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5-1-1966

# Categories of Lutheran Preaching in America and their Communication Systems for Apprehending Revealed Truth

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## Recommended Citation

Wendler, Harlan, "Categories of Lutheran Preaching in America and their Communication Systems for Apprehending Revealed Truth" (1966). *Master of Sacred Theology Thesis*. 321.
https://scholar.csl.edu/stm/321

CATEGORIES OF LUTHERAN PREACHING IN
AMERICA AND THEIR COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS
FOR APPREHENDING REVEALED TRUTH

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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May 1966

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Advisor

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Reader

# EVALUATING LUTHERAN PREACHING

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# INTRODUCTION

Preaching in the Lutheran Church has had the place of prominence in the worship life of Lutheran Christians from the time of the Reformation until the present day. Even though the altar is in the center of the chancel and the pulpit is at one side, the latter seems to have played the more dominant role in the historical development of the Lutheran cultus. When you ask any Lutheran Christian why he goes to church, more often than not he will reply: "To hear the Word of God." When pressed further you will probably discover that he means he attends worship services to hear a good sermon. When Lutheran congregations consider candidates to fill a vacancy for the pastoral office, they usually require that the man should be a good preacher, despite the well-known fact that they soon require him to spend more time on administration of the parish than on preparing sermons. Furthermore, it is not without significance that one of the largest Lutheran seminaries in the United States, Concordia of St. Louis, refers to her athletic teams as "The Preachers." Again, while many Lutherans often refer to their pastor as "Reverend" in his presence, they are likely to speak of him in his absence as "The Preacher." This would seem to indicate that preaching is still prominent in the church.

In these latter years pastoral theology, particularly in the area of pastoral counselling, has achieved added emphasis in the ministerial profession. As one result of this emphasis some people have been ready to confine preaching in modern times to the limbo of uselessness.[1]

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[1]Charles W. Smith, "Is Preaching Outmoded?" Biblical Authority for Modern Preaching (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 11.

However, Lutherans in general, both pastors and people, are still certain that Scriptural preaching is the best means the church has for communicating God's revealed truth to both Christians and non-Christians. They remember Martin Luther best as the man who turned the tide of ecclesiastical and political opposition to religious freedom by means of the Bible in his hand along with its public proclamation to the people in their own tongue. The content and the power for proclaiming the revealed truth of God always has been and still is the message itself, but the preferred launching pad is the pulpit rather than the counselling room. This does not minimize the importance of personal counselling. Rather, the pastoral counselling relationship helps the communication process from the pulpit, since preaching is the proclamation of God's truth to individuals, even though the individuals are in a group setting.

What then is preaching? The following will serve as a good definition of preaching for purposes of this thesis:

> Christian preaching is the communication by a man in Christ to individuals in their known needs to the end that by God's grace they may experience newness of life within the community of the Holy Spirit, the Church.[2]

Because preaching has such a prominent place in Lutheranism, and since the writer is a parish pastor, his interest in this thesis is not only academic, but also pragmatic. Every Lutheran preacher has heard, read, and delivered sermons in which the situation, the circumstances, the content, and the delivery of the sermon were joined in such a way that the communication process clicked or meshed. Then again, there

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[2]David A. MacLennan, Pastoral Preaching (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955), p. 28.

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were times when the sermon did not appear to communicate well even when preached repeatedly on the same morning. One asks why one time and why not the other? It seems too easy to answer that this is in the realm of the Holy Spirit. If that were true, logically the preacher would not need to prepare sermons, but just depend on the Holy Spirit for inspiration!

To carry the query a bit farther, people have observed the talents, gifts, and fruit-bearing of various preachers. Some men produce fruits in abundance wherever they go. Their total ministry, including their preaching, is highly effective. Paul declared that one plants, another waters, but God gives the increase. One should have no argument with the apostle, for God judges the preacher on the basis of the talents He has bestowed in relation to faithfulness. Yet, must not each preacher study and sweat to be the kind God requires him to be?

What is good Lutheran preaching? What are its components? The quest for successful proclamation of divinely revealed truth which enables men to apprehend it must be a humble prayer on the part of the preacher to God to make the ways of grace apprehensible. While the full answer to this quest will never be known this side of Judgment Day, some facets of the answer appear to have been given by God to His faithful heralds and need to be searched out. This paper is such a quest. It proposes to investigate, analyze, and evaluate the relationship between the message, form, function, and language of Lutheran preaching in America and the communication systems involved for apprehending revealed truth.

General reading in the field at first seemed to indicate different types of sermons, such as topical, expository, prophetic, evangelistic,

pastoral, liturgical, etcetera. But are these mutually exclusive types? Are these proper categories or classifications of Lutheran preaching? Many sermons have elements of all these so-called types, perhaps emphasizing one more than others in a given sermon. To establish proper criteria for evaluating sermons, various authorities in homiletics and criteria of communication were consulted, and sermons were analyzed.

The primary sources of materials are mostly printed sermons. This immediately poses a limitation, since such sermons are usually edited, and therefore are generally not presented exactly as preached. The advantage of such a source is that the printed sermon is more readily available and easier to analyze than taped sermons. Such tapes are not as widely available for study of a cross-section of Lutheran preaching in America and require more listening time for analysis compared to the reading time of a printed sermon. The outstanding advantage of the tape as a source, is that it is a true reproduction at least of the voice of the preacher. A videotape combines the sight of the preacher with his "sounding forth." Such videotapes are not easily available. The way to obtain the best source is to be in the audience, observe the preacher and the congregation, then review the same sermon on videotape and finally read it in print.

We further limited ourselves chiefly to sermons in the English language, although there is some preaching going on quite regularly each week in a number of Lutheran pulpits in the United States in foreign languages. Only a few sermons and meditations in the German language were examined. It appeared advisable to stay, for the sake of timeliness, within relatively recent years in the selection of sermons. The sermons

examined are, in most cases, those delivered since the close of World War II.

The study of the sermons, the reading of literature in the field of communications, and the examination of the writing of various homileticians led to the following plan for presenting this thesis. First to be considered is the evaluation of the sermon's message. The category of kerygma in this regard will deal with Lutheran preaching's content and function. The term "category" has been employed rather than "class" or "kind," because it connotes more than mere classification. In a scheme of classification "category" includes the thought of assertion and predication which coincides more satisfactorily with the term "preaching" as used in the thesis. It became natural to associate each of the categories in Lutheran preaching with a distinct communication system in view of both the theology and logical arrangement involved in this study. The expression "communication system" has to do with both sending and receiving messages. Since the sermon deals with both preacher and hearer this process has to function, if the message is to become both a stimulus and a response in the heart and life of the hearer and both at once. The communication system for this category will stress the Word of God made operative by the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, there will be an evaluating of the achievement of unity in the sermons. I shall deal with the category of vertical and horizontal objectives, or as they are sometimes termed, faith and life goals. The communication system for the apprehending of revealed truth in this category concerns itself with the thematic dialectic, that is to say, the structured relation of the sermon's central theme to its parts.

The third evaluation is that of the strategy of persuasion found in the sermon. Here will be considered both vertically and horizontally the perspective and authority from God to man, and the response to God and to the neighbor. The individual's relationship to God as an individual and his corporate relationship to the body of Christ, the church, appears to be vital for persuasion. I have named this evaluation the category of dialogical relationships. Its companion communication system has to do with the personality of the preacher to help the hearer apprehend the encounter or confrontation with God's Word and the power of suggestive spiritual sharing of God's truth.

In the fourth place, consideration will be given to evaluating the means of expressing God's revealed truth. This category of the use of language in sermons comes to grips with the hearer in terms of Christ as the Word, the Revealer of God's gracious will for him. The communication system to convey this category is, so to speak, a band of sight and sound wave lengths which beam through the technical apparatus of clarity, simplicity, accuracy, concreteness, force, moods, tenses, sentence structure, and the like, to the end of moving the hearer in God's direction.

There are significant forces at work in the American environment which hinder the effective communication of revealed truth. These forces are in addition to the normal limitations of the preacher and the distractions of the audience. A devastating problem is the fact that the language imagery and culture of the Bible is unknown not only to the masses, but even to modern church members. Many have substituted the modern god of scientism for the God of the Bible, so that immediately the biblical sermon of the previous generation no longer grips the modern

hearer. David H. C. Read discusses the pressures of science upon the public mind, much of which believes that science has the sole key to human life and prosperity. He points out that the atom bomb is a fact for good or ill and is more effective and powerful in men's minds than the hell they once believed in. Such a fact for people becomes a judge of truth, and they think they have no right to judge a fact.[3]

Interpreting a nation wide survey on mass communication, an article in Fortune magazine, according to F. W. Dillistone, concludes that modern scientific world-pictures are totally unlike pictures of the pre-scientific age; that to communicate truth today which claims to be timeless in its relevance, but which was originally expressed in terms drawn from a pre-scientific age, seems almost impossible.[4] The technological revolution has so confused man's mind and paralyzed his moral sense, that he is nervous and apathetic. He tries to shut off the strain through isolating himself from his fellow man and gets himself involved with his neighbor only at a comfortable distance; for example, modern man can read of massacres and even watch torture, enslavement, rape, and murder, and, without a twinge, readily return to his football or baseball entertainment.

> The modern ethos . . . works against successful communication of
> Christian truth and its appropriation as a basis for action in the
> world. It helps keep people away from a church that has not re-
> ceived the build-up. Interest in such a religious institution seems
> an irrelevant personal hobby. More seriously, it removes the peo-
> ple who do come to church as an effective audience even while they
> are there. It is not entirely that they will not hear, but that

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[3]David H. C. Read, The Communication of the Gospel (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1951), p. 41.

[4]F. W. Dillistone, Christianity and Communication (New York: Chas. Scribner Sons, 1956), pp. 13-17.

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they cannot.  There are clear signs that this is so.  The signs are found in the gap, increasingly evident to the discerning, between the thinking of the ministry and the thinking of the laity.  The gap becomes more evident the nearer thinking approaches the need to decide about action.[5]

Among the better educated one finds the influence of humanism a barrier to the communication of revealed truth.  Here it is not a matter of indifference or ignorance.  Rather, modern man has examined organized religion critically.  He has measured it against his own needs and the needs of the present day world and concludes that Christianity is not the answer.  The new skepticism under the storm of political and technological upheaval has led many to feel that the Christian faith was all right in the relatively simple and unscientific days of our agrarian forefathers, but it does not work in today's world.  Both the intellectuals and the laboring masses have, to a large degree, turned away from the church, while the middle class is excited about money and the materialism of the "Great Society."

To overcome these and other barriers to communicating the gospel to modern man, some Christians insist that the requirement is one of technique.  Just find a good Madison Avenue technique to reach the masses with that old time religion and America will turn back to the Bible and to God!

> The western heresy supposes that psychological research, high pressure advertising, opinion polls, mass suggestion, success stories, and modern business methods are the way the masses are to be swept into the Christian fold.[6]

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[5]Smith, p. 29.

[6]Read, p. 17.

While the knowledgeable will smile sardonically at the suggestion that theology is the pathway through confusion, thoughtful Christians press the claim for authoritative proclamation, even though the church militant is rent asunder by schism. There are still enough voices crying in the night declaring and demonstrating the good news, calling men to face the claim of Christ and give answer, so that here and there people are still committing themselves to the True God for the abundant life.

While scientists can work with the idea of God in the area of what theologians call the natural knowledge of God, there can be no real meeting ground scientifically between science and faith. However, in the field of sanctification, at least externally,[7] there are what appear to be certain similarities between the attitudes of scientists and those of Christians. Scientists can work with the concept of God, when that concept is useful for fostering healthy persons characterized by integrity, compassion, and humility. These three marks of a healthy personality involve ethical questions of respect for personality. Walter E. Stuermann refers to the latter when he remarks: "At this critical point, the rational interests of science and the humane interests of religion coincide."[8]

For the apprehension of revealed truth, however, one must look to the Holy Spirit first of all. The "how" of such apprehension remains God's secret, but He is pleased to show us the mystery in action. The

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[7]I am referring here primarily to motivation. The non-Christian can do good works before men, but only a Christian can do good works before God.

[8]Walter E. Stuermann, Logic and Faith (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 101.

Holy Spirit works by telling people what Jesus said and did.[9] God has not chosen to declare His truth in the heavenly language of ecstatic speech such as the charismatic gift of tongues through His church to others. Paul made it clear to the Corinthians that such speaking was for the edification of the speaker, but not for the hearer unless there was an interpreter of tongues present.[10] God, rather, is pleased to use the laws of human language, logic, and personality to help hearers apprehend revealed truth. Included in this study is the attempt to show these laws or criteria at work in Lutheran preaching.

The next four chapters deal with the above criteria in some detail. In order to be able to evaluate Lutheran preaching in America, discussion of the criteria will be presented first. Then excerpts of Lutheran sermons will follow to demonstrate the criteria.

After applying the thesis to various sermon collections in general, a detailed application to a specific sermon will follow to demonstrate and exhibit the categories and the communication systems in evidence as proper criteria for the evaluation of Lutheran preaching in this country.

If these criteria are demonstrably proper, then it follows that their application would be a useful step toward the answer to the quest: How does the Lutheran preacher proclaim the divinely revealed truth successfully to enable the hearer to apprehend it? To ask it another way: How can we use this charismatic gift of preaching to show forth God's glory more brightly and His rescuing and edifying power more winningly?

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[9] John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14.

[10] 1 Cor. 14:27-28.

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# CHAPTER I

## EVALUATING THE MESSAGE OF THE SERMON

Sermons have been delivered artistically and presented skillfully, but yet they failed because they were devoid of gospel content. This should not happen to Lutheran preaching in view of the heavy emphasis upon the theological disciplines and the expository method of developing the chosen text. But even here it happens occasionally that the kerygmatic content is weak or entirely absent. What then should be included in the category of kerygma? What does an examination of Lutheran preaching include?

C. H. Dodd's distinction between kerygma and didache[1] is now considered overdrawn. He wants to separate the content as summarized in the second article of the Apostle's Creed from the ethical instruction given to those who already accepted Christ as Savior. Yet the proclamation of the gospel for conversion, sustaining in faith, and sanctification is actually one in content.[2]

The preaching of the kerygma is not only the proclaiming of a past event, but is coupled with a present one which includes a function of teaching and another of therapy along with the telling of what happened. It is not only what God in Christ has done, but what He is still doing as the Event continues. The proclamation is not mere information, but glad

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[1]C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and its Development (New York: Harper, 1936).

[2]Richard R. Caemmerer, "Kerygma and Didache in Christian Education," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (April 1961), 200.

tidings for those involved, for example, not as we might read about men
rescued on a life raft, but tidings for one who is on the raft! Frederick
W. Schroeder writes that the proclamation must include the whole counsel
of God.

> though Apostolic preaching had the death and resurrection of Jesus
> as its focal point, the history of Israel and the pronouncements of
> Israel's prophets were used quite freely, both to support the
> Christian message and to show that God had been working out his pur-
> poses long before the fulfillment of his design became apparent in
> the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth.[3]

To get back to the question again: What should be included in the
category of kerygma? In the primitive church the apostolic doctrine con-
stituted the kerygmatic message. In his Master's Thesis, William Backus
cites three elements of the New Testament proclamation: (1) A claim
that Christ as Messiah was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy
(Acts 2:16; 10:43; Rom. 1:2; 1 Cor. 15:3-4); (2) An historical exposition
of Christ's life, death, resurrection, and exaltation; (3) A summons to
the hearers to repent and accept the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ
(Acts 2:38, 3:19, 10:43).[4] According to New Testament usage kerygma seems
to mean both a content and an activity--a message and an action. Note the
following attempt to outline the kerygma:

> Theme: The prophesies are fulfilled; The New Age has dawned.
> Content: God who in many ways and at many times in the past has
> spoken and acted, has now acted decisively and uniquely in his only
> Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, born of David's seed; after John's
> baptism, he did mighty works by God's power; he was crucified, dead,

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[3]Frederick W. Schroeder, Preaching the Word With Authority
(Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), p. 76.

[4]William Backus, "An Analysis of Missouri Synod Sermons Based on the
Content of the New Testament Kerygma" (S.T.M. Thesis, Concordia Seminary
Library, St. Louis, 1951).

and buried, but raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and exalted at God's right hand; he will come again as Judge and Savior of men--of these things we are witnesses. Offer: And now to all those who repent and believe in His Son, Jesus, who is the Messiah, God is offering salvation; that is, the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Spirit, and life in His kingdom. Invitation: Therefore, repent, believe the gospel, and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.[5]

From the purview of Historical Theology, Lutheran preaching proclaims law and gospel. The law in its function is not only descriptive of God's will and diagnostic in describing sin, but also judgmental. The gospel is not only information but also the conveyance of grace. Some Lutheran preaching in America tends to generalize the law and gospel with the didache function, being little more than moralizing, and the therapy consists too often in generalizations about God's care and providence. William Backus discusses eight elements of good preaching in relation to the New Testament kerygma in The Lutheran Quarterly as follows: (1) The work of Christ is one in which God participates--the atonement is God's action; (2) The person and work of Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures; (3) Sin in the life of the worshipper--traced to "Sarx;" (4) Christ died on the cross; (5) Christ's death was for man's sin; (6) Christ rose from the dead; (7) New life through the Spirit's presence; (8) The gospel and sacraments as means of grace.[6] In good Lutheran preaching one finds the content of kerygma combined with didache and at times with therapy. There should be a consistent contemporaneous inter-relationship between the content and the function. This is so because the message is historical and arises

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[5]John H. P. Reumann, "The Kerygma and the Preacher," Dialog, Vol. III (Winter 1964).

[6]William Backus, "Contemporary Lutheran Preaching," The Lutheran Quarterly, XIII (February 1961), 5.

from historical events. The kerygma becomes active and intelligible only in history, so that function of didache is dependent upon content. Didache reiterates the content, deepens it within the hearer, and spells out its implications.

> The preaching of the Word is a teaching function of the church with ethical implications. Conversely, the ethical teachings of the Christian Church should always be oriented toward and undergirded by the proclamation of Jesus Christ as Savior.[7]

The ethical implications that accompany the kerygma demonstrate its relevancy to contemporary life. Thus we can say that the whole sermon is the Word of God, and not merely the text and parallel Scripture passages that may be quoted within the sermon.

A word is in order concerning the therapeutic function. The concern of therapeutic speech is to remedy or improve the existing condition of the hearer.[8] This is more than warning and exhorting. It is the process of healing and making whole. It utilizes the look of faith to the past for fulfillment and to the future in hope for promises of God yet to be fulfilled for present assurance. Here again the therapy interacts with the content of kerygma.

A further consideration for evaluating the sermon's message is to question how the communicative process works for the hearer's apprehension of the message. Where the sermon is textual the Lutheran immediately finds himself in rapport with the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and the means of

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[7]Ronald E. Sleeth, Proclaiming the Word (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964), p. 10.

[8]H. Grady Davis, Design for Preaching (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), p. 127.

grace.

> The Word and the Spirit are so conjoined and united together that
> whatever the Spirit accomplishes for the salvation of men He
> accomplishes through the Word, and whatever effects are produced
> by the Word we know to be the work of the Spirit.[9]

The study of communication techniques must be preceded by a study of com-

munication theology. "The place of the Holy Spirit in Lutheran theology,

then, is something fixed and definite. He always accompanies and works

efficaciously in and through the means of God's own appointment."[10]  There-

fore, the importance of the text as means of the operation of the Holy

Spirit is essential in Lutheran preaching. Advertising and publicity can

sell ideas, but this in itself is not communicating gospel. Indoctrina-

tion can fasten one to Christian formulas, so that orthodox beliefs are

affirmed and emotional responses obtained, but such engineering of reac-

tion is not that love of all the heart, strength, and mind that God re-

quires of us.

Quite often topical sermons use Scripture as a pre-text more than as

a text. However, a good biblical topical sermon draws upon the Scrip-

tures to produce a basis or platform from which to transmit a communique

from the Word. The Holy Spirit empowers the hearer to apprehend the

truth that the kerygma is the all-powerful self-revelation of God, who

accomplishes what He declares.

> The Lutheran Church believes that the Word of God . . . not only
> tells me what I must do to be saved, but it also enables me to
> do it. It is indeed the principal means of grace. It is the

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[9] L. B. Buchheimer, "DeOpere Spiritus Sancti," Concordia Theological Monthly, XX (June 1949), 404.

[10] Ibid., p. 405.

vehicle and instrument of the Holy Spirit. Wherever the divine
Word is, there is also the divine Spirit, and wherever a person
uses the Word of God in any form God is divinely operative in it.[11]

The message transmits to the hearer that God Himself is present and active.

The means of grace are the Spirit's tools to communicate to the hearer

that the Word of the Lord is the Lord Himself. It is the Word that be-

came flesh and dwelt among us, incarnate in Him who with a word healed,

forgave sins, and raised the dead.

In the following sermon excerpts, note the means of grace as communi-

cation power:

> The sacrament is the touch of heaven, the gift of new birth, that
> forever marks the child as destined for the service of God and for
> eternity. This child at the font is not simply another number in
> the vital statistics of the race. This child is a part of the fam-
> ily of God.[12]

> Jesus does not depend on any external force to compel conformity to
> God's will. His approach is by way of announcement of forgiveness,
> by way of cleansing from sin, and by way of implanting a new heart
> of love for God and for our fellow men. These are His gifts to you
> who believe.[13]

In the next samples look for the Holy Spirit as communication power

for kerygma:

> Let it be said . . . that the Holy Spirit is here according to prom-
> ise, and is doing His work in our world. It is the work of the
> Holy Spirit to take of the things of Christ and declare it [sic.
> them] to you. It is the Spirit that creates and maintains life in
> His church and in her members.[14]

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[11]Edwin E. Pieplow, "The Means of Grace," The Abiding Word, II,
edited by Theodore Laetsch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947),
341.

[12]Victor Beck, editor, The Gospel We Preach, III (Rock Island, Illinois:
Augustana Press, 1956), 350.

[13]Ibid., p. 5.

[14]Ibid., p. 9.

As a loving Spirit He is with us today and spirit always seeks a
body in which to dwell.  To accept the Spirit of the living God is
to have this new life of the kingdom, the fruits of which are for-
giveness, love, joy, and peace.[15]

To worship the ascended Lord is to express joy at the glad tidings
that the Savior has died, risen, and ascended to God.  Through this
kind of worship, the Holy Spirit can enter our hearts and give us
the same power that was given to the disciples.[16]

Let us then worship the ascended Lord . . . that we may be filled
with the power of the Spirit, in order to have peace and joy, and
extend His Kingdom until He comes.[17]

The Spirit of Truth leads us into the truth which deals with the
most important values of life.  The Spirit of God reveals to us the
Truth about ourselves, about God, about eternity and the meaning and
purpose of life.  The Holy Spirit convicts of sin.  Sin is no longer
a mere theory, but a living reality.[18]

He gives us the power to overcome sin in our lives.  Walk by the
Spirit and do not gratify the desires of the flesh.[19]

The Holy Spirit walks along side His children in every experience of
life.  He is with us in temptation, in sorrow, and in every time of
need.[20]

In this following sample consider the therapeutic function of keryg-

ma joined to the means of grace for communication:

We are defective, but God himself has atoned for our sins.  We are
defective, but God himself heals us as we receive His Son as
Savior.  We are born as slaves, but a second birth at baptism makes
us His own as He claims us.  A cross on Calvary was the instrument
God used to make man righteous and acceptable.[21]

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[15]Ibid., p. 10.

[16]Ibid., p. 171.

[17]Ibid., p. 172.

[18]Ibid., p. 183.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., p. 282.

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I would call attention in the above to the balance between law and gospel and between sin and grace. Another example of the therapeutic function of proclamation is found in this excerpt:

> If you have come to the service burdened by a knowledge of your mistakes, I trust that you will see Jesus looking at you as He once looked at Peter, looking not only with reproof, but with love and forgiveness. Do not leave the service fearing your mistakes in your heart. During the offertory and during the prayers think of your mistakes one by one, and lay them there. Never think of them again. Certainly do not take them home with you or bear them about in your mind and heart. If you do as Peter did, admit your mistakes, sincerely repent, and believe in God's mercy in Christ, you will discover that by the grace of God all the guilt of your sins is washed away.[22]

In the next sermon samples one can observe the didactic function of the kerygma and the use of the law for diagnosis plus judgment:

> God knows us to be sinners against His holiness and yet he treats those justified through faith in Christ as if they were not guilty at all but righteous. . . . the sinner saved by God's grace knows that this treatment from God is the very thing that has won him from his sin and given him the vision of a new life. In justification God claims us to be something we have not yet become, and by the loving power of that claim we are won to the righteousness.[23]

> If you have come to the service tonight without any consciousness of sin, I trust that you will realize that in our hearts and in our lives all of us have sinned as grievously as Peter and Judas. By our lives we deny that we know Christ. We often betray Him. We do not have the opportunity to do it just as Judas did, because Jesus is not visibly with us. But we betray Him in other ways by becoming disloyal to His cause, by doubt and unbelief, by letting Satan take control of our thoughts, and by rebellion against Christ's better knowledge and will.[24]

> The advice which Peter gave to Jesus is clearly labeled as coming from its true source. The advice is labeled as being a product of Satan. Thus the very disciple whom Jesus had just called "blessed,"

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[22]Elmer Kettner, Life Victorious (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), p. 32.

[23]Beck, p. 277.

[24]Kettner, p. 32.

only a short time later is called "Satan" for Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Jesus did not say "Get thee behind me, Peter, for thou art of Satan," but he said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." He could not have put it more strongly, but in order that there would be no misunderstanding, Jesus added, "Thou art an offense unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." It is as if He had said "you do not have any taste for God's things, you do not understand God at all, you are thinking only as a sinful man. Get thee far from me.[25]

A. W. Arthur achieves the didactic function of the kerygma connected with

the Lord's Supper as the means of communication:

In our lesson we hear our Lord say, "For I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God comes." Listen especially as He says, "until the Kingdom of God comes." He looks ahead, and is not it to the consummation of all things? . . . the Sacrament is not without its apocalyptic note. St. Paul tells us, "as often as you eat this bread and drink. . . . The Church, when she is true to her commission, is earnestly proclaiming the Crucified Christ who rose again and for whose return we confidently look. . . . Every celebration of the Sacrament is a witness to this faith. Christ is coming again.[26]

These examples will suffice to demonstrate that the kerygmatic con-

tent of the sermon combines with a didactic or therapeutic function, and

the power of communicating the truth in the kerygma and its application

resides in the means of grace made operative by the Holy Spirit. The ex-

cerpts utilize either the text or draw on parallel Scripture thoughts as

the basis for the communication process.

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[25]Herman Astrup Larsen, By Man Rejected (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1953), p. 25.

[26]Beck, p. 127.

# CHAPTER II

## EVALUATING THE SERMON'S ACHIEVEMENT OF UNIFIED OBJECTIVE

A frequent deficiency of some of the expository sermons in this study was the lack of a clear observable objective. Usually the theme and parts of such sermons were well organized, but a definite sermon objective in quite a number of selections was absent. Because topical sermons usually begin with an objective in the mind and heart of the preacher before he selects a text, the failure of having a clear goal was less frequent among the topical sermons reviewed as compared to the expository type.

When the sermon lacks a clear objective the preacher is inviting the hearer to ask: So what? If the kerygmatic content for proclamation together with didactic and therapeutic functions are going to be capacitated for persuasive action, there must be direction or spiritual circuitry along which spiritual power can travel towards cumulative results.

In order that the hearer might not be confused with a widespread shotgun spray of goals, the sermon ought to be aiming at a single goal either vertically or horizontally. By that is meant the objective aims either at a faith-goal, sometimes referred to as evangelistic, or to a life-goal, sometimes called edifying. In the former, the goal is to present Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that the hearer will be led to put his trust in God the Father for forgiveness through the redeeming action of God's Son. In the latter objective, the sermon aims to further this new relationship with God by the process of nurturing it, so that the hearer serves the Lord through the fellowship of His church and in his

daily behavior. In this edifying nurturing process the same kerygmatic
content along with the didactic and/or therapeutic function are at work
as in the evangelistic objective. Richard R. Caemmerer lists two broad
structures for nurturing the hearers, first, the gifts of the Spirit
and, second, the Christian calling.[1] The nurturing helps hearers to live
as citizens of God's Kingdom; it builds the church in spiritual power, co-
hesivensss, and outgoing helpfulness; and it comforts the people by
strengthening them with courage, peace, security, and love.

In achieving unity in the sermon, the preacher is aware of the basic
unity of the whole Bible. Saint John in Chapter 20, verse 31, gives us a
pretty good general statement of Scripture's basic goal that "ye might be-
lieve that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye
might have life through His name." Each sermon that achieves unity will
have a particular specific objective which differs from week to week, yet
it will be aimed at the general unifying objective of the Bible, although
from specific angles. In every sermon the chief objective is to

> present Christ to men and men to Christ, that they may experience
> His power, truth, and love, and respond with loving trust and
> obedience. It is to create conditions . . . whereby the persons
> listening may experience a divine-human encounter.[2]

Where the sermon's objective is clear the theme and parts are formu-
lated so as to become the tracking apparatus of the sermon. If a sermon's
ideas mill around loosely it cannot bring the hearers to a unifying

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[1]Richard R. Caemmerer, Feeding and Leading (St. Louis: Concordia
Publishing House, 1962).

[2]David A. MacLennan, Pastoral Preaching (Philadelphia: The
Westminster Press, 1955), p. 38.

experience of Christ.  The theme may contain the goal, but it should not be confused with the goal, lest the false assumption is made that a text's central thought as it capsules the informational content of the text will in itself persuade the hearer to make a response.  The theme and parts are the communication system for the sermon's objective.  The outline gathers, separates, and unifies, so that the progression of thought is formulated.  Then the hearer can apprehend where the Spirit of God is taking him.

> Where the text is familiar and the thematic concept rich, a more
> synthetic outline may be used.  Aspects of the theme derived from
> the text as a whole form divisons.  The subdivisions show how each
> aspect is found in the text and apply to the hearers.  Where the
> text is lengthy or unfamiliar the outline should be more analytic;
> that is, the divisions should summarize sections of the text itself
> as they relate to the theme of the passage.  The subdivisions of
> such an outline are usually more synthetic; that is, they summarize
> aspects of that particular section of the text in relation to the
> main theme.[3]

While the topical sermon is legitimate and is used by Lutheran preachers in America, particularly in the choice of free texts, this type of sermon runs the risk of using a text as a pre-text and does at times become a distillation of the preacher's general reading about the Scriptures.  A topical sermon is built around a subject or idea taken either from Scripture or outside of it.  The text is often quite short.  By contrast, the expository sermon, utilizing pericopes for texts, is usually longer than a verse or two, and the theme with the major and minor parts comes readily from the text.  The whole expository sermon is "an honest attempt to unfold the true grammatical-historical-contextual meaning of the passage, making it

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[3]Edmund P. Clowney, Preaching and Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Erdman's Publishers, 1961), p. 117.

relevant to life today by proper organization, argument, illustrations, applications and appeal."[4]

In developing the theme the preacher utilizes a dialectic. The thesis, theme, or central thought is made clear to the hearer by direct positive declaration, but in addition the contrast or comparison, called antithesis, causes the hearer to recognize his need to weigh and consider the thesis. However, the structure of the sermon cannot leave the hearer hanging on the horns of dilemma but should help bring the thoughts, will, and emotions together in synthesis, so that the goal comes through in a unified way. Thus it demands a response to the objective. Occasionally the objective of the sermon doesn't get specific until the conclusion. In a sermon based on LeFarge's story of "The Sudden Guest" which discusses the problem of sinful indifference to the needs of others, the objective or goal is finally stated in the sermon's conclusion: "A person . . . has been commissioned by Christ to shine as a light in a crooked and perverse world."[5]

In the following excerpts note the theme and dialectic as they relate to the faith goal of the sermon, namely this: "Surely our hearts well up with praise and thanksgiving as we meditate upon these promises concerning the blessed hope of the resurrection."[6]

> In His answer Jesus gives us much enlightenment and instruction on the whole subject of the resurrection. In considering the answer

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[4]Faris D. Whitesell, _Power in Expository Preaching_ (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1963), p. VII.

[5]Victor Beck, editor, _The Gospel We Preach_, III (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Press, 1956), 310.

[6]_Ibid._, p. 320.

we find four glorious promises we can take to ourselves concerning the state of those who will be raised from the dead.[7]

Let us meditate often upon this promise: "for they cannot die any-more." The second great promise concerning those who die in Christ is seen in the statement, "they are equal to angels."[8]

Jesus gives us the third promise when He says of those who attain to the resurrection that they "are the sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."[9]

The fourth promise found in our text is a further witness to the fact of eternal life: "But that the dead are raised even Moses showed in the passage about the bush. . . . Now he is not God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him."[10]

A sermon which utilized the words of the text based on John 8:31-36 for much of the theme and parts on the theme "How Free Are You?" was delivered by John R. Benson. Part I: Everyone is a potential slave; Part II: Everyone is potentially free; (A) If ye abide in My Word; (B) Then are ye truly My disciples; (C) Ye shall know the truth; (D) The truth shall make you free; Part III: Free indeed.[11] In another sermon called "The True Saints" the theme and parts are a division of the subject, but I could find no real connection to any objective or goal. "It is of the latter that Jesus is speaking in the beatitudes of our text, wherefore our chosen subject: The True Saints; their condition, their trust, and their reward."[12]

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[7]Ibid., p. 318.

[8]Ibid., p. 319.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., p. 320.

[11]Ibid., p. 279.

[12]Ibid., p. 354.

In the next sample the division of the theme's parts are clearly
stated, but are not clear for meaning to the hearer: "First of all, we
must not interpret tragedy as a punishment for sin."[13] "Second, we must
exercise a sense of values when we interpret tragedy."[14] "Finally, the
good uses to which disaster may be put by the grace of God must also be
considered when we interpret tragedy."[15] In a sermon by Paul H. Andreen
based on Matthew 11:28-30 called "The Divine Invitation: Come to Me,"
there is a one-sentence introduction and then a plunge into the first of
four parts.[16] It is difficult to find the objective of the sermon. The
theme is divided in this manner: Part I: Here is a Divine invitation;
Part II: Christ invites us for He knows our needs; Part III: We must meet
the challenge of His invitation; Part IV: The invitation conveys God's
love. The parts are not mutually exclusive. Part I fits under Part II.
Part IV should precede Part III logically.

One of the best examples to demonstrate a simple dialectic for easy
remembrance is offered by Edwin C. Munson in a sermon entitled "How
Money Talks" based on Mark 12:41-44. This text is the story of the widow's
two mites. The two mites tell how money talks. Part I: About the giver;
Part II: About the gift; Part III: About the spirit of giving. Here is a
key sentence in Part I: "Those two mites given in the spirit of love and
faith, bore witness to the fact that that woman's religion was precious,

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[13]Ibid., p. 209.

[14]Ibid., p. 211.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid., p. 263.

that it was worth something."[17]  A key sentence in Part II "It is the relation it has to the means of the giver and the heart of the giver that reveal the greatness or smallness of the gift."[18]  Another important sentence for Part III is "Not until we love greatly and sacrifice voluntarily and gladly can we ever claim to have given the widow's mite."[19]

A bonfire is useful at a pep rally for the big football game, but the team will have to be thoroughly instructed in skull practice to learn the plays and then practice their execution in order to get the ball over the goal line.  Stirring up a bonfire of enthusiasm in a sermon will accomplish little without a clear goal and structure for theme, dialectic, and progression of thought.

[17]Ibid., p. 259.

[18]Ibid., p. 260.

[19]Ibid., p. 261.

# CHAPTER III

## EVALUATING THE STRATEGY OF PERSUASION

In the category of dialogical relationships thoughts turn particularly to the relationship between God and man and between man and his neighbor. What do preachers say when they get into the inner conversation of people's lives? As mouthpieces of God and as representatives of the congregations, the preachers become God's instruments for setting up a situation of dialogue between God and the hearer. The sermon becomes the significant substance of that dialogue.

If that dialogue is to happen, if the message is to have meaning for the hearer and meet his conscious needs, solve the problems of which he is aware, and lead to an actual acceptance of the sermon's faith or life goal, then the hearer must experience that he is in conversation with God. James W. Clarke claims that a sermon may have qualities in biblical rootage, content, order, unity, progress, relevance to the human situation, and decent diction, but yet fall to the ground because it lacks a sense of God. It is an awareness of God that gives the sermon a sense of the eternal.[1]

> This awareness provides the mystical element in preaching which
> conveys that sense of the Infinite which challenges and yet allures,
> scourges and yet comforts, condemns and yet encourages, inspires
> and yet informs, is relevant to the problems of contemporary life,
> and yet is an echo from behind the hills of silence and of wonder.[2]

Herein lies a quality of persuasive appeal and warmth.

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[1]James W. Clarke, Dynamic Preaching (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1960), p. 120.

[2]Ibid., p. 121.

In answering the question of what is involved in the process of persuasion, we must deal with relationships:

> Religion is primarily concerned to deal with the area of inter-
> personal relationships:  God to man, person to person in the
> society of persons, and person to self.  Christian worship, includ-
> ing preaching, is concerned with expressing and activating right
> inter-personal relationships:  reverencing God, responding to God
> in His active outreach (agape-love) to us, returning to God (repent-
> ing), being forgiven, being turned around toward God (converted),
> being brought out of alienation into actual koinonia-fellowship
> (becoming reconciled), being born again, being remade in the image
> of God (becoming sanctified, made holy) and growing in the grace
> and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, concurrently
> coming to respect other persons, forgiving and being forgiven, be-
> coming reconciled to others and responding to them in love and grow-
> ing in love, considerateness, righteousness and fair dealing towards
> them, and at the same time accepting God's forgiveness and forgiving
> one's self, being brought to respect one's self, finding one's life
> by losing that life in gracious personal relationship with God, and
> growing in personal integrity and honor.[3]

In this category of dialogical relationships the sermon demonstrates, for one thing, a perspective and authority that comes from God and moves toward man.  It sets up a reciprocal response with God and the neighbor. The sermon's offer of God's Words as law and gospel meeting the hearer's need conditions him for empathetic response.  It invites a facing up to the truth which authoritatively asks for dialogue.  This is encounter, yet it is also sharing, since the sermon is not monologue but dialogue.  The process summons the hearer to react with heart, mind, and will.

The perspective and authority of the message occurs just because it relates to the revealed truth of God in the Bible.  This relationship is at the root of persuasion's power.  In this authority there is the divine

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[3]Graham Jamieson, "Communicating and Relating in Religion," Theology Today, XVI (April 1959), 35.

imperative to acknowledge the rule of God. It asks for obedience from everyone who is aware that God has reconciled him. In addition, the perspective of revealed truth presents the requirements of compassion by doing unto others as God in Christ has done unto him.

Preaching, then, doesn't depend on external authority, but the authority is the grip of the message itself. In this connection, Edmund P. Clowney makes the interesting point that the New Testament terms for the message all reflect authority. These terms are kerygma, evangelion, martyria, and didache. There is a divine commission from the herald of the King. Evangelion is the good news of the prophets that the kingdom has come because the King has come. God Himself is the great witness to His Son and He is confirmed by the Holy Spirit. The apostolic witness testifies to Christ. The didache applies the insights of the cross's authoritative meaning for faith and life.[4] The message acts with compelling power upon the hearer's awakened insight. He feels he is responding to something newly formed within. In the proclamation God is acting. He awakens the empathetic insight to react. D. T. Niles discusses this activity when the gospel is proclaimed: (1) There is God in His activity to win men to live in fellowship with Him; (2) There is God in His activity to reveal to men His true nature and purpose; (3) There is God in His activity to create for Himself a people who will be His instrument in the world; (4) There is God in His activity to bring to pass His kingdom

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[4]Edmund P. Clowney, Preaching and Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Erdman's Publishers, 1961), p. 56.

into which will be gathered all the treasures of the nations.[5] God is at
work and we work with Him. The result of what we do is under the result
of what He does. "Our work is an offering to Him, His work is what ful-
fills His purposes."[6]

Merrill R. Abbey states that the sermon is something more done than
said. It is God's act. God for the hearer must be present in the preach-
ing. The proclamation is not merely propositions about God, but a pro-
claiming from God Himself.[7] Preaching depends for authority on the power
of the Word being preached, and this power is not just a readiness to be-
lieve that the Word is true, but that the Word will cause to happen what
it promises.

The dialogical relationship in the persuasion process from God to
man and from man to God and to his fellowman achieves confrontation or
encounter. God in reconciling the world through Christ has already made
His decision, and the time comes when the hearer has to make one, too.
To arrive at that point of time in the persuasion process, that is to say,
to set up the encounter, rational exhortation and logical argument may be
less effective than the power of emotion. Here the use of the dramatic
arts might be useful

> wherein the hearer . . . through enkindled imagination is led to
> experience vicariously the situation in which he finds a solution
> to his problem. He is not told the answer or given the solution

[5]D. T. Niles, The Preacher's Task and the Stone of Stumbling (New
York: Harper & Bros., 1957), p. 92.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Merrill Abbey, Preaching to the Contemporary Mind (New York:
Abingdon Press, 1963), pp. 35-36.

but finds it for himself as the satisfactory way out of a dilemma in which he has participated imaginatively.[8]

"The basic principle of dramatization is to place truth in such imaginative form that people respond through several of their senses."[9]

On the other hand, the danger of such a technique is that it can lead the hearer into an escape from reality. He feels he is Christian simply by compartmentalizing his religion to the Sunday slot. He pulls out of the world and lives vicariously in an oasis of idealism for an hour. Thus he could affirm his ideals without any encounter or confrontation to change his life. It may be better to harness the emotions to a logical structure, because the decision of God, the message of reconciliation confronts the whole man, the whole being, the heart, mind, and will. When the people and the preacher participate with their whole being in the gospel, then the sermon becomes a shared experience.

A persuasive sermon invites the hearer to share empathetically in experiences of relationship. Bishop James A. Pike points out that people recognize within themselves fear, guilt, inhibition, frustration, loneliness, indecision, and despair. While these may involve secondary questions rather than ultimate ones touching human existence, yet often behind a penultimate question there is an ultimate question requiring an ultimate answer.[10]

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[8]E. Winston Jones, *Preaching and the Dramatic Arts* (New York: MacMillan, 1948), p. 50.

[9]Ronald E. Sleeth, *Persuasive Preaching* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1956), p. 66.

[10]James A. Pike, *A New Look in Preaching* (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1961), p. 37.

Then in the empathy-sharing process in connection with dialogical relationships Bishop Pike offers some general comparisons: Fear has its roots in idolatry. The answer is a thorough-going monotheism. Inhibition is due to cultural conditioning preventing some from enjoying the physical world. The answer is the doctrine of creation. People mistake limitations for failure. "The significant thing about self-fulfillment is what we do with our limitations."[11] Here the author points to the example of Christ's suffering ending in victory. For indecision God's Providence is the answer. The loneliness and yearning for deep and abiding relationships is offered in the fellowship of the church, the communion of saints. Despair, restlessness, and meaningless are overcome by the doctrine of eternal life.

Thus, in addition to perspective and authority for strategy of persuasion, the effective sermon also demonstrates a relationship of the individual hearer to his fellow believers. While the audience is a collection of individuals, it is not only that; it is more. It is a Christian congregation, a body of believers united in a common faith and purpose of life. The congregation supplies dialogue to the hearer through the preacher. The hearer is doing this to every other hearer. "The sermon is the . . . word which comes from God to the church."[12] The Word creates the church. It confronts the church and creates new life. The preacher and those who aided and trained him to understand the text and proclaim it were already members of the church. Each hearer in whom

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[11]Ibid., p. 54.

[12]Dietrich Ritschl, A Theology of Proclamation (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1960), p. 69.

dialogue is in process hears the witness of the church to the Word.

For persuasion from God via His Word to the church, the sermon declares His divine invitation. God says to the hearer: "You are wanted." He takes the initiative. He says: "Come." The invitation narrows towards the decision of either yes or no. It allows no neutrality. This summons to decision should be clear and definite, and it is often accomplished by having two definite but strong opposing alternatives.

Invitation also implies an expected response. One must go to accept an invitation. The going assumes the invitation is trustworthy. The response is an act of faith; for example, the blind man was asked to wash in the pool of Siloam, and the paralytic was asked to take up his bed roll and walk. Sometimes the response is an act of love to the next person or an improvement in behavior.

Moreover, the invitation asks the hearer to wait upon God with expectancy. The sermon doesn't merely tell the hearer what ought to happen to him, but it should affirm that God is at work making it happen at the present moment, and is waiting at the same time for the hearer to realize what is happening. When encounter comes to the hearer, he is aware that God has been confronting him all along with patient expectancy.

Everyone easily detects the difference between a "canned" speech and a delivered address. Even a recording is known to be less effective as compared to a "live" broadcast, and neither is as effective as a person-to-person meeting. For communication between persons, the sermon, well planned as it might be on paper, cannot be a recitation. For communication between persons there must be conversation. The problem is difficult enough when people are actually speaking with one another, as so

often people talk past each other. There is that well known six way
block to conversation between two persons; namely, the person you think
you are, the person you actually are, and the person the other conversa-
tionalist thinks you are, plus the same three way problem in his case.
Since the preacher is doing all the speaking in the sermon, can there be
much dialogue at all?

Every experienced public speaker knows of audience "feedback." In
delineating a system of communication for the category of dialogical re-
lationships to measure the sermon's strategy of persuasion, the personal-
ity dynamics of preacher and hearer are an important consideration and
require further thought. The "feedback" is very important to the process
of persuasion.

After considering the form, function, and rationale of the sermon, it
still needs a way of reaching people emotionally and volitionally for per-
suasion. The hearers sit in the pew with their prejudices, emotions,
fears, and frustrations all wrapped up together. The preacher too has his
share of the same. The personality dynamics of both have to mesh to com-
municate the relationships discussed above. To accomplish dialogue be-
tween God's truth and man's life, the proclaimer must understand the word
and thought of man as well as the revealed word and thought of God. He
cannot be so preoccupied with himself that he loses touch and breaks con-
tact with the hearers. The persuasive sermon demonstrates a sensing and
responding to the hearer so structured that meaning for the hearer is
offered and conveyed.

On the other hand, the hearer responds to the proclaimer by sensing
his purpose, and thinking through and along with the words and thoughts

being conveyed. Comprehension on the part of the hearer helps the
preacher, since this gives meaning to him for his efforts to communicate.

> Dialogue is that address and response between persons in which there
> is a flow of meaning between them in spite of all the obstacles that
> normally would block the relationship. It is that interaction be-
> tween persons in which one of them seeks to give himself as he is to
> the other, and seeks also to know the other as the other is.[13]

For communication of interpersonal relationships between God, the
preacher, and the hearer, the good sermon deals with people's inherited
universal drives, hungers, and urges, which demand satisfaction. The nat-
ural knowledge of God and the ethical drive, that is to say, conscience,
together with the other inherited drives, especially the master drive,
called the ego, shape personality and powerfully influence the indivi-
dual's relationship to his environment. The sermon senses the personality
needs of security, satisfaction, acceptance, and the need for God or cos-
mic relatedness, as some have called this latter need.[14] This need for
God affects all the other personality needs. Herbert H. Farmer states that
the gospel proclamation must have the unmistakable cosmic note in it. Peo-
ple have to feel an interpretation of the confusion, perplexity, and heart-
break of humanity as a whole without excluding their own personal perplex-
ities and heartbreaks. They need to sense where God fits in. Without the
dimension of the eternal, the whole picture of life becomes flat, futile,
and unreal to the human spirit, just as the third dimension in a landscape
is needed to give it a quality of realness. If men cannot talk the lan-
guage of eternity, they cannot be convinced that anything, even though

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[13]Reuel L. Howe, The Miracle of Dialogue (Greenwich, Conn.: Seabury
Press, 1963), p. 37.

[14]William H. Eifert, The Pastor at Work (St. Louis: Concordia
Publishing House, 1960), p. 262.

temporarily exciting and interesting, is really worth doing.[15] Sensing
is of first importance for communication of interpersonal relationships.

In some way humans will utilize things they have felt, heard, and
seen. People must respond to what has been sensed. They do this even
with non-verbal communication; for example, clowns who can display
accurately every emotion known to man without uttering a word. Sensing
is the first of the personality dynamics, but responding is an almost im-
mediate second dynamic, because everyone has need for a reciprocal rela-
tionship. People listen with eyes as well as ears and eventually respond
positively or negatively. Our very presence in a situation says something
before we have a chance to use words. The preacher's previous dealing
with the hearer, their opinion of him, the kind of sermon he generally de-
livers will be a part of the responding in this system of communication.

The third personality dynamic for communication is that of organiz-
ing. The preacher selects from the masses of expressions and stimuli of
which he is a part and selects those to which he will give attention in
the sermon. If the preacher's inferiority feeling, love of self, and the
selfish need to manipulate others dominates, the sermon inevitably is
structured to draw others into support of himself. But if his own rela-
tionship to God is truly Christian, the love of God in his heart and life
will be free to go out to others in his sermon. The stimuli in the sermon
will be organized to have genuine helping attitudes towards the hearer in
line with the gracious and good purpose of God's revealed will. The
stimuli of what the preacher hears, sees, touches, tastes, and even smells

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[15]Herbert H. Farmer, The Servant of the Word (New York: Chas.
Scribner's Sons, 1942), p. 126.

will be selected in terms of being for the hearer's benefit, so that he
"catches on" to this spirit of the sermon.

The final personality dynamic of communication is that of meaning.
It has to do with the sermon's establishment of rapport. Meaning im-
pinges upon people differently. There are some with whom a speaker finds
it difficult to be comfortable. When the audience is hostile, the
preacher and hearer are communicating very little, if at all. They are
just sparring with each other. To overcome this, honesty and fairness
in dealing with the hearer and his problem is very important. "An ef-
fective preacher understands the difference between reasoning and ration-
alizing; he knows the difference between fact and opinion; he respects
the use of evidence, and of the forms of support."[16] This honesty in-
cludes the use not only of words, but tone, emphasis, and gestures. The
sermon and its delivery indicates that it wants to convey what the
preacher as God's spokesman intends to convey, lest the hearer get a dif-
ferent meaning from what the preacher intended. Herbert H. Farmer writes
that the sermon conveys meaning in such a way that the integrity of per-
sonal judgment is respected, yet

> the unique function of speech is that of conveying in the most ex-
> plicit way possible the judgment of one self-conscious awareness to
> another in such wise that both are brought directly and inescapably
> under the claim of truth.[17]

The power of suggestion is an important ingredient for meaning. The
sermon signals the preacher's meaning and the hearer interprets the sig-
nals and takes up their significance into his own personal awareness. It

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[16]Sleeth, p. 46.

[17]Farmer, p. 51.

is then that an impression is created and the force of suggestion can lead
the hearer to a volitional expression of being God's person again through
Christ. It is exactly here that the doctrine of reconciliation via Christ's
atonement is so crucial for the communication of persuasive power. With-
out it, the sermon lacks the dynamic of meaning. But through it the per-
son knows he is a new creature and is released from the old meaning of his
existence.

Now that the personality dynamics have been briefly examined as a
collective system of communication, one has the further consideration of
how the Holy Spirit may use them as instruments for communication between
relationships. The first one to use the phrase "truth through personality"
for a definition of preaching was Phillips Brooks in his Yale Lectures on
Preaching. Leslie J. Tizard quotes the pertinent paragraph as follows:

> The communication of truth by man to men . . . has in it two essen-
> tial elements, truth and personality. Neither of these can it spare
> and still be preaching. . . . preaching is the bringing of truth
> through personality.[18]

For the persuasive process to be communicated there occurs a joint
operation between God, His Word, the preacher, and the hearer. The method
of communicating the message "arises from the nature of the message and
its source."[19] The message has to be both delivered and received. In one
sense the preacher is subordinate to the message, lest the message be ac-
cording to man instead of from God. In this sense the message is inde-
pendent of man, it depends on the Holy Spirit for communication, for it

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[18]Leslie J. Tizard, Preaching, the Art of Communication (New York:
Oxford U Press, 1959), p. 20.

[19]Chas. W. Smith, Biblical Authority for Modern Preaching
(Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 35.

is the Spirit's truth, and it serves not the purpose of man but of God.

Yet in another sense, the preacher is God's representative to man, for he

is also the servant of the congregation, called by them to be their in-

tercessory spokesman to God in their behalf. This situation sets up the

preacher for communicating authoritatively for persuasion.

> Ideally, the authority will be recognized to be the gospel, medi-
> ated through the preacher's personality from the Bible within the
> church, when it proves itself effective in the hearers, because it
> comes to them as a revelation, as "news" that brings good.[20]

The preacher

> contributes his own experience of Christ, his knowledge of Scripture
> and a Christian interpretation of them along with his sense of the
> people's need. The people contribute not only by attendance, but
> also share in the problem of acceptance. They become aware that
> they are not dealing with a man of good ideas, but with an agent of
> an ancient and tried faith.[21]

For communication of perspective and authority in this category of

relationships, the Holy Spirit's indwelling in the heart and conduct of

the preacher is necessary, although not an absolute necessity, since the

gospel itself is the power of God unto salvation. People have been con-

verted and edified by reading the Scriptures or tracts and the like. Yet

the church chooses and authorizes men to be preachers who have confessed

the faith and meet the qualification of Christian character. What the

preacher is as a person either helps or hinders persuasion. Oswald C.

Hoffmann has this to say:

> Compassion is the burden of our preaching--the everlasting compas-
> sion of God in Jesus Christ. If we are to reach into the hearts
> of people, we must share with them this spirit of divine compassion.

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[20]Ibid., p. 51.

[21]Ibid., p. 85.

We shall be able to share it only if we ourselves live near the cross.[22]

There is a vast difference in being authoritarian and preaching with authority for persuasion. The former is browbeating with external force. The latter has a real and implicit strength from the truth of the message itself. The preacher himself must give evidence that he is under the authority of the divine Word. Certainty in his own heart helps carry conviction. Mere erudition isn't authoritative. "Only the Spirit can invest human words with the authority that compels acceptance and obedience."[23]

What the personality of the preacher is will show up by what he says and does in his relationship to God and his hearers. His words and actions are suggestive. He can increase the power of suggestion by being physically direct. The poised preacher shows self-control, self-confidence, and the certainty of his message by the way he walks to the pulpit. The hearers are thereby alerted as to whether the speaker is strong and earnest or weak and hesitant. "The presence of good bodily action will suggest the keen desire of the speaker to communicate his ideas to the audience."[24]

Furthermore, the power of suggestion through the personality of the preacher is enhanced by using good vocal delivery. A vigorous delivery

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[22]Oswald C. Hoffmann, "Reaching Through Preaching," Wenchel Foundation Lectures (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), p. 23.

[23]Frederick W. Schroeder, Preaching the Word With Authority (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), p. 121.

[24]Thomas V. Liske, Effective Preaching (New York: MacMillan, 1960), p. 261.

creates confidence in the preacher's message. A voice that is warm and disarming creates not only a liking for the voice but for the man himself. The voice transmits shades of meaning. Monotonous over-deliberateness suggests mere memorization and lack of personal commitment to the message. Suggestive words evoke pictures in the mind, recall associations, and re-create past experiences. The preacher's own emotions are charged, and his senses are stimulated so as to pull the hearer into empathy with the meaning that the preacher's message has for the preacher himself.

The Christian transparency of the preacher's personality pictures a sample of victory over frustration. It portrays fulfillment. In addition, it shows success over the constant threats to one's personhood.

With feelings of insignificance man often follows a policy of expedience until he loses his center of personal existence. Such a man tries to get others to like him at all costs, until he becomes nothing more than a kaleidoscopic series of the reflections of others. Such a person has lost his sense of being in relationship to any ultimate significance. The sermon has to signal that the preacher is sensitive to this loneliness and then present the compassion of Christ with the gospel's unique power to heal that loneliness. Then too, such a preaching personality presents a mature and grateful reliance upon God in a culture which causes guilt feelings by insisting that everyone ought to be self-sufficient, but isn't, despite his best efforts.

The qualities or characteristics of the preacher's personality are the fruits of faith put to use by the Holy Spirit in persuading the hearer that Christ's truth can be a power for faith and life for him in ever greater measure. The Holy Spirit's truth through the personality of

the preacher is an effective instrument for communicating the sermon in the category of dialogical relationship.

The first sermon sample below is an example of the authoritative dialogical relationship from God to man and the response back to God.

Look at Jesus with your own eyes, open your heart before Him, and be sure that you can trust the impression He makes upon your own soul. He speaks to your heart with authority. If a man loves the truth, the teachings and person of Jesus present no problem. Learning from Him sets the soul to singing harmony with truth that is eternal in the heart of God. One is your teacher, even Christ.[25]

The next sample exhibits encounter along with kerygma and the personality dynamic of meaning:

And the first step to being free is to recognize one's self as a sinner and thus a slave, fettered without resources to help one's self. It is to see one's self as impotent, and then to be faced with the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." To every slave there is offered freedom, and what freedom there is in Christ![26]

In the following note these emphases: encounter, responding, relationship of individual to the church and sharing in the gospel's perspective.

Today you and I stand on the threshold of a new church year. We hear the words of Jesus. We feel the impact of the gospel. If we accept His salvation we must also accept responsibility. If we are renewed by Christ, it is that He may see the fulfillment of His desires in us, in His church, and through us upon men everywhere.[27]

The personality dynamics of sensing, organizing, and meaning are evident in the following sermon excerpt:

[25]Victor Beck, editor, The Gospel We Preach (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Press, 1956), p. 251.

[26]Ibid., p. 281.

[27]Ibid., p. 6.

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the prayers and impulses for Christ in the home are so important.
Frequently a mother will feel weighed down with her children's
countless little cares. She wonders sometimes if all the petty
routine is worth while. How much more is not someone else doing for
God than she! But let every mother remember this, that to gain one
good Christian character to society, to be responsible for putting
high and holy ideals in the heart of one man or woman is the noblest
and finest task of all.[28]

In a sermon on Mark 10:17-27 the preacher wants to communicate to the

hearer the awareness of the rich young man who sensed something was miss-

ing in his life. In the excerpt that follows, the personality dynamics

of sensing and responding is related to encounter. "Certainly this is not

an isolated case. No doubt this youth has many counterparts even in this

generation. In the encounter of Jesus and the ruler we can discover clues

for the solution of our own troubles."[29] "This account has the effect of

bringing me face to face with the Master. I discover that He puts His

finger on the chain that binds me to material and secular interests."[30]

Another sample featuring the dynamic of organizing for persuasion

comes from Erick Hagg's sermon which states its text as authority, and

then offers an example of a life situation for application. After this

comes a discussion about leaders of church and state, followed by a pre-

sentation of the planned effort of world relief as a sign of Christian

love. A statement near the end of the sermon focuses on the meaning of

the entire sermon:

> The time has come for all of us to search our own house from cellar
> to attic in order to ascertain that the lamp of Christian confession

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[28]Ibid., p. 351.

[29]Ibid., p. 286.

[30]Ibid., p. 287.

is on a stand where all can see it and thank God for it, and not in an obscure and concealed spot where no one is helped and cheered.[31]

This sermon, however, lacks gospel, so the power for communication is limited.

The quality of timeliness fits in with the dynamic of meaning as the following excerpt reveals:

> In our daily Salina Journal a column during Lent was entitled "Lenten Guideposts." Each day some noted person cited an instance in his life where God has meant a great deal. But never once did it center in the fact of Christ and what His cross means. They were only superficial revelations of God's love. . . . Too many people see Jesus as a good man but not as the divine Son of God who died to save man from sin.[32]

The following series of excerpts portray the Holy Spirit's truth through the preacher's personality for communication.

> It has been said when the modern man thinks of God, he sees only a big oblong blur. But when the believer thinks of God he sees Jesus crowned with glory and honor, as the revelation of God. Jesus is the incarnation of God. All is centered in Him. Look into His face. Hear the answer to your questions. Trust in Him. Do great works in His name.[33]

The next sample is from a sermon entitled: "Joy, Friendship, Harvest" by Ralph R. Lindquist.

> "I am the vine, you are the branches." This statement is a profound utterance of a great truth. It is a description of the relationship between the Master and His true disciples. It is a picture of the deep personal communion between Christ and His own.[34]

> Jesus proved His friendship on Good Friday, when He gave His life for our sins. He entered the pulpit of His Cross, and preached the

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[31]Ibid., p. 309.

[32]Ibid., p. 181.

[33]Ibid., p. 155.

[34]Ibid., p. 157.

most singular sermon in the annals of man. Have you heard that sermon? Oh, yes, with your ears. But with your innermost person?[35]

We just have to go and tell, go and proclaim His wonderful good news. And there is not only this inner compulsion of how we feel, but also the call from above. Jesus says, "I chose you and appointed you." In other words, our own willingness blends with an appointment by the Master.[36]

[35]Ibid., p. 159.

[36]Ibid., p. 160.

# CHAPTER IV

## EVALUATING THE MEANS FOR
## EXPRESSING GOD'S REVEALED TRUTH

Some of the concluding sermon excerpts in the previous chapter portray the preacher's reliance upon the Holy Spirit working through his personality as an instrument for persuasion. A further step in examining Lutheran preaching in America is the inquiry into the manner by which the preacher serves as such an instrument. The non-verbal communication aspects, such as gesturing, style of delivery, breathing techniques, liturgical setting, architectural atmosphere, etcetera, will not be considered. These are very important for expressing God's revealed truth, but the sermon depends mostly on words to express revealed truth. Therefore, the category of the use of language and its communication system of technical apparatus plays the dominant role for expressing God's truth to the hearer.

To express thoughts and ideas the words employed in the sermon must have meaning. If there is to be a communication process, the meaning must be the same or at least similar for the preacher as well as the hearer. This brings an immediate problem into focus, since the language barrier of words can distort meanings. Reuel L. Howe points out that every word depends for its existence and meaning on life that has been lived and carries responsibility for life that is to be lived. The problem is acute because language is not exact and precise. Differences arise in words out of their emotional associations as a result of the hearer's particular experiences. Verbal communication

like an iceberg has its hidden area.[1]

Because of differences in the meaning of words, their symbolic image in the speaker's and hearer's minds is not always identical. What a speaker says has to filter through what the hearer thinks the person is like and therefore what the hearer thinks has been said. Theological vocabulary in a sermon for the average American church-goer has little meaning in his daily life. Until that vocabulary is filled with meaning from the experiences of the hearer, the words will not evoke a meaningful image. When Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God, it was powerful because He spoke to the heights and depths of Israel's tradition and memory. He used the leverage of their world view. His words assured imagery in their minds and hearts. They had meaning. Christ said that His words are spirit and life. Christian truth is alive. This life can be expressed or conveyed with words creating the imagination of God's love. People can see the truth through words and hear the truth through words, if they see and hear Christ, the Living Word.

Some words in a sermon will evoke an image of Christ. Others will appeal more to the ear. The visual shape and the tonal shape, seeing and hearing, are the pairs through which information is transmitted the world over. F. W. Dillistone discusses principles that combine words and images to become efficient agents of communication. These basic principles are building and sharing. The world itself is a structure of atoms and molecules which have a unity that strikes the eye. There is a unity of shape and form. The world is also a system of interconnections between

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[1]Reuel L. Howe, The Miracle of Dialogue (Greenwich, Conn.: Seabury Press, 1963), p. 27.

waves and charges.[2] Man shapes and builds the materials which he finds, the images and patterns which he sees and the tones and variations which he hears. Symbolically his structures appear in the form of temple cults, myths, and liturgies. Any divine communication which is to come meaningfully to man must relate itself to these general structures which constitute the human situation.[3] New experiences come through the use of imagery and lead to new discoveries which can be offered to a fellow human for his consideration.

The Old Testament provides a collection of images and word patterns derived from dramatic events and oracles, but the people of God must wait for the true integrating agent, the Image, the Word, the Messiah!

> God's Image appeared in human form and men saw Him in a wide variety of visual situations. God's Word was spoken through events of a human career and men heard Him in a succession of dialectical encounters.[4]

Edmund Clowney writes in a similar vein:

> The covenant Lord comes to his people, dwells in their midst, and promises a final deliverance, an ultimate covenant of peace to be established by his coming. Since it is the Son of God who fulfills these promises, the redemptive epiphanies of God are particular revelations of Christ. When the Lord descends on Sinai, marches through the desert, and ascends Zion, leading captivity captive . . . this redemptive appearance manifests the saving action that will find its culmination in Christ.[5]

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[2]F. W. Dillistone, Christianity and Communication (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1956), p. 28.

[3]Ibid., p. 34.

[4]Ibid., p. 55.

[5]Edmund P. Clowney, Preaching and Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Erdman's Publishers, 1961), p. 77.

The images which the earliest Christian witnesses had seen were brought together to form the great name-portraits of the New Testament. These images were available already in the Old Testament, but they were taken over and adopted because of what people had seen in and through Jesus of Nazareth. These names depict the impression made by Jesus on those who companied with Him. Here are a few of the imaged names of Jesus from the Old and New Testaments: Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Seed of the Woman, Shiloh of the Patriarchs, Angel of the Lord, Branch of Jesse, Son of David, Son of Man, Son of God, Desire of the Nations, Suffering Servant, Immanuel of the Prophets, King of Israel, Promised Messiah, Star out of Jacob, Zion's Cornerstone, Light of the Gentiles, Rose of Sharon, Sun of Righteousness, Judge and Lawgiver, Offspring of a Virgin, Holy Child, Carpenter's Son, Bridegroom, Word made flesh, Lamb of God, Light, Life, Man of Sorrows, Master, Rabbi, Morning Star, Nazarene, High Priest, Redeemer, Way, Truth, Resurrection and the Life, Rock of Offense, Savior, Shepherd, Sin-bearer, Vine, Advocate, Alpha and Omega, Arm of the Lord, Beloved Son, Author and Finisher of our Faith, Captain of Salvation, Chief Shepherd, Day-spring, Deliverer, Door, Elect of God, Faithful Witness, First Begotten Forerunner, Governor, Head of the Church, Holy One of God, Horn of Salvation, I Am, Image of God, Just One, Lord of Glory, Mediator, Only Begotten Son, Our Passover, Root of David, Bishop of Souls, Son of the Blessed, Son of the Highest, etcetera.

What Jesus was, in the pattern of His character, could appeal to the eye; the news of what He did in the crisis of death and resurrection could make an appeal to the ear. The words which the disciples heard

became concentrated in short proclamations like Christ died for our sins, the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, being justified by His blood, risen and alive forevermore, etcetera. God has been willing so to reveal Himself in such a way that the images, words, names, and proclamations which were born within the history of mankind could become vehicles for man to bear testimony to what he had seen and heard.

The growth-building and sharing process continued in that divine organism, the church. New reconciliations were effected as God's Word of judgment and grace in Jesus Christ met challenges and saved alienated lives. This becomes a temple-building process as well as a covenant relationship through the centuries. The imaged word and the audible word were transported out of Jewish culture first into the Greek thought world and then to the Latin. The Latin language

> sharpened distinctions and made clear definitions; it gave Christianity a vocabulary for certain aspects of its life. But it had not the resources to become an adequate transmitter of the lively Hebraic-Hellenic dialectic which the Scriptures themselves contained and which the Christian faith . . . displayed.[6]

The Renaissance helped to open up the way for the faith to relate itself to the images and language forms of its day. Religious words of the Bible in the vernacular gained new vitality and meaning in the circumstances of the Reformation age.

In modern times science has developed a world view in which life is enclosed within a vast mechanical system whose laws can be learned and whose processes are harnessed to supply material needs. This has engulfed the imagination of mankind and has helped make Marxism the great

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[6]Dillistone, p. 80.

rival of Christianity; the task of showing and explaining God's Truth to man for apprehension has been made more difficult.

Dillistone contends that for the modern situation of man the essential Christian message to be proclaimed consists of picture and story. The picture portrays Christ, the central figure whose personal career enfolds itself around one center--the plan of death and resurrection--from which the whole is viewed and interpreted. The universe is not a random conglomeration of elements nor a pre-determined evolutionary process, nor the continuing dialectic of two eternally opposing principles. The model for integrating the universe is not found in a mystical formula. Neither is it an impersonal rational principle in a machine. Rather the universe has meaning in terms of personal values, and the model or pattern for its integration is to be found in the personal career of Christ.[7] The visual imaged word depicts to the hearer what Christ was and is, emphasizing His human and divine natures along with His personal union as the God-man. This is imaged revelation of God in Christ.

The audible word, on the other hand, emphasizes what Jesus did and still does in His divine office of Messiahship. The appeal here is to the ear through the process of story. Dillistone presents this thought by noting that Christian witness proclaims that in the story of Christ all history finds the key to its significance and the pointer to its goal. This meaning of history is not in the attainment of political independence nor economic self-sufficiency, nor in class dominance, nor is the goal of history to be found in the possession by all people of material comforts

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[7]Ibid., p. 100.

and physical well-being nor in eliminating all inequalities of status and class. Rather the meaning of history is found in the redemption of man from his earth-boundedness and self-centeredness. History's goal is to be found in establishing God's perfect rule among men.[8]

In order that the picture and story, the imaged word and the audible word, may reach their target, they must be audience-directed. The sermon's meaning must be directed to the audience that is present. The sermon that bemoans the absentees or those "outside our circles," or the wicked "they" who are the sinners will not help the hearers to realize God is expressing His truth to them directly.

To avoid misdirection, the preacher must realize that very often audiences have stereotyped pictures which generalize. People accept or reject new ideas on the basis of a relationship to pre-conditioned pictures; for example, Negroes are shiftless, New Englanders are cold and aloof, Southerners are friendly and genteel, Jews are tight-fisted, Russians are rough and boorish, Italians are fat and garrulous, etcetera. A word in the sermon may trigger a stereotype response from the congregation. The sermon's language should seek to avoid such responses by careful attachment of meaning to words.

In addition, the pastor's love for his people will help the sermon to get engaged with the audience in the presentation of divine truth. Intimacy signals injected into the sermon occasionally, such as "you know" and "you see," help give meaning to the thoughts, because "Language is

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[8]Ibid., p. 99.

the vehicle of personal relationships, not just packets of information."9

The sermon that communicates the imaged and audible word and makes the picture and the story of Christianity meaningful to the audience pays attention to the technical apparatus or mechanics of language. The following seven areas appear to be involved in this system of communication: (1) Clarity, (2) simplicity, (3) accuracy, (4) concreteness, (5) force, (6) grammatical structure such as moods, tenses, and voices, and (7) sentence structure. The proper or improper use of this apparatus determines what can be called the style of the sermon.

The first requisite for good style is ease of understanding. Specific words and concrete illustrations help convey strong stimuli for listener attention. Figures of speech add tone and color. Short words and brief sentences work for clarity. Oral style requires "straight forward development, simple and direct construction, careful use of silence and employment of visual-auditory transitional devices rather than verbal connectives and modifiers."10 Faris D. Whitesell explains the basic qualities of good sermon style as clarity, energy of language, elegance, naturalness, purity, precision, individuality, perspicuity, plainness, force, and beauty. "Because a sermon is a spoken message, the preacher should cultivate an oral style consisting of clear words, simple words, exact words, action words, and picture words."11 However, it must be

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9R. T. Brooks, "Christian Communication," The Congregational Quarterly, XXXI (January 1958), 28.

10Webb B. Garrison, The Preacher and His Audience (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1954), p. 120.

11Faris D. Whitesell, Power in Expository Preaching (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1963), p. 139.

added that some of these descriptions are relative, for example, elegance and beauty. What may be considered elegant and beautiful by one person might be thought staid and drab by a different hearer.

Clarity of language is of prime importance in communication. Clear words make thoughts transparent to the audience; for example, a small percentage of the audience may know what a verdant pasture is, but nearly everybody would know what a green pasture is, unless some of the people had never been outside a large city. In that latter case the whole concept of "pasture" would have to be explained.

One cannot assume, moreover, that technical religious terms such as redemption, reconciliation, triune, etcetera, are understood merely because they are used frequently. Using the language of the people forces the preacher to know the meaning of theological terminology to enable the sermon to help the hearer think through his religion in his own terms. If the sermon speaks over the heads of the people, they may doubt that the preacher is very eager to communicate. True dignity of the pulpit proceeds from presenting grand truths in a simple style.

Along with simplicity, the sermon language should provide accuracy. Even though the preacher knows the precise meaning of a term, he cannot assume that the hearers have the exact duplicate understanding. Many a preacher has felt chagrin when the hearer completely misunderstood what he endeavored to say. Repetition of the thought in different words helps insure accurate communication. One of the biggest problems in a dialogical relationship is that people talk past each other. Telltale signs, blank stares, puzzled brows, blinking eyes, feed back to the preacher that his words need to be restated for the permeation of thoughts into

the hearer. The increasing demand for shorter sermons makes the choice of accurate language a paramount necessity.

Another area of technical apparatus is force. Strong words drive home a point vividly and emphatically. Usually short words are more forceful than long words. The economy of words is an aid to force as are specific terms as compared to general. The same is true of concrete words instead of abstract, and vivid instead of drab words. Instead of saying the great fish disgorged Jonah on the land, the statement that the great fish vomited Jonah on the beach would be more readily apprehended and remembered.

Words that trigger emotions are forceful in producing action. While terms as "the blood of the Lamb, foot of the cross, company of the redeemed, cross of Calvary" and the like can be overused and carry little information, yet they are powerful media for the communication of emotional overtones, and arouse dormant ideas.

While the intellectuals will readily follow abstract ideas, people in general are helped more by verbal pictures. The average audience in the church requires material to be presented in a concrete form for apprehension. The old adage holds: a picture is worth a thousand words. Much has been written about illustrations pro and con. For purposes of this paper, the accent is on language being concrete and illustrative rather than holding a brief for the use of illustrations. Theodore P. Ferris says: "One good illustration carefully done is worth ten ordinary ones carelessly done."[12] A sermon with too many illustrations is like a woman

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[12]Theodore Parker Ferris, Go Tell the People (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 93.

with too many jewels which hide rather than enhance her appearance. The best kind of illustration is one that comes from the ordinary family life of people. Only rarely should a sermon proclaim the preacher's personal experiences.

A concrete word or phrase is clean cut and sharp. It cracks through the communication barriers with objective reality. Such words are not wool gatherers, but incisively cut away extraneous verbosity. They place and fix one thought in the hearer's heart and mind after another, on solid foundation, so as to build a clean thought structure.

The language style of the sermon will evidence good grammar. Moods, tenses, and voices are used properly and skillfully. The power or force of language is much dependent on these. The suggestive power of the Bible to a large extent is in its affirmations. Its verbs in the indicative mood outnumber the imperatives. "If the indicative verbs had not first done their work of setting before men the vision of the reality of God, the imperative verbs would not stir them in the slightest."[13] In the sermon on the mount, for example, Jesus begins with the beatitudes as declarative statements of fact. In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus draws a picture of what a good neighbor is, rather than moralizing about being a good neighbor. Only one line at the close commands: "Go and do thou likewise." A good sermon will have a maximum of positive statements of affirmation and a minimum of "shoulds," "rights," "musts," etcetera. A statement such as "a boy scout should be trustworthy" doesn't have the suggestive power that "a boy scout is trustworthy" has, because

[13]Ibid., p. 24.

the latter makes scouthood visible to the hearer and communicates an imaged concept. In a similar manner, a sermon could communicate the Christhood of Jesus.

Too many sermons are ineffective because they are exhortations instead of proclamations. One cannot nag people into being good. It is wiser to attract them to goodness. The indicative mood declares and reveals, and the great purpose of the sermon is to reveal God and His Truth. "One of the reasons why the religion of the Bible is so everlastingly strong is that it is written largely in the revealing language of the indicative mode."[14] Some examples of biblical passages of this are the following: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" "The eternal God is thy Refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple." "I know that my Redeemer liveth." "The Lord is nigh unto them that fear Him" etcetera.

The subjunctive mood is used sparingly in every good sermon. One great danger that needs to be avoided is the use of conditional clauses in such a manner as to make salvation dependent upon man, or the assent of man. When the sermon sets up the condition that, if the hearer will be so good as to believe in Christ, or if he will act in a given manner, then God will bless him with faith and Christian life, it proclaims Arminian theology rather than Lutheranism. The better sermons substitute the word "when" instead of "if." This has the added feature of

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[14]Ibid., p. 22.

pre-supposing that the hearer is in agreement with the message, and carries the expectation that the hearer will respond to the condition set forth. It gives the sermon an existential dimension, and in addition it leaves room for the gospel as motive power.

The tenses too add or detract from the sermon according to their position in relation to the thought content. The story of faith and life need not always be proclaimed in the past tense. While the message is rooted in the past, it isn't buried there. Relevance will dictate a copious use of the present tense. "The heart of the sermon must be in the present tense for revelation . . . is a contemporary experience."[15] Eschatological material is usually presented in the future tense, although in the Scriptures future events are portrayed as having already happened or are in the process of happening. This is sometimes called the historical present.

Some attempts have been made at "role playing" by the preacher in a sermon. In that case he proclaims the message in the first person and uses the present tense in the main.[16]

For the sake of movement in the sermon the active voice predominates in usage over the passive voice. Ordinarily the active voice for sermon proclamation is more direct and emphatic. Occasionally in order to direct attention to the object rather than to the subject of a transitive verb, the order is changed, so that the subject, instead of performing action, is acted upon. This makes the voice passive. Much use is made of the

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[15]Ibid., p. 27.

[16]J. Marcellus Kik, Voices From Heaven and Hell (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1955).

passive voice in written material, but the active voice is preferred in speeches, especially in sermons. Usually this difference becomes evident rather quickly between a lecture and a sermon.

While sentence structure is mentioned last for the communication system of technical apparatus, it certainly is not the least. All the parts of speech would be involved in a thorough discussion of sentence structure. With reference to this thesis, the following observations will be sufficient.

Sermons from Lutheran pulpits in the past tended to use a great many modifiers and clauses, especially those delivered in German. In fact some of the older Lutheran sermons have a whole paragraph in one sentence. Today the ever increasing demands for shorter sermons require shorter sentences and fewer modifiers. The nouns and verbs predominate. There is good precedent for this, as the language of the Old Testament even in translation from the Hebrew shows the preponderance of nouns and verbs. The Koine Greek of the New Testament, however, is more complex and descriptive. Flowery language sparingly used helps for purposes of imagery, but too much of it is like too much perfume.

Since the sermon is proclamation, the declarative sentences will carry the load for communication. To arouse attention and keep interest, the interrogative and exclamatory sentences are useful. The imperative sentence guides and directs emotion rather than argument, and should be used only after the declarative sentence has done its work. For beauty and rhythm, a balanced compound sentence has no equal. Consider the superb example in Psalm 46:6: "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted."

The excerpts that follow demonstrate some aspects of the category
of the use of language and its communication system of technical apparatus.
A sermon entitled "With Eyes Fixed on Jesus," by Carl E. Rydell, has ex-
cellent samples of the imaged word:

> The Servant of the Lord portrayed in the written work of prophecy
> and in Jesus, the Word become flesh, are merged. The Servant with
> the Spirit of the Lord upon Him stands before them. The Christ,
> who for so long a time had been hidden in their sacred writings is
> revealed to them in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. It is always
> a wonderful moment when Jesus Christ steps out of God's Book and
> reveals Himself. For one purpose of God with His Word is to con-
> front you with the Savior, to have Him stand before you in all His
> grace and glory as the anointed Servant of God.[17]

"If you expect to meet Jesus in the Word, and are prepared to accept a
revelation of Him, you will never be disappointed. He is the Word and
will make Himself known."[18] "At the same time that Scripture yields up
the secret of the person of the Savior, making Jesus known and presenting
Him as God's Anointed. . . ."[19]

In this next excerpt from a sermon entitled "How Free Are You" by
John R. Benson, one can observe emphasis in the audible word:

> God who gives us salvation through Jesus Christ our Savior. . . .
> God has found a way to make us free. The only-begotten Son of
> God has entered human life. . . . he took upon Himself the guilt
> of all mankind. He makes us free from sin, because He takes our
> sins upon Himself. He makes us free from the law because "by
> grace you have been saved through faith."[20]

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[17]Victor Beck, editor, The Gospel We Preach (Rock Island, Illinois:
Augustana Press, 1956), p. 2.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid., p. 281.

Another example of the audible word is the following:

> Scripture . . . also qualifies and designates His mission here on
> earth, a mission which Jesus gladly accepted. He came to preach the
> good news of the acceptable year of the Lord. He told men that God
> had not forgotten them. . . .[21]

"Many who were slaves to sin, . . . were set free. Others who were being

crushed by the press of evil circumstances, and equally evil men, were

given strength to endure. . . ."[22] [In the above note the use of the pas-

sive voice.]

> He robbed sin, infirmity, affliction, and disease of their power. He
> bore our sins in His own body on the tree; He took our infirmities
> and bore our diseases; and in all our afflictions He was afflicted.
> He stepped in under the load of every man that He might lighten bur-
> dens, atone for sins, and give the benefit of His strength, courage,
> and grace.[23]

"This was the mission of Jesus to which He fully gave Himself. To accom-

plish this assignment He died, done to death on a cross. . . ."[24] [Note

passive voice in the last phrase.] "Jesus rose from the dead. He lives

to bring to completion all God's plans. Jesus changes people."[25]

In the next sample the preacher expresses the thought of loneliness in

concrete language:

> In the gray dusk of early dawn a man approaches pier 91. About to
> embark on a large ocean-going vessel, he calls out to a young lad
> who is selling newspapers. "Here's a $5 bill son. All I ask is
> that you wave good-bye to me when the boat leaves the pier." What

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[21]Ibid., p. 3.

[22]Ibid., p. 4.

[23]Ibid., p. 4.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid., p. 5.

brought about such a strange request?  There is only one
explanation:  the man was lonely.[26]

The following sample shows accuracy and clarity in expressing audi-
ence direction:

> Whether we are a farmer or a foreman, a father or a freshman,
> whether we are clad in a gray flannel suit or work-soiled dunga-
> rees, we cannot help exclaiming with the psalmist, "What is man
> that thou art mindful of him?"[27]

The next sample presents the audible word with concreteness and
force:

> Like thunder from a clear sky came the amazing announcement from
> the lips of Jesus, proclaiming that that Word of Scripture had
> suddenly become more than a pronouncement of God's intentions and
> purposes.  It had assumed proportions of personality, actuality,
> and performance.  "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in
> your hearing!"[28]

The following passages exemplify concrete visualization:

> Try to picture what took place.  Try to imagine yourself as being
> present in Nazareth that Sabbath.  There stands Jesus reading the
> prophecy. . . .  All in the synagogue see Jesus.  They hear the
> prophecy as He reads from Isaiah.  Then before their eyes, at that
> very moment the Servant of the Lord portrayed. . . .[29]

An illustration such as the following may be interesting and even

entertaining, but it runs the risk of becoming an end in itself, rather

than a means of making plain God's mercy and patience:

> Have you ever heard the highly imaginative story about the scien-
> tist who succeeded in making little people, not more than a few
> inches in height?  He kept them in a long sink on one side of his
> laboratory, so the story goes.  He spared no effort to make them

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[26]Ibid., p. 56.

[27]Ibid., p. 58.

[28]Ibid., p. 1.

[29]Ibid., p. 2.

as comfortable as possible. The temperature was carefully controlled;
food was supplied in variety and in abundance; activities to chal-
lenge every interest were freely offered. However, the experiment
did not work out very well. The scientist had posted "Rules for
Happy Living in a Laboratory Sink," but the folks who lived in the
laboratory sink did not pay much attention to them. The scientist
himself they completely ignored. Now the little people began to
quarrel among themselves. They stole; they lied; they developed
social classes because they differed in skin color and because
they did not all live on the same side of the toy railroad track,
and so they ostracized certain individuals; they even waged minia-
ture warfare for the possession of a particular part of the sink;
they hated and finally killed one another. In utter disgust the
scientist pulled the plug on one end of the sink, opened the faucet
on the other end, and as he rubbed his hands together of absolved
responsibility, he watched the whole nasty business go down the
drain.[30]

For concrete visualization, the following brief illustrative sen-

tences do a better job of communicating:

The walls of Jericho fell on the seventh day with the blare of trum-
pets and shouts of the multitudes. But it was the steady tramping
by the foot-weary Israelites on each of the preceding six days that
did it. The trumpeting of the Gospel on Sunday is meaningful, but
the footwork of the Lord's witnesses on the six week days is what
really pulls down the strongholds of sin.[31]

A frequent number of sermons employ the optative mood for communica-

tion power in the concluding paragraph, for example: "May we act and live

as true sons and daughters of freedom, radiating light and cheer as the

Spirit of Christ permeates our lives."[32]

In this chapter, it has been demonstrated that the sermon employs

language to depict the imaged word of God, particularly the promises of

God in relation to the Christ and culminating in Jesus' Person. Such

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[30]Armin C. Oldsen, A Message From God (St. Louis: Concordia
Publishing House, 1953), p. 68.

[31]Beck, p. 187.

[32]Ibid., p. 284.

revelation deals with beauty and compassion, strength and courage, concern and forgiveness, faithfulness and love, pain and hope. The appeal climaxes in what Jesus Christ was and is. By way of contrast, language can describe the Word of God and the Word made flesh as the audible word. The appeal here is what God in Christ through His promises has done and still does for man's salvation. The appeal to the ear has an immediacy of apprehension and response which is more rapid than the appeal to the eye. While all words, of course, must pass through the ear before they can make an impression on sensory nerves, the language which we have related to the imaged word will set up a visual perception of what the original witnesses "saw," while other language related to the audible word will appeal to the sense of hearing what the original witnesses "heard." In either case, the language must be geared for the hearers in attendance, so that the technical apparatus can be utilized for communication.

# CHAPTER V

## APPLICATION OF THESIS

In each of the previous chapters, excerpts of sermons have been offered as samples of the categories and communication systems discussed. In this chapter the emphasis is on the general application of the thesis, first to various types of sermons, and secondly, a specific application to a sermon in detail. In the first instance I have chosen a sermon collection of sixty-five sermons based on a series of gospel lessons for the church year. It is a collection of Augustana Lutheran parish sermons, entitled The Gospel We Preach.

In general, this collection from various sermonizers appears to illustrate this thesis extensively, with few exceptions. A brief study of several sermons will bear this out. The first selection is by Raymond W. Hedberg with the title "The Door to Life," based on John 10:1-10. The introduction presents the problem or difficulty of apprehending spiritual truth and of making spiritual reality meaningful and practical for us. The law proclamation shows the impossibility of getting into the Kingdom of God and achieving spiritual insight by man's own power and effort. The gospel is declared by calling Christ the Door. "Through Him man finds new life, a new spirit, and a new and lasting joy."[1]

The content of this sermon is textual and is presented clearly and simply. Christ is explained as the Door of salvation. The power for

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[1]Victor Beck, editor, The Gospel We Preach (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Press, 1956), p. 148.

communicating the gospel comes through in this short sentence, "Christ is the only Door!"[2] In a previous sentence there is this example of the gospel as means.

> Christ is the door through which we enter the Kingdom of God. He is the means of access, the way by which one leaves darkness, confusion, and uncertainty behind, and comes into the bright sunlight of eternal love.[3]

The achievement of unity can be discerned by noting the thesis, the goal and parts of this sermon. The thesis is that Jesus "has made it possible for us to grasp the deep and profound truth of life," and the goal is to find out "how a person can get into the kingdom of God."[4] Part I shows that Christ is the door or means of entrance into the Kingdom; Part II: Christ is the only door; Part III: He is the door or entrance way to the abundant life. There you have the dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.

The statement "We cannot wrap the great spiritual realities of life in a package and carry them home with us. They must be apprehended through faith and insight, both of which are made possible by the Holy Ghost,"[5] offers an example of perspective as an ingredient in the strategy of persuasion. Then for the other ingredient, authority, the preacher quotes 1 Cor. 2:14, "because they are spiritually discerned," and the text, "Christ is the door! This is why He came to earth to dwell among us. God

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[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 146.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 147.

has not abandoned man to his own devices to get on as best he can."[6]
"God is also the revealed God who makes His purposes known and who reaches
down in Christ to help men find their way."[7] Besides authority, the
didactic function of kerygma was utilized in the latter statement.

Next, the reader may discover elements of encounter, empathy, and
sharing as part of the perspective and authority in the category of dia-
logical relationships.

> The doorway is as wide as the heart of God! Read through the
> Gospels! Take note of the warmth of our Lord's relationships
> with people. Observe His concern for the individual, His love
> for the least and the lost. This is the One who is the door to
> the Kingdom. Strong yet tender, holy yet approachable, firm yet
> forgiving, He stands before all men as the way by which they enter
> the Kingdom.[8]

Encounter is communicated via personality dynamics in this:

> Once this truth burns its way into souls, our usual complacency
> will give way to a strong sense of urgency. For too long a time
> we have responded to the Gospel as though it were a mild sort of
> palliative that might bring some measure of relief from the world's
> ills. If there is but one way to the Kingdom, we had better make
> haste to reach every man with the Gospel. Either men will face
> Christ and in faith go through Him into the Kingdom, or they will
> face the stone wall of frustration and defeat.[9]

In the category of the use of language, the imaged word is observa-
ble in these samples: "In one vivid picture the truth becomes plain.
Christ is the door! Then comes a message, right out of heaven, 'I am
the door; if any one enter by me, he will be saved.'"[10] "It is Jesus,
the Savior of the World!"[11]

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[6]Ibid., p. 147.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., p. 148.

[10]Ibid., p. 147.

[11]Ibid., p. 148.

The world so often thinks of Christ as a pale anemic idealist, who frowns more than he smiles. How differently the Gospels present Him! He is the robust, stalwart Son of God--strong, dynamic, able! In Him "all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell."[12]

Next, a sample of the audible word: "'Abundant' is the term Jesus uses to describe the kind of life citizens of the Kingdom of God enjoy. 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.'"[13] Discussing Christ as the door some say it

matters little what you believe as long as you are sincere. With one stroke Jesus smashes that idea to pieces. "He who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber."[14]

Many little signals were used to give the message audience direction as pronouns, us, our, we, you, imperatives as, consider the question, read through the Gospels, take note, observe His concern, look also at another word, follow Him, lay your all at His feet.

An example of clarity and simplicity of language:

We can go to a store and buy a pound of butter and a loaf of bread and take them home. But we cannot wrap the great spiritual realities of life in a package and carry them home with us. They must be apprehended through faith and insight. . . .[15]

Samples of accuracy and exactness: "Though men search a lifetime for other ways, they will sooner or later come to the inescapable fact.

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[12]Ibid., p. 149.

[13]Ibid., p. 149.

[14]Ibid., p. 148.

[15]Ibid., p. 145.

Christ is the only door!"[16]  "Christ is the door through which we enter the Kingdom of God."[17]

Example of concrete visualization:  "It is like a person who cannot swim struggling in water beyond his depth.  The more he tries, the more he realizes he needs the strong arm of another to save him."[18]  "Can you pile your good deeds high enough to get you over the barrier that stands in the way?  With one simple idea Jesus sweeps these man-made makeshift attempts into the wastebasket."[19]  "And the glories of heaven will keep filtering through into this life. . . ."[20]

An example of concrete illustrative use of language:  There was

a merchant seaman who had just completed a voyage on a ship bear-
ing a cargo of explosives.  For that dangerous service he had
been paid his bonus in two $500 bills.  It was all the money he
had . . . he had not opportunity to get his bills changed at a
bank and could find no one willing to cash them.  Not being able
to buy food, he finally had to secure the help of a local police
station.  He had the money in his hand, but it was not in small
enough units to make it negotiable.  We have much the same prob-
lems as we try to grasp and comprehend the truth of God.[21]

An example of force.  "Obey the whole law and you are in!  This do and you will live!  Very simple--but did you ever try it?  Can you possibly buy, bribe, or barter your way in?"[22]  "There will be no 'gate crashers' in heaven."[23]

[16]Ibid., p. 148.

[17]Ibid., p. 146.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid., p. 150.

[21]Ibid., p. 145.

[22]Ibid., p. 146.

[23]Ibid., p. 148.

This sermon used the indicative mood, and several subjunctives, the active voice, present and past tenses with several perfects and future perfects. There were declarative, interrogative and imperative sentences.

Since there is a considerable wealth of sermons preached by Lutheran pastors in America at Lenten mid-week services, some useful insights can be gained for the study of this thesis. As might be expected, these sermons are usually rich in kerygmatic content, as the Lenten season offers opportunity to stress the heart of the Christian faith. A series of seven sermons which related Jesus' hands and the hands of those who accepted or rejected Him as Savior and Lord in the Passion story were prepared and delivered at mid-week Lenten services by Joseph L. Knutson. They were collected and made available in a book with the title, With Hands Uplifted in 1947.

The first sermon, based on 1 Timothy 2:8, is called "Praying Hands." It uses the didactic function of law and gospel to show the meaning of God's attributes for the hearer, such as God's strength and power, guidance, and benevolence, by the use of hands as symbol.

The second part of the sermon emphasizes the meaning of hands in prayer in the dialogical relationship of response as an expression of attitude from the hearer's heart. Clear gospel is proclaimed here:

> This is the Christ who is the center of our faith and especially
> so during the Lenten season. For we pray to and worship the
> Christ who came in the likeness of sinful flesh, incarnate in
> our very selves, that He might fully enter our estate and fulfill
> the demands of the law on our behalf, redeeming us from sin to
> God and making us heirs according to the hope of eternal life.[24]

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[24]Joseph L. Knutson, With Hands Uplifted (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1947), p. 9.

The goal in this sermon is that the hearer's spiritual observance and exercises may be connected with the lifting up of holy hands in prayer. My analysis of the thematic dialectic is as follows for achieving the sermon's goal:

I. What praying hands symbolize.

    A. Power and guidance.

    B. They can indicate peace and blessing.

II. Praying hands suggest prayer posture.

    A. Posture can indicate an attitude in worship.

    B. Folded hands represent need and trust.

    C. Uplifted hands show open-heartedness.

III. Praying hands should be holy.

    A. Such hands show purity of motive.

    B. Holy hands are without wrath.

    C. They are without doubting.

The signaling for thought progression is rather weak throughout.

The story of Albrecht Dürer's "Praying Hands" masterpiece is used to introduce the theme, while the conclusion points to further goals in succeeding sermons on the general subject of "Uplifted Hands."

> Using the symbol of hands we shall study the history of our redemption; for hands we see, His hands and others, some hands of blessing and others, some hands of hate, but all of them depicting the Christ of the cross and our attitudes toward Him.[25]

The two columns below will show applications of the thesis as they relate to quotations from the sermon:

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[25]Ibid., p. 10.

Authority in the strategy of persuasion.

"The believer never gets beyond the grasp of the guiding hand of God."[26]

Personality dynamic of sensing.

"It violates our sense of God's majesty and the spirit of worship to have a pastor lead the congregation in prayer with his hands in his pockets or using them to support himself against the pulpit."[27]

Encounter.

"Folded hands say, 'It is all up to you Lord.'"[28]

Personality dynamic of meaning.

"What better preparation can we make for Lent than to lift up holy hands of prayer to Him, asking Him to make this Lenten season a spiritual pilgrimage that will vitalize for us the glory and wonder of our redemption and lead us deeper into the richness of His love and grace."[29]

Imaged Word--the appeal here of hands expressing the attributes of God.

"The right hand of God means the power of God and His ability to create, sustain, and rule."[30]

Audible Word--revealer of God.

"Fundamental truth of Christian revelation that apart from Jesus we do not know anything about God."[31]

Audible Word.

"Jesus laying His hands on little children and imparting His blessing."[32]

[26]Ibid., p. 3.

[27]Ibid., p. 4.

[28]Ibid., p. 5.

[29]Ibid., p. 10.

[30]Ibid., p. 3.

[31]Ibid., p. 9.

[32]Ibid., p. 4.

Audience direction.    "The congregation is in no posture for
prayer if unfolded hands twiddle with pro-
gram or hymnal. . . ."[33]  "We know this
God, because He has revealed Himself in
Jesus Christ."[34]

The language in most of this sermon is simple and clear, but not
direct enough; for example, "Perhaps your hands have taken what is not
ethically yours."[35] More force could have been generated here with an
interrogative sentence without the "perhaps." In the illustrative mater-
ial one finds some direct dialogue which enlivens the style. The active
voice predominates. Various tenses give variety. The indicative mood
with the declarative sentences makes for straightforwardness. There are
few imperatives in this sermon.

Another sermon of this Lenten series has for its subject "With Hands
Uplifted" and employs Matthew 26:6-13 as the text. The left hand column
below indicates the particular category or communication system in rela-
tion to quotations from the sermon listed in the right hand column.

Content of law.  Judg-    "It is easy for them to go the way of evil
ment of the law.          and live according to the flesh, because it
                          is the way their emotions drive them. Some
                          say they are made that way, and therefore,
                          we can no more sin than a gland can sin.
                          But the Bible makes it plain that the sin
                          is not in our glands but in our natures or
                          dispositions."[36]

Gospel as means of grace    "It is only when a life has yielded itself
for communicating power.    to the regenerating power of the gospel
                            that there is the reality of serving God

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[33]Ibid., p. 4.

[34]Ibid., p. 8.

[35]Ibid., p. 7.

[36]Ibid., p. 15.

out of a free spirit and a joyful heart. The flesh is present. . . . But the flesh has been given its death-wound through the cross, and the life of the spirit has mastery and the joy of victory."[37]

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|---|---|
| Holy Spirit as power for communicating. | "The Spirit can woo and capture the emotions of men and make him an incarnation of the Christ."[38] |
| Didactic function of kerygma. | "The real virtues of life are not the products of the brain, but fruits of faith and love that spring from the heart [sic. regenerated heart] God pleads, 'Give me thine heart!' For when He has the alabaster cruse of our heart's affection, He has us."[39] |
| Therapeutic function of kerygma. | "Jesus also is remembered by the work and influence of every consecrated Christian life that breaks the alabaster cruse of the gospel over the sins, needs, and sufferings of humanity."[40] |
| Textual reference for communicating power. | "Jesus said in defense of Mary's act, 'It is a beautiful thing she has done to me,' (Moffatt)."[41] |
| Content for proclamation. | "Assuring him that Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and that he that lives and believes in Him shall never die."[42] |

There is some loss of unity in the sermon for the hearer, since it does not state the goal explicitly. The goal seems to be a life goal, namely, to love like Mary of Bethany so as to break "the alabaster cruse

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[37]Ibid., p. 5.

[38]Ibid., p. 15.

[39]Ibid., p. 16.

[40]Ibid., p. 25.

[41]Ibid., p. 16.

[42]Ibid., p. 25.

of the gospel over the sins, needs, and sufferings of humanity."[43]

I gleaned the following thought formulations for the theme and dialectic:

I. Loving hands show affection from the heart.

    A. Our feelings control much of life.

    B. Christ's redemptive love governs the Christian's feelings.

II. Loving hands are important for building God's Kingdom.

    A. Beauty has a place in God's Kingdom.

    B. The arts can be employed in God's service.

    C. We should add beauty to our worship.

III. Loving hands help us meet death.

    A. Mary's act was timely.

    B. Christian loving hands are for both life and death.

The left and right columns continue the evaluations demonstrated by the sermon:

| Category of dialogical relationships. | "We are governed more by our feelings . . . than by anything else. Most of the time . . . it is a matter of whether or not we feel like doing it. Now this is a good thing and a bad thing, depending on the individual's relationship to Christ."[44] |
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| Perspective and authority. | "It is proper and right to pray that God will make life beautiful."[45] "Luther declared that anything that was not prohibited by the Bible man had a right to use if it could glorify God and edify Christian hearts."[46] |

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[43]Ibid.

[44]Ibid., p. 14.

[45]Ibid., p. 17.

[46]Ibid.

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|---|---|
| Encounter. | "Contrary to existing social customs there is no double standard taught in the Bible regarding morals.  So far as real sin is considered, what is sin for woman is also sin for man."[47] |
| Relationship of individual to the church. | "To give woman leadership in church and state violates the fundamental biological law as well as the Word of God, which makes man the head."[48]  "You will be a never-forgotten part of the communion of saints."[49] |
| Personality dynamics. | "Jesus was going to die.  So are all of us."[50] "Too many of us are better pall-bearers than life partners; . . . better grave diggers than homemakers."[51]  "We see so much evil intrigue, malicious plotting, and cruel acting in connection with the betrayal . . . of Jesus, that this story . . . comes like a refreshing rain. . . ."[52] |
| Holy Spirit's truth through personality as instrument. | "Life of the Spirit has mastery and the joy of victory."[53]  "The Spirit can woo and capture the emotions of man and make him an incarnation of the Christ."[54] |
| Imaged word. | "Himself as the paschal lamb chosen by God. . . ."[55] |

[47]Ibid., p. 21.

[48]Ibid., p. 22.

[49]Ibid., p. 26.

[50]Ibid., p. 13.

[51]Ibid., p. 14.

[52]Ibid., p. 13.

[53]Ibid., p. 15.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Ibid., p. 13.

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|---|---|
| The use of language--clarity, simplicity, accuracy, concreteness, and force. | "Right here we put our finger on what is wrong with most people."[56] |
| Active voice, past tense, indicative mood, and declarative sentence. | "Paul was no woman-hater."[57] |
| Balanced interrogative sentence. | "Which is better--flowers for the living or flowers for the dead? An alabaster cruse for the living, or a tombstone for the dead?"[58] |

In the next sermon one finds a topical presentation of six different kinds of hostile hands in the Passion story. These are: confirming hands, ignorant hands, cruel hands, bigoted hands, hands of avarice, and hands of bondage. Applications with reference to each type are made to the hearer. The goal seems to be self-examination: "Let us look at these hands and ask ourselves whether we too are guilty of lifting hands against the person of Jesus."[59] This is inadequate, since it would be more complete and helpful to aim to increase the faith or improve the life of the hearer.

The question "How far can ignorance be overlooked and excused?" may be considered an example of didactic function.[60] A forceful statement of perspective and authority from God to man is seen in this: "The fact

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[56]Ibid., p. 14.

[57]Ibid., p. 22.

[58]Ibid., p. 24.

[59]Ibid., p. 30.

[60]Ibid., p. 32.

stands that man apart from the influence of the Word of God is the most cruel animal on earth."[61]

Note a kind of indirect gospel proclamation in the sermon's conclusion: "How about our hands? Are they hostile to Jesus? Unless they are hands that have been cleansed by the atoning blood of Christ, they are."[62]

This sermon was informative, but the persuasive elements were thin and the theme and dialectic rather obscure.

Another sermon called "Guilty Hands" exhibits Christ encountering every man in various situations of life. Note the perspective, authority, and encounter in the persuasive process in these statements:

> Every form of "hand washing" we engage in bears testimony to the fact that He is God and that His Word is true and will be the last word spoken over our lives and actions. The very fact that men engage in so many fake religious practices witnesses to the supremacy and uniqueness of Jesus. We cannot get Him off our hands. We have to make a decision concerning Him.[63]

The dialectic in the sermon strengthens the encounter. I have outlined it as follows:

I. The washing of Pilate's hands testified to Christ's innocence.

    A. Pilate tried to put off a formal trial.

    B. He sent Jesus to Herod.

    C. He tried to release Jesus by comparison with Barabbas.

II. Pilate's washing of his guilty hands was a testimony against himself.

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[61]Ibid., p. 35.

[62]Ibid., p. 41.

[63]Ibid., p. 46.

     A. He sinned against truth.

     B. This leads to cowardice.

III. Pilate's washing of guilty hands was a testimony against Christ's enemies.

     A. The road to punishment follows rejection.

     B. Let not this washing be a testimony against the church today.

         1. Do not try to pass the blame.

         2. Do not try to compromise.

This sermon emphasizes the negative at the expense of positive motivation to some degree. Its strongest feature is its strategy of encounter.

The sermon "Pierced Hands" is an expansion of this sentence: "The pierced hands of Jesus declare the fact of atonement."[64] In the following quotation the gospel kerygma, elements of invitation, the audible word, personality dynamics, didactic function, the declarative sentence, concreteness, accuracy, sharing, perspective, and authority are readily observable:

> The pierced hands of Jesus are stretched out in redeeming love to welcome every penitent sinner to come and receive forgiveness and the gift of eternal life. We know that God loves and wants us, because His hands bled for us.[65]

The strength of the sermon is its clear presentation and application of Christ's redemption to the hearer. Its goal is to believe in Christ's redemption for forgiveness, although this is not stated directly.

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[64]Ibid., p. 59.

[65]Ibid., p. 68.

The title of the second to last sermon in this Lenten series, "Hands With Only a Grave," seems forced and uncertain. This sermon aims at the malady of trying to be a believer without being a confessor of Christ. It aims at persuading the hearer to become a confessor by witnessing. The material revolves around Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. In the area of persuasion, too much time is spent on thesis and antithesis with little left for synthesis.

The last sermon, "Bequeathing Hands," is on the Lord's Supper. The preacher utilizes the didactic function of the gospel along with proclamation in the drama of Christ's Person and Work as portrayed and offered in the sacrament. The sermon amplifies its central thought, namely, "The Lord's Supper is our Lord's legacy to a believing church."[66] Because the goal is indefinite, there is no unified impact, but rather a series of applications to subdivisions of the topic; that is, bequeathing hands are fulfilling hands, bestowing hands, absolving hands, and prophetic hands.

Another Lenten series by Elmer A. Kettner, called Life Victorious,[67] utilizes the therapeutic function of the gospel. The titles of the sermons indicate such expectation--In Christ we overcome: anxiety, conflicts, hatred, evil frustration, selfishness, misunderstanding and death. These sermons are better at diagnosing maladies than at delineating specific therapy.

A further general application of this thesis to sermons on free texts, particularly as it applies to topical sermons proves to be an

[66]Ibid., p. 87.

[67]Elmer A. Kettner, Life Victorious (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956).

interesting index of Lutheran preaching in America as the sermons range
across synodical lines.  A recommended Lutheran preacher, whose sermons
are among the finest parish-oriented offerings in America today, is
Alvin N. Rogness.  Two columns will again relate the thesis to the ser-
mon quotations below:

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|---|---|
| Kerygma combined with didache. | "It took none less than the Great King Himself 'who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame' to teach us the sublime lesson of suffering.  He had taken into His all-embracing heart the sins of all men and made them His own."[68] |
| Perspective and authority combined with imaged word. | "Why did the almighty God, the King of Kings, the Sovereign Judge of heaven and earth choose to invade the earth in such bewildering quietness?"[69]  "Down through the centuries it has always been the witness of selfless service and voluntary suffering which has ennobled the Christian man and community."[70] |
| Empathy and sharing combined with kerygma. | "In Christ's victory they became victors.  With Christ's death they were made free from the guilt, punishment and dominion of sin.  He had become their mighty brother. . . ."[72] |
| Imaged word. | These expressions—Almighty God, King of Kings, Sovereign Judge, Suffering Servant, Great King Himself, Incarnate God, Mighty Brother. |
| Audible word. | "God had created us to be sons in His Kingdom. . . ."[72]  "He elected to come not |

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[68]Alvin N. Rogness, Who Shall Be God (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1954), p. 4.

[69]Ibid., p. 2.

[70]Ibid., p. 4.

[71]Ibid., p. 2.

[72]Ibid.

with power, but in lowliness and humil-
ity."[73] "He came explicitly to suffer and
to die."[74]

Accuracy and pointedness.
"He had entered this battlefield of flesh
and blood to do war against a foe and
win."[75]

Concreteness.
"God is no celestial tyrant coveting the
homage of millions of dogs wagging their
tails."[76]

Force.
"God is not clumsy."[77]

In the introduction the sermon called "The King Meek," from which
the above material was drawn, uses a contrary-to-fact conditional clause
to heighten the visualization. Rogness' sermons have the capacity to
catch the hearer and have him become bound up with the truth proclaimed.
The language is fresh, clear, and pointed. The expressions are concrete,
forceful, and imaginative. The redemption by Christ as power for faith
comes through with refreshing vigor. The message is personal and em-
pathetic; for example, "It could be that you would like a less meddlesome
God, one who does not pursue, nor knock, nor woo--one rather who would bar-
ricade Himself behind laws and requirements and leave you alone."[78]

Personality dynamics which
communicate encounter and
empathy.
"Now what does He want with you? Why does
He torture you so? Cannot He leave you
alone? If you want an answer, look at

73Ibid., p. 3.

74Ibid., p. 5.

75Ibid.

76Ibid., p. 3.

77Ibid.

78Ibid., p. 13.

Him. Look long. You think He carries a
whip. But it is not a whip that makes His
shoulders droop so. Look again! It is a
cross that weighs down His frame. And
those hands that will not let you go, they
have nail prints in them. The eyes that
fix you night and day; they are filled
with tears."[79]

Unusual thought provoking
kerygmatic statement.

"Despair and grace are the twin-therapy of
God. Grace strikes when despair has laid
low all of man's pretended defenses.
Grace strikes when we walk in the dark val-
ley of meaninglessness . . . when despair
destroys all joy and courage--then grace
strikes!"[80]

Diagnosis by the law.

"No person has really succeeded in 'getting
away from it all' by the inward look, be-
cause you yourself are a composite of
past, present, and future, with all the
environmental and hereditary ills packed
into that self of yours."[81]

Communicating power of the
means of grace by the Holy
Spirit.

"To see Christ filling the skies, you will
first have to find Him as the Christ of the
Gospel, in God's Word. Within that Word
the Holy Spirit opens your eyes to see your
own sinfulness and guilt, and to see Jesus
on a cross for your salvation."[82]

Perspective and authority
with encounter.

"The vast reaches of the starry heights will
not whisper the love of God, and looking
into its twinkling mass, you will fail to
be overwhelmed by God's love unless you have
first encountered it in God's Good Book."[83]

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[79]Ibid., p. 28.

[80]Ibid., p. 80.

[81]Ibid., p. 106.

[82]Ibid., p. 109.

[83]Ibid., p. 110.

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| Force. | "Let the Scriptures help you, and looking up you see a God who has no idea of letting you down."[84] |
| Concrete visualization. | "In the fullness of time He lifted against time's horizon a cross, the luminous pledge of His eternal love and faithfulness."[85] |
| Personality dynamics in dialogical relationship. | "Having looked up like that, you can never be the same again. You cannot leave the memory of that face on the cross and go back to a grim chase after this world's distractions."[86] |
| Personality dynamic of organizing stimuli for encounter. | "While it is a relief to abdicate, your only joy is to be found in the kingdom. You are doomed to misery, and to spiritual death outside. The native element of the bird is air; the native element for man is the kingdom of God. To settle for less is to die. You can never be mere man. You are either led by the Spirit to be a child of God, and therefore, more than mere man, or you turn away from the Spirit and become an animal, something less than mere man."[87] |
| The Holy Spirit's Truth through personality as instrument. | "I do not know what you need most. Some of you need harsh talk. You are behaving badly and need some divine spanking. Others of you are making an earnest attempt to overcome temptation. You could stand some encouragement, even praise. Some of you in sheer stupidity are pursuing a mistaken course in life. You need instructional guidance. Whatever may be your peculiar needs, I venture to guess that there is not a person among you who could not stand some comfort."[88] |

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[84]Ibid.

[85]Ibid., p. 111.

[86]Ibid.

[87]Ibid., p. 118.

[88]Ibid., p. 125.

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Another sermon selection for study was one by Edwin C. Munson, "The Mount of the Lord," based on the Old Testament text Genesis 22:1-14 for the first Sunday in Lent.[89] The human dilemma is discussed when either choice selected seems to violate the Christian's highest faith and loyalty.

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|---|---|
| Kerygmatic gospel. | "The ram which Abraham found caught in the bushes is only a type of the Lamb of God that God Himself has provided for sinful humanity in the giving of His Son Jesus Christ."[90] "There is only one vicarious sacrifice that can atone for man's sin and reconcile him to God, and that is the sacrifice of the Lamb of God on the mount of the Lord called Calvary."[91] |
| Use of Scripture for communication power. | "The Book of Genesis traces it [idea of human sacrifice] back to the very beginning of human history."[92] The sermon quotes Isaiah 53 and also Revelation 7 in support of the vicarious atonement. |

The objectives of the sermon are to show that both faith and love are tested, and to teach that in the testing process faith in God is rewarded, because it rests on Christ's vicarious sacrifice. The main goal is to trust Christ as the atoning sacrifice for men's sins, though this is not explicitly stated as goal. Through Abraham's dilemma, the sermon strives to help the hearer face modern dilemmas; for example, in war shall one take the lives of the enemy or not and allow the enemy to take more lives of his countrymen? Shall one become a missionary or stay home and care for aged and ailing parents?

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[89]Edwin C. Munson, _Ancient Truths for Today's Needs_ (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Book Concern, 1962).

[90]Ibid., p. 117.

[91]Ibid., p. 118.

[92]Ibid., p. 116.

Personality dynamic.

"Somehow God has implanted certain instincts and ideas in man. One that seems to be quite universal, for we find it expressed among different people throughout history, is the idea of sacrifice as atonement for sin. Only through sacrifice can guilt be expiated and man be reconciled to God. It was a hideous perversion of this deeply felt need when men would sacrifice innocent people for their sins."[93]

Imaged word.

A number of expressions like Creator, Lamb of God, and God in His omniscience.

Audible word.

"God gave them courage, patience, unselfishness, and joy which they did not have before they answered God's challenge. . . ."[94]
"God provides the sacrifice that really redeems."[95] "Christ in divine love gave Himself for sinful humanity."[96]

Audience direction may be observed in the sermon's applications.

Forceful expression.

"Finite minds cannot understand it, but believing hearts can appreciate it."[97]

This particular sermon had a better simplicity than the rest by the same preacher in his book. In gaining the attention of the audience the preacher used a personal experience on a mountain and then led his hearers to the "Mount of the Lord."

A further study is from a series of biographical sermons by John H. Baumgaertner. This one is on the apostle Philip. Note the kerygma in this didactic statement: "Actually Philip didn't find Jesus at all. It

[93]Ibid.

[94]Ibid.

[95]Ibid., p. 117.

[96]Ibid., p. 118.

[97]Ibid.

was Jesus who found Philip. The Bible is very plain about that."[98]  The law and gospel are woven back and forth throughout the sermon, and the hearer is involved continuously in Philip's situation. This is the sermon's strategy of persuasion as is apparent in the empathy and sharing in the following: "We end up liking him perhaps because he was like so many of us today. He was Mr. Average Christian."[99]

The sermon's structure revolves around three incidents in Philip's life. The first is his call into discipleship and witness attempt to Nathaniel. Sin's opposition is evident in the scorn and ridicule Philip meets from his friend Nathaniel, but the power of the gospel is demonstrated in the simple request "Come and see!" Through empathy and encounter the sermon identifies the hearer's own sinful attitudes with those of Nathaniel's rejection of the gospel invitation.

In part two of this sermon Philip's own limitations are demonstrated. The part covers his role in the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. The hearer senses Philip's shame and lack of faith to be his own. Note the encounter as challenge here:

> The work of the Kingdom of God calls for faith and courage, initiative, determination, imagination! It demands . . . an unfailing belief in the sustaining, strengthening, helping grace and power of the God of miracles![100]

> Philip looked at the crowd, at the problem, and forgot all about the power of Christ. Let's not make that same mistake when we plan our life, when we set out to do the work of God, . . . without Him--nothing! With Him and through Him--anything![101]

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[98]John H. Baumgaertner, Meet the Twelve (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1960), p. 34.

[99]Ibid., p. 32.

[100]Ibid., p. 37.

[101]Ibid., p. 38.

The final part of this sermon deals with the scene in the Upper Room at the Last Supper. The empathy is strong--"Jesus is sorrowful, He tells them, to the very point of death. They listen, wonderingly, fearfully, and tears run down their cheeks."[102] The hearer's own remembrance of this Upper Room incident is called back by bringing to mind the holy sacrament.

The sermon's goal becomes clear in the last sentence: "Do we see Him? Do we listen to Him? Do we believe?"[103]

The imaged word is portrayed with terms as Savior, Messiah, Master, Lord, Christ, Body, Blood, Father, Crucified, Risen and Ascended Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, Light of life, well-spring of Salvation, Friend of Sinners, and Redeemer of Souls.

The audible word is employed with expressions such as these:

The Master has washed His disciples' feet. He has taught them that most precious and priceless virtue . . . humility. He has given them . . . the holy sacrament of His Body and Blood, and then He speaks to them of the Father. . . .[104]

The factor of audience direction comes through by means of the dramatic involvement of the hearer in the role of Philip and the other characters, while the concreteness depends on the hearer's ability to identify with the role-playing.

The sermon's presentation is simple and clear, yet indirect in seeping into the hearer's consciousness. For this reason considerable imagination is required from the hearer.

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[102]Ibid., p. 39.

[103]Ibid., p. 40.

[104]Ibid.

Forceful expressions of note are: Mr. Average Christian, a particular matter-of-fact man, look who's got religion!; don't tell me you've found a church you like!; without Him--nothing!; with Him and through Him--anything!

For the most part the indicative mood, active voice, and present tense were used, although there were some past and a few perfect tenses. There were quite a number of interrogative and imperative sentences.

The other sermons in this series conform to this pattern of presentation which is topical rather than expository.

Still another sermon for review is by the former Lutheran Hour speaker, the Rev. Armin Oldsen, entitled "When God is Near." This particular sermon along with others in his book was selected on the basis of the largest request for them through the mail from the radio audience.[105] It pulls together parallel Bible verses to expound the text, Psalm 119:151.

In the introduction the audience is directed to the Bible to find the answer to what is wrong with the modern world. The proclamation is first of all a diagnosis of sin as it pervades varied areas of life, such as idolatrous homage to science, education, militarism, materialism, pleasure, and popularity. Christ's name is used twice and Savior once. Except for the latter there is no specific gospel proclamation. The Bible's revelation is mentioned once, but there is no system of kerygmatic communication power employed except for one reference to the Holy Spirit.

The sermon's objective is to set for the faith-goal to believe God

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[105]Armin C. Oldsen, A Message From God (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953).

is near. The particulars of the outline draw a word picture of modern idolatry and its evils. These gods are real and near to people's lives. That seems to be the first part of the central thought.

The second part shows that God is real and near in His judgment. Sin keeps man away from God's nearness. The solution is to recognize sin in life and open the heart to faith in Christ the Savior. There is no attempt to present theme and parts, but rather to create a general impression about the subject: "When God is Near."

The perspective dwells upon the distance between God and man on account of sin. The authority for the truth is the evidence of sin's ruin in life. The encounter shows that man must face up to the reality of God's nearness in judgment upon life. In the conclusion, encounter comes in the quotation: "'Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' That's the only way to get near to God."[106]

This sermon seeks response by identifying the speaker's own need with his audience--"I've felt that way at times, and I've heard it said many times, 'God doesn't seem real at all.'"[107] Again: "I've seen many evidences of God's nearness. My greatest trouble--and yours--in drawing near to God is an awareness of our unworthiness."[108]

The sermon wants to present meaning by being imaginative. The phrase "look at" occurs seven times at the beginning of paragraphs. Audience

[106]Ibid., p. 14.

[107]Ibid., p. 12.

[108]Ibid., p. 14.

direction comes through in the application of God's Word to the life of the people and the people are directed to God.

The style aims at being intimate and friendly; for example, after an illustration: "I like that, don't you?"[109] The language is clear and simple, and special pains are taken to be concrete by drawing a visual picture for the hearer. The mood is indicative. There are a considerable number of imperatives. A few sentences were in the passive voice, such as "Man was placed on earth by God for more noble purposes than just to have a good time."[110]

This sermon could have had more power by explicit gospel statement of who God is and what He has done through Christ. Then the Word as means of grace would have communicated better.

A second sermon from the same series is entitled "The Foundation for Life." The kerygma is presented in terms of sin and grace. The solution for the world's crumbling foundation is not Christ as teacher, leader, example, friend, or companion, but rather the Christ of Calvary. The truth's foundation for life rests upon God's love for sinful man. There is explicit gospel. Much of this sermon can be summarized in the conclusion:

> In your life there will be a last invitation to accept Christ as your personal Savior, the foundation for your life. This radio message may be it. Believe in Him! Many are now saying with me for the first time while thousands are repenting, what they in essence said many times before--not only "Christ, I think you're a wonderful teacher;" not only, "Christ, I think your ideals are remarkable;" not only, "Christ, I think your example is splendid;" not only, "Christ, I think you're an outstanding leader;" but,

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[109]Ibid., p. 13.

[110]Ibid., p. 11.

"Christ, my Savior, I love you. I trust you with all my life for time and for eternity. What do you want me to do?" As Christ is our foundation, He'll be more than a pious expression. He'll be a living reality. We'll do more than confess Him. We'll dedicate our lives to Him. Amen.[111]

A sermon by J. R. Brockhoff with the subject "God's Second Creation" has good kerygmatic content; for example, "He came to be our Savior. He was born to die for our sins. Through Him we have life and liberty."[112] There is perspective and authority in this thought: The wise men

worshipped Him with gifts. This is the only thing we can really do when we are confronted with Christ as He really is. He is Lord and Savior. He is King of Kings. There is something in every man's soul that will not rest until he surrenders to Christ.[113]

Note the imaged word in the preaching and the audible word in the following statement concerning atonement:

Through Jesus, God has done something for us. He created, in the human sense, a Savior. By His atoning death we have access to God. Our sins may be forgiven. In this manger-child we have the Savior of the World. This is God's love gift to the world. This is all God's doing.[114]

In the following excerpt one may observe the didactic function of kerygma:

When the good news of Jesus is read, heard, or received, the Spirit gives birth in us to a faith in Jesus. . . . We are born again of the Spirit, and through that new birth we are a new people. . . . Christ is also the agent of God's working through us.[115]

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[111]Ibid., p. 21.

[112]Alton M. Motter, editor, Preaching the Nativity (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 41.

[113]Ibid., p. 42.

[114]Ibid.

[115]Ibid.

There is evidence of encounter, for example: "Now we are faced with two creations," or "This is the choice with which we are confronted this Christmas."116

The theme is not clearly spelled out. Part one declares the fact of creation as men gaze upon the manger child. Subdivisions are: The reactions of wonder, of joy, and of obedience. Part two shows God in action with particulars as Jesus for us, in us, and through us. Part three deals with the result of God's second creation. The particulars are: God's peace contrasted to man's peace, and peace dependent upon reconciliation with God through Christ.

The language is simple and accurate, but not too concrete. The use of editorial "we" helps give empathy and solidarity of the individual with the church.

Sermon excerpts from "Christ, Cash, and Christmas," by William R. Snyder, offers examples of unusual style:

> The playing of these carols by the ministers of materialism is calculated to put you in the Christmas mood; that is, the buying mood. The sacred songs are used by store men to play on your heart strings, so you will loosen your purse strings. . . .117

> Many mundane marketeers. . . . These servants of secularism suggest. . . . Because cash is king instead of Christ at Christmas. . . . Tragic tale of some father who stoops to stealing so his children may have just as many toys. . . . Such a cash centered Christmas is a curse. . . .118 Heavenly Father did not advertise the birth of His Son with bombastic blaring, blasting, bellowing commercials. Instead the birth of the Christ Child was announced with angelic anthems. . . . Thus the first Christmas was not designed by the

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116Ibid., p. 45.

117Ibid., p. 27.

118Ibid.

Divine to shame men but to save them. It was not designed to stress the superficial, but to stress the spiritual.[119]

This play on words for alliteration is a little overdone, since it calls attention to technique instead of to the message and goal of the sermon.

The goal was not stated but implied that the hearer should agree to get the commercialism out of Christmas. One is left hanging at the end of the sermon with many loose ends, for the objective is unclear and the thought lacks progression. The content is confined to the law with little or no gospel, except in speaking of the birth of Christ; for example, Christmas "was not designed to drive men into debt, but to drive them out of all debt through Jesus Christ."[120] The sermon's major strengths are the language imagery and sentence balance.

A sermon on stewardship is "Love is Extravagant" by Arthur E. Graf.[121] The introduction uses a life situation to gain the personal involvement of the hearer. The kerygma is stated minimally and allows "love" to remain an abstract term. The goal to love God is too general. There are no signals for a thematic system and thought progression. Part III is considerably longer than Parts I and II. The main objective appears to be to persuade the hearers to fill out pledge cards as a sign of love's extravagance. The authority is Christ's commendation of Mary's action.

In the same series the same writer has an expository sermon entitled, "The Christian's Living Hope." The textual development and kerygmatic

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[119]Ibid., p. 28.

[120]Ibid.

[121]Arthur E. Graf, Bought With a Price (Springfield, Illinois: Faith Publications, 1961).

gospel are rehearsed considerably in Part I. Part II defines terms of the text and makes each term a particular in the thematic structure. The faith goal of hope is stressed in Part III. While the language is simple and clear, the thematic arrangement isn't.

For a sample of Lutheran preaching published by the Wisconsin Synod, there is available a series on the Ten Commandments by Victor A. Bartelt.[122] The first sermon has the theme: Place God Above All Things. The didactic function of the kerygma is strong. The approach is catechetical. The goal seems to be to recognize sins against the First Commandment and then fear, love, and trust God. The gospel kerygma is slight, with little dialogical relationship to the hearer's need for power. After quoting St. Augustine's famous dictum about finding rest in God, the hearer is told: "Look to Jesus as your Savior and you will have it."[123] The illustrations and Scriptural examples are helpful in diagnosing the sin of idolatry.

For hearers who are familiar with the catechism's divisions of the First Commandment, the theme and dialectic would be easy to follow.

The other sermons in this series follow a similar pattern of presentation. They all tend to be a topical development. The authority of God is appealed to in setting up the encounter. One of the better statements of kerygmatic gospel comes through in the sermon on the Sixth Commandment:

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[122]Victor A. Bartelt, Living Our Lives For God (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1957).

[123]Ibid., p. 19.

It is also for these sins against the Sixth Commandment that He
gave His life on the cross and shed His holy precious blood.  May
this love and forgiveness on the part of our Savior move all of us
to hold the marriage bond sacred and to live clean and pure lives
in thought, word, and deed.[124]

An example of a topical sermon without a text is one by Wallace E.

Fisher of the Lutheran Church in America, entitled "Why Must People

Suffer?"[125]  The textual basis consists of Scripture references related

to the topic of suffering.

The introduction attempts to state the problem of suffering and com-

municate the preacher's desire to sense and give meaning to the hearer's

need; for example:

Cancer or death in the family or economic failure inflects a kind
of suffering which sits on a man's front porch; it is in full public
view.  Incalculable human suffering sits presently on the doorstep
of the world community. . . .  To live is to have a share of hard-
ship and with some it is a double share.[126]

In proclaiming law the sermon declares the consequences of sins and

the judgment of God's moral law.  Each person is made responsible for the

misery of sin in the world.

A good summarizing thematic statement is the following:

The first thing that Jesus teaches about suffering is this:  so much
of it is self-imposed and/or forced into life by every man's un-
willingness to cooperate responsibly with his God and his fellow-
men.[127]

The preacher's distinction between law and gospel isn't always clear:

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[124]Ibid., p. 65.

[125]Alton M. Motter, editor, Preaching the Passion (Philadelphia:
Fortress Press, 1963).

[126]Ibid., p. 19.

[127]Ibid., p. 21.

The gospel . . . defines three dimensions of human suffering. Suffering rolls into life when man abuses his freedom, when God seeks to remedy man's defective character; when man chooses to take up the cross of Christ.[128]

On the other hand, the last paragraph has clear gospel: "Because He suffered and died for us; because He lives with us and for us, more of us need never again face His inevitable suffering alone or accept defeat. In Christ we are more than conquerors."[129] The first phrase of the last quotation illustrates also the audible word, while this next excerpt demonstrates imaged word: "Because He has suffered with persons, Christ understands man's human predicament."[130]

Joseph Sittler has an interesting collection of sermons, delivered to university students, in paperback. In his introduction the author states that the form of the Christian sermon is changing radically because of the changed situation of the hearer.[131] He thinks that a college congregation is seldom a fellowship of believers. Knowledge of the Bible and theological terms cannot be assumed to be understood. Therefore, the preaching in a college "must be related to life in its most problematic aspects."[132]

These sermons have little direct gospel kerygma. Christ's incarnation and His Person get attention, but there is little or no communication

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[128]Ibid., p. 24.

[129]Ibid., p. 25.

[130]Ibid., p. 24.

[131]Joseph Sittler, The Care of the Earth (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 1.

[132]Ibid., p. 4.

system of the means of grace. The sermons are more like philosophical religious homilies.

On the other hand, the theme and dialectic offer a clear progression of thought, which makes for unity. A college audience would readily follow the logical structure of these sermons. The preacher appears, none the less, overly concerned with the hearer's intellectual objections to the Christian faith. In general the language is simple enough, but in places it would not likely be understood by other than graduate students.

The last grouping of sermons in this study to come under observation for this thesis is the occasional sermon. A particularly penetrating sermon was delivered by the Rev. Edmund Nieting, Pastor of Calvary Lutheran Church, Wood Dale, Illinois. This taped sermon was based on Romans 12:1-2 in connection with a Youth Sunday emphasis.

The preacher began by discussing the problem of an accurate diagnosis of youth's needs. There are good and evil among the youth of the nation. Scriptures do not divert to a special group apart from other groups. Rather, the Scriptures make applications to all age levels. Therefore, Christian youth should not take a negative approach to Christian life and expect to be admired because they don't do the bad things that some youth do; for example, "Lord, admire me, because I didn't steal a car last night." The didactive element of the law is proclaimed in that all are judged by God as individuals, and not merely because one is in a particular age group. He uses the text for communicating the kerygma.

Youth cannot expect the church to keep up with the world in providing entertainment for them or even busy work in church functions, for example: ushering, Easter breakfasts, and money raising projects. By

itself such action isn't fulfilling the text. Youth's relationship to God is much larger than that. Every day of the week is an opportunity to integrate into the life of God, and to help others do the same.

Next the sermon turns to the home life of youth. The problem there is apathy and indifference on the part of the home. Parents are too ready to agree with youth's complaints about youth work--"It wasn't any fun," and then agreeing that the youth need not participate. This is not the "sacrifice" of the text. People don't only serve the Lord when they enjoy it. The preacher referred to the text for communicating power.

The sermon discussed wrong motives for doing church work, such as at Christimas and Easter programs for glory and exhibitionism. Instead the hearers were given the suggestion to pull weeds at church when nobody would be around. The sermon taught the value of personal witnessing and helping others without hope of reward.

In the conclusion, the declared goal is to present the body as a living sacrifice, but there wasn't enough gospel proclamation for goal attainment. An exception was a sentence in reference to youth as redeemed and forgiven children of God as motivation for goal attainment. The sermonizer used the pronoun "I" and the expression "own thinking" and his own experience in presenting law proclamation, but none with gospel kerygma. The personality dynamics were evident in making the goal concrete for youth, as well as good approaches for encounter.

A sample of funeral sermons is offered next from a collection by the Literature Board of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. The particular sermon on Matthew 15:14, "With Jesus to a Far Country" by Martin A. Haendschke, is concerned with a departed wife and mother. The goal is

to comfort the survivors with the truth that Christ has taken the deceased to heaven. You can appreciate the therapeutic function of the kerygma in this: "Only the loving hands of Jesus can bind up the deep wounds of grief; only the merciful hands of our Redeemer can heal your broken hearts in this hour of sorrow."[133]

For persuasion the preacher invites the hearers to share his conviction and communicates it via the Spirit's truth working through himself as spokesman--"We lift our tear dimmed eyes heavenward . . . and ask the Holy Spirit to bless our hearts with this consoling thought: OUR DEPARTED SISTER HAS TRAVELED WITH JESUS TO A FAR COUNTRY."[134]

Part I offers a Scriptural picture of heaven. Part II is entitled "We Are Certain That Our Sister Has Arrived Safely in the Heavenly Home." Part III reads: "In Faith and Hope We Are Traveling Toward This 'Far Country' Ourselves." I discerned the following particulars of thematic structure: (IA) The description in Scripture; (B) Jesus is there; (IIA) She confessed faith in Jesus; (B) Her faith saved her; (IIIA) We must be prepared; (B) We can be sure of entering the far country also.

For the use of language the imaged word is seen here:

Far above the azure blue skies we find the glory and majesty of the dwelling place of our loving and merciful God. There is the home of the saints, Jerusalem the Golden; there they live in the very presence of the Most High; . . . See the King of Kings face to face. . . .[135]

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[133]Literature Board of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, The Life That Never Ends (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1949), p. 62.

[134]Ibid.

[135]Ibid., p. 63.

Or this: "Christ is our only hope of salvation. . . ."[136] The language achieves force and concreteness of descriptiveness, for example: "Today He tenderly touches the bitter wounds of grief and sorrow seeking to lighten the heavy blow that has fallen on all of us, and at the same time with the same love and tenderness. . . ."[137]

President Erwin L. Paul of the Northern Illinois District of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod delivered a sermon to the combined Central and Northern Regional Pastoral Conferences on the subject, "Isaiah's Threefold Vision." Law and gospel move back and forth throughout the sermon on the basis of Isaiah's religious experience. The didactic and therapeutic function of the kerygma is applied to the pastors repeatedly, the law being proclaimed in terms of holiness and the gospel in terms of Christ's atonement. The goal of the sermon aims at portraying a vision of faith for a faithful ministry. There is good use of signaling the progression of thought.

Inasmuch as the hearers in this case are pastors and the occasion is a conference, the situation sets up readily for the empathy and sharing of dialogical relationships. The perspective is there, as well as authority along with encounter--"Study and experience have produced a vision of the Holy One for our mind's eye. We have seen demonstrations of His crushing power, His unsearchable wisdom . . . haven't we?"[138]

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[136]Ibid., p. 65.

[137]Ibid.

[138]Erwin L. Paul, "Isaiah's Threefold Vision," St. John's Lutheran Church, Forest Park, Illinois, 1963. (Mimeographed pamphlet)

Again--

> If that vision of the High and Holy God is ever before us, think
> of the authority we have behind us. It will make us fearless
> among those who are expedient; responsible among professionals;
> fill us with dignity in the midst of commonness; give us backbone
> for the time of crisis--ready to do great things because we are
> sustained by a great God.[139]

Through the use of rhetorical questions, the sermon implies that the

preacher is the spokesman of the Holy Spirit; for example, "brethren, it is

a lost world, and what the Lord wants to know of you and me today and

everyday is this: 'Are you ready to save it?'"[140]

For the imaged word there is this:

> The Exalted Creator and Ruler of heaven and earth, before whom
> the angels hide their faces; whose glory fills the earth . . .
> the God who drowned Pharaoh in the Red Sea; who called forth
> the blood and rained fire and brimstone on Sodom. . . .[141]

The audible word comes through here together with the visible word:

"The salvation Isaiah spoke about has come to pass; the child is born, the

Virgin's Son is here, the Suffering Servant has made the sacrifice. . . ."[142]

The entire sermon is audience directed and has simple and forceful

language. Concrete descriptions set forth Isaiah's vision as it related

to pastoral experiences.

A wedding address by the Rev. Alfred Doerffler based on 1 Chron.

17:27 sets up the strategy of persuasion quite well in the introduction.

Note the elements of empathy and sharing here: "You have looked forward

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[139]Ibid., p. 1.

[140]Ibid., p. 4.

[141]Ibid., p. 1.

[142]Ibid., p. 2.

to this day with eager and joyful hearts.  For months you have planned
and made preparations. . . ."[143]  Comparisons for evaluation are listed
below:

| | |
|---|---|
| Relation of individual to the church. | "This is also the prayer of your parents, your families, your friends."[144] |
| Perspective and authority. | "God also wants you to be His happy people."[145] Again, "Real and lasting happiness comes from God through Jesus Christ our Lord."[146] |
| The goal of the sermon. | That the couple trust God to bless their home. |
| Proclamation of the law in terms of need. | "Why do we need God's blessing and benediction?  Because of the sinfulness of our hearts."[147] |
| Weak proclamation of the gospel. | "If God in Christ dwells in heart and home. . . ."[148] |
| Use of text for power of communication and this fine statement. | "But while prayer asks for God's blessing, God sends His blessing to us through His Word."[149] |

This writer gleaned the following dialectic from the sermon:

I. Your request

    A.  "Let it please Thee to bless the house of Thy servant." (Text)

        1.  Why make the request?

        2.  You need strength.

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[143]Eifert, W. H., editor, In Season Out of Season (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), p. 203.

[144]Ibid.

[145]Ibid.

[146]Ibid.

[147]Ibid., p. 204.

[148]Ibid.

[149]Ibid.

B. Blessings come in answer to prayer.

II. God's storehouse.

    A. His means of supply is His Word.

    B. You shall be blessed through it.

For progression of thought there could have been better signaling. The revealed truth is "couple-directed." The expression "angel of the Lord" in the sermon is imaged word. Familiar "religious" words are used. The subjunctive mood was used once, while the imperative mood was more frequent. The language is simple, but not very forceful. The future tense is in evidence in the sermon's last particular.

Another occasional sermon in this study was written by the Rev. E. P. Weber, with the caption "Fulfill our Joy." It ties together the occasion of Paul's joy provided by the faith and life of the Philippian Christians to the occasion of the church's joy over the marriage of the young couple. This involves good empathy and sharing. It also relates the individual to the church for the strategy of sermonic persuasion.

The primary goal seems to be that the couple may live unitedly in the joy of Christ. To achieve a unified progression of thought-pattern, the preacher used three expressions from his text. They are "mind," "love," and "accord." For giving meaning to "one mind" he proclaimed a diagnosis of the law with reference to the tensions of marriage and divorce. The word "Christ" for gospel content takes too much for granted by the hearer, especially when Christ is called upon to act as "umpire" in tensions of marriage.

The work of Christ as redeeming Savior is presented in part two on "Love." In part three the gospel is proclaimed in terms of the familiar

forgiveness concept. Each part of the dialectic has law and gospel as separate units. It would have been more helpful to obtain synthesis not only in the concluding application of fulfilling joy, but in the kerygmatic content as well.

Some of the statements could have been more accurate; for example, "Forgiveness is the bulldozer which cuts down the wall of separation erected between two persons by sin."[150] A bulldozer "knocks down" rather than "cuts down."

| | |
|---|---|
| Imaged word expressions. | Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of Man, Christ as Solid Rock, "Let Christ be the Lord of your marriage."[151] |
| Audible word. | "here the great God . . . died for us sinful creatures that we should not perish but have everlasting life."[152] |
| Personality dynamic for sensing empathy. | "Love is a tinkling sensation of the heart."[153] |

In general the language of this wedding address was concrete, simple, clear, and illustrative.

An interesting address was delivered April 18, 1943, at the graduation exercises at Valparaiso University by Dr. O. P. Kretzmann, entitled "Quest and Achievement." The introduction stresses the stark reality of the times--World War II contrasted to the delusive dreams at the beginning of the twentieth century. The law proclamation comes through in diagnostic analysis with reference to the older generation's failure to

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150Ibid., p. 106.

151Ibid., p. 107.

152Ibid., p. 105.

153Ibid.

achieve peace and brotherhood.

The goal of the address aims to help the graduates recognize the superior value of a quest of life with God rather than the achievement of materialistic success. Moses' quest and sight of the Promised Land on Mount Nebo is the source of the thought progression. Christ's Cross is connected to Moses' quest. There is good perspective and authority in showing the dialogical relationship between God and man; for example, note this encounter: "Here is where God enters. He speaks to you today. . . ."[154] "He alone can finally give the vision, the dream, the hope, the courage, the faith, which you will need so bitterly in the days that lie before you."[155]

For communication power the kerygmatic content shows in this excerpt, as well as empathy and encounter: "You will not be able to live as He would have you live except by the power of your redemption from sin and your peace with God."[156] The sermon's force and accuracy is apparent from this: "In a world which worships power and force, you are called to be representatives of mercy."[157]

An additional example of this thesis is offered from a sermon on the occasion of dedicating church windows. It was delivered by W. H. Eifert at the Church of Our Redeemer, Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1943.

The text becomes the sermon's theme--Romans 8:34: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again."

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154Ibid., p. 108.

155Ibid., p. 109.

156Ibid.

157Ibid., p. 110.

The goal is not stated, but implies that people should have confidence that nothing can condemn the Christian. The kerygmatic content is declarative and didactic, but the sermon lacks color and life, especially in Part I.

The second part of the sermon deals with an explanation of the window's symbols. It is illustrative of the redemption and resurrection of Christ which had already been explored textually in Part I. There is hardly any system of communication for persuasion. While the language is simple and clear, the element of force is lacking, for example: "We Christians may with sure confidence insist that no one can condemn us. . . ."[158] The word "may" could be deleted for force. The sentences are rather long in places--one had seventy-six words in it.

A gem of a sermon for Palm Sunday in connection with a children's confirmation class comes from A. R. Kretzmann, pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Luke, Chicago, Illinois. It develops Peter's fall and repentance in terms of his earlier confession, his time of denial, and his tears of repentance around the theme: Three Great Days of a Great Christian and a Great Disciple.

One can readily observe the communication of kerygma here:

Today you recognize no other help but the blessed means of grace-- the Word at home and in your heart, and in your church--and the Sacraments as the great aids and assurances that the love of God was real and great and glorious in the work of Jesus, our ever- blessed Lord.[159]

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[158]Ibid., p. 63.

[159]Ibid., p. 39.

The dialectic first develops the confessional action of the children's faith, then follows the antithesis of the possible fall from Christ, and continues with the synthesis of restoration. In the strategy of persuasion one finds proper perspective combined with personality dynamics for communication; for example:

> My dear children, you have been with the Lord for some time. In Holy Baptism you were made a part of Him, in His holy body, the church.[160] You have spent this first period of your life with Him, . . . Today you come to the day when you have an opportunity to confess Him.[161]

In discussing the possibility of a confirmand's falling away from Christ, one may watch for truth through personality in this: "It is possible that the day may come when I might have to ask, 'Can that be John or Robert or . . . whom I heard confessing their Savior on Palm Sunday. . . .'"[162]

The reader may notice the audible word in this excerpt: "This cock was only doing what he had done all his life--what a thousand others like him were doing all over Jerusalem that morning--but in his morning call God's voice sounded."[163]

This occasional sermon used the present tense frequently for empathy. The indicative mood and the active voice along with clarity, accuracy, force, and concreteness helped to stimulate the hearers toward a vital experience with the text in terms of the occasion.

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[160]Relationship of the individual to the church.

[161]Eifert, p. 38.

[162]Ibid., p. 40.

[163]Ibid., p. 43.

A Thanksgiving Day sermon by Rudolph Prange begins with an illustration about a check paying a bill on the basis of money in the bank. This is compared with the observance of Thanksgiving Day as if God received a check from the Christian and it were validated by godly conduct afterwards. The progression of thought leads into the subject "After Thanksgiving, Thanksliving." The goal is far too general that the hearer should obey God's Will by living a Christian life. One finds such generalized objectives as this: "God wants to be thanked for His benefits."[164] "God wants to be thanked oftener than once a year."[165] And in the conclusion:

> Let us not be content to thank God with our lips; let us thank Him with our life. Let us prove to God that we truly appreciate His benefits; let us do so by sincere thanksgiving; let us prove our sincerity by thanksliving.[166]

The law proclamation is declared in that the hearer is either ungrateful or insincere in thanksgiving. Next a wrong motivation is presented for repentance--"When we number God's benefits--that should lead us to repentance, to turn from our wicked ways, to do better in the future."[167] If only the sermon had told what these benefits are; namely, forgiveness of sins via the atonement of Christ, the hearer might have received the power of the gospel to effect change, but the sermon destroys any chance for this in a few lines later: "If out of gratitude for God's benefits we are careful to heed His Commandments, we prove to

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[164]Ibid., p. 156.

[165]Ibid., p. 157.

[166]Ibid., p. 160.

[167]Ibid., p. 159.

Him that we mean what we say when we thank Him."[168]   The sermon fails to

realize that gratitude is already the thanksliving and not a cause for it.

At the end of this sermon the gospel is declared negatively--almost

as law--

> As Christians we are in possession of the greatest blessing of all,
> God's assurance of complete pardon for the sake of Christ, who
> died for us on the cross, whereby heaven's door has been opened
> unto us, inviting us to enter and to feast forever on the joys God
> has prepared for us there.  If by our actions we bluntly tell God
> that we place a very low estimate on all these blessings of His, we
> need not be surprised if He takes them from us and gives them to
> those who will appreciate them.[169]

The quotation above contains the only reference to Christ's cross through-

out the sermon.  There were frequent affirmations of the law to convict

the hearer, but not enough use of the means of grace to convert him.

There were no transitional paragraphs and few signals to help the

hearer follow the progression of thought.  The thematic dialectic wasn't

clearly indicated.

For the strategy of persuasion there are appeals to God's authority;

for example, "God wants to be thanked. . . . God is pleased with. . . ."[170]

Encounter comes through in this:  "If we really mean what we say today,

we should do everyday what we did today--thank God."[171]

This sermon attempts to organize concepts and present meanings of

thanksgiving in terms of daily thanksliving.  The preacher tries to sense

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[168]Ibid.

[169]Ibid., p. 160.

[170]Ibid., p. 156.

[171]Ibid., p. 157.

a problem of meaning for the hearer by the example of a husband who suggested they bring a special offering as a memorial in honor of their son who had fought in France, because their son was not killed. The application then is made to be thankful for the misfortunes that passed by the hearers.

In the category of the use of language the sermon's best feature is its simplicity, but in print, at least, the sermon is rather lifeless.

In the last part of this chapter I am applying the thesis to a sermon in detail. To accomplish this purpose a check sheet has been set up as a measuring device. The check list is attached to this study as an appendix to the paper. The numbers following each sentence of the selected sermon relate to the numbers on the check sheet.

My commentary on the categories and systems of communication in evidence will follow. This sermon was selected because it indicates so well the proposals and findings of this thesis.

<div align="center">Use of Check List as Measuring Device for Sermon</div>

<div align="center">

God's Purified People
by
Carl F. Reuss, Director, Commission on
Research and Social Action of
The American Lutheran Church

Titus 2:11-14

</div>

Christmas is a season of many meanings to many people. 11,15
Some people know its true meaning and message. Others do
not. 9,18
To some people, for example, Christmas is a season of frantic
hustle, bustle, crowds, and confusion. 19,20
To others it is a time for merriment and partying. 7,9,19,20
To yet others Christmas is merely a welcome break in routines,
a time for sleeping and lazy days. 7,9,19,20

Even to Christian people Christmas is a season of many meanings.  9,10,15
The message of God's great gift is so comprehensive and so
profound that perhaps no one of us can grasp its full
dimensions.  2,9,11,14
So we emphasize portions of the Christmas message which merit
special consideration.  11

Some of us might like to dwell on the crude setting and common
people who were God's actors in the drama of Christmas.  7,9,11,19
Or we might emphasize the confident faith they displayed.  7,9,11
Perhaps we prefer instead the startling appearance of the
angelic choir and the promise inherent in the wonderful words
sung by that heavenly chorus.  7,9,11,13,19,20
Others of us might note the cruelty of man to fellow man in
the census conditions the emperor decreed and in the innkeeper's
indifference to the urgent needs of a woman soon to be delivered
of her child.  7,9,11,19

Yet we all know that these are merely sidelights.  11,20
The spotlight is on the fact that God became man.  1,2,13,19,20
God took on human form.  2,8,13,16,19
God became one of us, to share fully in the realities of human
life.  2,8,9,13,14,16,19

God became man not out of some idle whim or prankster's
jest.  8,13,20
He became man to fulfill his Eden-given promise that he would
send a savior to redeem man from the bondage of sin.  1,2,8,9,13,
14,16,18
The birthday in Bethlehem was God's delivery date on promises
so often declared in scripture.  1,2,8,9,13,19,20

God became man not to descend to the earthy vulgarity, the
passions, and the cheapness that man so often makes of his
life.  13,20
Rather, God became man in order to show that man's life can
take on the heavenly qualities of upright, godly living if a
people is reborn as God's own people.  1,2,5,7,9,13
This too is part of what salvation means.  2,11

Christmas means also, then, the birth of a people of God who
are zealous for good works.  2,5,7
This of course is not the full or the only message of Christmas.  1,2
It nevertheless is an essential part of the full message of
Christmas, a part which we believe needs some emphasis to-
day.  2,5,9,11
This thought we find in Titus (2:11-14), especially the last
words of verse 13 and all of verse 14:  "our great God and
Savior Jesus Christ, . . . gave himself for us to redeem us from

all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who
are zealous for good deeds." 1,2,3,8,9,13,14

As we think further on the meaning for us today of this part
of God's message for Christmas we can see ourselves as God's
purified people. 1,2,5,9,15
As his purified people we are:

> released from sin,
> redeemed for good, and
> reunited with God. 1,2,4,6,7

I

Sin is a powerful force in human life. 1,17,18
Sin is not so much a thing as a way of life. 1,2
It is a force which has taken hold in human life and rules tri-
umphantly. 1
Sin to the human being is like alcohol to the alcoholic, like
heroin to the drug addict, like lewd pictures to the victim of
pornography. 2,15,19,20
Some force has overwhelmed him and has taken command of his
person. 2
He no longer rules over his drives and passions. 2
They have come to rule--and to ruin--him. 1,2,20
So it is with sin--a way of life the victim usually knows is
not right but which he feels helpless to resist. 1,2,20

Sin takes many specific forms. 2,17
St. Paul itemized for the Galatians some works of the flesh
which clearly are contrary to the noblest purposes of man:
"immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery,
enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension,
party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like." 1,2
3,7

Look about us in the world. 2,8,21
So [sic. See] how ever-new these sins are as they appear in
the news headlines, the "true confession" and "confidential"
types of magazines, and the drama of stage and screen. 2,8,19
Does any one of us seriously doubt that sin holds sway in
human life? 1,21

Contrast with his list of works of the flesh, St. Paul's list
of fruits of the Spirit, the marks of God's purified people:
"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
gentleness, self-control." 1,2,3,6,8,9,15

Even the world somehow expects these traits to be evidenced on
Christmas day. 6
An accident any other day becomes a tragedy on Christmas. 7,20,21

Thievery, strife, anger, and the like seem especially
despicable on Christmas.  1,2,7,19
At least this one day of the year the world believes that the
evil side of man should be hidden and his better possibilities
brought to the fore.  7,11

God's salvation, in the form of His Son become man, brings to
men the power thus to be released from sin.  1,2,3,6,13,14
It enables man to renounce irreligion and worldly passions.  2,3
11,14
Christmas means that man is released from ruinous bondage to
sin--provided only that he will accept God's own offer of
release.  1,2,11,14,18

## II

Christmas means too that man is redeemed for good.  1,2,5,6,7,11
"Zealous for good deeds," the apostle says of God's purified
people.  2,3,5,8
They live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, he
says.  2,3,8

Family life, in the relations between husband and wife, between
parents and children, and between brothers and sisters, is a
first area where the good deeds of God's people can show in
real, living, and daily demonstrations of the fruits of the
Spirit.  2,3,5,7,12

Another area badly needing evidence of Christian zeal for good
deeds is that of money, management, labor, and the whole of
man's economic institutions.  1,2,5,7,11,19
Sober, upright, and godly lives are as much in demand here as
in every other area of life.  1,2,5
As Christ-purified men and women we must see that economic
affairs are another arena in which we Christians evidence the
fruits of God's spirit at work in our lives.  1,2,3,5,9,14,15,19

Would any of us dispute that into the area of government and
public life generally, God's purified people also must bring
their zeal for good works and their witness of sober, upright,
and godly lives?  1,2,5,9,14,15
How many of us have noted that Paul's oft-quoted words to the
Romans about being subject to the governing authorities come
between passages dealing with the power of love in human
life?  2,8,9,15,21  ["action" is a better word than "power"
here.]

"Let love be genuine; . . . love one another with brotherly
affection; . . . Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil

with good. . . . Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 12:9,21; 13:10). 2,3,9

Faith active in love is the good for which God's purified people have been redeemed. 1,2,5,8,14
Love is God's [unclear] guide to the whole of our lives--in family, community, ["objective" instead of "guide" here] work, citizenship, leisure and recreation, 1,8
and in every other circle of our contacts with our fellow human beings, even in our automobile driving. 19,20

This point of the centrality of love in human life Jesus made when he answered the question "which is the greatest command-ment in the law?" 1,2,6,8,13,15
by saying: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two com-mandments depend all the law and the prophets." (Matt. 22:36-40). 1,2,5,8,15

### III

Released from sin, redeemed for good, as God's [better formu-lation to have Part III and then Part II to prevent mixing law and gospel] purified people we now are reunited with him. 1,2,3,4,6,14
Let us not boast in these blessings. 17
They are not of our doing. 17
St. Paul declares emphatically that "No human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law since through the law comes knowledge of sin." 1,2,3

No--much rather we become reunited with God by what God has done. 1,2,6,11,14,20
His is the initiative. 1,8,21
His is the action. 20,21
His are the terms for reunion. 21
God's action was to give His Son, Jesus Christ, over into man-hood, death, and resurrection in order to bring salvation to the world. 1,2,3,8,13,14,15,20
It was God's great gift, given ["It" is unclear] in kindness, in mercy, in love, and in the spirit also of justice. 1,3,11
All he asks is that we receive this gift in faith. 1,8,9
God justifies whomsoever has faith in Jesus; He cancels out their sins because Jesus has paid their debt for them. 1,2,11, 13,14

We ourselves know that try as we will we cannot do what we know we should do, and we do that which we know we ought not to do. 1,11

Thus seeing ourselves we throw ourselves on God's mercy.  1,2,8,9
Believing His promises we find God welcoming us into His
family of purified people.  1,3,4,9,10,11,13,14,15
Reunited with Him, accepted as one of His own, being one of
His family we try as best we can to live the kind of lives
that would please Him.  1,3,5,6,9,11
His apostle gives us the outline--"to live sober, upright, and
godly lives in this world."  1,2,3,5,8,11,15

God's purified people are released from sin and are redeemed
for good in this world because they are reunited with Him.  1,6,
7,14,16,18

For God's purified people on this Christmas day there is
meaning in the words of our text which should guide the whole
of our lives throughout the whole of the year.  1,2,3,5,6,11,14,15

"Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ gave himself for us to
redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people
of His own who are zealous for good deeds."  1,2,3,13,14

The introduction in this sermon is full of kerygmatic content sur-

rounding the nativity almost immediately:  "The spotlight is on the fact

that God became man.  God took on human form."[172]  Again, "He became man

to fulfill His Eden-given promise that He would send a Savior to redeem

man from the bondage of sin."[173]

Part I includes law proclamation; for example, "Sin is a powerful

force in human life.  Sin is not so much a thing as a way of life."  Part

II quotes Jesus' summary of the law in Matthew 22:36-40, that is, to love

God and the neighbor.  Part III contrasts law and gospel and shows that

release is God's action by giving

His Son, Jesus Christ, over into manhood, death, and resurrection,
in order to bring salvation to the world.  God justifies

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[172]Alton M. Motter, editor, Preaching the Nativity (Philadelphia:
Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 101.

[173]Ibid.

whomsoever has faith in Jesus; He cancels out their sins because Jesus has paid their debt for them.[174]

For proclamation of law and gospel, the sermon utilizes the didactic function of the text: "Christ, . . . gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds."[175] Sin and grace in terms of law and gospel are balanced; "Sin to the human is like alcohol to the alcoholic, like heroin to the drug addict. . . ."[176] Next the preacher quotes Paul's Galatian passage on the works of the flesh after which he follows up with kerygmatic gospel: "God's salvation in the form of His Son become man brings to men the power thus to be released from sin."[177]

Repeatedly one finds the didactic function of the text in the expression "Christmas means. . . ." For example, "Christmas means also, then, the birth of a people of God who are zealous for good works."[178] The parts of the sermon teach that Christmas means released from sin, redeemed for good, and reunited with God. The following didactic function of kerygma underscores the same thought: "Christmas means that man is released from ruinous bondage to sin--provided only that he will accept God's own offer of release."[179]

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[174]Ibid., p. 104.

[175]Titus 2:11-14

[176]Motter, p. 102.

[177]Ibid.

[178]Ibid., p. 101.

[179]Ibid., p. 102.

The therapeutic function of kerygma is offered here: "Christmas means too that man is redeemed for good, zealous for good deeds, the apostle says of God's purified people."[180] Again, "Love is God's guide to the whole of our lives--in family, community work, citizenship, leisure, and recreation. . . ."[181]

For support and didactic the sermon quotes five apropos Scripture texts to clarify the text. It also aims at communication of kerygma through the Holy Spirit in this clause: "Contrast with his list of works of the flesh, St. Paul's list of the fruits of the Spirit, the marks of God's purified people. . . ."[182] Further, the gospel as means of grace is striking in this sentence: "God's salvation . . . brings to men the power thus to be released from sin. It enables men to renounce irreligion and worldly passions."[183] The sacraments are not mentioned, but baptism could have been brought in legitimately in connection with the word "purify" in the text.

The central thought or theme content of this sermon can be drawn from the sermon itself in this sentence: "As his purified people we are released from sin, redeemed for good, and reunited with God."[184] The objective or goal is to "see ourselves as God's purified people."[185]

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[180]Ibid., p. 103.

[181]Ibid.

[182]Ibid., p. 102.

[183]Ibid.

[184]Ibid., p. 101.

[185]Ibid.

The theme's structure divides easily into three parts. Part I: released from sin; Part II: Redeemed for good; Part III: Reunited with God. These are mentioned in the introduction to the sermon which is lengthy. The conclusion comprises one sentence as it restates the text.

The discussion of sin with reference to force or power in the hearer's life is a contrasting didactic to the works of the Spirit. The sermon shows that Christmas means living in Christ's redemption rather than living in sin. Christians are zealous unto good deeds. That's the antithesis--"Faith active in love is the good for which God's purified people have been redeemed."[186] Part III elucidates the synthesis. Here is the key sentence: "God's purified people are released from sin and are redeemed for good in this world, because they are reunited with Him."[187]

For progression of thought the transition from one particular or paragraph to the next could have been helped by signals, though possibly the preacher's voice inflections in the delivered sermon may have helped accomplish such transitions.

The preacher portrays perspective in the introduction where he shows the varied meanings of Christmas for both non-Christians and Christians. He focuses on the basic authority and perspective of Christmas in the fourth paragraph: "Yet we all know that these are merely sidelights. The spotlight is on the fact that God became man."[188]

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[186]_Ibid._, p. 103.

[187]_Ibid._, p. 105.

[188]_Ibid._, p. 100.

Notice the God-to-man aspect of the strategy of persuasion in this: "God became one of us, to share fully in the realities of human life,"[189] or this: "The birthday in Bethlehem was God's delivery date on promises so often declared in Scripture."[190] Two sentences later the dialogical relationship reverses: "God became man in order to show that man's life can take on the heavenly qualities of upright godly living, if a people is reborn as God's own people."[191]

The dialogue moves from Christ's man to the fellowman in Part II, which expresses the textual phrase "zealous unto good deeds." However, God is still the source of power for Christian action: "We become re-united with God by what God has done. His is the initiative. His is the action. His are the terms for reunion. God's action was to give His Son. . . ."[192]

The pronouns "we" and "us" kept signaling the truth to the hearer that the individuals together as church are involved in the sermon. God too is involved in sharing Himself with the hearers in the incarnation. "God became one of us to share fully in the realities of human life."[193] Again, "We find God welcoming us into his family of purified people."[194]

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189Ibid., p. 101.

190Ibid.

191Ibid.

192Ibid., p. 104.

193Ibid., p. 101.

194Ibid., p. 104.

There are these clues to the use of personality dynamics for the purpose of gaining attention and interest in the words of the sermon's introduction: "Christmas is a season of frantic hustle, bustle, crowds, and confusion . . . merriment and partying . . . a welcome break in routines, a time for sleeping and lazy days."[195] The following phrase probes for interest: "Some of us might like to dwell on. . . ."[196] The preacher senses the hearer's questions as to what Christmas may mean to them. Then he lifts out and organizes one of their Christmas interests and associates it with the essential meaning of Christmas in the gospel. The sermon next invites the hearers to respond to that meaning in their hearts and lives.

For the dynamic of responding to the audience's need to know what sin is like, there is this sample of comparison: "Sin to the human being is like alcohol to the alcoholic, like heroin to the drug addict, like lewd pictures to the victim of pornography."[197] The sermon sets up the situation for response by saying: "Look about us in the world. See how ever new these sins are as they appear in the news headlines. . . ."[198] This, plus references to biblical passages contrasting the works of the flesh with those of the Spirit, summons preacher and people to some answering responses about their own situation. The audience has to consider God's answer: "God's salvation . . . enables men to renounce

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[195]Ibid., p. 100.

[196]Ibid.

[197]Ibid., p. 102.

[198]Ibid.

irreligion and worldly passions."[199]

Part II teaches that the sensed stimuli which summon response can be organized into the meaning of Christmas for every facet of human living. This strikes at the center of personality and gives meaning to the hearer's existence. Response to God's love comes in returning love to God and the neighbor. Christmas has meaning then for the believer in terms for this response--"redeemed for good in this world, because they are reunited with him."[200]

The sermon offers numerous examples of the imaged word: "The startling appearance of the angelic choir and the promise inherent in the wonderful words sung by that heavenly chorus."[201] Those words help visualize a spiritual setting. Another phrase, "Eden-given promise,"[202] helps visualize a whole drama of action in the mind of the hearer. On the same page, the expression "birth in Bethlehem" visualizes God in human form for a believing Christian and prepares understanding for the next sentence: "If a people is reborn as God's own people. . . ."[203] The sermon is actually attempting to set up the image of Christ within the hearer as a person who belongs to God's purified people. Here the sermon could have been more visual by showing Christ through the visible word in Holy Baptism.

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[199]Ibid.

[200]Ibid., p. 105.

[201]Ibid., p. 100.

[202]Ibid., p. 101.

[203]Ibid.

In presenting the malady of sin, the imagery of the alcoholic, drug addict, and lewd person helps to make transparent the "powerful force of sin," or "the victim usually knows it is not right but which he feels helpless to resist,"[204] or "Look about us in the world. See how ever-new these sins are as they appear in the news headlines. . . ."[205] [Italics mine] Various words have good image quality, such as accident, tragedy, thievery, strife, anger, and release; the same may be said of phrases as death of Christ, resurrection, kindness, mercy of Christ, etc. Some expressions help the hearer "see" Christ's Person for apprehending Him as the Truth; for example, "God became man," or "a Savior to redeem man."[206]

The appeal of the audible word to what God did and does for man's salvation: "God's salvation brings to men the power thus to be released from sin. It enables men to renounce . . . provided only that he will accept God's own offer of release."[207] Notice there the offer of the gospel and the immediacy of opportunity for response.

As one reads clauses such as these: "That man is redeemed for God,"[208] and "the good for which God's purified people have been redeemed,"[209] and "God justifies whomsoever has faith in Jesus; he cancels

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[204]Ibid., p. 102.

[205]Ibid.

[206]Ibid., p. 101.

[207]Ibid., p. 102.

[208]Ibid., p. 102.

[209]Ibid., p. 103.

out their sins because Jesus has paid their debt for them,"[210] you may note the narrative aspect, which appeals to the ear more than to the eye.

The sermon keeps the sentences short; for example: "Sin is a powerful force in human life,"[211] or "Sin takes many specific forms,"[212] or "Look about us in the world."[213] There are ninety-seven sentences which average about sixteen words per sentence. The words in the sentences are within the vocabulary of the average church-goer; an exception would be the word "licentiousness." There may have been a few others.

An especially strong feature of the sermon is its concrete language. I have listed these samples: "The common people who were God's actors in the drama of Christmas. The spotlight is on the fact that God became man."[214] "The birthday in Bethlehem was God's delivery date."[215] "An accident any other day becomes a tragedy at Christmas."[216] "Love is God's guide to the whole of our lives . . . even in our automobile driving."[217]

For forceful expressions, how about these? "Frantic hustle, crowds and confusions, merriment, lazy days, startling appearance, prankster's

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[210]Ibid., p. 104.

[211]Ibid., p. 101.

[212]Ibid., p. 102.

[213]Ibid.

[214]Ibid., p. 100.

[215]Ibid., p. 101.

[216]Ibid., p. 102.

[217]Ibid., p. 104.

jest, vulgarity, passions, cheapness, alcohol, heroin, lewd, pornography, drives, helpless, strife, anger, ruinous." The use of the rhetorical question also lends force to the process of persuasion: "How many of us have voted. . . ."[218] Also rapid fire sentences present forceful expressions, for example: "His is the initiative. His is the action. His are the terms for reunion."[219] Balanced phrasing gives additional force: "Reunited with Him, accpted as one of His own, being one of His family, we try as best we can. . . ."[220]

Most of the sentences are in the indicative mood, while occasionally there is a subjunctive: "If a people is reborn as God's own people. . . ."[221] I counted four interrogative sentences, one sentence in the optative mood, and several imperatives. Mostly, as is usual in preaching, the present tense predominates. The active voice occurs throughout the sermon.

This sermon was particularly lucid in demonstrating the presence of the four categories in Lutheran preaching along with their communicating systems for apprehending God's revealed truth. In evaluating it according to such a measuring device, it also serves as a helpful model as to what good preaching in the Lutheran Church in fact is.

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[218]Ibid., p. 103.

[219]Ibid., p. 104.

[220]Ibid.

[221]Ibid., p. 101.

# FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

In reviewing the primary sources used in this study, the following general observations with reference to this thesis may be made. The use of the check list as a measuring device developed from the first four chapters of this study was applied to the sermons, and the following findings were noted. The check list may be found in the Appendix. While the selected sermons in the major Lutheran Synods offered examples of rich and explicit gospel kerygma, a good many of them tended to spend more time and words on presenting the law in diagnostic form rather than proclamation of the gospel. These sermons also minimized the judgmental function of the law.

The preaching utilized the didactic function of kerygma more frequently than therapy. This may indicate preachers need more pastoral experience as Seelsorger.

A considerable number of sermons based on free texts were topical rather than expository, yet they could be considered textual via the use of parallel passages.

Occasionally one finds gratitude misused as a motive for sanctification rather than Christ's atonement. Where the gospel kerygma was clearly set forth and the means of grace were utilized to communicate it, this wrong motivation was avoided.

In addition, the Holy Spirit was used in relation to the text for communication rather sparsely, and the sacraments still less. However, a goodly number of the sermons did include one or the other of the sacraments as means of grace for the power of communicating.

Many of the sermons analyzed had implied objectives, but quite a number simply conveyed information followed by generalized applications. Theme and dialectic were better represented as compared with stated objectives or goals.

The aspects of the sermon's strategy of persuasion were in evidence quite often with one notable exception--the individual's relationship to the church. The sermons aimed at a highly individualized personal conception of religious faith with rather weak emphasis on the corporate relationship of the hearers to each other as the Body of Christ. This may be accounted for by the individualistic emphasis stemming from the formal principle of Lutheran theology, justification by faith alone.

Except for those sermons which merely set forth the text in catechetical fashion or in dogmatic categories, the exegetical approach to the text, especially where the pericopes are used for proclamation, is still quite strong in the Lutheran preaching I analyzed.

Furthermore, the expressions featuring the imaged word were less in evidence compared to those using the audible word for expressing revealed truth. One reason for this may be the fact that the Reformation stresses the work of Christ more than His person, since the former was at the major point of protest against Romanism.

Finally, it is evident that Lutheran preaching in America stresses clarity, simplicity and other technical apparatus for the use of language. Sentences have grown shorter over the years and the language less formal than the former generation. The better sermons were careful to allow the declaratory sentences to do their work before coming with the hortatory sentences.

In brief summation, the objective analysis of the categories of
Lutheran Preaching in America and their communicating systems for appre-
hending revealed truth supplies useful criteria for evaluating sermons.
The analysis makes predictable to a considerable degree what Lutheran
preaching in America expects to happen to its hearers. As stated at the
outset of this paper, in the process of persuasion there are factors
known only to God, but He has made enough of these ascertainable that
their proper use helps the hearers to respond to the effective proclama-
tion of the Word, while an improper use or lack of the categories and
their companion communication systems can hinder the stimuli, power,
impact, and movement of the preaching. It is the preacher's sacred duty
and privilege to use these factors skillfully as a "workman of God, that
needeth not to be ashamed."

# APPENDIX

## CHECK SHEET AS MEASURING DEVICE

I. For evaluating the message.

    1. Content for proclamation--law and gospel.
    2. Didactic and therapeutic function.
    3. Communication power as textual, means of grace, Holy Spirit.

II. For evaluating the achievement of unified objective.

    4. Vertical, evangelistic, faith goals.
    5. Horizontal, edifying, life goals.
    6. Communication system of theme and dialectic (thesis, antithesis, synthesis).
    7. Progression of thought, clear formulation from introduction to conclusion.

III. For evaluating the strategy of persuasion.

    8. Perspective and authority--from God to man and to God and to man.
    9. Encounter, empathy, sharing.
    10. Relationship of individual to the church.
    11. System of personality dynamics (sensing, responding, organizing, meaning).
    12. Holy Spirit's truth through personality as instrument.

IV. For evaluating the means of expressing God's revealed truth.

    13. The imaged word (beauty, compassion, strength, and courage, concern and forgiveness, faithfulness and love, pain and hope, appeal of what He was and is).
    14. The audible word (immediacy of apprehension and response, appeal of what Christ did).
    15. Audience directed.
    16. Communication system--clarity.
    17. Simplicity.
    18. Accuracy.
    19. Concreteness, imagination, visualization, illustrative.
    20. Force--strong words, economy.
    21. Moods, tenses, voices, sentence structure.

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