they feel. They are in a nation of strangers. The street signs are all in another language, the money is different, the food is not what they know. They have no political power, so they don't have any hope of getting someone in office who will

Understanding Bible text

be sympathetic to their situation. The powers-that-be dictate every waking moment.

Understanding Bible text

The children are learning strange ways and forgetting everything about their homeland. Like children everywhere, they react by trying to make their own communities. They just want to hang out with other kids. They play in alleyways and back streets. They make fun of their parents and their old-fashioned ideas. But even underneath their youthful recklessness, they know things are not quite right. They just wish someone would protect them and take care of them. Maybe they're looking for a place to belong. Their folks are tired and grumpy, too caught up in the Babylonian rat race to pay attention to the things that worry kids. The teenagers must be terrified. They are old enough to realize that their folks are not in charge. The terrifying thing about growing up is realizing that adults don't have things under control. Their folks can't really take care of them, can't protect them from the violence of everyday life.

Understanding Bible text

Just the other day, one of the Isaiah kids was slapped in handcuffs and hauled off to the Babylonian juvenile detention center. Who knows what she was doing. Maybe she'd skipped out of school and was hanging around on the street corner smoking cigarettes. Or, maybe she had a knife in her backpack because, well, life is dangerous in Babylon. All she wanted was a little escape from the daily grind. She wanted to feel in control. Belong someplace. Now she's in a holding cell, fingerprinted and photographed, waiting for the judge to make a decision.

Understanding Bible text

Imagination

In Isaiah's world, everybody is on hold and hopeless. There's no safe place anymore. They're convinced that the world is in trouble, but they feel helpless to change things. They want a place where they can lock the doors and make the world go away. They don't want Isaiah giving them one more program or mission. They're only human. Stretched beyond their limits. They want a sanctuary, a safety zone in the midst of a falling-apart world. They've had enough of trouble. The world is covered with clouds and shadow.

Problem Form, Tension

Repetition

Tension

Now, look at what God promises. God's promises are light to a world covered in midnight. Someone says that only from the deepest nighttime does God's promise make sense. God promises a light that will break through the clouds, a glimmer of hope that will dawn on a people in exile. God set up Adam and Eve with a bridal shower of good things. Fertile land as far as the eye could see. Fruit hanging on every tree, animals of every kind, grain, and grapes. God's plan was to give humans a land of abundance. From creation to the New Jerusalem, the people of God hope for a real historical future that is brighter than the current situation.

Solving Form

She solves the problem from the standpoint of O.T.

The physicality, the real embodiedness, the concreteness of the vision is critical, since it takes flesh and blood seriously. There is religious meaning in things like food production, farming, organization, and survival. Whether God promises a garden or a city, the divine promise is that Yahweh can use spirit and body, nature and history, politics and the future. Whether in the cities or in the farmlands, God's promise is an inheritance

Solving Form

of sufficiency from one generation to another. Land, a territory, a safe place, a religious symbol of “actual earthly turf where people can be safe and secure, where meaning and well-being are enjoyed without pressure or coercion,” and it also symbolizes “wholeness of joy and well-being characterized by social coherence and personal ease in prosperity, security and freedom.”

Solving Form

In the New Testament, we bump into the same notion in Jesus’ teachings about the realm of God: a real place where we belong and can flourish. To have a place means that God hopes for our security and our well-being. Jesus talks about such a place. The realm of God is a new creation where the meek inherit the earth. When you are homeless and alienated, when you are far from home, when you are without a safe place, the idea of a homeland is good news.

Solving Form

She solves the problem from the standpoint of N.T.

Something should be bothering us along about now. All this gathering and homeland and family stuff sounds a little too much like a family reunion, a community of like-minded and blood-related folks. We think about the growing

Problem Form

Contemporary situation

cliquishness of the world. For years now, Israel and Palestine have been fighting over the "homeland." People in Northern Ireland have been fighting a family feud in the streets of Belfast. Black and white Africans continue to mark out townships along racial boundaries. Even here, in the U.S.A., Californians are trying to keep the borders strong to prevent Mexicans from coining into the state. We have racial quotas. Polish Americans, Irish Americans, Italian Americans, Asian Americans. We have schools for boys only. National organizations for women. Colonists came to this country as a pilgrim people wandering in the wilderness to find a freedom home and within 200 years had built up their "sanctuary" into a world-ravaging death machine, wielding power over other countries. The possession of land and wealth or the idea of a "nation for us" can quickly become demonic.

Problem Form

Contemporary situation

But God's "nation" is not limited to one geographic, or ethnic, or religious, or racial group. God's holy nation is a gathering of all peoples, all nations, and backgrounds.

Solving Form

The tension is resolved.

The socio-political reality which Isaiah envisions is an earthly reality in which God is in charge, in which earthly rulers have been displaced by Yahweh. Isaiah proclaims a nation ruled by the divine mandate to form a community of justice and inclusion. The nation will be a place in which all the homeless and displaced gather in security, in which violence and destruction are things of the past. Isaiah's vision, like the other prophetic visions, includes provision for widows, orphans, and the impoverished. The vision is that of a just world, where, as verse 17 claims, peace will be the overseer and righteousness will be the taskmaster. There will be neither absolute princes nor absolute paupers.

Solving Form

Isaiah calls for a human community of justice in which all the sons and daughters will be reunited, not just the biological or ethnic sons and daughters. If Adam and Eve are the original parents, then all humans are sons and daughters of Yahweh. "Your sons shall come from far away and your daughters shall be carried on their

Solving Form

nurses' arms." Isaiah's vision of a just world is what Jesus proclaimed when he began his preaching ministry, saying "I have come to proclaim good news! I have come to set the inmates free from the penitentiaries, to provide medical care for the disabled, to proclaim that this year is when God's salvage operation should commence." The good news is good news most particularly to those who have been left out, discarded, neglected, orphaned, and forgotten.

Solving Form

There's a church in a southern city where the displaced and the dispossessed gather every Sunday. The building is small and modest. The churchyard stretches toward poor and working-class neighborhoods and toward a public housing project. But on Sunday morning, folks from the suburbs and folks from the inner city gather on the lawn. Folks of every color, in every kind of dress. A woman from Africa stands in native dress, talking to a white gay couple and their newly adopted South American baby. A middle-aged single mother helps her adopted son struggle up the sidewalk on his walker. An elderly African American

IMAGINATION (vivid description)

woman pushes a wheelchair bearing a Caucasian man. A young Asian woman walks hand-in-hand with her Euro-American boyfriend. A van drives up to unload work-release prisoners free for the day. As we approach the church yard, a young woman laughs with delight. "It looks like a halfway house!" she giggles.

Do you see Isaiah's vision? In the darkest hour, when all seems hopeless, there is hope. When our children are at risk, when our streets are not safe, when our daily lives are captive to strangers, God's new world still takes shape. God's people gather, from all corners of the world, to create a promised land of justice, a promised land of safety, an actual earthly turf where people can be safe and secure. Gathering together, they are the dawn of a new day a light to other nations, a glory to the Lord. God takes on flesh and walks among us, life in the Dominion of Death. "Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together; they come to you; your sons shall come from far away; and your daughters shall be carried on

IMAGINATION (vivid description)

Conclusion (Image)

She describes a congregation in which this vision is already coming to life. That image offers the congregation an experience of the new world. That experience gives us the strength to rise, and shine, and to want to give ourselves to the work of helping God build this community.

their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice." Arise, shine; for your light has come.

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5.3.1 Evaluation of Susan Bond's sermon

Bond takes an inductive approach. As noted in the introduction, the inductive sermon does not come to the major point or conclusion until the latter moments of the homily. The message begins with situations that need to be interpreted from the standpoint of the gospel. She then gathers and evaluates resources that help the community understand the biblical text and situation that is the focal point of the sermon. Therefore she creates tension. The tension creates interest that helps the congregation want to be involved in the sermon.

This next chapter will explain some guidelines for the form of preaching to communicate effectively.

CHAPTER 6

CHAPTER 6

PRACTICE-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE FORM OF THE SERMON AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The forms of sermons and effective communication have been established throughout this work. The second chapter introduced certain selections from literary forms in Scripture on the form of preaching. In the third chapter we investigated certain selections from three preachers. In the fourth chapter, some communication forms were analysed and explained. The fifth chapter analyzed a selection of sermons on form and effective communication. This final chapter is devoted to practice-theoretical perspectives on the form of the sermon and effective communication. In this chapter the following issues will be dealt with:

- Some suggestions for the form of a sermon
- Some suggestions for effective communication applicable to the form of a sermon

6.1 SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FORM OF A SERMON

Sermon form affects the message of the sermon, because the sermon form translates the potential energy of the message of the sermon into productive movement. Sermon form affects both the text and the congregations, sometimes in profound ways.

6.1.1 Text - centered sermon form

The bible stands at the center of the sermon. A sermon should be biblical because the biblical text is the foundation for preaching (Venter, 2001:525). The biblical text, therefore, is the source for the sermon. While some authors have suggested that the sermon theme and its structure must come from the text, another group of authors take a slightly different approach. For them it is less important that main points come out of the text and more important that the form of the text controls the form of the sermon.

Wardlow (1983:29) says that the form of the biblical text and the form of preaching from that text is much like that of a building and its form. Some texts are lofty spires, others are geodesic domes, and still others are shanties. The form of sermons should be shaped by and reflect the form of the biblical text.

Each text has its own designs, and we live in it according to the type of space it is. The text should not just yield the ideas and structure of the sermon, but the form of the text should determine the form of the sermon. A narrative text should produce a sermon that is presented as a narrative and a didactic text should yield a sermon that is structured didactically.

Each passage has a theme, so each passage has a form which best suits the message of that text. It is the task of the preacher to discover the message and the form from the text so that the word of God can be proclaimed to the congregation.

A text-centered sermon, however, solidly puts a specific text, controls the theme, the content, the organizational structure, or the form of the sermon, or some combination of these four. Beyond theme, form, structure, and content, however, there are other rhetorical features of this kind of preaching, features that can be seen in the relationship of the audience to the sermon and in the

relationship of the preacher to the sermon.

From this examination of text-centered preaching a number of rhetorical features of sermons reflecting this bias can be established. First, text-centered preaching will use language cues that point to the biblical text as the authority for the message. Second, text-centered preaching relies primarily on a specific biblical text as the source for the message. It may insist on taking its organizational structure and /or its sermonic form from the text itself. Taking a form approach to preaching, the text controls the theme, the main points of the sermon, its overall structure, and even the form of the sermon.

6.1.1.1 Reshaping the form of the text

Unless a sermon is simply the reading of a biblical passage, it is inevitable that the form of the sermon will reshape its text. A text originally written as one genre becomes an entirely new type of literature. If not done with sensitivity, this could mask its original message or distort its interpretation (Greidanus, 1988:141).

The various genres of biblical literature employ a wide variety of rhetorical devices. For example, Paul makes frequent use of chiastic structure (a b b' a') in his epistles. Chiasms are usually intended to point to the center elements for emphasis (Long, 1989:119-121). Careless division of the text into a sermon outline (perhaps assigning the "a b" elements to part I and the "b a" to part II) would prevent the sermon hearers from experiencing Paul's emphasis.

Certainly a preacher must realize that his choice of form will alter the text, and he should seek forms which will capture the message of the original.

In short, the Bible provides a rich repertoire of biblical forms. There should

therefore never be a separation between the content of a biblical text and its literary form and dynamics. Text-centered preaching relies primarily on a specific biblical text as the source for the message. Therefore a preacher must insist on taking its organizational structure and /or its sermon form from the text itself.

6.1.2 Congregation-centered sermon form

The importance of the audience in speech has long been recognized by communication theorists (Litfin, 2001:41). No one can be true to the biblical text and ignore the congregation. The biblical word is never a word in abstraction. It is always a specific word to a specific situation.

Preachers must listen to God's Word personally. But they must also be attuned to how Scripture can meet the specific needs of a particular group being addressed (Venter, 2001:518; Willhite & Gibson, 1998:18). Therefore, Robinson (1994:100) says, "Truth is never more powerfully experienced than when it speaks to someone's personal situation".

Thus, preparing a sermon is a commitment to listen to the text as well as to the needs of the target audience. When the living Word touches the living situation, the preacher makes a real and life-transforming connection with the hearers. The sermon must be delivered with audiences learning and response as the primary goal.

A preacher must know his audience in order to reach them. Things, such as economic status, marital status, family life, and other factors, are useful in designing messages. How can a preacher preach to a need, if he does not know the need(s) of the flock? How can he possibly make a connection with a person, if the person cannot relate to what is being preached? For this reason, the importance of knowing the listeners is a key to change hearts.

Evidence of concern for the audience in preaching is the current inventiveness of the forms used in preaching. Books of Craddock, Lowry, and Buttrick were all written to encourage variety in sermonic form out of the belief that traditional sermons were too often preaching to the air and not to people. They conclude that even well-structured content is wasted work if it does not make contact with the audience. Thus, for gaining and maintaining audience attention, they suggest various experimental preaching forms. All of these forms seek to improve the ability of the sermon to gain and maintain contact with the audience during the sermon.

6.1.2.1 Determining the hearers' response

A logical, rhetorical outline may be more effective than a story in convincing the congregation of propositional truths. A narrative, conversely, may be more likely to evoke an emotional response.

Buttrick (1981:51) offers the example of a miracle text. One can imagine the response among the disciples when Jesus stilled the storm and a great calm fell upon the sea. He writes that "To evoke a "wow!" from listeners, the wise preacher will guess that a turgid apologetic for miracles, or, worse, any rational explanation of miracles may scuttle the sense of "wow" and, therefore, be homiletically inappropriate. If a passage wants to provoke amazement, it would seem homiletically respectful to aim at the effect".

It follows that a sermon form conducive to turgid apologetics may not be the one to best evoke amazement or wonder in the hearers.

6.1.2.2 Shaping hearers' expectations

The form of the sermon can shape the congregation's expectations of the

materials they are about to hear (Greidanus, 1988:141). This, in turn, can affect the way they experience the material when it is delivered.

Craddock (1985:73) illustrates that “one can sometimes hear the opening phrase, discern the form and settle down to the experience to follow. The following phrases clearly signal familiar experiences: “Once upon a time;” “There was a certain man;” “Dearly beloved, we are gathered here;” “There were these two Irishmen, Pat and Mike”.

A preacher should consider whether the form he chooses sets the proper scene for the message he intends to deliver. Will it create informality for a pulpit “Counseling session?” Will it give the necessary sense of gravity for a serious rebuke? Will it warm the congregation for the sweet message of the Gospel?

6.1.2.3 Gaining and holding hearers’ interest

The sermon form should aimed at gaining the interest of the congregation and sustaining it to the conclusion (Greidanus, 1988:141). This, of course, is a primary function of the introduction, but the entire development of the sermon must also serve the purpose. A logical, orderly unfolding of a topic is one means. Since the mind and ear naturally try to impose logic on what is said, the hearers are drawn along as they make the connections intended by the preacher. A disjointed presentation, on the other hand, can lose interest, because the mind becomes uneasy when logical connections are not made (Markquart, 1985:196-197).

Sometimes, however, a logical arrangement is not the most effective way to sustain interest. Cox (1985:132) suggests, “A psychological order that takes into account the feelings, the desires, and the needs of the hearers will more surely achieve the objective for a particular sermon. A suitable climax for a

sermon may be at the point where logic is left behind, where the hearer is more and more involved in the truth that logic has already presented or that is generally regarded as valid”.

The principle of “end stress”, that is, of saving the moment of greatest interest for the end, may serve either the logical or psychological format.

6.1.3 Inductiveness-centered sermon form

A way of dealing with the suspicions of a contemporary listener is to use inductive, rather than deductive, preaching. Lewis and Lewis (1989:43) describes that as “lay out the evidence, the examples, the illustrations and postpone the declarations and assertions until the listeners have a chance to weigh the evidence, think through the implications and then come to the conclusion with the preacher at the end of the sermon.”

Johnston (2001:151-155) says, that inductive preaching employs four valuable elements. (1) It involves the listener in learning. (2) It takes on dialogical form. (3) It starts the message where people are. (4) It keeps up the suspense so people will follow. A good inductive sermon should awaken a conflict that’s real to the listener, that allows the weight of that tension to be felt before beginning the move toward resolution.

The kinds of circumstantial evidence, facts, descriptions, narratives that are typical of inductive reasoning lend themselves to the vividness and concreteness on which audience interest thrives.

In short, the preacher should make an inductive approach to hold interest and to enhance the listener’s participation. Thus inductiveness-centered-form sermon is an important means for contemporary Christians.

6.1.4 Storytelling-centered sermon form

The Bible is story. It contains stories. Narrative is a staple in the structure of Scripture. The stories in the Bible, though, are not without intention. The Bible has an agenda and so must the preachers who proclaim its truths. Nevertheless, stories can provide an environment where a deeper sense of truth can be forged. (Fulford, 1999).

Storytelling is not only a powerful way to gain interest and attention for the sermon, it is also a useful way to help the listeners identify with the original human beings in the text. The Bible is as thoroughly human as it is divine. A story helps listeners relate to the innate humanity of Scripture.

Johnston (2001:158-162) explains the craft of storytelling as a skill that can be learned and developed with practice—and these six guidelines:

1. Introduce the story with suspense. A startling or paradoxical statement can introduce a story. Another way of introduction is with a rhetorical question. And another approach is a direct lead into a human predicament. A strong introduction leads the listener to ask, “What happens next?”
2. Summarize your point. A story illustrates a specific principle or lesson, and if told properly the listener should grasp the point in a somewhat abstract manner. Once the point is clear, the visible light inside the listener’s head flashes, “Yes, I heard that!”
3. Use specifics and vivid imagery. Vague and nondescriptive words fail to paint the mental picture that is necessary for the listener to identify with the story. Specifics are a fundamental axiom of creative writing courses. It is fundamental because it’s vitally important, and it is vitally important because it marks the difference

between being interesting and being boring.

4. **Personalize.** State how the person, events, or quote relates to you as the speaker. This will bring your own experiences, thoughts, and feelings into the picture, lending an added dimension.
5. **Maintain the flow.** A good storyteller understands the balance in maintaining the energy and direction while providing the pertinent details.
6. **Internalize the emotional.** Feel the emotions of the characters, visualize the setting and movement in the events, and allow gestures and body movement to re-create the environment being described.

To conclude, storytelling stands as a powerful communication skill for postmodern times. The preacher must bring the stories to life. Stories that adopt a present-tense experience of the story will create an immediate event where God speaks in a moment in time.

6.1.5 Movement in the sermon form

Craddock, Lowry and Buttrick make major contributions to our understanding of the importance of movement. They mention that a movement in preaching enhances effectiveness in preaching because it calls for incompleteness and a lack of exhaustiveness in the sermon itself. Thus, a narrative preacher like Lowry says that a sermon is an ordered form of moving time (Lowry, 1989:66-70).

Anderson (2004) mentions that the preacher makes four primary moves:

1. **Tell the story.** It is hard to go wrong when one begins with a

compelling story. People love stories because we live our lives in narratives. We experience life as a sequence of experiences. The preacher who wants to connect listeners to the word of God will begin by connecting the human story in the text to the human story of the listeners.

2. **Make the point.** Preachers ought to make points. Stories are compelling, but preachers do not need to shy from articulating “the moral of the story.” This section could require complex structure (i.e. three points) or it may be simpler in nature. Some texts may lend themselves to greater depth than others, yet every text intends a point. We ought to take joy in making that point.
3. **Engage the problem.** The preacher engages the listener’s innate objections. The best way for the preacher to achieve this goal is by remembering that she or he is a listener too - the first listener, in fact. The preacher, as a fellow human, can help the listener by engaging those natural objections which must be overcome in order for the respondent to engage God in his word without reservation.
4. **Imagine the difference.** At the end of the sermon, the preacher needs to describe the difference the sermon is intended to encourage. The preacher ought to be as specific as possible here, offering tangible pictures of what it would look like if the listener did exactly as God intended. This section of the sermon ought to engage the listener emotionally. The goal is to motivate the listener so that he or she actually wants to respond.

The four moves do not necessarily need to be given in four equal moves. They do not necessarily need to be given in exact order. All four, however, should find their place in the sermon.

To conclude, movement in the sermon has a dynamic effect on the attention of preaching audience. It is essential for effective speech communication.

6.2 SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION APPLICABLE TO THE FORM OF A SERMON

6.2.1 Introduction and conclusion

The introduction should introduce the subject (the dominating theme) and the object (the burden, the purpose, the motivating thrust) of the message to the listeners (Olford & Olford, 1998:209). The focus of the introduction is the presentation of the dominating theme of the message.

The introduction should also include the thrust of the message. In other words, the preacher should communicate why the message is being preached. The thrust of the message communicates in various ways. The preacher's personal concern can be expressed, an illustration of the need for the truth can be told, biblical material can be drawn in, etc.

Litfin (2001:236-253) suggests that an introduction should attempt to accomplish four aims: (1) Capturing the attention of the audience. (2) Building rapport with the audience. (3) Showing the audience why they should listen to the speech. (4) Orienting the audience to the subject matter of the speech. A preacher should captivate the congregation to remain attentive throughout. Litfin (2001:239) suggests some ways to accomplish these aims:

1. *Novelty*: a startling statement or statistic; a new discovery; a prophecy or prediction; a familiar idea in a novel setting or vice versa.
2. *Movement or activity*: active, vivid wording, conjuring up images of movement; changes in your style of delivery.

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3. *Proximity*: a problem closely related to the audience; a news item from the local newspaper; a commendation of the audience; a reference to a previous experience of the audience or a previous speaker.
 4. *Concreteness*: a well-told narrative, hypothetical or actual, any concrete or specific wording.
 5. *Familiarity*: a comment on a homely or familiar matter; a common experience, vividly told; an epigram; a proverb; an apt quotation with an unusual way of putting something; a comparison or analogy.
 6. *Conflict*: a disagreement; an argument, fight, or struggle any "cognitive inconsistency".
 7. *Suspense*: a challenging rhetorical question or series of questions; a problem raised for a solution; a conundrum or riddle.
 8. *Intensity*: use of particularly colorful wording, delivered with strength; a forceful quotation.
 9. *Humor*: a joke; a humorous incident; a witty remark.
 10. *Life-relatedness*: a discussion of needs; a vivid story of human interest with which the audience can identify.

Each of these aims calls for careful planning. The introduction is so important because it is the beginning. If a preacher does not get off to a good start with real communication contact, a preacher never achieves it.

In conclusion, the preacher should design to capture attention for contemporary Christians, build rapport, point out a need, and orient the audience to the subject in the introduction.

6.2.2 Language with appeal

The congregation involves in the message through the use of concrete, vivid

language. Litfin (2001:278-286) suggests the use of clear, familiar, short, accurate, fitting, modern, properly arranged words to the audience. People lose patience with boring words very quickly. An audience turns their attention to something more interesting unless a preacher constantly works to hold their attention. He mentions also the use of sensory, specific, active, imaginative, fresh, human-interest, euphonious, concise words for interesting language. He explains that the most common imaginative languages are metaphors and similes. Metaphors and similes grab the attention and interest of listeners and reach the mind and the heart. Metaphors present the comparison less directly, but just as vividly. Therefore, a metaphor seeks to create new meaning, to help us experience the reality of something in a new way (Long, 1989:172).

According to McDill (1994:226-229), language which particularizes has some of five qualities: figurative, descriptive, sensate, concrete, and specific. Figurative language portrays one thing in terms of another to create a more exact and vivid image. Descriptive language uses modifiers to add color and precision to the picture. Sensate language identifies qualities particularly perceived by the senses. Concrete language brings ideas and principles down to earth for clarity and understanding. Specific language refers to individual members of a larger class of things.

Robinson (1987:186) suggests that like an artist or novelist a minister must learn to think in pictures. Vivid language functions for the congregation as lights that illumine and clarify obscure concepts in the sermon.

A preacher must also learn to think in terms of specifics in order to avoid abstractions and generalizations. Steimle *et al.* (1980:174) points out that "when for example they call for their congregations to witness to the world in the home, in the office, at school, or in the street. Preachers ought to ask themselves, 'what, specifically, do you have in mind?'. By the pushing beyond generalizations to particulars, preachers should make their language

concrete and specific and clarify their proposals so that their hearers can visualize what is demanded and become meaningfully involved.

A preacher must translate the gospel into today's language. Erickson (quoted by White, 1995:3) offers a helpful distinction in the use of the terms translation and transformation. He says that every generation must translate the gospel into its unique cultural context. The gospel must constantly be translated because the audience keeps changing. Just as the New Testament was written in everyday Greek so too a preacher must present messages in a way that everyday people can understand. A target audience doesn't want to hear archaic sermons. A preacher's constant challenge must be to present the timeless truths of Scripture to your listeners in ways that are fresh and relevant.

An effective form always requires a choice and arrangement of words that are appropriate. Therefore, the preacher should remember also to use vivid language, language that stimulates the senses for contemporary Christians.

6.2.3 Feedback as dialogue

The preacher who is attentive to and responds to feedback will be in a position to make necessary adjustments in the form and communication process. Feedback is a cybernetics term, that deals with control systems which operate on the basis of information about effects. For the preacher it involves listening with the eyes. This may mean he or she will have to step away from manuscript preaching. The preacher must be aware of the effects of his or her communication in terms of behavioral relationship.

Ezell (1999:137) has compiled the general feedback that a preacher want to get is simply:

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1. Was the point of the message communicated?
 2. Was the message clear? (i.e. in form and content)
 3. What from this message do you remember?
 4. Was there anything in the message that was foggy? (form and content)
 5. What did the message lack?
 6. How did you feel when you left the church?
 7. What made you personally involved?

Feedback works in much the same way as communication; it demands a response. To avoid monologue, preaching must never become a zero-feedback situation. Robinson (1983:69) tells us: "The most astute preachers allow their eyes and ears to program their mouths. As they stand in the pulpit, they respond to cues from the audience telling them how they are doing. As they prepare, they study not only content but also people, hearing the spoken and unspoken questions. After speaking, they listen intently to find out how they have done."

Feedback is dependent upon feedforward, whereby the speaker anticipates certain listener behaviors, at given points in the delivery. The preacher needs both feedback and feedforward. Clevenger and Matthews (as quoted by Markquart, 1985:202) says that without feedforward, feedback would be a static and sterile affair; and without flexible feedback, interaction could scarcely be human.

To conclude, feedback enables refines and rethinks a preacher's content, delivery, and tone through the eyes and ears of listeners. Feedback, as a form of listening, enable a preacher to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of his or her unique style and presentation.

6.2.4 Needs of the hearers

A significant duty of every preacher is to avoid being boring. Since most audience boredom is the result a speaker's message being irrelevant, a preacher must discover and be attentive to the needs of the hearers. Markquart (1985:202) provides us with an excellent summary of hearer's needs. The hearers need:

1. a preacher who *is* immersed in the message.
2. vivid images and analogies which can be remembered.
3. order and clarity.
4. repetition of words, phrases, and sentences.
5. familiar language.
6. facial honesty.
7. good eye contact.
8. conversational variations of the voice.
9. pacing, rhythm, and timing.
10. good stories, analogies, and illustrations.

Sermon development must be one of the highest priorities for the pastor and must by far exceed careful study and reflection of the text. Sermon development also must include analysis and reflection born from contact with the lives of the congregation and from contact with the current world in which we live. Sermons would be more effective if the amount of time spent on congregational analysis was at least equal with the amount of time expended on textual analysis.

The attentive preacher should gather information and learn how to ask questions of the congregation as he or she goes about the duties associated with daily pastoral care (visitation, counseling, etc.). Preachers must ask questions within several different contexts such as, the congregational context, the personal socialization context, the language context, and the

wider context of current world events (Van Seters, 1988:264-266).

6.2.5 Interest

Of primary concern to the preacher is the art of being interesting. Preachers should familiarize themselves with those things that an audience would tend to find interesting. Egertson (1976:76) has compiled a "Decalogue of interest" which is helpful:

1. suspense is more interesting than certainty.
2. the concrete is more interesting than the abstract.
3. people are more interesting than things.
4. the immediate is more interesting than the distant.
5. images are more interesting than definition.
6. the humorous is more interesting than the serious.
7. conflict is more interesting than concord.
8. the familiar is more interesting than the foreign.
9. events are more interesting than ideas.
10. the practical is more interesting than the theoretical.

To be interesting demands that certain forms of preaching be abandoned and allowed to die an ignoble death, and that new forms be embraced. The day of warehouse homiletics and its accompanying emphasis on substance, to the exclusion of form and style, must cease. The standard three-point and a poem must be replaced with variety of form and style, story telling, images, humor, transparency, and relevance.

Defining preaching as truth through personality omits the fact that preaching is also done in the midst of personalities. Black (1990:24) makes an important statement which reflects the speaker-listener relationship, "people together are a different sort of creature from people alone." Talking to people must be

replaced with talking with people. Trying to cram ideas from hours of exegetical labors into the minds of the hearers must be replaced with being creative enough to know what it is that allow for a hearer to voluntarily open his or her mind to hear.

In order to be interesting the preacher's task is to listen to the listeners, to find out the kinds of questions they are asking, their needs, desires, goals, etc. this can begin through information gathering and by being attentive to feedback. We touched on the area of feedback when we discussed communication as a dialogue, but perhaps we should reinforce this critical aspect of communication.

6.2.6 Imagination

According to Green (quoted by Burghardt, 1987:22), imagination is the divine-human point contact. He writes, "Proclamation...can be described as an appeal to the imagination of the hearers through the images of scripture. The preacher's task is to mediate and facilitate that encounter by engaging his or her own imagination, which becomes the link between scripture and congregation". In other words, the various facets of preaching — the preacher, the exegesis of the text, sermon writing, and the congregation —are our imagination. Imagination is the meeting place of God and humankind.

Imagination has a powerful tool assisting the preacher in keeping the attention of the listeners. Images give more life and force to speech because they join the realm of experience to fact (Robinson, 1987:69). If the message is well established, an effective image can be a significant help in holding the listener's attention and driving the meaning deep into the listener's consciousness.

The best place to find this image is in the text itself. The Bible is rich in

picture language the preacher can employ in the service of the sermon. Rather than assembling a variety of competing images a preacher can give a powerful unity to the sermon.

Wiersbe (1999:129) mentions that children spend their early years with rich imaginative powers, but by the time children reach fifth grade, these powers are almost destroyed in the average classroom. One of the greatest destroyers of the imaginations is television, while radio drama and printed literature help the imagination develop". To help develop a preacher's imagination a preacher must do as creative people do, read widely.

To conclude, the preacher must make sure to offer imagination examples for the life of the listener. The preacher needs to put himself or herself into scenarios familiar to the listeners, thinking through the implications so as to locate the sermon in the listener's real time.

6.2.7 Eye contact

Eye contact is an important aspect of nonverbal communication. One of the most important roles of eye contact is its function as a regulator of verbal communication. To establish a bond of communication with the congregation, a preacher must look them in the eye. By looking at an audience a preacher establishes a bond of communication and says to them, in effect, "I want to talk with you."

How do we develop good eye contact? Litfin (2001:321) suggests the following guidelines: a) Try to divide your audience into sections and then let your eyes range from section to section. b) Look at different people whenever your gaze turns to a particular section. c) Do allow yourself to pick out individuals in the crowd. d) Look them in the eye momentarily and then move on.

Rueter (1997:172) says that eye contact is vital. It testifies to the preacher's empathy with the people who are right there under the same roof. There's a reciprocal empathy in them. Their antennae can sense whether we're tuned in with them or not. A large part of their sensing antennae is in their eyes. So, a preacher should have eye contact for at least 85 percent of the time (Sprague & Stuart, 1988:266).

Therefore, the preacher needs eye contact in order to monitor this feedback that in turn allows them to improve and more precisely refine their messages even as they preach.

6.2.8 Humor

Older homiletic textbooks used to disparage the use of humor in a sermon because of the seriousness of the biblical message. Buttrick (1987:95) alludes to this when he discusses humorous introductions. "The problem of humor slipped into introductions is twofold: (1) The humor is almost always disconnected with the subject matter. Therefore, preachers will probably have to design a second introduction to refocus a congregation. (2) While there may be passages of scripture that are hilarious, the gospel is ultimately serious..."

Yet Buttrick (1987:95) does not disapprove of humor altogether. He sanctions humor if a sermon requires a hermeneutical orientation of joy and laughter. He offers two additional rules, (1) Congregations should laugh only when you want them to laugh, and have good reason for their bemusement and (2) If you are a naturally funny person, your problem is control; if you are not a naturally funny person, do not try.

De Bono (1990:87) describes humor as an asymmetrical pattern of thinking. It's thinking that lacks symmetry or predictability. Humor directs people to

see an idea or object from a different angle or new vantage point, then acts to reinforce what's known to be true on an unconscious level.

Essentially, if humor is not contrived or mechanical it is extremely effective as part of the effective communication process. Humor functions best as a tool to lend insight, to hold interest and to relax the strain of listening. Humor communicates insightfully and winsomely in a way that postmodern listeners will find both attractive and compelling.

6.2.9 Illustration

Illustrations are particularly helpful when the exposition calls for careful explanation and detail. Theological concepts, direct commands and exhortations, and heavier didactic material often require illustrative expression. The preacher needs to determine when further explanation is needed by means of a vivid illustration. Certainly the preacher ought to consider whether or not an illustration is needed in relation to major truths being expounded (Buttry, 1998:15).

Moreover, illustrations help maintain attention. This type of content invites people to see, not just to hear. Illustrations bridge beautifully between explanation and application, and they help to reinforce the application (Olford & Olford, 1998:209).

Sources for illustrative material are numerous: personal experience, common community experience, current events, historical accounts, literature, hymns and poetry, parables, and material created for the occasion. Other preachers often are a good source or at least good catalysts for thinking through possible illustration. Resource books and computer programs are all available to help the searching preacher.

A special word is needed about the use of the Bible for the purpose of illustrating truths in the primary text. The Bible itself is a wonderful source for illustrative material. Numerous narrative texts are available to give a picture of a truth, a wrong or right behavior, and most of all, the dealings of God with His people. God is always the hero in biblical narrative. All human examples break down. But to ignore the vast amount of truthful, accurate, vivid, dynamic, and indeed God-breathed illustrations within the word would be a shame (Wiersbe, 1994:10).

6.2.10 Design for communication

McDill (1994:171) says that sermon design is the selection and arrangement of the materials to be presented in the sermon. Sermons are designed to connect well with the audience, appealing to the hearer both functionally (according to their intended purpose) and aesthetically (according to a sense of beauty). He (1994:171) suggests some guidelines for planning the design of sermon:

1. Design a dynamic form rather than a static one. Dynamic means forceful, alive, moving. Static means set, complete, still. Plan your sermon design to be moving and alive as you interact with you audience. Remember that a sermon is an oral presentation which does not come into existence until it is preached.
2. Keep your outline clear and simple. Writing your sermon idea and division statements for the ear will make a difference in the way you word them. These statements of your main ideas should be clear in concept and wording. Read these statements aloud. How do they sound? Are they immediately understandable? Is there a rhythm and symmetry to their wording? Do they roll off the tongue without a stutter?

purpose, but not so long as to drag the speech out unnecessarily.

7. Be careful of false conclusions.

The preacher must avoid rushing or deadening the conclusion. Regardless of the flow or the apparent impact of the message to that point, in faith the preacher must seek to clarify, exhort, and invite the response that the truth deserves and demands. The conclusion crystallizes, personalizes, and helps actualize the response called for by the message (Olford & Olford, 1998:194).

The preacher has developed a more or less complex structure of thought in the body of the speech, which ideally has been clearly organized and well presented. The preacher has taken the whole apart and presented it to listeners piece by piece. Whereas in the body of the speech, a preacher has analyzed ideas, now a preacher needs to synthesize the idea one final time so that the audience can see how all of the many parts fit together. This is the primary task of the conclusion.

In conclusion, the preacher should design to tie the entire message together and drive the main idea home one last time.

6.3 FINAL CONCLUSION ON PRACTICE-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE FORM OF THE SERMON AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

So far we have reviewed some suggestions for the form of sermon and investigated various methods which have been applied to the form of sermon. Finally the following practice-theoretical conclusions can be drawn from perspectives on the form of the sermon and effective communication:

1. A sermon should be biblical and the biblical text is the foundation for preaching. The biblical text, therefore, is the source for the sermon.

The form of sermons should be shaped by and reflect the form of the biblical text. The text should not just yield the ideas and structure of the sermon, but the form of the text should determine the form of the sermon. A narrative text should produce a sermon that is presented as a narrative and a didactic text should yield a sermon that is structured didactically.

2. The sermon must be delivered with audience-learning and-response as the primary goals. Therefore the preacher must know his audience in order to reach them. Sermon form should aim to gain the interest of the congregation and sustain it to the conclusion. Therefore a preacher should utilize a congregation-centered sermon form, inductiveness-centered sermon form, storytelling-centered sermon form and movement-centered sermon form to obtain effective communication for contemporary listeners.
3. An effective sermon can take on a variety of forms, depending on the text used and the preacher's creativity and the receptivity and comprehension of the audience.
4. A preacher should captivate a congregation to remain attentive throughout for contemporary listeners. Therefore the preacher should design a sermon with communication skills.

CHAPTER 7

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 AIM OF THIS STUDY

The main aims of the suggested research are to investigate the form of the sermon and effective communication on basis-theoretical and meta-theoretical levels, and to suggest some guidelines for the praxis of the form of sermons to communicate effectively for the contemporary congregation.

7.2 CONCLUSION ON BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON LITERARY FORMS IN SCRIPTURE

1. Literary forms and rhetorical devices in the Bible communicate effectively. Therefore, a preacher should pay attention to biblical literary form and dynamic communication.
2. Narrative is one of the most common genres and main literary type found in Scripture. The features of the narrative are the scene, dialogue, and plot. This consists of an organized specifically three important rhetorical devices (chiasmus, inclusion, and repetition).
3. Prophetic literature has a wealth of literary variety such as narrative, song, wisdom, and apocalyptic literature. They have value such as the arousing and fulfillment of figures of communication, style and arrangement.

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4. The four gospels were written in prominent forms (historical narrative, parable, dialogue, sermon, and proverb). Especially, metaphor, irony and parables can be characterized as the forms of Jesus' teaching.
 5. The epistles employ rhetorical devices such as antithesis, chiasm, climax, metaphors and allegories as well as parallelism. This device focuses mainly a dominant role in the effective communication.

7.3 CONCLUSION ON BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON FORMS OF SERMON FROM RECENT HISTORY

1. A preacher should build in movement in sermon construction as opposed to fixed categorical development.
2. To make an effective communicative sermon a preacher should utilize the movement, unity, evocative imagination, narrative and visual language. This helps for effective communication because the presence of a governing form focuses the energy of the sermon.
3. The form of a sermon has a communication ability which helps to link the preacher and listener, and to incite the interest and attention of the listeners.
4. A good sermon form functions as a bridge from problem to solution, from itch to scratch, and enables the listeners to view the problem from a fresh perspective
5. A preacher should take delight in putting words and images together as they build a world for faith. Therefore, a preacher

must use the language of common image, metaphor, illustrations and examples. They include short quotes, briefly described scenes, action episodes, pictures, stories, and bits of dialogue.

7.4 CONCLUSION ON META-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON FORM AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

1. Communication involves source, message, channel, receiver, feedback. Dialogue is involved whether or not the dialogue is verbally articulated. It means that communication is a process of sharing with another person one's message in a two-way transmission of ideas, and is intended to produce a response in the receiver.
2. To communicate effectively the preacher as communicator needs to understand the communication process and the sources of error, and also to understand audiences. It means that a preacher needs training for effective transmission.

7.5 CONCLUSION ON PRACTICE-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE FORM OF THE SERMON AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

1. The form of sermon should be biblical and the biblical text is the foundation for preaching.
2. A preacher should consider a variety of sermon forms, depending on the text used and the preacher's creativity and the receptivity and comprehension of the audience.

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3. A preacher should captivate a congregation to remain attentive. Therefore a preacher should design a variety of sermon forms with communication skills.

TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. A homiletical study on effective communication and the form of the sermon in Jesus and Paul for today.
2. A study on the functions of imagination in the form of the sermon.
3. A study on the congregation-centered sermon in the postmodern context.
4. A study on the dynamics of communication between the preacher and the congregation.

KEYWORDS OF THIS STUDY

The following keywords can be used for electronic research purposes:

- *Communication*
- *Form*
- *Preacher*
- *Preaching*
- *Sermon*

ABSTRACT

The form of the sermon and effective communication

A homiletical study

The aims underlying this study are basically an attempt to provide possible answers to the following two questions:

- *Why* should the form of sermons contribute to communicate the embedded message effectively?
- *In which way* can a preacher structure and adapt the form of sermons in order to communicate effectively to a contemporary congregation?

In order to reach these aims a selection of sermons and the way in which they communicate an underlying message are investigated. This approach is used to disclose possible basis-theoretical elements that have been applied in Scripture and in the history of preaching. Certain aspects of effective communication are also analysed and explained in order to extract meta-theoretical elements that can be applied to the form of sermons. Finally, certain conclusions are deduced after these elements have been scrutinised.

Basis-theoretically, the research undertaken has revealed the following guidelines:

- Literary forms and rhetorical devices in the Bible contribute to effective communication. A preacher should thus pay attention to, on the one hand, literary forms applied in the Bible and, on the other hand, the dynamics of communication in the process of exegesis.

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- To communicate effectively in a sermon a preacher should consider the flow, the movement and links in the construction of sermons, as opposed to fixed categorical statements forced onto the text. Further conditions for communication in a sermon include inter alia the following: the unity of the line of thought within the sermon, and also the utilisation of imaginative portrayal, narrative style and metaphorical language.
 - The form of a sermon has the inherent communicative ability to provide a link between preacher and listener, incite the interest and attention of listeners, and span a bridge between problem statement and a possible solution.
 - A preacher should find fulfilment in the careful arranging of words and images as they eventually contribute to create an environment in which faith can develop and grow. A preacher should thus apply the narrative as well as the communicative value and function of images, metaphors, illustrations and examples.

In this study the necessity of understanding the communication process between preacher and congregation is highlighted on metatheoretical level, and ways of communicating these aspects effectively are also indicated.

Guidelines that have been extracted as a result of the research undertaken include the following:

- The form of sermons should be shaped by and also reflect the form of the biblical text. The biblical text should not merely yield the ideas and structure for the sermon, but the literary form of the biblical text should also co-determine the form and structuring of the sermon.

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- In order to enhance effective communication a preacher could make use of inter alia the following: a congregation-centred sermon form, an induction-centred sermon form, and a narrative-centred sermon form.
 - Sermon form should be structured, not only according to the line of thought and the movement and links in the biblical text itself, but also by analysing the nature and needs of a contemporary audience.

OPSOMMING

Die vorm van die preek en effektiewe kommunikasie 'n Homiletiese ondersoek

Die onderliggende doelwitte van hierdie ondersoek verteenwoordig basies 'n poging om moontlike antwoorde op die volgende twee vrae te verskaf:

- **Waarom behoort die vorm van 'n preek daartoe by te dra om die ingebedde boodskap effektief te kommunikeer?**
- **Op watter manier kan 'n prediker die vorm van 'n preek struktureer en aanpas om effektief te kommunikeer met 'n hedendaagse gemeente?**

Om hierdie doelwitte te bereik is 'n aantal preke geselekteer en die wyse waarop die onderliggende boodskap gekommunikeer word, is ontleed. Hierdie benaderingswyse is gebruik om moontlike basis-teoretiese elemente wat toegepas is in die Skrif en in die geskiedenis van prediking bloot te lê. Sekere aspekte van effektiewe kommunikasie is ook ondersoek en verduidelik met die doel om metateoretiese elemente wat op die vorm van 'n preek toegepas kan word te abstraher. Ten slotte is sekere gevolgtrekkings gemaak nadat hierdie elemente noukeurig ondersoek is.

Basis-teoreties het die ondersoek die volgende riglyne na vore laat kom:

Literêre vorms en retoriese hulpmiddels wat in die Bybel gebruik word, dra by tot effektiewe kommunikasie. 'n Prediker behoort dus ag te slaan op, aan die een kant, die literêre vorms wat in die Bybel toegepas word, en aan die ander kant, die dinamika van kommunikasie in die proses van eksegeese.

Om in 'n preek effektief te kommunikeer behoort 'n prediker kennis te neem van die gedagtevloei, die bewegings en oorgange in die opbou van die preek, in teenstelling met kategorieese stellings wat op die teks afgeforceer word. Verdere voorwaardes vir kommunikasie deur middel van 'n preek sluit onder andere die volgende in: die eenheid van die gedagtelyn in die preek self, asook die aanwending van verbeeldingryke voorstelling, narratiewe styl en metaforiese taalgebruik.

Die vorm van 'n preek het die inherente kommunikatiewe vermoë om 'n skakel tussen die prediker en die luisteraar te skep, die belangstelling en aandag van die luisteraars te wek en 'n brug te span tussen die stel van die probleem en die moontlike oplossing wat in die preek gebied word.

'n Prediker behoort vervulling te vind in die versigtige rangskikking van woorde en beelde aangesien dit ook uiteindelik daartoe bydra om 'n omgewing daar te stel waarbinne die geloof kan ontwikkel en groei. 'n Prediker behoort dus sowel die narratiewe as die kommunikatiewe waarde en funksies van beelde, metafore, illustrasies en voorbeelde toe te pas.

In hierdie studie is die noodsaaklikheid van die kommunikasieproses tussen prediker en gemeente op metateoretiese vlak benadruk. Die wyse waarop hierdie aspekte effektief gekommunikeer word, is ook aangedui.

Riglyne wat op grond van die ondersoek geabstraheer is, sluit die volgende in:

- Die vorm en strukturering van 'n preek behoort die vorm van die Bybelse teks te weerspieël. Die Bybelteks behoort nie bloot die idee en struktuur vir die preek vry te verskaf nie, maar die literêre vorm wat gebruik is, kan ook medebepalend wees vir die vormgewing van die preek.

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- Om effektiewe kommunikasie te verbeter behoort 'n prediker onder andere van die volgende gebruik te maak: 'n gemeente-gerigte preekvorm, 'n induktief-gerigte preekvorm en 'n narratief-gerigte preekvorm.
 - Preekvorm behoort gestruktureer te word, nie alleen in ooreenstemming met die gedagtelyn, die bewegings en oorgange in die Bybelse teks self nie, maar ook deur die aard en behoeftes van 'n hedendaagse gemeente te ontleed.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS OF BIBLE BOOKS

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Gen.	Genesis	Ex.	Exodus
Lev.	Leviticus	Num.	Numbers
Deut.	Deuteronomy	Josh.	Joshua
Judg.	Judges	Ruth.	Ruth
2 Kgs.	2 Kings	2 Kgs.	2 Kings
1 Sam.	1 Samuel	2 Sam.	2 Samuel
1Chr.	2 Chronicles	2 Chr.	2 Chronicles
Ezra.	Ezra	Neh.	Nehemiah
Esth.	Esther	Job.	Job
Ps.	Psalms	Prov.	Proverbs
Ecc.	Ecclesiastes	Song.	Song of Songs
Is.	Isaiah	Jer.	Jeremiah
Lam.	Lamentations	Ezek.	Ezekiel
Dan.	Daniel	Hos.	Hosea
Joel.	Joel	Amos.	Amos
Obad.	Obadiah	Jon.	Jonah
Mic.	Micah	Nah.	Nahum
Hab.	Habakkuk	Zeph.	Zephaniah
Hag.	Haggai	Zech.	Zechariah
Mal.	Malachi		

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Mt.	Matthew	Mk.	Mark
Lk.	Luke	Jn.	John
Acts.	Acts	Rom.	Romans
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians	2 Cor.	2 Corinthians
Gal.	Galatians	Eph.	Ephesians
Phil.	Philippians	Col.	Colossians
1 Thes.	1 Thessalonians	2 Thes.	2 Thessalonians
1 Tim.	1 Timothy	2 Tim.	2 Timothy
Tit.	Titus	Phlm.	Philemon
Heb.	Hebrews	Jas.	James
1 Pet.	1 Peter	2 Pet.	2 Peter
1 Jn.	1 John	2 Jn.	2 John
3 Jn.	3 John	Jude.	Jude
Rev.	Revelation		

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