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Training Elders in the Alexandria District of the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to Preach Expository Sermons

Cedric N. Belcher Sr

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ABSTRACT

TRAINING ELDERS IN THE ALEXANDRIA DISTRICT
OF THE SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE OF
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS TO PREACH
EXPOSITORY SERMONS

by

Cedric N. Belcher, Sr.

Adviser: R. Clifford Jones

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: TRAINING ELDERS IN THE ALEXANDRIA DISTRICT OF THE
SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTISTS TO PREACH EXPOSITORY SERMONS

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Date completed: May 2010

Problem

Elders are assigned to preach on Sabbath in the absence of the pastor in the Alexandria District of the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Though some have been preaching for many years, many have not had additional training in preaching.

Method

The training program was designed to inform and offer practical skills on how to preach expository sermons. To demonstrate mastery of the training content, elders

preached two in-seminar sermons. The better of the two sermons was preached in the elder's respective church.

Results

The elders showed significant improvement in their in-seminar-preaching. Their respective churches acknowledged the improvement.

Conclusions

Elders can improve their preaching skills when properly trained. Properly trained elders can preach with confidence and guarantee that an empowered elder is preaching every Sabbath.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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OF THE SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE OF
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EXPOSITORY SERMONS

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Cedric N. Belcher, Sr.

May 2010

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DEDICATION

The completion of this project would not have occurred without the support, encouragement, and editorial assistance of my wife Dr. Sonya Gray Belcher. I wish to dedicate this project to her for her enduring love and to our three children Gabriella, Angellina, and Ced. I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother Annie Y. Flumo for instilling in me the drive to succeed.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this project to the memories of Dr. Kenneth Mulzac and Pastor John D. Aaron. Dr. Mulzac served as my adviser prior to his death and Pastor John D. Aaron shepherded the Nazarene Baptist Church in Alexandria, Louisiana. He had requested a copy of the project after its completion.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

The Alexandria District of the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists¹ has elders assigned to preach in my absence in order to fulfill the preaching responsibility on Sabbath. At Smyrna, elders preach twice a month; at Maranatha, elders preach three times a month; and at Natchitoches First, an elder preaches three times a month. On average, elders preach seven times a month in the Alexandria District. Many of these elders have not had extensive training in preaching.

Statement of the Task

The task of this project is to develop a program to train elders to preach expository sermons. With extensive training, elders in the Alexandria District will experience

¹The Alexandria District of the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is located in central Louisiana and is comprised of three churches: Smyrna Seventh-day Adventist Church, Maranatha Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the Natchitoches First Seventh-day Adventist Church.

a new dimension of preaching that would be both substantive and spiritually rewarding.

Justification for the Dissertation

Many Seventh-day Adventist pastors have multiple churches and, in their absence, elders are assigned to preach. Floyd W. Bresee observed this phenomenon in 1997 and said, "On any given Sabbath around the world perhaps as many as 80% of Adventist sermons preached are preached by lay preachers—usually, but not always, by local church elders."² As recently as 2006, Joseph A. Webb also noticed this trend. In an article advocating the training of lay preachers, he wrote, "It is probably no exaggeration to assume that there may be more lay people than professional clergy preaching on any Sabbath."³ The observations by Bresee and Webb pose a challenge.

To exacerbate this challenge further, some conferences, because of budgetary constraints, are laying off pastors or, in some cases, are having one pastor serve multiple churches. Hence, pastors are relying heavily upon

²Floyd W. Bresee, *Successful Lay Preaching* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, 1997), 13.

³Joseph A. Webb, "Training Lay Preachers," *Ministry*, August 2006, 24.

elders to preach in the pastor's absence.

In addition, many elders have had little or no extensive training in preaching. The lack of extensive training creates a daunting preaching task. Therefore, a program that trains elders to preach can be a solution.

Jesus understood the significance of training. He assembled a group of individuals and trained them before sending them to expand the gospel of the Kingdom of God (Mark 3:14), "both in Jerusalem, and in Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). These trained disciples preached the gospel wherever they went.

Paul also assembled a faithful group of itinerate associates to assist him. These individuals demonstrated unyielding fidelity to Paul's teachings. They provided Paul with encouragement and, on some occasions, corrected erroneous doctrines among the believers. Paul allowed them to serve as an extension of himself when circumstances could not permit him to be present.

One of these associates was Timothy. A special kinship existed between Paul and Timothy. Paul referred to Timothy as his "beloved son in the Lord" (1 Cor 4:17), his "son in the faith" (1 Tim 1:2), and "my dearly beloved son" (2 Timothy 1:2).

Commenting on the success that accompanied Paul and Barnabas, Ellen G. White wrote, "When men of promise and ability were converted, as in the case of Timothy, Paul and Barnabas sought earnestly to show them the necessity of laboring in the vineyard."⁴ She added, "This careful training of new converts was an important factor in the remarkable success that attended Paul and Barnabas as they preached the gospel in heathen lands."⁵ Paul trained Timothy and also admonished Timothy to be "apt to teach" others (2 Tim 2:24). Implicit in Paul's admonition to Timothy was the call to train others for the gospel proclamation (2 Tim 2:2).

Finally, there is a systematic theme in the writings of Ellen G. White concerning training laypeople in every aspect of ministry, including preaching. She perceived that there were many gifted individuals sitting in the pews who could tremendously impact the advancement of the gospel if adequately trained. She insisted that "the forces for good among the lay members of the church cannot be developed and brought into proper working order without

⁴Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1911), 186-187.

⁵Ibid.

careful planning and systemic training. As these workers are developed, they must be given the wise, helpful supervision of experienced leaders."⁶ The most effective tool that can be given to lay people is to "teach them to work for God."⁷ This is the responsibility of the minister or the pastor. The pastor or minister is entrusted with training lay people in every aspect of ministry, including preaching.

Description of the Dissertation Process

Current literature on training elders how to preach expository sermons, such as books, articles, journals, periodicals, and dissertations was reviewed. Since this project is a practical exercise, considerable time was given to reviewing dissertations that had designed and implemented training programs to enhance elders' preaching skills. Following the review, a training program was developed.

The training program consisted of two seminars covering the following themes: Preparation of the Speaker

⁶Ellen G. White, "Fields Near at Hand," *Review and Herald*, October 22, 1914, 3, 4.

⁷Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 7:19.

and Preparation of the Sermon. The first seminar, Preparation of the Speaker, was a spiritual retreat. This retreat aided elders in understanding their call to preach, the spirituality of the preacher, and maintaining an intimate relationship with Jesus. The second seminar, the Preparation of the Sermon, formed the practical aspect of the training program. Topics for the seminar included defining preaching, how to select a sermonic text, reading the text in many versions, exegesis, writing out the sermon, application, utilizing figures of speech, illustrations, delivery, and maintaining continuous self-development. Only elders voted by their respective churches in the Alexandria District of the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists were eligible for training.

The training program concluded with the elders preaching two in-seminar sermons. The better of the two sermons was preached in the elders' respective churches. Finally, the elders gave feedback on the effectiveness of the training program, instruction, teaching style, and overall content.

Definition of Terms

Conference: Group of churches located in a defined geographic area with one central administration.

Company: A group of believers assembled for fellowship worship, and the hope of becoming a church.

District: Two or more churches in a geographic locale administered by one pastor.

Elders: Local lay leaders voted by their respective churches to assist the pastor in various aspects of local church ministry.

Expository Preaching: Preaching that seeks to disclose a text, whether short or long, through meaningful interpretation and explanation. Through interpretation and explanation, the substance of the text is applied to contemporary hearers so that the hearers can understand, obey, and become transformed.

Facilitator: Someone who designs, implements, and oversees a seminar.

In-Seminar Sermon: A fifteen-minute sermon preached during the training program by elders to demonstrate their understanding of the expository preaching.

Lay Preaching: Preaching done by a non-paid, baptized Christian (who is not clergy), who has little or no

theological education, and who has been commissioned to preach by God and one's church.

Spiritual Retreat: A one-day get-away for the purpose of discovering and developing a daily, lifelong intimacy with God, as well as an understanding of the call to preach.

Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: The organization within the Southwestern Union of Seventh-day Adventists that oversees the furtherance of the gospel in five states in the south and southwest: Alabama, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas.

Training: The systematic process of sharing information and knowledge not previously known or known in a limited capacity.

Delimitation

The intent of this project dissertation was not to render an exhaustive analysis of preaching. It was beyond the scope of this project to do so. Therefore, this project is delimited as follows:

1. Expository preaching was the focus of this project and discussions on preaching was limited to this genre. However, only a broad treatment of the topic itself was undertaken.

2. Only elders voted by their respective churches within the Alexandria District of the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists were allowed to participate in the training.

3. Only dissertations related to training laypeople to do expository preaching were reviewed. These dissertations were classified as recent, beginning from the year 2000 to present.

Limitations

Few limitations emerged as a result of this project. While these limitations did not affect the overall outcome of this project, it is possible that they might have influenced the project. The limitations are as follows:

1. *Verbal feedback from church members.* In the absence of a standardized evaluation, verbal feedback was solicited. It is possible that some church members might have refrained from being truthful so as not to hurt the feelings of the elders, since the elders were present and the evaluations were verbal.
2. *Personal feedback.* The personal meeting or one-on-one meeting with the elders was designed to point out areas of growth, encouragement, and empowerment. All elders expressed deep gratitude for the training

without any negative reservation. While their comments were commendable, given the context of the meeting, it is also possible that their responses could have been gauged not to hurt the facilitator's feelings.

3. *Evaluation of the training program.* The elders evaluated the overall training based on a set of questions given to them. While the evaluation was designed to be anonymous, because of the small number of elders in the training—six—it is possible that it might have influenced responses to the questions since the elders may not have wanted their hand writing to be detected.

Methodology

The establishment of a theological foundation for training elders to preach was critical to creating a training program to preach. A comprehension of the theological underpinnings of why elders should be trained to preach reduces any misguided assumption about the role and importance of lay preaching. It also empowers the elders to take seriously the ministry of preaching, because their preaching can be biblically authenticated.

To assist in designing the training program, current literature, including the writings of E. G. White were reviewed. Based on the review, a training program was created.

After designing the training program, elders voted by their respective churches in the Alexandria District were invited to participate. The training program consisted of two seminars—Preparation of the Speaker, a spiritual retreat, and Preparation of the Sermon, the practical aspect of the training.

During the sermon preparation phase, elders were exposed to expository preaching. When the training was completed, the elders preached two sermons to demonstrate their mastery of the material. One of the two sermons preached was of the elder's own choice and the other was chosen from a group of texts suggested for the training program. Feedback was given after each elder's sermon. The feedback was given by fellow elders and the facilitator in order to encourage, empower, and enhance the elder's preaching.

The elders' respective churches evaluated them. The elders also evaluated the overall training program. The facilitator also spent one-on-one time with the elders to give in-depth feedback.

Expectations from this Dissertation

This project will help ensure that in the absence of a pastor, a trained and empowered elder is preaching every Sabbath in the Alexandria District of the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. With the proper training of elders, our churches will experience a new dimension of preaching, which would be both substantive and spiritually rewarding.

This project will allow elders to prepare their sermons systematically in advance, based on a preaching calendar provided by the pastor in collaboration with the elders.

This project will empower elders to develop the skills necessary to preach with confidence.

This project will help expand my preaching knowledge, as well as enhance my teaching skills.

CHAPTER II
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR
LAY PREACHING

Introduction

It is common to find elders preaching on Sabbath in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Many Seventh-day Adventist pastors lead two or more churches which results in elders preaching at least once a month. Given the regularity of elders preaching, there is a great need for training these elders to preach with competence and confidence. A fundamental starting point in this quest is the enunciation of a biblical and theological rationale for lay preaching.

This chapter examines the biblical and theological bases for lay preaching. Pertinent to the exploration of a theological basis for lay preaching is the need to study the concepts of "laity" and "the priesthood of all believers." These terms are helpful in establishing the biblical authority for elders to preach. In addition, biblical precedents will be sought out along with the

writings of Ellen G. White¹ for any statements alluding to the need for lay preaching. Finally, the last section of this chapter will broadly define expository preaching and cite examples of lay expository preaching from the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Description of Concepts

Laity

The word "laity" is a descriptive term for believers other than the paid, professional clergy.² The term "laity" comes from the Greek word *laos* which means "people," or, in a specialized sense, God's own people.³ Although not stated in both the Old and New Testaments, the underlying meaning of the word "laity" is implied in both Testaments.⁴

God intended the laity to be a collective unit. There was to be no hierarchal difference. Everyone who belonged to the family of God and accepted the Lordship of Jesus was part of the *laos*. However, church history reveals that,

¹Ellen G. White is regarded as one of the founding members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. God inspired her to write numerous books, articles, and journals. Her counsel through her written work is highly respected within the church. She lived from 1827-1915.

²Bernice M. Ledbetter, "Laity," in *Global Dictionary of Theology*, eds. William A. Dyrness and Veli-Matti Karkkainen (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 463.

³Ibid.

⁴Daniel Bourgeois, "Lay/Laity," *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology* (2005), 2:901.

for many years, only ordained ministers were actively involved in ministry.

The emergence of the Reformation helped to fuel the rediscovery of the laity's role.⁵ During the Reformation, Martin Luther argued for the abolition of the unbiblical distinction between the ordained minister and the laity.⁶ All believers had the same rights and privileges as the ordained minister. Thus, the role of the laity was rekindled.

The Priesthood of All Believers

The "priesthood of all believers" derived its etymological significance from the Old Testament priesthood.⁷ God instituted the priesthood and established Aaron and his descendants as caregivers. The inaugural service, described in Exod 29:1-7, depicted the consecration of Aaron and his sons for the ministry of service to God's people. Aaron and his sons served the

⁵Russell Moy, "The Loss and Recovery of Lay Ministry," in *Equipping the Saints: Mobilizing Laity for Ministry*, eds. Michal J. Christensen and Carl E. Savage (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 41.

⁶Stephen J. Nichols commenting on the influence of Martin Luther's theological reforms notes that Luther's reform restored the role of the laity. Stephen J. Nichols, *Martin Luther: A Guided Tour of His Life and Thought* (Philipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002), 82-83.

⁷Richard E. Averbeck, "Priest, Priesthood," *Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible* (2000), 636.

people. In this way, "corporate Israel in the Old Testament functioned as a kingdom of priests in both its mediation between God and the other nations and in its service of worship to the Lord in the sanctuary (Exod 19:5-6)."⁸ Corporate Israel reflected God's ideal of care-giving. They provided care to their people.

The New Testament borrows the Old Testament's imagery of care given by the priests and ascribes it to all believers. The author of the New Testament book of 1 Peter on two occasions used the word "priesthood" in reference to all believers. In 1 Pet 2:5, the author wrote, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood." The author further added, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (1 Pet 2:9). The essence of both citations is inclusiveness.

In the New Testament community, therefore, the priesthood is broadened to include all believers, regardless of pedigree, social status, and academic accomplishments. There is a continuity of care-giving and service provided by all believers. All believers are part

⁸Averbeck, "Priest, Priesthood," 637.

of the priesthood and appropriately labeled "the priesthood of all believers."

As previously stated, the German reformer, Martin Luther (1483-1546), protested the hierarchal differences within the church. He did not see any difference between the lay people and the priests, bishops, and pope except their function.⁹ "All baptized were now worthy equally to stand before God, forgiving and praying for others without priestly mediation."¹⁰ Through baptism, all believers stand equally before God as priests. They are identified collectively as, "brethren," "believers," and "disciples."

Carl R. Trueman offered another perspective on Luther's comments regarding the "priesthood of all believers." Luther's aim, Trueman contended, was not to create a radical individualism but rather "to abolish the divisive hierarchy between the sacred and the secular, and to accord parity to all things in the scriptural realm."¹¹ The distinction between the clergy and the laity was

⁹Timothy J. Wengert, *Priesthood, Pastors, Bishops: Public Ministry for the Reformation and Today* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008), 4.

¹⁰Martin E. Marty, *Martin Luther* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2004), 59.

¹¹Carl R. Trueman, "Reformers, Puritans and Evangelicals," in *The Rise of the Laity in Evangelical Protestantism*, ed. Deryck W. Lovegrove (New York: Routledge, 2002), 21.

artificial and superficial. No scriptural precedent existed for maintaining such division within the church.

Summary

An overview of the "priesthood of all believers and the laity" implies the following: first, there is no biblical justification for the distinction between the laity and the clergy. To the contrary, the Bible contains explicit injunctions about the inclusiveness of all believers. Within this inclusiveness, believers are called upon to exercise their gifts in the service of God and the community of faith.

Second, if the church neglects the counsel of Scripture and continues to engage only in 'specialized ministries' carried out by professional clergy, the gifts of the members will remain dormant. The professional clergy will, therefore, have failed in unleashing the power of the members in carrying forth God's gospel.¹²

Third, the purpose of the endowed gift is to render

¹²Luke Timothy Johnson insists that laity can be trusted because the laity has evolved. There are many professional people who make up the ranks of the laity and some of these gifted people can be called upon to preach. Luke Timothy Johnson, "Trust the Laity," *Commonweal*, March 24, 2006, 31. David Philippart argues that lay people should preach just as it occurred during the first century. Of course his argument is framed in the context of giving the homily during the mass. In spite of that, his counsel applies universally. David Philippart, "Put the Lay People in the Pulpit," *US Catholic*, May 2004, 26.

service to God and utilize one's gift in the pursuit of that endeavor. All believers have a central role to play and should be encouraged to participate in ministry. By participating in ministry, they share in the service of God and are active participants.

Fourth, the reality that there is no partition between believers should serve as an impetus for greater service and greater willingness to serve. Lay people should feel free to use their gifts in the furtherance of the gospel because it is God's intention that every Christian become involved in the various aspects of ministry, including lay preaching.

Lay Preaching

The amount of literature dealing with lay preaching is limited and, in most cases, "scarce."¹³ Nevertheless, an attempt will be made to define lay preaching. This definition will assist in finding biblical precedents for lay preaching and will serve as a working definition for lay preaching. A further search will be made into the

¹³Nadine Foley, *Preaching and the Non-Ordained: An Interdisciplinary Study* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1983), 4; Leslie N. Pollard, "The De-Clericalization of Preaching Ministry: Lay Preaching Recovered" (D.Min. dissertation, Claremont School of Theology, 1992), 11; Victor V. Dyman, "Holistic Approach to Preaching: A Training Program for Lay Speakers of Manhattan Seventh-day Adventist Church" (D.Min. dissertation, Andrews University, 2008), 12.

writings of Ellen G. White for any reference to lay preaching.

What is lay preaching? According to Christian Neff and Harold S. Bender, lay preaching is an act performed by someone selected from a congregation who has no "theological education" and does not receive any "fixed remuneration."¹⁴ This individual carries out his/her task with joy and gladness. Another definition of lay preaching closely related to Neff and Bender's describes lay preaching as preaching done by a non-ordained, unpaid volunteer, man or woman, who passes an examination and is commissioned by his church to preach.¹⁵ One difference with this definition is that the individual has to pass an examination first before being commissioned to preach.

Patricia A. Parachini offers another definition of lay preaching. She believes that lay preaching is any type of preaching done by a "baptized Christian" who is not clergy or a deacon.¹⁶ The lay preacher belongs to the community of

¹⁴Christian Neff and Harold S. Bender, "Lay Preachers," Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia, <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/L398.html> (accessed 17 April 2009).

¹⁵Karl Krumbacher, "Lay Preaching," Christian Classical Ethereal Library, <http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/encyc/encycl2/htm/ii.xxviii.xii.htm> (accessed 15 April 2009).

¹⁶Patricia A. Parachini, *Lay Preaching: State of the Question* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 6.

believers and serves because of that relationship.

Certain basic features are operative in the three definitions discussed that are useful in establishing how this project defines lay preaching: (1) those who practice lay preaching are not paid clergy; (2) they have little or no theological education; and (3) they are commissioned to preach. For this study, lay preaching is a combination of three definitions. As such, lay preaching is defined as preaching by unpaid, baptized Christians (who are not clergy), who have little or no theological education, and who have been commissioned to preach by God and one's church.

Old Testament Examples

The phrase "lay preaching" does not exist in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, there are numerous examples of lay preaching in the Old Testament. This section will limit itself to three examples of lay preaching as found in the Old Testament. The three examples are: Noah,¹⁷ Amos, and Hosea.

¹⁷Dyman views Noah and Amos as lay preachers. He further writes, "Noah is a classic example of who a lay preacher is: he had to support his family with work of his own hands, preach, build the ark, etc." Dyman, 61, 67.

Noah

Genesis 5:28-29 provides a biographical sketch of Noah. He is the son of the one hundred eighty-two year old Lamech. Noah's name suggests he would comfort his people concerning the cursed earth and comfort his people concerning the difficulty of working the earth for sustenance (Gen 5:29). Noah built an ark based on the instructions of God. He and his family were saved from the flood that destroyed the antediluvian world.

The book of Genesis gives no indication that Noah preached to the antediluvians. Peter acquaints his readers with Noah's preaching. He refers to Noah as "the preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet 2:5). Hence, it is revealed that Noah was a preacher, a lay preacher.

Noah lived in a world filled with vice and violence (Gen 6:11). It was in this environment of degeneracy and decadence that God commissioned Noah to preach. His preaching consisted of warning his contemporaries about God's impending destruction of the world by water. The themes of justice and mercy can be inferred from his preaching. The reason for this speculation is that God used Noah and the building of the ark to offer salvation to those who would repent. Had the people repented and changed their ways, then God would have reversed His

decision to destroy the world with a flood.¹⁸ We infer that the people did not repent, based on the fact that only Noah and his family entered the ark. Noah continued preaching until the flood came, even though his redemptive message went unheeded.

Noah fulfilled the criteria of lay preaching because he was commissioned by God. He was unpaid and he had little or no theological education.

Amos

Instead of relying upon others to sketch his biography, Amos did it himself. Amos 1:1 states, "The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the day of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake." Amos was an inhabitant of the town of Tekoa, part of the Southern Kingdom, with no ties to the priesthood. He said, "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel (Amos 7:14-15)." Amos'

¹⁸Hagit Amirav, *Rhetoric and Tradition: John Chrysostom on Noah and the Flood* (Lovanii-Dudley, MA: Aedibus Peeters, 2003), 192.

own words are clear. He had no affiliation with the priestly order.

One can surmise three things from Amos' self-portrayal:

1. Amos was not a prophet, according to his own words. He did not graduate from the school of the prophets. He gathered sycamore fruits and was a herdsman.

2. He had no pedigree. He had no ties to the priesthood and none of his ancestors belonged to the priestly order.

3. His call to "prophecy" came directly from God.

Amos' preaching ministry served as a direct rebuttal to the promiscuous lifestyle of his contemporaries. God no longer occupied center stage in the lives of His people; as a result, the intentional spiritual vacuum left was filled with lavish opulence, oppression, aggression, and possession of a morally-deprived heart (Amos 4:1; 5:11-12; 6:4-6). It was to this circumstance that Amos, a lay preacher, was commissioned to preach.

Amos' preaching contained two "woes oracles"—"prophetic words" (Amos 5:18; 6:1) that express grief over

the spiritually bankrupt nation of Israel.¹⁹ These “woes” were also against the rich who exploited the poor and were insensitive to the plight of the poor. Destruction would overtake the land for their sins. Yet, in spite of the impending doom, God would preserve a remnant unto Himself. This remnant, according to Amos (9:11-15), would experience increased productivity from farming. Earlier in his sermon, Amos pictured God as a roaring lion (Amos 3:4), as a firefighter rescuing His people, and as a mourner crying for His people.²⁰

Amos preached repentance, care for the poor, judgment, justice, and the second coming. The phrase “the day of Lord” would be a day of reckoning and not a day of peace, as the people thought.²¹ Even with a preaching that seemed to be couched in doom, Amos continued to offer his people a glimmer of hope that God would restore His people (Amos 5:14-15).

Hosea

The information about Hosea is too sparse to formulate

¹⁹Harold Shank, *Minor Prophets, Volume 1: Hosea-Micah*, The College Press NIV Commentary, Old Testament Series (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2001), 196.

²⁰Ibid., 195-196.

²¹Ibid.

any accurate picture of his background. However, this is certain: Hosea received a call from God (Hosea 1:1-2) to preach about God's love for His people in spite of their choices to follow other "strange gods" (Hosea 4:12-13; 13:2). In following other "strange gods," God was still committed to the covenant partnership between Himself and His people; He was willing to accept them back if they were willing to seek Him out.²² Hosea would be the medium through which God demonstrated His undying love for His people.

To be effective in his preaching, Hosea had to experience the pain of rejection. God asked him to marry a prostitute (Hosea 1:1). Through his tumultuous marriage, God illustrated the failure of His people to embrace His unconditional love for them, even though they had been unfaithful. God ultimately allowed His people to be captured by the Assyrians, "but he did not ultimately abandon his people whom he loved."²³ Even in their disobedience, God's presence was evident.

Hosea's sermons focused on hope, judgment, and charges. Gary V. Smith saw three distinct elements in

²²Gary V. Smith, *Hosea, Amos, Micah*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 22.

²³Dale Larsen and Sandy Larsen, *Hosea: God's Persistent Love: 12 Studies for Individuals or Groups* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 5.

Hosea's preaching: (1) his use of vivid imagery to portray Israel's unfaithfulness; (2) his emotive display to describe God and Israel; and (3) his unique "vocabulary and grammatical construction."²⁴ Hosea used those means to communicate the love of God for His people and the call to repentance.

Hosea also preached against certain religious practices that were not in conformity to God's will (8:11-10:8). The people had built "many altars of sin" (8:11); "They sacrifice flesh" (8:13); they had "gone a whoring from God." (9:1); they were "swearing falsely" (10:4); and they had refused the "knowledge of God" (4:6). To those charges, Hosea announced the visitation of God. God would exact judgment upon His people.

Hosea's preaching also condemned idolatry (2:4). God's people replaced Him with and worshipped other gods. Hosea admonished his people to repent and return to serving God. If they did, God would respond and care.²⁵ The people chose not to follow Hosea's preaching. Hosea continued his preaching ministry in spite of the attitude of God's people.

²⁴Smith, 30.

²⁵Shank, 142.

Examples from the New Testament

The New Testament contains many examples of lay preaching. The purpose of this section is to cite three examples: Jesus, John the Baptist, and some of the disciples.

Chronologically, John the Baptist appears in the New Testament narrative before Jesus does. John's birth and the circumstances surrounding his birth take place prior to the birth of Jesus. However, this study will begin with Jesus, followed by John the Baptist, and then end with the disciples.

Jesus

Jesus²⁶ entered a synagogue one Sabbath and the scrolls of Isaiah were given to Him. He read these words from Isaiah's scroll: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19). Those

²⁶Dyman asserts that Jesus and His disciples were lay preachers. Dyman, 84; Floyd W. Bresee maintains that Jesus was a lay preacher because he did not have any "theological training." Bresee, *Successful Lay Preaching*, 14.

words inaugurated His preaching ministry. They highlighted the crucial role of preaching, not only to Jesus' hearers and his disciples, but for future generations.

Several themes flow out of Luke 4:18-19. First, Jesus indicates that His preaching is under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God has commissioned Him to preach. Second, His preaching is all-inclusive. The Spirit has commissioned Him to preach to everyone: the outcast, the marginalized, the downtrodden, the sick, the poor, the rich, the influential, religious leaders, and political figures. Third, his preaching is good news, the good news that the kingdom of God has arrived. Everyone has access to it.

Jesus continued preaching throughout Galilee (Matt 4:23) and various towns and cities (Luke 8:1) after His synagogue preaching. His hearers noticed a difference between His preaching and that of the religious establishment. The difference was crystallized by sayings such as, "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt 7:29).

The Sermon on the Mount is another example of Jesus' preaching. It can be found in Matt 5-7 and Luke 6, and parts of chapters 8, 11, 12, and 16. The sermons in those chapters are many, and discussing them would exceed the

scope of this project. Notwithstanding, a few themes are worthy of mentioning: "the kingdom of God,"²⁷ accountability, responsibility, divorce, reconciliation, love for your enemies, the Lord's prayer, fasting, seeking the kingdom of God, depending upon God to supply your needs, passing judgment, and the blessed.²⁸ These are but a few of the themes that can be found in those chapters.

Jesus was not ambiguous about His mission and the vital role of preaching. Preaching helped to facilitate His mission, gave clarity to His mission, and provided a purpose for His mission. Therefore, it was not surprising when He told His disciples: "Let us go somewhere else - to the nearby villages - so I can preach there also. That is why I have come" (Mark 1:38 NIV).

Jesus fits the example of lay preaching as defined in this project because He was commissioned (John 20:21). His

²⁷Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld defines the "Kingdom of God" as having the elements of present and future realities. God still exercises His sovereign will now and in the future sense this world needs mending. Jesus' preaching on those concepts brought hope to His hearers. Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, *Recovering Jesus: The Witness of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007), 137-138.

²⁸Mike Graves and David M. May believe that the best term that describes the word "blessed" is honor. Within the societal context of the word honor, honor was reserved for people of status and lineage. Therefore, there is a reversal or a "radical reordering" taking place with the use of "blessed." Those who are blessed are not only the well-to-do but the outcasts and the poor. The inclusion of this group went against the prevailing assumptions of the day. Mike Graves and David M. May, *Preaching Matthew: Interpretation and Proclamation* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2007), 46-47.

first sermon acknowledged His commission: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach" (Luke 4:18). Jesus also did not receive any pay. He did not belong to the religious establishment.

John the Baptist

John's parents belonged to the priesthood. His father was a priest and his mother, a descendent of Aaron (Luke 1:5). Yet, John did not follow in the footsteps of his father.²⁹ He did not become a priest.

Other than the circumstances concerning John's birth, nothing is known about his upbringing. Nothing is known about John until his appearance in the desert as a rugged lay preacher commissioned by God to prepare God's people for the coming of His Son—"and the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness" (Luke 3: 2).

Concerning the preaching of John the Baptist, Mark's Gospel introduces him as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight" (Mark 1:3). Mark uses the word "crying" to

²⁹Daniel S. Dapaah advances several speculative suggestions about why John did not follow his father's footsteps. Dapaah's speculation is based on a broad array of scholars. However, none of the arguments are conclusive. Daniel S. Dapaah, *The Relationship Between John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth: A Critical Study* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005), 41.

characterize John's preaching. The word "crying" implies proclamation,³⁰ hence, preaching (Matt 3:1). Therefore, Mark introduces John the Baptist as a preacher with a distinct message.

Many noticeable themes such as baptism, repentance (Mark 1:4), and the "kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:2) are evident in John's preaching. It seems as though John's primary focus is to prepare the way for Christ,³¹ the "expected figure."³² However, John does not identify this figure by name but rather describes the function of this figure: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (Mark 1:8). John also differentiates his ministry from this expected figure—"One mightier than I" (Mark 1:7). In this way, John showed the superiority of the One to come.

John the Baptist's preaching summoned Israel, in a time of expectation, to anticipate the "expected figure" who would attempt to draw hearts back to God. In order to receive the "expected figure," repentance had to take place (Matt 3:2). Repentance was the precondition for receiving the kingdom of God. John also denounced the pretentious

³⁰Harold C. Washington, "Cry Out, To," *NIDB* (2006), 1:807.

³¹Sergius N. Bulgakov, *The Friend of the Bridegroom: On The Orthodox Veneration of the Forerunner*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 4.

³²Dapaah, 66-69.

attitude of the Pharisees and Sadducees and called them a "generation of vipers" (Matt 3:7). Pretence and pedigree are not prerequisites for entrance into the kingdom of God; repentance is. Even though John vacillated concerning the *messiahship* of Jesus, the "expected figure," he remained steadfast in his preaching even until death.

John received his commission from God. Even though he was born into a priestly family, he did not follow the priestly order. He was not part of the clergy. Instead, John was a non-paid preacher. He lived in the wilderness and subsisted on "locusts and wild honey" (Mark 1:6). John represents a lay preacher.

The Disciples

Upon His accession, Jesus commissioned His disciples to preach the gospel to every nation (Matt 28:19-20). He chose His disciples for that purpose. He intended that they should be with Him so that He might send them forth to preach (Mark 3:14).

After the accession of Jesus, His disciples preached. Peter and John were arrested for preaching in the name of Jesus. Their captors prohibited them from preaching anymore in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18). Following that

reprimand, Peter and John continued to preach about the risen Christ.

The author of the book of Acts makes this poignant statement, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Who are "they"? The Bible does not give an adequate description of the total composition of "they." However, it is probable that the majority of "they" were lay people. In fact, during the persecution that followed after the stoning of Stephen, the church in Jerusalem was "scattered abroad . . . except for the disciples" (Acts 8:1). The disciples remained in Jerusalem for fear, but the others, the lay people, went about preaching.

The disciples preached the same message that Jesus preached.³³ They preached that the "kingdom of heaven is at hand,"³⁴ (Mark 1:15; Luke 9:2), Jesus is the Messiah, and about the resurrection of Jesus. These themes were present in Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. Regardless of the preacher—Stephen, Paul, or Peter—the preaching in Acts focuses on resurrection preaching, and "should be understood against the benchmark of Peter's message on the

³³Roger Wagner, *Tongues Aflame: Learning to Preach from the Apostles*, ed. Malcolm Maclean (Fern, Great Britain: Mentor, 2004), 24.

³⁴*Ibid.*

Day of Pentecost."³⁵ A review of Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost is necessary if it is the benchmark against which other preaching is viewed.

Acts 2:14-40 records Peter's preaching which coincides with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit during the Pentecost festivities in Jerusalem. Those in attendance were amazed to understand the disciples in their own language (Acts 2:6). Some reasoned that the disciples were drunk. Peter stood up to clarify the misunderstanding. It is from this backdrop that Peter preached his first sermon.

Some of the themes of Peter's first sermon were (1) judgment is coming, (2) Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, (3) they killed the Lord's anointed, (4) Jesus is alive, (5) the exalted Christ gives the spirit to the church, and (6) there is hope for those who repent.³⁶ Those who heard Peter were convicted. That day, three thousand souls were added to the church (Act 2:41).

Another example of Peter's preaching is found in his visit with Cornelius. Peter's prejudice is challenged in a night vision concerning unclean food (Acts 10:10-15). When

³⁵Wagner notices slight variations in the other sermons in Acts. However, he still insists that all other sermons in Acts are essentially "bound up in Peter's first sermon." The disciples are witnesses and express the same witness. Ibid., 119.

³⁶Ibid., 126-145.

Peter met Cornelius, Cornelius revealed the reason for Peter's summons—to hear the Word of God. Peter reassured Cornelius that Jesus is no respecter of persons. Even though it was unlawful for a Jew to fellowship with a non-Jew, God was expanding his kingdom to include Jews and Gentiles. Peter preached about Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy, the Bearer of good news. This Jesus died and rose. As evidence of Peter's preaching, the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his household and they were baptized (Acts 10:47-48).

Although this section has focused on Peter's preaching, it is important to cite a few other examples. Stephen is another example of a lay preacher. Stephen preached in his defense before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:1-10). Though the preaching is lengthy, it is a historical narrative about God's graciousness toward His people. Over and over again, Stephen emphasized the rebellion and rejection of Israel in departing from God's counsels. God's counsels were personified in Jesus who was also rejected and crucified. This Jesus is alive and sits at the right hand of God (v. 56). Stephen's preaching led to his death.

Like Stephen, Philip was chosen to assist the disciples with caring for the church (Acts 6:5). Philip

was also numbered with the disciples "that were scattered abroad and went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). According to the book of Acts, Philip preached in Samaria. The content of his sermon is not known but the subject of his preaching centered on Christ (Acts 8:5). His preaching of Christ is revealed through his most notable encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch. Philip found the eunuch reading from the scrolls of Isaiah. The eunuch did not understand what he was reading. Philip used the occasion to preach about Jesus (Acts 8:35), showing that the Lamb of God in Isaiah is Jesus. Philip's preaching consisted mainly of Jesus (Acts 8:5, 12) as he explained and interpreted Scripture.

Examples from Ellen G. White

Ellen G. White is held in high regard in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church believes that she was endowed with prophetic gifts and that her writings are a source of guidance for the church.³⁷ Her writings cover a wide variety of subjects, including preaching. Therefore, a cursory exploration will be made of her general

³⁷*Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (Silver Springs, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), 255-257.

perspective on preaching. This will be followed by examining three statements from her writings regarding lay preaching, inasmuch as this is the focus of this chapter.

Preaching

Ellen G. White took preaching seriously. She "felt it her duty to begin instructing the ministry on the proper method of preaching."³⁸ Based on her passion for preaching, she counseled pastors to preach short and pointed sermons,³⁹ to refrain from trivialities,⁴⁰ to use their voice properly,⁴¹ and to preach under the influence of the Holy Spirit.⁴² These elements were emphasized in her counsel to preachers with the hope that their assimilation would enhance their preaching.

Ellen White tied preaching to salvation. She wrote, "God's appointed means of saving souls is through 'the foolishness of preaching.'"⁴³ She observed that many people

³⁸R. E. Turner, "A Critical Analysis of the Concept of Preaching in the Thought of Ellen G. White" (Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont School of Theology, 1979), 45.

³⁹Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1974), 296.

⁴⁰Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1915), 313.

⁴¹White, *Evangelism*, 665-670.

⁴²White, *Gospel Workers*, 284.

⁴³White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:300.

did not share similar sentiments regarding preaching. Commenting about those individuals, she added, "Many do not look upon preaching as Christ's appointed means of instructing His people and therefore always to be highly prized. They do not feel that the sermon is the word of the Lord to them and estimate it by the value of the truth spoken."⁴⁴ There might be other means of saving souls, but God chose preaching as the primary means of saving souls. Ellen White understood that and shared her concerns.

Preaching, according to one writer, is "communicating God's Word in human words."⁴⁵ The expression of God's Word through human language provides an opportunity for God to be heard. Preaching as a means of communicating God's word was important to Ellen White. From the summary of her perspective on preaching, it is possible to that her definition of preaching is the medium provided by God to save souls. This medium of communication should be short, void of trivialities, focused, Christ-centered, and influenced by the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁴White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:298.

⁴⁵Todd A. Wilson, *Introduction to Preach the Word: Essays on Expository Preaching in Honor of R. Kent Hughes*, eds. Leland Ryken and Todd A. Wilson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 4.

Lay Preaching

Many individuals have mischaracterized Ellen White's statement that "Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching"⁴⁶ as diminishing preaching. This statement needs clarification. A closer look at the above statement indicates that she was stating a historical fact. Jesus performed more healing than preaching. This historical fact does not minimize preaching. On the contrary, she recognized the importance of preaching. She saw preaching as a vital instrument in the salvation of humanity.⁴⁷

The enormity of the task of spreading the gospel at the end of time prompted Ellen G. White to make this declaration: "The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers."⁴⁸ This statement makes no direct reference to preaching but to lay participation in spreading the gospel. The "work" encompasses the proclamation of the gospel and other

⁴⁶Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1942), 19.

⁴⁷White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:300.

⁴⁸White, *Gospel Workers*, 352.

attributive means and methods of furthering the gospel. The laity has a pivotal part to play in the propagation of the gospel if the "work" of spreading the gospel is to go out with rapidity.

Ellen G. White wrote, "We are nearing the close of this earth's history. We have before us a great work, the closing work of giving the last warning message to a sinful world. There are men who will be taken from the plow, from the vineyard, from various other branches of work, and sent forth by the Lord to give this message to the world."⁴⁹ This list is not an exhaustive list, but includes people from diverse backgrounds and professions. Also included on this roll call are the non-professionals—lay people, individuals who have been commissioned to proclaim the gospel prior to the second coming of Jesus.

Christ played a vital role in the preaching of Ellen White. She advocated putting Christ in every sermon.⁵⁰ For her, Christ was to be the center of all preaching because He alone is the Savior. The necessity of making Christ the focal point of preaching led her to write, "Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be

⁴⁹White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 7:270-271.

⁵⁰White, *Evangelism*, 186.

foremost in uplifting Christ before the world."⁵¹ Jesus Himself declared that "all Scripture testifies of me" (John 5:39). Ellen White believed in preaching Christ. She also believed in lay preaching.

Examples from the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Christianity started as a lay movement.⁵² The Seventh-day Adventist church also began as a lay movement with heavy emphasis on lay preaching. William Miller, a prominent figure in the Advent Movement, is considered to be the "father of the Advent Movement."⁵³

Miller, a farmer, was an ardent student of Scriptures. His study of Scriptures, especially the prophecies, led him to conclude that the second coming of Christ was imminent. Miller, a man in his fifties who had never preached in public before, delivered his first sermon when the opportunity finally arrived.⁵⁴ He went on to preach several sermons thereafter.

Although William Miller never became a member of the

⁵¹White, *Gospel Workers*, 156.

⁵²Bresee, *Successful Lay Preaching*, 14.

⁵³Ibid, 15-16.

⁵⁴Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Brushton, NY: Teach Services, 2000), 42-43.

Seventh-day Adventist Church, his contributions to the establishment of the church,⁵⁵ especially its theological foundation, is immeasurable. He organized other helpers to preach the message.⁵⁶ Bresee suggests that the number of lay preachers who united with Miller in preaching is inexhaustible.⁵⁷ Among these limitless names of "Millerites," some of whom would later become members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, was a lay preacher named Joseph Bates, a former sea captain who embraced William Miller's message. Joseph Bates became a prolific preacher and eventually one of the founding members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Just as Christianity began as a lay movement, the Seventh-day Adventist Church started as a lay movement with a strong emphasis on lay preaching. William Miller and others felt commissioned to preach. They were unpaid individuals with a passion for spreading God's word.

The Nature of Expository Preaching

Throughout this chapter, an attempt has been made to

⁵⁵Merlin D. Burt, "Introduction," in *Memoirs of William Miller*, ed. Sylvester Bliss (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005), xv.

⁵⁶Bresee, *Successful Lay Preaching*, 16.

⁵⁷Ibid.

establish a theological basis for lay preaching. Since the aim of this project is to train elders to preach expository sermons, a broad definition of expository preaching is necessary in order to suggest examples from the Old and New Testaments. It is not the purpose of this section to discuss in-depth expository preaching. The chapter entitled "The Review of Current Literature" will do that.

Expository preaching is not defined according to "style" or "methodology," "but by the end result of explaining and applying the meaning of the text."⁵⁸ A more simplistic definition of expository preaching could be "*any kind of preaching that shows people the meaning of a biblical text and leads them to apply it to their lives*" (italics not mine).⁵⁹ This definition of expository preaching stresses two key components: explaining and applying a text to its hearers. The purpose of such an act is to allow one's hearers to understand the meaning of the text as it is explained and applied to their lives.

⁵⁸Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 33.

⁵⁹Ibid.

Expository Preaching in the Old Testament

Expository preaching is best described in the Old Testament book of Nehemiah. In the eighth chapter, Ezra the scribe is standing on a platform and reading from the book of the Law of Moses. Nehemiah 8:1-8 captures the scene:

And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose . . . And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people) and when he opened it, all the people stood up . . . And the Levites caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

Several features of expository preaching exist in the above text. They are as follows:

1. Ezra and the Levites brought out the Law of Moses (8:2). The Law of Moses referred to the "writings or the Torah." The giver of the Law of Moses was God. God

appointed or prescribed it for His people Israel to read.⁶⁰ This book served as the basis of the preaching that took place.

2. Ezra and the Levites read from the Book of the Law of God (8:8). James Montgomery Boice argues that the most significant thing that happened that day was Ezra reading from the Law for six hours.⁶¹ As the Law was read, the people stood attentively and listened.

3. They caused the people to understand the reading (8:7). Interpretation and explanation followed the reading of the Law.⁶² As a result of the interpretation and explanation that took place, the people were able to understand what was read.

There is a debate by some scholars about whether a translation of the text from Hebrew to Aramaic is what occurred or a literal "paragraph by paragraph" is what is implied.⁶³ It is probable that what took place was an explanation of the Law so that the people could understand.

⁶⁰Philip A. Noss and Kenneth J. Thomas, *A Handbook on Ezra and Nehemiah* (New York: United Bible Societies, 2005), 339.

⁶¹James Montgomery Boice, *Nehemiah: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006), 92.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 93.

⁶³*Ibid.* See also Noss and Thomas, 405; Keith N. Schoville, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, The College Press NIV Commentary, Old Testament Series (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2001), 216.

The phrase "give the sense," which Noss and Thomas believe refers to interpretation and explanation,⁶⁴ is followed by the phrase "and caused them to understand." It is possible that after the Law was read, explained, and interpreted, the people understood.

4. Application took place as well. "When the people heard the reading of the law and were instructed as to its meaning for them, they wept in remorse for failure to observe its demands."⁶⁵ The application of the Law engendered contrition. The people wept as they discovered how far removed they were from the will of God.

Some of the terminology used in Neh 8:1-8 needs further investigation. There are three terms in Neh 8:8 that express the practice of expository preaching. They are "parash," "sekel," and "bin." The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* gives the following meaning:

1. Parash - The "basic meaning is 'to make/be made clear' (by revelation, explication, or translation)."⁶⁶

⁶⁴Noss and Thomas, 405.

⁶⁵Schoville, 217.

⁶⁶Victor P. Hamilton, "Parash," *TWOT* (1980), 2:740.

2. Sekel - It means to give "insight," "understanding," or "comprehension;" in another sense, it means "to cause, to consider, giving insight, and teaching."⁶⁷
3. Bin - This Hebrew word means "understand, consider, or perceive."⁶⁸ When the Hiphil stem is used as in verse 8, the emphasis is on one's ability to understand; "Ezra read the word of God in the presence of men, women, and those able to understand."⁶⁹

Nehemiah 9 opens with the children of Israel "assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them" (9:1). They "confessed their sins" and that of their fathers (9:2). Furthermore, "they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one fourth part" (9:3). As they read, they confessed their sins. In their confession, the children of Israel retraced how God had providentially cared for them. They chronicled God's gracious attitude toward them.

⁶⁷Louise Goldberg, "Sakal/sekul," *TWOT* (1980), 2:877.

⁶⁸Louise Goldberg, "Bin," *TWOT* (1980), 1:103.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

Expository Preaching in the New Testament

This section deals with the preaching ministries of Jesus, Peter, and Paul. Sermons from their ministries illustrate examples of expository preaching in the New Testament.

Jesus and Expository Preaching

Jesus provides the best model for preaching, since He "came preaching" (Mark 1:14; Luke 4:16), commissioned his disciples to preach (Mark 16:15), and the people heard Him not as the scribes⁷⁰ but as someone with authority (Matt 7:29). There are two instances in Jesus' preaching ministry that allude to the expository preaching that this section will examine. The two instances are Luke 4:16-21 and Luke 24:27. Each will be studied individually.

Jesus' first sermon is documented in Luke 4: 16-21:

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down.

⁷⁰See, Ryan Ahlgrim, *Not as the Scribes: Jesus as a Model for Prophetic Preaching* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2002).

And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. and he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Ellen G. White made this observation: "When a rabbi was present at the synagogue, he was expected to deliver the sermon, and any Israelite might give the reading from the prophets. . . . He 'stood up to read. . . .' Jesus stood before people as a living expositor of the prophecies concerning Himself. Explaining the words He had read, He spoke of the Messiah."⁷¹ Ellen White referred to Jesus as an "expositor." According to Chongho Yang, Jesus exemplified several features of expository preaching:

1. Jesus used the biblical text (Isa 61:1-2a).
2. He interpreted and explained the Word.
3. He applied the Word to His hearers. [His hearers understood the meaning of His words.] He said, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (vs. 21).⁷²

Jesus' last sermon also showed characteristics of expository preaching. Just before His ascension, Jesus met some of His disheartened disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were trying to ascertain the meaning of His death. If

⁷¹Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1940), 236, 237.

⁷²Chongho Yang, "A Plan for Strengthening Expository Preaching by Korea Seventh-day Adventist Pastors" (D.Min. dissertation, Andrews University, 1996), 60.

Jesus was the Messiah, they argued, why such an ignominious death? In His encounter with these disciples, Luke states that, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He [Jesus] expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). His preaching was biblically based. He interpreted Scripture and provided the meaning so that the disciples could understand.

Ellen G. White pointed out that Jesus caused the Emmaus disciples to understand Scriptures.⁷³ She asserted, "Christ performed no miracle to convince them, but it was His first work to explain the Scripture."⁷⁴ Jesus could have chosen to enact a miracle to convince His troubled disciples. Instead, He chose to explain and apply Scriptures.

The word "expound" is the Greek word *diermeneuo*, which means "to interpret."⁷⁵ The word *hermeneuo*, from which we get our English word hermeneutics, is a synonym of the word *diermeneuo*.⁷⁶ Hermeneutics and interpretation are used interchangeably by many to "refer to the process of

⁷³White, *Desire of Ages*, 800.

⁷⁴Ibid., 798-799.

⁷⁵Stephen D. Renn, ed., *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Word Studies for Key English Bible Words Based on the Hebrew and Greek Text* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 2005), 353.

⁷⁶Ibid., 527.

determining the meaning and significance of a text."⁷⁷

Jesus' interpretation of Scriptures opened the eyes of the Emmaus disciples. Afterwards they were able to comprehend the Scriptures and put into perspective the death of Jesus. Upon his departure, the same discouraged disciples exclaimed, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures" (Luke 24:32).

Another example of Jesus' expository preaching is recorded in Mark 1:14-15. This account seems to be a summary of Jesus' preaching because the gospel writer Mark interjects some of the leading themes of Jesus within those verses.⁷⁸ Reflecting on this text, Yang believes that the sentence, "The time has come," illustrates the fulfillment of prophecies; moreover, the preaching was "based on the Scriptures, exegesis, and interpretation of the biblical passages."⁷⁹

Yang also surmises that there are six features of expository preaching recorded: (1) the Old Testament Scriptures, (2) Exegesis and interpretation of the biblical

⁷⁷W. Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*, 3rd ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 1.

⁷⁸R. Allen Culpepper, *Mark*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary, vol. 20 (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2007), 51.

⁷⁹Yang, 62.

passages, (3) Christo-centric message, (4) Explanation, (5) Illustration, and (6) Application to the hearers' present needs.⁸⁰ Jesus referenced the Old Testament—made it the basis for His preaching; He gave the meaning of the text, that is, the interpretation; He applied the text, acknowledging that prophecies had been fulfilled. He is the fulfillment of prophecies. The kingdom of God has arrived and He is the "effector."⁸¹ He brought about the kingdom of God.

Peter's Preaching

The Day of Pentecost did not only signal the full manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the disciples but it also heralded the expository preaching of the disciples, especially Peter. Peter's sermon that day was based on texts from Joel and the Psalms. He sought to show how those texts related to Jesus. Peter also applied the text to his hearers. The following expository features can be inferred:

1. Interpretation of Joel 2:28-32 and Ps 16:8-11 (vv. 14-21, 26-35)

⁸⁰Yang, 62.

⁸¹Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 74.

2. The person and work of Jesus Christ (vv. 22-24)
3. Origin of Jesus through the line of David (vv. 26-30)
4. Emphasis of the kerygmatic ingredient of the resurrection and exaltation in power (vv. 31-37)
5. Application of the message to the hearers because they crucified the Lord (v. 38).⁸²

Peter's preaching on the Day of Pentecost exemplified preaching throughout the book of Acts: "boldly preached expository sermons with Spirit-given interpretation and application of Scripture."⁸³ Peter's preaching identified Jesus as the Messiah and called for repentance. When the people understood Peter's words and its application to them, most of them repented.⁸⁴ About three thousand souls were added to the church that day.

The visit of Peter to Cornelius' house is illustrative. Peter's prejudice is challenged in a night vision. When Peter met Cornelius, Cornelius revealed the reason for Peter's summons—to interpret and explain the

⁸²Yang, 63.

⁸³Allison A. Trites and William J. Larkins, *The Gospel of Luke/Acts*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, vol. 12 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishing, 2006), 393.

⁸⁴French L. Arrington and Roger Stronstad, eds., *Life in the Spirit: New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 547.

Word of God. In the exchange between Peter and Cornelius Peter delivered a sermon. Peter's sermon (Acts 10:36-43) had elements of expository preaching:

1. The Scriptures were expounded
2. The meaning of Scriptures was made clear. Exegesis and interpretation occurred.⁸⁵
3. Persuasive explanations were offered.
4. The sermon was Christ-centered
5. Peter gave illustrations to assist in explaining the text.
6. Peter applied the text to the needs of the people (Acts 2:36-40).⁸⁶

Paul's Preaching

Paul is considered by many scholars as "the first and greatest Christian theologian."⁸⁷ Paul was not only a theologian, but a preacher as well. The book of Acts contains many of his sermons. Some of the words used in his sermons will be studied as examples of expository preaching.

⁸⁵Yang, 66.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 2.

In Acts 17:2-4, we read that Paul traveled to Thessalonica. Upon his arrival, he attended a synagogue service and preached. The content of his preaching is not stated. However, he used three words that might indicate that expository preaching took place. The three words are: "reasoned", "opened", and "alleging" (Acts 17:2-3 KJV).

The word "reasoned" is the Greek word *dialegomai*, "to dispute."⁸⁸ Paul used Scripture to demonstrate that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Paul's preaching was centered on Christ. Expository preaching probes and discusses a portion of Scripture. In the process, its hearers are convinced about the certainty of the message conveyed in the text.

Another word used by Paul is the word "opening," which in Greek is the word *dianoigo*; it means "to open."⁸⁹ Similarly, the same word was used by the disciples on the road to Emmaus when they reminisced about their time with Jesus. They said, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he *opened* [emphasis mine] to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32). Expository preaching demands the thorough explication of

⁸⁸Renn, 782.

⁸⁹Ibid., 701.

Scripture, opening Scriptures so that its hearers encounter the risen Jesus in a reassuring manner.

The last of the three words is "alleging." The Greek word for "alleging" is *paratithemi*, which means "to set, place before."⁹⁰ When Paul used the word "alleging," he made a formal application of the text to its hearers. He set before them Scriptures and the meaning of the Scripture he read. Expository preaching takes the meaning of the text and sets it before its hearers in order for them to encounter the text in a personal way.

Another feature of expository preaching in Paul's ministry takes place in Rome. While Paul was under house arrest in Rome, a large contingent of Jews came to see him. To them, "he expounded and testified about the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses, and out of the prophets" (Acts 28:23). Paul "expounded", "testified", and "persuaded." The basis of his exposition was the Word of God—the Law of Moses and the Prophets. Here again, Paul demonstrated expository preaching by explaining and applying the Word of God. His hearers were able to understand, but not only that, on most occasions, they accepted Paul's preaching.

⁹⁰Renn, 770.

This section has, so far, examined Paul's expository preaching in Acts. How about Paul's letters? Are there features of expository preaching evident? Sidney Greidanus argues that Paul's letters to the various churches are models of contemporary preaching because of the "kerygmatic nature" and some of the letters contained actual sermons.⁹¹ The meaning of the phrase "contemporary preaching" is vague, but one can deduce that the reference is to expository preaching. The reason for this conjecture is because Greidanus lists eight areas an expositor needs to beware of when interpreting Paul's letters. Some of those eight areas are features of expository preaching: "Selecting a suitable text, analyzing the text, and preaching Christ."⁹² In analyzing the preaching text, an individual must take into account the literary context, as well as the historical context.⁹³ Therefore, some of Paul's letters are examples of expository preaching.

⁹¹Sidney Greidanus, "Preaching From Paul Today," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 737.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid., 741.

In summary, Paul's preaching had the following characteristics:

1. The Scripture served as the basis of his preaching ("He reasoned with them from the Scriptures" [Acts 17:2]).

2. He utilized exegetical principles ("To whom he expounded" [Acts 28:23]).

3. He used persuasion ("Persuading them concerning Jesus" [Acts 28:23]).

4. His sermons were Christ-centered ("For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" [1 Cor 2:2]).

5. He applied the text to his contemporaries.

Summary

There is no distinction in the service of all Christians. All believers are part of the "priesthood of all believers." Even though this term did not exist in the Old Testament, it existed in the priestly function. The priest served as a caregiver to the community of faith. In the New Testament, the term applies to all believers. The artificial barricade erected between the people (laity) and the pastors (professional clergy) is unbiblical. Therefore, all believers are required to use their gifts in

the propagation of the good news, which also includes preaching.

Both the Old and the New Testaments present shining examples of lay preaching and lay expository preaching. Noah, Hosea, and Amos functioned as lay preachers. John the Baptist, although born in a priestly home, functioned as a New Testament example of a lay preacher as did the disciples. In one instance, during the persecution that arose after the crucifixion of Jesus, "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). These were lay people possessed with a passion for sharing the story of the resurrected Jesus.

In this chapter, a theological framework can be established from Scripture to validate lay preaching. Lay preachers can then undertake their responsibility with assurance. They can embrace their preaching as a divine injunction just like a professional minister. They can rest assured and be confident that a biblical mandate and precedents exist for their participation in the furtherance of the gospel.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF CURRENT LITERATURE

Introduction

This literature review focuses on the status of preaching and the necessity of expository preaching. In addition, it explores various definitions of expository preaching, sets forth criteria for identifying expository preaching, and highlights the advantages of expository preaching.

The Status of Preaching

Preaching has undergone tremendous challenges throughout its history. Some of those challenges had to do with the viability of preaching. This section will look at the status of preaching.

Preaching

Henry Emerson Fosdick, a prominent preacher and pastor of the Riverside Church in New York (1925-1946), wrote an article which appeared in *Harper's Magazine* in 1928

entitled "What is the Matter with Preaching?"¹ The article discussed the challenges facing preaching and recommended a solution.² The issues raised by Fosdick are still being discussed by contemporary observers of preaching. "What is the matter with preaching today?" One writer, although not answering the question directly, but commenting on the status of preaching, notes that "by all objective standards, *the pulpit has lost public influence*. Certainly, preaching is no longer as socially significant as once it was."³ Similarly, Adam Hamilton offers these remarks: "We live in a day and time where 'preaching' and 'sermons' are often used to describe things we don't like."⁴ What has led to the devaluation of preaching? What has eroded the influence of preaching? Why is preaching consigned to the category of "things we don't like?"

Several factors have been suggested as contributors for "What is the matter with preaching today." Some of

¹Mike Graves, "Harry Emerson Fosdick's Timeless Question," in *What's the Matter with Preaching Today?*, ed. Mike Graves (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 4.

²Ibid.

³David G. Buttrick, "Preaching Today: The Loss of a Public Voice," in *The Folly of Preaching: Models and Methods*, ed. Michael P. Knowles (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 3.

⁴Adam Hamilton, *Unleashing the Word: Preaching with Relevance, Purpose, and Passion* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 9.

these factors are related to what takes place during worship or what is given more credence during worship. Steven J. Lawson states that "in some churches drama, dialogue, film clips, and similar means are taking the place of solid Bible exposition."⁵ These mediums of expression have their place in worship and help to facilitate the worship experience. However, they are no substitute for or alternative to preaching. The time for preaching should not be "absorbed by music, drama, and other forms of entertainment."⁶ Preaching should not be made to acquiesce to other elements of worship. Neither should it be relegated to a lesser role.

While others focus on the lesser features of worship that have supplanted preaching, William H. Willimon focuses on preaching itself. He maintains that preaching is theological.⁷ The problem with preaching, in his view, is that it is not theological.⁸ David G. Buttrick expresses similar sentiments. He believes that preaching should be

⁵Steven J. Lawson: *Famine in the Land: A Passionate Call for Expository Preaching* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003), 57.

⁶Jack Hughes, *Expository Preaching with Word Pictures: With Illustrations from the Sermons of Thomas Watson* (Fearn, England: Christian Focus, 2001), 7.

⁷William H. Willimon, *Proclamation and Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 3.

⁸Ibid.

theological.⁹ A movement towards theology presupposes drawing theological principles from a given text.¹⁰ Those principles are expressed as theological truths.¹¹ Accordingly, they are applied to its hearers.

While the factors related to "What is the matter with preaching today" are numerous and vary, Todd A. Wilson contends that there are other factors of equal importance that 21st century preaching needs to consider. He lists these factors as "multiculturalism; rising biblical illiteracy; shifting epistemology; increasing social, cultural, and technological complexity; rapid change; and dearth of models and mentoring."¹² These factors add to the complex challenges facing preaching and perhaps to the overall question of "What is the matter with preaching today." Preaching must find a way of addressing these and other issues.

However, in spite of all the factors stated earlier,

⁹Buttrick, 10.

¹⁰John Koessler, "Why All the Best Preachers are Theological: Everyone Does Theology. Do You Do It Right?," in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today's Communicators*, eds. Haddon Robinson and Craig Larson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 244.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Todd A. Wilson, *Preach the Word: Essays on Expository Preaching: In Honor of R. Kent Hughes*, eds. Leland Ryken and Todd A. Wilson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 4.

none is more alarming than when some preachers themselves concede preaching to other areas of ministry. Preaching has given way to small group ministries, worship, and singing.¹³ In doing so, these elements of worship and evangelism have undermined preaching. Stuart Briscoe further states, "These and other trends have led more than a few preachers to question the validity and effectiveness of preaching; and the result has been a marked loss of confidence in preaching."¹⁴ If those commissioned to preach vacillate about the importance of preaching, then preaching has a greater internal problem than external. Maybe the first solution to the question, "What is the matter with preaching today?" is to restore confidence in preaching as a function of the church.

The Renewal of Preaching

It would be presumptuous to argue for the annulment of preaching. Neither would it be prudent to suggest that the current gloomy commentaries on preaching imply that preaching is not needed. Preaching comes from "God's own

¹³Stuart Briscoe, *Preach It!* 2nd paperback ed. (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2004), 15.

¹⁴Ibid.

initiative"¹⁵ and is necessary because it is important to God. If preaching were unnecessary and an ineffective method, Jesus and His apostles would certainly have devised an alternative means of saving souls.¹⁶ They did not. In fact, in His last commission to His apostles, the Great Commission, Jesus counseled them to preach (Matt 28:16-19).

God has many ways of saving individuals, but He has chosen "the foolishness of preaching" (1 Cor 1:21) as the primary means of salvation. Therefore, as long as this present world exists, there will always be a need to seek God, hear from God, and hear about God.

The need to hear the Word of God today could also be an incentive for preaching. "People are searching for meaning, looking for hope and good news, and genuinely want to hear a word from God."¹⁷ This fact was demonstrated through a survey conducted by Mary Alice Mulligan and associates.¹⁸ Believing that people who regularly listen to sermons can help preachers improve their sermons, a

¹⁵Guerric DeBona, *Fulfilled in Our Hearing: History and Method of Christian Preaching* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), 5.

¹⁶Briscoe, 16.

¹⁷Adam Hamilton, 10.

¹⁸Mary Alice Mulligan, Diane Turner-Sharazz, Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm, and Ronald J. Allen, *Believing in Preaching: What Listeners Hear in Sermons* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005).

research team began a four-year project to test the hypothesis. The research population consisted of twenty-eight congregations and a total of two hundred and sixty-three participants. Some of the participants, those more familiar with Scripture, indicated an honest yearning to know more about Scripture.¹⁹ For most of these listeners, the power of preaching was connected to the utilization of Scripture.²⁰ Participants preferred preaching to be tied to Scripture, interpretation, and real life application that mirrors the text. Perhaps the kind of preaching that would restore confidence in the pulpit is the kind that utilizes Scripture in this way.

Preaching that is anchored in Scripture remains faithful to Scripture. A survey of expository preaching shows that such preaching is anchored in Scripture; hence, "it is the only kind of preaching that perpetuates biblical proclamation in the church."²¹ Lawson adds, "A return to preaching—*true preaching, biblical preaching, expository*

¹⁹Mulligan, Turner-Sharazz, Wilhelm, and Allen, *Believing in Preaching*, 24.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 21.

²¹James F. Stitzinger, "The History of Expository Preaching," in *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically*, ed. John MacArthur, Jr., and the Master's Seminary Faculty (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 43.

preaching—is the greatest need in this critical hour.”²² He adds further, “If a reformation is to come to the church, it must be preceded by a reformation of the pulpit. As the pulpit goes, so goes the church.”²³ While it is true that preaching is a composite whole, meaning that there are other factors related to preaching that are crucial, the renewal of preaching has to be precipitated by the rediscovery and reaffirmation of expository preaching: not that it is the only avenue for communicating the gospel, but that it remains faithful to Scripture. Furthermore, when preaching is faithful to Scripture, then it is possible to restore confidence in the pulpit as well as in the hearts of those who hear it, since eroded confidence in God’s Word is at the heart of the problem.²⁴

Expository Preaching in Selected Contemporary Literatures

An analysis of how contemporary homileticians define expository preaching is considered in this section. This analysis will examine selected contemporary literature and a working definition will be suggested.

²²Lawson, 17.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., 57.

Definition of Expository Preaching

Many similarities exist among the contemporary definitions of expository preaching. This section will begin with Haddon Robinson's definition, since his view of expository preaching, included in his book *Biblical Preaching*, has caused a renaissance of expository preaching, thus restoring the biblical text as the center of preaching.²⁵ Robinson defines expository preaching as "the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted from a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers."²⁶ This view accents the message and spells out how a biblical concept is articulated. A biblical concept is transmitted "historically, grammatically, and through a literary study of Scripture."²⁷ The Holy Spirit is an active agent in this process. The Holy Spirit applies the

²⁵Greg W. Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching: The Holy Spirit's Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2007), xv.

²⁶Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 21.

²⁷Ibid.

text through the personality and live experiences of the preacher. The preacher then communicates that message through application to his or her hearers.

Another definition of expository preaching describes expository preaching as "the contemporization of the central proposition of a biblical text that is derived from proper methods of interpretation and declared through effective means of communication to inform minds, instruct hearts, and influence behavior toward godliness."²⁸ According to this definition of expository preaching, the interpretation of the text leads to the formulation of a "central proposition" or a theme. The theme is communicated through an "effective means." The purpose of the communication is threefold: "to inform minds, instruct hearts, and influence behavior toward godliness,"²⁹ in other words, to effect a change in the hearers. Therefore, the end result is to transform behavior into the likeness of God.

Bryan Chapell's definition of expository preaching is akin to the definition cited above. Chapell explains that

²⁸Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Biblical Preaching*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 19.

²⁹Ibid.

expository preaching may be defined as "a message whose structure and thought are derived from a biblical text, that covers the scope of the text, and that explains the features and context of the text in order to disclose the enduring principles for faithful thinking, living, and worship intended by the Spirit, who inspired the text."³⁰ For Chapell, the text drives expository preaching. At the same time, the text provides the basic structure and thought of the sermon. The sermon reveals lasting principles for "faithful thinking, living, and worship."³¹ The Holy Spirit is involved in the process, since the Holy Spirit inspired Scripture (2 Pet 1:21).

Two more definitions are helpful in establishing what constitutes expository preaching. The first of these definitions does not restrict the length of the text in which the expository sermon is anchored. This definition states that the "expository sermon starts with a good-sized passage of Scripture, such as a chapter, and draws its topic and its points totally from that passage."³² This

³⁰Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 31.

³¹Ibid.

³²Maylan Schurch, *Help! I've Been Asked to Preach: Don't Panic . . . Here's Practical Help to Keep Your Sermon From Sinking* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2007), 18.

definition takes into account that the sermon could be based on a chapter, as long as the topic and points are derived from the chapter. Of course, this does not preclude preaching from a smaller portion of Scripture.

The final definition in this section does not focus, per se, on what expository preaching is, but rather, on what an expository preacher does. In describing what an expositor does, Richard Mayhue states that an expositor is someone "who explains Scripture by laying open the text to public view in order to set forth its meaning, explain what is difficult to understand, and make appropriate application."³³ The expositor reveals the meaning of Scripture and explains it. This is followed by relevant application. The hearers are exposed to the meaning of Scripture and its application.

What are the main features in the definitions surveyed thus far? Before summarizing, a consideration needs to be given to a summary of definitions on expository preaching by Jack Hughes. After reviewing some classic and contemporary definitions of expository preaching, Hughes offered the following characterization:

The *content* of expository preaching is the word of God. The *method* of deriving the sermon is the application of

³³Richard L. Mayhue, "Rediscovering Expository Preaching," in *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically*, 8.

the historical, grammatical method of interpretation and exegesis. The *quality* of the sermon is accuracy to the text of God's word. The *goal* of expository is to represent or expose to view or plainly reveal what God and the authors of Scripture meant by what they said, exactly and entirely. The *practical purpose* of expository preaching is to show how the text of Scripture is to be applied in the believer's life. The expository sermon must also be *personally applied* by the preacher and *delivered in the power of the Holy Spirit*. The *mode* of delivery is public preaching or proclamation.³⁴

The attributes found in the definitions reviewed by Hughes can apply to the expository sermons defined in this chapter. According to the five definitions stated previously, expository preaching is based on a text, long or short, which is interpreted to rediscover the author's intent and the substance of the rediscovery is applied to its contemporary audience. Supportive materials are organized around a central theme. The central theme then becomes the impetus that drives the sermon.

What Expository Preaching is Not

Another way of clarifying what is expository preaching is to differentiate between what expository preaching is and what expository preaching is not. This way will help bring clarity to what expository preaching is.

In clarifying what is not expository preaching, Richard L. Mayhue cites ten suggestions based upon the

³⁴Hughes, 16.

classic work of Faris D. Whitesell.³⁵ These ten suggestions are:

1. [Expository Preaching] It is not a commentary running from word to word and verse to verse without unity, outline, and pervasive drive.

2. It is not rambling comments and offhand remarks about a passage without a background of thorough exegesis and logical order.

3. It is not a mass of disconnected suggestions and inferences based on the surface meaning of a passage but not sustained by a depth-and-breath study of the text.

4. It is not pure exegesis, no matter how scholarly, if it lacks a theme, thesis, outline, and development.

5. It is not a mere structural outline of a passage with a few supporting comments but without other rhetorical and sermonic elements.

6. It is not a topical homily using scattered parts of the passage but omitting discussion of other equally important parts.

7. It is not a chopped-up collection of grammatical findings and quotations from commentaries without a fusing

³⁵Faris D. Whitesell, *Power in Expository Preaching* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), vii-viii, quoted in Richard L. Mayhue, "Rediscovering Expository Preaching," in *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically*, 8.

of these elements into a smooth, flowing, interesting, and compelling message.

8. It is not a Sunday-school-lesson type of discussion that has an outline of the contents, informally, and fervently but lacks sermonic structure and rhetorical ingredient.

9. It is not a Bible reading that links a number of scattered passages treating a common theme but fails to handle any of them in a thorough, grammatical, and contextual manner.

10. It is not the ordinary devotional or prayer-meeting talk that combines running commentary, rambling remarks, disconnected suggestions, and personal reactions into a semi-inspirational discussion but lacks the benefit of the basic exegetical-contextual study and persuasive elements.³⁶

Some of Mayhue's detailed enumeration of what is not expository preaching is affirmed by others.³⁷ Mainly,

³⁶Mayhue, 8.

³⁷York and Decker, 33-34; Derick Thomas, "Expository Preaching: Keeping Your Eye on the Text," in *Feed My Sheep: A Passionate Plea for Preaching*, ed. Don Kistler (Orlando, FL: Soli Deo Gloria, 2002), 69-70; Hughes informs his readers that "expository preaching is not necessarily verse-by-verse exposition through a book;" although expository preaching can be topical, it must conform to three 'non-negotiable elements:' "Sound hermeneutics manifested in exegesis, a biblical focus and exposing biblical truth from its scriptural context." Hughes, 20.

expository preaching is not “necessarily” exploring a text verse-by-verse or making a running commentary on the text. While those means might edify, they do not fully reveal the full intent of the biblical author nor do they communicate the intent of the biblical author. Expository preaching, first and foremost, is based on the authority of the Bible³⁸ and seeks to unveil the author’s intent, the original recipient’s understanding of the text, and what it means to the contemporary hearers.

Working Definition

As a result of this study, the following has emerged as a working definition of expository preaching: Expository preaching is the disclosure of a text, whether short or long, through meaningful interpretation and explanation. Through interpretation and explanation, the substance of the text is applied to the contemporary setting of its hearers so that the hearers can understand, obey, and become transformed.

The Necessity of Expository Preaching

This section focuses on the need for expository

³⁸Henry Mitchell, *Celebration & Experience in Preaching*, Rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008), 89.

preaching. It will also look at criteria for and advantages of expository preaching.

Need for Expository Preaching

The Bible is the audible voice of God enthroned in Scriptures. Sermons anchored in Scriptures express the ideal of God and satisfy humanity's desire to hear the Word of God and not the opinions of humanity. Haddon Robinson warns, "Ministers can proclaim anything in a stained-glass voice at 11:30 on Sunday morning following the singing of hymns. Yet when they fail to preach the Scriptures, they abandon their authority. No longer do they confront their hearers with a word from God."³⁹ The temptation to minimize the authority of the Bible for what is popular and politically expedient is not viable. People want to hear the Word of God and the sermon that best captures this expression is the expository sermon.⁴⁰ Hence, expository preaching approximates the tenor of Bible-based preaching. It also guards against unwanted interpretation of Scripture and stamps any lack of confidence in preaching by remaining faithful to the interpretation, explanation, and application of Scripture.

³⁹Robinson, 20.

⁴⁰Ibid.

Criteria for Expository Preaching

For a sermon to be labeled expository preaching, certain guiding principles must be adhered to. This research will limit itself to the criteria provided by Jerry Vines and Faris D. Whitesell. Although both men wrote several decades ago, their criteria are still useful because not many contemporary authors of expository preaching express it like Vines and Whitesell did.

Jerry Vines enumerates several factors that constitute expository preaching. The factors are the following:

1. The sermon must be based on a passage from the Bible.
2. The actual meaning of the passage must be found.
3. The meaning of the Bible passage must be related to the immediate and general context of the passage.
4. The eternal, timeless truths in the passage must be elucidated.
5. Those truths must be gathered around a compelling theme.
6. The main points of the sermon must be drawn from the Scripture verses themselves.
7. Every possible method to apply the truths found in the verse must be utilized.

8. The hearer will be called to obey those truths and to live them out in daily life.⁴¹

Whitesell has similar factors as Vines, but with slight variations. Whitesell lists seven criteria:

1. It is based on a passage in the Bible, either short or long.

2. It seeks to learn the primary, basic meaning of the passage.

3. It relates that meaning to the context of the passage.

4. It digs down for the timeless, universal truths stemming out of the passage.

5. It organizes these truths tightly around one central theme.

6. It uses the rhetorical element of explanation, argument, illustration, and application to bring the truth of the passage home to the hearer.

7. It seeks to persuade the listener to obey the truths of the passage discussed.⁴²

⁴¹Jerry Vines, *A Practical Guide to Sermon Preparation* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1985), 6-7

⁴²Whitesell, xv.

The following identifiable features can be extrapolated from the review of contemporary literature as the criteria for identifying an expository sermon:

1. Expository preaching is grounded in a single biblical text, long or short. The text provides the framework for preaching. If no text is provided, then such presentation is another form of oral communication, but is not expository preaching.

2. It strives to ascertain the biblical writer's intent, which is unearthed through interpretation of the text.

3. It generates a central idea or theme from the text. The central idea is a universal truth that is applied to the contemporary audience.

4. It gathers supportive materials to assist with applying the text. Some of the supportive materials could be subpoints from the text, illustration, etc.

5. It is Christ-centered. Jesus declared, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32).

6. It persuades its hearers to obey the truths presented. Jesus warned: "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

Advantages of Expository Preaching

The devaluation of preaching coupled with some preachers' negative attitudes toward it, has undermined preaching. Perhaps an outline of some of the advantages of expository preaching can aid in building confidence in the hearers and the preachers.

Many expositors have written extensively on the advantages of expository preaching.⁴³ A summary is listed below:

1. Expository preaching reaffirms the centrality of Scripture.
2. Expository preaching safeguards the integrity of Scripture.
3. Expository preaching stimulates the study of Scripture.
4. Expository preaching disallows the insertion of human opinions that contradicts the intent of the biblical writer.
5. Expository preaching produces biblically literate preachers and hearers. It is extremely difficult for a preacher who practices expository preaching not to be first influenced by the discipline required to preach an

⁴³Schuron, 18-19; Mayhue, 15-16; MacArthur, xiii.

expository sermon. When the preacher is influenced by what is done, the preacher is able to influence his/her hearers.

6. Expository preaching has the potential of transforming its adherents. Therefore, the hearers are able to experience Scripture in a transformative way.

7. Expository preaching bridges the gap between what the Scripture meant and what it means. Through application, the hearers are transposed from their life-situation to the biblical world and back to their life-situation, thus making Scripture relevant.

Review of Dissertations on Lay Expository Preaching

The emergence of the 21st century has added its own challenges to preaching. Congregations are educated and have a high expectation of preaching. To meet the challenge of high expectation, it is imperative for those who preach to continue to enhance their preaching skills. Since elders or laypeople preach, it is equally important to equip them to preach because they are at a disadvantage. They are at a disadvantage because many elders have little or no training to preach.⁴⁴ Furthermore, resources in this area are sparse or often outdated. Therefore, recent

⁴⁴Bresee, *Successful Lay Preaching*, 13.

dissertations will be reviewed to ascertain training methods. Other aspects of expository preaching will be noted as well, since that is the emphasis of this project.

The review of dissertations was limited to eight recent dissertations (from 2000 to the present) dealing with lay expository preaching. These dissertations were found at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, the Dallas Theological Seminary, and the James White Library at Andrews University.

Three of the dissertations found described the process of training laypersons to preach.⁴⁵ They dealt with selection of participants, length of the training sessions, duration of training, and evaluation. Kenneth Burges believed that to assist laypersons who have not been taught to preach required designing a course to help them develop the skills necessary to preach because laypersons can be taught.⁴⁶ His course lasted for ten weeks and included the call of the lay preacher, interpreting the text, developing

⁴⁵David McCord, "The Application and Relevance of Expository Preaching" (D.Min. dissertation, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000); Kenneth J. Burges, Sr., "Development and Evaluation of a Sermon Preparation and Delivery Class for Laymen" (D.Min. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 2006); Dale Hance Dilbeck, "Equipping Laymen to Preach from Narrative Texts to the Small Rural Churches of Oklahoma" (D.Min. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002).

⁴⁶Burges, 8-9.

the sermon, and, at the end of the course, laypeople demonstrated competence by preaching a thirty-minute sermon. Dale Hance Dilbeck, on the other hand, divided his training program into two phases comprising six weeks each. Two sermons were preached after the instruction and feedback was given.

Although Burges did not define expository preaching, he used expository preaching to instruct lay people. Unlike McCord, who defined expository preaching and gave a historical survey of expository preaching, Burges recommended books dealing with expository preaching. He used some of the books cited in his training of lay people, such as *Preparing Expository Sermons* by Ramesh Richard. Notwithstanding, Burges acknowledged that the end result of preaching is to effect change in the hearts of those who hear the sermon.⁴⁷

For his part, David McCord looked at applying biblical principles through expository preaching.⁴⁸ He surmised that the composition of the Bible lends itself to expository preaching⁴⁹ and that expository preaching facilitates

⁴⁷Burges, 21.

⁴⁸McCord, 4.

⁴⁹Ibid., 26.

spiritual growth and revival because it is based on Scripture.⁵⁰ Yang agreed that Scripture should serve as the basis for expository preaching. He defined expository preaching as the "art of preaching the Word of God through the explanation of a definite Bible text and the application of its meaning to people's needs today."⁵¹ Expository preaching is, therefore, rooted in Scripture, based on a Bible text, and has the potential of enriching spiritual growth which could, in turn, lead to revival.

Some of the dissertations reviewed were committed to training laypersons to preach; however, they targeted specific ethnic groups. The training was geared towards a particular nationality as opposed to laypersons in general. Dennis R. Barton's dissertation was one of those.⁵² He wrote his dissertation in English but the training manual was written in French. Hence, an individual had to be familiar with French in order to implement its teachings. Notwithstanding, Barton emphasized the fact that laypeople

⁵⁰McCord, 17.

⁵¹Yang, 39.

⁵²Dennis R. Barton, "Developing and Implementing a Training Program for the Preparation and Delivery of Biblical Sermons by Lay Leaders of French Baptist Churches" (D.Min. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000).

are called. The call also includes preaching—preaching that is Bible-based.

The call of laypeople to preach was also affirmed by Dale Hance Dilbeck. He asked a rhetorical question about the appropriateness of training laymen to preach. He answered the question with “four frontal arguments: theological, scriptural, historical, and practical.”⁵³ While some of those arguments might be debatable, Delbeck believed that laymen are called to exercise their gifts, which also includes preaching.

William Kilgore’s dissertation⁵⁴ was one of those dissertations that focused on empowering pastors to train laypersons to preach. Two sets of training were pursued, one for the pastors to understand preaching and the other for the pastors to communicate or train laypeople to preach based on the pastor’s training. Kilgore’s project also included the local congregation in the evaluation process. The reason for this is because local preaching takes place in a congregational context. The involvement of the local congregation continues the communal fellowship, thus making

⁵³Dilbeck, 40.

⁵⁴William Kilgore, “Training Pastors in A Multi-Church District to Develop Lay Leaders to Do Bible-based Preaching” (D.Min. dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003).

the congregation feel a part of the skill enhancement of the layperson.

The last two dissertations examined in this section are projects written in 2008. Although they do not deal with expository preaching specifically, their emphasis on preaching presented new insights for lay expository preaching.⁵⁵ Jerry Arnold's dissertation connected spiritual gifts and preaching. He used a spiritual gifts inventory to identify those who had the gift of preaching. Once those individuals were identified, he trained them to preach. Before the training, he presented biblical reasons for why lay preaching is necessary.

Victor Dyman, on the other hand, took a holistic approach to training lay persons to preach. His approach was a thorough analysis of preaching—preaching that communicates effectively with the postmodern generation. He defined preaching as “a specific, authoritative, and earnest oral proclamation of the Gospel in which the Word of God is read, expounded, and applied to the listeners.”⁵⁶ This definition of preaching formed the basis for holistic

⁵⁵Jerry D. Arnold, “Equipping Lay People with the Spiritual Gift for Preaching in the Collegedale Community Seventh-day Adventist Church to Preach” (D.Min. dissertation, Andrews University, 2008); Victor V. Dyman, “Holistic Approach to Preaching: A Training Program for Lay Speakers of Manhattan Seventh-day Adventist Church.”

⁵⁶Dyman, 8.

preaching. Holistic preaching, Dyman insisted, includes the "personal authenticity of the speaker, exegetical accuracy of the message, and adaptation to the specific audience."⁵⁷ These elements make up holistic preaching. Some of these elements, "exegetical accuracy of the message, remaining true to the text" and "adaptation of the message to specific audience," and application are also features of expository preaching.

Summary of Themes

The following is a summary of themes from the review of selected dissertations:

1. Expository preaching is a natural outcome of the makeup of the Bible. Expository preaching strives to discover the author's intent through interpretation. The result of the interpretation is expressed through relevant application to its hearers.

2. Expository preaching can lead to spiritual growth and transformation. One way such growth does take place is through the communication of God's intent. God intends that souls be saved (Luke 19:12) and transformed. Expository preaching can capture and communicate that purpose (Matt 8:8).

⁵⁷Dyman, 8-9.

3. Expository preaching has several advantages both to the preacher and the hearers. The preacher can experience the satisfaction as well as the blessing of "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15). The hearers can also participate in the blessing by hearing the Word of God presented (Rev 1:3).

4. Some features of expository preaching can also be found in "holistic preaching" such as remaining true to the text and applying the text to contemporary hearers.

5. Training laypeople to preach expository sermons is possible. In order to facilitate the training, one might consider the number of participants in the course or seminar, format for the instruction, the number of days or weeks of the training, the content of the training, evaluations, and feedback.

6. The evaluations used were mainly on three levels: the participants' evaluation of one another along with the facilitator's evaluation of participants; the participants' evaluation of the training course and the facilitator's instructions; and the respective churches' evaluation of the participants.

Summary

Many reasons can be given for "What is the matter with

preaching today.” Along with those reasons are also the challenges of the 21st century. However, as important as those challenges and reasons are, even more important is the diminishing confidence of some of those who engage in preaching. Maybe the first thing that needs to be done in addressing the complex challenges facing preaching is to restore confidence in preaching.

One way of restoring confidence in preaching might be to allow Scripture to be the basis for preaching. The type of preaching that fulfills this role is expository preaching. Expository preaching remains true to the Bible. It is the type of preaching that tries to approximate the notion that the Bible is indeed the Word of God.⁵⁸ Out of the Bible flows God’s redemptive work. Out of the Bible flows God’s commission to “Preach”—saying that “the kingdom of God is at hand” (Matt 10:7).

When this type of preaching is carried out, Scripture is kept from unscrupulous misinterpretation—the preacher remains true to Scripture. Confidence is restored in the preacher. Furthermore, the hearers are transformed through their obedience to the preaching.

⁵⁸Philip Ryken, “Preaching that Reforms,” in *Preach the Word: Essays on Expository Preaching: In Honor of R. Kent Hughes*, 204.

Elders can be taught this kind of preaching. Perhaps one way of facilitating that process is to design a training seminar. In designing such a seminar, it might be helpful to consider including the following:

1. The biblical rationale for lay preaching.
2. In-seminar preaching—giving participants the opportunity to demonstrate the skills acquired from the seminar. The number of sermons each participant preaches can be determined by the person who conducts the seminar.
3. Evaluations—evaluating sermons preached during the seminar to help participants grow. An evaluation for the preaching of participants, the congregation's evaluation of the preaching, and participants' evaluation of the training content and instruction should be created.
4. Personal feedback—allowing personal feedback time between the participants and the facilitator.
5. Instruction—how to structure the training so that it is effective.
6. Sessions or phases of the seminar—considering how many sessions to have and the duration of each session.

CHAPTER IV

DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to document a training program for elders on expository preaching. This chapter will also give a brief history of the Alexandria District, a description of the project's participants, and a report on the formulation of the seminar.

The District

The Alexandria Seventh-day Adventist District is located in Central Louisiana and is comprised of two cities, Alexandria and Natchitoches. The city of Alexandria has two churches, Smyrna Seventh-day Adventist Church and Maranatha Seventh-day Adventist Church. Natchitoches has one church, Natchitoches First Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In 2001, the district was composed of only Smyrna Seventh-day Adventist Church and Natchitoches First Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Maranatha Seventh-day

Adventist Church was added to the district in 2004.¹ Since 2004, the three churches have formed the Alexandria District and share a pastor.

Sharing a pastor means that an elder is always preaching on Sabbath in the district. Elders preach as follows: At Smyrna, elders preach twice a month; at Maranatha, elders preach three times a month; and at Natchitoches First, an elder preaches three times a month. On average, elders preach seven times a month in the Alexandria District of Seventh-day Adventists.

The City of Alexandria

The city of Alexandria lies along the south banks of the Red River. It is the most populous city in the Parish, hence, it is the parish seat or capital city. The population of Alexandria grew from 46,342 in 2001 to approximately 50,236 in the middle of 2008. This growth was largely due to the exodus from New Orleans as a result of Hurricane Katrina. The predominant religious group in Alexandria is Southern Baptist, followed by Roman Catholic

¹The information cited here was contained in an email from the Executive Secretary of the Southwest Region Conference on March 12, 2009 based on a request from me (see Appendix L).

and other Protestant denominations.² The Pentecostals also have a hub in the area.

The City of Natchitoches

The City of Natchitoches is the oldest permanent settlement city in Louisiana. It was established in 1714 as a French outpost station. Later, it was acquired as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The name of the city comes from the Natchitoches Indian tribe that occupied the area. The population of the city is about 17,865.³ Natchitoches is known as the "City of Lights" due to its annual light celebration during the Christmas holidays. Protestants makeup the largest religious group in Natchitoches and within that number, the Baptists have the most members.⁴

²Wikipedia, "Alexandria, Louisiana," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria,_Louisiana (accessed 25 March 2009).

³Wikipedia, "Natchitoches, Louisiana," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natchitoches,_Louisiana (accessed 25 March 2009).

⁴According to the breakdown of religious affiliation, "52.25% of the people in Natchitoches, LA are religious. . . . 12.54% are Catholic; 37.41% are Protestant; 0.59% are LDS; 1.27% are another Christian faith; 0.00% in Natchitoches, LA are Jewish; 0.03% are an eastern faith; 0.42% affiliate with Islam." 29.62% of Protestants are Baptist. Sperling's BestPlaces, "Natchitoches, Louisiana," <http://www.bestplaces.net/city/Natchitoches-Louisiana.aspx#> (accessed 25 March 2009).

Smyrna SDA Church

Smyrna came into existence in 1936 following a tent meeting or crusade by Elder T. H. Coopwood.⁵ The church immediately became a member of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. During its infancy, Smyrna shared a pastor with a church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana because of its small membership. Given the distance between Alexandria and Baton Rouge, roughly 2.5 hours, the pastor spent more time in Baton Rouge than Alexandria. Local elders assumed leadership roles in the pastor's absence. However, this changed when church membership increased and Smyrna was added to a new district.

After many pastors and seventy-three years of existence, Smyrna is a thriving church. It has a hundred and fifty three (153) members, mainly adults, young adults, and children. In 2008, Smyrna returned a tithe of \$208,242.03. Smyrna is well known in the community for its outreach programs that includes a weekly TV broadcast and a weekly radio ministry. Smyrna also has a rich musical tradition. It is presently the largest church in the

⁵All the information on the history of Smyrna came from a compilation by Betty Anderson. The compiled history is usually inserted in the church's anniversary booklet annually (see Appendix C).

Alexandria District in terms of both membership and tithe.

Maranatha SDA Church

In 2002, a group of ten individuals who used to be members of the Smyrna Seventh-day Adventist Church received permission from the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to establish a company.⁶ This group wanted to evangelize the surrounding cities. The SWRC agreed and in January 2003, the company was formally organized. Seven months later, its first convert was baptized. Several months after that, its first youth was baptized. Currently, Maranatha has about seventy-four members, mainly youths and young adults. In 2008, \$76,436.03 was returned in tithe.

Maranatha has a renowned youth group called Xtreme Praise Ministries. This youth group is composed of about twenty-five percent Adventists and seventy-five percent non-Adventists. The majority of the baptisms at the Maranatha Church come from the ministry of Xtreme Praise.⁷

⁶A company is a term used in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to refer to a group of believers who live in the same area and meet for fellowship and worship. They assemble for the purpose of becoming an organized church. See, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, Rev. 17th ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 40.

⁷All the information on the history of Maranatha came from a compiled history that usually appears in the church's annual anniversary booklet (see Appendix C).

Natchitoches First SDA Church

The Natchitoches First Seventh-day Adventist Church started as a result of a local family's desire to plant a church in the city of Natchitoches.⁸ This desire began with a visit by Lois Raymond and her brother McDuffie to their Uncle Wesley Wiley just before World War II. Uncle Wesley Wiley, or John and his wife Odessa were Seventh-day Adventists living in Enid, Oklahoma. When Lois and McDuffie returned to Natchitoches, they received numerous tracts in the mail about the "Second coming of Christ," "The Sanctuary," and "the Beasts of Daniel." The information contained in those tracts convicted them and they shared their new insights on the Bible to their parents Rollie and Florida Pearl Raymond.

A group of about twenty individuals embraced the new teachings but were unable to be organized into a church because the person authorized to do so did not complete the process. Years passed and another effort by Jessie, daughter of Rollie and Florida Pearl Raymond, and her husband, C. R. Pritchett, came to a discouraging end because

⁸Paralee Knight, a member of the Natchitoches Church now relocated to California furnished the information on the history of the church in a fax message dated March 31, 2009 (see Appendix C).

the believers, once again, could not find a permanent building.

In August 1976, Paralee, another daughter of Rollie and Florida Pearl Raymond, and her husband Lonnie Knight moved back to Natchitoches from California. Upon their arrival, they found a building. The building was purchased and the first church service was held in 1977. There were nineteen chartered members. Since 1977, its membership has fluctuated even though it has one hundred and seven (107) members on the roll. Of that number, between twelve and fifteen members are present on a given Sabbath. The membership is mostly adults, with about one percent youth. One of the reasons for the fluctuation in membership could be because it shares a pastor with two other churches and there are not enough empowered local leaders to carry on other functions of the church. Natchitoches First returned \$11, 027.25 in tithe in 2008. Presently, Natchitoches First SDA Church has the smallest number of members in the Alexandria District.

Participants

The participants of the seminar in this project were elected elders from the Alexandria District. The participants were enthusiastic about the seminar. They

welcomed the seminar and saw it as an opportunity to enhance their preaching skills.

There were six elders who initially signed up to participate in the project. Of the six, only five completed the project; one elder dropped out for personal reasons. Three of the participants were from Smyrna and two from Maranatha. Natchitoches First did not have representation because its only elder relocated to a different state. In addition, one of the three elders from Maranatha could not participate in the project because of family obligations.

With the exception of one elder who graduated from Oakwood University with a BA in Theology, only two other elders had ever attended a workshop on preaching. However, the workshop was not in-depth and did not emphasize expository preaching. Therefore, all the elders were curious and excited about participating in the seminars on expository preaching. They viewed the seminar as an attempt to enhance their preaching skills.

Design of the Seminar

Two factors contributed to the design of the seminar: the review of current literature and the dissertation

review. These two factors established the content and the structure of the seminar.

Review of Literature

As covered in Chapter III, the review of literature was of selected contemporary literature dealing with expository preaching, in particular, and preaching in general. Books and articles were the main elements of the review. The review assisted in establishing the content for the seminar, for example, the status of preaching; criteria of expository preaching; the need for expository preaching; and the advantages of expository preaching.

Review of Dissertations on Lay Expository Preaching

The last factor that helped influence the design of the seminar was the dissertations reviewed. The review of dissertations helped to provide the structure of the seminar. The structure of the seminar pertained to the participants, the duration of the seminar (weeks or days), length of each session, in-seminar preaching, evaluation, and feedback.

Preliminary Meeting

During the November 6, 2008 preliminary meeting with the participants, the Description of the Project was handed

out to the elders and discussed (see Appendix B). The objectives of the project were stated as follows:

1. To enhance the preaching skills of elders in the Alexandria District who preach in the absence of the pastor.

2. To develop a training program to equip elders to preach expository sermons. With an extensive training of elders, the Alexandria District will experience a new dimension of preaching that would be both substantive and spiritually rewarding.

Within the description of the project handout were specific dates for the various seminars and completion of the seminars. Those dates were revised during the preliminary meeting to accommodate participants. The dates were again revised due to the facilitator's mission trip to Africa in late November and early December 2008. At the end of the preliminary meeting, participants agreed to participate in the seminars. They also expressed their willingness to complete the seminar.

Title of the Training Program

After reviewing selected contemporary literature and dissertations, the training program was designed. The training program was entitled "Preparing to Preach" (see

Appendix A). The program was divided into two seminars. The first seminar was entitled "Preparation of the Speaker" and the second seminar was entitled "Preparation of the Sermon."

Implementation

Preparation of Speaker

Not much emphasis is placed on the preparation of the speaker. Yet, as Bresee points out, "The biggest task in preaching is not preparation of the sermon but preparation of the preacher."⁹ The goal of the "Preparation of the Speaker" seminar was to devote time to discussing the importance of spiritual preparation before sermon preparation.

The "Preparation of the Speaker" seminar started on November 16, 2008. The venue should have been a retreat site but there was none available prior to the seminar. Therefore, the first session was held in the library of the Smyrna Junior Academy.¹⁰ The goal was to create a retreat-style atmosphere that was relaxing, reflective,

⁹Bresee, *Successful Lay Preaching*, 19.

¹⁰The Smyrna Junior Academy is a K-8th grade elementary school sponsored by the Smyrna Seventh-day Adventist Church, one of the churches in the Alexandria District.

instructive, and spiritual. The training was composed of discussions, interactions, exercises, and reflective time.

The seminar was divided into sessions. Six hours were allotted for the presentation of the following topics:

"Understanding Your Calling," "The Role of Preaching," "The Human Dimension of Preaching" (see Appendix A), and

"Developing a Theology of Preaching (see Appendix G)."

Several exercises were performed and an assignment to write a personal theology of preaching given. The first seminar ended with worship in which participants sang songs (see Appendix F) and formed a circle, and where every participant prayed. Prayer partners were formed between elders for accountability, camaraderie, support, and sharing sermon ideas.

Preparation of the Sermon

"Preparation of the Sermon" was the second seminar of the "Preparing to Preach" training program. The Preparation of the Sermon seminar was conducted in two days and two phases in order to present the information contained in the seminar adequately and to accommodate the schedules of the participants. The training featured discussion, group interaction, dialogue, and questions from the participants. Handouts were given on various topics

for the participants to follow along.

On March 7, 2009, the first phase took place. The seminar ran for three and a half hours. Participants were exposed to topics such as "The Status of Preaching," "Choosing a Text," and "Interpreting the Text" (see Appendix A). The presentations were divided into fifty minutes of discussion with ten-minute breaks allotted before the next topic.

The last phase of the "Preparation of the Sermon" occurred the day after the first phase, March 8, 2009. The same format was used as in the previous phase. Phase two continued with the "interpretation of the text." Other topics discussed were "From Text to Sermon," "Delivery," and "Long-Term Freshness" (see Appendix A).

An example of how to interpret the text was demonstrated for participants using Ezra 8:28-29 (see Appendix O). The demonstration was followed by the construction of a sermon based on the interpretation of the text. The sermon was intended to be preached during the session, but time did not permit this because some of the elders had other obligations. Therefore, the sermon was read and a copy given to the participants (see Appendix P).

Several handouts were passed out during the session. A condensed version of how to formulate the sermon (see

Appendix H) along with the sermon flow chart (see Appendix I) were handed out so that participants would not feel overwhelmed by the information shared. Another handout on "Must have Books" was passed out (see Appendix K). This handout encouraged participants to include the books listed on the handout in their library. On the same handout, "Must have Books," a preaching plan for the rest of the year, 2009, was outlined. The preaching plan took into account that there are four quarters in the year. Each quarter had a subject or theme assigned so that the pastor and elders could design their sermons around those themes. That way, the elders and pastor would be preaching on the same theme throughout the year.

Evaluation

Four elements formed the crux of the evaluation. They were sermons preached among participants, sermons preached in church, an evaluation of the seminar by the participants, and personal feedback from the facilitator.

Participants' Sermons

One of the objectives of the seminar called for participants to preach two sermons among themselves. One sermon was left to the participant's own discretion. They were given flexibility in that the elders could use an old

sermon (sermon preached before) or a newly developed sermon (a sermon never preached before). One of the two sermons (the newly developed sermon) was chosen from a group of texts suggested by the facilitator (see Appendix J). Participants were required, however, to utilize the information presented in the "Preparing to Preach Seminar," follow the guidelines for expository preaching presented during the seminar, and base all sermons on the format for expository preaching as presented in the "Preparing to Preach Seminar." Two dates were designated for the sermons, March 23 and March 27, 2009.

Sermon One

The five participants preached their first sermon on March 23, 2009. Three participants were from Smyrna Seventh-day Adventist Church and two from Maranatha Seventh-day Adventist Church. Each participant was required to turn in a hard copy of his sermon before preaching. After each sermon, feedback was given¹¹ based on a feedback sheet distributed (see Appendix M).

¹¹The "Feedback Sheet," was an adaptation of sermon evaluation sheets found in the preaching lab of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. All the sermon evaluations found did not have any names of a professor on it to suggest who produced the evaluation. The evaluations were modified for the purpose of the "Preparing to Preach Seminar."

The feedback from the first sermon showed the enormous time the participant spent in assimilating the content of the seminar and reproducing it in their sermons. Favorable and encouraging feedback was shared among participants. The participants affirmed one another and suggested ways of improving the sermon.

Sermon Two

Sermon two followed the same pattern as sermon one. Those who had not preached a sermon based on the group of texts provided by the facilitator were required to do so and those who had already preached from one of the texts provided were at liberty to preach any sermon of their choosing, whether newly developed or previously preached. Once again, all the sermons were to follow the guidelines presented in the "Preparing to Preach Seminar."

Feedback was given after each participant's sermon. Although no previous instrument was used to determine prior preaching, some improvements were shown in the participants' two sermons. Table 1 shows the improvement.¹²

¹²The average of the total score assigned to a sermon by participants is here represented as participants. The facilitator's score plus the sum of the participants' score divided by the number of participants equals the total. The "Feedback Sheet" score ranges from 1-10, with 10 being the highest score.

Table 1. Feedback results

Sermon 1	Elder 1	Elder 2	Elder 3	Elder 4	Elder 5
Participants	83%	77%	87%	91%	90%
Facilitator	99%	84%	94%	99%	96%
TOTAL	91%	81%	91%	95%	93%
Sermon 2					
Participants	87%	95%	95%	87%	94%
Facilitator	96%	98%	95%	95%	89%
TOTAL	92%	97%	95%	91%	92%

Church Preaching

Part of the evaluation of the seminar included the respective church members' evaluation of the participants. The Project Description stipulated that the better of the two in-seminar sermons would be preached at each participant's respective church. The highest average from the two sermons preached during the seminar determined the better sermon.

On March 31, 2009, the two elders from the Maranatha Seventh-day Adventist Church preached their better sermon during Prayer Meeting. The next day, April 1, 2009, two elders from Smyrna Seventh-day Adventist Church preached their better sermon. The Prayer Meeting was called

"Elders' Preach-out."¹³ A program was planned for the preach-out.

The "Preparing to Preach" training program did not produce a feedback sheet for the churches. Instead, verbal feedback was solicited from members in attendance. The feedback was given collectively by the members after all the elders had finished preaching. The responses were basically the same from both churches:

1. "The messages were clear."
2. "No 'wondering.'"
3. "There appeared to be a big improvement from the last time they preached until today."
4. "They preached with confidence."
5. "Vast difference in their preaching after the seminar."
6. "They stayed with the text."
7. "It was easy to follow the sermons."
8. "The preaching was like watching an artist painting. The elders painted a picture."

¹³One of the three elders from Smyrna Seventh-day Adventist Church could not preach during the Elders' Preach-out because of an emergency at work that required him to stay. Therefore, only two of the three elders at Smyrna preached.

9. "I like when a preacher can take what the text said then and make it applicable now. That is what the elders did tonight."

10. "Hats off to the instructor."

Facilitator's Feedback

At the conclusion of the last phase of the "Preparation of the Sermon" seminar, a sign-up sheet was passed around for elders to sign. Thirty minutes was reserved for facilitator's feedback with the elders. There were four reasons for the meeting: (1) to return feedback forms from fellow elders , (2) to spend time personally in affirming and pointing out areas of improvement, (3) to summarize expository preaching, and (4) to discuss the better sermon to be preached at church.

The personal feedback meeting with the elder was held on Sunday, March 29, 2009. The elders were affirmed on their ability to implement the seminar. Furthermore, they were commended for preaching two sermons in five days. The elders themselves praised the seminar, agreed that expository preaching has changed the way they preach, and suggested that every elder should take the seminar.

Participants' Evaluation

The participants' evaluation of the seminar was the

last measuring tool of the "Preparing to Preach" training program (see Appendix N). Four categories formed the basis of the evaluation: (1) teaching—to measure the effectiveness of the teaching during the seminar, (2) content—to find out if the seminar was taught at the right level of comprehension, (3) general observation—to ascertain transferability of the seminar, and (4) questions—to measure strengths of the seminar, weaknesses of the seminar, and areas of improvement. In order to maintain a level objectivity and honesty, elders were told not to write their names on the evaluation form.

Strengths of the Seminar

The following responses were made by the elders concerning the strengths of the seminar:

1. "Interpreting the text, exegesis worksheet, the seminar materials, the presenter's knowledge and experience. The facilitator was enthusiastic."

2. "Seminar improved one's sermon preparation and developed better studying habits."

3. "Empowered an individual to become more proficient in preaching. [It] helped me to understand sermon structure. [It] helped to look deep into the meaning of Scripture."

4. "Helped to cultivate good studying habits and research. Caused one to apply oneself. It enhanced one's preaching skills."

5. "Caused a desire for in-depth study."

Weaknesses of the Seminar

Of the five elders, three responded to the question What is the weakness of this seminar? by writing "none." One elder wrote there was "nothing weak about the seminar. Everything was positive." However, one elder suggested that the sessions were lengthy.

Table 2. Seminar evaluation

Rating System: 1-Agree Strongly 2-Agree 3-Unsure
4-Disagree 5-Disagree Strongly

	Elder 1	Elder 2	Elder 3	Elder 4	Elder 5
Teaching					
Facilitator is knowledgeable about the subject	1	1	1	1	1
Facilitator is prepared	1	1	1	1	1
Facilitator presents material in a way that helps me to learn	2	1	1	1	1
Facilitator encouraged participation	2	1	1	1	1
Facilitator answers participants' questions	2	1	1	1	1
Facilitator is enthusiastic about teaching	1	1	1	1	1
Content					
The pace of the seminar is just right	1	2	1	1	1
The information is easy to comprehend	2	2	1	1	2
The seminar is the right level of difficulty	3	1	1	1	2
The handouts are helpful	2	1	1	1	1

Table 2–Continued

The seminar enhanced my understanding of preaching	2	1	1	1	1
General Observation					
I like the seminar	1	1	1	1	1
I would recommend this seminar to all elders	1	1	1	1	1
I like to have an annual preaching seminar	1	1	1	2	1

Source: Adapted and modified from a course evaluation from <http://teachingtoday.glencoe.com/userfiles/file/CourseEvaluation.pdf> (24 March 2009).

Seminar Improvement

Again the responses to the question “What suggestions of improvement would you like to make?” were positive. Two elders stated, “none.” One elder said: “I thought it (the seminar) was simply excellent. No need for improvement.” Another elder felt that videotaping of the sermon would have been helpful. Another elder recommended “dividing up the sessions into shorter segments because too much information at one time can be counterproductive.”

Overall, the responses were encouraging. The results of the seminar evaluation are in the table above.

Conclusion

The excitement of the elders of the Alexandria District to participate in the "Preparing to Preach Seminar" was matched only by their dedication to completing all the seminars and fulfilling all the requirements of the seminar. After several weeks of intense instruction and sermon preparation, they delivered the better of their two sermons before their respective churches. The church acknowledged the improvement in their sermons.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION, CONCLUSION

Summary

Within the Alexandria District of the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, elders are called upon to preach in the absence of the pastor. These elders perform their task with diligence. However, they, like many other elders and laypeople who preach in the absence of a pastor, are at a disadvantage. They have little or no training in preaching. To further compound the problem, the 21st century has introduced its own challenges. Media has brought into homes some of the most skilled preachers, thus creating a high level of expectation. This project attempted to create a training program to help empower elders in a multi-church district to preach with confidence and competence.

The first step in establishing a training program was to articulate a biblical rationale for lay inclusion in preaching. The biblical reason would serve as an impetus for lay participation in preaching. Furthermore, it would

assure the elders that their preaching is not only a function of the position, but rather, God's willingness to allow every Christian an opportunity to use his or her gifts in His service.

There were two concepts that expressed God's willingness to include every Christian in His service or ministry: "the priesthood of all believers" and "laity." The concept "priesthood of all believers" is a New Testament phrase that indicates that all believers or baptized Christians have the privilege to use their gifts in God's service. Moreover, there is no hierarchal distinction among God's people. All have been adopted into the family of God and, as such, all believers are active participants in the service of God. In addition, although this phraseology is strictly New Testament, it has its roots in the Old Testament priesthood. When God inaugurated the priests, He set them apart to act as care-givers to the community of faith and the surrounding nations. The act of care-giving was borrowed from the Old Testament and ascribed to all believers in the New Testament and subsequent generations.

The concept "laity" is akin to the concept of the "priesthood of all believers." The word laity comes from the word *laos* which means people, God's own people. This

concept is a collective concept referring to all of God's people. A review of Church history showed that a hierarchal structure was put in place that differentiated between professional people—the clergy, and nonprofessional people—the laity. The reformation helped to rediscover the role of the laity. It insisted that the distinction between the laity and the clergy was unbiblical.

Laypeople can preach, not only because the concept of "the priesthood of all believers" justifies their inclusion, but also because there are precedents from the Bible, the writings of Ellen G. White, and the history of Seventh-day Adventism to authenticate their inclusion in preaching.

In order to find biblical precedents, a definition of lay preaching was given. According to the definition, lay preaching was defined as those who were not paid clergy, had little or no theological training, and were commissioned by God and their church. From this definition, examples were sought from the Old and New Testaments. Noah, Amos, and Hosea were Old Testament examples of lay preaching. Jesus, John the Baptist, and the disciples were examples of New Testament lay preachers.

Ellen White also affirmed lay preaching. Three statements were cited from her writings. The three

citations noted God's desire to utilize every Christian in the spreading of the gospel, especially at the end of time. These Christians would include laypeople who would go out and preach.

The history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church began with lay preachers. As a matter of fact, although William Miller never became a Seventh-day Adventist, he was known as the "father of Adventism." He was a lay preacher motivated by a passion to inform others about the second coming of Jesus. His preaching inspired other lay preachers who worked along with him.

Not only is there a justification for lay preaching in the Bible, the writings of Ellen G. white, and the history of Seventh-day Adventists, there are also examples of lay expository preaching in the Bible. Since this project sought to train elders to preach expository sermons, it was necessary to find examples from the Bible. Before finding examples from the Bible, a cursory definition of expository preaching was offered to help identify examples of lay expository preaching. Ezra's preaching in Nehemiah 8 was used as an example of Old Testament expository preaching. The preaching of Peter on the Day of Pentecost was used as an example from the New Testament. Jesus' preaching on the road to Emmaus was also cited along with Paul's preaching

in Acts 17:1. Stephen and Philip were also mentioned as examples of lay expository preaching.

If there is anything wrong with preaching, it is possible that the preacher's themselves are responsible. Many have allowed other peripheral elements of worship to usurp biblical preaching, which is expository preaching. Maybe one way of renewing confidence in preaching is to renew expository preaching.

Expository preaching tries to approximate the tenor of the Bible. It lends itself to the natural makeup of the Bible. After examining several definitions of expository preaching, this project defined expository preaching as the kind of preaching rooted in Scripture, which seeks to determine the intent of the biblical writer through interpretation and explanation. The substance of the interpretation is then applied to its contemporary hearers for the purpose of effecting a change and generating obedience.

There are many benefits to expository preaching. Some of these benefits include (1) remaining faithful to Scripture, (2) avoiding unscrupulous interpretation, (3) application that coincides with accurate interpretation, (4) hearers being transposed from their contemporary setting to the biblical text and back to the contemporary

setting, 5) hearers being empowered by the preaching and the preachers themselves being encouraged, (6) renewal of confidence, and (7) strengthening of competence.

After defining expository preaching, the criteria for expository preaching, and the advantages of expository preaching, a training program was designed. This training seminar took into consideration the call of the lay preacher, what lay preaching is, and what expository preaching is. To help determine training methodologies, dissertations were reviewed. The dissertation review gave suggestions on how to design a training seminar.

The participants of the training seminar were elders voted by their respective churches in the Alexandria District. These elders were trained using two seminars: "The Preparation of the Speaker" and "The Preparation of the Sermon." After the training, each elder was required to preach two in-seminar sermons. The better of the two sermons was preached in a worship setting with church members present to offer their feedback.

The church members collectively acknowledged the improvement in the elders' preaching. They noticed that the sermons did not wander aimlessly, the elders adhered to the Bible text, the application of the text was relevant, and the elders were more confident in their preaching.

Recommendations

This project accomplished many objectives, namely, the elders' confidence was renewed; they had a better understanding of expository preaching; and the congregations recognized the improvement in the elders' preaching. Notwithstanding, there are a few areas that could enhance this project. They are as follows:

1. Include a standardized evaluation for the congregation instead of verbal evaluation. With the verbal feedback from members, it is possible that some people would refrain from being truthful so as not to hurt their elder's feelings.

2. Shorten the amount of materials presented. Sometimes the elders or facilitator or both felt like the information presented in the seminar was too much for the short time period.

3. Allow an interval of about one week for elders to preach their second in-seminar sermon. The elders had four days to prepare their second sermon. It created a lot of stress for some of the elders

4. Video tape in-seminar sermons. The videotaping of the participants' sermon has a twofold benefit. The elders can track their progress and observe areas of improvement. The facilitator can have a second instrument of evaluation.

5. Since preaching is important to the church, all elders need to undergo extensive training in preaching. Expository preaching should serve as the model of such training since it approximates the tenor of Scripture.

6. An annual preaching seminar will be helpful to afford elders the opportunity to continue improving their craft.

7. Elders need to be exposed to a wide variety of tools that will assist them in carrying out their task with efficiency and accuracy. One way might be to provide elders with Bible software. Many preachers no longer travel with many books to do their research. They have all they need on their laptops. Elders too can benefit from the same and those who are computer illiterate can be trained.

8. In a multi-church district, once elders have been trained, rotate them. Allow elders to preach in their home church as well as in the church that is not their home church. This way, the congregations are exposed to different speakers.

9. Maybe this training program can be used on a larger scale to train elders in the Southwest Region Conference and beyond. In addition, CPU credits can be given to those who participate.

10. Include a pre- and post-test to assist in evaluating the elders prior knowledge of preaching and if the training helped to increase their understanding of preaching after the training.

Conclusion

Just like the professional preacher, elders as lay preachers have been called to assist in spreading the gospel. Many of them are at a disadvantage. They have little or no theological training. In spite of that, they can be trained. There is willingness on the part of many elders to improve their skills and enhance their preaching. Through a properly organized training program, elders can be trained to improve their skills. By so doing, it is possible that elders can preach with confidence and competence.

As a result of this project, The Alexandria District of Southwest Region Conference can most likely have an empowered elder delivering the Word of God every Sabbath. Every Sabbath, an empowered elder who understands the enormity of the preaching task, the discipline, and the high level of preparation needed to preach a sermon will mount the pulpit. This elder will be armed, not only with the theoretical knowledge of preaching, but also with the

biblical injunction that elders as laypeople, as well, have been called by God to use their gifts in the furtherance of the kingdom of God.

APPENDIX A
THE TRAINING MANUAL

“Preparing to Preach”



**Elders' Preaching Seminar
Alexandria District of Southwest Region
Conference
Facilitated by: Pastor Cedric N.
Belcher, Sr.**

"PREPARING TO PREACH"

Seminar I: Preparation of the Speaker
Session 1: Understanding Your Calling

Objectives:

1. To remind elders that to serve is a function of God's calling and the call to serve also includes preaching.
2. To illustrate that there are biblical and Seventh-day Adventist examples of lay preaching.

I. Are elders called?

A. Preachers who enter the ministry often say they have been called.

B. Should an elder say: "I have been called?"

II. What does it mean to be called?

A. The concept of "the call."

1. H. M. S. Richards, in his book *Feed My Sheep*, asks the question: "What is the call to ministry?" He argues that the call to ministry has three elements: "The conviction in the heart of the man himself [or woman herself]; second, fruitage; third recognition by the church."¹ These elements constitute "the call."

2. Another way to render "the call" is to say: "the call" is conferred by God; affirmed by the church; and performed in the life of the called.

a. "The call" is conferred by God - God initiates "the call." He places "the call" in the heart of an individual.

¹H. M. S. Richards, *Feed My Sheep*, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 70.

b. "The call" is affirmed by a local body, the church. Sometimes "the call" is affirmed by others who have seen the conferred gift(s) active in the life of the individual. The church recognizes "the call" and affirms the call by nominating or selecting the person for service.

c. "The Call" is performed in the life of the called. In other words, the fruit of "the call" becomes evident through behavior, attitude, and service, ministry, etc.

B. Texts Relating to "the Call"

1. Hebrews 3:1
2. Philippians 3:14
3. 2 Timothy 1:9

a. This text deserves further comments. Paul is here addressing Timothy. He reminds him that it is God who called him. His calling is a holy calling initiated by God. In another way, it is the sovereign act of God through which the call is placed on an individual, elder, to serve.²

C. Biblical examples of the Call

1. God called Israel.
2. God called Moses (Ex. 3:4).
3. God Called Samuel (1 Samuel 3:4).
4. Paul - Galatians 1:15-16a

²Larry Kreider, Ron Myer, and Steve Prokopchak, *The Biblical Role of Elders for Today's Church: New Testament Leadership Principles for Equipping Elders* (Ephrata, PA: House to House Publications, 2004), 32.

5. He called you. Remember that "the power of biblical preaching is rooted and grounded in God's sovereign calling of His chosen servants. This heavenly summons is foundation to powerful preaching; moreover, "those whom God calls to preach His Word must know they are divinely selected to carry out His assignment."³

III. The Responsibility of the call

A. Biblical Responsibilities

1. The word for elder in the New Testament is the word: *presbuteros*. Other words associated with *presbuteros* are, *episkopos* ("overseer") and *poimen* (shepherd).⁴ These words describe the function of an elder.
2. The word *presbyteros* both in the Old Testament and the New Testament signifies older or seniority. It also implies someone who has been placed in a leadership role over God's people.⁵
3. Lynn Anderson describes an elder as "'older ones who lead because of experience' -older in years and older in spiritual experience."⁶ This explanation does not limit elder to a chronological age but includes spiritual maturity as well.

³Steven J. Lawson, *Famine in the Land: A Passionate Call for Expository Preaching* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003), 58-59.

⁴Kreider, Myer, and Prokopchak, 8.

⁵Cornelis Van Dam, "Elder," in *Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book, 2000), 197; "Elder/Eldest," *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Word Studies for Key English Bible Words Based on the Hebrew and Greek Text*, ed. Stephen D. Renn, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 324; see Benjamin L. Merkle, *The Elder and Overseer: One Office in Early Church* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003); Roger T. Beckwith, *Elders in Every City: The Origin and Role of the Ordained Ministry* (Carlisle, England: Paternoster Press, 2003), 21.

⁶Lynn Anderson, *They Smell Like Sheep: Spiritual Leadership for the 21st Century* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing, 1997), 128.

4. J. G. Davies also believes that in a contemporary sense "a presbyter is someone who is ordained to minister the word and sacraments and an elder being a layman set apart by ordination to assist the presbyter in his administration and government of the church."⁷ What is important in Davis' statement is that an elder is also set part to help in the work of the church. That setting apart is through ordination, according to him.

B. Seventh-day Adventist requirements:⁸

1. A religious Leader of the Church

- a. The elder should be a person of deep personal faith and "must continually seek to lead the church into a deeper and fuller Christian experience."⁹ An elder models spiritual maturity. That person serves as an example in the spiritual dimension of Christian living.

2. To Foster All Lines of Church Work

- a. Under the pastor and in the absence of a pastor, the elder is responsible for "fostering all departments and activities of the church."¹⁰ As part of the leadership team in the local congregation, the elder assists with all aspects of ministry. His or her assistance is needed when the pastor is present as well as when the pastor is absent.

⁷J. G. Davis, "Elder," in *Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, eds. Alan Richardson and John Bowden (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1983), 175.

⁸Seventh-day Adventists Church Manual, rev. 2005, 17th ed., The Secretariat, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 50-51.

⁹Ibid., 50.

¹⁰Ibid., 51.

3. To Conduct Church Services

a. Be prepared to conduct various church services along with the pastor or in the pastor's absence.

b. Communion Service - only ordained elders can serve

4. Baptismal Service - under the supervision of a pastor or Conference an elder can administer baptismal rites.

5. Marriage Ceremony

a. An elder may give the sermonette, offer the prayer but must not give the charge, vows, and the declaration of marriage except authorized by the conference.

6. Work with the Conference - just as the pastor does, the elders are encouraged to work with the Conference in every aspect of the church work.

7. Foster Stewardship - elders take the lead in stewardship by words and deeds.

8. Assume responsibility - when the pastor is not present to ensure the smooth operation of the church.

9. Capable of Ministering the Word

a. "The elder must be prepared to minister in the word and doctrine."¹¹ One of the most important responsibilities of the elder is to preach. Preparation is necessary to fulfill this responsibility.

¹¹Ibid., 50.

IV. Preaching as an element of the call

A. The Importance of Preaching

1. The call to preach is derived from God's own initiative.¹² God summoned the church to preach (Matt. 28:16-19).
2. Jesus preached (Luke 4:16-19)
3. The disciples preached (Acts 8:4)

B. The Need for Preaching

1. The "foolishness of Preaching (1 Cor. 1:21)"
2. To save souls (1 Cor. 1:21)
3. To give hope to those who are looking for meaning in life and wanting to hear the good news.¹³

C. The Purpose of Preaching

1. To lift Jesus up! (Jn. 12:32)
2. To show Jesus as humanity's only hope (Acts 4:8)
3. To remind the world about the "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13) that Jesus is coming again.

D. Lay Preaching

1. What is Lay Preaching?
 - a. It is any preaching carried out by individuals who are not paid clergy, have little or no theological

¹²Guerric DeBona, *Fulfilled in our Hearing: History and Method of Christian Preaching* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), 5.

¹³Adam Hamilton, *Unleashing the Word: Preaching with Relevance, Purpose, and Passion* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 10.

education, and have been commissioned by God and/or their church to preach.¹⁴

b. Lay preaching has contributed greatly to the growth of the Christian church and its revival. History attests to this fact. Reflecting upon history, Clifton Guthrie comments, "The history of the church shows again and again that the revival of lay preaching can bring renewal to the church."¹⁵ Lay preaching is a vital part of furthering the gospel.

2. Examples from the Old Testament

- a. Noah
- b. Amos
- c. Hosea

3. Examples from the New Testament

- a. Jesus
- b. John the Baptist
- c. The Apostles

4. SDA History

a. Ellen White, foreseeing the work to be done during the close of earth's history, comments, "We are nearing the close of this earth's history. We have before us a great work, the closing work of giving the last warning message to the sinful world. There are men who will be taken from the plow, from the vineyard, from various other branches

¹⁴This definition was gathered from three definitions of lay preaching as found in Chapter II.

¹⁵Clifton R. Guthrie, *From Pew to Pulpit: A Beginner's Guide to Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005), 6.

of work, and sent forth by the Lord to give this message to the world."¹⁶ Ellen White believed that lay preaching was vital to the furtherance of the gospel, especially as the coming of Jesus nears. She encouraged lay involvement in spreading of the gospel.

b. Examples of Lay Preachers

a. William Miller

b. Joseph Bates

c. James and Ellen White

V. Have you been called?

A. "Every member of God's church has been called into some ministry. All are part of a priesthood of believers called out from the world to minister for Christ. This priestly ministry serves people both inside and outside of the church. Elders, like all members of Christ's body, are divinely called to their ministry."¹⁷

¹⁶Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1948), 7:270-271.

¹⁷*Seventh-day Adventist Elder's Handbook*, Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Silver Springs, MD: 1994), 33.

"PREPARING TO PREACH"

Seminar I: Preparation of the Speaker
Session 2: The Human Dimension of Preaching

Objectives:

1. To state the importance of the human element of preaching.
2. To suggest ways to nourish that element.

I. The Character of Preaching

A. Charles Bradford retells a story about the legendary preacher Henry Ward Beecher. Beecher visited a church in a rural community. He took his seat and a young man preached one of Beecher's sermons word-for-word. After the sermon, Beecher stood in line to shake the young preacher's hand. When Beecher shook the preacher's hand, he asked the young preacher: "Young man, how long did it take you to prepare that sermon?" "Oh, perhaps three or four hours," replied the young man. "Well, said Beecher, it took me thirty years."¹ The story told above by Charles Bradford is used to highlight the fact that preaching is more than words; it is about preparation. Bradford adds, "Much more important than the preparation of the sermon is the preparation of the preacher."²

B. More Quotes

1. "No one appreciates speakers who talk farther than they walk. You don't have to be perfect to preach, but you must at least be perfectly committed to the truth you're preaching."³

¹Charles Bradford, *Preaching to the Times: The Preaching Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Washington: Review and Herald, 1975), 91.

²Ibid.

³Bresee, *Successful Lay Preaching*, 63.

2. "The biggest task in preaching is not preparation of the sermon but preparation of the preacher."⁴
3. In his classic work, *The Craft of Sermon Construction*, William E. Sangster put it like this, "All life is preparation for preaching."⁵ He continues, "No preaching is great which is not highly informed by a life of Christian experience."⁶ What is implied here is that all of who an individual is and their experience can be brought to bear on the preaching experience.
4. In the book, *Preaching with Power: Black Preachers Share Secrets for Effective Preaching*, Dr. R. Clifford Jones asked Walter L. Pearson, "What counsel do you have for beginning preachers? In other words, what is the secret of great preaching?" Pearson responded: "Who the preacher is is infinitely more important than what the preacher says and how the preacher sounds. The least talented preacher who is fully dedicated to God will be more effective than the most talented preacher who lacks a personal relationship with God."⁷ Pearson's advice reinforces the importance of the human element of preaching. If who a preacher is is more important than what the preacher preaches, then it behooves the preacher to maintain an unbreakable connection with God. Maybe one way of maintaining that connection is through spiritual formation.

⁴Ibid, 19.

⁵William E. Sangster, *The Craft of Sermon Construction* (London: Epworth Press, 1954), 145.

⁶Ibid., 146.

⁷Clifford R. Jones, *Preaching with Power: Black Preachers Share Secrets for Effective Preaching* (Silver Springs, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, 2005), 98.

II. Spiritual Formation

A. Quotations

1. Romans 12:2 provides insights into spiritual formation. The key word is "transform." The word "transform" is the Greek word *metamorphoo*. From this word comes the English word metamorphosis. The Greek word shows the spiritual change that takes place in the life of the believer through the renewal of the believer's mind.⁸ The mind is "reprogrammed by the [Holy] Spirit."⁹ The transformation of the believer is not a single event but a continuous process of being filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18; Col 3:10).¹⁰
2. If there is such a thing as the first step in spiritual formation, then that will be the forming. Forming leads to transforming which results in Christ, and not the ego taking center stage in the life of the believer.¹¹ Dallas Willard also believes that forming is critical. He states, "The human spirit is an inescapable, fundamental aspect of every human being; and it takes on whichever character it has from experiences and the choices that we have lived through or made in our past. This is what it means for it to be formed."¹² He adds, "Our spiritual dimension has been *formed*, so it also can be *transformed*."¹³ Transforming simply means to change.

⁸Renn, *Expository Dictionary of the Bible*, 980.

⁹Roger Mohrlang, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Romans and Galatians*, vol. 14 ed. Philip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: 2007), 186.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 185-186.

¹¹John Ackerman, *Listening to God: Spiritual Formation in Congregation* (Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 2001), 19.

¹²Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 13.

¹³*Ibid.*, 14.

B. What is Spiritual Formation?

1. Paul Pettit defines both terms separately in order to come up with a definition of spiritual formation. He defines "spiritual" as "the dynamic, holistic maturing relationship between the individual believer and God, and between the individual believer and others."¹⁴ He defines "formation" as, "an ongoing process of the believer's actions and habits being continually transformed (morphed) into the image of Jesus Christ."¹⁵ Out of these two definitions emerges his definition of spiritual formation. Spiritual formation, for him, is "the ongoing process of the triune God transforming the believer's life and character toward the life and character of Jesus Christ- accomplished by the ministry of the Spirit in the context of biblical community."¹⁶
2. There are several definitions for spiritual formation but M. Robert Mulholland's definition is appealing because of its simplicity. He defines Spiritual formation as "a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others."¹⁷ He adds that "spiritual formation is the experience of being shaped by God toward wholeness."¹⁸ Spiritual formation helps to reshape the image of an individual into the image of God. If who the preacher preaches is Jesus, then the preacher must take on the character and characteristics of the one who is preached.

¹⁴Paul Pettit, ed. *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publication, 2008), 20.

¹⁵Ibid., 21.

¹⁶Ibid., 24.

¹⁷ M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to A Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 12.

¹⁸Ibid., 16.

3. Spiritual Formation is the same as spiritual growth, spiritual life, spiritual discipline, spiritual shaping, Spiritual transformation, etc.

C. What can we do?

1. Perhaps the first thing to do is to center one's life on prayer. "We must become persons of prayer. Prayer is paying attention. Without that single-minded attention to God, we will rarely hear anything worth repeating, catch a vision worth asking others to gaze upon, or have anything worth mounting a pulpit to proclaim."¹⁹ Even though the above statement describes ministry as a whole, prayer is important. Prayer is also a key component of reshaping or reimaging. Melvin Steinbron states, "*Spending time daily with God is imperative number one. He calls us to be like Him Since we tend to take on the character and the personality of those with whom we are close, the journey inward with God is a prerequisite to the journey outward for God.*"²⁰ Coupled with prayer is worship or intimacy with God. Jesus model that for all who would follow after him. The Bible also states that, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there Prayed" (Mark 1:35).
2. Robert J. Foster's classic book, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path of Spiritual Growth*, lists several paths to spiritual wholeness: "Meditation, prayer, fasting, study, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, confession, worship, guidance and

¹⁹John H. Westerhoff, *Spiritual Life: The Foundation for Preaching and Teaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), xii.

²⁰Melvin J. Steinbron, *Can the Pastor Do It Alone: A Model for Preparing Lay People for Lay Pastoring* (Ventura, CA: Regal Book, 1987), 102.

celebration."²¹ Harry Shield agrees with Foster and further names, "reflection on God's sovereignty," "thought journal," and "thought gratitude" as others things that can be done to enhance one's spiritual life.²² Mel Lawrenz, for his part, suggest "crisis" as a means of spiritual formation.²³

III. Exercise

A. Three exercises entitled: Spiritual Quest: God's Hand in My past; God's Hand in My Present, and God's Hand in My Future were done (see appendix H).²⁴ These exercises were geared towards reacquainting elders about God's providential presence in their lives. In spite of all they have gone through, God still wants to use all of them in His service.

IV. Conclusion

A. In his book *God's Workmanship*, Oswald Chambers devotes a chapter to what he calls "The Ministry of the Interior." The Ministry of the interior speaks about the centrality of prayer in the life of the believer. He adds, "One of the first lessons we learn in the Ministry of the Interior is to talk things out before God in soliloquy-tell God what you know He knows in order that you may get to know it as He does."²⁵ The preacher

²¹Robert J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path of Spiritual Growth* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978)

²²Harry Shield, "Preaching and Spiritual Formation," in *Foundations of Spiritual Formation*, 252-254.

²³Mel Lawrenz, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 2000), 41-46.

²⁴Jon Dybdahl, "Spiritual Quest," a handout presented at a retreat for GSEM 542 Spiritual Formation II, Andrews University Theological Seminary, Fall 1997.

²⁵Oswald Chambers, *God's Workmanship* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1953), 20.

needs to be transparent before God so that they can be authentic before God's people.

- B. Spiritual Formation has to do with character building. "Character is the sum total of your habits. . .Your habits define your character. There is only one way to develop the habits of Christlike character: You must practice them. . .If you practice something over time, you get good at it. These character-building habits are often called *spiritual discipline*."²⁶
- C. Remember, "Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people."²⁷ The world is looking for people who profess what they confess.
- D. Clifton F. Guthrie quotes a stamen by John Wesley that sums up this session. Wesley states, "Give me one hundred preachers who fear noting but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell, and set up the Kingdom of God upon earth."²⁸

²⁶Rick Warren, *Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth am I Here for* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 221.

²⁷Foster, 1.

²⁸Guthrie, 6.

"PREPARING TO PREACH"

Seminar I: Preparation of the Speaker
Session 3: The Role of Preaching

Objectives:

1. To clarify what is preaching.
2. To show that a lay preacher is a witness.
3. To illustrate the connection between the character of the lay preacher and preaching.

I. What is preaching?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

II. Why We Preach?

- A. Because God said so.
 1. "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" (Jonah 3:2).
 2. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).
 3. "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach" (Mark 3:14).

4. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim 4:2).

B. Definitions of Preaching

1. "Preaching is an event or encounter with God that leaves the congregation with stronger faith and deeper commitment to doing God's work."¹
2. "Preaching is the faithful, passionate reporting of God's useful news."²
3. "Preaching is the gifted expression of God's saving power inside human language."³
4. "Preaching is the Oral communication of biblical truth by the Holy Spirit through a human personality to a given audience with the intent of enabling a positive response."⁴
5. One of the most popular definitions of preaching comes from Philip Brooks. He writes, "What, then is preaching, of which we are to speak? It is not hard to find a definition. Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men. It has in it two essential elements, truth and personality. Neither of those can it spare and still be preaching."⁵ He condensed that definition to what has become the famous definition of preaching - preaching is "truth through personality."⁶

¹Paul Scott Wilson, *The Practice of Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 5.

²Brad R. Braxton, *Preaching Paul* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 27.

³DeBona, *Fulfilled in Our Hearing*, 5.

⁴Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 27.

⁵Philip Brooks, *Lectures on Preaching* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1877), 5.

⁶*Ibid.*, 8.

6. This section will focus on the personality of the lay preacher.

III. The Personality of the Lay Preacher

A. There are three elements of Persuasion

1. Those three elements can be seen in 1 Thessalonians 1:5. The passage states: "Our gospel came to you not simply with **words** [logos], but also **with power, and with deep conviction** [pathos]. You **know how we lived** [ethos] among you for your sake." Bryan Chapell defines these three elements as:⁷
 - a. Logos - The verbal content of the message, including its craft and logic.
 - b. Pathos - the emotive feature of a message, including the passion, fervor, and feeling that a speaker conveys and the listeners' experience.
 - c. Ethos - The perceived character of the speaker, determined most significantly by the concern expressed for the listeners' welfare. This is the most 'powerful component of persuasion.'
2. "Preaching's earthly glory may be eloquence, but its eternal heartbeat is faithfulness."⁸

⁷Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 35.

⁸Ibid.

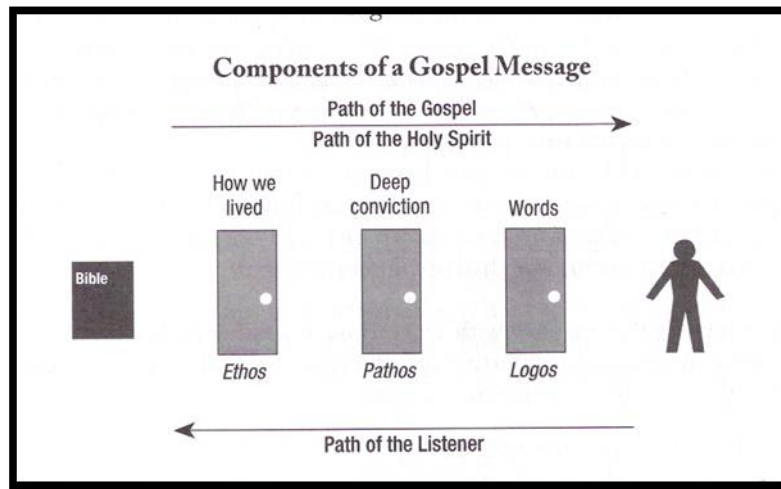


Figure 1: Components of a Gospel Message. Source: Chapell, 35

3. The figure above shows the Components of a Gospel Message and its receptivity. There are two paths: Path of the Gospel/Holy spirit and Path of the Listener, with each going in opposite direction. The Path of the Listeners starts with the Logos and continues to the ethos - the preacher. However, the Path of the Gospel begins with the ethos, the character of the speaker and how the speaker is perceived. If Chapell is correct in this figure, then who the preacher is as important as what is preached.

B. The Lay Preacher as a Witness

1. "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" Acts 1:8).
2. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe Me" (Isaiah 43:10-12).
3. A witness is like an eyewitness reporter who reports what has been seen. Jim Shaddix likens the preacher to a reporter. The purpose of the reporting is to share facts that have been found.⁹ Similarly, lay preachers testify to an

⁹Jim Shaddix, *The Passion Driven Sermon* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 10.

event and that event of which they testify is "the encounter between God and the preacher."¹⁰ That encounter is their intimacy with God and is a combination of many facets of their life and life experiences. It also includes how they live.

4. Speaking about the importance of authentic Seventh-day Adventist living, Floyd W. Bresee writes, "Seventh-day Adventist lay preacher should be a seven-day, not just a seventh-day Christian. You can't preach with conviction and a clear conscience unless you're genuinely attempting to live during the week what you preach on Sabbath. There's nothing more humiliating than, in the middle of a sermon, to look down at your wife, your child, or a church member and realize that they know you're not living what you're preaching. Jesus preached with such power because what he taught He was. We must be what we expect our listeners to become."¹¹ The lay preacher as well as the preacher has to model what they preach.
5. For those who only believe that once the preaching is done the work of the preacher is over, Warren Wiersbe warns, "If all we want to accomplish in a message is the heralding and explaining of the Word, why not play sermon tapes from gifted preachers and spend our sermon preparation time playing golf? Because God's people need to hear a *personal* witness to the power of God's Word, a witness who helps them apply God's truth to their own lives so they can be better disciples. We need in our pulpits witnesses who have learned and lived the Word."¹² The work of the lay preacher is not over when the preaching ends. The work

¹⁰Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 48.

¹¹Bresee, *Successful Lay Preaching*, 20.

¹²Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Dynamics of Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999), 15.

continues through the daily living of the lay preacher. The lay preacher's personality carries forth the gospel. The character of the lay preacher is vital to the lay preacher's proclamation.

6. Abraham was asked by God to sacrifice his only son Isaac. Isaac walked obediently with his father, without remonstrance, to the designated place of sacrifice. When they arrived, Isaac was puzzled because there was no sacrifice. Isaac said: "Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb" (Gen. 22:7). That haunting question needs an answer by those called upon to preach. The listeners say: I see the wood - the exegesis, the research, the parsing, the knowledge, etc; I see the fire - the eloquence, elocution, the style, the rhetoric, the delivery, the hooping, but where is the lamb? Where is Jesus - the Lamb of God! The wood is important but it cannot take the place of the lamb. The fire has its place but it cannot take the place of the lamb. The lamb is the basis for our preaching. Everything centers on Him. Like John the Baptizer, the lay preacher must say, I have seen the Lamb of God; I am a witness; now "Behold the Lamb of God."
7. Christ is whom we preach! Paul says: "But we preach Christ." Col. 1:23 (NKLV)

"PREPARING TO PREACH"

Seminar II: Preparation of the Sermon Session 1: The Status of Preaching

Objectives:

1. To give an overview of the status of preaching
2. To recommend that expository preaching is needed
3. To define expository preaching
4. To describe criteria for expository preaching
5. To state the advantages of expository preaching
6. To allow each elder to develop their own theology of preaching based on the definition given during the seminar.

I. Status of Preaching

A. Preaching has undergone tremendous challenges throughout its history. Some of those challenges had to do with the viability of preaching. Is preaching still relevant? Is preaching needed?

1. Henry Emerson Fosdick, a prominent preacher and pastor of the Riverside Church in New York (1925-1946), wrote an article which appeared in the *Harper's Magazine* in 1928 entitled: "What is the Matter with Preaching?"¹ The article discussed the challenges facing preaching and recommended a solution.² The issues raised by Fosdick are still being discussed by contemporary

¹Mike Graves, "Harry Emerson Fosdick's Timeless Question," in *What's the Matter with Preaching Today?*, ed. Mike Graves (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 4.

²Ibid.

observers of preaching. "What is the matter with preaching today?" One writer, although not answering the question directly but commenting on the status of preaching, notes that, "By all objective standards, the pulpit has lost public influence. Certainly, preaching is no longer as socially significant as once it was."³ Similarly, Adam Hamilton offers these remarks, "We live in a day and time where 'preaching' and 'sermons' are often used to describe things we don't like."⁴ What has led to the devaluation of preaching? What has eroded the influence of preaching? Why is preaching consigned to the category of "things we don't like?"

2. Factors Responsible

- a. Steven J. Lawson states that, "In some churches drama, dialogue, film clips, and similar means are taking the place of solid Bible exposition."⁵ These mediums of expression have their place in worship and help to facilitate the worship experience. However, they are no substitute for preaching or alternative to preaching.

- b. Todd A. Wilson contends that there are other factors of equal importance that 21st century preaching needs to consider. He lists these factors as: "Multiculturalism; rising biblical illiteracy; shifting epistemology; increasing social, cultural, and technological complexity; rapid change;

³David G. Buttrick, "Preaching Today: the Loss of a Public Voice," in *The Folly of Preaching: Models and Methods*, ed. Michael P. Knowles (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 3.

⁴Adam Hamilton, *Unleashing the Word: Preaching with Relevance, Purpose, and Passion* (Nashville, MI: Abingdon Press, 2003), 9.

⁵Steven J. Lawson: *Famine in the Land: A Passionate Call for Expository Preaching* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003), 57.

and dearth of models and mentoring."⁶
These factors add to the complex challenges facing preaching and perhaps to the overall question of "What is the matter with preaching today?"
Preaching must find a way of addressing these and other issues.

- c. Although he wrote several decades ago, Floyd W. Bresee's statement holds true today. He examined the challenges facing preaching and discovered that, "Mass media have brought a myriad of the most accomplished speakers into virtually every American living room, making the public more sensitive to what is expected of a speaker."⁷ A high level of expectation has been placed on preaching because of not only the giftedness of televangelists but also the education of the congregation. Many people who sit in the pew are educated. In some instances, they manage corporations. Hence, a level of professionalism is required of the preacher.

3. The Preachers Themselves

- a. Preachers have allowed other forms of ministry to supersede preaching.⁸ In doing so, these elements of worship and evangelism have undermined preaching. Stuart Briscoe further states, "These and other trends have led more than a few preachers to question the validity and effectiveness of preaching; and the

⁶Todd A. Wilson, *Preach the Word: Essays on Expository Preaching: In Honor of R. Kent Hughes*, eds. Leland Ryken and Todd A. Wilson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 4.

⁷Floyd W. Bresee, "An Analysis of Homiletics Teaching Methods Adovacated by Contempory Homiletic Authorities in the United States" (D.Min. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1971), 1.

⁸Stuart Briscoe, *Preach It!* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2004), 15.

result has been a marked loss of confidence in preaching.”⁹ If those commissioned to preach vacillate about the importance of preaching, then preaching has a greater internal problem than external. Maybe the first solution to the question, “What is the matter with preaching today,” is to restore confidence in preaching as a function of the church.

B. Renewal of Preaching

1. It would be presumptuous to argue for the annulment of preaching based on the negative circumstances surrounding it.
2. Neither would it be prudent to suggest that the current gloomy commentaries on preaching imply that preaching is not needed.
3. Preaching is still needed
 - a. In his book, *Feed My Sheep*, H. M. S. Richards, the founder of the Voice of Prophecy (the first Christian broadcasting program in North America), makes this statement, “Don’t think that preaching is going to die. It never will-not as long as there are sinners in this world, not as long as the work of God isn’t finished. Preaching will never be superseded as long as true men with a true message are guided by the Holy Ghost.”¹⁰ Richards adds, “Whether some of us believe it or not, preaching is the most important function of the Christian church and of the Advent message.”¹¹ Preaching will continue as a vehicle for saving souls.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰H. M. S. Richards, *Feed My Sheep* (Review and Herald, 2005), 13.

¹¹Ibid., 27.

- b. There is a yearning for the Word of God
- c. Preaching that is anchored in Scripture remains faithful to Scripture. A survey of expository preaching shows that such preaching is anchored in Scripture; hence, "It is the only kind of preaching that perpetuates biblical proclamation in the church."¹² Lawson adds, "A return to preaching-true preaching, biblical preaching, expository preaching-is the greatest need in this critical hour."¹³ He further adds, "If a reformation is to come to the church, it must be preceded by a reformation of the pulpit. As the pulpit goes, so goes the church."¹⁴ While it is true that preaching is a composite whole, meaning there are other factors related to preaching that are crucial, the renewal of preaching has to be precipitated by the rediscovery and reaffirmation of expository preaching, not that it is the only avenue for communicating the gospel, but that it remains faithful to Scripture. If preaching is scripturally sound, then it is possible to restore confidence in the pulpit as well as in the hearts of those who hear it.

C. Expository Preaching and Scriptures

1. The Old Testament

¹²James F. Stitzinger, "The History of Expository Preaching," in *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically*, John MacArthur, Jr., and the Master's Seminary Faculty (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 43.

¹³Lawson, 17.

¹⁴Ibid.

- a. Nehemiah 8:1-8
- b. Words associated with Expository Preaching as found In Nehemiah 8:1-8
 - i. *Parash* - to make or be made clear
 - ii. *Sekel* - to give insight or cause to understand
 - iii. *Bin* - comprehend or the ability to comprehend

2. The New Testament

- a. Jesus
 - i. Luke 4:16-19
 - i. Jesus used a text as a basis for preaching.
 - ii. Interpreted and explained the text.
 - iii. He applied the text to His audience.
 - ii. Luke 24:27
 - i. The Critical word used is "expounded." The word used for "expound" is the Greek word *diermeneuo*, which means The word "expound" is the Greek word *diermeneuo*, which means "to interpret"¹⁵ The word *hermeneuo*, from which we get our English word *hermeneutics*, is a synonym of the word *diermeneuo*.¹⁶ Hermeneutics and

¹⁵Stephen D. Renn, ed. *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Word Studies for Key English Bible Words Based on the Hebrew and Greek Text* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 2005), 353.

¹⁶Renn, 527.

interpretation are used interchangeably by many to "refer to the process of determining the meaning and significance of a text."¹⁷ Jesus' interpretation of Scriptures opened the eyes of the Emmaus disciples. Afterwards they were able to comprehend the Scriptures and put into perspective the death of Jesus. Upon his departure, the same discouraged disciples exclaimed: "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures" (Luke 24:32).

- ii. Ellen G. White makes this comment about Jesus Emmaus' sermon, "Opening their minds that they might understand Scriptures." She asserts that: "Christ performed no miracle to convince them, but it was His first work to explain the Scripture."¹⁸

b. Peter

- i. Acts 10:36-43

c. Paul

- i. Acts 17:2-4

- i. The word "reasoned" is the Greek word *dialegomai*, "to dispute."¹⁹ Paul used

¹⁷W. Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*, 3rd ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 1.

¹⁸Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1940), 800.

¹⁹Renn, 782.

Scripture to demonstrate that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

- ii. Another word used by Paul is the word "opening," which in Greek is the word *dianoigo*; it means "to open."²⁰

Similarly, the same word was used by the disciples on the road to Emmaus when they reminisced about their time with Jesus. They said: "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures (Luke 24:32)?"

- iii. The last of the three words is "alleging." The Greek word for "alleging" is *parathithemi*, which means "to set, place before."²¹ When Paul used the word "alleging," he made a formal application of the text to its hearers.

3. The Church must preach

- a. A kind of preaching that is rooted in Scripture, that seeks to interpret and explain Scriptures and at the same time making Scripture relevant to its contemporary audience.

II. Expository Preaching

A. Various Definitions

- 1. "The communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted from a

²⁰Renn, 701.

²¹Ibid., 770.

historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers."²²

2. "Expository Preaching endeavors to discover and convey the precise meaning of the Word. Scripture determines what expositors preach because they unfold what it says. The *meaning of the passage is the message of the sermon*. The text governs the preacher."²³
3. My Definition: Expository preaching is the disclosure of a text, whether short or long, through meaningful interpretation and explanation. Through interpretation and explanation, the substance of the text is applied to the contemporary setting of its hearers so that the hearers can understand, obey, and become transformed.

III. Criteria for Expository Preaching

A. The following are identifiable features of expository preaching extrapolated from a review of contemporary literature.²⁴ They are:

1. It is grounded in a single biblical text, long or short. The text provides the framework for preaching. If no text is provided then such presentation is another form of oral communication but not expository preaching.

²²Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 21.

²³Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 32.

²⁴Jerry Vines, *A Practical Guide to Sermon Preparation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 6-7; Whitesell, *Power in Expository Preaching*, xv.

2. It strives to ascertain the biblical writer's intent. The biblical writer's intent is unearthed through interpretation of the text.
3. It generates a central idea or theme from the text. The central idea is a universal truth that is applied to the contemporary audience.
4. It gathers supportive materials to assist with applying the text. Some of the supportive materials could be subpoints from the text, illustration, etc.
5. It is Christ-centered. Jesus declared, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32).
6. It persuades its hearers to obey the truths presented. Jesus warned: "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

IV. Expository Preaching is Not

- A. Another way of clarifying what is expository preaching is to differentiate between what expository preaching is and what expository preaching is not. This way might help bring clarity to what expository preaching is.
 1. [Expository Preaching] It is not a commentary running from word to word and verse to verse without unity, outline, and pervasive drive.
 2. It is not rambling comments and offhand remarks about a passage without a background of thorough exegesis and logical order.
 3. It is not a mass of disconnected suggestions and inferences based on the surface meaning of a passage but not sustained by a depth-and-breath study of the text.

4. It is not pure exegesis, no matter how scholarly, if it lacks a theme, thesis, outline, and development.
5. It is not a mere structural outline of a passage with a few supporting comments but without other rhetorical and sermonic elements.
6. It is not a topical homily using scattered parts of the passage but omitting discussion of other equally important parts.
7. It is not a chopped-up collection of grammatical findings and quotations from commentaries without a fusing of these elements into a smooth, flowing, interesting, and compelling message.
8. It is not a Sunday [Sabbath]-school-lesson type of discussion of a Bible passage organized around a contents outline, informal and fervent, but lacking sermonic structure and rhetorical factors.²⁵
9. It is not a Bible reading that links a number of scattered passages treating a common theme but failing to handle any of them in a thorough, grammatical, and contextual manner.
10. It is not the ordinary devotional or prayer meeting talk which combines running commentary, rambling remarks, disconnected suggestions, and personal reactions into a semi-inspirational discussion, but without the benefit of basic exegetical-contextual study and the persuasive elements of a sermon.

²⁵Farris D. Whitesell, *Power in Expository Preaching* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963) vii-viii, quoted in "Rediscovering Expository Preaching," Richard L. Mayhue, in *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically*, 8.

V. Advantages of Expository Preaching

A. Many expositors have written extensively on the advantages of expository preaching.²⁶ A summary is listed below:

1. Expository preaching reaffirms the centrality of Scriptures.
2. Expository preaching safeguards the integrity of Scripture.
3. Expository preaching stimulates the study of Scriptures.
4. Expository preaching disallows the insertion of human opinions that contradicts the intent of the biblical writer.
5. Expository preaching produces biblically literate preachers and hearers. It is extremely difficult for a preacher who practices expository preaching not to be first influenced by the discipline required to preach an expository sermon. When the preacher is influenced by what is done, the preacher is able to influence their hearers.
6. Expository preaching has the potential of transforming its adherents. Therefore, the hearers are able to experience Scriptures in a transformative way.
7. Expository preaching bridges the gap between what the Scripture meant to what it means. Through application, the hearers are transposed from their life-situation to the

²⁶Schuron, 18-19; Mayhue, 15-16; MacArthur, *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically*, xiii.

biblical world and back to their life-situation, thus making Scriptures relevant.

VI. Preaching as a Science

A. Preaching as a Science

1. Homiletics is the science, the art, the technique (s), or the mechanics of preaching.
 - a. "Preaching, as true art, implies that there will be training, discipline, and acquired skill added to any and all native gifts."²⁷ He adds, "It (homiletics) is the systematic setting forth of the body of laws and of principles on which all art must rest."²⁸
2. "Preachers may be born preachers, but they are not born ready-made! Preaching is an art, a science, and a labor which, to be successful, must be a labor of love."²⁹
3. "Preaching is not an easy assignment."³⁰ It contains both "perspiration and inspiration."³¹ These statements suggest that preaching as a task is difficult and preaching as an assignment is equally difficult. The task of preaching is the skills, discipline, time, training, and

²⁷Lloyd M. Perry, *A Manual for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993), 2.

²⁸Ibid., 3.

²⁹Arnold T. Olson, Preface to *Biblical Sermon Guide: A Step-by-Step Procedure for the Preparation and Presentation*, Lloyd M. Perry, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book, 1970)

³⁰Wayne McDill, *12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 2nd ed. rev. expanded (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2006), 3.

³¹Roger Bowen, ed. *A Guide to Preaching* (Great Britain: Cambridge Press, 2005), 3.

preservation needed to construct a sermon.

VII. The Theology of Preaching

A. The Theology of Preaching

The theology of preaching has to do with one's perception of preaching. One's perception of preaching can impact how an individual preaches. Calvin Miller adds this twist, "Theology is not what we preach. Theology is who we are, and who we are is what we preach."³² Given this fact, write out your Theology of Preaching (see appendix E)

³²Calvin Miller, *The Sermon Maker: Tales of A Transformed Preacher* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 36.

"PREPARING TO PREACH"

Seminar II: Preparation of the Sermon Session 2: Choosing A Text

Objectives:

1. To define what is a sermon
2. To give suggestions on how to choose a text
3. To acquaint participants with the literary genres of the Bible.
4. To give suggestions on knowing what to preach

VIII. What is a Sermon?

A. Definition of a Sermon

1. "The written text or oral event of **preaching. Sermon** is but an echo of the man."¹ The word "**sermon**" is derived from the Latin word *sermo*, which means "speech" or "conversation."² The sermon is a conversation that "links together" the biblical world and the contemporary world.
2. The sermon is an instrument used to convey God's truths. Those who preach should take the sermon seriously. Paul Scott Wilson believes that, "Preachers tend to think of the sermon as an object or a thing, like an essay or lecture, rather than a vehicle God uses to establish a relationship with God's people. Salvation is communicated and authentic life bestowed."³ In other words take preaching seriously.

¹John S. McClure, *Preaching Words: 144 Key Terms in Homiletics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 125.

²Ibid.

³Paul Scott Wilson, *The Practice of Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 31.

B. Sermons should be Christ-centered

1. By Christ-centered, it means that the sermon should be about Jesus, His merits, His mediation, and His immediacy. He Himself **said**: "If I be lifted up from the earth, [I] will draw all man unto me" (John 12:32). H. M. S. Richards adds, "The lifting up of Christ is the central theme in all preaching."⁴
2. 1 Cor.1:23 - Paul says: "But we Preach Christ."
3. H. M. S. Richards tells a story about an infidel who could not argue with a preacher but decided to turn his argument to a man nearby. The infidel asked the man several questions about the man's knowledge of Christianity, "When was Christ born," etc. To each question, the man replied: "I don't know." In frustration the infidel said: "You don't know much about it, do you?" The man said: "No." I don't know much about those things, but I know Jesus did something for me. I know that." The man proceeded to narrate the change that came into his life after he was introduced to Jesus by the preacher. The man talked about how he beat his children and his wife, robbed his home of money to drink, and how his home was hell on earth. But when he met Jesus, there is joy in his home. The kids that used to run away from him are running to him. There is peace in his **marriage. "Jesus did that for me, that I know,"** the man said.⁵ Preaching is about Jesus!
4. Ellen G. Whites notes, "There is a great work to be done in our world. Men and women are to be converted, not by the gift of tongues nor by the working of miracles, but

⁴Richards, *Feed My Sheep*, 18.

⁵Ibid., 15-16.

by the preaching of Christ crucified.”⁶ Then she makes this specific statement to Seventh-day Adventists, “Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the World.”⁷ Christ is the essence of the sermon. An Adventist preacher should always remember that.

IX. Types of Sermons

A. Topical Sermon - a sermon in which the subject of the sermon comes from the text. Titles of some topical sermons are: Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God - Jonathan Edwards; Pay Day Some Day - Robert G. Lee

1. Example - John 3:16

a. Let us Love

i. Love your Friends

ii. Love Your Enemies

iii. Love Your God

B. Textual - the sermon in which the basic headings are derived from the text

1. Example - John 3:16

a. For God So Love

b. That He gave

c. Whosoever Believeth

d. Shall not perish

⁶Ellen G. White, *My Life Today* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 219.

⁷White, *Gospel Workers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1915), 156.

- C. Doctrinal - a sermon in which a particular doctrine is **studied** and proof texts used to support it.
- D. Narrative - "Preaching in which some aspects of narrative exerts a controlling influence on the sermon."⁸
- E. Thematic/Repetition Sermon - one in which the title or the theme is repeated. Example, "It's Friday, But Sunday is Coming."
- F. Biographical - a sermon that looks at a character in the Bible.
- G. Procedural - This is a practical "how to" message.

X. The Source of a Sermon

A. The Bible

1. An individual may acquire sermon ideas from other sources but the Bible should be the foundation of the sermon. This is what distinguishes a sermon from other forms of oral communication.
2. The authority of the sermon is the Bible. The sermon starts with the Bible.⁹ When the Bible becomes the foundation of the sermon, then, the congregants will hear from God.¹⁰

XI. Choosing a Text

A. What is a text?

1. It has been established that the basis for the sermon is the Bible. The Bible provides

⁸McClure, 90.

⁹Paul Scott Wilson, *Preaching and Homiletical Theory* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2004), 7;

¹⁰Kenton C. Anderson, *Choosing to Preach: A Comprehensive Introduction to Sermon Options and Structures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 34.

the text upon which the sermon is based. Every sermon needs a text as a foundation of the sermon. The sermon gains *its* authority from a biblical text that renders God's Word.¹¹

2. The word "text" comes from the Latin word *textus* or *textum* and it means "woven" or "spun".
3. The text is the fabric of the sermon
 - a. History of *Choosing* a Text
 - i. The Jewish Synagogue
 - ii. Jesus' Example in Luke 4:16-19
 - iii. Ancient Practice
 - iv. See Exercise 1
4. Caution
 - a. Don't choose a text as a pretext for preaching your opinions. In other words, "A text is not an excuse for a sermon, but the cause of it."¹²
 - b. Choose a text that you can adequately explain.
 - c. The Bible was not outlined with *chapter and verse* divisions when it was first written. Those came later to assist with reading. Hence, even when the text has been chosen and is a unit thought, read the chapter and the book from which the text is derived to get a full understanding of the text.

¹¹Paul Scott Wilson, *The Practice of Preaching*, rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007), 6.

¹²Eugene James Peterson, "The Development of the Message and the Messenger for Effective Preaching in the Twentieth Century" (D.Min. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1980), 109.

B. A Text could be:

1. A section of the Bible
2. A verse in the Bible
3. Verses in the Bible
4. An expository sermon can be based on a word or group of words from the Bible.

C. Other names for a Text

1. Passage
2. Pericope - The word comes from the Greek word *perixore* and refers to the act of cutting. A periscope is a text that has been cut out to reveal certain biblical truths.

D. No preacher should ever say: "I don't have anything to preach."

XII. Literary Genres of the Bible

A. History - factual narrative or story or account. The four gospels and the book of Acts are considered historical books of the New Testament and from Genesis - Job are considered to be historical books of the Old Testament.

B. Prophecy - makes up "22 percent of the Bible."¹³ It foretells immediate and future events.

C. Apocalypse - uses symbolic representation to reveal God's activities in human **affairs**. The book of Revelation, Daniel, and portions of Ezekiel fit into this category.

D. Poetry - the entire book of Psalms and the Song of Solomon are poetic books.

E. Parable - the use of stories or illustrations to reveal a biblical truth. Example: *The Sower*.

¹³Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 100.

F. Epistles - Letters written to churches to either admonish or to address circumstances. Romans - Jude.

G. Figurative - figure of speech

1. Simile - "An imaginative comparison using *like*, or *as*." ("As the deer pants for the water, so pants my soul for you [Ps. 42:1 NIV];" "He shall be like the tree planted by the rivers of water [Ps. 1:3])."
2. Metaphor - "An implied likeness in which, *like*, or *as* are omitted." ("You are the salt of the earth [Matt. 5:13];" "You are the light of the world [Matt. 5:14])."
3. Paradox - A seemingly contradictory statement. ("Whosoever desires to save his life will lose it, and whosoever loses his life for My sake will find it [Matt. 16:25 NKJV])."
4. Hyperbole - "An exaggeration used to emphasize a point." (It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.")
5. Irony - "Words used to convey the opposite meaning." ("The man has become like one of Us [Gen. 3:22])."¹⁴

XIII. How do you know what to preach?

A. Let the Holy Spirit lead

1. The role of the Holy Spirit cannot be separated from preaching. Just as the Holy Spirit was involved in the production of the Bible, so should the Holy Spirit be equally involved in the process of sermon construction and delivery.

¹⁴Ibid., 114-115.

B. The Text might choose you

1. G. Ray Jordan made an observation many years ago that still holds true today. He maintains that, "The Scripture that speaks to us will more easily speak *through* us."¹⁵ Furthermore, "The text that walks right out of the Bible and takes us by the hand, demanding that we pay attention to what it has to say, will be the one that will take our congregation by the hand, and demand that it be heard."¹⁶ If the text speaks to the preacher, the preacher can preach the text with conviction. The text must first speak to the preacher. One way of doing this is to live with the text¹⁷ and in the text.

C. You might choose the text

D. A contemporary event might warrant the text

1. Youth Day
2. Father's Day
3. Mother's Day
4. Easter
5. Christmas, etc

E. Know the needs of the church community

1. Know the congregation
2. Identify with their issues

F. Core Doctrines

¹⁵G. Ray Jordan, *You Can Preach: Building and Delivering the Sermon* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1951), 89.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Roger Brown, David L. Edwards, David Gitari, Semea Meldrum, Esther Mombo, and Vinoth Ramachandra, *Guide to Preaching* (London: SPCK, 2005), 4.

"PREPARING TO PREACH"

Seminar II: Preparation of the Sermon Session 3: Interpreting the Text

Objectives:

1. To encourage elders to first engage in interpretation before explanation
2. To show that the interpretation attempts to arrive at the author's intent.
3. To expose elders to tools they can use in interpreting a text.

I. Foundational Steps

A. The Importance of Prayer

1. The preaching process always begins with prayer. Writing to preachers about the importance of prayer, Harry Shields admonishes, "We would do well to pray for our preaching, the kind of prayer in which we implore the Lord of Life to enlighten us as to the meaning of his Word and to empower us to communicate it with power from on high."¹ Prayer helps to reassure the preacher. It also lets the preacher know that he or she is in partnership with the triune God.

B. The Role of the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit was in the beginning when the world was created (Gen 1:1-2).

¹Shields, "Preaching and Spiritual Formation," in *Foundations of Spiritual Formation*, 252.

2. The Holy Spirit witnessed the commencement of Jesus' preaching, teaching, and healing ministries (Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; and John 1:32).
3. The Holy Spirit inspired the Bible writers (2 Tim 3:16).
4. As much as the text is significant in preaching, it is equally important to acknowledge that preaching is incomplete without the Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit who inspired Scripture can also empower those who preach Scripture. Preaching needs both the authority of God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit.²

C. Fred B. Craddock was right when he said: "The process of arriving at something to say is to be distinguished from the process of determining how to say it."³ The how to say it begins with interpretation. Preaching is indeed hard work. It is not for those who are lazy.

II. Why is Interpretation Important?

- A. Hermeneutics is the science of biblical interpretation. In other words, it "is the science and art of understanding, translating, and explaining the meaning of the Scripture text."⁴
- B. We do interpretation every day
 1. Someone says something and we ask: "What did you say?"
 2. You say something and someone perceived it differently and acts differently. When the

²Greg W. Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching: The Holy Spirit's Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2007), xv-xvi

³Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching 4th print* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 84.

⁴McDill, *12 Essentials Skills for Great Preaching*, 67.

person is confronted they reply, "I thought this is what you meant." In response we say: "Why did you not ask me what I said?"

C. Example: Text message between two individuals

1. First Individual: "Thanks for a wonderful weekend."
2. Second Individual: Thanks for everything. Just let me know this week if you get a little time."
3. What is going on?
 - a. What is happening here is a pastor, first individual, who sends a text message to one of the AYS Leaders of the church, second individual, to congratulate her on a job well done. The second individual would like to consort with the pastor on a follow up program.
 - b. Without interpretation it will be difficult to arrive at the true meaning of the text.
 - c. Someone said that, "The life of ministry is a life of interpretation."⁵ This is also true of life itself. We live in an interpretative world that is constantly asking: "What did you say?" "What did you mean?" In order to decipher those questions, interpretation must occur.

III. How to Interpret a Text

A. Meditate on the text

1. Read it in more than one version

⁵W. Dow Edgerton, *Speak to Me That I May Speak: A Spirituality of Preaching* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2006), 43.

2. Read, **read, read** until it becomes part of you.
3. The late Dr. Kenneth Mulzac, professor at Andrew University Theological Seminary, used to tell his class: "Read with fresh eyes."
4. Meditate upon the Bible passage before consorting other works.

B. Know your tools

1. One must be familiar with the primary tools and secondary tools.
2. The Primary tool is the Bible. Know the various translations of the Bible.

Types of Translations

- a. *Formal*. This type of translation tries to remain as close as possible to the original language while still being understandable in the language into which it was written. Examples of formal translation are King James Version, the Revised Standard Version, and the New American Standard Version. NIV - the New International Version
- b. *Dynamic Translation* - This type of translation is concerned more about establishing a relationship between its present reader and its original reader, "idioms are not maintained but are translated into idioms of the language into which the translation is being made." Examples of dynamic translations are *New English Bible* and *Today's English Version*.
- c. *Paraphrase* - This type of translation is a subjective-interpretive commentary. The *Living Bible*, *The*

Message, and the *Clear Word* are examples of a paraphrase.⁶

d. *The Spirit of Prophecy* - the writings of E. G. White

3. Secondary tools

a. Bible Commentaries - takes a portion of Scripture and explains it.

b. Concordance - tells where a word can be found throughout the Bible and defines how it can be used.

c. Bible Dictionaries - defines words and terms

d. Topical Bibles

e. Bible Encyclopedias

f. Lexicon - gives exact meaning of words

g. Etc

4. Miscellaneous

a. Books on Sermons

b. Oral Sermons - CDs, DVDs, Tapes, Cassettes, etc

c. Web sermons

d. Theological Journals

e. Books

f. Newspaper

⁶Bradford, *Preaching to the Times*, 35-36.

C. How long should it take to prepare a sermon

1. It has been said that a rule of thumb for sermon preparation "is one hour in study for every minute in the pulpit."⁷ Most people spend between 10 - 20 hours preparing a sermon. This does not include prayer. If every minute spent in the pulpit were equally spent in prayer, our sermons would do wonders to reach people. The key here is to spend the amount of time that meets the Lord's approval.
 - a. Start early
 - b. Plan ahead
 - c. Plan yearly

D. Ways of interpretation

1. Bryan Chapell lists six critical questions in his book *Christ-centered Preaching*:⁸
 - a. What does the text mean?
 - b. How do I know what the text means?
 - c. What concerns caused the text to be written?
 - d. What do we share in common with those to (or about) whom the text was written and/or the one by whom the text was written?
 - e. How should people now respond to the truths of the text?
 - f. What is the most effective way I can communicate the meaning of the text?

⁷Bresee, *Successful Lay Preaching*, 27.

⁸Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 104-105.

2. Another approach⁹

- a. Historical Background
- b. Literary
- c. Grammatical
- d. The Context

3. Practice exegesis and avoid eisegesis

- a. Ronald J. Allen defines the two terms this way, "The term 'biblical exegesis' refers to the disciplined process of locating the possible meaning of the text in its historical, literary, and theological contexts. The term 'exegesis' derives from two Greek words meaning 'to lead out of.' Through 'exegesis,' the preacher intends to lead meaning out of the text so that we can identify it and relate to it. The goal is to identify and respect the otherness of the text." He goes on to say, "We often speak of 'eisegesis' as the opposite of exegesis. The designation 'eisegesis' is made up of two Greek words that mean to lead into."¹⁰
- b. Exegesis -It means reading from the text its implied meaning. The interpreter must render the true intent of Scripture.

⁹Kenneth Mulzac, "Old Testament Exegesis," a lecture presented for CHMN 748 Preaching the Literary Forms of the Bible, Andrews University Theological Seminary, July 2006.

¹⁰Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching An Essential Guide* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 30.

c. Eisegesis - "To lead out of."¹¹ It means reading into the text one's own opinions.

IV. Handout On Interpretation (see appendix H)

V. Expository Interpretation

A. The word expose, from which one gets exposition and expository, means "'to lay open or uncover,' and it implies the sum of the preacher's exegesis, hermeneutics, and homiletics."¹² In the interpretative process, the preacher seeks to reveal and uncover the author's intent.

B. After interpretation has taken place, the substances of the text is distilled and applied to its contemporary hearers. That **is** what expository preaching seeks to do.

C. Charles Bradford

1. Charles E. Bradford writing to a Seventh-day Adventist audience penned these words: "Some good men, conscientious men, feel that it is enough to select a few passages from the Spirit of Prophecy, string them together, and preface with a text of Scripture. The material per se is without question good, but it is not preaching."¹³ Certainly this is not expository preaching. As valuable as the Spirit of Prophecy is, it should not be the foundation of the sermon.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Jim Shaddix, *The Passion Driven Sermon* (Nashville: Boardman & Holman, 2003), 127.

¹³Bradford, *Preaching to the Times*, 39.

"PREPARING TO PREACH"

Seminar II: Preparation of the Sermon Session 4: From Text to Sermon

Objectives:

1. To develop a central idea of the sermon
2. To understand the purpose of the sermon
3. To examine the various parts of the sermon

I. The Central idea

- A. Various words have been used to illustrate focusing the sermon on one thing: central idea, proposition, theme, thesis statement, and main thought. The preacher derives the idea of the sermon from a text.¹ Robinson puts it another way, "A sermon should be a bullet, not buckshot. Ideally each sermon is the explanation, interpretation, or application of a single dominant idea supported by other ideas, all drawn from one passage or several passages of Scripture."² Paul Wilson further intimates, "God uses the preacher not to pronounce a general word to the whole world. God uses the preacher to speak a specific word to a particular congregation that has set apart this person to speak God's Word on their behalf. Since the whole text in all of its detail cannot meaningfully connect with everything, some particular aspect or aspects of the text need emphasis. In some way choosing this point of emphasis is a small step in the sermon process, but in other ways this is the most important step a preacher can make."³ The choosing of a sermon idea helps to focus the preaching. It declares

¹Haddon Robinson, "The Relevance of Expository Preaching," in *Preaching to a Shifting Culture: 12 Perspectives on Communication that Connects*, ed. Scott M. Gibbon (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book, 2004), 83.

²Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 35.

³Wilson, *Preaching and Homiletic Theory*, 8.

"the heart of the text's message and the heart of a sermon." ⁴ The preacher knows the direction of the sermon. Therefore it is easy to lead the congregation there.

B. Formation of the central idea⁵

1. Subject and complement

a. If the words confuse you think about it as question - subject and answer - complement.

b. Finding the subject and the complement comes from the text. It comes as a result of asking, "What is the author talking about?"

2. Creating the central idea

a. See Exercise 2 (appendix)

II. State the Purpose of the Sermon

A. The purpose of the sermon explains the main message the preacher would like the audience to take away from the sermon. It could be an action, etc

B. Ask the following questions:

1. "What does it mean?"

2. "Is it true?"

3. "What difference does it make?"

III. How Can I Put It Together: Question of Structure

A. Observe the pattern of the text; it will give you a hint about the sermon structure.

⁴Wilson, *The Practice of Preaching*, 41.

⁵Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 43-45.

B. How to express the sermon:⁶

1. Deductive Sermon- from the specific to the general. This sermon begins with the main idea and proceeds with supportive explanation.
2. Inductive Sermon- from general to the specific. This sermon begins by not stating the main idea but the main idea becomes obvious and clear as the sermon comes to an end.
3. Combination of Both

C. "Double Exegesis"

1. "Double exegesis" takes into account the biblical world and the contemporary world. It seeks to apply the substance of the text from the biblical world to the contemporary world. In conducting "double exegesis," "The preacher should be able to feel the pulse and sense the mood of the age in which he [or she] lives. To do this, he must be in touch with the currents of life and thought. Such understanding will help him slant his preaching to today's world rather than yesterday's."⁷ Robinson adds, "A congregation does not convene as a jury to convict Judas, Peter, or Solomon, but to judge themselves. We must know the people as well as the message, and to acquire that knowledge, we exegete both the Scripture and the congregation."⁸

IV. Outline

A. Outline must include the following

1. Title

- a. The title is the name given to the sermon; it is the sermon condensed in a word,

⁶Guthrie, *From Pew to Pulpit*, 72-73.

⁷Whitesell, *Power in Expository Preaching*, 134.

⁸Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 28.

words, phrase, or sentence. An announced title prepares an audience for what is to come. It also does another thing. It "set[s] the boundaries for the sermon. Or to put it another way, the title should remind the preacher, all through the process of preparation, where the sermon is going, so that he or she will be able eventually to lead the congregation to the promised land of the sermon purpose."⁹ The title charts the course of the sermon.

- b. It is said that print media spend hours trying to come up with the right title. In like manner, those who preach the Word should spend time working on sermon titles. People sometimes remember a title more than the sermon. Never introduce the sermon by saying "the subject of my message or sermon is." Always say "the title of my sermon is..." Announce your sermon title because it tells your audience where you are going.

2. Subject

- a. What is the subject? "The subject is what the preacher is going to talk about."¹⁰ Clyde E. Fant adds that, "A Subject and title are not the same. A subject is what the sermon is about; a title is what you call it."¹¹ Don't confuse the title of the sermon with the subject of the sermon. They are not the same.

3. Theme or thesis or preposition or central idea

- a. A theme is a gist of the entire sermon. The theme should be short, clear,

⁹J. Ellsworth Kalas, *Preaching from the Soul: Insistent Observation on the Sacred Art* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 44.

¹⁰Charles W. Koller, *Expository Preaching Without Notes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book, 1962), 59.

¹¹Clyde E. Fant, *Preaching for Today*, rev. ed. (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1987), 187.

appealing, interesting, and Christ-centered.

4. Introduction

a. Haddon Robinson states four purposes for the introduction.¹² Introduction must:

- i. Arrest attention
- ii. Uncover needs
- iii. Orient the listeners to the body of the sermon
- iv. Exhibit other characteristics
- v. Charles E. Bradford suggests that introduction be varied; sometimes a historical background; reconstruction of the scene; use of a poem.¹³
- vi. Derek Newton lists three purposes for an introduction: "To gain the hearer's attention, to touch the hearer's live, and to introduce the body of the sermon."¹⁴ The main purpose of the introduction is to introduce the sermon. If it falls short of that, it has not fulfilled its purpose.

5. Transitional sentence

a. Transitional sentences are connective statements that smoothly join parts of the sermon. There are more than one transitional sentences in a sermon. "Each transitional sentence acts like a hitch between the boxcars of a train. It not only connects one main point to another,

¹²Ribonson, *Biblical Preaching*, 166-175

¹³Bradford, *Preaching to the Times*, 68.

¹⁴Derek Newton, *And the Word Became. . . A Sermon: a Practical Guide to Biblical Expository Preaching* (Fern: Mentor, 2003), 223-224.

but it helps the listener follow the development of the sermon."¹⁵ Without the transitional sentence there will be an abruptness from one part of the sermon to another.¹⁶ In addition, think about transitional statement as shifting gear. When shifting gear it should be smooth.

- b. Helpful words for transitional statements: and, therefore, so, "in our text today," etc.

6. Application

- a. One of the main elements of expository preaching is application. Robinson believes that "application gives expository preaching purpose."¹⁷ He adds, "dull expository sermons usually lack effective applications."¹⁸ The word 'application' comes from two Latin words 'ap' meaning 'to' and 'plicio' meaning 'to fold'; both words put together means to join something to something else.¹⁹ Therefore, application is "the bridge between our work of exegesis on the original meaning of a biblical passage and our work of exposition as we apply the text into the lives of our twenty-first century listeners."²⁰ Application answers the question, "What difference does this text mean for people today?"

¹⁵York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 147

¹⁶Terry G. Carter, J. Scott Duvall, and J. Daniel Hays, *Preaching God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Preparing, Developing, and Delivering the Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 112.

¹⁷Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 27

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Newton, 160.

²⁰Ibid.

7. Body

a. Examples of main headings or divisions or points

i. One word

1. Reassure
2. Renounce
3. Restore

ii. Parallelism - "means the nouns, verbs, and modifiers appear in the same order throughout the points, and the wording changes only as much as is necessary to indicate a major turn of thought."²¹

1. Pray, because prayer will reveal your heart.
2. Pray, because prayer will reach God's heart.
3. Pray, because prayer will conquer others' hearts.²²

iii. John R. Bisagno in his book *Principle Preaching* advances the idea of principle preaching.

1. Definition of principle preaching - it is "drawing life application principle from the Bible and preaching them as the outline of the sermon. In each case, the three or four or even five divisions of the sermon are

²¹Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 137.

²²Ibid.

principles, not the usual points."²³

2. Example (the traditional way)

a. Title: "The Call of Joshua"

b. Text: Joshua 1:1-7

c. Division/headings/points

i. The Call of Joshua

ii. The Command of Joshua

iii. The Conquest of Joshua

iv. The Courage of Joshua

d. Principle Preaching Example

i. Don't Get Stuck in
Life's Passageway
(Josh. 1:1-2).

ii. God's Already Been
Where You're Going
(Josh. 1:3).

iii. God has a Wonderful
Blueprint for Your
Life (Josh. 1:4).

iv. Yesterday's
Faithfulness
Guarantees Tomorrow's
Courage (Josh. 1:5-
7).²⁴

²³John R. Bisagno, *Principle Preaching: How to Create and Deliver Sermons for Life Applications* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2002), 3.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 5-7.

8. Conclusion

a. The conclusion is the hardest part of the sermon. It is the hardest part because often little or no effort is spent in developing it. Much of the preacher's time is spend in other areas of the sermon. The conclusion is important just like other parts of the sermon. It is said that the Greeks referred to the conclusion as the "final struggle which determines a conflict." If the conclusion is the final struggle that determine the sermon, adequate time should be spent crafting it. Furthermore, the conclusion must conclude. Quit saying "as I conclude," "as I come to a close," or "in conclusion" and keep preaching for another ten more minutes. When you announce the conclusion you must conclude. Better yet DON'T ANNOUNCE YOU ARE CONCLUDING, Conclude!

b. Avoid saying:

- i. "In conclusion"
- ii. "Finally"
- iii. "As I conclude"

c. A conclusion can be one of the following:

- i. Summary - summation of the sermon
- ii. An illustration - the use of a story to once again reinforce the sermon
- iii. Quotation - use of a quote to sum up the sermon
- iv. Question - state a question to motivate to action
- v. Restatement - repetition of main points or ideas of the sermon

- vi. Song - singing or quoting the words of a song

9. Appeal

- a. Every sermon must have an appeal. Your work is not done until an invitation has been made. **IF YOU PREACH WITHOUT AN INVITATION, YOU HAVE GIVEN A SPEECH AND NOT A SERMON! The appeal must be to an invitation to do something.**
- b. The appeal must be direct, personable, and persuasive; hopefully it is an invitation to accept Christ.
- c. Vary the appeal. Have more than one kind of appeal or one way of making an appeal. "The preacher with only one appeal is like a musical instrument with only one tone. However sweet the tone is, when it loses its freshness it loses its charm."²⁵ Have more than one way of making an appeal. And don't be afraid to make an appeal. The appeal is not about you.
- d. It can be done by:
 - i. Raising hands
 - ii. Standing up
 - iii. Coming forward
 - iv. Signing a card

V. Imagination

- A. Although Robinson was speaking about style, his comments, "like an artist or novelist, you must learn to think in picture. That means you must visualize details,"²⁶ is fitting for the use of imagination. The imagination must see Joshua and the children of Israel marching around the walls of Jericho. The eyes must seek to determine what

²⁵Koller, 108.

²⁶Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 194.

is happening in the city as the children of Israel march. Are the city dwellers mocking and throwing objects at them? What do the marchers do? Do they stop or do they proceed? They march on! Can a Christian march on when others and things of this world are trying to distract them? Although this might not be the essence of the **text, it** creates a mental picture that can be rectified by the text, if that is what the text is talking about.

B. This is how H. M. S. Richards puts it, "We as preachers should develop a Christian imagination so that we can describe what we see. That helps others to see it."²⁷

VI. Illustrations

A. Like the word implies, illustrations illustrate. They are useful in the sermon. "They are needed to reach the present-day 'picture-conscious' mind. Our generation has been trained to think in pictures. . . . People need word pictures in preaching, too."²⁸ This **statement,** though written several years **ago,** is **true** even more so today.

B. Finding Illustrations:

1. Personal experience
2. Illustration books
3. Stories
4. The Bible
5. Current events
6. Nature
7. **Newspaper**

²⁷Richards, *Feed My Sheep*, 297.

²⁸H. C. Brown, H. Gordon, and Jesse J. Northcutt, *Steps to the Sermon: A Plan for Sermon Preparation* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1963) 69.

8. Magazines

VII. Quotations

- A. When used it must be short
- B. Sparingly used
- C. Appropriate

VIII. Figure of speech

- A. Examples
 - 1. Metaphor

- 2. Simile

IX. Style

- A. Style is about clarity; the way in which the sermon is conveyed.
- B. To be clear one should:
 - 1. Strive to be understood
 - 2. Use conversational language
 - 3. Be deliberate
- C. Language
 - 1. Use picture words
 - 2. Robison makes this observation about language. He states that, "There are bright words, as brilliant as a tropical sunrise, and there are drab words, as unattractive as a country bus station. There are hard words that punch like a prize fighter, and weak words as insipid as tea made with one drunk of a teabag. There are pillow words that comfort people and steel-cold words that threaten them. Some words transplant listeners at least for an instant close to the courts of God, and other words send them to the gutter. We live by words, love by

words, pray with words, curse with words, and die for words."²⁹ To further illustrate, Robinson quotes Joseph Conrad in his book, *Biblical Preaching* as saying: "Give me the right word and the right accent, and I will move the world."³⁰ Words are **powerful**; use them to paint pictures.

3. Example: "Like David, most of us have faced the giant before, that oversize accumulation of debt that seem to snowball into an avalanche threatening to suffocate us beneath the blizzard of bills."³¹

D. How to develop style

1. Study great preachers and speakers
2. Discover what makes them effective
3. Incorporate those principles into your personality. Do not clone those you admire. God made only one you.

X. Write out your sermons

- I. There is a great advantage in writing out a sermon.
 1. An individual can store it and make changes when need be. Don't have to rewrite.
 2. Make necessary corrections
 3. Be accurate with words

²⁹Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 185.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹T. D. Jakes, *Reposition Yourself: Living Life Without Limits* (New York: Atria Books, 2007), 253.

"PREPARING TO PREACH"

Seminar II: Preparation of the Sermon Session 5: Delivery

Objectives:

1. To stress the importance of delivery
2. To study other aspects of delivery

I. Delivery

- A. The sermon does not end in its written form. "The effectiveness of a sermon depends on two factors: what we say and how we say it."¹ The "how we say it" is delivery. Delivery is the manner in which the sermon is orally conveyed. The first task of delivery is to be understood. The preacher must, like the Verizon commercial rhetorically ask the question: "Can you hear me now?" In other words, "Was I clear?"
- B. Delivery should be natural.

II. Delivery includes several components. Some of which are:

A. Audience

1. Know your audience.
2. Preaching is a "trilogue:" God, the preacher, and the audience. The audience is part of the preaching moment. To be effective, the preacher must know to whom the sermon is addressed so that the sermon can speak specifically to that audience.

B. Appearance

1. Be neat
2. Tidy

¹Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 201.

3. Shave if you are a male
4. Iron clothes
5. Personal grooming
6. Look presentable

C. Usage of language

1. Be clear
2. Be accurate
3. Be inclusive
 - i. Use "we and us" instead of "you."

D. Gestures

1. Beware of Mannerism
2. Keep eye contact
3. Be yourself
4. Quoting the result of a famous study conducted by psychologist Albert Mehrabian, Robinson writes, "Only seven percent of a speaker's message comes through his words; thirty-eight percent springs from his voice; fifty-five percent comes from his expressions."² Be mindful of your mannerism. They sometimes speak louder than your words. They might sometimes help or hinder the sermon.

E. Voice

1. Pause
 - i. Don't be afraid of pause. Bradford states that a pause can be used as an

²Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 203.

"attention devise."³ E. G. White adds, "Some seem to think they must race right straight along or else they will lose the inspiration and the people will lose the inspiration. If that is inspiration, let them lose it, and the sooner the better."⁴ In other words, don't be afraid to pause.

2. Modulate your voice at times
3. Employ silence at times
4. Speak from the diaphragm

F. Style

1. Style has to do with clarity. There is no one style. Charles Bradford believes that, "There are differences in styles of preaching. Partly because of cultural conditioning, due in some measure to denominational emphasis or racial background. But beyond these influences, the preacher's own physical and emotional nature should shape his style."⁵ He adds, "Develop your own style based on your physical-mental-emotional make-up."⁶ In other words, be yourself! Notwithstanding, note that "The manner in which the truth is presented often has much to do with determining whether the truth will be accepted or rejected."⁷ Even though style might be subjective, strive for clarity.

³Bradford, *Preaching to the Times*, 83.

⁴White, *Evangelism*, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1946), 670.

⁵Bradford, 77.

⁶Ibid.

⁷White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1948), 4:404.

2. How the sermon is preached⁸

- i. Manuscript - preaching from notes. The preacher carries a complete manuscript of the sermon into the pulpit and reads from it word for word, dynamic reading or other versions.
- ii. Memorization - the preacher memorizes the entire sermon and preaches from memory, no notes.
- iii. Extemporaneous - the preacher starts with a full manuscript and then an outline. The outline or a version of the outline is carried into the pulpit and the preacher preaches from that version.

G. Rehearse the Sermon

1. Study your sermon
2. Read your sermon out loud
3. Listen to yourself as you read aloud

⁸Terry G. Carter, J. Scott Duvall, and J. Daniel Hays, *Preaching God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Preparing, Developing, and Delivering the Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 153-155.

"PREPARING TO PREACH"

Seminar II: Preparation of the Sermon Session 6: Long-Term Freshness

Objectives:

1. To encourage continuous growth

Suggestions for Long-Term Freshness:

1. Widen Your Reading

- a. The preacher who does not read widely and constantly will become stagnate and predictable. They will have one or two sermons. Subsequently, every text they choose will gravitate toward those two sermons. H. C. Brown and others said it accurately, "The preacher whose sermons are fresh and dynamic is the preacher who is constantly reading."¹
- b. Use the "sixfold path." Read from six different areas at one time (novels, historical, biographical, diary/journal, poetry, and something of interest).²

2. Study great preachers' sermons³

- a. Read books on past great preachers
- b. Listen to their tapes
- c. Learn to use their admired strengths and don't be a facsimile copy of them. God made one you!
- d. Read one or more great books on preaching yearly
- e. Attend seminars on preaching

¹Brown, *Steps to the Sermon*, 181.

²Bruce Mawhinney, *Preaching with Freshness*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publication, 1997), 248.

³Ibid.

- f. Plan your sermons in advance
 - g. "Let iron sharpen iron." Find someone to share sermon ideas with.
3. Gather materials early
- a. The old preachers called it "sermon garden or draws of apple." Snatch away sermon ideas, illustrations, etc.
 - b. Don't wait for the night before preaching-you might end up with the Friday night blues!
4. Practice self-evaluation
- a. Listen to recordings of yourself
 - b. Ask others to give you feedbacks

APPENDIX B

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT
"Training Elders in the Alexandria District of the
Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
to Preach Expository Sermons"

Purpose of Project:

1. To enhance the preaching skills of elders who preach in the absence of the pastor.
2. To develop a training program to equip elders to preach expository sermons. With an extensive training of elders, the Alexandria District will experience a new dimension of preaching that would be both substantive and spiritually rewarding.

The Project:

- The project is divided into two parts: "The Preparation of the Speaker" and "The Preparation of the Sermon."
- **Preparation of the Speaker**
 - A Retreat: November 16th from 12 pm - 5 pm
 - Components of Retreat:
 - Discussions
 - Interaction
 - Reflective Time
 - Exercises
 - Topics:
 - Understanding your Calling
 - The Role of Preaching
 - The Human Dimension of Preaching
 - Developing a "Theology of Preaching"
- **The Preparation of the Sermon**
 - Description of section:
 - November 23rd from 9 am - 5 pm
 - Required to preach two in-seminar sermons
 - One sermon will be of your own choosing and the other will be selected from several texts supplied by the project director

- Project participants will evaluate sermons and give feedback.
- Required to preach the better of the two sermons at Prayer Meeting - church will evaluate each sermon.
- Handouts will be given on each seminar
- There will be six seminars
 - Each will be for 50 minutes
 - You will have a ten minute break before the next section
 - Lunch time will be scheduled
- Preaching Dates:
 - In-Seminar-Preaching
 - January 3, 2009 at 6:00pm (The date was later revised to March 23, 2009)
 - January 4, 2009 at 10:00am (The date was later revised to March 27, 2009)
 - In-Church-Preaching (Prayer Meeting)
 - January 6, 2009 - Maranatha's Prayer Meeting (The date was later revised to March 31, 2009)
 - January 7, 2009 - Smyrna's Prayer Meeting (The date was later revised to April 1, 2009)
- **Thing to emphasize:**
 - How to know what to preach?
 - Choosing a text
 - Interpreting a text
 - Designing a sermon
 - Delivering a sermon
 - Preaching with freshness

APPENDIX C
HISTORY OF CHURCHES

NATCHITOCHE'S CHURCH'S HISTORY

Just before World War II, Lois Raymond and her brother McDuffie, boarded a train to Enid, OK to visit their Uncle Wesley Wiley, whom they had never seen. Although he was their mother's brother, they did not know that he and his wife Odessa, were Seventh-day Adventists, and of course they had no way of knowing that Elder W.S. Lee was building a church for the new believers there. For the next six weeks McDuffie helped the builders complete this project.

Immediately, letters filled with information about the Second Coming of Christ, The Sanctuary, and the Beasts of Daniel began to arrive in the mail. When Lois and McDuffie returned to Natchitoches full of enthusiasm and excitement about their newly acquired knowledge, they encouraged their parents, Rollie and Florida Pearl, to invite Elder G. Dasant to Natchitoches to talk to about 20 others who were eager to hear more the the 'Three Angels' Messages. Elder Dasant came, but unfortunately, he was unable to keep his promise to return and organize the group into a company. So the John Walker family moved to Shreveport and joined the Adventists there. The Manny Washington family, and the Sedonia Benjamin family joined the Faith and Victory congregation of Natchitoches. McDuffie was drafted into the army, Lois went away to college, Jessie and one or two of the other girls began trying to observe the Sabbath. however, the odds were discouraging. Paralee was sent to Enid for a school term and while there, she was baptized by Elder O. Trotter. She returned to Louisiana the following school term, and she and her sister Gustavia were sent to Alexandria to attend school so that Paralee could attend church on Sabbaths. During that year, Gustavia was baptized by Elders Coopwood and Bryant. About a year later, Lois and Jessie were baptized by Elder F.L. Peterson in Los Angeles, and a few years after that Lola Mae was baptized as a result of attending meetings conducted by [unclear] in California. The mother of them all, Florida Pearl began attending the Coushatta, LA, church whenever she could get someone to take her the 27 miles.

A number of years passed. Jessie was burdened for souls in Natchitoches. So, with the blessings and assistance of her husband, C.R. Pritchett, she spent most of a summer's vacation in Natchitoches giving Bible studies. Soon an evangelistic effort was conducted by Elder Warnick and Elder Shepherd on the lawn of Lola's house. A regular place for meeting to worship on Sabbaths was secured for afternoon services. The rental fee at first was paid for by Jessie and Paralee. These afternoon sessions were for a while conducted by Bro. Iris Thomas and Walter Douglas of Coushatta. More than once the group had to discontinue meeting in these places due to disturbances of the owners of the building. This caused the members to have to begin attending Coushatta again.

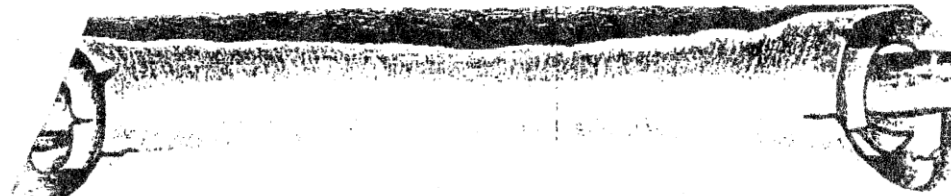
During these years, Sister F.P. Raymond and Lola Thomas were the mainstay of the church group. They filled positions as treasurer, Superintendent, Sabbath School teacher, deaconess--whatever position needed to be filled, they did their best faithfully. At present Sis. F.P. Raymond is the oldest charter member. When she tells you she's 98, she says "I'm trying to make a hundred, 99 1/2 won't do."

In August of 1976 Paralee and husband Lonnie moved from California to Natchitoches, and within a short time Paralee noticed a FOR SALE sign on the property on the corner of Kounce and Hill Streets and without hesitation checked on the particulars. She then contacted the district pastor, Elder Earl Howard, who immediately informed the conference president, Elder William Jones, and he in turn conferred with Elder O.A. Jackson, conference secretary and Elder M. Bias, conference treasurer.

Without delay, very expeditiously, these dedicated men along with the district pastor, Elder Earl Howard, came to Natchitoches to inspect the church building and the parsonage. Right away they located a bank in town that would carry the balance after an initial down payment contributed by members and interested persons from sister churches, and the signature of Rollie Raymond, who had been baptized at age 86 by Elder G. Chisell, was a property owner in Natchitoches. Since the parsonage was occupied by the pastor of the congregation selling the property, he remained for sometime and paid rent. The next two resident pastors lived in the parsonage also, and their

payments went toward the note. God blessed richly. Some said we would have to close the doors for lack of payment. They've been proven wrong.

PRAISE THE LORD!!!



The first Sabbath in 1977 the opening services for the Natchitoches First Seventh-day Adventist Church were held with Pastor Earl Howard in full charge as his gracious wife Pauline stood by his side to assist.

Charter Members: 19

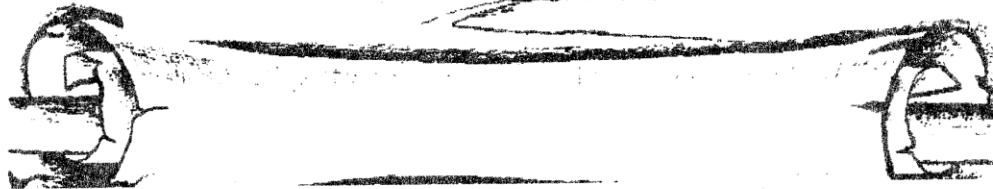
- The Effie Pikes Family*
- Lonnie and Paralee Knight*
- The Charles and Betty Raymond Family*
- The Lola Thomas Family, Fabienne, Florie, Michael*
- Rollie Raymond and wife Florida Pearl*

Bro. Rollie Raymond and Sister Lola Thomas are now deceased.

Since 1977 the membership has fluctuated under the pastorate of the following young pastors: Elder Warren Humphrey, Pastor Winston Stanley, Pastor Howard Small, Pastor Byron Francois, Pastor C.M. Bailey, Pastor Joe Ellis, and now Pastor Marvin Jemison.

In addition to the pastors listed above, some of the other pastors and evangelists who were instrumental in the growth and nurturing of the Natchitoches are:

- L.B. Baker
- G. Chisell
- B.E. Wright
- G. Downes
- Elder Petway





HISTORY OF SMYRNA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH



The Smyrna Seventh-day Adventist church was originated in Alexandria, Louisiana, in 1936, as a result of tent meetings held by Elder T. H Coopwood.



Certificate of Baptism dated Oct. 31, 1936.

Mary Buckner (mother of Sis. Betty & Frankie Anderson & Carey Walker Sr.)

Pastor T. H. Coopwood.

Ark.- La. Conference

M. L. Plummer, Clerk

The new church became part of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists. With only a few members at its inception, the late sister Maddlie Plummer (known to us as Sister Maddlie Lawson) served as the Clerk for many years, and later as church pianist. Before her health began to fail, sister Birdie McCluster served as Church Pianist and Bible Worker.



Sis Maddlie Lawson

During its earlier days, Smyrna's pastor served both in Alexandria and Baton Rouge, Louisiana. This meant that Smyrna did not have a pastor every week.



The late Brother Eddie Lawson served as the local elder for a number of years. He did a very splendid job and was a very good leader to the small company of believers who soon became a family. Later, as Smyrna grew in number, they have been blessed with many pastors.

Bro. Eddie Lawson

In the early part of the 1940's, Elder Fletcher J. Bryant, and Elder Gabe J. Chissell served as pastors. During the latter part of the 1940's, the late Elder Douglas Batson, assisted by Brother Irving, held another tent meeting; It was an exciting time, Sabbath worship services, Missionary Volunteer (later known as Adventist Youth-AY), as well as a large wedding were held under his tent.

The early 1950's brought us Elder D. J Dixon and family. Up to this point, Smyrna still did not have a church facility of its own and was still having worship services in various places. The desire for a church building caused the Smyrna family to save money in a building fund in order to secure its own house of worship.

In 1952, Elder L.B. Baker served as pastor. Shortly after his arrival, plans to build a church were started. This church building was to be located on the corner of Broadway Avenue and Tenth Street. On August 15, 1953, the dream of a church home became reality, when the small congregation held services for the first time in a church of their own under the pastor Elder L. B Baker.

Elder J.C. Smith came in 1954 and served only for a short time. In 1956, Elder C.E. Dudley served as pastor. He later became the president of South Central Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. For a short period of times, the church would sometimes be without a pastor but did not lack in leadership, but dedicated and faithful laymen such as Bro. Jay Brisbon, served as leaders.

In 1960, Pastor J. L. Brown, served as pastor and school teacher of the new church school that was established under his leadership. Elder William Cleveland also served as pastor in the early 1960's. The latter part of 1963 brought us to the late Elder Van Runnels, who in the summer of 1964 held a very successful tent effort, which lasted for three months.



Pastor H. M. Mouzon & Wife

In the summer of 1964 Elder Van Runnels, Pastor H.M Mouzon and Pastor H.L Thompson worked together to conduct a great three-month tent revival. Then from 1964- 1967, Pastor H.M. Mouzon served as pastor and the church experienced growth.

From 1967-1970 Pastor J.C. Wray led the church, at which time a great remodeling campaign took place. From 1970-1973 the young Pastor Helvius Thompson served as pastor.



Pastor Downes

In the summer of 1973, Pastor M.A. Jemison, began his first of two pastorates at Smyrna. He was followed in the month of February 1977 by Elder Williams H. Downes.

In the early part of April 1982, Pastor Alfred Booker, began to serve Smyrna as pastor. Under his leadership the church acquired 6.9 acres of land on which the multi-purpose building would be later built. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the multi-purpose facility were held on May 4, 1985 at 7:20 p.m. On Sabbath, May 15, 1986 grand opening services were held. Pastor Booker continued to serve as our pastor until August 1988.



Pastor A. Booker & W

Pastor J. R. Ellis followed, staying for almost eight years. He is most remembered for creating the plan that led to the note burning for the multi-purpose facility. He did a splendid job for the Lord, and under his pastorate the church continued to grow.

In June of 1996, Pastor M. A. Jemison returned to serve as pastor. This is considered to be a remarkable feat, not accomplished by many ministers. He diligently carried out the work of the Lord creating a financial system that paved the way for the church to save money towards future plans of building a sanctuary. Pastor Jemison accepted a call to serve in New Orleans, LA so that he could assist his ailing in-laws.



Pastor Charles McNeil

On January 6, 2001, Pastor Charles McNeil was introduced as pastor. Pastor McNeil continued a pastor of Alexandria for two years, which were mark by diligence and great organization. Most recently, on May 24, 2003, Pastor Robert Davis was introduced to Smyrna as pastor. He still continues to serve and God has blessed his ministry.

In 2003, Pastor Robert Davis was introduced to Smyrna as pastor. He lead the church in building a sanctuary and several renovations in the Multi-purpose building; including remodeling the bathrooms, finishing the upstairs portion of the building to accommodate the Church school, and expansion of the Kitchen. He also began a Media Ministry, led the church in housing evacuees during the Hurricane Katrina Disaster and began an Annual Community Fest bringing together the community and the church.



Pastor Robert Davis, Sr.



Pastor Cedric N. Belcher, Sr.

In 2006, Pastor Cedric N. Belcher was introduced to Smyrna as pastor. He has implemented several new ideas: a plan to curtail our Sabbath services to enable the church to do more outreach ministries in order that others may be saved; Started a Church Office ministry in order that someone will be available during business hours to take calls for prayer or other church business and to contact our missing members; Began a church news in-house broadcast to keep our members informed; and began an Annual Week of Revival during Black History Month in which area Pastors are invited along with their choirs to lead out in each night's service, bringing the Community and

Church together. Pastor Belcher continues to serve diligently, as a man of God, as leader of his family, and in planning spirit filled activities for the growth of his church members.

In these few paragraphs contains the history of the great Smyrna Seventh-Day Adventist Church; a church that has stood as a bulwark in the community. Noted throughout the city and conference for its youth ministries and dynamic choir Smyrna has been an example of greatness and leadership. God is with this church and continues to lead it forward. The only thing we have yet to accomplish are the things we have yet to dream.

"Those who part in the establishment of our work upon a foundation of Bible truth, those who know the waymarks the have pointed out the right path are to be regarded as workers of the highest value. The Lord has declared that the past shall be rehearsed as we enter upon the closing work. Every pillar that He has established is to be strengthened. We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established; we cannot enter into any new organization, for this would be apostasy from the truth." (Selected Messages Book 2, pp389-90.)

***NOTE:** Most of the above Information is from Original compilation of Sis. Betty Anderson. (Published 2006) Some information has been left out due to unfamiliarity of facts or information not being readily available at the time of publication of this booklet. To update information for future references, please contact the clerk.

Church History



On October 22, 2002, a proposal to further evangelize Alexandra and the surrounding areas was presenting to Elder Billy E. Wright, President of the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventist (SWRC) at the Lone Star Camp. Upon careful study and deliberation of the proposal, the SWRC approved the establishment of the Maranatha Seventh-day Adventist Company.

The Maranatha Seventh-day Adventist Company was then established in January 2003 with a core group of ten (10) people. The members of this core group are as follows: Elder Alfred & Helen Hudson, Elder David & Betty Hudson, Elder Ronald & Maudlyn Hutchinson, Bro. Walter & Christine Ince, and Bro. Sylvester & Valarie Dotson.

The small group of organized believers started looking for a place of worship. Elder David & Betty Hudson contacted Pastor Lorenzo Dearborne of the True Believers Baptist Church and asked his permission to worship in his building on Saturdays. Pastor Dearborne and his congregation consented. Thus, the first Sabbath Service was held on January 25th, 2003. Prayer Meeting followed subsequently every Tuesday evening at 7:00 PM.

The infant company faced many challenges. But with each challenge God provided strength to surmount them and to spread the gospel message. As a result of the untiring fidelity of the company Bro. Max Pugh, the first convert, was baptized, approximately seven months after the company was organized. Few months later, Yazmin Ince, a youth, was baptized. Eleven additional souls were baptized by the first year anniversary celebration.

Pastor Robert L. Davis served as the first pastor of the new company, from 2003 to 2006. He was succeeded by Pastor Cedric N. Belcher. Pastor Belcher has been instrumental in fulfilling the dream of Maranatha in acquiring its own property. On November 16, 2006 a property was purchased on South MacArthur Drive. On the same date that the property was purchased, the Southwest Region Conference Executive Committee voted Maranatha to become a church, a decision to be approved at constituency meeting in May 2007.

Maranatha is now four years old and the membership has grown from 10 to 50 - TO GOD BE THE GLORY!!!

We thank you for being a part of this historic celebration. Pray for us as we continue to press forward toward the mark of the high calling.

APPENDIX D

BIBLICAL EXEGESIS WORKSHEET

Biblical Exegesis Worksheet
(Adopted from Dr. Mulzac)

Text Under Consideration:

I. Context

(a) Historical Context

(i) Questions to answer:

- a. When was the book written?
- b. Who was the author?
- c. Who are the addressees?
- d. What events are described?
- e. What geographical location is described?
- f. What is happening on the international arena?
- g. Look for people (king, leader), events (specific and general) and places.

(b) Cultural Context

(c) Literary Context

(i) Larger context in Scripture

- How does this book fit into Scripture as a whole?
- How does the main theme fit with Scripture overall?
- What does this teach us today?

(ii) Immediate context

- Statement of the author revealing his purpose
- Repetitions of words, themes, ideas
- Connection between preceding and following thoughts
- Plan of action; time of action - morning, night, season of the year, time of the week
- Flashbacks, time prophecies, or times when the future is presented as though already reality
- Interaction of persons, especially divine personage and people
- Geography

- Conversations and actions taken because of these exchanges
 - Emotions; employ your sense as you feel the character's pain, anger, hunger, etc
- (iii) Delimitation
- What marks the boundaries of the passage?
 - Where does it start and end?
- (iv) Structure of the passage
- How is this passage designed?
 - What are the essential building blocks of the passage?
 - What are the parts that hold this passage?
 - People mentioned
 - Events mentioned
 - Repetitions of words
 - Chiasm
 - Changes in personal pronouns
 - Changes in speakers in conversations
 - Theological motifs or themes (the big idea)
- (v) Outline

II. Linguistic Analysis

- (a) Syntax
- (i) Are there usual or unusual pattern of construction?
 - (ii) Are there any peculiarities?
 - (iii) Pay close attention to verbs
 - (iv) Note that in Hebrew verbs denote kind of action rather than time of action
- (b) Rhetorical feature
- (i) Look for irony, comparison and contrast; questions, especially rhetorical questions, sarcasm, alliterations, hyperbole (deliberate exaggeration), paradox, oxymoron (juxtaposing contradictory statements as in Matt. 13:22 and Luke 19:40: "if there is silence, the rock will cry out")
 - (ii)
- (c) Word studies

- (i) Examine the meaning of words in their immediate context
- (ii) How the author uses the word in different places
- (iii) Usage in the rest of the OT or NT
- (iv) Look for the range of meaning because one word may have several nuances or shades of meaning
- (v) Note that words change meaning; different meaning in different context

III. Genre

- (a) Poetry - is often figurative and metaphorical
- (b) Prose
- (c) Prophetic Literature
- (d) Forms - These are smaller subsets of the genre. Psalms of confession, royal psalms, thanksgiving hymns. Know between casuistic law ("if/then") and apodictic law ("you shall"). In the wisdom literature: proverbs, parables, miracle stories, admonitions (Nathan), biography, history, war stories, love stories, and so forth.

IV. Theology

- (a) What is the main or overarching idea that is discussed here?
- (b) What supporting ideas are given?
- (c) How are they developed?
- (d) How are they used within the content of the book?
- (e) How are they used within the context of the OT or NT?
- (f) What is God saying here?
- (g) What role do His people have to play?
- (h) What other theological ideas may be identified: remnant, judgment, salvation, and so forth?

V. Application

- (a) Individual
- (b) Corporate

APPENDIX E

EXERCISES

"PREPARING TO PREACH"

Seminar I: Preparation of the Speaker
Session 3: The Human Dimension of Preaching
Exercise 1: The Call

1. Do you know that you have been called?
 - a. _____

2. How do you know that you have been called?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

3. What has been the fruitage of your calling?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
 - f. _____
 - g. _____

"PREPARING TO PREACH"

Seminar I: Preparation of the Speaker
Session 3: The Human Dimension of Preaching
Exercise 2: Spiritual Quest - God's Hand in My Present

1. Read thoughtfully Psalm 139:1-24

2. Then. Make a list of things the Psalmist says God knows about this present life.
 - a. What does this lead Him to think and do?

 - b. Ponder the awesomeness of God's knowledge. How do you think the realization of God's knowing all this affected the Psalmist's present life and decisions?

3. Now. Sensing that God knows all this about us, what do you think would be His evaluation of your present life?
 - a. In this time of reflection and quiet, picture yourself in God's presence - or if you find that difficult, try being in Jesus' presence. Knowing that He knows all about you, yet loves you tremendously, honestly face your present.

 - b. Record in writing what you think is His as well as your evaluation of your present. Where are you now?

4. Write down three things that you think God would like you to work on in your spiritual life.
 - a. One way of doing this is to think about your devotional life or relationship with God.

 - b. Write down a second thing related to human relationships - a spouse, child, parent, friend, sibling, etc.

 - c. Lastly, write down something that has to do with your relation to the physical realm - diet, exercise, use of time, recreation, etc.

"PREPARING TO PREACH"

Seminar I: Preparation of the Speaker

Session 3: The Human Dimension of Preaching

Exercise 3: Spiritual Quest - God's Hand in My Past

1. Read carefully Isaiah 49:1-7

2. Then. Who is the one called in verse 3 "my servant and Israel (literally "God strive")? Note carefully what is said here about the servant's past.
 - a. In what ways has God worked for the servant in the past?
 - b. Has this servant always been what he/she should have been (note verse 4)?
 - c. Write down or talk through all the ways God has acted in the history of His servant.

3. Now. Can you identify with the servant?
 - a. Did God call you from the womb? And name your name (v.1)?
 - b. Have you ever labor in vain and spent your strength for nothing" (verse 4 RSV)?
 - c. Has God worked in your past? Sit quietly, perhaps with eyes closed and recall your past pilgrimage. Reenter your past and trace those key points where God was.
 - d. Write down as much as you can of your personal specific story of God's work in your past.

"We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." Life Sketches, p. 196

"PREPARING TO PREACH"

Seminar I: Preparation of the Speaker
Session 3: The Human Dimension of Preaching
Exercise 4: Spiritual Quest - God's Hand in My Future

1. Read carefully Jeremiah 1:4-10
2. What do you make of Jeremiah's call?
 - a. What did God say He would do for him?
 - b. What responsibilities did God give to Jeremiah?
 - c. How did God accomplish His aim for Jeremiah?
3. Now. Relax in quietness in God's presence.
 - a. Meditate on some of the things you'd like to see God do in your future. Claim some of the promises for yourself.
 - b. Don't worry about impure motives - God can help you deal with these later.
 - c. Allow yourself to dream what might take place by God's power in your life. What would you like to see happen?
 - d. Write down your hopes, dreams, and plans for you future.

"If the future looks somewhat clouded, hope on, believe on. The cloud will disappear, the light shine again." 1T p.

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"PREPARING TO PREACH"

Seminar II: Preparation of the Sermon

Session 3: From Text to Sermon

Exercise 5: Subject and Complement

*Examples:

1. Psalms 117:

Praise the Lord, all nations!

Extol him, all you people

For his love is strong

His faithfulness eternal

a. What is the Subject?

b. What is the Complement?

2. Habakkuk 1:2-4

a. What is the Subject?

b. What is the Complement?

Try at home:

3. Matthew 7:21

a. What is the Subject?

b. What is the Complement?

4. 1 Timothy 5:1-3

a. What is the Subject?

b. What is the Complement?

*All the examples are from Haddon Robinson's book, *Biblical Preaching*, pp. 43-49

APPENDIX F
WORSHIP SONGS

Worship Songs

I Need Thee Every Hour

I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord;
no tender voice like thine can peace afford.

Refrain:

I need thee, O I need thee;
every hour I need thee;
O bless me now, my Savior, I come to thee.

2. I need thee every hour; stay thou nearby;
temptations lose their power when thou art nigh.
(Refrain)
3. I need thee every hour, in joy or pain;
come quickly and abide, or life is vain.
(Refrain)
4. I need thee every hour; teach me thy will;
and thy rich promises in me fulfill.
(Refrain)
5. I need thee every hour, most Holy One;
O make me thine indeed, thou blessed Son.
(Refrain)

There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood

There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's
veins; And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their
guilty stains. Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their
guilty stains; And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all
their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day;
And there have I, though vile as he, washed all my sins away.
Washed all my sins away, washed all my sins away;
And there have I, though vile as he, washed all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood shall never lose its
power. Till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin
no more. Be saved, to sin no more, be saved, to sin no more;
Till all the ransomed church of God be saved, to sin no more

E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds
supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.
And shall be till I die, and shall be till I die;
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing Thy power to save,
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue lies silent in the
grave. Lies silent in the grave, lies silent in the grave;
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue lies silent in the
grave.

Lord, I believe Thou hast prepared, unworthy though I be,
For me a blood bought free reward, a golden harp for me!
'Tis strung and tuned for endless years, and formed by power
divine, To sound in God the Father's ears no other name but
Thine.

APPENDIX G

ASSIGNMENT

PREPARING TO PREACH

Preparation of the Speaker

Assignment 1: Write Your Theology of Preaching

A Theology of Preaching is one's concept of preaching and how an individual fits into the larger context of preaching. Another way to express this would be how an individual feels about their preaching ministry. What drives your preaching? What motivates your preaching? Why do you preach?

MY THEOLOGY OF PREACHING:

APPENDIX H

STEPS TO FORMULATING THE SERMON

Steps to Formulating the Sermon

1. **Choose the Text**
 - a. The text might come from "the overflow."
 - b. An occasion might warrant it
2. **Meditate upon the Text**
 - a. Read, read, and read the text in various versions
 - b. Become familiar with the text
 - c. Jot down your impression (s) of the text
3. **Interpret the Text**
 - a. Discover the intent of the author
 - b. Look at grammar, words, phrases, syntax
 - c. Look for what was not said
 - d. "Attend to every 'insignificant line; look between the line." Eugene L. Lowry, the Homilectical Plot: the Sermon as Narrative Art Form (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1975), 89-90.
 - e. Details
 - f. What does the text mean today?
 - g. Follow the Biblical Exegesis Worksheet
 - h. Consult secondary tools and other sources
4. **Develop the Central Idea of the Sermon**
 - a. What is the text saying?
 - b. How can it be applied today?
5. **Outline the Sermon**
 - a. Title
 - b. Scripture Reading
 - c. Sermonic Text
 - d. Subject
 - e. Central Idea
 - f. Audience
 - g. Introduction
 - h. Body
 - i. Division/headings/points
 - j. Conclusion
 - k. Appeal
6. **Write out the Sermon**
 - a. Application, Illustrations, figure of speech, quotations, etc
7. **Deliver the Sermon**
 - a. Style
 - b. Voice
 - c. Gestures
8. **Evaluation Yourself**

APPENDIX I

SERMON FLOW CHART

SERMON FLOW CHART

Title:

Scripture Reading: A parallel text, text associated with what the sermon is about.

Sermonic Text: The basis for the sermon or the foundation of the Sermon.

Subject: What are you talking about? ie, faith, love, unity, etc.

Thesis/Proposition/Central idea: What do you want your audience to walk away with? When people ask what did the preacher talk about, your thesis should answer that question.

Audience: Know your audience.

Introduction

Transitional Statement

Body:

Divisions/Points

Conclusion

Appeal

APPENDIX J
TEXTS TO PREACH

Texts for Preaching

Texts:

The Old Testament:

- Gen. 19:26 Lot's Wife
- Ex. 3:2 The Burning Bush
- 2 Kings 5:10-27 Naaman
- Num. 21:8,9 The Brazen Serpent
- 1 Kings 17:14-16 The Widow of Zarephath

The New Testament

- Matt. 25:1-13 The Ten Virgins
- Luke 10:25-37 The Good Samaritan
- Luke 7:11-17 The Widow of Nain
- John 11:38-44 Lazarus
- Mark 4:37 - The Tempest
- Matt. 9:20 - The Woman with an Issue of Blood
- Acts 3 - The Lame Man at the Beautiful Gate
- Luke 6:48 - House Built on the Rock
- John 2:1-11 at The Wedding of Cana

APPENDIX K
MUST HAVE BOOKS

Must Have Books

- Bradford, Charles E. *Preaching to the Times: The Preaching Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Graphics.
- Bresee, W. Floyd. *Successful Lay Preaching*. Review and Herald Graphics, 1997.
- Lowery, Eugene L. *The Homilectical Plot*. Atlanta, GA: Knox Press, 1977.
- Miller, Calvin. *The Sermon Maker*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.
- Robinson, Haddon W. *Biblical Preaching: the Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.
- White, Ellen G.: *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1962.

Planning Ahead Subjects for the year

Smyrna/Maranatha/Natchitoches

First Quarter

1. Overall vision for the year
2. Stewardship

Second Quarter

1. Sabbath

Third Quarter

1. The Sanctuary
2. The Second Coming

Fourth Quarter

1. Health

APPENDIX L

E-MAILS

District Info

Thu, March 12, 2009 11:57:57 AM

From: Terrell McCoy <tmccoy@swrgc.org>

[View Card](#)

To: Cedric Belcher <nyan@rocketmail.com>

Alexandria Smyrna and Natchitoches came together in 2001 as a district. Alexandria Maranatha joined the district in either 2003 or 2004. They first showed up in the conference directory in 2004.

Hope this helps!

Terrell McCoy
Executive Secretary
Southwest Region Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists
2215 Lanark Ave.
Dallas, Texas 75203

P.O. Box 226289
Dallas, Texas 75222-6289

Office: 214-943-4491 ext. 206
Cell: 972-983-8522
Fax: 214-941-9796

RE: Information
Thu, October 1, 2009 3:49:49 PM
From: Terrell McCoy <tmccoy@swrgc.org>
View Card

To: Cedric Belcher <nyan@rocketmail.com>

On Oct 1, 2009, at 3:49 PM, "Terrell McCoy"
<tmccoy@swrgc.org> wrote:

Dear Dr. Belcher,

(Just wanted to get used to saying Dr.) At the end of the
July 2009 you had the following membership in your
district:

Alexandria Maranatha - 74
Alexandria Smyrna - 153
Natchitoches - 107

Since then, you had 3 members that were added to the
Maranatha Church in August 2009. I am in Tennessee right
now and I do not have the figures of any transfers in or
out, deaths or apostasies for any of your churches for the
month of August. Depending on what did in your district in
those areas for the month of August or September will give
you your current membership.

If this doesn't help, let me know or call Naomi at the
conference office before she leaves for the day.

Take care!

Terrell McCoy
Executive Secretary
Southwest Region Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists
2215 Lanark Ave.
Dallas, Texas 75203

P.O. Box 226289
Dallas, Texas 75222-6289

Office: 214-943-4491 ext. 206
Cell: 972-983-8522
Fax: 214-941-9796

APPENDIX M

SERMON FEEDBACK FORM

SERMON FEEDBACK FORM

Name of Lay Preacher: _____

Name of Feedback Lay Preacher: _____

Sermon Title: _____

Sermon Type: _____

Audience: _____

<u>Sermon Element</u>	<u>Comments/Feedback</u>	<u>Score</u>
Introduction (Did it capture the attention & set the stage for the sermon?)		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Research/Analysis (Was there pertinent use of exegesis?)		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Organization/Structure (Did the organization come from the text? Was there unity & progression of thought?)		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Style/Language (Was there proper use of language? Did it help or detract?)		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Delivery (Eye contact, posture, gesture, mannerisms intonation, variety)		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Illustrations/Supportive material (Were they forced or natural? Did they help or hinder?)		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Central Idea (Was there a main idea & was it easy to remember? Did it flow from the text?)		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Application (Was it relevant & audience appropriate?)		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Conclusion (Did it conclude? Did it challenge, affirm and motivate to action?)		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Appeal (Did it move to action?)		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

POSITIVE FACTORS:

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

TOTAL SCORE: _____ %

APPENDIX N
SEMINAR EVALUATION

SEMINAR EVALUATION

Seminar Name: _____

Facilitator: _____

Please complete this seminar evaluation by assigning a number that corresponds to your opinion. Write the number that corresponds to your choice.

DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS EVALUATION! I wish to get objective and anonymous responses from participants. By remaining anonymous, you can be honest and I can get a more accurate impression of how you feel about the seminar.

Rating system:

1-Agree Strongly 2-Agree 3-Unsure 4-Disagree 5-Disagree strongly

Teaching Evaluation

Facilitator is knowledgeable about the subject

Facilitator is prepared

Facilitator presents material in a way that helps me learn

Facilitator encourages participation

Facilitator answers participants' question

Facilitator is enthusiastic about teaching

Content

The pace of the seminar is just right

The information is easy to comprehend

The seminar is the right level of difficulty

The handouts are helpful

The seminar enhanced my understanding of preaching

General Observation

I like the seminar

I would recommend this seminar to all elders

I would like to have an annual preaching seminar

Questions

1. What are the strengths of this seminar?

2. What are the weaknesses of this seminar?

3. What suggestions of improvement would you like to see?

APPENDIX O

BIBLICAL EXEGESIS WORKSHEET FOR EZRA

Biblical Exegesis Worksheet Example
(Adopted from Dr. Mulzac)

Text under consideration: Ezra 8:28-29

I. Context

(a) Historical Context

Questions to answer:

- a. When was the book written? Some believe it was written around 458 BC.
- b. Who was the author? Ezra.
- c. Who are the addressees? Two audiences in mind: the captives in Babylon and the remnant in Jerusalem
- d. What events are described? Jerusalem is being rebuilt. Ezra is interested in reestablishing the Law of God. A nation can only stand as its laws are known.
- e. What geographical location is described? Journey to Jerusalem. For information sake find out the topology. How far was the journey?
- f. What is happening on the international arena? Persia is the most powerful nation on earth. The king has power. Whatever he decrees is law.
- g. Look for people (king, leader), events (specific and general) and places.
Artexerxes is the king of Persia.
 - i. Ezra, a Scribe, requests to go back to Jerusalem and reestablish the Law of God.
 - ii. Ezra is a shortened form of Azariah, which means "Yahweh has helped." (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by Biblesoft)
 - iii. "The genealogy of Ezra is given in Ezra 7:1-6, where it appears that he was the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, the son of Shallum, the son of Ahitub, the son of Amariah, the

son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, the son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the high priest. Since Seraiah, according to the Book of Kings, was killed by Nebuchadrezzar at Riblah (2 Kings 25:18-21), and since he was the father of Jehozadak, the high priest who was carried into captivity by Nebuchadrezzar (1 Chron 6:14-15 (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by Biblesoft)

iv. His Commission: In the 7th year of Artaxerxes I (459-458 BC) Ezra requested permission of the king to go up to Jerusalem; for "Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Yahweh, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances." Artaxerxes granted his request, and gave him a letter permitting as many of the people of Israel and of the priests and Levites as so desired to accompany him to Jerusalem, and commissioning him to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, and to carry a gift of money from the king and his counsellors, and all the money to be found in the province of Babylon, and the freewill offerings of the people and priests, with which to buy offerings to offer upon the altar of the house of God which was in Jerusalem. (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by Biblesoft)

(b) Cultural Context

(c) Literary Context

(i) Larger context in Scripture

- How does this book fit into Scripture as a whole? The book of Ezra, like the book of Nehemiah, has to do with the rebuilding of Jerusalem
- How does the main theme fit with Scripture overall? Scripture is about restoring and rebuilding.
- What does this teach us today? It is not enough to rebuild the infrastructure, but it is also important to reinstate the law of God.

(ii) Immediate context

- Statement of the author revealing his purpose
- Repetitions of words, themes, ideas
- Connection between preceding and following thoughts
- Plan of action; time of action - morning, night, season of the year, time of the week
- Flashbacks, time prophecies, or times when the future is presented as though already - Does not apply
- Interaction of persons especially divine personage and people. Does not apply
- Geography - Journey
- Conversations and actions taken because of these exchanges. The words of admonition given by Ezra
- Emotions; employ your sense as you feel the character's pain, anger, hunger, etc.
 - What was the emotion of Erza? How did he convey that message along the river?
 - How did the people accept the message?
 - Emotionally how did they respond?

- Were they excited to be participants in such a great endeavor?
- What was the attitude of the people as they journeyed to Jerusalem, know what they were carrying?

(iii) Delimitation

- What marks the boundaries of the passage? The word "And." Although it is marked as a separate thought, it appears as the only recorded conversation in chapter 8.
- Where does it start and end? Verse 28-29 but one has to read the entire chapter to get the gist of the text.

(iv) Structure of the passage

- How is this passage designed?
 - It is designed to admonish, to instruct, and as a charge.
- What are the essential building blocks of the passage? "Words."
- What are the parts that hold this passage?
 - People mentioned - a selected group of men to carry the provisions back to Jerusalem. The provisions included vessels from the temple.
 - Usually, only those of the priesthood were permitted to handle the holy vessels of the temple.
 - The men of Iddo were influential and from the priesthood. Matthew Henry believes that there was a college there and Levites were being recruited from there.
 - Nethinims Of the history of the Nethinim in earlier times there are but few and

uncertain traces. When Joshua discovered that he had been beguiled by the Gibeonites into a covenant to let them live, he reduced their tribe to servitude, and declared, "Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall never fail to be of you bondmen, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God" (Josh 9:23,27). It is no doubt tempting to see in the Gibeonites the earliest Nethinim, but another tradition traces their origin to a gift of David and the princes for the service of the Levites (Ezra 8:20). (from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1996 by Biblsoft)

- Events mentioned
 - Going back to reinstitute the Law of God
- Repetitions of words: Holy is mentioned twice; the Lord three times
- Changes in speakers, in conversations? - No!
- Theological motifs or themes (the big idea)
 - Look at Ezra 7:10. Ezra desires to reinstitute and instate the law of God. Everything is centered on that; therefore, getting to Jerusalem with the provision requires a call to service.

(v) Outline - see sermon

II. Linguistic Analysis

- (a) Syntax
 - (i) Are there usual or unusual pattern of construction? None!
 - (ii) Are there any peculiarities? Maybe not.
 - (iii) Pay close attention to verbs. The words "watch" and "keep."
 - (iv) Note that in Hebrew verbs denote kind of action rather than time of action.
- (b) Rhetorical feature
 - (i) Ezra is using word to express the seriousness of the mission. He uses adjectives associated with God - "holy" and "strong"; verbs "watch" and "keep."
- (c) Word studies
 - (i) Examine the meaning of words in their immediate context
 - The word Holy. It is the Hebrew word "qodesh"; it comes from the root word qadash which means "consecrate, hallow, dedicate, holiness."
 - Keep - "shamar" - to hedge about with thorns, to guard, to protect,
 - Watch - "shaqad" - to be alert, on the look out, attentive
 - (ii) How the author uses the word in different places
 - (ii) Usage in the rest of the OT or NT - the same, different when applied to God
 - (iii) Look for the range of meaning because one word may have several nuances or shades of meaning
 - (iv) Note that words change meaning; different meaning in different context

III. Genre

- (a) One of the historical books

IV. Theology

- (a) What is the main or overarching idea that is discussed here? Service. There should be a commitment on the part of those who handle holy things and volunteer their service.
- (b) What supporting ideas are given?
 - Specific instructions
- (c) How are they developed?

- Prayer and fasting
 - Selection
 - Instruction
- (d) How are they used within the content of the book?
- The theme of the book is reinstating God's Law. Those who serve must be an example in keeping God's Law.
- (e) How are they used within the context of the Old Testament? All are required to keep God's law.
- (f) What is God saying here? Commitment is the badge of honor worn by those who serve.
- (g) What role do His people have to play? They accepted the challenge and cooperated with Ezra. They did not complain. Nobody turned back.
- (h) What other theological ideas may be identified: committed, diligence, no turning back.

V. **Application**

- (a) Individual
- a. Service is not a function of what we do but who we are. It does not matter where we came from, once in the service of God we should be commitment and holy.
- (b) Corporate
- a. All of God's people are of a royal priesthood. We are to serve God as a holy vessel; our theme should be, "Lord prepare me, a sanctuary . . ."

APPENDIX P

SAMPLE SERMON

EXAMPLE SERMON
Sermon Outline

Title: Service that Counts

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 2:9

Sermonic Text: Ezra 8:28-29

Subject: Service

Central Idea: Service is not necessarily a function of what we do but who we are and whose we are.

Audience: Elders or Lay Preachers

Introduction:

1. Ezra had permission; Ezra had provision; but Ezra did not have protection.
 - a. Ezra had permission because King Artaxerxes permitted Ezra to go back to Jerusalem and assist with the reconstruction of Jerusalem, the renovation of the temple, and the reinstatement of worship.
 - b. Ezra had provision - the king gave back to Ezra the silver, the gold, and golden vessels plundered from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, when he captured Jerusalem.
 - i. Ezra had provision also because the captives, those living in Persian captivity, also sent their contributions with Ezra.
 - c. However, Ezra did not have protection. Maybe it was due to the fact that after bragging about His God, Ezra did not want to ask the king for protection. Ezra trusted in God. Therefore he assembled an expedition team to travel back to Jerusalem with provisions and to assist with rebuilding the religious institution of Jerusalem, calling his people back to the Law of God.

The text says (Transitional Statement)

1. Ezra had everybody he needed except the Levites to carry the sacred vessels. When the call was made others came but not the Levites. Once again, Ezra made specific call to the "chief men," or as Matthew Henry says, "to the professors at the theological seminary, for the preachers to come. This time they came."
2. Listen to what Ezra told them: Ezra 8:29

Body

1. There are three things I would like to raise out of Ezra admonition that I believe can be helpful to those of us who have been called to service.

The First thing is: The call to service is a call to holiness (Ezra 8:28a).

One of my favorite authors makes this comment: "The care exercised by Ezra in providing for the transportation and safety of the Lord's treasure, teaches a lesson worthy of thoughtfulness. Only those whose trustworthiness had been proved were chosen, and they were instructed plainly regarding the responsibility resting on them." (Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, 617).

The Second thing is: Since God is holy, the things of God are holy (Ezra 8:28b).

The Third thing is: If you take care of the things of God, God will take care of you (Ezra 8:29-30).

Conclusion

1. Our work is not yet done. We have permission, we have provision; we should be holy; we handle holy things; but our work is not done until we reach Jerusalem.
2. Jesus was faithful with the assignment God gave Him. It was an assignment of service that He followed through on to Calvary. Yet, His work will be completed when He takes us to New Jerusalem.

Appeal

1. God is calling for faithful servants.

APPENDIX Q

FEEDBACK TIME WITH PASTOR

Facilitator's Feedback Form
"Preparing to Preach"
Elders' Seminar

Positive Feedback:

Suggestions for Improvement

Scores:

Fellow Elders

1. Sermon #1

2. Sermon #2

Pastor

1. Sermon #1:

2. Sermon #2:

Total

1. Sermon #1:

2. Sermon #2:

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VITA

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