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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE FACTORS OF PERSUASION
IN THE SERMONS OF DR. WALTER A. MAIER

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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June 1956

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CHAPTER I

THE INTRODUCTION

The Problem

An ambition to discover the reasons for the astounding progress of The Lutheran Hour since its beginning, and a love for Dr. Walter A. Maier, who heralded its Gospel message for seventeen years, are the motivating factors which inspired the writing of this thesis. It should be said from the outset that the writer in no way wishes to create the impression that in the final analysis the remarkable success of this Christian radio mission and man was not due to the blessing of Almighty God, whose powerful tool Dr. Maier was.

Dr. Maier began his Lutheran Hour career over the Columbia Broadcasting System during the 1930-31 radio season. For a few years the Lutheran Hour had to be discontinued, but it was resumed again in 1935 over a Detroit and Cincinnati station of the Mutual Broadcasting System.

In the seventeen years during which Dr. Maier delivered his mighty messages, which were based on Scripture and exalted Christ, the Lutheran Hour grew with each passing year. At the time of the radio preacher's death in 1950, the Lutheran Hour was broadcast over approximately twelve hundred stations, located in a total of fifty-one countries throughout the world. This miracle of modern missionary history was broadcast in fifty languages in keeping with the Pentecostal idea that every man shall in his own language hear the wonderful works of God.¹

¹"The Tribute of Our Love" (St. Louis: The Lutheran Hour).

It has been estimated that each Sunday Dr. Maier reached an audience of twenty million people. William McDermott comments:

Imagine having a 20,000,000 congregation on a single Sunday! It would be a miracle akin to feeding the 5,000 on loaves and fishes, or to walking on the sea. Yet that is the size of the reverent listening audience to the "preaching-est preacher" in all the world today, and doubtless of all time. From October until June he delivers impassioned sermons to a total of more than 600,000,000 in a season. His crowd for one year exceeds the total population of the United States, Canada, England, France, Germany, and Russia. It surpasses the total number of people in China or India. In four years he preaches to more than the equivalent of all the people of the earth.²

Dr. Maier was the first man whose Christ-centered messages encircled the world regularly.³

The heart and core of every Lutheran Hour message which Dr. Maier preached was "Bringing Christ to the Nations." It was found in the urgent appeal that the unchurched and unconverted look to Jesus Christ and find in Him their only and all sufficient Redeemer.

It is not always possible to calculate the results of Christian preaching. This is difficult in the congregation, but it is almost impossible with an invisible radio audience. Yet definite evidence often reached the broadcast in literally thousands of letters that many people had been brought to faith in their Savior. One survey based on a total of 9,678 replies showed that 2,650 had, to the knowledge of those replying, been saved through the broadcast Word. Another survey involving 2,340 responses brought the evidence of 605 additional responses.⁴ This

²William F. McDermott, "Twenty Million....Hear Him Preach." Reprint from The Christian Herald, March, 1947.

³The Dr. Walter A. Maier Memorial Booklet (St. Louis: The Lutheran Laymen's League), p. 64.

⁴"Brought to Faith in Jesus through the Lutheran Hour" (St. Louis: The Lutheran Laymen's League), p. 3.

is to say nothing of the letters received presenting personal spiritual problems, numbering about twenty-five thousand per week, or the number of Christians strengthened in faith and life through the broadcast.⁵

Scope and Purpose

The particular subject matter of this thesis does not concern the program of The Lutheran Hour as a whole. This would also include a consideration of other appeals which the weekly program offered such as counselling, singing, and the giving away of devotional materials, plus the mighty backing of the Lutheran Laymen's League. All of these factors, and perhaps more, were human variables which helped to determine the success of "Bringing Christ to the Nations." Therefore, it is important to remember that they exist.

The scope of this investigation, however, is confined only to the preaching on the program; more exactly, the preaching of Dr. Walter A. Maier. The specific purpose is to search out those factors of persuasion in the radio sermons of Dr. Maier which may so largely help to account for his success in preaching the Gospel. The object is to figure out the secrets of his effectiveness as Andrew Blackwood suggests:

"Study the methods of the radio preacher whom your thoughtful laymen enjoy, and figure out the secrets of his effectiveness. You will find that he depends mainly on being natural and in earnest."⁶

⁵McDermott, op. cit.

⁶Andrew W. Blackwood, The Preparation of Sermons (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943), p. 224.

Furthermore, it should be noted that this is an investigation. It does not presume to be the last word on the subject, but it does attempt to point out in a general way the factors which contributed to Dr. Maier's persuasive preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Method

Logically, there are three steps which must be taken in order to discover the principles of persuasion in the sermons of the powerful radio herald. First of all, and this is the problem of Chapter II, a sketch of the life and personality of Dr. Maier is called for. His family background, education, and special training all had a bearing on his preaching and must be considered. By means of the record of his achievements and from the opinions of his contemporaries a conception of the preacher's personality may be gained.

The second step in the development should obviously be an investigation of the general subject of persuasion. This phase of the problem is treated in Chapter III. Reference is made here to the opinions of leaders and scholars in the fields of homiletics, psychology, and speech; and by their aid some standards by which to analyze the sermons of Dr. Maier are evolved. The general factors of persuasion which come into consideration are the elements of content, especially Law and Gospel; devices of style; techniques of delivery; and the preacher's personality. These factors relate quite well to the three elements necessary for successful public speeches advocated by H. L. Hollingworth. These elements are interesting subject matter, conformity to the psychological principles of speech, and the personal charm and attractive personality of

the speaker.⁷

The application of the criteria of effective persuasion, established in Chapter III, to specific sermons of Dr. Maier completes the study. Chapter IV gives the results of a detailed analysis of the one sermon, "God Says, 'Hurry!'", chosen because of the availability of the original printed manuscript and the transcribed recording which Mrs. Walter Maier graciously permitted the writer to use; because the title symbolizes the powerful evangelical emphasis of Dr. Maier's sermons; and because it was preached toward the close of his radio ministry when he had reached the apex of popularity. Not only does the analysis of this sermon include an application of the persuasive factors in content and style, but also in delivery. The latter is based upon a transcribed recording of the sermon. The recording will, at least in a small degree, present a more complete picture of the persuasive factors in Dr. Maier's preaching. It would be extremely dangerous to develop the problem of the thesis using only printed sermons for source material, because there can be a vast difference between oral and written style. In fact, Webb Garrison maintains that material couched in good oral style seldom proves effective in print.⁸ On the other hand, however, it must also be noted that there were many requests for Dr. Maier's sermons in print; and these too must have been powerful means for leading people to Christ.

In order to round out the study still more, Chapter V contains a

⁷H. L. Hollingworth, The Psychology of the Audience (Chicago: American Book Company, 1935), p. 37.

⁸Webb B. Garrison, The Preacher and His Audience (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1954), p. 113.

survey of every twentieth sermon in the odd seasons of The Lutheran Hour. Where there is an evident duplication of the subject of a previously analyzed sermon, the thirtieth sermon has been chosen for examination. By its very nature the survey touches only the practical highlights of persuasion commonly found in these fifteen sermons, nevertheless stressing Dr. Maier's penetrating use of Law and Gospel. With considerable emphasis on the first and last preached Lutheran Hour sermons, an attempt is made to point out a growth in Dr. Maier's persuasive preaching by dividing the sermons into two chronological groups. The first group consists of sermons preached during the Depression and before World War II; the second group has sermons preached during the War and the post-war period.

It is evident that the writer of the thesis does not assume to make hasty and bold conclusions concerning the relative values of persuasive factors employed by Dr. Maier. Much of the application of the persuasive factors to individual sermons tends to be subjective. By a cold analytical and statistical means, which can also be subject to human error, only a fair conception may be gained of some of the secrets of the radio preacher's power in winning and leading men to Jesus Christ. The greatest power of persuasion is, of course, the Gospel of Christ, which he boldly and sympathetically preached as a "dying man to dying men."⁹ That is the rediscovery of the summary chapter, Chapter VI.

⁹James S. Stewart, Heralds of God (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), p. 60.

CHAPTER II

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND PERSONALITY OF WALTER A. MAIER

William McDermott of the Christian Herald calls Walter A. Maier the "Jeremiah of the Twentieth Century."¹ Donald Hake, writer for the Sunday Magazine, acclaims him as "The Luther of the Twentieth Century," crying out prophetically to his generation to turn to the Savior.² There can be little doubt that Dr. Maier's extreme popularity is due to somewhat of a prophet's appeal which had its root in the type of man he was. Therefore, it is good to make a few comments on his life and personality. Furthermore, that the life and personality of Walter A. Maier repay study is strongly suggested by the fact that the preacher's persuasive power is to a large extent determined by the authority and prestige of his personality.³

As of this date, no extensive biography on the life of Walter A. Maier has been published, although Mrs. Maier is in the process of writing one. For the bulk of the material on Dr. Maier's life and personality, the writer is largely indebted to Harriet Schwenk, Dr. Maier's private secretary, for her biographical data in the Dr. Walter A. Maier Memorial Booklet and her article "Jubilate" in Christmas Echoes. Other information has been gathered from newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, tracts, and bulletins of various kinds, most of which are in the

¹William F. McDermott, "Twenty Million....Hear Him Preach." Reprint from The Christian Herald, March, 1947.

²Donald E. Hake, "He Throws Inkwells on the Air," Sunday Magazine, April and May, 1945.

³Infra, pp. 46-9.

possession of Mrs. Maier, whose kind interest and help the writer gratefully wishes to acknowledge.

Life

Walter A. Maier was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on October 4, 1893. One of eight children, he was the son of Emil William Maier, an organ builder, and Anna Katherine Schad Maier. Dr. Maier was a shining example of the influence of a Christian home, where devout parents prayed daily with and for their children.

The first school he attended was the historic Cotton Mather Public School, an elementary school in Boston. It was during this time that a professor's appeal for Christian workers at a youth institute influenced him to dedicate his life to the ministry. Thus he complemented his education at the Concordia College Institute, Bronxville, New York, which is a Lutheran high school and college. He graduated in 1912, having worked his way through by washing dishes.

In 1913, when he was nineteen years of age, Dr. Maier received his B.A. from Boston University. Then he enrolled at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, and graduated in 1916, having payed expenses by doing mimeographing and selling books.

He continued his preparation for the ministry through graduate studies at Harvard University, specializing in Semitic languages, literature, and history. He received his M.A. there in 1920, at which time he also won the Harvard Billings' Award in oratory. Nine years later Harvard awarded him the Ph.D. degree in the field of Semitics.

A number of honorary degrees were also bestowed upon him. In 1943 Concordia College of Unley, South Australia, awarded him the honorary

D.D. degree. In 1945 Houghton College of Houghton, New York, presented him with the LL.D. degree.

One of Dr. Maier's major achievements during his early years was the vitalizing of the young people's group of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. In 1920 he gave great impetus to young people's work by becoming the first full-time executive secretary of the Walther League and the editor of the Walther League Messenger. Under his editorship and through the power of his vigorous editorials, the Walther League Messenger maintained a steady growth, with eighty thousand subscriptions at the time of his resignation.

Another highlight of his life was in 1922 when he became professor of Old Testament Interpretation and History at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. Here his students affectionately called him "WAM." He remained an active member of the faculty until 1944.

In 1930 he began his actual radio ministry as regular speaker on The Lutheran Hour over the Columbia Broadcasting System. When The Lutheran Hour began to be broadcast over the Mutual Network in 1935, it soon became such an extensive program, that the radio ministry required his full time. In 1944, Concordia Seminary granted him a leave of absence, enabling him to use his full talents and time in preaching the Gospel of Christ to millions of listeners who awaited his message each week.

One must marvel at the working capacity of the man, since for a time he successfully held down three positions, which presently each have a full-time worker: Seminary professor, Lutheran Hour speaker, and editor of the Walther League Messenger.

Walter A. Maier was also engaged in various part-time activities. From 1929 to 1940, he served during the summer months as dean of the Lutherland Camp and Conference Association at Pocono Pines, Pennsylvania.

He was a leader in founding Gamma Delta, the organization for Lutheran university students throughout the United States.

During World War I he acted as Lutheran pastor for internees quartered on Gallup's Island in Boston Harbor and to prisoners in War Prison Camp No. 1 at Still River, Massachusetts. Later he was camp pastor at the United States Army Camp Gordon near Atlanta, Georgia. In 1947 the United States Army sent Dr. Maier to Europe as special consultant on education and religious affairs.

After his return to this country, by personal pleading for the suffering in Europe and through the aid of friends, he helped support two thousand European families with relief packages.

Besides his vigorous activity as Lutheran Hour speaker, which also included appearances at rallies all over our country, as well as regular weekly broadcasts from radio station KFUC on the campus of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, he found time to produce many tracts, pamphlets, and a manual for family worship entitled, Day by Day with Jesus. He also wrote some twenty volumes of books, most of which are compilations of his radio sermons. He prepared the research materials for a commentary on Nahum, which McDermott calls "one of the most exhaustive theological tasks of the generation."⁴ Probably his best known book and also the most widely circulated is a 598 page treatise on marriage entitled For Better, Not for Worse.

⁴McDermott, op. cit.

On June 14, 1924, Walter A. Maier and Hulda A. Eickhoff, a former Indiana schoolteacher, were married. Mrs. Maier not only maintained a radiant household, but also aided her husband in the preparation of sermon manuscripts. Two sons graced their marriage. Both Walter Jr. and Paul followed in the footsteps of their father by choosing the ministry as life professions.

After a brief period of illness, Dr. Maier died on January 11, 1950. His body was laid to rest on January 14, at Concordia Cemetery, St. Louis, and later at Our Redeemer Cemetery in the same city, where a monument was erected in his honor.

It is well to note here that the two outstanding characteristics in the life of Walter A. Maier were his tremendous capacity and love for work, and his overwhelming devotion to projects which were of service to people, the greatest of which was preaching the Gospel.

Personality

An editorial in the Milwaukee Sentinel described Dr. Maier like this: "He was a great Christian teacher . . . great in every sense. He was a preacher, scholar, and writer. And certainly radio's most successful evangelist."⁵

Outwardly, the stocky five-foot-eight radio preacher looked and acted like a successful salesman. His sandy hair topped a perpetually smiling face, except when he preached; and he greeted his friends cordially, standing with his arm around their shoulders as they talked. He was a man of modest dress and tried to avoid arrogance in appearance,

⁵Reprint from Milwaukee Sentinel, January 11, 1950.

even though his aggressive way manifested a dynamic personality.⁶ Interestingly enough, as if to match the calibre of his activity, he wore a size eight hat.

Not only did his appearance manifest much drive and warmth, but his handshake was even a better expression of the power of this man. Hartzell Spence describes it as "monumental. He shakes your hand in an iron grip with the sweeping motion employed in Indian wrestling, and follows through with a yank and twist that nearly pulls you from your feet."⁷

Dr. Maier was a complete extrovert and an intellectual. He had to be in order to accomplish what he did. Harriet Schwenk comments:

There was rhythm, speed, and drive in Dr. Maier's work which a person seldom sees even in successful executives. He found joy in working and continued in long sustained periods of production without surcease. The rhythm was that of an artist; the speed, of a jet plane; the drive, of a genius; and the dynamo furnishing the power, the Holy Spirit to extend the reach of the Savior's Gospel.⁸

The radio minister was driven by a restless energy that kept him on the go at all times. He always wanted to fill every request, however humble it might have been.⁹ Until his fatal illness he had missed but one scheduled broadcast which serves as a record of his great vitality.¹⁰

One of the best examples demonstrating his outstanding mental ability and physical drive is in connection with writing devotional materials.

⁶Hake, op. cit., p. 12.

⁷Harriet Schwenk, "Jubilate," Christmas Echoes, 1950, p. 54.

⁸Ibid., p. 12.

⁹Milwaukee Sentinel, op. cit.

¹⁰Reprint from St. Louis Star Times, January 12, 1950.

On one day from 10:15 A.M. to 1:30 A.M. the next morning, in spite of several interruptions, he dictated one hundred and fifty devotions of 200-220 words each for the 1951 devotional calendar, Day by Day with Jesus.¹¹

Dr. Maier was an avid reader and had an outstanding memory. He knew the contents of a stack of five hundred letters in the time that it took a slow reader to ferret out the details of five. His mind grasped the salient points from a letter, an article, a report, a paper, and then vulcanized the facts into his memory. It seems almost impossible that occasionally he reviewed from seventy-five to one hundred books a day.¹²

Not only did Dr. Maier have marvelous gifts, but he was, above all, a man of deep religious convictions. He never compromised with his beliefs. He preached the truth of the Bible and let the chips fall where they might. He left no ambiguity of where he stood theologically, and his radio audience loved him for his exaltation of Christ, Son of God, and Savior of the world.¹³ The St. Louis Globe Democrat described him as "a militant crusader . . . more than a vigorous spokesman for the Lutheran Church . . . a missionary imbued with a zeal which matched his convictions."¹⁴ Hake asserts that to evangelical Christians throughout the country he was known as the contender for the faith of all believers.¹⁵

¹¹Schwenk, op. cit., pp. 53f.

¹²Ibid., p. 52.

¹³Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁴Reprint from St. Louis Globe Democrat, January 12, 1950.

¹⁵Hake, op. cit., p. 1

In this connection, no doubt, Dr. Maier's most formal vindication of the Bible occurred in reference to church union on December 7, 1948, when he participated in the "Town Meeting of the Air." After the program, which also carried the voice of such notables as E. Stanley Jones, hundreds of letters were received from pastors and laymen of various denominations, thanking Dr. Maier for his Biblical stand. These letters spoke of his "uncompromising witnessing for Jesus Christ . . . clear, ringing, convincing testimony . . . courageous and sincere expression of faith."¹⁶

Fervent prayer marked the life of this great man of God. His earliest memory was of his father at prayer, and the most influential human factor in his life were the devotion, prayers, and outstanding example of his parents.¹⁷ Preparation for every sermon followed intercession which had implored the Holy Spirit's help. Each sheet of his sermon manuscript carried the prayerful dedication "INJ" in the upper left hand corner. He never lost sight of the value of prayer for other people, too. His staff typed thousands of cards with names, addresses, and prayer requests, so that he could remember these cases by specific intercession.¹⁸

Humility was an outstanding characteristic of his personality. He gave full credit to the Almighty God for success which crowned almost

¹⁶Excerpts of letters received after Dr. Maier's participation in the "Town Meeting of the Air."

¹⁷Anna Rothe, editor, Current Biography (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1947), Vol. 8, No. 5, p. 37.

¹⁸Schwenk, op. cit., p. 53.

every undertaking he began and gratitude to Heaven for the privilege of serving in the Kingdom. Dr. Maier's words were:

The privilege of spreading the Gospel to millions of listeners in and out of the Church is the highest honor I could ask for. If I can bring radio listeners to realize the sufficiency of God's grace for every human need and crisis, that reward is more precious to me than life itself.¹⁹

He always insisted that the secret of the success of the Lutheran Hour was not in his personality or gifts of speech, but in the prayers of the listening audience and in that preaching of the simple Gospel that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."²⁰

Although his work was characterized by serious determination, he also had a sense of humor. He loved to play little practical jokes, such as exchanging hats with guests.

It is well to take note of his remarkable sermonizing habits, too. Mrs. Maier revealed that he always had pencil and paper next to his bed to write down sermon thoughts that otherwise might escape him. Much of his material came from his voluminous ten four-drawer files, crammed to overflowing with gathered facts, illustrations, ideas, and information on every subject.²¹ He used only those ideas that were pertinent, for he had a newsman's sense of modernity and timing.²² His words were, "I must keep pulse on human affairs."²³ He used all his historical and

¹⁹"Lutheran Hour Presents Dr. Walter A. Maier" (Official souvenir program from Chicago Lutheran Hour Rally, October 3, 1943).

²⁰Hake, op. cit., p. 10.

²¹Reprint from Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, January 13, 1950.

²²Hake, op. cit., p. 9.

²³Ibid.

contemporary illustrative materials solely to illustrate the Bible, never to take its place.

Dr. Maier always studied the text in the original language. His aim was to quote at least one Scripture passage per minute of the twenty he usually preached.²⁴ Preparation for Lutheran Hour sermons took him at least twenty hours, about two or three times the national average for preachers.²⁵ His ambition was always to exhaust his subject, and this accounts for the length of some of his sermons in printed form.

Consideration must be given to what his contemporaries thought of his delivery. Spence calls it "machine gun delivery."²⁶ Hake comments:

Dr. Maier violates all modern appealing techniques of radio speech by virtually shouting into the mike. Yet his hard but pleasant voice has a gripping appeal that commands and holds attention, and his audience loves it.²⁷

On one occasion, after he resolved to take the advice of speaking in a more conversational tone, his mail took a nose-dive and friends wrote inquiring about his health.

This herald for Christ opened all the diapasons of the oratorical organ and muted no testimony for the Redeemer.²⁸ McDermott gives the best description of his actual preaching:

As he races on with his fervent plea, sweat begins to stand out on his face and hands. He gestures violently, often coming to a climax with his whole body poised as a lion for a spring. Although

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., p. 8.

²⁶Hartzell Spence, "The Man of the Lutheran Hour." Reprint from Saturday Evening Post, June, 1948.

²⁷Hake, op. cit., p. 10.

²⁸Schwenk, op. cit., p. 59.

stripped of coat and shirt to give him freedom of movement he soon is dripping with perspiration. The words pour out of his mouth and soul in a perfect torrent. A manuscript is before him, but he often forgets it as, with eyes closed, he climbs a mountain peak of inspiration and hurls wide and far his thunderbolts of warning to a lost world.²⁹

It is difficult to say just how much Dr. Maier stressed oratorical skill in the preparation of his sermons. It is difficult, too, to know whether he was conscious of certain persuasive appeals as he wrote the sermons. The writer of the thesis was not able to find any books on speech or persuasion in his library, although there could have been a few not accessible. This probably points out the fact that he was not particularly concerned about oratorical persuasiveness. His aim was to emphasize the message rather than the method. On the other hand, he did take a private course in oratory while studying at Harvard. Hake calls him "experienced in debate, oratory, and extempore speaking."³⁰

Although Dr. Maier seemed to violate many of the soft spoken techniques of radio delivery, he nevertheless had a commanding hold on his audience. Spence contends: "Doctor Maier's popularity is not due to his oratorical acrobatics, however, but to the direct hold he gains on his audience. There is no doubt that he means you, not some other fellow."³¹ He identified himself with his listeners and had an instinctive sense for the things that would interest them and the cause that would promote their welfare.³²

²⁹McDermott, op. cit.

³⁰Hake, op. cit., p. 4.

³¹Spence, op. cit.

³²Milwaukee Sentinel, op. cit.

He was no respecter of persons, but loved all ages, types, and classes of people. Thus with an impassioned voice he let himself go in terrific earnestness. He envisioned sinful people engulfed in physical and spiritual suffering. McDermott comments:

Dr. Maier sees far beyond that--he glimpses frustrated, confused, despairing and often rebellious millions of people everywhere; he envisions a world of humanity lost in darkness, and groping for the light Therefore to him in that broadcasting hour, the whole human race is crowded right there into that little studio with him, and he is telling everyone personally the good news of salvation.³³

Dr. Maier, too, had been known to prepare a sermon for a single listener. His passion for people remained with him till his death. During his last conscious moments he made this beautiful confession of faith:

"If any man sin, we have an Advocate,"--praise God!--"with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the Propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"; he repeated, "and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."³⁴

Although Dr. Maier had severe critics, too, his dynamic love for people and the living Lord of love inspired him to do great things for all who were privileged to hear him. His outstanding mental abilities, his sincerity and terrific earnestness, his overwhelming zeal for life, and his uncompromising and courageous way in the faith of the Apostles, marked him as one of the great preachers of all time and one who held persuasive power over his audience. He relied upon God for strength. He had intellectual power, but in that he never trusted. He had a great

³³ McDermott, op. cit.

³⁴ Schwenk, op. cit., pp. 61f.

personality, but his faith lay not in it. If his personality could be summarized in a sentence, it should be in the form of the Bible passage he loved so dearly and signed as autographs so often: "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."³⁵

Even so brief a sketch of the life and personality of Walter A. Maier cannot but have depicted him as one of the truly great men of the twentieth century. One possessed of such remarkable aptitude for the work of persuading his fellow men to espouse the cause of Christ is rarely encountered and difficult to account for--except as a unique gift of God.

³⁵Romans 8:37.

... of persuasion has its ultimate roots in the... Aristotle is usually... for first exploring the subject scientifically. His... the first worthy writer on this subject. Aristotle... as "the art of implanting notions which lead to..."

Throughout the centuries Aristotle's definition of persuasion has... although occasionally it has been modified. Aristotle... as "the art of activating, or of... or directing in another individual a belief or... by the speaker."

The Maier and Porter say:

... of Speech (New York: McGraw Hill... 1921), p. 212.

... The Psychology of Humanistic Speech (New York: McGraw Hill and Company, 1922), p. 10.

CHAPTER III

THE FACTORS OF PERSUASION

Before a detailed investigation can be made of the factors of persuasion employed in Dr. Maier's sermons, it is necessary to survey the general subject of persuasion. By this means, instruments of analysis may be developed by the aid of which the skill of Dr. Maier may be better revealed.

Definition

Although the concept of persuasion has its ultimate roots in the Word of God moving men and elements into action, Aristotle is usually given credit for first exploring the subject scientifically. His Rhetoric is the first worthy volume written on this subject. Aristotle defines persuasion as "the art of implanting motives which lead to consequent free action."¹

Throughout the centuries Aristotle's definition of persuasion has pretty well held its own, although occasionally it has been amplified. Robert T. Oliver defines persuasion as "the art of motivation, or of instilling, activating, or directing in another individual a belief or type of conduct recommended by the speaker."²

Lew Sarett and Foster say:

¹Daniel Guy Powers, Fundamentals of Speech (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1951), p. 212.

²Robert T. Oliver, The Psychology of Persuasive Speech (New York: Longman's Green and Company, 1942), p. 10.

Persuasion is a method whereby a speaker induces an individual or an audience to believe or to act by implanting a wish to do so; by driving at a deep hunger, emotion, or habit that intensifies that wish; or by touching off some other psychological spring of human action.³

It should be noted that persuasion in common usage covers two meanings: to induce belief and to influence conduct.⁴ These are also the two basic goals of persuasion.

The problem of persuasion is largely a problem of getting and holding the attention of an audience whose attitudes may be those of belief, doubt, or disbelief.⁵ According to Hollingworth the persuasive speaker must catch, hold, impress, convince, and direct the listener.⁶ Oliver states that "the chief task of the persuasive speaker is to serve as a 'selector' of his audience's attention."⁷

It is a fallacy to think of attention as a single total response to a sermon. Attention must be captured, held, and recaptured many times.⁸ Garrison maintains that this is most easily accomplished when the speaker talks about the four things which people are most interested

³Lew Sarett and William Foster, Basic Principles of Speech (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1946), p. 485.

⁴James A. Winans, Speech Making (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), p. 256.

⁵Sarett and Foster, op. cit., p. 490.

⁶H. L. Hollingworth, The Psychology of the Audience (Chicago: American Book Company, 1935), p. 12.

⁷Oliver, op. cit., p. 199.

⁸Webb B. Garrison, The Preacher and His Audience (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1954), p. 66.

in. These are basic human wants, people, activity, and conflict.⁹ Sarett and Foster make a point of stressing fresh knowledge and special information, and problems of human aspirations, crises, defeats, and triumphs.¹⁰ Oliver emphasizes the vital as the most important element of holding attention. He says: "Two propositions may be noted here: first, nothing is really persuasive to an audience which is not in some degree vital to it; second, nothing is really vital unless it is personal."¹¹ In other words, a persuasive speaker who wishes to hold the attention of his audience will always relate his message to their needs.

Persuasion, then, is the art of inducing an audience to belief and action by speaking, primarily, to their basic needs.

Persuasion in Preaching

There can be no doubt that successful preaching must also contain the element of persuasion. The very essence of the Gospel is the persuasive answer to human need for God. Harwood Pattison defines preaching as "the spoken communication of divine truth with a view to persuasion."¹²

Most homileticians agree that the underlying principles in preaching and rhetoric are the same, because they have their target in human nature. Batsell Baxter contends:

With but a few exceptions the principles underlying all effective speaking are the same. Certain modifications of the suggestions of the rhetoricians are sometimes made necessary by the peculiar

⁹ Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁰ Sarett and Foster, op. cit., pp. 502f.

¹¹ Oliver, op. cit., p. 212.

¹² Harwood Pattison, The Making of the Sermon (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1902), p. 3

pulpit situation and subject matter, but the basic principles remain the same.¹³

M. Neu points out similarities but also one marked difference:

So far as its effect on the will is concerned, the sermon as well as the oration must possess force and energy that will move to action; for it is an essential characteristic of public discourse that it shall summon the hearers to a decision and inspire them to the performance of certain definite acts The preacher, however, must not forget that his primary purpose is not, like that of a political orator, to move his hearers to perform certain outward acts. It would be to forget that all God pleasing activity must proceed from an inner necessity out of the regenerate heart.¹⁴

John A. Broadus asserts that a major difference lies in the primary source materials.¹⁵ The primary source is for preaching, of course, the truth of the Word of God. This Truth is unchangeable and is in essence ultimate persuasion. But humanly speaking, the factors of persuasion are exercised through the human personality proclaiming this Truth of God. Thus Phillips Brooks describes preaching as "Truth through Personality."¹⁶

Persuasive preaching begins with the truth of the Word of God. But it must also begin with the hearer, to use James Stewart's words.¹⁷ Especially in preaching, the preacher must give deep concern to the

¹³ Batsell Barrett Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 306.

¹⁴ M. Neu, Homiletics (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1934), p. 203.

¹⁵ John A. Broadus, Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, edited by Charles Dargan (New York: George H. Doren Company, c.1898), p. 16.

¹⁶ Phillips Brooks, Lectures on Preaching (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1894), p. 8.

¹⁷ James S. Stewart, A Faith to Proclaim (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), p. 125.

needs of his audience. Blackwood suggests this single label for all the sermons any minister ought to preach: "messages from God for the needs of men."¹⁸ Stewart describes the basic need as "a rediscovery of Christianity as a vital relationship to a living Christ."¹⁹

Furthermore, it is against the background of the contemporary situation and within the framework of current hopes and fears that the Gospel must be proclaimed. John Fritz says: "The purpose of preaching is to supply the spiritual needs of the hearers, not only in a general way, but as time, circumstances, and conditions demand."²⁰ Blackwood holds that the state of the times affects the substance and the tone color of every sermon.²¹ Herbert Farmer asserts: "Eternal as the Gospel is, there must be some translation of it into the present tense."²²

So then, good preaching does apply the elements of persuasion with a special emphasis on the hearer's present human needs which are only symptoms of his need for God. Both preaching and persuasion have their target in the human being, but Gospel preaching is accompanied by a greater sense of urgency because of a more decisive message. There is one marked difference, however, in source. The source of Gospel preaching is God, while the source of human persuasion is mere man.

¹⁸Andrew Watterson Blackwood, The Preparation of Sermons (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), p. 34.

¹⁹Stewart, op. cit., p. 143.

²⁰John Fritz, The Preacher's Manual (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), p. 20. -- p. 543.

²¹Blackwood, op. cit., p. 23.

²²Herbert H. Farmer, The Servant of the Word (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), p. 122.

Radio Preaching

It is evident that this study must also deal with preaching via the radio. Here again, the authorities agree that the principles for good radio speaking are the same as those involved when speaking to a visible audience. Sherman Lawton maintains that "the radio talk does not necessitate a new technique nor new principles of speaking. It does necessitate more intense application of old principles, principles as old as Aristotle or older."²³ Sarett's words are these: "All the basic principles of speech apply, in one degree or another, to radio speaking."²⁴

Alan Monroe, however, adds one necessary criterion. He says concerning radio speaking: "Make your appeal as universal as possible."²⁵ Applying this to preaching, Everett Parker agrees when he states:

The subject matter of the radio sermon must connect as rapidly as possible with the experience of the listeners. And, although you speak to a single need and a single purpose, it is important to select a topic that has wide appeal, one that is of concern to a great many people.²⁶

Again, it is clear that the problem of persuasion via radio is largely a problem of meeting the universal needs of the listening audience.

Since the problem of this thesis necessitates an understanding of the qualifications for a persuasive radio sermon, it is well to quote

²³ Sherman Paxton Lawton, Radio Speech (Boston: Expression Company, 1932), p. 13.

²⁴ Sarett and Foster, op. cit., p. 572.

²⁵ Alan H. Monroe, Principles and Types of Speech (New York: Scott, Foresman and Company, c.1935), p. 450.

²⁶ Everett C. Parker, Elinor Inman and Ross Synder, Religious Radio (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1948), p. 100.

Parker's criteria for such a sermon:

- a. The theme of the radio sermon must be important to a mass audience, but must be so presented that it produces a positive effect upon, and induces action by the individual hearer.
- b. It must have for both speaker and individual listener the satisfaction of fairly intimate two-way conversation.
- c. Its idea-content must be offered at a pace that the mind, by way of the unaided ear can receive. This not only affects the speed and manner of delivery, but also limits the speaker to the presentation of one idea, and furthermore, to one interpretation of that idea.
- d. The radio sermon must be logically planned, but it should be written out of emotion, i.e., genuine feeling.
- e. The radio sermon, like other forms of radio writing must utilize the shorter sentence, the more vivid word, the colloquial phrases, of good conversation. It can be fully as intellectual as any pulpit sermon, but it has to be less formal in language and requires an entirely different technique of pacing and presentation.
- f. "Conversational" though its style should be, it does not follow the vagrant line of actual, unrehearsed conversation between two people. The radio sermon must start with a specific idea, and invariably, it must use a direct approach. The idea that motivates it must "march" must start some place and go directly to its goal.²⁷

Having now reviewed some of the peculiar emphases of preaching and particularly radio preaching, namely, the emphasis of preaching directly to immediate universal needs, we next consider the basic and underlying factors of persuasion common to speeches and sermons in general. The term "factor" is used in its broad sense, including elements of content, devices of style, techniques of delivery, and the impact of the speaker's personality. Although this categorization is somewhat arbitrary, it does help to present a neater picture of the

²⁷Ibid., p. 123.

persuasive factors employed in successful speeches and sermons. The first factor to be considered--and from the viewpoint of preaching, the most important--is elements of content.

Elements of Content

Reason and Emotion

Every ideal persuasive speech or sermon should have appeals to the human mind and feeling. These are rightly called appeals to reason and emotion. These are important because they are universal. As early as the pre-Christian era when Aristotle wrote his thesis on rhetoric, it was recognized that communication includes two major elements: logical and emotional appeals. Logic is primarily concerned with information, while emotion is closely linked with action.²⁸

There has not always been agreement, however, as to which appeal is the most effective. To go into this matter here is not within the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that both appeals are valuable in persuading an audience. Sanford states: "It is a well established principle that there must be a judicious mixture of logical and emotional proof in speeches."²⁹ Oliver contends: "the best source for the persuasive speaker is to intermingle all types of appeal in his speeches. Like the wise military strategist, his efforts should be to 'advance on all fronts.'"³⁰

²⁸Garrison, op. cit., p. 213.

²⁹William Sanford, Principles of Effective Speaking (New York: Nelson and Sons, 1934), p. 180.

³⁰Oliver, op. cit., p. 192.

The appeal to reason is necessary to provide a good sound understanding of the subject and to hold it in memory. X Oliver suggests: "First think--then feel--then speak, is a sequence the persuasive speaker would do well to observe."³¹ Rational appeals are especially useful with intelligent and well educated audiences.³² Since the standard of intelligence in our country is quite high, it would seem that any speech or sermon should contain a good amount of appeals to reason.

One of the first prerequisites of an appeal to reason in a sermon is to have logical order, or a good outline.³³ The material should be so arranged that there is a moderate form of argument ending up with a climax of the main idea. Simple facts have a high persuasive value, but it must be remembered that no fact is better than its source.³⁴ However, it is well to observe the warning of Farmer that it is wise to use quotations sparingly for they tend to come between the speaker and hearer.³⁶

An ideal speech will give primary consideration to appeals to the emotions. Sarett claims that we feel our way to our convictions more frequently than we reason our way to our emotions.³⁷ Hollingworth states that the emotional appeal is characteristic of that form of

³¹Ibid., p. 174.

³²Hollingworth, op. cit., p. 111.

³³Reu, op. cit., p. 173.

³⁴Oliver, op. cit., pp. 176f.

³⁵Lawton, op. cit., p. 71.

³⁶Farmer, op. cit., p. 62.

³⁷Sarett and Foster, op. cit., p. 479.

speaking classically known as oratory.³⁸

Appeals to the emotions are basically appeals to the natural wants and desires of human beings: self-preservation, property, power, reputation, affections, sentiments, and tastes.³⁹ Oliver amplifies this listing somewhat and states that the basic emotional drives and desires are: freedom, helpfulness, new experience, power and influence, recognition, response, security and stability, submission, and workmanship.⁴⁰ Basically, these are all aspects of self-interest, the appeal to which is a most powerful medium of persuasion. If we were to gather out the two most important drives, we would probably find that the desire for self-preservation and the desire for love and affection would be at the top of the list. Thus in preaching, every idea expressing an escape from the destruction of this world and the horror of hell is an appeal to self-preservation. Every announcement of the love of God in Christ is an appeal to the affections. It is important to remember that the proclamation of Law and Gospel has these two important appeals.

Appeals to the emotions affect the feeling responses. They may cause feelings of either pleasantness and excitement, or unpleasantness and depression.⁴¹ It is important to present the hearer with such contrasting feelings, as this study will bring out shortly.

A word should be said about the use of emotional words and phrases relating to Christ, such as "blood of the Lamb" and "the foot of the

³⁸Hollingworth, op. cit., p. 110.

³⁹Sandford, op. cit., pp. 70f.

⁴⁰Oliver, op. cit., pp. 167f.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 165.

cross." These expressions are often held in disregard. However, Garrison calls them "powerful media for the communication of emotional overtones."⁴² Yet one must be careful not to go to extremes in this matter and use vulgar, sentimental expressions which offend the sense of the beautiful.⁴³

Decision

A second element of content in helping to persuade an audience lies in the effective use of two conflicting ideas. Antithesis is a universal requisite of speech.⁴⁴ Hollingworth comments, "In persuading an audience then, one fundamental procedure then is that of linking up the proposition to be advanced with an atmosphere of desirability, or attaching to its antithesis a feeling tone of undesirability."⁴⁵

This, of course, holds true in preaching too. Caemmerer advises that a desirable sermon goal be constructed on the basis of antithetical undesirable problems.⁴⁶ For example, a desirable goal of faith has for its antithesis the undesirable problem of unbelief. In a sermon on faith, then, it would be imperative to point up the striking contrasts between faith and unbelief. These contrasts place the hearer in a situation which means a decision. Preaching that presents a

⁴²Garrison, op. cit., p. 42.

⁴³Reu, op. cit., p. 182.

⁴⁴Winans, op. cit., p. 211.

⁴⁵Hollingworth, op. cit., p. 117.

⁴⁶Richard R. Caemmerer, Preaching to the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Mimeo Company, 1952), p. 29.

vivid contrast between two courses of action is likely to result in decision. This element of contrast toward decision is important. In fact, Garrison says that "the effective impact of a sermon is to be measured in terms of decision."⁴⁷

Suggestion

Another valuable element in persuasion is suggestion. Suggestion is the process of establishing an idea in the mind of another person.⁴⁸ Suggestion is basically of two types: direct and indirect.⁴⁹ Direct suggestion is an explicit command. Indirect suggestion involves the planting of an idea into the mind of the listener without seeming to do so.

Most authorities, including Oliver and Hollingworth, agree that the indirect suggestion is the best.⁵⁰ This would mean that everything which contributes to the aim of the speech would be indirect suggestion. Yet it would especially include the idea of social suggestion. In a speech this type of suggestion would have its form in the testimonies of other people and in the opinions of authorities. Social suggestion is a very powerful type of suggestion, especially if the authority of the speaker is not too great. Winans contends: "The speaker who can make his audience feel this social imperative pushing them in the direction he

⁴⁷Garrison, op. cit., pp. 226f.

⁴⁸Sarett and Foster, op. cit., p. 526.

⁴⁹Oliver, op. cit., pp. 232-36.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 243f.

wishes has a powerful leverage."⁵¹

The question, too, is a powerful element of indirect suggestion. This is especially true when questions come in small groups, but then are placed at crucial intervals throughout the speech. Again, Winans comments:

The peculiar virtue of the question in commanding attention is in its prompting of the hearer to answer, to think for himself, rather than passively to accept the statements of the speaker. Such questions are a challenge; they put the matter up to you.⁵²

Closely related to this is the idea of challenge. A persuasive speech will hold out pointed challenges to the listeners. Speaking of sermons, Farmer states:

A sermon has failed, indeed it has not been a sermon, unless it carries to the serious hearer something of a claim upon or summons to his will, to his whole being as this gathers itself together in his will.⁵³

Direct suggestion, or the use of explicit commands, can be used sparingly. However, a speaker with much prestige and authority may use imperatives quite freely. Direct suggestion is definitely aided by authority.⁵⁴ As far as Christian preaching is concerned, one must be careful in using imperatives, even with much prestige and authority. Caemmerer says: "Imperatives concerning faith or works are in place if they summon the hearer to employ God's own power through the redemption of Christ for his faith or his works."⁵⁵

⁵¹Winans, op. cit., p. 294.

⁵²Ibid., p. 213.

⁵³Farmer, op. cit., p. 65.

⁵⁴Winans, op. cit., p. 291.

⁵⁵Caemmerer, op. cit., p. 43.

In the case of either indirect or direct suggestion, it is important to note that suggestion in a positive form is more likely to be responded to than negative suggestion.⁵⁶ This thought also has a definite bearing on preaching. Garrison's words are:

Positive, affirmative emphases always make decisions seem desirable The joys of heaven have spurred more men toward God than have the terrors of hell. Given an opportunity to repeat favorite Bible verses in a permissive atmosphere, mature Christians almost always select promises.⁵⁷

Introduction and Conclusion

The introduction and conclusion are two crucial points in any persuasive speech or sermon. The purpose of the introduction is to catch the attention of the audience and introduce the speech. Sermon introductions can be of various types: startling statement, introductory anecdotes, Biblical text, direct question, summary statement, and descriptive statement.⁵⁸ It is good to use a variety of introductions, and all types mentioned before have their place. However, in radio sermonizing, the introduction should be brief and to the point. This is the chief characteristic of a good introduction for a radio sermon. Blackwood says: "Away with the old time tedious introduction! In other days the preacher felt free to use a few minutes in getting warmed up, but the preacher over the radio must be ready before he starts."⁵⁹

⁵⁶Winans, op. cit., p. 292.

⁵⁷Garrison, op. cit., p. 229.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 165-68.

⁵⁹Blackwood, op. cit., p. 222.

A good conclusion consists of a summary statement and a challenge to action.⁶⁰ A brief attempt to review the content of the speech or sermon at its close will notably improve the memory of its content.⁶¹ A final challenge to action is another attempt to get the listener to believe or do what the speaker desires: Thus, there will usually be several brisk imperatives in the concluding paragraph or paragraphs. Finally, Blackwood makes this helpful suggestion:

Whatever the content and the form of the last paragraph or two, the sermon as a whole must lead up to a final sentence which ought to stand out more boldly and strongly than any other sentence of the text.⁶²

Law and Gospel

In Christian preaching the presence of Law and Gospel in the content of the message is the acme of persuasive power. The preacher's source of power is not human at all but in the Gospel message. Caemmerer states:

Essential is the corollary that human finesse and artifice cannot be the source of power for the Christian preacher. St. Paul deliberately sought to forego rhetorical excellence in order that his message might come in the full force of its divine power.⁶³

As Farmer puts it: "preaching is not merely a means for conveying the content of the Christian faith, but is in a real sense bound up with that content itself."⁶⁴ Thus, the persuasive power of a sermon in inducing men to faith and life is to be measured, above all, in terms of its

⁶⁰Garrison, op. cit., pp. 168f.

⁶¹Hollingworth, op. cit., p. 108.

⁶²Blackwood, op. cit., p. 167.

⁶³Caemmerer, op. cit., p. 47.

⁶⁴Farmer, op. cit., p. 14.

content, namely, the Gospel, and also the Law which prepares the way for the Gospel.

The theology of the Law makes it clear it has a purpose, namely, to lead men to a sense of need for help and rescue of the Gospel.⁶⁵ However, before it can do that, it must diagnose sin. In order to preach concretely, realistically, and persuasively the preacher must begin his diagnosis of sin with surface symptoms, which are merely the visible signs of a far deeper malady. The surface symptoms are outward acts that offend against the clear commands of God. Stewart describes them generally as suffering and sin.⁶⁶ It is important that the surface symptoms be made very concrete to the listener, especially to the unbeliever, since he knows little about the life of God in the heart and the fact that he lacks it. They should be in the realm of the listener's experience.

Yet the proper diagnosis and persuasive preaching of the Law goes farther than mere surface symptoms. It continues with the description of the underlying malady, which makes the hearer realize that this need for God is greater than the mere surface symptoms do suggest. Caemmerer states: "Sins of unbelief, fear, lovelessness, selfishness, in all their detail and variety, are simply symptoms of an underlying evil."⁶⁷ The final diagnosis must contain an announcement of death without God and the reminder of man's nothingness and helplessness without God. It must make known God's wrath and judgment.

⁶⁵Caemmerer, op. cit., p. 30.

⁶⁶Stewart, op. cit., pp. 75-80.

⁶⁷Caemmerer, op. cit., p. 27.

Now it stands to reason that two items must be taken into account here. First of all, some Biblical texts lend more to a discussion of surface symptoms than the underlying malady. Nevertheless, the underlying malady of life without God should be brought in at least briefly. The audience must in some way be made to feel its absolute need for God. Secondly, in a mixed audience of believers and unbelievers, it would surely seem natural that the emphasis would be on surface symptoms which are in the realm of common experience. This will be an important consideration in the discussion of Law in Dr. Maier's sermons.

After the Law has shown the hearer his definite need for God, then the Gospel is proclaimed. The Gospel is real persuasion, the "persuasio," sweetness, the answer to man's need. Caemmerer defines the Gospel as "the proclamation of the completed work of atonement by Jesus Christ."⁶⁸ The Gospel preacher does, indeed, place at the focus of his preaching the account of an act which is past, namely, the redemptive work of Christ.

The Gospel is supremely the message of the Cross and the Resurrection.⁶⁹ Stewart comments: "For your task is to confront the rampant disillusionment of the day and smash it with the cross of Christ and shame it with the splendour of the resurrection."⁷⁰ Again from Stewart: "Go back and listen to the preachers of the early Church. They never pointed men to the cross without showing them the resurrection light

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 31.

⁶⁹Alan Richardson, A Theological Word Book of the Bible (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), p. 100.

⁷⁰Stewart, op. cit., p. 21.

breaking behind it."⁷¹

This is in reality the basic message of the sermons of Peter and Paul in the Book of Acts. They preached the Cross and Resurrection in the context of the world's suffering and sin, but as revelation, victory and challenge.

The real sweetness of the Cross and the Resurrection comes in the fact of forgiveness. It comes in the fact "for us." God forgives man's sin because of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. The genuine persuasion of the Gospel consists in this that the Cross and the Resurrection are the divine answer to the human need for forgiveness and power over sin. The Cross and the Resurrection are the reason for and the proof of the believing sinner's at-one-ment with God.

There are various forms or modes of the atonement presented in the Bible, which help to make the atonement much more meaningful. Caemmerer lists a number of these categories:

- a. Christ is a sacrifice for sins, so that our sins may be forgiven, and God's wrath diverted from us.
- b. Christ is the mercy-seat which shields our sins from judgment and wrath of God.
- c. Christ, through His whole life, death, and rising again brings life in place of death.
- d. Christ accepts the indictment of the Law in our stead and reconciles us to God.
- e. Christ works out our peace with God through the price of His own death.
- f. Christ through His redemptive work makes possible the gift of the Holy Spirit to us.⁷²

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 87.

⁷² Caemmerer, op. cit., p. 33.

Summary

Summarizing this section on the elements of content, then, there can be no doubt that the greatest single factor of persuasion is in the dynamic message of the Gospel with its assisting element of the Law to point out human needs. Perhaps, this can be called the theocentric view of persuasion. Humanly speaking, however, one cannot deny the value of other persuasive factors such as appeals to reason through a good outline, testimonies, statistics, and evidence of authorities; or appeals to the emotions by considering man's basic desires; or by setting up elements of contrast with a view toward decision; or by various means of suggestion such as commands, social suggestion, challenge, and questions; or by pointed introductions and challenging conclusions. These are human arrangements which if properly used, can make the Law more dreadful and the Gospel much sweeter to people. The real power of persuasion is still in the essential elements of the Cross, Resurrection, and Forgiveness. Reu affirms: "That which edifies is in the last instance, not the mental ability of the preacher, but the divine Word alone."⁷³ It is still that acting Word which will accomplish the pleasure of God; which is the power of God unto salvation. In this connection, it is interesting to note the comment that Luke makes about the preaching of Jesus: "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power."⁷⁴

⁷³Reu, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

⁷⁴Is. 55:10-11; Rom. 1:16; Luke 4:32.

Devices of Style

To enumerate and investigate all the devices of style which contribute to a persuasive speech or sermon, would be an insurmountable task. This discussion will concern itself with the most effective devices and those which are usually stressed by authorities in homiletics, psychology, and speech. These devices of style are repetition, variety, and concreteness.

Repetition

Both Hollingworth and Oliver agree that repetition is the most effective form of emphasis. Repetitions are most valuable when there are at least three or more presentations of repetition and when these are separated by intervals of time.⁷⁵ Hollingworth states: "Repetition with variation promotes conviction; repetition with duplication better specifies and defines the response to be made."⁷⁶

Especially in radio, there is great value in repetition. Blackwood asserts:

The radio preacher uses skill in repetition because he wishes a few ideas to stand out. Even in a fifteen minute sermon he finds it better to say one thing in ten different ways than to touch ten different things, each in passing.⁷⁷

In every persuasive speech, and most assuredly the radio sermon, it is good to repeat the theme, which then becomes somewhat of a slogan

⁷⁵Oliver, op. cit., p. 125.

⁷⁶Hollingworth, op. cit., p. 159.

⁷⁷Blackwood, op. cit., p. 222.

or catch-word. Hollingworth makes this observation: "A slogan or catch-word crystallizes a whole program and remains with the audience a succinct formula of action."⁷⁸

Variety

The slogan "variety is the spice of life" also has its bearing on the presentation of speeches and sermons. Hollingworth maintains that well organized diversity is one of the conditions of sustained attention which is so necessary for persuasion.⁷⁹ Garrison goes so far as to say this: "Indeed, it is safe to say that the most important single element in commanding attention is contrast, or ordered change."⁸⁰ Scripture itself is full of variety, as the different modes of atonement suggest.

Variety can be achieved in a number of ways. In sentence structure there can be a variation of short sentences, long sentences, declarative sentences, interrogative sentences, exclamatory sentences, and imperative sentences.⁸¹ Paragraphs too can be of different lengths. In the content of the material there can be ordered change with reference to people, activity, conflict, and basic human wants, not to mention the variety in which these four basic human interests can be presented, namely, through illustrations, testimonies, evidence of authorities, statistics, prose argument, and simple presentation of

⁷⁸Hollingworth, op. cit., p. 159.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 59.

⁸⁰Garrison, op. cit., p. 78.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 84.

facts, verse, and many others.⁸² In paragraph organization there can be variety in reference to emotional states or modes, a variety between pleasant and unpleasant, exciting and depressive emotions.⁸³ All these methods of implanting variety are aids in compelling attention which is fundamental to successful persuasion.

Concreteness

The word "concreteness" is being used in a rather broad way, meaning devices which help to make the idea of the message clear to the audience. Broadus claims that the most important property of sermonic style is clarity.⁸⁴ Hollingworth agrees that the first principle for directing the beliefs and acts of an audience is to be specific and definite.⁸⁵

This, of course, involves language, and precisely words. The persuasive speaker will use short, crisp, direct Anglo-Saxon words.⁸⁶ He will use words that are familiar and convey the proper meaning with as little translation as possible.⁸⁷ On this account, a preacher will have to take care not to inflict abstract theological expressions on his listeners. Stewart comments: "It is sheer slackness to fling at

⁸²Ibid., p. 82.

⁸³Ibid., p. 84.

⁸⁴Broadus, op. cit., p. 361.

⁸⁵Hollingworth, op. cit., p. 158.

⁸⁶Luther Weaver, The Technique of Radio Writing (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., c.1948), p. 39.

⁸⁷Winans, op. cit., p. 183.

your people great globs of religious phraseology derived from a bygone age."⁸⁸

A word should be said about sentence length, too. During the Elizabethan age the number of words to a sentence numbered about fifty. Today, however, sentence length should not average over twenty-five words.⁸⁹ Especially radio talks should incorporate brief sentences. They carry punch and arouse action. Ideas are hammered home and rapid movement is implied.⁹⁰ Brief sentences in the conclusions are very good.

Concrete speaking and especially preaching has a certain directness. Oliver calls it common ground by which a speaker stresses the fundamental and basic relationships which he may have with his audience.⁹¹ This will account for a lot of "we" sentences. Yet in preaching the Gospel, it is also important to stress the "I-Thou" relationship. The prime function of speech between the preacher and his audience is to convey the ^Ttruth in such a way that it really becomes theirs. This is Farmer's basic idea of good preaching, when he says:

in effective preaching you, my friend, would be inescapably aware that God is talking to you, asking you questions which you must answer, offering you here and now the succour which you most desperately need.⁹²

⁸⁸ Stewart, op. cit., p. 38.

⁸⁹ Hollingworth, op. cit., p. 57.

⁹⁰ Garrison, op. cit., p. 99.

⁹¹ Oliver, op. cit., pp. 272-76.

⁹² Farmer, op. cit., pp. 64f.

The sermon achieves directness when the word "you" is employed. This is a powerful medium for persuasion.

Illustrations, too, have a place in the consideration of concreteness. Their aim is chiefly to clarify. Garrison asserts that no phase of the preacher's art is more important than the mastery of illustrative material.⁹³ In preaching there seem to be four basic types of illustrations: Biblical, historical, contemporary, and ordinary life. As far as their relative value is concerned, the imaginative analysis of ordinary life is the form of illustration that pays greatest dividends in terms of preaching material.⁹⁴ Besides this a good sermon illustration will be understandable, pertinent, fresh, convincing, commensurate with the theme, and interesting.⁹⁵

There are certain figures of speech, too, which are aids to persuasiveness. The most widely used figure of speech is alliteration which exploits the sounds of words.⁹⁶ Based primarily upon initial letters, it gains effect by repetition. By its boldness it attracts attention. By its repetition it thrusts a sound deep into the listener's mind and makes the phrase memorable.

Summary

As it has been demonstrated, repetition, variety, and concreteness are devices of style which help to make a sermon clear, interesting, and

⁹³Garrison, op. cit., p. 171.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 127.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 178.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 109.

powerful. In concluding this discussion, Blackwood summarizes very well a number of principles of style that govern the listenability of any radio sermon. According to him, the persuasive radio preacher uses short words, short sentences, short paragraphs. He writes about persons one by one and never lets the hearer lose sight of some person or persons, preferably in action. This kind of preaching calls for facts, facts that live and move and press onward towards the goal.⁹⁷

Techniques of Delivery

Nedra Lamar is quite correct when she states that the first necessity of a technique of delivery in speech is inspiration, to feel the spirit of the passage or message. The second is technical.⁹⁸ This thought is very close to the words of Caemmerer, who summarizes very well the Biblical concept of effective speech.

The Biblical concept of effective speech is capsuled in the term parrosia. It describes on the one hand, open and frank speech, direct and unmistakable It describes a speech that is unhampered within the speaker or his surroundings But then it also describes the courage and boldness with which the Christian presents his message This is a boldness of faith.⁹⁹

Sarett and Foster add to this idea when they state that sincerity and the desire to communicate are essential for effective radio speaking. These requisites may even offset a poor voice.¹⁰⁰ Sincerity is the

⁹⁷Blackwood, op. cit., p. 222.

⁹⁸Nedra Lamar, How to Speak the Written Word (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1949), p. 131.

⁹⁹Caemmerer, op. cit., p. 47.

¹⁰⁰Sarett and Foster, op. cit., p. 573.

belief in the cause for which the speaker stands, and the desire to communicate refers to the direct "I to you" attitude which a good speaker has with his audience.

Variety is an important element in delivery, too. Hollingworth asserts: "In public speaking that use of the voice is most impressive which utilizes extreme changes of tone quality, or of all the attributes of sound."¹⁰¹ This means variety in the use of silence, in rate of speed, in loudness or softness, and in tone.¹⁰²

Sherman Lawton relates further mechanics of delivery.¹⁰³ The volume should be average conversational volume. The pitch should be average baritone, which is most desirable. Rate should be about one hundred fifty words per minute. The more rapid rates have proved the most effective. Gestures also help to color the whole delivery and vitalize the action. The effective radio speaker should stand erect and hold the manuscript up to his eyes.¹⁰⁴

Other elements of effective delivery, according to the Speech Performance Scale used by Concordia Seminary are enthusiasm, poise, alertness, force, adaptation, communication, and clearness. However, it must be stated again that the most important techniques of delivery lie in the attitude of the speaker, namely, his sincerity and boldness and desire to get across what he is saying. Variety is, no doubt, the most important technical element.

¹⁰¹Hollingworth, op. cit., p. 107.

¹⁰²Garrison, op. cit., p. 82.

¹⁰³Lawton, op. cit., pp. 146f.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 139.

Personality of the Speaker

All the factors of persuasion discussed, with the exception of the intrinsic power of the Word, are of no avail, without the authority and prestige of the speaker. According to Sarett and Foster, the intrinsic worth of the speaker himself is the greatest single force in persuasion.¹⁰⁵ Garrison comments that no group is really swayed until individuals yield to the personality of the speaker.¹⁰⁶

In order to achieve his maximum effectiveness, in addition to the possession of a genuine Christian character, the preacher must be sincere, must be earnest, must be original and well informed and studious, must possess a strong, healthy body and a good mind.¹⁰⁷ He must face the fact of truth squarely, for nothing is so destructive of confidence in a speaker as suspicion of his sincerity.¹⁰⁸ Oliver asserts that every effective speaker must be a good leader. He defines the art of leadership as: "the ability to belong to a group thoroughly, while rising above it in the power of speech, in intensity of feeling, or in fineness of character. The ideal leader transcends his group in all three of these ways."¹⁰⁹

Authority and prestige, however, are not only personal but also acquired. Acquired prestige comes from a reputation enjoyed and titles

¹⁰⁵Sarett and Foster, op. cit., p. 504.

¹⁰⁶Garrison, op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁰⁷Baxter, op. cit., p. 291.

¹⁰⁸Winans, op. cit., p. 389.

¹⁰⁹Oliver, op. cit., p. 85.

inherited. It comes from the judge's robes, from the academic gown, from the insignia of the office.¹¹⁰ A speaker or preacher who possesses both personal and acquired prestige has a remarkable hold on his audience from the outset.

Something must be said about religious experience in the authority of the Christian preacher. The words of Garrison are appropriate:

Power in handling the emotions of the listener cannot be found as an end in itself. It is always a by-product growing out of spiritual struggles, defeats, and victories. This is why religious experience is and must remain one of the major factors in the authority of the preacher.¹¹¹

That is the testimony of all great, effective Christian preachers.

Oswald Riess exclaims:

the heart and soul of all preaching, as the one thing that is both the making of a preacher and the making of a sermon . . . is this: I must know that I am nothing and that Christ is all.¹¹²

Again Riess states:

And the preacher who is preaching that Word of the Lord is one who has experienced the annihilating effect of that Word on himself. There is something in his every member that shows it. Such a Word, coming through such a preacher, the Spirit of God can use mightily to reduce the man in the pew to nothing.¹¹³

Indeed, Christian preaching comes from the heart of a man who has been touched personally by the compassion of God.

Effective Christian preachers are enthusiastic. What is striking about the preachers of the New Testament is that they had been swept off

¹¹⁰ Oliver, op. cit., p. 81.

¹¹¹ Garrison, op. cit., p. 220.

¹¹² Oswald G. Riess, Nothing and All (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), p. 6.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 21.

their feet and carried away by the glory of the great revelation of God. They went to men who had sinned disastrously and they cried: "Listen."¹¹⁴ Enthusiasm for the message is a prerequisite to vital preaching. This is closely related to earnestness, which Spurgeon places first on the list of qualities for success in preaching.¹¹⁵ As Oswald Hoffmann puts it, such an earnest enthusiasm for the Gospel will not proclaim a religion which can be described as "Christianity and water."¹¹⁶

A preacher's authority is furthermore advanced by the visible evidence of concern for his hearers. All of the Gospel and its accompaniments of diagnosis must be preached with the preacher's own concern for the hearer.¹¹⁷ Hoffmann asks:

Can we say we have a reaching ministry if our preaching gives no positive evidence of this same empathy, this willingness to identify ourselves with the people--the sinful people--into whose lives we are trying to reach?¹¹⁸

The essence of this concern is love, of which Spurgeon once said:

My brethren, there is more eloquence in love than in all the words that the most clever rhetoricians can ever put together. We win upon men not so much by poetry and by artistic wording of sentences, as by the pouring out of a heart's love that makes them feel we would save them, that we would bless them, because we belong to them, regard them as brethren, and play a brother's part, and lay ourselves out to benefit them.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴Stewart, op. cit., p. 43.

¹¹⁵Garrison, op. cit., p. 217.

¹¹⁶Oswald C. J. Hoffmann, Reaching Through Preaching (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), p. 12.

¹¹⁷Caemmerer, op. cit., p. 10.

¹¹⁸Hoffmann, op. cit., p. 9.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 22.

The essence of the preacher's authority, in summarizing now, centers about his courageous Christian character, his mental ability and physical energy, his divine office and powerful proclamation, his religious experience, and his enthusiastic loving concern for his hearers. In reality, it is the authority of God Himself, shining through.

Summary

After having thus considered a number of prominent authorities to contribute to an understanding of the elements, devices, and techniques of persuasion, it is next necessary to attempt to comprise some kind of summary check list. Thus the following factors of persuasion may be held to be essential or useful in the radio preaching of the Gospel.

Elements of Content

Reason

- Logical outline
- Special and specific information
- Testimonies
- Evidence of authorities

Emotion

- Self-preservation
- Affection
- Reputation
- Power
- Property
- Motivating words and phrases

Decision

- Antithesis
- Decision for the desirable

Positive Suggestion

- Indirect suggestion
- Social suggestion
- Question
- Challenge
- Imperatives

Introduction and Conclusion

- Brief and pointed introduction
- Summarizing and challenging conclusion

Law and Gospel

Surface symptoms and human needs
 Underlying malady of sin
 Cross and Resurrection
 Forgiveness and Atonement

Devices of Style

Repetition of theme

Variety

Sentence and paragraph length
 Content: people, activity, conflict, wants
 Mood: pleasant and unpleasant

Concreteness

Short words and sentences
 Directness
 Illustrations
 Alliteration

Techniques of Delivery

Sincerity and enthusiastic desire to communicate

Boldness

Variety: pause, rate, volume, tone

Personality of the Speaker

Christian character

Talents and ability

Office and message

Religious experience

Loving concern for hearers

With these standards as guides in the investigation, it should be possible to bring to light some of the reasons for Dr. Maier's astonishing success in preaching the Gospel.

CHAPTER IV

FACTORS OF PERSUASION IN THE SERMON "GOD SAYS, 'HURRY!'"

The purpose of the investigation in this chapter is to begin to analyze Dr. Maier's powerful preaching by searching out the persuasive factors in one sermon. It is an attempt to feel the full impact of its message on the mind and heart of the listener. Although there will be occasional references to the recorded sermon, the main research will be done on the basis of the printed sermon. This must of necessity be so in order to incorporate the findings of this chapter with those of the general survey of sermons, the examination of which will be conducted solely on the basis of the printed sermon. It is surely true that there are differences between the printed and recorded sermon, and these will be presented briefly toward the close of this chapter.

To begin with, it is well to observe that Dr. Maier began every sermon with a prayer. "God Says, 'Hurry!'" is no exception to this rule. Mightily the purifying Spirit of God is invoked, Who is Himself the most powerful persuasive force. The opening prayer prepares the hearer for the message and also summarizes it. This is well illustrated in the following words:

Purifying Spirit of God: Awaken us from the sleep of indifference, and arouse us to the danger of delay both in accepting the living Christ as our Redeemer and in bringing the message of His atoning death to others! Show us that for our beloved country, as for ourselves, the time for repentance and return to Thy mercies is short.¹

"God Says, 'Hurry!'", preached on the first Sunday after Easter,

¹Walter A. Maier, Go Quickly and Tell (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), p. 186.

April 4, 1948, is a very lengthy sermon in print. There are nineteen pages of text, thirty-nine different paragraphs, about six hundred and twenty lines, and nearly six thousand words. It is evident that Dr. Maier would try to exhaust his subject and then pick out only the most dynamic materials for presentation over the radio. This gives the live sermon a bomb-like and explosive vitality and energy, because all the material is capsuled into twenty minutes of radio preaching which should normally take forty.

The texts for the sermon are from the New Testament, Matthew 28:7-8 and Luke 24:12:

Go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring His disciples word Then arose Peter and ran unto the sepulchre.

Dr. Maier used the texts very well to determine the content, goal, and mood of the sermon, as will be pointed out later.

Elements of Content

Reason and Emotion

The sermon has a very clear cut two-part outline. In the first twenty-four paragraphs of the body of the sermon, Dr. Maier addressed the Christian listeners and exhorted them to hurry for Christ. In the nine paragraphs which follow, he pleaded with those who are without Christ to hurry to Him. This simple outline, which is also the sermon theme, is clearly expressed in the introduction: "Hurry for Christ, you who know His saving love! Hurry to Christ, you who are living without Him."²

²Ibid., p. 188.

One theological insight is worthy of note here. The recorded sermon summons not only those who are living without Him, but most assuredly those "who are living against Him."

Much of the strength of the sermon lies in its simple outline and its logical organization and amplification. Dr. Maier made it very plain just what he was going to do. He did not involve his hearers in a complicated argument, but led them through, step by step, a logical outline. His pleading appeal for those who know Christ to hurry for Him is strengthened by four basic propositions: (1) The example of the women, especially Mary, who hurried to tell others the good news of Christ's resurrection; (2) The sad fact that there are yet many people untouched by the Gospel message; (3) The advancing threat of atheistic communism; (4) The super-annihilation which may soon confront the human race.

In the second part of the sermon in which Dr. Maier confronted those who do not know Christ, he presented three fundamental considerations which should compel them to repentance and faith: (1) The example of Peter, the one time denier of his Lord, who nevertheless ran to meet Him; (2) The uncertainty of life; (3) The absolute horror of meeting God without Christ. Although these facts are not presented in an argumentative way, they nevertheless are powerful appeals to the human mind.

The appeal to reason is further enhanced by the use of specific and timely facts and statistics. In this printed sermon ten paragraphs contain some special and specific information. The most powerful and persuasive piece of information, no doubt, is the recitation of the Communist Ten Commandments, which Dr. Maier powerfully employed to show the anti-God, anti-Christ, and anti-Bible beliefs of atheistic communism.

It is difficult to measure the crushing impact of this on the mind of the hearer.

Much of the information seems to be of a secret nature, unknown or little known to the public. It is well to illustrate the use of statistics:

Less than four years before a global struggle may begin which will feature a new superpoison so strong that a single ounce can kill 180,000,000.³

and it may be too late to fall on our knees when the new rockets released 7,000 miles away by a push button, drop their deadly cargo within our borders.⁴

Before this broadcast is aired again, almost 27,000 people in the United States will have died.⁵

The listening audience would find it extremely difficult not to believe the words of a man with so many facts at his command, not to mention the value of special information in getting and holding attention.

Testimonies and the evidence of authorities are also persuasive appeals to reason which Dr. Maier used very successfully. The text of the sermon records four testimonies from people of various walks of life. A teacher, leper, Air Force lieutenant, and historian help to strengthen Dr. Maier's appeal to accept the love of Christ.

Much more space, however, is given to the evidence of authorities, most of whom are distinguished men in politics and science. There are seventeen instances where Dr. Maier cited experts, either men or specialized groups, to prove his point in the sermon. The authorities were

³Ibid., p. 198.

⁴Ibid., pp. 199f.

⁵Ibid., p. 204.

all leaders on the contemporary scene. Among them are the President of the United States, Dr. Albert Einstein, Leland Stowe, a student of international affairs, Dr. Robert Hutchins of the University of Chicago, the Federation of American Atomic Scientists, the United States Air Policy Commission, one religious leader, and other unnamed atomic scientists. To add the familiar to this, which always charges an argument, Dr. Maier voiced the words of news commentators and the headlines of newspapers. This helps to put the entire matter into the realm of the people's experience, and puts the final amen to the fact that the time for repentance is short.

So far the emphasis has been on the evidence of human authorities. Nothing has been said of divine authority, or of God as an authority, which for the Christian is the ultimate authority. In the very theme of the message, "God Says, 'Hurry!'", the listener is made to confront God Himself. Six times throughout the sermon, God is definitely called upon as an authority in such terms as "God says" or "the Lord tells us," not to mention the numerous Scripture passages which are the Word of God. If anything puts finality to the purpose of the message, it is the fact that God says it.

Thus, taking into consideration the appeal to reason alone, the sermon is powerfully persuasive. There are at least thirty-seven instances of rational appeals which are carefully interwoven in the thirty-nine paragraphs of the text.

"God Says, 'Hurry!'" is, furthermore, outstanding from the use of appeals to man's universal drives and desires. Fourteen paragraphs allude quite directly to the desire for self-preservation, the strongest

drive of all. Although these appeals to self-preservation are found throughout the sermon, they come to a climax about the middle when Dr. Maier spoke of the advance of atheistic communism and the impending self-destruction of the world. The following illustrations of the appeal to self-preservation are typical:

If we are to help rescue this generation for Christ and from chaos, for God's benediction and from man's bacterial bombardment, if we want to avoid the atomic destruction of a third world war, we must use a new acceleration in spreading the salvation message.⁶

Again God says, "Hurry!" because of the screaming super-annihilation which may soon confront us.⁷

The most arresting presentation of an appeal to this drive is not in the printed sermon, but in the recording:

We are not asking you to think over and sometime later to let us know what you will do about it; but for the sake of your soul and its salvation we do plead: Welcome the Savior into your heart now.

Not only does the sermon have great appeal to the motive of self-preservation, but it also contains twelve paragraphs where the appeal to the affections is quite clearly evident. Appeals to the affections are basically appeals to the love of Christ and are in essence the Gospel appeal. They permeate the sermon and form a wonderful climax toward the conclusion. The following passages well illustrate the appeal to the affections:

What wondrous love that Christ sends this message to you as He directs us, "Go quickly and tell my faithless follower: In Me there is pardon for your sins and peace for your soul."⁸

⁶Ibid., p. 188.

⁷Ibid., p. 195.

⁸Ibid., p. 202.

believing that your loving and living Savior has forever atoned for all your sins, you can be wholly His, without any intermediary to plead your cause.⁹

Other recognizable appeals to basic drives are there, too. There is one appeal to reputation in which Dr. Maier pointed out how Christianity has elevated the place of woman. An appeal to power is seen in the statement that in Christ people have victory and power over sorrow and suffering, loneliness and loss, darkness and disease, horror and hell, death and damnation. Altogether, this makes a total of twenty-eight instances in which Dr. Maier clearly employed appeal to the emotions. This is powerful preaching because it reaches the common and universal feelings in the hearts of all people.

However, the sermon is not overly sentimental. This is supported by the fact that only three times reference is made to the blood of Christ. The following expressions are used: "blood stained cross . . . the Savior shed His blood . . . your sins have been washed away in His blood." There are many other emotion-packed words, however, which help to arouse the listener to belief and action. Among them are such dynamic terms as "doomed . . . suffering . . . crucified . . . love . . . sacrifice . . . fear-filled . . . deceiving . . . rescued . . . sobbing . . . bitter, and bloody, and brutal . . . darkness . . . disease . . . horror . . . hell . . . loneliness . . . hatred . . . lust . . . crushed . . . surrender" and many more.

Swiftiness and speed characterize the emotional tone of the sermon. The word "hurry" is used thirteen times; "quickly," fourteen times; "hurry! Go quickly and tell," four times. The sermon theme, either in

⁹Ibid., p. 205.

exact word or paraphrase, is repeated six times, which really helps to put the message into motion. This is not even to mention other words such as "haste . . . speed . . . acceleration . . . instantaneous . . . run . . . now" and others which all help to emotionally arouse the hearer to the realization that the time is short and the moment for repentance and faith is now.

Decision

The sermon is very effective in making people choose one of two possible courses of belief and action. Faith in Christ is made most desirable, and unbelief extremely undesirable. This emphasis of desirable and undesirable contrasts is clearly apparent throughout the thirty-nine paragraphs. In fact, it is so evident that one can almost outline the conflicting propositions. The characteristics of being without Christ are: slavery of woman; immorality; fear of danger; suffering and death; advance of atheistic communism; destruction of the world; judgment of God and the horror of hell. In absolute contrast, on the other hand, the characteristics of being with Christ are: woman suffrage; moral strength; joy in danger, suffering and death; halt of atheistic communism; world peace; forgiveness of sins and the joy of heaven.

In the final analysis the listener really has no choice, because all the desirable characteristics of being with Christ serve his longing for self-interest. The undesirable is made so undesirable and the desirable so desirable that there really is no alternative except to hurry to Christ. The most concrete example of the rendition of contrasting ideas is this: "Only through Him, the Prince of Peace, can men find joy instead of jealousy, beauty rather than bloodshed, grace and peace in

place of grief and punishment."¹⁰

Indeed, Dr. Maier was also skilled in the use of conflicting ideas, which added much to the persuasive power of his preaching.

Suggestion

"God Says, 'Hurry!'" is characterized by both indirect and direct suggestion. As is quite natural in any sermon, the mass of the material is indirect suggestion; so the findings here take no exception to this rule. Dr. Maier made excellent use of social suggestion, which is one of the most powerful forms of indirect suggestion. The seventeen instances where authorities are cited, help to suggest in a very positive way that now is the time to come to Christ. The four personal testimonies to the faith of the Redeemer are powerful factors in suggesting the value of faith in Christ to the listener. All of these have been mentioned before in the consideration of appeals to reason. No doubt, the testimony of the Air Force lieutenant, in a most striking way, serves to send the sinner to Christ in an age of unrest and fear. His words to his parents were: "I go without fear, trusting in my Lord Jesus Christ. If I am taken do not mourn, for I will be with my Savior, waiting for you in heaven."¹¹ It is interesting to note that Dr. Maier did not cite his own personal religious experience to suggest repentance and faith to others. However, it must be stated, that his own faith so clearly underlies the entire message, that it is not necessary to say

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 198.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 203.

directly what the Gospel has done for him. This is self-evident.

The oratorical question is another form of indirect suggestion which adds to the persuasiveness of the sermon. Twenty-two questions are scattered throughout the sermon. The best grouping of questions seems to be toward the culmination of a painful section of law when Dr. Maier wanted his audience to realize the utter evil of people and nations without Christ. He asked: "Is there nothing, you ask, which can prevent this mowing down of the masses? Will the nations not be sane enough to refrain from suicidal struggle? Will they not agree to abandon this devilish destruction?"¹² The answer to these questions, of course, is negative; and it is then that Dr. Maier proceeded to show that the only hope for the world is in Jesus Christ. This is a dynamic transition.

Furthermore, Dr. Maier did not leave his audience without challenge, which is also a type of indirect suggestion. Already in the introduction he presented a challenge to his listeners:

If we are to help rescue this generation for Christ and from chaos, for God's benediction and from men's bacterial bombardment; if we want to avoid the atomic destruction of a third world war, we must use a new acceleration in spreading the salvation message.¹³

He wanted his listeners to feel with him and have a part in this rescue of the world. Thus he had a particular challenge to American laymen and preachers:

American laymen, this is your hour to arise in defense of Christ's Church, and if you will publicly testify to the Son of God, you can greatly help your country meet this crisis. Preachers in America, this is the time for the quickest and widest possible spread of the

¹²Ibid., p. 196.

¹³Ibid., p. 188.

good news proclaiming grace in Jesus.¹⁴

In another instance, Christian citizens are challenged to get to work and call a legal halt to the rampage of divorce. In spite of the fact, that there are only three occasions where the element of challenge is clearly presented, its tone underlies almost every sentence, especially imperative sentences.

Direct suggestion, or the use of imperatives, is also carefully employed. Not including the theme, which is also a command, there are seventeen imperative sentences in the sermon, many of which are beautifully capsuled in the closing paragraph of the first section and in the conclusion. Fifteen of the commands are positive in nature which adds to their persuasive character. All the commands are short, brisk statements, thus contributing much to the force of the sermon.

The conclusion offers the best example in the use of persuasive imperatives. Making his final appeal to come to Christ, Dr. Maier used five short commands in rapid succession, the last of which is the sermon theme: "Welcome the Savior into your heart now! Make haste to the living Lord! Run, as Peter did, to your risen Redeemer! Come quickly to the conquering Christ and be blessed forever! God says, 'Hurry!'"¹⁵ After this the Holy Spirit is invoked to give strength and power for what has been directly suggested. This is theological preaching and positive persuasion.

In short, there are sixty-three instances where suggestion is

¹⁴Ibid., p. 201.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 205.

employed by means of testimonies, authorities, questions, challenges and imperatives. In most cases this does not even count supporting sentences which add to the development of the suggestion. With nearly two suggestions per paragraph, the sermon must have made a tremendous impact on the mind and heart of the audience.

Introduction and Conclusion

The introduction in the printed sermon is five paragraphs long. This is unusually long for a radio sermon, although the long introduction does serve a very fine purpose. The global listening audience is commended for such wide response to "Bringing Christ to the Nations." The fact that nearly one hundred thousand letters were received in three weeks from a hundred different countries is presented as proof that the message has the answer to the needs of all people. Every listener fits into at least one of the following categories:

by listeners on the highest and lowest levels of human society, by widely known scholars and plain people who otherwise write infrequently, by State governors and doomed men in penitentiaries, by eager, active young people, and lonely older folks¹⁶

Then after a few comments are made on the power and speed of radio in extending Christ's Kingdom, the theme of the sermon and the texts are introduced.

The introduction seems a bit laborious, especially in getting and holding attention, even though there are certain persuasive factors in it. At this point it is well to note that the recorded sermon begins with a one sentence quick attention-getter. After Dr. Maier amazingly announces

¹⁶Ibid., p. 187.

that the words which he is speaking are carried around the world by short-wave in only one-seventh of a second, he proceeds immediately to introduce the theme and text of the sermon.

The conclusion is persuasively ideal, brief, and to the point. In a sentence the content of the message is summarized. After several pointed pleas to accept the Savior now, the help of the Holy Spirit is simply invoked.

Law and Gospel

Most unique about the factors of persuasion in "God Says, 'Hurry!'" is the permeating declaration of Law and Gospel. There can be no doubt that the persuasive preaching of the Law and Gospel was Dr. Maier's main concern.

The Law is forcefully used to bring the listener to a sense of need for God. The sermon is packed with surface symptoms close to contemporary human experience which serves to point out man's helplessness in a practical way. Nineteen of the thirty-nine paragraphs carry presentations of sin, especially its surface symptoms, thus alerting the hearer to his basic need for God. Among the surface symptoms are human suffering, immorality of women, the reign of communism, the brutality and hatred of the nations, lack of prayer and repentance, slumbering of church members, unbelief, blasphemy, godless life, fear, accidents, and death. The four most extensively and vividly described are the immorality of many American women, the terrorizing advance of communism, the brutality and hatred of the nations which will result in the self-destruction of the world, and the transient character of this life in view of accidents

and death itself.

Dr. Maier also helped the listener to ponder the underlying malady of sin, thus leaving the listener with a feeling of utter hopelessness and helplessness without God and Christ. There is no hope in human goodness. This is well illustrated in the following passages:

a death conquering God for a dying world.¹⁷

Will the nations not be sane enough to refrain from a suicidal struggle? Will they not agree to abandon this devilish destruction? No! The human heart is so brutal and hate-filled that it deliberately seeks the worst and widest means of massacre.¹⁸

We who bow before Him know that only He, but surely He, can turn the mortal mind from hatred to compassion, for lust to love. Only he can make us new creatures in Christ.¹⁹

There is something in the entire sermon which makes man feel his emptiness. Sin is pictured as an overwhelming force moving in on every side, crushing the human heart. Such a preaching of the Law as the following, which makes man's stand before God impossible, surely prepares the sinner to receive the sweet Gospel:

Are you ready to meet your God? Not without Christ and the assurance that your sins have been washed away in his blood! When your last hour comes, self-confidence, reliance on money, trust in your own intelligence, your own ability will vanish.²⁰

The Gospel appeals in this sermon are really astounding. Similar to the Law, the Gospel is not confined to one particular section, but it permeates the entire sermon. Twenty-four paragraphs involve the Gospel,

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 193.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 198.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 204.

or at least close association with it in word or phrase, thus getting people to ponder the great fact of redemption. Fourteen of these contain references to the suffering and death of Christ. Of course, the entire Gospel message is not always fully stated in so many words, but it is surely implied in such expressions as "blood stained cross . . . the crucified Savior . . . the Savior shed his blood . . . His life a payment for your guilt." Twenty-one paragraphs contain resurrection references. Again, the entire resurrection message is not always proclaimed, but it is inferred in such phrases as "living Savior . . . risen Redeemer . . . empty grave . . . destroyer of death." The accent of the resurrection in this sermon is, no doubt, due to the text and the fact that it was preached on the Sunday after Easter.

In a certain sense, the message of the Cross and the Resurrection are not Gospel at all, until they are announced as benefiting people. However, this can be rather flexible, since for some people the simple word "Jesus," can open up all the avenues for Gospel meditation. Nevertheless, in order to make this Gospel absolutely clear, there are at least nine paragraphs with distinct and beautiful references of forgiveness and atonement. These are so arresting that they bear quoting:

We must hurry to spread the message of full and free forgiveness in Jesus.²¹

He may not remember you with the reward of earthly prosperity; but He can give you privileges which money cannot buy, the calm of peace, the joy of reconciliation with your heavenly Father, the strength of trusting faith.²²

²¹Ibid., p. 188.

²²Ibid., p. 191.

In how many hidden dangers He has rescued you! How often He has turned unseen perils from your path! How frequently He has kept the shadow of death from descending upon you!²³

This shows that no matter how bitter and brutal and bloody the battle of your life may be, the Destroyer of Death lives to put the foes of your faith to flight, to comfort you in affliction, strengthen you in weakness, fortify you against temptation, provide for all needs, protect you in every danger, and deliver you from evil Because the Son of God lives, the eternal victory over sorrow and suffering, loneliness, darkness and disease, death and damnation, horror and hell, is yours personally, yours certainly, yours eternally, once you are His in humble contrite faith.²⁴

We who bow before Him know that only He, but surely He, can turn the mortal mind from hatred to compassion, from lust to love. Only He can make us new creatures in Christ; only He can fulfill the promise, "A new heart . . . will I give you."²⁵

tell America the message of mercy and might, the promise of pardon and peace in the crucified but victoriously risen Redeemer!²⁶

Today, too, Jesus is calling you, the once faithful, but now through unbelief, blasphemy, godless life, and willful sinning denying your Savior. The same Son of God ready to forgive Peter . . . eagerly pleads for your repentance and return. What wondrous love that Christ sends this message to you as He directs us, "Go quickly and tell" My faithless follower: In Me there is pardon for your sins and peace for your soul!" . . . Yet Christ the true Savior, the only Savior, took away all your transgressions, transferred them to Himself, cleansed you from their curse, and gave you His resurrection as a divine guarantee of eternal glory Though our Lord made His life a payment for your guilt, His body did not decay, but He arose again, as the Easter victory testifies. He lives more certainly than you and I live, as the eternal Ransom for every sin and for every sinner, your own personal Deliverer.²⁷

Are you ready to meet your God? Not without Christ and the assurance that your sins have been washed away in His blood.²⁸

²³
Ibid., p. 191.

²⁴
Ibid., p. 193.

²⁵
Ibid., p. 198.

²⁶
Ibid., p. 200.

²⁷
Ibid., pp. 202f.

²⁸
Ibid., p. 204.

Wherever you are and whoever you are, the Son of God can be yours from this moment on. You yourself can approach the Redeemer, who has promised, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out," and believing that your loving and living Savior has forever atoned for your sins; you can be wholly His, without any intermediary to plead your cause.²⁹

It is worthy to observe that these proclamations of Gospel are well spaced. Every few pages of the printed sermon the way of salvation is made clear. This is excellent persuasive preaching because it also involves a certain amount of repetition, which helps to cement the wonderful fact of the redemption in the hearer's mind and heart.

The following graph is an attempt to illustrate the careful spacing of clear Gospel proclamations in various parts of the sermon.

TABLE 1

CLEAR PROCLAMATIONS OF GOSPEL



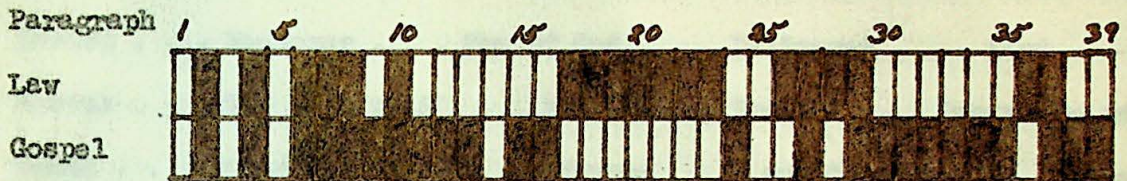
It is necessary, too, to show the general distribution of Law and Gospel by means of another graph. Here Law and Gospel elements are included which are not so vivid and clear as the previous demonstration, yet these paragraphs surely do present the picture of the Law and Gospel to the mind of the hearer. It is interesting to observe here that some paragraphs contain both Law and Gospel, some only Gospel and some only Law; and occasionally there are blocks of paragraphs including Law and blocks including Gospel. Having several paragraphs of Law or Gospel in succession, as the case may be, strengthens its impact tremendously.

²⁹Ibid., p. 205.

Although there seems to be no set pattern for the distribution of Law and Gospel, one fact is known, and that is that Law and Gospel permeate the entire sermon.

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF LAW AND GOSPEL IN THE PRINTED SERMON



This constant repetition of Law and Gospel elements is powerful persuasive preaching. The hearer can never get away from the fact that he needs God, and that God is the answer to this need. It is simply hammered home.

Although all the modes of the atonement³⁰ are represented at least once in the sermon, the more frequent references are found to Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins and as a deliverer or shield from judgment and death. The former centers about the accent of the Cross, the latter on the Resurrection. The greatest stress is on Christ as sacrifice and ransom for the forgiveness of sins. There are five distinct references to this mode of atonement. It is not unusual that the sermon should have this accent, since Dr. Maier specialized in Old Testament interpretation in which the sacrificial system is so dominant. There are three references to Christ as shield and deliverer from judgment and wrath. The

³⁰Supra, p. 37.

atonement is also pictured as life in place of death, as reconciliation to God, as peace through death, and as the gift of the Holy Spirit through the redemption.

A word must be said about the Christocentricity of the sermon. Jesus Christ is really the heart and core of it. Ninety-five times the second person of the God-head is mentioned in such terms as "Jesus . . . Christ . . . Redeemer . . . Son of God . . . Deliverer . . . Lord . . . Master . . . The Crucified . . . Everlasting Friend . . . Destroyer of Death . . . Prince of Peace . . . Ransom . . . and Companion." On the average this would be nearly three times per paragraph. God the Father is mentioned thirty-one times, and the Holy Spirit only three times. Dr. Maier makes it absolutely clear that the only access to God is through Jesus Christ.

Summary

From the examination of the elements of content alone, it is no wonder that a sermon like this should have such gripping effect on a listening audience. It appeals to both mind and feeling, to body and soul. In thirty-nine paragraphs, granting that some appeals are repetitious, there are at least thirty-seven appeals to reason, twenty-eight appeals to the emotions, fourteen of which are appeals to self-preservation, the strongest motive of all. The sermon moves along with speed. At least thirty-one times words are employed which characterize rapid movement. The sermon confronts the listener with the terrible undesirability of being without Christ, but the beauty of being with Him. There are at least twenty-one appeals to the strongest type of indirect suggestion,

social suggestion, some of which are also appeals to reason as mentioned before. Twenty-two questions and three challenges vigorously suggest the preacher's intention to the audience. Seventeen imperatives give the final push to the sermon and intensify it. Although the introduction is too long, it serves the purpose of uniting the audience. The conclusion is ideal. Law and Gospel permeate the sermon from beginning to end. Nineteen of the thirty-nine paragraphs have presentations of Law and its diagnosis of sin, making the listener feel his utter helplessness. Twenty-four paragraphs involve the precious Gospel, nine of which are clear presentations of the way of life, which in itself would make the sermon vitally persuasive. Surely it is true that from the viewpoint of content alone, the sermon is excitingly persuasive; and Dr. Maier, knowingly or unknowingly, used many of the most powerful methods of persuasion. The really remarkable fact is that the factors of persuasion pervade the whole sermon.

Devices of Style

Repetition

Much has already been inferred concerning the use of repetition in "God Says, 'Hurry!'". The fact that the elements of Law and Gospel are repeated so often, really drives home the fact of sin and grace. The fact that Jesus Christ is repeated ninety-five times helps to make it a Christocentric sermon. The fact that twenty-seven Bible passages or parts of them--only two from the Old Testament--are quoted, points out that this is a Bible sermon.

Be that as it may, repetition should concern itself primarily with

the text and theme of the sermon. In "God Says, 'Hurry!'" the entire text is quoted only once, and that not before the sermon, but in the introduction. Parts of the text, however, are repeated thirteen times, all of which emphasize the fact that it is high time to hurry for and to Christ. The theme itself, "God Says, 'Hurry!'", or a very close paraphrase of it, is repeated six times. There can be no doubt that "God Says, 'Hurry!'" was somewhat of a slogan which penetrated the hearer to belief and action and became a part of his memory.

It should be noted too that these repetitions are not only in one part of the sermon. They are spread throughout at intervals, and thus they are a most powerful element in persuasion. The hearer is simply bound to come quickly to Christ. Especially since the theme is repeated with utter finality as the second last sentence of the sermon, does it create a lasting impression.

One of the best examples of effective repetition in one paragraph is evident in statements asserting that there are only four years left before the nations will destroy each other. Dr. Maier warned:

less than four full years remain before we may be overtaken by devastation . . . less than four years left before American cities and towns can be attacked by robot planes . . . less than four years in which a war can break . . . less than four years before a global struggle may begin³¹

With four repetitions in succession, the year 1952 surely begins to stand out in the mind of the audience as the year of crisis.

³¹Ibid., p. 197.

Variety

From the viewpoint of sentence and paragraph structure alone, there is considerable variety in this sermon. Different types of sentences make the sermon exciting. It contains 159 declarative sentences, twenty-two interrogative sentences, thirty-four exclamatory sentences, and seventeen imperative sentences. There is extreme variety in the length of sentences, too. The longest sentence is seventy-five words and the shortest is only one word.

Paragraphs also vary in length from four lines to forty-five lines. The sermon has considerable variety in the four basic areas in which people are interested: people, human wants, activity, and conflict. Human interest in people is satisfied by Mary and Peter as presented in the text, by personal testimonies of people, by the evidence of authorities, and by some illustrations. The interest in human wants is gratified by numerous appeals to self-preservation and affection. Interest in activity is observed by the many challenges to repentance, while interest in conflict is answered by the presentation of problems concerning immorality, atheistic communism, and hatred of nations. The bulk of interest content in this sermon seems to center in people, which makes it very appealing.

The following chart is a rather subjective attempt to show by paragraphs the variety in interest content:

TABLE 3

VARIETY IN INTEREST CONTENT

Paragraph	1	5	10	15	20	25	30	35
People	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Wants		█		█		█		█
Activity	█	█		█			█	█
Conflict			█		█		█	

It is evident that there is good variety in content material, not to mention the different ways this material is related. There is not too much variety in the quality of the contents, however, since there is nothing amusing, satirical, or conical in it. The whole sermon is terribly serious, grim, earnest, fervent, reverent, and shocking.

Quite excellent use is made of the appeal to emotional moods of pleasantness and unpleasantness which are the feeling responses to various presentations. Thus these moods should be caused to change quite often since both Law, which should create a mood of unpleasantness, and Gospel, which should create a mood of pleasantness, permeate the entire sermon. This gives the listener a constant up and down feeling which is beneficial in helping him to hold attention to the message and thus be persuaded to belief and action by it.

Concreteness

It is quite amazing that a man like Dr. Maier with such tremendous mental ability used mostly one and two syllable words in the sermon.

There are occasions when three or more syllable words are used, but these are rare. The sermon has some scientific terms, but with explanation. This is illustrated in the following passage: "botulism (food poisoning), psittacosis (parrot disease), tularemia (rabbit fever)"32 The words mentioned above and their meanings are entirely omitted in the sermon recording.

This sermon shows that Dr. Maier was a master at using, not only simple, but also specific and concrete words. Especially three instances of this are worth noting:

All the authors of so-called new faiths cannot bring your soul a small sixteenth of an inch closer to the Almighty.33

Those who figure on an eleventh-hour repentance often die at nine-fifteen.34

To be rescued from such ruin give yourself to the Savior this Sunday, not next; today, not tomorrow; this very hour, not late after midnight; now, right in your own home, or your hotel, in automobiles, speeding trains, or swift air planes, in sick rooms or hospitals, in public institutions or prisons! Wherever you are and whoever you are, the Son of God can be yours from this moment on.35

Theological terms are used at a minimum. Words like reconciliation, repentance, redemption, and salvation are used sparingly. Justification and sanctification are not used at all. The word Gospel is used only five times.

Sentences are not as brief as desirable for good radio preaching. The average sentence length seems to be about thirty to thirty-five words.

³² Ibid., p. 197.

³³ Ibid., p. 202.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 204.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 205.

The thesis writer recalls that Harriet Schwank spoke of a "thirty-two word Maier sentence."

"God Says, 'Hurry!'" bears a certain directness which simply compels the listener to confront the message. It is so directly presented that no doubt is left in the hearer's mind that God is talking directly to him through Dr. Maier. Although Dr. Maier tried to establish common ground between him and his audience through the use of the first person plural, "we . . . us," he definitely placed a greater emphasis on the second person, singular and plural, "you." In fact, one advantage of using the word "you" is the fact that the hearer can apply it directly to himself, even though the preacher may be thinking in terms of the plural. "God Says, 'Hurry!'" has thirty-seven "you" sentences, and eighteen "we" sentences. Concrete directness really contributes to the persuasive power of this sermon, for on the average the individual listener is directly confronted nearly once per paragraph. X

Illustrations, too, serve to clarify the sermon and add to its persuasive power. Not counting the personal testimonies and the evidence of authorities, there are six illustrations. Four are Biblical illustrations; two are from the Old Testament and two, from the New Testament. The Old Testament illustrations are of Nineveh and Sodom and Gomorrah. They are presented as an inducement to repentance and faith. The New Testament illustrations concern Mary and Peter, who are also involved in the text. They are presented as good examples to follow. Then there is one contemporary illustration and one historical.

One of the most fascinating observations in this sermon is Dr. Maier's extensive use of alliteration. There are no less than fifty-two

instances of this figure of speech. It is well to illustrate some of these:

crushing cruelties of the cross . . .³⁶

gripped by gloom, dazed and desperate over the crime at Calvary . . .³⁷

bitter and brutal and bloody . . .³⁸

the Destroyer of Death lives to put the foes of your faith to flight . . .³⁹

the eternal victory over sorrow and suffering, loneliness and loss, darkness and disease, death and damnation, horror and hell . . .⁴⁰

joy instead of jealousy, beauty rather than bloodshed, grace and peace in place of grief and punishment . . .⁴¹

Such alliteration gives rhythm and beauty to the sermon, attracts the attention of the listener, and fastens the phrase to his memory. This is good persuasion.

In concluding this discussion on devices of style in Dr. Maier's sermon, "God Says, 'Hurry!'", we see that the factors of successful persuasion are extensively employed. The continuous repetition of Law and Gospel elements and theme and text alone are sufficient to merit that statement. Variety in sentence and paragraph structure, in content, and in mood add to make the sermon persuasively exciting. Simplicity, clarity, and directness make the listener feel that he is personally

³⁶Ibid., p. 192.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., p. 193.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 198.

being confronted with the Gospel message. And alliteration adds the touch of flowing beauty. It is no little wonder that Dr. Maier's sermons were so appealing to people and so powerfully persuasive.

Techniques of Delivery

The writer of the thesis was fortunate to obtain the original manuscript of "God Says, 'Hurry!'" and also a transcribed recording of it. The original manuscript is basically the same as the printed sermon with the exception of a few additions, omissions, and word changes. There is one significant change. In the original script there is a whole paragraph, omitted in the printed sermon, inviting the audience to learn more about Christ through the radio Bible course and by help from other Lutheran pastors. The transcribed recording, in spite of the fact that it is, perhaps, a bit more general in nature because of its preparation for an international audience, nevertheless, should serve just as well as the original recording in presenting a picture of Dr. Maier's dynamic delivery.

Omissions and Additions

Dr. Maier did not attempt to preach all of the twenty-four page double-spaced original manuscript. Bracketed phrases, sentences, and paragraphs are evident throughout the sermon, which could easily be omitted.

One of the most astounding omissions is the first two paragraphs of the introduction, which in the printed page contains detailed facts on the progress of the Lutheran Hour. Dr. Maier added a few words to one

printed sentence and thus begins with only an unusual attention-getting sentence. He astounds his audience with this fact: "By the marvel of broadcasting, the words which we speak are carried around the whole world by short wave in only one-seventh of a second." After an exclamation of thankfulness to God for this, he proceeds to introduce the theme and the text.

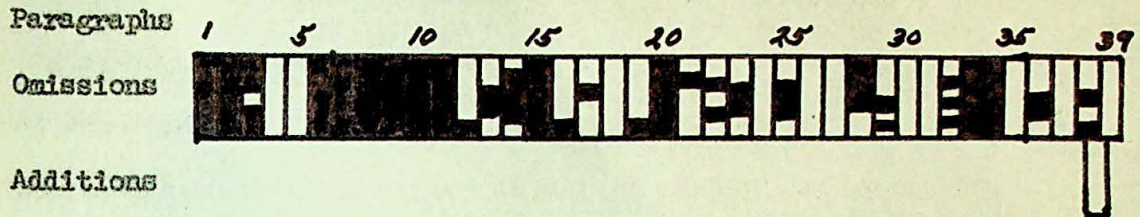
Another large section consisting of six paragraphs which is omitted consists of an elaborate discourse on parallels between Mary Magdalene and the immorality of American women today. Then an entire paragraph is omitted in which he spoke of courage in human suffering. It is easy to note that Dr. Maier was constantly racing on to get to his main point.

The next big omission is a paragraph containing some of the evidence of authorities, in which he tried to show that the time was short. Only the most important ones are picked out. The next significant paragraph which is omitted has denounced church members for being indifferent to Scripture. Then three personal testimonies consisting of three paragraphs are left out. Twelve full paragraphs are omitted, not to mention the large number of sentences in others.

X
All of these omissions are extraneous and mostly illustrative material, not necessarily connected with the main theme of the sermon. Thus nearly half of the printed sermon is omitted. Essentially this does not affect the factors of persuasion as they are found in the printed sermon, since it has been determined that they penetrate or permeate the entire sermon. Thus a good balance of persuasive factors remain.

TABLE 4

MAJOR OMISSIONS AND ADDITIONS IN THE PREACHED SERMON



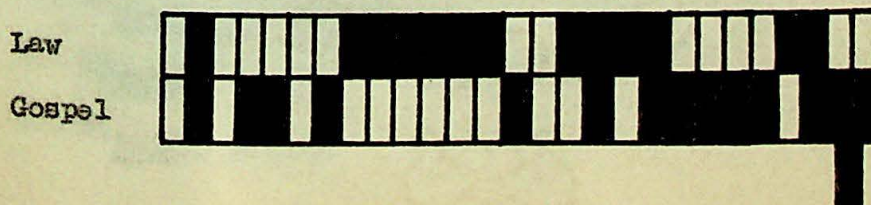
There seems to be no definite pattern as to which material is left out. In this case all four personal testimonies are omitted, nine evidences of authorities, one illustration, and one contemporary application, not too closely related with the theme, however. The other omissions are minor.

Of necessity several of the Gospel proclamations are also left out, but the best ones still remain. Twenty-three Bible passages or fragments are left. The most important material has not been discarded. The careful omission of much of the material in no way takes away from the strength of the message but makes it so much more direct and powerful.

The table below points out that basically there is little difference in Law and Gospel presentation between the printed sermon and the recorded sermon. Here, too, both Law and Gospel pervade it. Because the sermon is shorter, however, there is greater intensity. It is quite safe to assume that the other factors of persuasion follow a similar pattern, too.

TABLE 5

DISTRIBUTION OF LAW AND GOSPEL IN THE SERMON RECORDING



It is also interesting to note certain little additions in the sermon recording. That Dr. Maier was not a slave to his manuscript is shown by the fact that occasionally words are inserted, words like "because . . . indeed . . . see . . . if . . . and now." Three times he put the word "now" at the beginning of a new paragraph. His whole heart and soul was in what he was telling his audience. He lost himself, not so much in the words of the script, as in its feeling and inspiration.

Three times there are evidences of lengthier oral additions to the print. As was mentioned before, in the introduction he adds the words "by the marvel of broadcasting."⁴² In another instance he adds the words "must come from heaven." It is in this connection: "our only hope and our last hope for preventing the most hideous destruction the world has ever seen, must come from heaven and is in Jesus Christ."⁴³ In the final adaptation, he adds bingo parties and gambling to the list of card parties, chicken dinners, and entertainments on which church members ought not to center their energies.⁴⁴

Delivery

There is not really much that can be said about Dr. Maier's delivery in this sermon that has not already been related by others in Chapter II. Thus what follows shall merely be in the form of brief observations.

Sincerity and the enthusiastic desire to communicate the message characterize his delivery in this sermon. His extreme intensity of voice

⁴² Ibid., pp. 187ff.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 198.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 200.

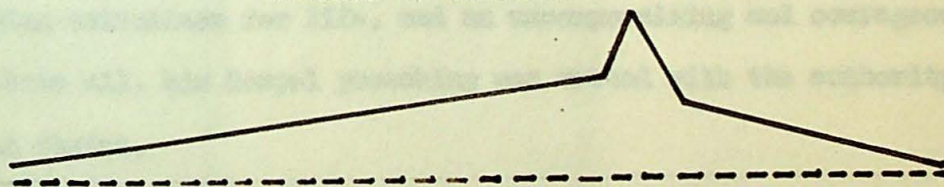
and preaching rate give account of the fact that everyone must be made to hear the wonderful Gospel message, and this quickly. He really lets himself go in terrific earnestness from the beginning to the very end. His talking gives the impression that he is really trying to reach you. Contrary to most good radio speakers, Dr. Maier speaks with a high pitched tenor voice.

The sermon begins with extreme intensity of feeling, yet there is considerable variety in delivery, too. It is characteristic of Dr. Maier's preaching, in this sermon at least, to begin on a high level. Then he keeps working up on the idea, by raising pitch and volume, and after he has hit one word with a tremendous emphasis, his intensity gradually declines. Then as he begins a new thought the same cycle is repeated. In almost every instance the words "hurry" and "run," which bear the theme of the sermon, are the words which receive this tremendous stress.

A scale will help to illustrate his general method of delivery.

TABLE 6

PATTERN OF DELIVERY



The average rate of Dr. Maier in this sermon is nearly one hundred and seventy words (second paragraph showed rate of ninety-eight words in thirty-five seconds) per minute. The slowest and most deliberate line was the first sentence which was spoken at the rate of about one hundred and fifty words (twenty-five words in ten seconds) per minute, for sake

of emphasis. The rate in the conclusion was about 162 words (102 words in thirty-eight seconds) per minute. This points out the fact that in spite of Dr. Maier's rapid delivery, he took advantage of the most crucial points in the sermon, the introduction and conclusion, in order to stress a point.

Dr. Maier's delivery in this sermon is characterized by prophetic boldness. The Gospel is proclaimed as though there were only twenty minutes left to bring millions to Christ. That kind of delivery is powerfully persuasive, for under it lies the terrific earnestness of a dying man talking to dying men.

The Personality of the Speaker

"God Says, 'Hurry!'" was preached during the fifteenth season of The Lutheran Hour. By this time Dr. Maier had already acquired much authority and prestige. This probably accounts for many of the imperatives in the sermon. He had all the qualifications that an outstanding and persuasive preacher of the Gospel must have: outstanding mental abilities, a dynamic love for God and people, sincerity and earnestness, overwhelming enthusiasm for life, and an uncompromising and courageous way.⁴⁵ Above all, his Gospel preaching was vested with the authority of God and Christ.

He was a real leader, rising above his people in power of speech, in intensity of feeling, and in fineness of character, yet feeling a part of them. Thus he preached not at people, but for people. Yes, he preached

⁴⁵Supra, pp. 7-19.

as though it were a matter of life and death, and it was. The Lord blessed his sermons and made them powerfully persuasive.

The message and method of his dynamic preaching is briefly but beautifully summarized in his own words addressed to Christian preachers in the sermon just analyzed:

Preach the Bible, preach repentance, preach redemption in Jesus; with all your heart, soul, mind, preach the Cross, the open grave, the open heaven, and the victory will be ours.⁴⁶

Could it be, then, that the secret of Dr. Maier's persuasive power lay in the simple fact that he preached the dynamic Gospel of God naturally and in earnest?

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 201.

CHAPTER V

COMMON FACTORS OF PERSUASION IN FIFTEEN PRINTED SERMONS

Having carefully observed Dr. Maier's prolific use of the factors of persuasion in the sermon "God Says, 'Hurry!'", we now proceed to see whether or not other sermons also have similar persuasive characteristics. This survey examination includes a total of fifteen sermons, the first six of which are sermons of the 1930's, preached during the Depression and before World War II; and the remaining nine of which are sermons of the 1940's, preached during the War and after, till the time of Dr. Maier's death. It is well to note the titles of these sermons:

1. To Whom Shall We Go?
2. Why Thanksgiving?
3. Screaming Sin and Fathomless Favor
4. Back to Bible Truth!
5. All Life from God
6. The Last Cry from the Cross
7. Who Is This Jesus?
8. Are You a Soldier of the Cross?
9. Are You Thankful to Christ?
10. The Price Christ Paid for You
11. Be Born Again in Christ!
12. Christ, Come into Our Home!
13. Alliance with God--Not with the Godless!
14. God Says, 'Hurry!'
15. Heaven's Love Lies in the Manger

There are persuasive factors common to all fifteen sermons, although not always in like degree. These factors are chiefly considered. Then, too, it is most interesting to observe a growth in Dr. Maier's use of persuasive techniques throughout the years of his radio preaching. This, also, is briefly pointed out as the survey analysis moves along.

Before we go into the analysis of the sermons, it is worthy to note the persuasive factors evident in the sermon titles. Five of the titles are questions which require an attentive answer from the listening audience. Five are imperatives expressing utter urgency of purpose. Others are simply striking alliterative, declarative statements such as "Screaming Sin and Fathomless Favor" and "Heaven's Love Lies in the Manger."

Something must also be said about the timeliness of the sermon titles. They manifest a deep concern for the hearer's present needs, especially, on a national level. Sermons such as "To Whom Shall We Go?" and "Why Thanksgiving?" surely filled a definite need during the difficult depression years. Then, in an advancing scientific age when people began to question the authority of the Bible, especially the doctrine of creation, the sermons "Back to Bible Truth!" and "All Life from God" were surely in place. During the years of World War II a sermon such as "Are You a Soldier of the Cross?" must have made a particular impact. Finally, in the post-war era when people were nervously relaxing from their religious and moral convictions, when international alliances were in the making, when another global struggle was beginning to simmer, what more powerful and persuasive sermons could be preached to a frustrated people than "Christ, Come into Our Home!", "Alliance with God--Not with the Godless!", and "God Says, 'Hurry!'".

The other sermon titles indicate clear Gospel expressions and are suitable for every time and age. Although they are somewhat general in nature, they, nevertheless, contain materials which answer the needs of a particular time.

The survey of the content and style of the fifteen sermons and their contribution to effectiveness and persuasion will now be discussed.

Elements of Content

✓ All of the fifteen sermons are based on a text from the Bible. Even though Dr. Maier was an Old Testament scholar, the survey indicates that he preached more from the New Testament than from the Old Testament. X Only four sermons have Old Testament texts and eleven have New Testament texts. ✓ This, however, is not to be considered unusual, since his primary concern was to preach the Gospel which is the basic message of the New Testament. Then, too, it can be said that since, as a rule, the New Testament would be more familiar to people than the Old, it would have greater persuasive appeal. People love the familiar. ✓

There is a vast range of difference in the length of the sermons. The sermons of the Thirties are by far the shorter ones. One sermon from this group has only eleven paragraphs. As time passed on, more illustrative material and sometimes material not necessarily relevant to the text, yet persuasively useful, was incorporated in the sermon. One sermon preached during the Forties has as many as thirty-nine paragraphs.

Most of the sermons examined have a simple two-part outline, although one has as many as four parts. It is significant that the first part of

the outline usually accents the need of the hearer, while the second part emphasizes the Gospel answer to the need. A good example of this is in the outline of the sermon "Christ, Come into Our Home!" The outline consists of two parts: "We Need Thy Blessed Presence; We Welcome Thy Blessed Presence."

Reason and Emotion

Appeals to reason are evident in varying degrees in all sermons investigated. Timely statistics and special information play a very important part in Dr. Maier's interesting presentations. Occasionally an entire paragraph is devoted to the recitation of statistics. The following is a typical example:

- 1 of every 37 births in the United States is illegitimate.
- 1 of every 25 Americans is an atheist.
- 1 of every 23 persons in the United States has been finger-printed in connection with crime.
- 1 of every 22 Americans has a criminal record.
- Only 1 of every 8 American young people continues Sunday school after reaching 15.
- 1 of every 4 Americans does not believe in life after death.
- Less than 1 in 3 American families says grace at meals.
- Between 1 of every 3 and 1 of every 2 husbands is unfaithful to his wife at one time or another.
- 1 of every 3 marriages ends unhappily.
- Less than 1 of every 2 Americans is a church member.¹

There seems to be a general, positive progression in Dr. Maier's use of statistics. The sermons preached in the Thirties seem more general, as the following statement indicates:

More divorces, more robberies, more murders, more deeds of impurity, more small and large thievery--more sin than ever before in the

¹Walter A. Maier, One Thousand Radio Voices for Christ (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), p. 361.

glittering golden age in which we live!²

The sermons preached in the Forties have more precise and specific information as the first quotation pointed out.

There is only one sermon that contains no paragraph containing some statistical fact. This is an early sermon. The highest number of paragraphs of sermons preached during this time having vital statistics is five. However, in the late sermons the ratio is anywhere from three to ten statistical paragraphs per sermon. It must be kept in mind, however, that proportionately there is, perhaps, not too much difference, because the late sermons are considerably longer.

Testimonies to the Gospel by contemporary Christians are persuasive devices used quite extensively in the sermons of the Forties. The last sermon Dr. Maier preached, "Heaven's Love Lies in the Manger," records as many as seven testimonies to the faith. In the early sermons testimonies are not used at all. Thus, here, too, there seems to be a growth in the persuasive power of Dr. Maier's sermons.

One of the strongest appeals to reason in Dr. Maier's sermons is his constant reference to authorities. He had proof for his statements. What he said was made extremely relevant because others had said it before. Most of the authorities cited are scientists and government officials. For greater effectiveness he always recognized their professional and official positions. In at least three sermons the President of the United States is summoned to present some kind of evidence. It is interesting to note that in the early sermons Luther is quoted twice and

²Walter A. Maier, The Lutheran Hour (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1931), p. 250.

the Catechism once. This does not occur in the late sermons analyzed. Most authorities, however, in the late sermons are contemporary, living men or groups of men, with whom the people are acquainted through newspapers and radios and who bear their respect. X

At least one authority is quoted in every sermon. In the sermons of the first section the ratio is from one to eight, while in the second group of sermons it is increased from one to seventeen instances per sermon. In spite of a radical increase of this particular rational appeal in one sermon, the use of authorities seems to be quite stable in all fifteen sermons.

It is well to quote at least one example to show how Dr. Maier used important and learned men to help persuade others of the necessity and truth of the Word:

Dr. Charles M. Stine, for many years Director of Research for the Dupont Industries, writes: ". . . Forty years is a long span in the life of man. For this period I have been reading my Bible and thinking of its wonderful truths in the light of college and university studies. All these years I have been more particularly concerned with the science of chemistry but . . . I have read widely in other sciences. All this has engendered in my mind a constantly increasing appreciation of the wisdom stored in the God-inspired pages of the old Book . . . Science--or man's wisdom--is a fluid and changing body of opinion as compared with the ineffable perfection of the wisdom of that Majesty who sits enthroned on high; for we read . . . 'all things were made by Him' (that is, Jesus Christ); 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.'"³

The persuasive power of the sermons is furthermore enhanced by specific reference to God and the Bible as authorities. Anywhere from four to sixteen times per sermon God and the Bible are specifically cited as authoritative proof. It was not unusual for Dr. Maier to do this, for he

³ Walter A. Maier, "Heaven's Love Lies in the Manger," The Dr. Walter A. Maier Memorial Booklet (St. Louis: The Lutheran Laymen's League), p. 11.

X stated in one of his sermons that Scripture is "the highest of all authorities, indeed, the only authority in matters of doctrine and morals."⁴

X Every sermon also appeals in some degree to the feelings and basic needs and desires of people. The Gospel and its manifold benefits are always held out as helping people. In reality the Gospel appeal serves self-interest. The most prominent appeal in the sermons examined seems to be the appeal to the affections. X Such expressions as the following are typical:

for love that will not let you go, for unfailing guidance through the deepest darkness of your distress, for unwavering confidence that can dry your tears, look to the Lord Jesus, God's Son, your Redeemer! When you trust Him entirely and believe with all your heart that He endured the agonies of the crucifixion to guarantee your redemption, you have the one promise which can sustain you throughout long, weary years of increasing pain, or, should it be God's will, during the anguish of approaching death.⁵

All sermons seem to have somewhat equal appeals to self-preservation and reputation. The appeal to property is not used to any great extent with the exception of the Thanksgiving sermon preached during the Depression. This is so arresting that it bears quotation:

At a time when bank deposits, in spite of unemployment, are still at a staggering peak; when there is an automobile for every sixth person in the country; when skilled and unskilled labor, in spite of wage reductions, is paid more for a day of eight hours than these same trades and occupations received a generation ago for a week of ten- or twelve-hour days, at this time we can well agree that the Prosperity of our nation must be spelled with a capital P and that it stands absolutely unequalled in any other land or other age of history. Consider our home-life as it is shaped and molded by the progress and the resources of the present hour. There is no people

⁴Maier, The Lutheran Hour, p. 249.

⁵Walter A. Maier, America, Turn to Christ (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), p. 105.

on earth that has the variety and the quantity of food that graces the average American table three times every day. The London Daily Mail recently called attention to the fact that, while the white population of the United States is about twice as large as that of Great Britain, the United States has not only twice as many telephones and motor-cars as England, but fifteen times as many. We have our comfortable homes, our radios, our musical instruments, our jewels, our expensive clothing, our endless catalog of luxuries, in a measure which baffles the poverty-pinched people of other nations.⁶

Occasionally, the sermons contain paragraphs which seem to include all the basic drives and desires mentioned before. This is well illustrated in one sermon in which Dr. Maier holds forth Christ as being of genuine benefit to the home. These are his words:

For a dozen other reasons: for comfort in the bereavements which these years, more than others, multiply; for the solution to our household hardships; for the supply of food, shelter, clothing, and our physical wants; for help in guiding the home; for divine aid in living clean, chaste lives; for strength to resist temptation; for increasing devotion, which will prevent husband and wife from losing their love for each other; for self-sacrificing interest in the children and for the children's obedience to parents; for divine companionship in every sickness and sorrow; for the promise that our prayers in behalf of the family are answered; and more than this, for the assurance that in Jesus, who gave Himself for us, our sins have been removed and that therefore the whole family, united in firm trust, will be reunited after death's ravages in heaven's hal-
lowed bliss--for all this we need Christ in our homes--the true divine Christ, both Son of God and Son of Man who "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree," the shameful, cursed cross of Calvary.⁷

Who can measure the full persuasive strength of a paragraph like that? It proclaims all the answers to man's basic needs, especially the need for God. Who will not accept it?

All sermons are quite strong with action-packed words and words which should cause emotional reactions. It is impossible to mention all of them,

⁶Maier, The Lutheran Hour, pp. 82f.

⁷Walter A. Maier, He Will Abundantly Pardon (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1948), pp. 114f.

but a few words ought to be said about such expressions as "the blood of Christ." There are only three sermons that have no references to the blood of Christ. In these cases the modes of atonement presented in the texts do not really require this expression. The other extreme is in the sermon "The Last Cry from the Cross" where there are seven references to Jesus's blood. Phrases that really arouse the emotions occur when Dr. Maier describes the cross as "the spectacle of blood and horror," or when he speaks of "the blood that dripped from my Savior's wounds." In one paragraph of a sermon the word "blood" is used four times. It is well to illustrate since the repetition of the word "blood" helps to establish its emotional impact:

This alliance with the atoning Savior is sure, for it is sealed with "the blood" He shed on the accursed cross at Calvary to pay the punishment of your sins; "the blood" by which the stain of your guilt is washed away forever; "the blood" which can "purge your conscience" and reconciles you to God. This eternal covenant is the gift of grace. Whenever, if ever, the peace treaty to conclude the Second World War is signed, it will impose conditions, payments, and penalties on the defeated nations; yet the peace pledge between Heaven and earth, in "the blood" of Christ, is granted you freely by the purest compassion which even the Lord of love could grant.⁸

Certainly Dr. Maier preached a blood atonement. Yet the evidence shows that it was not overly sentimentalized.

Decision

The sermons investigated present contrasting ideas which demand a choice and a decision from the listener. Humanity without God is always pictured as undesirable. God and His mercy in Christ is offered as something needed and desirable. This is basically also the contrast between

⁸Maier, One Thousand Radio Voices for Christ, p. 371.

Law and Gospel which will be discussed later. The following example is typical:

He beheld us, swayed by selfishness, controlled by unholy desires, ruled by passions, and although we hated Him, He loved us. While we turned from Him, He turned toward us. We deserved rejection; nevertheless He offered us redemption.⁹

Often the contrasts are made more acute by putting them into questions. This almost forces the hearer right on the spot to choose one of two courses of action. It is well to illustrate this. Dr. Maier asked:

Are you ready to build on shifting sands, to base your hopes on theories that are advocated to-day only to be discarded to-morrow? Or do you want that Word of which God Himself says: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away"?

Surely the vivid description of the wide contrast between the weakness of humanity and the strength of God, between the bitter Law and the sweet Gospel, in all of their intricate detail and amplification add much to the persuasiveness of Dr. Maier's preaching.

Suggestion

Indirect suggestion is wisely used in the form of social suggestion, challenges, and questions. There are only two sermons in which the lives and testimonies of other people are not used as an inducement to faith and life. These are sermons preached during Dr. Maier's early radio ministry. Although it should be kept in mind again that the late sermons are longer than the early ones, yet here, too, there seems to be a growth in Dr. Maier's use of persuasive techniques. In the sermons of the Thirties

⁹Walter A. Maier, Christ, Set the World Aright! (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1945), p. 72.

¹⁰Walter A. Maier, Christ for the Nation (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1936), p. 137.

the ratio of the number of instances of social suggestion per sermon is from zero to twelve, whereas in the sermons of the Forties the ratio is from two to twenty-one.

✓ Challenges are apparent in every sermon. Usually there are two or three clear instances in every sermon. They are quite frequently found in the introduction, at the conclusion and application of sections, and at the final conclusion of the sermon. While numerous challenges are directed to the unbeliever to accept Christ, many are also addressed to the Christian to correct some present evil. One of the most pointed challenges is charged to those Christians whose pastors are denying the deity of Christ. Dr. Maier exclaimed:

If you who look to Jesus and say, "I know whom I have believed," want to avoid that calamity, pray a hundred times more fervently! Testify! If you do not rise up in protest every time the true Scriptural Jesus is swept aside in your pulpit, you come under this condemnation by our Lord, "Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven." Speak up, and if continued protests are unheeded, either you or those who dethrone the Son of God must step out of that church!¹¹

Perhaps, the most effective form of indirect suggestion which Dr. Maier used is the question. Every sermon contains at least four questions. The ratio of questions per sermon in the first group of sermons is from four to eighteen. This ratio is considerably increased in the second category, where the number ranges from six to forty-six questions per sermon.

✓ The most effective use of questions seems to be in the sermons of the Forties, when often three to seven questions in succession are presented in order to emphasize a point. In the opinion of the writer this

¹¹Walter A. Maier, For Christ and Country (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1942), pp. 36f.

is one of the high points of Dr. Maier's persuasive power. A question always demands an answer. A preacher who asks attention-getting questions throughout the sermon and then builds up to a climax of pointed questions has the audience at his disposal. For example, when Dr. Maier was asserting the divinity of Jesus in the face of opposition, in what better form could the argument be rendered than via questions? The following paragraph will illustrate the decisive, persuasive power of the question:

If the voice that proclaimed, "Let not your heart be troubled! . . . My peace I give unto you," is but the utterance of another mortal teacher, how can we be sure of its truth? If the arms stretched toward all the weary, burdened souls with the invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest! are only the arms of an earthly Comforter, of what benefit can they be to us in life's repeated trials and increasing sorrows when we need heavenly assurance? If He who was nailed to the cross was only a noble, self-sacrificing sufferer, how can Calvary mean more to us than Valley Forge, Gettysburg, Flanders Field? If the Jesus who promised, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," contradicted that pledge with His own death and remained to moulder and decay in His grave, as all men must, then how can we find any positive pledge of the resurrection and the life everlasting?¹²

The use of a series of questions in a row is not infrequent. In another sermon, where Dr. Maier was suggesting that people are sinners, he asked:

Therefore I ask you in the question of our text, "Do you 'help the ungodly' and love the unbelief of 'them that hate the Lord'?" Is your life directed to Christ or away from Him? Are you headed toward heaven or toward hell? Is your Bible shut, while you find plenty of time to read sex stories and murder novels? Do you swell the crowds in attendance at public entertainment, but by your absence from worship keep church attendance disastrously small? Do you run around with people who make fun of our faith, profanely abuse the precious name above all other names, Jesus, glorify sin, live for lust, liquor, and the lure of the flesh? Despite your church

¹²Ibid., pp. 33f.

membership and pretended piety, are you a hypocrite, carrying on secret affairs, congratulating yourself that you are smart enough to keep your crimes concealed?¹³

Who can give a negative answer to the indictment of these charges? The impact is overpoweringly persuasive.

Direct suggestion in the form of commands is present in every sermon. However, it must be noted that this type of suggestion is not as frequent in the first section of sermons as in the second group. Some of the sermons of the Thirties have only one instance of direct suggestion. One, however, has twelve. In the sermons of the Forties, there are from ten to twenty-four commands in each sermon. From the viewpoint of persuasion, the early limited use and the late prolific use of direct suggestion is very acceptable. Dr. Maier did not directly suggest ideas to his audience until his reputation and authority as Lutheran Hour preacher had quite solidly been established. After several years of radio ministry, the listening audience, as a general rule, was quite ready to accept his suggestions. This probably helps to account for the hortatory accent of his late sermons.

In this connection, something must also be said about the powerful radio preacher's use of imperatives in persuading people to accept Christ. Gospel imperatives are not too evident in the early sermons. In fact, three of those sermons had no Gospel imperatives at all. The highest number of Gospel imperatives in the sermons of the Thirties was five. The Gospel imperatives in this section of sermons are somewhat mellow as the following expression indicates: ". . . I want you to see in this

¹³Maier, One Thousand Radio Voices for Christ, p. 369.

divine Christ . . . the Lamb of God."¹⁴

The sermons preached during World War II and later, however, show a far greater number of Gospel imperatives. Most of them have four or five brief and brisk commands to accept Christ. One sermon has as high as eight such statements. Perhaps, it might be said in this connection also, that the late sermons of Dr. Maier are characterized by a sense of urgency. There were still so many people to be won for Christ and so little time to preach the Gospel! Hence the Gospel imperatives, and thus more effective persuasion!

At no time did Dr. Maier leave the impression that man was capable of accepting Christ himself. His Gospel imperatives are Gospel imperatives in the strictest sense. Before he told people to come to Christ, he pointed out to them their utter helplessness and hopelessness without God. He held out God's hand of divine promise in Christ. And then, after the Gospel had already effected repentance, he told his hearers to accept Christ. He preached the Gospel before he stated the imperatives.

Dr. Maier always asked for God's, and especially the Spirit's, help. The following instances are typical:

God lead you to Christ this Christmas Day.¹⁵

May the Lord this day give every one of you the grace to behold the fearful agony Jesus endured as He paid the highest price of all history, His own holy, divine Self as the Ransom for the sins of the world, and resolve that, with the Spirit's help, you will believe Christ, confess Christ, defend Christ, and glorify Christ with the victory cry: "Jesus bought me with His blood"¹⁶

¹⁴Maier, The Lutheran Hour, pp. 4f.

¹⁵Maier, The Dr. Walter A. Maier Memorial Booklet, p. 15.

¹⁶Maier, Christ, Set the World Aright!, p. 82.

Only God, through His Spirit, can convince you that what I say is true. Give that Spirit a place in your heart! Ask Him to remove any stubborn resistance, any willful blindness! Yield to Him the direction of your life and let Him persuade you that Christ is your God!¹⁷

Introduction and Conclusion

The sermon introductions vary in length from two to eight paragraphs. No doubt, one of the most persuasive factors in the introductions exists in their variety from sermon to sermon. Some sermons begin with an anecdote or story, others begin with a quotation, others with a striking opening sentence, others with a series of questions, others by a statistical evaluation of the state of the times, and still others by statements concerning the progress of the Lutheran Hour.

The introductions are usually timely, pertinent, and fresh. For example, during World War II, Dr. Maier began one sermon with these vital questions:

"Can my son remain a Christian in the Army?" "Is it possible for a young man called to the colors from a God-fearing home to maintain his devotion to the Lord Jesus?" "Will my boy come back from the Navy with his faith in the Savior unbroken?"¹⁸

Personally, one of the most amazing and amusing introductions consists of an announcement of the vindication of the Biblical doctrine of creation. A famous radio preacher, probably Fosdick, had publicly disowned this precious Biblical truth. Dr. Maier boldly described the situation as follows:

¹⁷Maier, For Christ and Country, pp. 340f.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 329.

he is, as contradictory as it seems, the radio voice of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America! The nation's largest broadcasting system puts at his disposal Sunday after Sunday its entire coast to coast network of almost a hundred stations, free of all charge, while it discriminates against our broadcast by refusing to accept our Christ-centered programs even though we pay for every second of broadcasting time at full commercial rates . . . I have cited this traitorous attack on the Scriptural doctrine of creation because, in rebuttal, I want to testify to the revealed truth of man's origin and destiny.¹⁹

An introduction like this should be very successful in getting and holding attention because of the element of conflict involved.

After some startling statement or story has been presented in the introduction, Dr. Maier would then proceed to introduce the theme and the text of the sermon. In nearly every sermon the central thought is quite clearly stated, already in the introduction.

Variety also characterizes the conclusions of the sermons. Some sermons close with a summary statement, some with brief imperatives to accept Christ, some with lengthy stories, some with questions, and some with the recitation of a hymn verse. One sermon ends with this beautiful prayer and confession: "Into Thy hand I commit my soul. Thou hast redeemed me. Thou Christ of the cross, my Lord and God, my Ransom and Savior, my Life for all eternity."²⁰

One of the most effective conclusions must have been his restatement of the soldier's pledge of allegiance to his government along spiritual lines. This is so arresting that it bears quotation:

"I do solemnly promise that I will bear true faith and allegiance

¹⁹Walter A. Maier, The Cross from Coast to Coast (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938), pp. 79f.

²⁰Ibid., p. 386.

to the Christian Church, that I will serve honestly and faithfully against all enemies; that I will follow both the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Head of this Church, the Savior of my soul, and the guidance of Christian pastors and teachers appointed over me according to the rules and articles of His holy Word, the Bible. God help me in this, for the atoning Savior's sake!"²¹

Law and Gospel

The heart and core of Dr. Maier's persuasive preaching was in his timely presentation and application of Law and Gospel. The investigation of his sermons shows that he preached Jesus Christ as the only Way of Life. Lengthy statements such as the following occur in at least four sermons, not to mention shorter references to the same idea in more sermons:

With the yearning of His deep love He now would have me tell you that you are saved not through church or family connections, not by your character and accomplishments, not by long prayer and impressive ritual, not by fastings and pilgrimages, not by believing parents and church-building grandparents, not by congregational offices or religious society memberships, not by a social gospel or an ethical gospel, not by self-denial and self-torture. Thank God, all this uncertainty has been removed! You and I are saved only, but wholly and eternally, by grace, through faith in the full, free, final, finished mercies of the Lord Jesus.²²

Another powerful factor in his preaching was the proclamation of the Gospel for all mankind. He preached the Gospel without prejudice and discrimination. Proclamations like this are frequent occurrences in many sermons:

Christ Jesus is the Savior also of the whole race, with none barred from His mercy. Heap up the mountains of universal guilt; invite men of every country, color, and condition to bring their transgressions before the Crucified, and His mercy will be so marvelous

²¹Maier, For Christ and Country, p. 345.

²²Maier, America, Turn to Christ, pp. 114f.

that again a single drop of the blood He shed in His atoning death can wipe out the world's hideous rebellion against God's truth, love, and purity.²³

Before we further examine his preaching of the Gospel, it is well to make a few comments on his striking preaching of the Law. In every sermon the surface symptoms are vividly described in terms of contemporary problems, which range in scope from the international to the individual. The best package description of surface symptoms of sin is in the paragraph below:

We look out into this sin-soaked world, and "change and decay in all around we see." We behold the rampant evils in this modern day that drag men down to death; man's inhumanity to men; the selfishness that is responsible for the tragic industrial unrest in our country and the widening chasm between wealth and poverty; the spirit of modern indifference and stolid materialism which bids the masses eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow they may be dead; the ravages of lust and impurity that are wrecking our homes, making American children legal orphans and desecrating the holiness of matrimony and the blessings of family life; and, as reluctantly as we may admit this, our own shortcomings and our own special sins. In this mélée of morals we find ourselves tied with the cord's of men's favorite follies, earth-bound and earth-centered.²⁴

However, sin goes beyond surface symptoms. The proper diagnosis of the Law makes man see his total guilt in the face of the judgment of God.

Dr. Maier did this very thing in every sermon in a greater or lesser degree, depending a large measure on the text of the sermon. He went further than to preach the mere sociological aspects of sin; he preached the theological emphases of sin. He described sin as total depravity, separation, rebellion, death, transgression, judgment. The following passages, one from a sermon of the Thirties and another from a sermon of

²³Maier, For Christ and Country, pp. 38f.

²⁴Maier, The Lutheran Hour, p. 7.

the Forties, illustrate this theological emphasis well:

The Bible warns us, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." And again, "The wages of sin is death." There, in plain and unmistakable terms, you have a direct expression of the appalling extreme to which sin, as a violation of the will and Law of a just and holy God, can lead--first of all, to a separation from God, then to punishment in the form of affliction and death, and finally to the despair of an endless, hopeless eternity of darkness.²⁵

but the Almighty and All-knowing has a 100-per-cent record in revealing guilt. If you ally yourself with Christ's enemies, the time is irresistibly approaching when you must stand before the Lord and receive the sentence pronounced on your rebellion against the Redeemer. If you have never realized that every unforgiven sin sentences you to hell; if you have laughed at Scripture when it warns, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," may the Holy Spirit mercifully open your mind's eye today and make you understand the awful doom contained in this sentence of seven short words, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Jesus, the Mediator of mercy, spoke this awful sentence; He cannot make a mistake; this must be true. Stop making common with those who oppose the Savior! Come over to His side! Make a soul-covenant today with Christ!²⁶

The presentations of sin in the sermons analyzed vary from six paragraphs in the shorter sermons to as many as seventeen paragraphs in the longer ones. It seems that quite a few of the early sermons have their presentations of sin mostly in the first part of the sermon, which is then followed by the Gospel in the second part. In the late sermons, however, the diagnosis of the Law seems more frequently to permeate the entire sermon. In fairness, it should be stated that the majority of the sermons examined have this permeating and penetrating characteristic. This method of preaching the Law is much more persuasive because repetition and variety are involved. Time and time again this would bring the hearer face to face with his own sin and God's judgment, and thus prepare the way for the Gospel.

²⁵Ibid., p. 253.

²⁶Maier, One Thousand Radio Voices for Christ, p. 370.

If there is anything that strikes the attention of someone analyzing Dr. Maier's sermons, it is not so much the persuasive factors common to them, but the simple and beautiful way the Gospel is proclaimed. Dr. Maier held out the Gospel as a free gift for all. He seemed to confront his hearer directly and say, "Jesus died for you."

There are only two sermons which have less than four paragraphs containing distinct and beautiful expressions of Gospel. Both of these are short sermons preached the first year of his radio ministry. Other sermons have as many as nineteen paragraphs containing clear Gospel statements. Although in the sermons of the Thirties the Gospel seems to be bound mostly to the second part of the sermon, in the sermons of the Forties the Gospel message permeates the entire sermon. Again, repetition and variety make this a form of powerful persuasion.

Table 7 on the following page is an attempt to illustrate the number and distribution of clear Gospel statements in the fifteen sermons studied. This does not include expressions which could possibly be considered Gospel, but are not too distinct. It is safe to assume that Law passages fall somewhere in between the Gospel proclamations.

In every sermon there is usually one outstanding and climactic Gospel paragraph or sections of paragraphs. It either immediately follows a very acute diagnosis of Law or else forms the climax in a series of Gospel statements. Since the proclamation of the Gospel forms the very heart of Dr. Maier's preaching, these outstanding Gospel paragraphs should be noted. The quotations are arranged in chronological order. There is one from each sermon, with the exception of sermon No. 14,

"God Says, 'Hurry!'", which has been considered before.²⁷ The observation that the Gospel statements in the late sermons are more direct and more detailed is worthy of mention here.

And then, great and loving Savior that He is, when we cry for deliverance and forgiveness, for life instead of death, He brings us these "words of eternal life" that re-echo above all the thunder of God's wrath, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." If the high and holy authority of the inerrant Word of God lays down this inevitable sentence, "The wages of sin is death," then the greater grace of Christ, whose holy body was offered as a living sacrifice for all human iniquity, gives us this surpassing pardon, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," and with forgiveness the definite conviction that these words of eternal life, and these alone, actually lead to the blessed eternity with Christ.²⁸

the glorious comfort of the Cross of Jesus Christ, in which there is offered fully and freely, without price or restriction, the complete atonement for our sins and the hope of happiness here and hereafter.²⁹

Yes, as we know, not from man's reason, but from the revelation of a gracious God in His Word, there is divine favor, there is forgiveness of our sins, there is the immeasurable love of God, that prompted Him to send the "one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus," who "gave Himself as a ransom for all." There, in that wondrous Gospel-message, that "He became sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him," in the record of that world-moving transaction, "He hath purchased us with His own blood," in that promise of purification, that this blood, "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin," is the invitation that goes out to-night, addressed to all who may hear these words, to turn away from sin and to come to Christ, not in reliance upon your own accomplishments (for after all, how few and small and unworthy they are!), but trusting solely in the merit of Jesus' blood and righteousness, in the fathomless favor of God.³⁰

And on the other side, separated by an unbridged chasm, is that true soul wisdom which proclaims, "Christ died for our sins," and

²⁷Supra, p. 66.

²⁸Maier, The Lutheran Hour, p. 7.

²⁹Ibid., p. 83.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 253f.

reaffirms the promise of God that, when the "bleeding Head and wounded" dropped into death with the gasp "It is finished," Christ earned all, gave all, paid all, so that His word holds for all the immeasurable glory of this free, unconditioned, unrestricted, unlimited Gospel faith: "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."³¹

Then it is, when reason falters and self-reliance fails, that Christ comes with the assurance that through His suffering, His death, His resurrection, all our sins are canceled, our guilt removed, our indebtedness to God entirely paid, our sin-stained souls washed completely white by His blood, and all praise to His Savior love! our death transformed to life. It is the glory of our Christian faith, not only that it teaches men that they come from God, but it also shows them that through faith in Christ and His atonement--and through that faith alone--they will return to God. Because this is the answer to humanity's paramount need and its deepest fear, and the promise of its highest joy and happiness, Christ has heaped the promise of this blessed eternity. Listen to Him as He pledges: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." "I say unto you, he that heareth My Word and believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." "Because I live, ye shall live also." Take Him at His word! Trust Him! Live with Him!³²

When you approach the cross with the faith which without excuse or exception pleads guilty to the indictment of sin and the charge of your conscience; when you "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," offered in one sacrifice for all generations of men; and when your faith triumphs: "Thou hast redeemed me" by Thy free, full mercy, "redeemed me," beyond all question or quiver, "redeemed me" from my repeated transgressions and my constant weakness, "redeemed me" from sin, death, and the power of hell, from the tyranny of sorrow and affliction, from the fears and terrors of life, then you have the faith by which you can live victoriously and die triumphantly.³³

Jesus--this is Christianity's keystone creed, separating it from every other religion--as the Christ is the long-promised, divinely anointed, sin-destroying Deliverer, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," the Substitute for every sinner, the Ransom for every wrong, the Payment for the entire penalty of our

³¹Maier, Christ for the Nation, pp. 139f.

³²Maier, The Cross from Coast to Coast, pp. 89f.

³³Ibid., pp. 382f.

transgressions, the Reconciliation of a race estranged from God, the Restorer of the holiness and happiness lost in rebellion against the Almighty. Take all your own sins--and before Jesus do not try to parade yourself as innocent of evil, for each one of us, without exception, stands condemned by God's Word for our lustful longings, covetous desires, unclean hearts; take your total guilt, your accumulated soul-terror, the fear that your violation of God's Law and man's will be exposed or their crushing consequences visited on you; bring all this to the Cross, and there through faith in the sin-bearing Deliverer you know that His blood can remove your sins forever.³⁴

We must kneel in spirit before the crucified Redeemer and cry out: "How terrifying the guilt of my transgressions, since I could be pardoned by nothing less than this agony on the cross! How completely I sold myself into sin's slavery since I could be freed only by the blood that dripped from my Savior's wounds! What an eternity in hell my misdeeds heaped up for me since their penalty could be removed by nothing less than the sacrifice of God's Son Himself!" Yet at Calvary the Savior's mercy must loom greater than the wrong abounding in our lives, and we, too, should join the centurion in glorifying God and crying out: "What a compassionate Redeemer my crucified Lord is, since here He bore all my sins, the unnumbered, unspeakable, ungrateful violations of Heaven's holy Law! What a merciful Savior He is, since He left nothing undone that I must finish and so completely satisfied the justice of His heavenly Father that I need or can pay no amount to secure forgiveness! What a marvelous reconciliation He promises me since His love pledges that everything hard and crushing in life and death is hallowed here at the cross, so that through faith it becomes in reality a blessing! What an assured grace is granted here at Golgotha, where, every doubt removed and contradiction rejected, I can exult with Spirit-filled confidence, 'I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord!'"³⁵

Here is the marvelous mercy which our Lord offers you: First, Jesus loved you despite your transgressions, your willful spurning of His grace, your rejecting the good and choosing the evil, your stubborn rebellion against God. With a devotion surpassing the love of friend for friend, of patriot for country, of husband for wife and wife for husband, of mother for child and child for mother; He cherished you though you hated Him. Second, He the Son of God, atoned fully for your sins, shed His own lifeblood to redeem you, died to remove all your sins--the secret transgressions and the open vices, the small selfish mistakes, the scarlet and shrieking iniquities. Third, He

³⁴Maier, For Christ and Country, p. 38.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 341f.

freed you forever from the tyranny of hell. Fourth, He defeated eternal death for you and by His own Easter victory gave you the assurance of your resurrection unto life eternal. Fifth, He protected you in many dangers when unknowingly you faced disaster, even death. If He would withdraw His protecting hand, none of us would be alive this moment. Sixth, when human help is of no avail, He wants to enrich you with comfort, hope, peace, and rest. Seventh, He can turn all afflictions, bodily, mental, and spiritual, into advantages and blessings for your soul. Eighth, He offers you rebirth into a new existence, the strength to resist temptation, and the power to walk in His footsteps. Ninth, He has given you everything good and helpful in your life, all the material benefits you enjoy. Tenth, He offers you these miracles of His love by His mercy. You are saved freely, by grace! Eleventh, He assures you of all this without question or condition, without any "perhaps" or "maybe." Twelfth, Jesus has ascended to heaven and, sitting on the right hand of God the Father, intercedes for those who are His. He grants them His constant companionship in every hour of trial and makes "all things work together for good."³⁶

Christ cherished us so highly that He, the true and eternal Lord, Creator, and Sustainer of the universe, came into the world to lay down His life as the only means by which, our ungodliness removed forever, we could be brought back to God. How all-glorious and all-merciful the assurance of His own Word, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."!

We speak and sing of the Savior's sin-removing, death-destroying love; but how little we can measure His unfathomable devotion and how slow many are to accept its full blessing! Behold Him as He kneels in the Garden of Gethsemane, His soul agonized almost to death by the terror of your transgressions, His life almost crushed out by the anguish of your iniquities, and hear Him say, "This is the price I paid for you"! See Him captured, bound and beaten, and as the lash cuts into His bleeding back, listen as He cries, "This is the price I paid for you"! Find Him thorn-crowned, God-forsaken, crucified; but before His lips are silenced in death, believe Him, when He whispers, "This is the price I paid for you"! Never has there been a sorrow like His. Truly you are "bought with a price," the holiest in all history!

Do you think the price Christ paid for you too high, God's grace too good for you? Don't let the feeling of your own unworthiness limit the Savior's love! If you were ever inclined to feel that your sins are too many, too scarlet, too old and oft-repeated, to be forgiven, remember that in His matchless mercy He promises: "If any man sin, we

³⁶Maier, America, Turn to Christ, pp. 112f.

have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and His is the Propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"! Trust Him fully, believing that He can save to the uttermost, that He can make scarlet and crimson transgressions white as new-fallen snow and fleecy wool!³⁷

We must come to Him, God's Son and the world's Redeemer, admitting that because of our sins we are hopeless, helpless, damned; but grasping His grace, clinging to the cross, trusting the Gospel truth that at Calvary He was crucified for us, as He there suffered the pain, penalty, guilt, curse, torture, and terror of all our transgressions, we not only receive pardon for our iniquity, but by the Holy Spirit's mighty miracle of regeneration we are also born again into a new life. Scripture's pledge is fulfilled in us: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."³⁸

and as soon as you understand what Jesus did for you, that He willingly went to the cross, there in depthless agony paid the penalty of your sins, removed your guilt, took away the curse of your transgressions, washed and cleansed you in His blood, made you a child of Heaven, ready to be received by your Father--as soon as God is "All in All," you will repeat the prayer of the disciples on the Emmaus road and plead with Jesus, "Abide with us!" More than anyone or anything else, you will want the Savior, His Cross, His Gospel, in your family circle. You will pray that His blood, rather than the blood of the Passover Lamb sprinkled on the lintel and doorpost of your house, will cleanse the hearts of your family "of all sin." And Jesus, unfailing Friend that He is, will surely keep His promise and enter your household to remain as the unseen yet ever-radiant Redeemer, the invisible but invincible God to bless you and yours.³⁹

Praise the Lord of Love with me today that the blessed Savior wants us to ally ourselves with Him! We are sinful, selfish, sordid, but instead of casting us away forever, He yearns for us and offers us a treaty with the Triune God, a covenant with His compassion, an agreement with His unfailing grace. If you feel despair over the crimson blotches which stain your life, and you ask for the Heaven-given assurance that you will not be damned to hell but have the pledge of Christ's grace; if you want to begin life over again, wholly dedicated to your Divine Deliverer, then turn to Isaiah's prophecy, read, believe, memorize this peerless guarantee: "The

³⁷Maier, Christ, Set the World Aright!, pp. 73f.

³⁸Walter A. Maier, Let Us Return Unto the Lord (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), p. 50.

³⁹Maier, He Will Abundantly Pardon, p. 115.

mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Then, when you want to know more about this pact of peace, peace with your Maker and peace with your own conscience, turn to the last chapter of Hebrews and read, "The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," can make you perfect!

How marvelously merciful is this league with the Lord! It is open to you, no matter how selfish men may have persecuted you because of your color or your nationality. It is an unchanging covenant; for, while human pledges are altered, your Redeemer is "the same yesterday and today and forever." This alliance with the atoning Savior is sure, for it is sealed with the blood He shed on the accursed cross at Calvary to pay the punishment of your sins; "the blood" by which the stain of your guilt is washed away forever; "the blood" which can "purge your conscience" and reconciles you to God. This eternal covenant is the gift of grace.⁴⁰

Heaven's love lies in the manger, because all earthly devotion, at its highest and noblest, cannot even approach Christ's affection for you. He loved you with such a desire to save you from the curse of your own sins that for you He knew hunger and thirst, loneliness and grief; for you He was slandered and falsely accused, forsaken even by His Father and made to feel the terror of divine wrath on sin; for you He was in darkness and agony; for you He wore the crown of thorns and bore the cross of shame; and--O heavenly love beyond our deserving, understanding, and describing!--He cherished you more than His own life, dying to make His own holy body and soul the substitutionary sacrifice for your sins. Yet because He is your God, He rose again for you to give you the assurance of grace that your redemption, sealed in His blood, has been accepted fully and forever.⁴¹

It must be noted that Dr. Maier preached the Gospel not only as forgiveness for sin, but also as power over sin. He preached the Gospel as that power which brings, "new thoughts, new hopes, new ambitions, new courage, new contentment, new calm in Christ, new assurance of heaven's beauty, bliss, and blessing."⁴² Declarations like this are typical:

⁴⁰Maier, One Thousand Radio Voices for Christ, pp. 370f.

⁴¹Maier, The Dr. Walter A. Maier Memorial Booklet, p. 13.

⁴²Maier, Let Us Return Unto the Lord, p. 52.

All of you need strength to defeat evil, overcome temptation, conquer your selfish selves. Here it is, in the confidence that you have been purchased by God's Son as His own sacred possession. Nothing men have ever devised will give you who want to lead clean, happy lives, the moral strength required to resist sin successfully. Yet Jesus can!⁴³

Dr. Maier used much variety in presenting the atonement. Different modes are employed not only in different sermons, but even in a single sermon. The most common picture of the atonement seems to be that of Sacrifice for Forgiveness. This is peculiar to every sermon. In this connection, there is usually a heavy emphasis on the Substitute of the sacrifice. Other prominent modes of atonement are Ransom, Reconciliation, Deliverance, Peace, and Life.

As a general rule it can be stated that Dr. Maier primarily preached the Cross of Christ, although the Resurrection was not overlooked. There seems to be a growth in his theology of preaching in this area. Only one sermon in the first group has a lonely reference to the resurrection of Christ. In the second category of sermons there is only one sermon which does not make mention of Christ's resurrection. A post-Easter sermon has as many as twenty-one references to the resurrection Gospel.

In short, then, the strength of Dr. Maier's preaching of Law and Gospel lay in the fact that he preached the true Biblical concept of both. He saw evidences of the Law in the people's present problems and sins; and he held out the sweet Gospel as the free and full dynamic answer to the sin of individuals and nations. When Dr. Maier preached the Gospel there was absolute certainty that Jesus Christ was a gracious gift for all.

⁴³Maier, Christ, Set the World Aright!, p. 76.

Devices of Style

Repetition

Repetition is a very prominent characteristic of Dr. Maier's preaching. As it has been pointed out, this is true of his presentations of Law and Gospel. And this is equally true of the text and theme of the sermons. In one sermon the text or a part of it is repeated as many as twenty times. Never is it repeated less than four times. The theme of the sermon is repeated anywhere from two to fifteen times per sermon. Indeed, repetition of text and theme are common persuasive devices which Dr. Maier readily employed.

It is well to note, too, that the repetition of Bible passages in general gives the sermons a thorough Biblical flavor. People readily knew that he was a Bible preacher. One short sermon contains only six Bible passages, but the majority of sermons examined have many more than that. One lengthy sermon of the Forties contains forty-six quotations of Bible passages.

Nearly all of the quotations are from the New Testament, in spite of the fact that Dr. Maier was an Old Testament scholar and teacher. It is natural to assume that he quoted more New Testament passages than Old, because they contain the very essence of the Christian Gospel. Then, too, it is well to observe that most of the passages were familiar and simple passages, which most people, no doubt, had heard at sometime, and now again would be powerfully re-emphasized.

The analysis of the fifteen sermons shows that Dr. Maier's preaching is primarily Christological. This statement is supported by the fact

that in all the sermons, with the exception of five sermons of the Thirties; there are more reference in every sermon to Jesus Christ than to the Father or the Spirit. Dr. Maier's Trinitarian emphases were as follows: Jesus, Father, Spirit. Even though the text of the sermon to a large extent helps to determine the peculiar Trinitarian accent, it still seems very probable that Dr. Maier emphasized the Christological aspect of theology more at the close of his radio ministry than at the beginning.

In connection with the work of the Holy Spirit there seems to be a growth in his theology of preaching, too. For example, only one of the six sermons preached during the Thirties has any reference to the work of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, every one of the sermons preached during the Forties has at least one reference to the Spirit. One sermon has as many as six.

Variety

Every sermon contains a pleasing variety of declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory sentences. To keep the mind of the listener alert, every sermon has long sentences and short sentences. One early sermon has a sentence of 161 words, while in the late sermons the sentences rarely go over one hundred words. No doubt, in his later ministry, Dr. Maier tried to adhere more closely to persuasive radio style, and this accounts for the shorter sentences.

There were long paragraphs and short paragraphs. Every sermon shows excellent variety in reference to the four items people are basically interested in: people, activity, conflict, and human wants. The two spheres of interest which seem to predominate in Dr. Maier's preaching

are people and conflict.

The sermons are extremely interesting, because, from beginning to end, other people are involved in the message. This accounts for Dr. Maier's use of testimonies, authorities, and illustrations. Yet his most striking use of people to guide the listener through the message lies not in these somewhat extraneous materials but in the characters or people themselves involved in the text of the sermon. Thus, in the sermons analyzed the listener is made to observe the colorful and dramatic activity of such Bible characters as Ahab and Jezebel, Nicodemus, the Centurion at the Cross, Mary, and Peter. This emphasis of making the characters of the text lead the Law and Gospel message is outstanding in Dr. Maier's preaching and is good homiletics and powerful persuasion.

Conflict is the other outstanding element successfully employed by Dr. Maier. He was one who would let hammer blows fly at anything which stood in the way of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His sermons also bear witness of this fact. In one sermon he publicly took to task the Revised Standard Version of the Bible for substituting the word "Teacher" for the Authorized Version "Master" in Mark 14:14. Many sermons contain vindictive elements and attacks against existing conditions which are false and sinful. It is well to illustrate:

sin is the most unpopular of all subjects for discussion to-day, when people love to dwell lingeringly on the inherent goodness of man or try to disguise the hideousness of sin, sugar-coat its bitterness, and explain away its vicious nature under the masquerade of dishonest phraseology. Thus to-day psychological theories are often substituted for the Ten Commandments. In our current vocabulary a man who uses profanity and abuses the high and holy name of God is said to show "bad taste." A "racketeer" whose ruthless machine gun sweeps down an innocent pedestrian suffers under a series of "complexes." A child that refuses to obey its parents is coddled as a "self-expressionist." Young people who disregard the requirement of

pre-marital chastity claim to enjoy the "new freedom of our new age," while those who do observe this chastity are said to suffer from "inhibitions." It's Not Our Fault, a recent book, is one of the latest literary attacks on the stark reality of personal sin.⁴⁴

He often challenged his adversaries as the following passage verifies:

Three weeks ago I restated the Savior's own challenge, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil," and I asked the atheists and unbelievers in our radio audience to bring one real, substantiated indictment against our Redeemer. Since that time we have received between thirty-five and forty thousand letters; but to date not one real, honest accusation against our Lord has come to our attention.⁴⁵

The investigation of the fifteen sermons shows that he particularly attacked immoral and untrue messages of books and newspaper articles, which were not in harmony with the Gospel. At least five out of the fifteen sermons testify to this. The following passage, which is from the last sermon he preached, illustrates this well:

A book that turned up in Germany, and that was widely read by our GI's eighteen months ago told the American soldiers and civilians there not to pity the little German child they might see standing in the rubble, poorly dressed, cold and hungry; for this book warned, "Don't forget, in twenty-five years this little boy may be killing your son!" Our men were not moved by such appeals. This Christmas season again, recalling the Savior's words, "Love your enemies," our soldiers have remembered the undernourished and underprivileged children in the defeated countries, as many of them still are, to have some of their happiest moments.⁴⁶

Truly, his defense of the Gospel and his bold attack on sin contributed much to the interest and persuasive power of his sermons.

Concrete-ness

Among the elements of concrete-ness which are most outstanding in Dr.

⁴⁴Maier, The Lutheran Hour, pp. 248f.

⁴⁵Maier, For Christ and Country, pp. 337f.

⁴⁶Maier, The Dr. Walter A. Maier Memorial Booklet, p. 16.

Maier's preaching is directness. He left no doubt that he definitely meant you, the listener. In one sermon he commented:

I ask, not the world, not America, not your neighbor, but you yourself, personally, you especially: "Do you know that without faith in the Savior of your soul, despite bank account, college degrees, business prominence, despite name and fame, influence and affluence, you are, as Jesus says in our Scripture, 'flesh,' opposed to God and under His condemnation?"⁴⁷

It seems as though Dr. Maier was not always as direct in his preaching as his late sermons indicate. In the sermons preached before World War II "you" sentences and "we" sentences are quite equally represented in a sermon. In some sermons there are far more "we's" than "you's." However, in the sermons preached after the War there is not a single sermon where the "we's" predominate. These sermons are very pointed and direct. This also represents growth in the persuasive preaching power of Dr. Maier.

Although there is no statistical evidence for this statement, it is the opinion of the writer, after having read through many of Dr. Maier's sermons, that in the first part of the sermon Dr. Maier would usually emphasize the common ground with his audience through a predominance of "we" sentences. During the second part of the sermon he would become more direct by using more "you's." The first person singular was quite frequently used in the early sermons, while there were not too many instances of this in the late ones, probably because the late sermons had become more hortatory in nature.

Occasionally, sermons contain sections in which it is most evident that Dr. Maier was trying to reach every individual. The following is a

⁴⁷Maier, Let Us Return Unto the Lord, p. 44.

typical example:

As you confess your thanklessness, selfishness, lack of appreciation for His love, may you, the sick and invalid confined to your rooms; you, the wounded and injured in our military hospitals; you, the man and woman of our widespread armed forces; you, the workers in our defense industries; you, the young and the old on the nation's vital homefront, all of you, be given the courage and confidence of faith required to raise your hand in this oath of allegiance: "O Jesus, Redeemer of my soul, I thank Thee with every fiber of my being for the mercy, the self-sacrifice on the cross, that redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature. Gratefully I accept the cleansing granted by Thy blood. Humbly I pledge myself to live with the Spirit's help in gratitude for Thy grace. So help me God!"⁴⁸

He often mentioned his own feeling and personal obligation to every human being. In one of his sermons he stated:

Since you need the Lord more than all else and every promise we broadcast to you must therefore be Christ-founded, Christ-centered, Christ-exalting; because I do not want to meet you before the judgment seat of eternity and have you indict me with this charge, "I heard you preach, but you told me nothing of my sin or my Savior; you never showed me the way from earth to heaven," I put before you today the intense love of the Lord Jesus for your soul and ask: Do you know THE PRICE CHRIST PAID FOR YOU?⁴⁹

Who will not be persuaded by a preacher who manifests such intense concern for his hearers?

Another evidence of concreteness is Dr. Maier's prolific use of illustrations to clarify his Gospel message. No sermon has less than two illustrations. Three have as many as eight. These figures do not take into consideration testimonies and evidence of authorities which in a sense could also be thought of as illustrative material.

Most of the illustrations are either historical or of contemporary life. Historical illustrations seem to be used a bit more frequently,

⁴⁸Maier, America, Turn to Christ, p. 115.

⁴⁹Maier, Christ, Set the World Aright!, p. 71.

except during the War when quite a few war anecdotes are brought into the sermons. The following illustration typifies many of the contemporary illustrations used during World War II:

A Lutheran chaplain, wounded during the early, costly days at Guadalcanal recently told me that after a particularly heavy attack, when dead and bleeding Japanese lay in piles before our barbed-wire barricades, he went out with his commanding officer to help lessen the enemies' suffering. The first Japanese they touched was lying on his face, mortally wounded. As our men turned him over, hoping to ease his last moments, that dying enemy summoned his waning strength, pulled a hand grenade from his shirt, quickly withdrew the firing pin, and threw it at the commander in a futile attempt to kill those who had come to relieve him.

This thanklessness is not restricted to battlefields. Ingratitude is one of the world's most frequent sins.⁵⁰

✓ Bible illustrations are seldom used, with the exception, of course, of the illustrations incorporated in the text itself, as mentioned before.

In order to make the Gospel message even more direct, meaningful, and practical, he often makes application and presents direct programs for Christian action. In one sermon he gave a Ten Point Program for Christian living.⁵¹ The points are listed numerically which surely helps to impress them on the listener's mind.

Alliteration is a common device used to help clarify the message. Every sermon has from six to forty-five instances of this beautiful figure of speech. It is, perhaps, good to quote a few of the outstanding examples: "Sin-soaked world . . . poverty-pinched people . . . dropped into death . . . sin-stained souls . . . complete compassion, limitless love, matchless mercy, glorious grace, free forgiveness . . .

⁵⁰Maier, America, Turn to Christ, pp. 101f.

⁵¹Maier, One Thousand Radio Voices for Christ, pp. 367f.

firmly founded faith . . . full, free, final, finished mercies . . .
 stain of a single sin . . . death-destroying love . . . to Jesus or jung-
 le, to Christ or chaos, to redemption or ruin . . . permitting the pur-
 suit of paltry possessions . . . help and heal, soothe and strengthen,
 comfort and cheer . . . selfish, sinful, sordid . . . magnificence of
 the Christmas mercy and measure the grandeur of His grace." It is in-
 teresting to note the alliterative repetition in this sentence:

From Golgotha the praying Christ, the dying Christ, the atoning
 Christ, looks at our age with a plea for more prayer, deeper prayer,
 stronger prayer and with the heavenly promise of answered prayer,
 achieving prayer, victorious prayer.⁵²

Dr. Maier made very little attempt to use flowery and figurative
 language. He preached simply, directly, powerfully. There is only one
 instance of adorned language which is rather striking. Thus, it is
 worthy of quotation at least to show what Dr. Maier was able to do, but
 rarely did, for the sake of clarity:

Then Jesus speaks of His Father's hands, with the power and protec-
 tion they afford. The hands that stretched the canopy of the heav-
 ens and studded it with myriads of stars; the hands that called the
 universe into being and direct the music of spheres; the hands that
 raised the mountains and dug the hollows of the sea; the hands that
 arouse sleeping nature for the reawakening of spring, the hands that
 touch the dry bones of death and transform them into newness of life;
 --into those divine hands that guided the inspired writers to pen
 promise after promise, Christ committed his soul and now asks you
 to commit yours.⁵³

In concluding this section on the Devices of Style, it can safely be
 said that Dr. Maier made good use of repetition, variety, and concreteness.

⁵²Maier, The Cross from Coast to Coast, p. 380.

⁵³Ibid., p. 382.

Most important is the fact that he preached about people and rarely let the hearer lose sight of some person, most always in action. The other facet of style which contributed much to his persuasive preaching was his direct confrontation of the listener with the Law and Gospel message. His language was simple, clear, flowing, beautiful. His words had impressive power.

Summary

What then, can generally be said of the factors of persuasion in the analysis of fifteen sermons? To be sure, the basic persuasive elements of both content and style are evident in all of Dr. Maier's preaching from his very first sermon to the last. Yet throughout the years his sermons show a considerable growth in the use of especially the following persuasive homiletical skills: specific information, testimonies, questions, imperatives, permeating distribution of Law and Gospel, repetition, timeliness, directness, and urgency of purpose; not to mention an evident growth in his theology of preaching with greater emphasis on the Spirit and the resurrection of Christ. It was a progression in degree rather than kind without which he probably never would have achieved such effective mastery of the radio pulpit as he actually did.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONCLUSION

What noteworthy conclusions can now be drawn from the preceding investigation of the factors of persuasion in the sermons of Dr. Walter A. Maier?

To begin with, it must be noted that every practical investigation of this kind is bound to a certain amount of subjectivity. One can never completely divorce personal feeling from strict objective thought. The impressions of Dr. Maier's powerful preaching which the writer of the thesis experienced already in childhood, no doubt, also present their positive undercurrents in this investigation. Yet there is some objectivity in it all because Dr. Maier's sermons are compared with standards of persuasive preaching set down by scholars in homiletics, psychology, and speech. Thus, in the study of the sermons the writer often found himself competing between an ideally subjective and a really objective approach to the subject. Yet he has come to some definite convictions as to the relative importance of the factors of persuasion involved in Dr. Maier's preaching.

First of all, one of Dr. Maier's greatest sources of preaching strength lay in his dynamic Christian personality. It is the opinion of the writer that another preacher could use all the persuasive devices which Dr. Maier employed and still not preach like him. Dr. Maier was unique in his personality. His preaching was marked by an active love for God and people, by sincerity and terrific earnestness, by overwhelming zeal for life, by outstanding mental abilities, by an uncompromising and courageous way in the faith of the apostles and prophets. Indeed,

one of his most remarkable character traits was his resolute fearlessness. He set the hammer of God's Law down firmly upon anyone who was guilty of sin. And because he was fearless, people saw he had genuine convictions. They realized his loving concern for them. This fact helped to make his sermons astoundingly persuasive.

The greatest and ultimate source of preaching power, however, lay not in the radio preacher but in what he preached. It was not in the man but in the Message. He preached the acting and activating Word of God, both Law and Gospel, which in Christian preaching is the primary factor of persuasion. The spoken Word itself persuades. This is the amazing rediscovery of the entire thesis. One cannot even read the sermons without experiencing the Holy Spirit's help in pondering the great fact of redemption.

Dr. Maier preached the Law with the seriousness of an Old Testament prophet and applied it to modern times. He preached sin in its real theological sense, as separation, rebellion, death, judgment, hell. He would never let his listener rest from the indicting judgment of the Law. Thus, he diagnosed the Law many times in one sermon. The Law was always preached with a view toward contrition and repentance.

Dr. Maier preached the Gospel with all the fervor of a New Testament evangelist. He presented the Gospel as a gift, a free and full offering for the forgiveness of sins of all mankind. His Gospel always centered about what Christ has done and still does for sinners. He preached the Gospel of forgiveness and power for life.

✓ Most unique about his preaching of the Gospel is that he did not mention it only once in every sermon, but time and time again. (One

sermon has as many as nineteen paragraphs containing clear proclamations of Gospel. Every sermon has one outstanding Gospel paragraph, which speaks in magnificent detail of the only Way of Life.

In Dr. Maier's persuasive preaching of Law and Gospel, then, it is important to remember three things: the genuine theological emphasis; the application to contemporary problems; the permeating distribution throughout the entire sermon.

The investigation points up the fact that Dr. Maier also readily employed other factors of persuasion. No doubt most of them he used unconsciously, while some he put into the sermon consciously.

Among the elements of content which are quite often employed are appeals to reason through a good outline, statistics, testimonies, and evidence of authorities; appeals to the emotions by considering man's basic desires, especially the desire for affection; appeals via contrast to decision; appeals to suggestion such as social suggestion, challenges, questions, and commands; and the appeals evident in pointed introductions and challenging conclusions. The most outstanding characteristic of Dr. Maier's sermons is the unusual combination of both Biblical and timely content. Except for the unchanging Law and Gospel truths, the sermons would be long out of date because they were written for the needs of people in one particular time in history. This fact was a boon to Dr. Maier's effective preaching during his day because timely sermons are persuasive sermons.

The persuasive devices of style which find prominence in Dr. Maier's preaching are the repetition of theme, text, and Bible passages; variety in sentences and paragraphs, and sermon content; and concreteness through short and simple words, directness, illustrations, and alliteration.

The elements of conflict and apologetics dare not be overlooked as important techniques for creating and holding attention. Furthermore, it should be said that rapid movement best characterized the style of Dr. Maier's preaching. People, especially the characters involved in the text, would lead the listener through point after point in the sermon. The direct "I-you" approach and the prolific use of imperatives added more punch and persuasive power to his preaching.

Dr. Maier's delivery of about one hundred seventy words per minute was characterized by earnestness and vitality. The Gospel was proclaimed as though there were only twenty minutes left to bring millions to Christ. It was an urgent, high-pitched delivery, marked by a choice use of variety in volume and rate. Although his delivery was not the best from the radio point of view, yet people loved it and listened to his dynamic messages.

The following order of the Word, personality, and the factors of persuasion, in the writer's opinion, shows the relative importance of the fourteen most unique and outstanding factors of persuasion employed in Dr. Maier's preaching:

1. The Word: Law and Gospel
 - a. thorough Biblical concept
 - b. pervasive distribution
 - c. application to contemporary needs
 - d. Gospel imperatives
2. The Dynamic Christian Personality of Dr. Maier
 - a. conviction
 - b. earnestness
 - c. boldness

3. Factors of Persuasion: Content, Style, Delivery

- a. timeliness of facts and illustrations
- b. urgent, direct, "I-you," hortatory emphasis
- c. movement: people and the characters of the text
- d. special and specific information
- e. conflict and apologetic character
- f. repetition and variety
- g. vitality of delivery

The sermon study shows that there was an evident progression in Dr. Maier's use of the factors of persuasion. This is apparent in several basic elements. The late sermons preached have a more pervasive distribution of Law and Gospel, greater accent on Christology and the Resurrection and the Spirit, more Gospel imperatives, more special and specific information, more Christian testimonies, questions, commands, and a more direct presentation. The great radio herald's entire ministry seemed to build up to a tremendous climax.

It is worthy of note that Dr. Maier's preaching was preaching in the strictest sense. It was simple proclamation of sin and grace. There was no evidence of any philosophical attempt to explain some of the more profound concepts of Biblical truth. The message was simply presented and applied as truth. This factor made his preaching particularly appealing, not only to the educated, but, above all, to the mass of common people.

Dr. Maier was one of the truly great radio preachers of all time. There is still much in the content, style, and delivery of his sermons that remains to be explored. Examining more of the implications of his

theology of preaching alone would be an extremely exciting and beneficial task.

From a personal point of view, the study of the factors of persuasion in the sermons of Dr. Maier was extremely inspiring and profitable. It was not an experience in homiletics alone, but above all, in theology -- practical theology. The investigation of the factors of persuasion, from a theological and homiletical point of view, in the sermons of the powerful radio preacher would be a rich experience for every Christian preacher! If the printed and recorded sermons of Dr. Maier are able to make such an effective impact on the mind and heart of the observer, who can even begin to measure their full persuasive power as the sermons first flowed forth from the lips of the man of the Lutheran Hour?

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